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Discourses of Creativity in Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum

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Graduate Program in Education

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Abstract

The concept of creativity is ubiquitous in educational reports, policies, and curricula in the minority world. Many of these texts consider creativity an economic imperative and a key element of change for every knowledge domain of the 21st century. This study is anchored in a Critical Discourse Analysis theoretical framework and represents an inquiry of creativity in kindergarten curricula. The aims of this inquiry were to identify creativity common sense beliefs and theories and to examine which ones have been employed in which curricula, and with what implications for children, teachers, educators, and society. I designed a qualitative case study (Stake, 2005) consisting of participant observations, field notes, and interviews from one Ontario kindergarten class for one cycle of activity in the fall of 2012, which demonstrated the operational curriculum. I also conducted a critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Weiss & Wodak, 2003) of texts used in the kindergarten classroom, or required to be used, by teachers, early childhood educators (ECEs), and principals or coordinators of programs. These texts included the draft version of the programmatic kindergarten curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education [OME], 2010) and the final version (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016). Further, as a counterpoint, I analysed texts from Reggio Emilia’s early childhood education curriculum, as identified by teachers, to contrast and illustrate ethical pedagogical possibilities. The findings resulted from the ethical comparison of the studied educational paradigms were categorized in terms of enablers and constrainers of creativity. The emergent paradigm of creativity specific to Reggio Emilia, which draws on multiple theories while using ethics as gatekeeper, is the most beneficent for children and the system. The constraints of creativity as illustrated by the analysis of the Ontario programmatic and operational curriculum are sourced in the neoliberal discourse in education, in the accountability for efficiency’s sake, in creativity promoted and standardized in areas of learning, which will be of use in the future working age of the child, in transforming teachers and ECEs as managers, accountants, and grade one pre-trainers, and students in objects of political will and desire.

Keywords: Creativity, Early Childhood Education, Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum, Critical Discourse Analysis, Reggio Emilia
Dedication

This work seemed a solitary odyssey. It was not. It has been a social journey of becoming since the day I entered daycare to this day. I am taking this opportunity to thank all my educators, teachers, professors, and mentors with whom I crossed paths and travelled for a while. Your support, kindness, and wisdom are precious gifts which I have been trying my best to pay forward.

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Chapter 1

1 Introduction

The concept of creativity is ubiquitous in educational reports, policies, and curricula in the minority world. As I will show later in this chapter, many of these texts promote creativity, which can be considered an economic imperative and a key element of change for every knowledge domain of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. This study is an inquiry of creativity in kindergarten curricula. My aims were to identify creativity common sense beliefs and theories and to examine which ones have been employed in which curricula, and with what implications, were presented for children, teachers, educators, and society. I designed a qualitative case study (Stake, 2005) consisting of participant observations, field notes, and interviews from one Ontario kindergarten class for one cycle of activity in the fall of 2012, which demonstrated the operational curriculum. I also conducted a critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Weiss & Wodak, 2003) of texts used in the kindergarten classroom, or required to be used, by teachers, early childhood educators (ECEs), and principals or coordinators of programs: These texts included the draft version, used for the first time, of the programmatic kindergarten curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education [OME], 2010) and the final version (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016). Further, as a counterpoint, I analysed texts from Reggio Emilia’s\textsuperscript{1} early childhood education curriculum, as identified by teachers, to contrast and illustrate ethical pedagogical possibilities. To support this study, my research questions are:

1. How does Ontario curriculum represent creativity?
2. What are the implications of these representations for children?
3. What are the implications of these representations for educators charged with promoting creativity?

The knowledge produced by this inquiry may be used to contribute to a needed understanding of creativity from semiotic, historical, and pedagogical perspectives, and to portray the socio-

\textsuperscript{1} Reggio Emilia is an internationally renowned approach to early childhood education based in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Many programs base their ECE programs on Reggio-inspired curricula. A full description of this approach is detailed in Chapter 4.
political underpinnings of Ontario early childhood education. Understanding the curriculum from a historical perspective is necessary to understand the present one and improve it:

The problem of study is to subject the traditions and customs of everyday life to scrutiny. It is to make problematic the everyday language and practices of schooling in order to consider how schooling is possible as a social reality...To recognize that the present as a moment of tradition is a reversal of much of our logic about social life and schooling. Our efforts to improve the quality of schooling cannot resist the residues of our past values, remnants in the very patterns that we institute as school change. (Popkewitz, as cited in Baker, 1996, p.106)

The responses to my research questions may also serve as points of reference for the ethical portrays of the Ontarian and Reggio Emilia child care curricula.

This introductory chapter has the following structure: First, I will introduce the problem, purpose, and research questions, followed by the study’s rationale, methodology, as well as the researcher’s perspectives. Next, to frame the study, I will lay out the creativity demand in Canada and include public early childhood contexts of creativity in Ontario. I argue that these discourses are sequential and are framed in human capital theory (HCT) (Fitzsimons, 2017), which I will problematize.

1.1 Problem, Purpose, and Rationale

This doctoral dissertation investigates the concept of creativity in Ontario’s early childhood education (ECE) programmatic curricula in draft and final forms, as well as in one learning cycle of the operational curriculum in an Ontario kindergarten classroom (conducted in 2012), which was implicated in the genesis of the full-day kindergarten movement in the province. It also examines the Reggio Emilia ECE curricular texts to offer an illustration of a counterpoint to the Ontario public kindergarten program. For the purpose of this research, curriculum is defined as a democratically negotiated process between the four equally important commonplaces of education (Schwab, 1983): the teacher, the student, what is taught, and the milieu of teaching and learning. The investigation of the curriculum takes into consideration the following levels: overt curriculum (the curriculum text), null curriculum (what is not offered, but has an effect by its
omission), and the *operational curriculum* (taught curriculum) (Glatthorn, Boschee, Whitehead, & Boschee, 2015, p. 6). There are three main reasons for the comparison.

1. A preliminary analysis of Ontario and Reggio Emilia ECE documents revealed that, while the Ontario ECE curriculum (OME, 2010; 2016) mentions creativity as art creative process or creative thinking skills, Reggio Emilia has a more mature and well-defined theoretical position. The comparison of creativity conceptualization in both programs might impact the way children’s identities and their social relationships are envisioned and lived in the classroom.

2. Reggio Emilia is considered “an international role model” (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 1991) of ECE. The comparison might reveal differences with significant implications in children’s lives and creative potential.

Although creativity has been studied through many lenses, a complex understanding of its theoretical and pedagogical implications is yet to be developed, especially for ECE (McClure, 2011; Runco, 2006; Sawyer, John-Steiner, Moran, Sternberg, Feldman, Nakamura, & Csikszentmihalyı, 2003) as there are controversies: For example, according to Sawyer et al. (2003) there is a Western myth of early childhood creativity:

> Our culture has a folk belief that society suppresses creativity: for example, that formal schooling squashes children’s natural creativity. If so, then this would suggest that children are more creative than adults and that normal development is a process of becoming less creative. Is there any truth to this folk belief? If so what’s the evidence? If not, then why do so many people believe it? (p. 219)

Furthermore, investigation of the ECE creativity literature revealed more tensions. While Dudek (as cited in Runco, 2006) and Sawyer (Sawyer et al., 2003) argued that young children are not really creative. Runco and Charles (1997) suggested that children are very creative, because they are not constricted by assumptions and social conventions. Furthermore, Fox and Schirrmacher (2011) argued that the ages between three and five are critical in creativity development, hence the ECE educators have a tremendous opportunity to foster it.
1.2 Overview of Theoretical Framework and Methodology

As will be elaborated upon in chapter three, the theoretical and methodological framework for my dissertation is critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Weiss & Wodak, 2003). Theoretically, CDA has roots in critical theory and linguistics. It envisions discourses as social practices that can constitute and condition social relations (Fairclough, 1989). The use of discourses may result in the (re)production of unequal power relations. In this study, creativity theories are considered discourses. Methodologically, CDA is hermeneutic and interdisciplinary, drawing from traditional socio-linguistics, systemic functional linguistics, ethnography, and textual analysis (Luke, 2002).

To respond to my research questions, I conceived a comparative qualitative case study, which consisted of critical discourse analysis of curricular texts (Fairclough, 2003) as indicated by educators, teachers, principals, and coordinators, and includes participant observation (Anderson-Levitt, 2006) of one Ontario kindergarten class for one cycle of activity in 2012. The data were coded using The Questions of Curriculum (Dillon, 2009): nature, elements, and practice of creativity. The coding, according to these themes, helped identify the repeatability of patterns and indicated the dominant curricular creativity discourse. Next, was a comparison and critical reflection, which focused on the implications of these discourses. The reflection was completed from the position of myself as a teacher with growing ethical concerns about “existing social realities as humanly produced constraints which in certain respects unnecessarily reduce human flourishing or well-being and increase human suffering” (Fairclough, 2012). Heydon and Wang’s (2006) Continuum of Curricular Paradigms and Opportunities for Efficiency and Ethics provided the ethical framework in revealing possible social inequities. The quality of findings was assessed using theoretical triangulation through the alternation of interpretative perspectives (Meyer, 2001).

1.3 The I

I had two motivations for this study, which concerned facets of my identity: artist and teacher. As an artist, I was formed in post-communist Eastern Europe in the spirit of the modernist zeitgeist with its myth of art as a universal language. The apex of my artistic career was a Master’s degree art show. I tend to describe that experience as a utopian attempt to go against the
fashion of revolting against transcendental aesthetics. The research topic of my Master’s thesis, the sublime as an aesthetic category, was created in the phoenix spirit of modernist times. The Master of Arts dissertation art exhibition, Exit (2005, Bucharest), came in the form of doorways (see Figures 1-3). I played with the duplicity of the door; it was meant as a physical object as well as means of access to an interior and exterior space.

Figure 1. Master degree art show: Exit 1.

Figure 2. Master degree art show: Exit 11.

Figure 3. Master degree art show: Exit 9.
I have been teaching since I was nineteen years old. In 1995, I graduated from the Normal School of Bucharest, Romania, which granted my Elementary Teaching Certification. Following, was the Faculty of Arts, Bucharest, including the Pedagogical Module, which entitled me to teach art at secondary school levels. These qualifications were reflected in my ten years teaching experience in K-12 in the Romanian and International Baccalaureate programme. Coming to Ontario, Canada meant conforming to the local standards of teaching certification. At the recommendation of the Ontario College of Teachers after the evaluation of my credits, I obtained my second Bachelor of Education degree. During this time, my interest in curriculum studies was awakened by constant comparisons between the three different systems of education paradigms (Ontario, The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, Romanian), which I learned about and practiced.

My inquiry into creativity is fuelled by art related questions, and it is anchored in my story of an immigrant teacher walking in and out of cultures and times. As an Ontarian art teacher, I am told to consider creativity as the highest achievement of a student according to the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002). I am also required to teach the creative process, which has stages and “is intended to be followed in a flexible, fluid, and cyclical manner” (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 2009, p. 20). This conceptualization presupposes that creativity is teachable. Moreover, one could easily infer that all children will be creative provided that the creative process is taught and learnt. This vision raised the questions: Is there such a simple, universal, linear creative process that can be taught? Why is this considered “the creative process”? Who decided that? When do we start teaching it? What are the ethical implications of teaching this particular vision of creativity? If this is true, how come there are mostly White men taught in the Western history of art? These questions, which seem naïve, put me into a reflexive state of mind and made me think about my four-year-old daughter, her life in a public Ontario Kindergarten, and the ethical implications that this conceptualization of creativity will have upon her and other children as a Canadian-born or landed by chance immigrant in Ontario. Thus, this study was born.

1.4 The Problem

Creativity, and implicitly, innovation, is a Canadian and provincial priority as highlighted by national and provincial reports. For example, The Conference Board of Canada (2015), a
Canadian independent research non-profit organization, reported on the innovation achievements of the Canadian provinces, Canada, and 16 peer countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States) by looking at the following: public research and development (R&D), researchers engaged in R&D, connectivity, scientific articles, entrepreneurial ambition, venture capital investment, business enterprise R&D (BERD), information and communication technology (ICT) investment, patents, and labour productivity. While Ontario occupies the fifth position among all provinces and countries, Canada ranks ninth.

At the provincial level, the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, one of the most well-recognized independent, not-for-profit, provincially-funded research organization, which reports annually on the micro and macroeconomic dynamics of Ontario, has repeatedly underlined the creativity and innovation imperative and regards it as crucial for long-term Canadian prosperity. For example, in 2013 the institute concluded that “Ontario is simply not doing enough to become more productive and innovative, as reflected by the province’s low investment levels in research and development, machinery and equipment, and information and communications technology, despite tax incentives and government support” (Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity, 2013, p. 4). In 2014, they identified innovation as a precondition for Ontario to succeed in the modern economy and proposed the incorporation of innovation in education. In 2015, when looking at disruptive innovation as new and transformative technologies or business models, they recommended that Ontario “should foster an environment that invites, rather than resists, innovation and change” (Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity, 2015, p. 10).

The latest report from the Institute looked at innovation in Ontario and identified an innovation gap:

First, Ontario has an appetite for innovation, with many success stories. Yet, our analysis reveals that Ontario continues to suffer from an innovation gap. This can be partly attributed to our branch plant economy but our innovation ecosystem also lacks depth in the availability of risk capital and in experienced management talent that has successfully scaled new ventures. (Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity, 2016, p. 5)
One of the advanced solutions proposed by the Institute to address the creativity shortage was the investment in education as human capital development. Hence, in the Canadian and Ontario context, creativity has been directly implicated in education and Canadian global competitiveness:

Our provincial and federal governments have been investing in education in the past few years and so far have resisted reductions in these investments to tackle deficits. We applaud this stance. If we are serious about competing in the creative age, we have to invest in building the skills and capabilities that will give us the advantage we need. (Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity, 2011, p. 4)

In 2013, teaching innovation skills in elementary school was recommended as a necessary medium-term investment:

In last year’s Annual Report, the Task Force supported the notion that innovation should be taught in schools. In doing so, students learn the skills required for innovation, which is a leading driver of economic growth. The creation of new processes and ideas that are commercialized to meet specific societal demands and needs is exactly what the entrepreneurs of today and tomorrow must do to in order to create successful companies. (Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity, 2013, p. 28)

In 2014, one of the recommendations of the Institute was to focus on innovation and implicitly creativity starting with early education:

The Task Force recommends that all secondary school students in Ontario undergo innovation education to fulfill its vision that innovation is crucial to the province’s economic future. Ontarians need to recognize how innovation works and why it is important. This starts with early education and will persist throughout their working lives. It is not enough to focus just on stimulating R&D or bolstering certain industries to carry the torch on innovation. All Ontarians must apply the general principles of innovation into their organizations. (Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity, 2014, p. 88)

The Ontario early childhood education (ECE) full-day kindergarten (FDK) program corresponded with this creativity request, and its existence is justified as human capital
investment. Full-day kindergarten came into existence in the 2010-2011 school year when the Liberal government, under the advisory of Dr. Charles Pascal, who made the recommendation of a universal seamless FDK program and started its implementation, which was rolled out over five years. Since 2014, which marked the full implementation, the program has been available to all four and five-year-olds and in the following format: an average of 26 students per classroom (Ontario Regulation 132, 2012, s 2), a team of early childhood educators formed by a designated early childhood educator and a kindergarten teacher under the duty to cooperate (Education Act of Ontario, 1990, c.10, s. 264.1), and a written curriculum (using drafts until the final version was ready in 2016). This was with the intention of regulating the classroom curriculum, by clearly marking the directions of what and how it should be planned, taught, assessed, and learnt by children. Another fundamental change in early childhood education and care was the shift of responsibility of early education from the Ministry of Youth and Services to the Ontario Ministry of Education and local school boards. This major change in Ontarian early education was later framed in terms of return of investment and benefits, which outweighed the costs as follows:

The economic benefits of investments in the early years are also well-documented. Economist and Nobel laureate James Heckman calculates a seven-to-one return on public investment in programs for young children. More recently, TD Bank Chief Economist, Craig Alexander, noted that the widespread and long-lasting benefits of early childhood education programs far outweigh the costs. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 5)

Again, the economic terminology and quantification of costs and benefits of early childhood education, at least at a conceptual level, was evidently anchored in human capital theory, where “economic growth depends not only on the nation's physical capital (such as roads), but also on the education and health of the labor pool. Human capital theorists suggest that schooling promotes economic and social development because the benefits to the individual spill over to help society” (Russel, 2013). Furthermore, two authoritative documents that are at the heart of Ontario education: Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014) and Great to Excellent: Launching the Next Stage of Ontario’s Education Agenda (Fullan, 2013) impose more or less subtly the human capital theory presence in provincial education.
The first document proposed an educational vision of students’ development of skills and knowledge, which concluded in “personally successful, economically productive and actively engaged citizens” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 1) by focusing on four “renewed” objectives:

1. Achieving Excellence: which targets academic excellence and citizenship;
2. Ensuring Equity: with the aim of inspiring all students to reach their potential and by providing access to great learning experiences;
3. Promoting Well-Being: which is focused on the mental and physical health of the students;
4. Enhancing Public Confidence: which tackles the Ontarians’ vote on education.

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 1)

In this context, the FDK program was presented as a “significant investment” in the modernization of the educational system with the purpose of connecting it from “birth to adulthood:”

And full-day kindergarten – the single most significant investment in education in a generation – will soon be a reality across the entire province, giving every four - and five-year-old the best possible start in life. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 2)

With regards to creativity, it was invoked as part of an economic argument and justified as one of “the attributes that employers have already told us they seek out among graduates” (p. 3).

The second document represented a summary of what has been done since 2003, when “Ontario’s schools were in a troubled state” (Fullan, 2013, p. 1), its great present achievements, and what will and should be done in Ontario with regards to education. It stated that the province needed to focus on the “6 Cs:” character education, citizenship, communication, critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity to prepare students for the future. These six C’s are the new foci in education, because they are “attributes that parents and the public value, and that employers seek. They position our graduates for successful careers in Canada and across the globe” (Fullan, 2013, p. 10).
The Ontario full-day kindergarten was again framed in an economical discourse of investment in vulnerable children and the long-term profit of this investment with quantifiable return:

Before we made the investment in full day kindergarten, 28 per cent of our students were entering Grade 1 vulnerable because they were seriously behind their peers. As this percentage falls as a result of our investment, for every one per cent drop in vulnerability there will be a one per cent addition to Ontario’s contribution to the GDP over the life cycle of each cohort. (Fullan, 2013, p. 4)

In other words, for each one percent invested in these children, there will ostensibly be a profit of one percent for each year per generation over their life span, once they start producing. The above quote has the elements of an enticing financial investment offer. Creativity in particular was associated with “economic and social entrepreneurialism, considering and pursuing novel ideas, and leadership for action” (Fullan, 2013, p. 9), thus connecting it directly with the economical discourse.

The human capital discourse and reasoning behind the Ontario full-day kindergarten program and implicit creativity respond to the recommendations of the Panel on the Role of Government Report (Panel on the Role of Government, 2004) and With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario report (Pascal, 2009). Moreover, early childhood education was part of Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy (Ontario Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction, 2010). However, framing education in the human capital theory is problematic for at least the following reasons: First, although it might be common sense to think of public education as an investment in capital, which results in economic growth, the argument is reductive, as it cues the justification of education in economic terms and promotes the idea of investment return. In this context, the study of disciplines deemed as not valuable, such as art and philosophy, cannot be justified. As a result, the non-commodified bodies of knowledge are marginalized. This marginalization has major implications for curriculum making, as it is conditioned by the “cost-benefit strait-jacket” (Engel, 2000, p. 30). Second, human capital theory has been successfully challenged and proven to be more of a belief than a fact:
Various studies have exposed methodological flaws, unconfirmed assumptions, and ideological bias in human capital theory and its line of research. As such, within a few decades, interest in human capital theory as a line of research diminished substantially. (Ayers, 2005, p. 532)

To explore if the Ontario FDK program provided any evidence regarding commodified bodies of knowledge, I performed a preliminary analysis of the quantity of curricular outcomes called expectations in the Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016) that seemed to support the above statement. What the document announced as overall expectations represented the knowledge and skills kindergarten students were supposed to know and be able to do during and by the end of the program. The 31 overall expectations were to be assessed by teachers during the two-year kindergarten program and connect with the four frames of learning: Belonging and Contributing, Self-Regulation and Well-Being, Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours, and Problem-Solving and Innovating, which “reflect the integrated way in which learning occurs during children’s play and inquiry in Kindergarten” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 13). The overall and specific expectations, describe children’s learning in the Kindergarten program. Each expectation is associated with one or more of the frames, or broad areas of learning, of the program. All program expectations must be accounted for in instruction and assessment (see Growing Success – The Kindergarten Addendum, 2016 p. 10). Children’s growth in learning over the two years of the Kindergarten program is assessed in relation to the knowledge and skills described, in general terms, in the overall expectations (OEs) in each frame. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 116)

When looking at the number of overall expectations pertaining to Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours frame, it can be observed that 67 out of 126 overall expectations address the assessment of knowledge and skills in literacy and mathematics. This distribution of expectations is relevant in terms of what happens in classrooms where the kindergarten activities must represent the social practice of expectations, which means that at least half of the children’s instructional time should be spent teaching and assessing literacy and mathematics.
A glance at *The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. iv) draft document is also illustrative in supporting such claims as it establishes a precedent. In looking at the Contents: Program Expectations page (see Table 1), it can be observed that there is a hierarchy of topics given by their priority and the number of pages allocated to their discussion.

The main assumption of my argument is that a topic that has more relevance in a document is presented among the first ones in more detail and requires more physical space in terms of number of pages (Figure 5). Hence, the more pages dedicated to the topic, the higher its relevance in children’s education.

![Figure 4. The learning areas: Program expectations (OME, 2010, p. iv).](image)

I performed a brief analysis in terms of page numbers allocated to areas of learning. I plotted the data in a table for easier reference and analysis (see Table 1). The first column displays what the document terms learning areas, which seem to be equivalent to areas of study. In the second column, I plotted the number of pages of the document that addressed the expectations of the specific learning area. In the third column I plotted the rank of the learning area according to the quantity of pages dedicated to expectations per discipline.
### Table 1.

**The hierarchy of learning areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning area</th>
<th>Number of pages</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal and social development</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and technology</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and physical activity</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts: drama, dance, music and visual arts</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In looking at Table 1, it can be observed that the rank, according to the number of pages reveals a different perspective. While language and mathematics occupy the first and the second positions, the arts, which includes five disciplines with five fundamentally different bodies of knowledge: drama, dance, music and visual arts, are at the bottom of the hierarchy of importance. The fact that language and mathematics are leading the way raises questions in terms of similarities between the draft and final version of the document and establishes a precedent in terms of discipline importance in the kindergarten curriculum.

Based on the above statements, the Ontario FDK curriculum has an inherent hierarchy of study areas where language and mathematics are central and the rest are marginalized. This statement is also supported by the nuanced declaration of the Ministry of Education that emphasized the new goals of education, which “include high levels of achievement in literacy and mathematics, higher graduation rates and more” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 2).

Creativity presence or absence in the current kindergarten document must be part of its hierarchy of commodified knowledge. Again, because the knowledge and skills to be taught and assessed are outlined in the overall expectations, I searched for *creativity* in any morphological
stance (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, and adverb) in the overall expectations. Creativity was identified in two out of 31 (or 0.06%) overall expectations in two forms: as a verb in the context of children’s learning the mathematical concept of pattern and as a gerund in the context of technology and problem-solving skills in the process of creating and designing as follows:

18. Recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns, and extend, translate, and create them, using the core of a pattern and predicting what comes next (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 313)

24. Use technological problem-solving skills, on their own and with others, in the process of creating and designing (i.e., questioning, planning, constructing, analysing, redesigning, and communicating) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 316)

In looking at these two expectations it can be observed that the specific bodies of knowledge that address creativity in the 2016 kindergarten program are mathematics and technology, as patterning is a mathematical concept, while technological problem-solving skills refer to problem solving in technology. The science–technology duet and mathematics are highly valued in education and economy as macroeconomic studies, such as Hanushek, Jamison, Jamison, and Woessmann’s (2008) Education and economic growth: It’s not just going to school, but learning something while there that matters, have attempted to establish a clear connection between student achievement on science and math tests and per capita gross domestic product (GDP) growth, in an effort to demonstrate that science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education are major factors in determining the prosperity of a country.

However, when bodies of knowledge are assigned with economical and pragmatic value in education, as people we can lose sight of our humanity and cease to see ourselves as complex, interconnected human beings creating, sharing, intersecting, reflecting upon, and caring about our life journey. As such:

The applied sciences together with information and communication technologies are raised in status with regard to assumed economic utility rather than the arts and humanities. Nussbaum argues that the arts and humanities become feared by those who educate for economic growth, because it is “easier to treat people as objects to manipulate
if you have never learned any other way to see them”…When knowledge is seen as having different levels of economic value, and when that economic value becomes predominant, the complexities of defining the heuristic, epistemological, and ontological value of knowledge as a socially constructed phenomenon are lost…This is seen all too clearly in discourses of the knowledge economy in which the word knowledge is used “in an almost entirely rhetorical way; the meaning of knowledge is at best implicit and at worst virtually empty of content. (Patrick, 2013, p. 3)

The above statements and preliminary analysis demonstrate that ECE creativity discourses presented in the kindergarten curriculum texts and its context might be problematic with regards to the ethics of care for children the moment that the discourse is anchored mainly in human capital theory and economical logic.

In the next chapter, I survey the pertinent literature related to diverse conceptualizations of creativity and trace these across the early childhood education landscape.
Chapter 2

2 Literature Review

This literature review highlights discourses of creativity and follows creativity as it traverses early childhood education where “discourses are semiotic ways of construing aspects of the world (physical, social or mental) that can generally be identified with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors” (Fairclough, 2012, p. 11). I discuss and categorize key assumptions of worldviews of creativity including the relationship between creativity and the workforce, because it has effects in education. I also present studies and theories situated at the intersection of creativity and early childhood education, which I categorize according to the nature of their assumptions.

To my knowledge, there are no Critical Discourse Analysis studies which examine discourses of creativity and their role in the Ontario kindergarten program. However, there is a relatively small body of research that uses Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the Ontario kindergarten curriculum. For example, while Malins (2017) looks at the Canadian Early Childhood curricula through the lens of gender and sexual identity, Karagrigoriou (2018) compares Hellas and Ontario kindergarten curricula from the perspective of democratic citizenship education. The scarcity of studies which encompass Critical Discourse Analysis and Ontario kindergarten curriculum highlights the importance of the present study.

2.1 Creativity as a Problematic Concept

Creativity is an elusive and dynamic concept, hence, a clear definition with necessary and sufficient conditions is hard if not impossible to conceive. For example, Rhodes (1961) collected over 40 definitions of creativity and Cougar, Higgins, and McIntyre (1990) found around 100 definitions. In a period of almost 30 years the number of definitions almost tripled. It is probably this conceptual divergence that led Feldhusen and Goh (1995) to declare that:

Those who search for the essence of creativity in current theory and research are apt to be overwhelmed by both the current breadth of conceptions of the field as well as the relative uncertainty of its fundamental components. (p. 232)
Given the plethora of perspectives on creativity, in this chapter I attempt to structure these views according to paradigms. Gläveanu (2010) identifies three worldviews of creativity study that coexist, although they appeared at different historical moments: The He-paradigm—the lone genius; the I-paradigm—the creative person; the We-paradigm—social creativity.

The He-paradigm is probably the most known and has been manifested mainly in the arts during Romanticism and science during the Enlightenment period. Its roots can be traced in antiquity and Kant’s definition of the genius. Creativity is conceived either as divine inspiration or genetic inheritance and is characterized by exclusivity and disconnection: The genius, often a male figure, creates ex nihilo—he does not need existing knowledge or the world. The products he creates are always “landmarks in the history of a domain, sometimes the humanity” (Gläveanu, 2010, p. 81). This paradigm focuses on the achievements and lives of great people. Gardner’s (1994) The Creator’s Patterns is illustrative of this paradigm.

The I-paradigm emerged from psychology and replaced the genius with the normal person. The main event that forced the “democratization” of creativity in the United States was the Russian threat, for example the Sputnik extraordinary accomplishment (Razik, as cited in Gläveanu, 2010, p. 82). Creativity in this paradigm is envisioned as an individual quality and process, ignoring thus, the social factors.

Guilford (1950) and Torrance’s (1974) theories are relevant to this discourse as they have conceptualized creativity as a personality trait, part of human intelligence studied in controlled settings. Guilford proposed a model of creativity structured on four abilities: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. Torrance took Guilford’s ideas further and devised the Torrance tests of creative thinking (TTCT), which are widely used in education to evaluate students’ giftedness (Kim, 2006). The two tests, figural and verbal, are reported to measure five abilities: abstractness of titles, resistance to premature closure, fluency, originality, and elaboration (Villalba, 2008), but the Torrance tests are questioned in the field. Lissitz and Willhoft (1985) demonstrated that the mode of instruction affected students’ scores. Clapham (2004) showed that there was a moderate correlation between the TTCT and two other creativity inventories. These facts cast doubt on what the TTCT was really measuring. Nevertheless, the TTCT are widely used in creativity and educational empirical and theoretical studies. For example, Torrance
(1968) claimed that there was a significant decline in children’s creativity around the age of five, and he further argued that the main cause of the phenomenon was the heavy academic demand and acceptance of authority. Johnson (1985) approached creativity from a Piagetian perspective and compared students at different stages of cognitive development. Her findings suggested there is a U-shaped developmental creativity trend as the concrete operational students had lower scores than the students in the preoperational and formal operational stages.

Another theory that is anchored in the I-paradigm is the propulsion theory of creative contributions (Sternberg, 2003). Sternberg proposes three main categories of creative thinking: styles of creative thinking that attempt to consolidate and expand the current paradigm (replication, redefinition, forward incrementation, advance forward incrementation); creative thinking that rejects the current paradigm and attempts to instate a new one (redirection, reconstruction, reinitiation); creativity that puts together existing paradigms into a new one (synthesis).

Kirton’s (2003) adaptation–innovation theory envisions creativity as adaptive and innovative cognitive styles. The adaptor is drawn toward improving things within the current boundaries, while the innovator tends to restructure problems. Creativity is seen along a continuum between these two conceptualized limits and is grounded in the leadership models.

Creativity as a process is another conceptual pattern of individual creativity. In the field of philosophy, Kneller (1965), an enthusiast supporter of Guilford’s psychometrics, anchors his theory in the psychological model proposed by Wallace (as cited in Kneller, 1965) and constructs it as a cycle. The creative phased process (first insight, preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification) is conducive to creativity as “the discovery and expression of something that is both new to the creator and an achievement in its own right” (Kneller, 1965, p. 18). In the same domain, but on the opposite side, is White’s (1968) conceptual analysis of creativity. White creates a very subtle and solid rebuttal of Guilford’s (1950) and Torrance’s (1974) conceptualizations and highlighted its erroneous semantic use in education, however, he does not provide an explicit alternative. As Glăveanu (2010) states, theories and studies within the I-paradigm have had as an effect methodological reductionism and partial models of creativity. Furthermore, as McArdle and Grieshaber (2012) state, “the link between
individualism and creativity in most theories is steeped in liberal assumptions about the world, and is problematic” (p. 148).

The We-paradigm came as a response to these critiques and shifted the focus on the social as an integral part of creativity. Its beginnings can be traced to Amabile’s (1996) social psychology of creativity, where the “social factors can have a powerful impact on creativity” (p. 3). Her componential model of creativity consists of domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills, and task motivation, where the social factors play a crucial role in task motivation. However, the social factors are conceived as constraining or encouraging creativity and not as an intrinsic part of it.

Csikszentmihalyi’s (1997) systems theory takes the idea of the social further. In his theoretical frame, creativity emerges in the social context and is conceived as change into a domain that resists time. Some people are more likely to be creative due to personal qualities, favourable social position, and context. The individual creative process has five stages: preparation, incubation, insight, evaluation, and elaboration and is more recursive than linear (p. 83). It is studied at the intersection of the symbol, social, and individual systems. The domain—the symbol system—represented the transmissible body of knowledge (past creative achievements); the social system consisted of gatekeepers, people in charge of deciding and influencing what is knowledge; the individual, depending on his or her background (personality traits, cognitive processes, and motivation), transforms the body of knowledge.

Vygotsky (1990) conceptualizes creativity as any human act “that gives rise to something new…regardless of whether what is created is a physical object or some mental or emotional construct that lives within the person who created it and is known only to him” (p. 84). For Vygotsky, creativity exists in everyday life and occurs in collaboration. He argues that creativity is rooted in children's symbolic play with caregivers. Its development is furthered by emergence of inner speech and collaboration of imagination and conceptual thought. The creative mental function fully matures into adulthood. Gläveanu (2010) develops Vygotsky’s concept and defined creativity as,

a complex socio-cultural-psychological process that, through working with “culturally-impregnated” materials within an intersubjective space, leads to the generation of
artefacts that are evaluated as new and significant by one or more persons or communities at a given time. (p. 87)

He proposes a dynamic model where the meaning making process and the context are intrinsic to creativity:

The *new artifact* (material or conceptual) is seen as emerging within the relation between *self* (creator) and *others* (broadly understood as a *community*), all three being immersed into and in dialogue with an existing body of *cultural artefacts, symbols and established norms*. (p. 87)

The new artefact implies meaning making or interpretative procedures that are contextual and constructed within communities. Creativity is generative—related to tradition, however tradition is not defined as an abstract rigid notion.

The ontological premise of the We-paradigm seems the most comprehensive as it incorporates the social. It is this perspective that I will assume in this creativity study.

**2.2 Creativity and the New Workforce**

A theme that intersects the I- and We-paradigms with possible and probable effects in education is the new pro market concept of creativity as presented in Sletzer’s and Bentley’s (1999) report. It is argued that creativity is learnable and consisted in “the application of knowledge and skills in new ways to achieve a valued goal” (p. 1). It does not involve artistic sensibility and flourishes in environments where there are trust, freedom of action, variations in context, the right balance between skills and challenges, an interactive exchange of knowledge and ideas, and real-world outcomes. According to the authors, the structure of society is changing paradigms by moving from manual labour to “thinking jobs,” from industrial to a “weightless” economy, which necessitates a different type of workforce. In this modern capitalism the new worker has to be creative and apply skills and knowledge in multiple work environments:

More and more work will require a high knowledge component and high level skills; even marginal and low-paying jobs will demand greater ability to manage information, apply knowledge and learn on the job.
Accelerating competition and the application of new technologies mean that companies must innovate more rapidly in order to survive…The changing patterns and demands of the labour market will require new forms of personal discipline and self-reliance. (p. 2)

Consequently, creativity is not motivated by the desire to learn, but rather the necessity to survive. To prove their claims, the authors research five case studies of five programs from the US, Sweden, Canada, and the UK as follows:

Citizens Schools is an out-of-school learning programme for nine to fourteen year olds in Boston, Massachusetts, which uses over 1,000 volunteer professionals as apprentice-teachers in a range of fields. Harlem Educational Activities Fund, in New York City, is an enrichment programme for twelve to 21-year olds that wraps a spectrum of services around the needs of its students to help them gain acceptance to competitive secondary schools and colleges, and to thrive in these environments. Hyper Island, in Karlskrona, Sweden is a new kind of university which teaches its students the New Media Design trade through hands-on ‘live projects’ and work placements. Waterloo University’s Cooperative Education programme, in Canada, has integrated the notion of work-based learning into the more traditional university environment, offering students opportunities to spend up to half of their college careers applying their skills and knowledge in professional settings. Unipart Group is a manufacturing firm in Oxford that has infused creative learning into the life of its employees through its in-house university and innovative creative problem solving process. (Seltzer & Bentley, 1999, p. x)

Based on the above scenarios and their findings, Seltzer and Bentley (1999) propose the following changes to education:

1. Learning would be structured mainly through projects. A project is a piece of work, combining disparate resources, people and types of knowledge, to achieve a goal or concrete outcome. Some projects would be individual, while many would be group-based.

2. Problems and goals would not be completely predefined by the curriculum. Students would repeatedly practice identifying and solving problems, rather than having them placed before them.
3. Learning would take place in a range of contexts and use a range of methods. Projects would not all be research-based or within a traditional classroom environment. Students would be involved in *doing* as much as in thinking or knowing.

4. Knowledge and learning gains would be assessed from different perspectives—including that of the learner.

5. Alongside more traditional, teacher-centred assessment, students’ work would be evaluated by field experts, peers, parents and so on. It would be evaluated for different kinds of skills and knowledge—inter-personal, thinking strategies, self-organisation, depth of understanding, and so on.

6. Thinking and self-assessment would be embedded across the curriculum. Students would focus particularly on learning to make connections between different contexts—the transfer and application of knowledge across different domains.

7. Skills would be revisited and practiced over time, so that knowledge gained earlier in an educational career could be applied creatively to new problems.

8. Students would gain depth of understanding in a number of disciplines, or domains of knowledge, including traditional academic subjects. They would also learn explicitly how to combine inter-disciplinary knowledge in completing a project goal. (pp. 81-82)

To put this curriculum into practice, the authors propose a “coherent structure” formed by: the project, the learning portfolio, and the broker. While the first two components are familiar to any educational system, the broker seems to have a special purpose:

School-community brokers would be responsible for managing the interface between academic and real world learning. Their role would be to cultivate and maintain a network of parents, community members, professionals and organisations on which students and teachers can draw for learning opportunities and creative input. They would be responsible for maintaining a database of placement opportunities, resources and contacts. They would also advise students on developing and planning their portfolios, and liaise with subject-specialist teachers on the learning and assessment strategies for individual students and project teams. (Seltzer & Bentley, 1999, p. 85)
The authors place a strong emphasis on acquiring information technology literacy and the placement of students into business environments as soon as possible. The idea of preparing students for integration into the workforce is an intrinsic part of human capital theory, which has been addressed in the introduction of this thesis. Moreover, this conceptualization raises the questions: Why would addressing the needs of the various private, for profit business constitute the curriculum of public education? Is addressing the needs of the various private, for profit business creativity?

2.3 Creativity and Early Childhood Education

Most of the current research situated at the intersection of creativity and early childhood education (ECE) can sit under the umbrella of I- or We-paradigms of creativity worldviews by examining their assumptions. In looking at the landscape of creativity and early years education, I observed that most of the studies are rooted in the Piagetian or Vygotskian lines of thinking. First, I will address the I- and He-paradigm in ECE and then I will illustrate the We-paradigm.

2.3.1 The I- and He-paradigms of early years creativity.

Runco and Cayirdag (2012a, 2012b) argue that the creativity of young children is different than that of adults as children’s creativity often does not take the form of comparable products, such as artworks; children’s creativity manifests in intangible ways such as new understandings and new self-expressions. The early childhood creativity is marked by uninhibited expression and pretend play. As children grew up and socialized, they received feedback, which determined selections of expression. Hence, the authors argued that parents, caregivers, and teachers should opt for a balanced style of education, which combined mature feedback with play and experimentation. They also forwarded that creativity had “stages of development,” “domains of performance,” and that it was influenced by family, cultural context, immediate context, and personal creativity.

The stages of development are characterized by fluctuations of creativity (Claxton, Pannells, & Rhoads, as cited in Runco and Cayirdag, 2012a), with an emphasis on the possibility of the fourth-grade creative slump as documented by Runco and Raina (as cited in Runco & Cayirdag, 2012a). Early childhood creativity is associated with play, as indicated by its direct relationship with divergent thinking. This connection is also supported by Piaget’s (as cited in
Runco & Cayirdag, 2012a) imaginative play theory. Runco’s and Gruber’s (as cited in Runco and Cayirdag, 2012a) studies also address creative morality and altruism as necessary in the context of today’s complex ethical dilemmas. While Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences represents the support of the domains of performance argumentation, family and parenting style are addressed as influential factors of creativity. With regards to the influence of cultural context, Runco and Cayirdag (2012a) give, as an example, the sex typing and androgynous psychology as related to creativity by giving access to both masculine and feminine stereotype behaviours. The immediate context, from climate to permissive school environments, to physical environments, and to implicit theories of parents with regards to children’s creativity, also have an effect on creativity. As a solution to the creativity of the early years conundrum, the authors present Personal Creativity theory (2012a, 2012b) as a complex notion, which includes intrinsic motivation, cognition, and autonomy, and requires originality and effectiveness; it also acknowledges that the creativity of children is not necessarily recognized by the social arena, and that it is inscribed in everyday creative efforts. It is suggested that education must focus on ego strength and discretion of the children: where ego strength is a type of confidence that allows a child to stand up for himself or herself and discretion allows them to fit in. Looking at children’s creativity through this lens, the authors consider that encouraging children to be creative through explicit instructions, developing ego strength and discretion are essential for success in a school setting. This conceptualization of creativity can be easily integrated into the I-paradigm due to the democratization of creativity and its universalization.

Another issue of the early childhood creativity within the I-paradigm seems to be the question of the domain specificity of creativity. Baer (2012) focused on the evidence for domain specificity of creativity by examining the studies that used young students as participants. Using a consensus assessment technique, which consisted of asking experts to assess the creativity of products in a domain and correlating creativity ratings, Baer attempted to demonstrate that creativity is domain-specific by studying findings that there were low or random correlations between different types of creative products. Based on these results, Baer advocated for domain-specific domain creativity for early childhood and recommended programs be designed to enhance creativity through divergent thinking activities, such as brainstorming.
Guilford’s (1984) and Torrance’s (1974) vision of creativity as divergent thinking has also generated a line of study that concerns conceptualizations of creativity as originality, fluency, and relevance. Jalongo and Hirsch (2012) approach creative thought processes in young children by reviewing the creativity research field to answer the following five questions when relating them to children from infancy to eight-year-olds: 1) How should creativity in young children be defined? 2) What is the relationship between intelligence and creativity in young children’s thought processes? 3) Is it possible to teach creativity in the early childhood classroom? 4) What role does social support play in the creative processes of children? And 5) How can play nurture creativity in young children? (Jalongo and Hirsch, 2012, p. 90). They consider play a “prototype” of adult creativity and try to answer the questions regarding defining creativity in young children, the relationship between intelligence and creativity in young children, the teaching for creativity, and the role of social support. They argue for an inclusive concept of creativity, which includes cognition, small “c” creativity (everyday problem solving) and big “C” creativity (extraordinary accomplishments), as well as the social system and resources necessary to develop creativity in children.

The authors suggest that there are several impediments in teaching for creativity. For example, educators and parents do not recognize creativity, because they confuse it with intelligence, or label children in negative ways, or teachers’ beliefs and attitudes vary from laissez-faire to do-it-for-children. Jalongo and Hirsch (2012) acknowledge the role of the social in creativity, by redefining creativity as system that is shaped by cognitive processes, social and emotional processes, family, education, characteristics of the domain, social cultural aspects, and historical forces. Nurturing creativity in the young child is done through play, which is pleasurable, symbolic, motivating, freely chosen, and fully engaging (Hirsch, as cited in Jalongo & Hirsch, 2012, p. 100). It is concluded that the development of the creative thought in young children demands time, space, and opportunity, as well as social, intellectual, and material support.

The theme of creativity as a process is clearly illustrated by Blake and Giannangelo (2012). They review the research on creativity, which includes neurological perspectives and adopt Sharp’s (as cited in Blake & Giannangelo, 2012) research categories: person, process, press, and product. The authors opt for creativity as a process, “which connects and supports
other thinking processes” (p. 298). They argue that creativity in young children is relative to age, experiences, and environment. Blake and Giannangelo also examine three interactions of creativity: with play, problem solving, and inquiry. Play is related to divergent thinking as “play predicts divergent thinking” (p. 302); the problem solving-creativity relationship is rather complex and unclear, but research points toward creativity as a subset of problem-solving. Inquiry, which requires three intellectual skills: synthesis, analysis, and persuasion (Sternberg, as cited in Blake & Giannangelo, 2012) seems to overlap with creativity. Nevertheless, the authors argue that creative thinking supported inquiry in science as young children investigate through play. They also discuss the implications for the educational environment and practical approaches and the field of early childhood education.

The four-C model of creativity (Beghetto, Kaufman, Hegarty, Hammond, & Wilcox-Herzog, 2012) is an approach that harmonized the He- and I-paradigms as creativity is organized on qualitative levels: mini-c creativity: “subjective experience of creative ideation” (p. 254); little-c creativity; expert or pro-c creativity (professional level creators without an eminent status), and big-C creativity (e.g., Maria Montessori). In Beghetto, et al. (2012) it is argued that structured learning in early childhood could stifle creativity and they propose the four-C approach to creativity. The authors advise possible solutions for integrating creativity into early childhood education such as: developing broader conception of creativity, cultivating creativity in concert with full spectrum of development of child development, and cultivating lifelong leisure habits early on. The same four-C model is presented in Adams and Chen (2012). They identify four types of mini-c creativity for young children: exploring and experimenting, making, inventing, and creating wholes. The authors provide examples of practices that supported these types of creativity, such as observing children’s creating, framing creative activities, and appreciating the individual differences.

A special place in the creativity research of ECE within the I-paradigm is granted to art and creative movement. Clearly rooted in the Romantic vision of creativity, the democratization of arts is reflected in the democratization of creativity. In Grammatikopoulus, Gregoriadis, and Zachopoulou (2012), they examine creativity as a cross-curricular thinking skill in the context of the movement programs (dance and physical education). They explain the role of intrinsic motivation as a main trigger of creativity and emphasize the role of play in the kinesthetic
domain. They also review the role of the teacher in movement programs by encouraging teaching methods, such as movement exploration guide, discovery, and creative problem-solving. The authors propose seven movement activities that focuses on the following goals: use and modification of movement elements, development of creative thinking through the execution of motor skills, and development of critical thinking through the execution of motor skills.

In Antilla and Sansom (2012), creativity is considered an integral part of human existence—a way of making sense of our experiences and of the world, and a way of communicating our experiences and interpretations to others. The authors consider these processes as embodied, because embodied processes—sensations, perceptions, gestures, and movements—connected human beings with the material and social world (p. 182). The authors position movement and dance as a mode of learning and underline their status in education as not being serious ways of learning. As an alternative, they present the tradition of ako from New Zealand, where everyone is a learner and a teacher no matter the age. They further argue for an emergent curriculum, which is connected to children’s interests and goals in a responsible and creative manner. Embodied learning, such as dance, creates multimodal knowledge and engages various levels of consciousness. The examination of the New Zealand early childhood curriculum document reveals the embodied learning, such as “playing and moving are viewed as paramount modalities in a child’s life” (p. 192). The authors also review alternative visions of dance and movement education, such as promoting movement for well-being in Reggio Emilia schools, where the “pedagogy of listening” opens up spaces and times for the emergence of dance and movement.

In Blank (2012), the author reviews the development of art education discourses from Lowenfeld’s Piagetian-like linear stages of drawing development, to sociocultural theory where the child actively selects strategies for drawing for his or her own purpose, to U-curve theory where the child loses the playfulness and replaces it with a desire for technical proficiency, to modernist art stances, such as every child is an artist. The author also reviews the school arts discourses and characterizes them as instrumental for academic learning, as disciplines of visual culture and as a multimodal play. These approaches configure arts education as supporting the young children’s academic accomplishment (school readiness), or art as equal to other subjects, or art as multimodal play where art become a kind of multimodal meaning making. In “the
relationship between producing and receiving,” Blank examines the process over product construct of arts and invited a re-examination. Art as multimodal play opens up the possibility of thinking like artists. Reggio Emilia ECE offers an example of arts-integrated approaches.

2.3.2 The We-paradigm of early years creativity.

The We-paradigm of creativity in ECE is marked by the assumption that creativity is a system network that is embedded in the social. Hence, the studies that take into consideration the social system should be categorized here. For example, Saracho (2012) discusses the importance of teachers’ creativity, the relationship between creative teachers and creative children, the importance of positive creativity relationships, how teachers’ beliefs impact children’s creativity, and how teachers’ attitudes and verbal interactions in the classroom environment can stifle or develop creativity.

Another component of the early childhood education creativity is the curriculum. Nutbrown and Clough (2014) analyze the arts and creativity curriculum situation in the UK and state that many education scholars argue for “creativity and discovery as inalienable to young children’s learning” (p.147). The authors define arts as a human need and present it from the first months of life. Therefore, ECE must attend to this aesthetic need. They further state that although there is irrefutable proof that the arts have an extraordinary impact on young children’s learning, the art curriculum was “decimated” because of the redistribution of basics (English and mathematics) timetabling due to the fear of underachievement. The arts education and creativity in early childhood education are under the influence of limitations and fears of the curriculum makers. The arts situation in the UK curriculum is historically explained and the attempts to revitalize the art education are presented.

Moreover, McArdle and Grieshaber (2012) argue that creativity is iconic in education and examine the ideological underpinnings of creativity discourses. The authors create ten contradictory propositions, which summarize similar views of creativity and highlight their consequences in early childhood education. The propositions are as follows:

Proposition 1: The daily work of teachers is shaped by creativity discourses that value process and product. (p. 140)
Proposition 2: Creativity is innate, something that everyone has: the environment and mentors are important in supporting the development of creativity. (p. 141)

Proposition 3: Creativity is a personality trait: creativity involves skills and processes that can be taught and learned. (p. 141)

Proposition 4: Recognizing the potential for creativity resistance must be balanced with managing resistance. (p. 142)

Proposition 5: Nurturing creativity and learning through discovery and inquiry complements teaching discipline knowledge as content. (p. 142)

Proposition 6: Teachers’ daily work is shaped by discourses that value more objective approaches to creativity and discourses that focus on more subjective approaches to creativity. (p. 143)

Proposition 7: Creativity as a value and a corporate competitive edge but creatives need to be managed. (p. 145)

Proposition 8: Drawing on the wisdom of the group, teaching collaborative learning and co construction combine with valuing and encouraging individuality and originality. (p. 146)

Proposition 9: Children need time for dreaming and imagination but for learning to occur they must be on task. (p. 150)

Proposition 10: Discourses encourage teaching of creativity, problem-solving, problem finding and future factors: at the same time standardized testing is used for measuring children’s success and literacy and numeracy benchmarks must be met with your success. (p. 150)

Although discourses are competing, colliding, constructed on neoliberal assumptions, and formed by binary logic, McArdle and Grieshaber (2012) consider that teachers should draw on these discourses, reflect on the possibilities of supporting children’s creativity, and provide quality learning experience for all children.
This literature review mapped worldviews of creativity and their intersections with early childhood education. Creativity theories present in early childhood education are anchored in the mainstream research of creativity, which views creativity through the He-, I- or We-paradigmatic lenses. New perspectives, such as creativity as embodied learning or competing discourses of creativity, are emerging and paint a dynamic research landscape of ECE creativity. This literature review helped me to identify, position, and trace the creativity theories and discourses present in Ontario kindergarten public education texts, in the operational Ontario curriculum observed in the fall of 2012 and, as a counterpoint, in the texts of Reggio Emilia.
Chapter 3

3 Methodology

This study is designed to cohere through an aligned theoretical framework, methodology, and areas of targeted knowledge production through the findings. This chapter outlines each aspect of the study design. The aims of this research were to identify creativity common sense beliefs and theories, and to examine which ones have been employed in which curricula and with what implications are presented for children, teachers, educators, and society. I investigated the Ontario Full Day Kindergarten programmatic curriculum in draft and final form (2010), the Ontario operational curriculum in its infancy in a kindergarten classroom in 2012, and I also compared these to Reggio Emilia’s related programmatic texts (Drummond, 2000; Malaguzzi, 1998) to contrast and illustrate ethical pedagogical possibilities. These aims were reflected in the guiding research questions:

1. How do the Ontario programmatic and operational curricula represent creativity?
2. What are the implications of these representations for children?
3. What are the implications of these representations for educators charged with promoting creativity?

This chapter will outline my study’s design, state the rationale for choosing qualitative and case study methodology. I will state my theoretical position and discuss in detail my data collection methods, including the process used for analysis and synthesis considerations of reliability and trustworthiness.

3.1 Study Layout

All elements of the study were selected for their conceptual and pragmatic compatibility. Table 2 illustrates the layout of the study to highlight the relationship between the study components. In the first column, I state that critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Weiss & Wodak, 2003) is my theoretical framework and that the classroom curriculum is a democratically negotiated process between the curricular commonplaces of student, teacher, subject, and milieu (Schwab, 1983). CDA represents my ontological view of the world and provides the answers to the questions regarding the constructed nature of constituents of reality (e.g., identity, possibility, part, one,
object, property, relation, fact, and world), and how we depend on them subjectively and intersubjectively. The second column speaks about the methodology of the study or how knowledge is created and justified. This study is qualitative in nature and examines, contrasts, and reflects upon the social effects of Ontario kindergarten programming and Reggio Emilia through the lenses of CDA and Schwab’s concept of curriculum. The third column refers to what knowledge creation is targeted by the study and its possible consequences.

**Table 2.**

*Study layout*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Framework</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Targeted Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum: Democratically negotiated process between commonplaces of education (Schwab, 1983): student, teacher, subject, and milieu</td>
<td>I. Case study (Stake, 2005), of Ontario Kindergarten program II. Comparison and critical reflection focused on implications for children and teachers and educators.</td>
<td>Relevance to future Ontario and international kindergarten curricula</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Rationale for Qualitative Research and Case Study

This research attempts to illustrate a holistic understanding of early childhood education creativity discourses and their possible social practices and effects. The focus of this study is on how creativity is portrayed in the Ontario early childhood education (ECE) paradigm at a particular moment in time and the possible social effects creativity discourses or their absence produce in practice. Consequently, it was necessary for me to delve into the world of theory and curriculum of early childhood creativity: to describe it, reflect upon it, and make sense of the experience. The main assumption of this study is that social reality is “conceptually mediated”, such that the ‘objects’ of critical social analysis are simultaneously material and semiotic in character” (Fairclough, 2012, p. 10), and the relationship between the material and semiotic characters are dialectical. In this instance the semiotics of creativity theories employed in the curricular text are conceptually mediated by the written curriculum, which in turn becomes social practice and material in the classroom. Immersing in the text as a social phenomenon, describing, extracting, and interpreting meaning in this case of ECE creativity, are the core tenets of a qualitative research and represent the foundation of this current research study:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3)

Within the qualitative research paradigm, and implicitly critical discourse analysis, a case study is an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon, and it has a purpose and provides in-depth understanding of that particular phenomenon within its day-to-day context. It “concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social political and other contexts” (Stake, 2005, p.444). Yin (2009) completed the definition by adding the technicality that it:
• copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result;
• relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result;
• benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p. 18)

This present study fits well with Stake’s (2005) statement and Yin’s (2009) criteria, as it looks to identify discourses of creativity present in ECE kindergarten curricular texts and in Ontario operational curriculum to reveal their possible social effects. It relies on texts indicated by practitioners, on field data collected during participant observation, and it is guided by a CDA theoretical framework. To observe similarities, differences, and patterns across the data, I looked at the discourses of creativity as a social practice using the following categories: social determinants (power relations) and ideologies, effects (struggles at situational, institutional and societal level, normativity of discourse, its contribution to dynamics of power relations). An overview of the case study structure I used for this research is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Case study structure for this project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: Ethnography and multimodal discourse analysis</th>
<th>Stage 2: CDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Data collection and analysis using ethnographic tools: participant observation of one complete unit in one kindergarten class</td>
<td>• Data collection and CDA of creativity of related written texts cued by the ethnographic data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tools: Field notes, photographs of student activities, student artefacts, interviews: students, teachers, principals, and parents</td>
<td>• The texts were selected based on teachers’ and administrators’ cues: curriculum texts; professional development texts; and transcripts of interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Theoretical Position

This study is rooted in critical theory by adopting critical discourse analysis (CDA) as both theory and method, because:

Critical theories, thus also CDA, want to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection. So they are aimed at producing ‘enlightenment and emancipation’. Such theories seek not only to describe and explain, but also to root out a particular kind of delusion. Even with differing concepts of ideology, Critical Theory seeks to create awareness in agents of their own needs and interests. (Wodak, 2009, p. 7)

CDA is a form of recursive analysis of texts and contexts as productive and reproductive at micro levels of society and macro ideological nets of power relations, capital, and historical conditions (Fairclough, 1989). It puts an emphasis on language, meaning as a social construction, and its societal implications. In this context critical,

is used in the special sense of aiming to show up connections which may be hidden from people – such as the connections between language, power and ideology referred to above. CLS [critical language study] analyses social interactions in a way which focuses upon their linguistic elements, and which sets out to show up their generally hidden determinants in the system of social relationships, as well as hidden effects they may have upon that system. (p. 5)

CDA is both pragmatic and transdisciplinary and brings together linguistic and social theories (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 7). Its conceptual pragmatism has led to diverse areas of research. Luke’s (2002) review of the field revealed three genres of CDA research:

(1) Traditional sociolinguistic, ethnomethodological, pragmatic, and systemic linguistic analyses that focus on social and political issues as their objects of study (e.g. racism, sexism, violence and oppression, political policies); (2) interactional and ethnomethodological analyses that graft Foucauldian concepts of power into data
analysis; and (3) applications of approaches outlined by Fairclough, Wodak, and colleagues that aim to integrate detailed textual analysis and depth engagement with recent social theory. (p. 103)

I situated my inquiry in Luke’s (1995) second and third genres as the construction and application of creativity in education was to be found in the programmatic and operational curricula. In looking at the theories of creativity. I considered them to be,

ways of representing aspects of the world—the processes, relations and the material world, the ‘mental world’ of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world. Particular aspects of the world may be represented differently, so we are generally in the position of having to consider the relationship between different discourses. Different discourses are different perspectives on the world, and they are associated with the different relations people have to the world, which in turn depends on their positions in the world, their social and personal identities, and the social relationships in which they stand to other people. Discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124)

Given my affiliation with Fairclough’s worldview, I adopted three premises that employed the “cornerstones of CDA: discourse, ideology, power” (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 11) from poststructuralist, postmodernist, and Neo-Marxist theories (Luke, 1995). My study is also underlined by ideas consistent with McLaren’s (2006) statement that class struggle and capital are central societal concepts. They are not more important than race, ethnicity, or gender, but they are more central as they organize and coordinate daily life and the other “language games” (p. 41). Hence, they are intrinsic to my inquiry. However, the classic Marxist capital as social relation is conceived beyond the national discourse into the global arena. Furthermore, the class struggle is dialogical and occurs on multiple levels: economic, political, and ideological with the possibility of abolishing class exploitation. Thence, I adopted Neo-Marxism as a way to understand social reality. My ontological premises are that most people in the Western world, including Canada, live in a capitalist society.
In capitalist society, production is primarily the production for private profit of commodities, goods which are sold on the market—as opposed to the production of goods for immediate consumption by their producers, for instance, “and the class relationship on which this form of production depends is between a (capitalist) class which owns the means of production, and a (working) class who are obliged to sell their power to work to the capitalists, in exchange for a wage, in order to live” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 32).

In addition to the working class there is the middle working class, which represents people employed in services. The capitalist class seeks to dominate and control the working class mainly through the control of the state, which implies having the political power. The control can be exercised through coercion or consensus. In “normal” times, the dominance is mainly realized through consensus. As “ideology is the key mechanism of rule by consent” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 34), it is constructed and cultivated through social institutions (e.g., education, religion, media). Ideologies are unquestioned, normalized common sense beliefs and practices, which are conducive to consensus. People are usually not aware of the indirect connections of the ideology, with the interests of the capitalist class, such as “the constant doses of ‘news’” and “the tendency of the discourse of social control towards simulated egalitarianism, and the removal of surface markers of authority and power” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 37).

Discourse is considered by Fairclough (1989) to be a “social practice determined by social structures” (p. 17); it constituted and conditioned knowledge, social relations, and social identities. Discourse can also be defined as “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Hall, 2001, p. 72). It constructs the objects of knowledge through language; governs the way a topic can be talked and reasoned about; regulates conduct, and restricts other ways of talking and conducting ourselves.

Discourse, representation, knowledge, and truth are therefore historicized. Things are true only within specific historical and cultural contexts. Orders of discourse are networks of underlying conventions of social institutions and embody particular ideologies (Fairclough, 1989). For example, conversation as a discourse type has no place in legal proceedings, however, it is essential in informal negotiations between parts, hence in enacting justice.
The CDA concepts of power and knowledge have Foucauldian roots (Foucault, 1984). They are intrinsically linked, as knowledge is a form of power. Knowledge as truth has social effects and has the power “to make itself true” (Hall, 2001, p. 76). It operates through institutional apparatuses and techniques. Fairclough (1989) consider that power is enacted by putting constraints on content (e.g., topic, relevance), subject (e.g., status), and relations (e.g., politeness), and it manifests in the structural effects on knowledge and beliefs, social relationships, and social identities. Hence, power and knowledge are constituted and constitute through language, however, “language is not powerful on its own, it gains power by the use powerful people make of it” (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p.14). Knowledge is put into practice through discursive practices to persuade and regulate the social conduct, especially when there is no awareness (Fairclough, 1989). Power circulates and permeates all social life. It is “deployed and exercised through a net-like organization” (Hall, 2001, p. 77), and we are all part of it, sometimes in double roles of oppressor and oppressed. Although power creates discourse (Hall, 2001), it can be won in social struggles.

Even though CDA considers language “the primary medium of social control and power” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 3), it does not deny that power manifests in various modalities. According to Fairclough (1989):

The relationship between [the linguistic] mode and society is dialectical: language is influenced by society, and society is shaped by language. Therefore, use of language and other modes may result in the production and reproduction of unequal and inequitable power relations. (p. 5)

To have a deeper understanding of discourse, one must take into consideration the non-linguistic modes of social control: “Multimodality steps away from the notion that language always plays the central role in interaction, without denying that it often does” (Norris, as cited in Jewitt, 2009, p. 14). According to Jewitt (2009), four main assumptions underlay multimodality: 1) “meanings are made, distributed, received, interpreted and remade through many representational and communicative modes” (p. 14); “each mode in a multimodal communicative ensemble is understood as realizing different communicative work” (p. 15); “people orchestrate
meaning through their selection and configuration of modes” (p. 15), and “meanings of signs fashioned from multimodal semiotic resources are, like speech, social”. (p. 15).

CDA has traditionally been critiqued for various reasons. Chief among them are that the discourse is “in vogue and vague” (Widdowson, 1995, p. 158); there is a danger of theoretical circularity (Stubbs, 1997); it practices a critical orthodoxy that leads to normalization of critical theories (Billig, 2000), and the analyst’s political stance results in ideologically biased interpretation (Widdowson, 1995, p. 169). These criticisms have been addressed through critical self-reflection, clarification of conceptual confusions (Fairclough, 1996), and a provision of independent, non-linguistic evidence (Stubbs, 1997). They do not undermine the CDA research and social action. Fairclough’s (1996) response to the last critique is relevant:

It is from CDA’s ‘ideological commitment’ that its ‘prejudice’ is said to come, and its privileging of particular interpretations. Practitioners of CDA are indeed generally characterised by explicit political commitments. They are people who see things wrong with their societies, see language as involved in what is wrong, and are committed to making changes through forms of intervention involving language—e.g. by working on critical language awareness programmes for schools, which can point learners towards the possibility of self-conscious language change as a form of social change. (p. 52)

The CDA premises gave birth to the guiding questions of this research and the case study approach of ECE creativity discourses, which is detailed below.

3.4 Data collection

I acquired approval from my institution’s Ethics Review Board to begin my study and received access by the school board. I asked teachers, early childhood educators, the principal, and the program coordinator to provide the most relevant texts that informed the notion of creativity in the classroom curriculum. Pseudonyms were used for confidentiality and anonymity and informed consent was given by the participants and their parent(s) for the observation purposes. During the participant observations daily activities and the environment were recorded in audio and video format and in writing. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted and my participants included: one teacher, one educator, six children, one parent, and the principal. Triangulation of data included semi-structured interviews (transcribed) with one teacher, one
3.4.1 Participant recruitment.

Once the school board clearance was provided, I contacted the school principal in order to request permission to contact the kindergarten teacher and early childhood educator about the research project. When the permissions were granted, I met in person with the ECE and the teacher and established the details of my participant observation. At the meeting, I handed over a package containing the teacher and ECE Letter of Information and Consent form as well as a Letter of Information and Consent form, including interview permission, for each student in the classroom (see Appendix A-B). These Letters of Information and Consent were then sent to parents or guardians and collected by the classroom teacher or ECE. I received parental consent from 19 out of 26 students to conduct interviews and classroom observations.

3.4.2 Participant observation.

According to Jorgensen (1989) and Yin (1984) case studies can take many forms, which do not employ participant observation. Nevertheless, it “generally is practiced as a form of case study” (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 19), and it is focused on the direct implication in people’s daily lives to have access to facts and the insider’s point of view. The researcher assumes the role of the participant that allows “unobtrusive observations” (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 16), which are materialized in comprehensive, thick description of the studied phenomenon. To have access to the less visible applied discourses of curriculum and creativity, I immersed myself in a kindergarten curriculum program in Ontario from October 15, 2012 to November 15, 2012. I committed myself full day during that period and took part in all activities from teaching art to playing with children and supervising them during outdoor play. I made every effort to blend into the social environment so my presence would be unobtrusive and part of the normal classroom routine.

3.4.3 Interview process with students.

In the kindergarten setting I was introduced to the children as a fellow teacher or ECE. Starting the second week of observation, the teacher and ECE encouraged students to talk with me. I usually used a hand puppet or a puppet as a conversation “friend,” or, depending on the situation
and child, I engaged with him or her in various activities, such as painting. Each interview started with the question: What do you do at school? Depending on the child’s willingness to participate, the interview continued to encourage details about daily activities or his or her artifacts. The interviews took place during participant observation.

### 3.4.4 Interview process with adults.

Prior to and during participant observation, I contacted the teachers and principal and scheduled the interviews. All the interviews took place during participant observation times. With regards to parent interviews, the teacher contacted prospective parents, described the purpose of the study, and invited their participation at each kindergarten site. One parent responded to the invitation. All interviews took place in the classroom, with the exception of the principal’s interview, which took place in his office. All interviews were conducted face to face and were audio recorded in their entirety.

The inclusion of principals, parents, and students, the environment, and the documents in the research process is an acknowledgement that the curriculum is a complex phenomenon, which includes the social and physical milieu of the classroom (Schwab, 1983).

### 3.4.5 Text selection.

I selected the texts for analysis by asking the teacher, the ECE, the administrators of the Ontario kindergarten program and the educators and administrators of an Ontario Reggio Emilia inspired kindergarten to provide the most relevant texts with regards to creativity for their work in the kindergarten program. While in the Reggio Emilia-inspired kindergarten, the teacher and ECE, the program director and coordinator indicated an article from a professional development session and *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach—advanced reflections* by Edwards, Gandini, and Forman (1998). The classroom teacher, the ECE, and the principal also indicated the Kindergarten Curriculum Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, Draft version, 2010) document as the main source of creativity practice.

Before initiating the research in all its complexity, I performed preliminary analyses of the draft Ontario Kindergarten curriculum document (OME, 2010) and Reggio Emilia text (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998) and found the following: In the programmatic curriculum
document, creativity is mainly mentioned in the arts section as “creative process” (OME, 2010, p. 140) or referred to as creative thinking skills. There was no official position regarding creativity. In the Reggio Emilia-inspired case, the official theoretical position regarding creativity was presented by Malaguzzi (1998):

1. Creativity should not be considered a separate mental faculty but a characteristic of our way of thinking, knowing, and making choices.
2. Creativity seems to emerge from multiple experiences, coupled with a well-supported development of personal resources, including a sense of freedom to venture beyond the known.
3. Creativity seems to express itself through cognitive, affective, and imaginative processes. These come together and support the skills for predicting and arriving at unexpected solutions.
4. The most favorable situation for creativity seems to be interpersonal exchange, with negotiation of conflicts and comparison of ideas and actions being the decisive elements.
5. Creativity seems to find its power when adults are less tied to prescriptive teaching methods, but instead become observers and interpreters of problematic situations.
6. Creativity seems to be favored or disfavored according to the expectations of teachers, schools, families, and communities as well as society at large, according to the ways children perceive those expectations.
7. Creativity becomes more visible when adults try to be more attentive to the cognitive processes of children than to the results they achieve in various fields of doing and understanding.
8. The more teachers are convinced that intellectual and expressive activities have both multiplying and unifying possibilities, the more creativity favors friendly exchanges with imagination and fantasy.
9. Creativity requires that the school of knowing finds connections with the school of expressing, opening the doors (this is our slogan) to the hundred languages of children. (pp. 75-77)
These preliminary probes pointed toward distinct conceptualizations of creativity, which warranted the comparison of the cases as the possibility of different effects, power relations, and ideologies arose.

**3.4.6 Linguistic analysis of written texts including transcripts of interviews.**

Methodologically, critical discourse analysis is hermeneutical as it involves “continuous feedback between analysis and data collection” (Meyer, 2001, p. 16). The analyst describes, interprets, and explains how and why a particular world view is constructed, and what social relations and identities are created and enabled by examining the spoken or written language in a particular stance (discourse), as well as its social conditions of production and interpretation (see Figure 6).

![Figure 5. Dimensions of discourse and CDA (Titscher & Jenner, 2000. p. 152)](image)

According to Fairclough (1989), in the description stage, the researcher examines the formal properties of the text to determine the experiential, relational, and expressive values of the words (e.g., meaning relations), grammatical structures (e.g., the presence of agency), and textual structures (e.g., interactional conventions). While experiential values indicate the knowledge of the text producer, the relational value points to the social relations constituted and enacted through the text. The expressive value shows how text constructs social identities.

In the interpretation stage (Fairclough, 1989), the analyst mediates between the values of the text embedded in its formal proprieties and their social structural effects. The mediation is done on the premise that texts are socially operative only if embedded in social interaction where
the textual interpretations are produced. The analyst relates members’ resources (MR) (e.g., “knowledge of language, representations of the natural and social worlds they inhabit, values, beliefs, assumptions,” [Fairclough, 1989, p. 24]) and their interpretative procedures. Although both the stage of analysis and the members’ interpretative procedure bear the same name, the analyst’s interpretation is concerned with raising awareness about the possible ideological roots of the discourse and explicating his or her endeavour. His or her position is necessarily an insider’s position, because the access to a members’ interpretative procedures is given by his or her self-conscious interpretative procedure. Fairclough (1989) refers to four levels of interpretation:

- **Surface of the utterance (constituent of a text)—**where the interpreters draw on the knowledge of the language to convert (interpretative process) written or spoken language into recognizable words, sentences, phrases, etc.
- **Meaning of the utterance—**where the interpreters draw on semantic knowledge to assign meanings to the utterances and work out meanings of “semantic ‘propositions’” (p. 143-144).
- **Local coherence—**where the interpreters infer meaning connections between utterances and interpret coherently the pairs and sequences of utterances.
- **Text structure and topic—**where the interpreters determine how the whole text is organized and its global coherence and arrive at a synthetic interpretation.

The interpretation also depends on its situational context (external cues and interpretations of these external cues) as well as on the intertextual context (assumptions about connectivity with other discourses), which in turn gives interpreters cues about reactions: disagreement, agreement, what can be taken as common experience, and the like. The levels of interpretation are in a relationship of interdependence.

The role of the researcher in the last stage, explanation, is to demonstrate how the discourse (as a social practice) is determined by social structures (e.g., relations of power) and to show its effects of reproduction (e.g., sustenance of power relations) at three levels: societal, institutional, and situational. The explanation can be boiled down to answering the following questions:
1. Social determinants: What power relations at situational, institutional, and societal levels help shape this discourse?

2. Ideologies: What elements of MR (member resources), which are drawn upon, have an ideological character?

3. Effects: How is this discourse positioned in relation to struggles at the situational, institutional, and societal levels? Are these struggles overt or covert? Is the discourse normative with respect to MR or creative? Does it contribute to sustaining existing power relations, or transforming them? (Fairclough, 1989)

Threaded in the analysis is emancipatory reflexivity: an exercise of the “capacity to use knowledge about social life to transform it” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 15). An analyst’s reflection is concerned with self and world understandings and the revealing of social inequality (van Dijk, 1993). One ought to be critically self-reflective: to explicate what he or she is doing; to “develop self-consciousness about the rootedness of discourse in common-sense assumptions,” and “to bridge the gap between analyst and participant through the widespread development of rational understanding of, and theories of, society” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 167).

CDA gave the categorization of beliefs with regards to creativity: a knowledge and worldview of creativity, what social relationships are enacting that particular worldview of creativity, and the social identities that are constructed by that particular worldview of creativity.

3.5 Data Analysis and Synthesis: Answering the Research Questions

3.5.1 How does the Ontario curricula represent creativity (social determinants and ideologies of creativity)?

In order to better organize the data and envision the educational views of creativity constructed in the Ontario ECE program and Reggio Emilia ECE program, I adopted and adapted Dillon’s (2009) question of curriculum, which is anchored in Schwab’s (1983) conception of curriculum (and implicitly, mine). Dillon’s question “scheme…helps us to analyze instances of curriculum, giving us a systematic way to grasp curriculum proposals and programs, speeches and directives, theories and positions, contemporary controversies, and the like” (Dillon, 2009, p. 357). Dillon’s modified and simplified questions guided me to identify the particular perspective from which
creativity is represented within the programs. Thence, all findings with regards to creativity for each case (CDA analysis, participant observation) were structured as follows:

1. Nature of creativity as represented in curricula: What is it?
   a. Essence or substance: What, at bottom, is it?
   b. Properties or character: What is it like?

2. Elements of creativity as represented in curricula: What are the things that compose the particular educational vision of creativity?
   a. Teacher: the role(s) and characteristics of the teacher
   b. Student: the role(s) and characteristics of the student(s)
   c. Subject: what should be taught to whom in which circumstance for creativity to occur?
   d. Milieu: time/timing and place, circumstance, surrounding conditions, contexts, environments, eras, successively larger circles—classroom, school, community, society—surrounding the concept of creativity
   e. Aim: educational purposes, goals, objectives, aspirations, intents, ends in view
   f. Activity: How should a student act? How should a teacher act? How should teacher and student interact? How should teacher and parent interact? How should student and parent interact? How should student and student interact?
   g. Result: What comes of it? Who learns what?

3. What comes of the interaction of student-teacher, parent, and community? What will the creative student look like? How will the creative person be seen to act, feel, think, and live? (Dillon, 2009, p. 344)

The last question of curriculum, practice of creativity as represented in curricula: How to think and act it? (Dillon, 2009, p. 344) is answered implicitly in the interpretation and findings chapter as they are part of my research questions. This schema was used to intabulate data from each data source in a form of a matrix. Table 4 illustrates the organizational template for the data from the Ontario programmatic and operational curricula, while Table 5 was employed to structure the data from the Reggio Emilia programmatic curricula. The organization of data using this template played a key role in the identification of patterns and their repeatability.
### Table 4.

**Representations of creativity in Ontario kindergarten curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representation of creativity in the curriculum</th>
<th>Participant observation</th>
<th>CDA of texts and interview transcriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of creativity</td>
<td>Essence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proprieties or character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of creativity</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Milieu</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aim</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Result</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5.

**Representations of creativity in Reggio Emilia kindergarten curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representation of creativity in the curriculum</th>
<th>CDA of texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nature of creativity

Proprieties or character

Elements of creativity

Teacher

Student

Subject

Milieu

Aim

Activity

Result

3.5.2 What are the implications of these representations for children (effects of discourse)?

The interrogation of the creativity discourses at all levels of the curriculum: overt, operational, and null was with the student in mind: How do these creativity discourses construct student identity? Why and with what effects? How do these creativity discourses construct students’ relationships with other students, teachers, parents or guardians, society, and the environment? Why and with what effects?

3.5.3 What are the implications of these representations for educators charged with promoting creativity?

The last question: What are the implications of these representations for educators charged with promoting creativity? was answered by examining and explaining the social determinants (what situational, institutional, and societal power relations involved in shaping the particular discourses of creativity), ideologies (what unquestioned, naturalized beliefs were present in the discourses of creativity), and effects of the employed worldviews of creativity (the position of the creativity discourses in relation to struggles at situational, institutional, and societal levels;
the nature of the struggles; their contribution to the sustainability of the existing power relations or their transformation) (Fairclough, 1989).

The last part of the analysis was concerned with the comparisons of implications of both ECE creativity conceptualizations. The comparison was followed by a critical reflection regarding the implications of these two ECE programs (OME, 2010, 2016) for children and educators, which included an ethical appraisal of the creativity discourses present in the curricula. The ethical criteria were based on Heydon and Wang’s (2006) continuum (see Figure 6). I selected this continuum for three reasons: First, there is a strong conceptual linkage between efficiency and creativity discourse as progress, as extraordinary processes, products, and people, “the ultimate driving force behind all scientific progress” (Amabile, 1994, p. 316). A creative achievement, especially in science, is in direct connection with efficiency as its application is defined in economic and political terms. However, in the race toward valuable and efficient processes and products, a society can forget the ethical dimension of its world. Second, given that I adopted the ontological premises of the We creativity paradigm, where creativity emerges in the relationship with the community, it makes sense to examine kindergarten curricula and their assumed discourses of creativity through the lens of “efficiency through ethics.” Third, the nature of curriculum and implicitly its creativity discourse determine specific social relations between the teachers and students. Hence, an ethical appraisal of both curricula and the purpose of their creativity discourse enabled me to better identify and reflect over the inequities present in the life of the children and what can it be done to address them.

![Figure 6. Continuum (Heydon & Wang, 2006, p. 357).](image-url)
The main assumption of this analysis is that each paradigm has opportunities for ethics and efficiency. However,

the ways in which the paradigms configure teachers, children, and the teaching and learning environment can limit or expand the possibilities for each. Though efficiency may be important, curricula that are on the far end of the efficiency side are more likely to be cult-like in Stein’s (2001) sense, because they don’t ask critical, ethical questions about the purpose(s) of efficiency. (Heydon & Wang, 2006, p. 33).

As mentioned above, the reflection was done from the position of a teacher with growing ethical concerns about the cultural and economic reproduction in which resources are not democratically distributed (Fairclough, 1989, p. 234). It also provided the basis of recommendations for future actions of educators in charge of promoting creativity.

3.6 Reliability and Trustworthiness
The quality of the findings was assessed using Wodak’s (as cited in Meyer, 2001) theoretical and methodical triangulation. Adams et al. (2015) provide insight with regards to how triangulation works to produce valid findings:

Triangulation is a general approach whereby the convergence, complementarity and dissonance of results on related research questions, obtained from different methodological approaches, sources, theoretical perspective, or researchers are explored. It has been proposed that the validity of conclusions is enhanced if different approaches produce convergent findings. (p.95)

Triangulation as a process presupposes “using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (Stake, 2005, p. 454). The theoretical triangulation presumes alternating perspectives of interpretation and evaluation from four perspectives:

1. The immediate language- or text-internal co-text;
2. The intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses;
3. The extralinguistic (social) level which is called the ‘context of situation’ and explained by middle-range theories;
4. The broader socio-political and historical contexts. (Meyer, 2001, p. 29)

For example, repeatability of a certain representation of creativity present in the kindergarten overt and operational curriculum and at the societal level (e.g., in the contemporary political and economic discourses) clarified the meaning of creativity and addressed the classical reliability. Patterns of results from a multiple lens of analysis concluded in validity of the study.

This chapter outlined my research and the rationale for the case study methodology. I presented my theoretical position and discussed in detail my data collection methods, including the process used for analysis and synthesis considerations of reliability and trustworthiness.

The next chapter focuses on the critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Weiss & Wodak, 2003) of curricular texts used in the kindergarten classroom which included the draft version (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010) and the final version (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016) of the Ontario programmatic kindergarten curriculum. As a counterpoint, I analysed texts from Reggio Emilia’s early childhood education curriculum, as identified by teachers, to contrast and illustrate ethical pedagogical possibilities.
Chapter 4

4 Critical Discourse Analysis of Curricular Texts

This qualitative case study took place in an Ontario kindergarten classroom for one cycle of activity in 2012. Centering on conceptualizations of creativity, I conducted a critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Weiss & Wodak, 2003) of the texts used in the kindergarten classroom, which included the draft version, used for the first time, of the programmatic kindergarten curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, draft version, 2010) and the final version (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016). Further, as a counterpoint, I analysed texts from Reggio Emilia’s early childhood education curriculum, as identified by teachers, to contrast and illustrate ethical pedagogical possibilities. To support this study, my research questions were:

- How does Ontario curriculum represent creativity?
- What are the implications of these representations for children?
- What are the implications of these representations for educators charged with promoting creativity?

In this chapter I identify, describe, and interpret the creativity discourses present in the programmatic curriculum texts of the Reggio Emilia-inspired program for kindergarten aged children and the Ontario Programmatic curricula, in its draft and final version. I start by explaining how I chose the texts, then delve into descriptions of the nature and elements of creativity, and explicate the analysis of the texts pertinent to these themes.

4.1 Choosing the Texts

The texts chosen to be analyzed were indicated by the practitioners within the kindergarten classroom. I asked teachers, educators, principals, and program coordinators to provide information with regards to the most important texts that were relevant to the notion of creativity in their educational setting. This inquiry about creativity-related texts used in their practice was done based on the premise that CDA considers there is a dialectical relationship between the discourse and social practices. In the case of the kindergarten classroom in Ontario, at the time of the research commencement, one teacher, one early childhood educator, and one principal working in the same school indicated using the 2010 draft version of the Ontario Full-Day
Kindergarten curriculum authored by the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME). The text of the 2016 kindergarten curriculum was also included in the analysis, since the final version was published during this research project. The inclusion of both texts added a historical dimension to the study and provided an opportunity to compare and contrast the documents. Furthermore, the analysis of the 2016 kindergarten curricula represented another referential point to triangulate my findings.

To offer a counterpoint to the Ontario kindergarten education and envision other early childhood pedagogical possibilities I chose to examine Reggio Emilia-inspired curricular texts, which belong to a different paradigm of education. In this case, I contacted the teacher, ECE, principal, and the director of a Reggio Emilia-inspired program in Ontario and inquired about creativity-related texts used in their practice. Two texts were indicated: *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach—advanced reflections* (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998) and an article they were currently using for professional development: *Enterprise talk: A handrail to integrity and authenticity* (Drummond, 2000).

Fairclough (1982) identifies three stages of CDA research: description, interpretation, and explanation—each corresponding to identifying relationships between formal features of the text and their interaction with a person or researcher and the social effects of the interaction between a human being and a text. In the description phase, I tabulated the quotes from the texts relating to the different themes of creativity as exemplified below. For the description and interpretation of this part of the study, I structured the analysis using the above-mentioned categories (essence, properties, teacher, student, activity, subject, milieu, aim, and result) and looked at the following: vocabulary, morphology pronouns, verbs (voice, tense), adjectives and adverbs with expressive (evaluative) function, figures of speech, presuppositions, and the audience. However, “any given formal feature may simultaneously have two or three of these values” (Fairclough, 1982, p. 112).

By looking at the way content, relations, and subject are expressed, experienced, related and evaluated, I can explain the beliefs, social relations, and social identities the text is creating. The analysis was conducted using the adapted work frame of Dillon’s (2009) question of curriculum based on CDA analysis. In the nature of creativity section, I identify the producer’s world view of creativity; the elements of creativity section examines the teacher, the students, the
subject, the milieu, the activity, the aim and results of creativity. While the teacher, the student, aim, and result have experiential and expressive values, the activity concerns relational values.

Each text was analyzed in-depth using the same categories as adapted from Dillon’s (2009) questions of curriculum: nature of creativity (essence, properties) and elements (teachers, students, parents or guardians, milieu, subject, activity, and result).

4.2 Reggio Emilia-Inspired Kindergarten Program Creativity Through the Lens of Texts

This section looks at the Reggio Emilia programmatic curricular texts to identify the nature and elements of creativity. The data were described and interpreted and categorized using modified Dillon’s (2009) questions of curriculum. The first text I analyzed was Drummond (2000).

4.3 CDA of Drummond (2000)

Drummond (2000) argued that enterprise talk is a “measurable, practical guide for talking to children in times of difficulty and responding them with effective positives” (p. 201). After defining teaching for the purpose of the present article as “the way we bring ourselves to the learners” (p. 201) and discussing how teachers teach by modeling, informing, and responding positively to what they value, the author identified ineffective ways of teaching (habits) and suggested enterprise talk as a solution for establishing a positive relationship between teacher and learner. The components of enterprise talk are: prohibitions (no directions, no questions, and no praise) and guides to express oneself with integrity and authenticity (descriptions, narration, self-talk, nonverbal recognition, intrinsically phrased rewards, and descriptive cue sequence). Each of the components was exemplified and justified in terms of benefits for children. The author concluded this type of teachers’ behaviour led to “a deeper understanding of leadership in teaching” (p.208).

4.3.1 The nature of creativity.

Drummond (2000) did not mention creativity ad litteram in the text, but he made references to it as “creative expression” (p. 202) and indirectly as a “professed value” (p. 202) of the teachers, where professed has a positive connotation meaning openly declared. Creative expression has a clear conceptual reference to the arts, as one of the few people to clearly articulate it as an
individual learning process of interacting purposefully with the environment and medium was John Dewey in *Art as Experience* (2005), where creative expression,

> is a developing process…the artist finds where he is going because of what he has previously done; that is, the original excitation and stir of some contact with the world undergo successive transformation. The state of the matter he has arrived at sets up demands to be fulfilled and it institutes a framework that limits further operations. (p. 116)

This places creativity in arts within the curriculum.

Creativity meanings are further suggested through the verb *create* as infinitive as a direct object (to create: a possible response, something totally new, a future of integrity, a classroom) or as present perfect to emphasize an accomplishment (“we become more assured that we have created the appropriate climate” [Drummond, 2000, p. 202]). The verb is used in various contexts such as teachers’ model behaviour, helping teachers in difficult moments, or to present the results of descriptions as method to teach. In all these instances, the logical or syntactic subjects of the verbs are *community, teachers, or children*. The author implied then that creativity is an ability that the community, teachers, and children have. By using it in different ways such as, “to create a classroom of happy, energetic, and enterprising children” (p. 208) or creating “the appropriate climate” (p. 202), Drummond suggested a semantic net, which does not belong to the genius paradigm; it rather evokes the I and We worldviews of creativity by presupposing a social dimension of creativity and a personal accomplishment, as in creating something totally new.

### 4.3.2 Teacher.

There are three main teacher-related situations where creativity manifests itself as a value, as a teaching through modelling, and as an action to set up the social climate. All of these situations reflect the way the teacher was viewed as a creator of social relationships and social nets (Drummond, 2000, p. 201-202), as an example of “creator of order and beauty” (p. 204), and as a person who “attends, holds, and values, including creative expression and altruism” (p. 202). Hence teachers are creators whether it is about the creation of the social, self or environment.
Furthermore, when looking at how teachers were portrayed in the text, two expressive adjectives contour them as good and great as follows: “All good teachers I know have the courage to talk openly about their values and the wisdom to attend to their humanity” (p. 201) and “great teachers are comfortable playing in the complexity and ambiguity of an enhancing interpersonal relationship – flowing freely and fearlessly – giving learners the gift of being completely present with unconditional, positive regard” (p. 201).

Drummond’s text suggested that good and great teachers are courageous and unconditionally present for their students, and they are alone in the challenge of teaching and their own growth: “We travel alone, with only our own feedback, which is often nebulous and delayed.” (p. 202), though the author negated the intricate social net that surrounded a teacher from the principal, director to coordinators, colleges, ministries and the like.

The same idea of alone is also reflected by the phrase “give me trouble, give me stress, test me with the unexpected, and I become a less flexible person” (p. 203) as give me, although an imperative, is general and impersonal. The you implied subject of the imperative remains a mystery person as it is never revealed in the text.

Drummond stated that teachers react to given stress, trouble, and unexpected situations by having moments of dissonance. There were no bad teachers; there were good teachers who have moments when their conscience and their actions are not in sync due to the above factors. Two aspects of the language jumped out at me: a) the use of the pronoun I as a subject for the paragraph speaking about the bad habits of the teacher, and b) the choice of the word dissonance instead of conflict. Each of these aspects work euphemistically to tame the language used to describe the classroom: The I does not directly involve the reader in the action, but it makes the reader reflect over his or her behaviour and dissonance appeals to a softer version of dissenion. The euphemisms disappear during the description of teachers’ actions and power over children, but the excuses remain. The reflexive pronoun myself as a direct object indicates a split of identities: “Out of my anxiety and discomfort, I speak in tones of disapproval and control. I find myself trapped in battles of will, and I hear myself complaining and casting blame” (p. 203).

The excuses promoted the situation from a teacher’s point of view, but they did not highlight the potential damaging effect on children. The author used a metaphor that was also
used to describe the teacher’s tremendous power over the students: “I snuff the children’s spirit out like a candle” (p. 203). The futility of such psychologically violent acts is highlighted through another metaphor as the teacher was helpless when it comes to the will of the children “pushing the string” (p. 202) as children choose to behave a certain way.

Hence, the teacher was portrayed as a human being with the best intentions and huge power over children who can transform under stress and anxiety. He or she was alone in her or his own pursuits and in stressful situations, he or she needed some kind of guidance to interact with children in an authentic ethical manner. Contrasting these facets, the teachers made references to modes of interacting with students and highlighted the potentially damaging effects of the authoritative teaching and their futile efforts. Nevertheless, the teacher was constructed as an isolated being with no obvious relationship with the educational system. The teacher was also viewed in need of help in moments of dissonance as the meaning of handrail as a support device from “I want a handrail” (p. 203) suggests. The help is provided in the form of prohibitions and guides, as well as clarification of the duties: to inform, to model, and to respond positively.

4.3.3 Student.

In terms of vocabulary, students were referred to as learners and children, where children was the choice of wording with 57 mentions in the text, and learner with 21 instances. The relationship between the author and the children was present in the possessive pronoun my (“my children” [p. 203]) and designated a parental relationship, which presupposed love and care. Most of the time, the author used the plural form of the noun child or community, which was indicative of the emphasis the author put on the strong connections between the individual and the community. Ideally the students “take the initiative to act responsibly for the good of themselves and the good of others” (p. 204); the same idea of associative life was presented in the text in the The Learners Doing What I Value section through the use of adjective and adverb and nominalised verb rooted in cooperate (worked together): “cooperative community,” “achieving group goals cooperatively,” and “responsible individuals with a passion for exploring, expressing, and cooperating” (p. 202).

I have two observations about the vocabulary. First is that these utterances are positioned in an expressive context (value), which means that these are declared values that act as a moral
compass. Hence cooperation of children is a value and an aim. Second, the use of ideologically loaded “cooperative community” and Drummond’s expectations regarding students (cooperation) resonates with Dewey’s “socialist democracy” (Westbrook, 1991, pp. 429-463) where individuality is conditioned by freedom and liberty embedded in associative life and the community and the individual were organically interdependent. Students learn by mimesis and assimilate the values they are exposed to “in environments filled with directions, children wait to do things until directed and become, in turn, directive with each other” (Drummond, 2000, p. 204). Children were not considered powerless as their resilience is underlined through the expressive metaphor of “string pushing.” The phrase, “you can’t push a string” (p. 202) was chosen to illustrate the pointlessness of authoritative teaching. The expression was borrowed from the financial world and makes reference to futile monetary policies (Piager, 2003) in the case of deflation. Even through monetary incentives, such low interest rates are put in place, consumers maintain their lack of interest in increasing consumption. So, the efforts of fiscal agents (i.e., commercial or federal banks) to entice the costumers are useless. Their activity resembles pushing a string attached to an object and expecting to have an effect over the position of the object. Hence, in layman’s terms, it can be inferred that the children can resist learning, or otherwise put, teaching if they choose to and oppressive means are not the way to convince or teach a child.

In conclusion, the children were loved and seen as fully capable of discerning and acting toward the individual and collective good. They were resilient and learned by following models.

4.3.4 The subject.

What should be taught to whom in which circumstance for creativity to occur? The subject, in this case, is not about the disciplines to be taught to students, but about teaching the teachers how to manage “the social influences that support and sustain a community” (Drummond, 2000, p. 201). The author argued that modelling, informing, and responding positively were the main prerogatives of a great teacher and enterprise talk was the way to teach. The emphasis fell on the teacher-created circumstances and teacher behaviour in an early childhood education class: “Enterprise Talk reminds you to model, inform, and respond positively to what you value” (p. 203).
In terms of semantics, the word *enterprise* is misleading as it seems to belong to the field of economics; in this text, its first meaning as a unit of economic organization or activity is taken over by the concept of a systematic purposeful activity as illustrated in the presentation of the guides (i.e., “Systematically employing the Guides will transform your teaching” [Drummond, 2000, p. 204]) and in the description of the “children with enterprise:”

My colleagues and I were happy when we saw children being who they were, individually and uniquely, engaged in actions that they chose, at once benefiting themselves and the group. We enjoyed seeing children having fun, laughing, and being playful while doing real work, alone and with their peers, achieving group goals cooperatively. We liked seeing children willingly step into something new, staying focused on their intentions until they achieved their chosen ends. We were thrilled when children recognized the significance of their personal expression and when they spontaneously celebrated everyone’s achievements. What emerged was a picture of children with *enterprise*, willing to venture with boldness into areas of risk. (p. 202)

The judgement (expression) of what is good for students and the definition of enterprise were conveyed through the affective state of “my colleagues and I,” using adjectives or verbs that convey positive emotions such as *happy, thrilled, enjoyed,* and *liked.* In this context, these parts of speech communicate a sense of satisfaction that is transferred into the knowledge domain by defining enterprise and setting the ideal program for children. The semantic net of enterprise covers meanings associated with creativity, such as risk-taking.

In conclusion, the subject of enterprise was a systematic purposeful activity toward an end chosen by children.

4.3.5 Milieu: Relationship between author, teacher, and reader.

Although considered a paper, the text seems to belong to the spoken genre as it is written in consultation and advice mode. The text bears the marks of a conversation: use of personal pronoun *you*, masked imperatives (“I invite you to stop” [Drummond, 2000, p. 204]), and identification with the reader by using an inclusive pronoun *we.* The *we* is used by the author to get close to the reader, to befriend him or her, to ensure the reader that they are on the same
team. The author appealed to the common sense of teachers and early childhood educators by postulating his beliefs in anaphoric form, which enhanced the emotional weight:

I believe the experience of enterprise is possible for all children. I believe a worthy goal for early childhood education is to send all of our children into elementary schools as responsible individuals with a passion for exploring, expressing, and cooperating. I believe that, while maintaining the richness of our diversity, we can agree upon a set of values such as these that lie at the core of a cooperative learning community. (p. 202)

The connection between the author and the teacher and reader is first approached through the use of personal pronouns: I, we, you, and they as teacher educators. These references depend on how much the author wanted to implicate the reader and how much action from the audience. An example is the use of the inclusive we, which was also used as an anaphora:

When we, as teachers, discover that our professed values, such as eagerness and creative expression, are now present in the behaviour of our learners, we become more assured that we have created the appropriate climate. We know we are traveling on the path of increasing effectiveness because we discover it under our feet. We face difficulty nurturing our own development, in this “being with learners” aspect of teaching, because we travel alone, with only our own feedback, which is often nebulous and delayed. (p. 202)

The relationship between the reader, presumably a teacher (i.e., “when we, as teachers” p. 202), and the author is one of subtle power and requires convincing as the author changed hats: first he is a teacher, then expert, then teacher of teachers. The reader travels along and is successively a teacher, a witness to the author’s bad habits, and then a student of teaching with the promise of success. These identities can be observed following chronological succession of changes. First the author included himself in the teacher’s category “as a preschool teacher” (p. 202) and identified himself as being part of the community “my colleagues and I” (p. 202) and we. Then Drummond moved to I again to express his beliefs with regards to enterprise talk. Next, the general we as teachers (“How We Really Teach,” p. 202) was used to express his “understanding of teaching” after “watching hundreds of hours of videotape” (p. 202) and categorizing actions of great teachers as experts: They, the teachers, “model, inform and respond positively to what they
In the Recognizing Habits section, another shift from the plural *us* to *me* happens, as the description of bad habits of teachers, such as controlling the children, showing less flexibility, and casting blame came under scrutiny. In the next section, Being the Person I Most Want To Be the author became the expert, and the teachers became *you* (i.e., “I offer you Enterprise talk”; “enterprise talk forces you to set these habits aside and take on the challenge of finding another way to talk” [Drummond, 2000, p. 203]) marking the beginning of the instructor and student relationship. From here on, the teachers became the *others* through the use of *you, teachers, and they*. The play of pronouns and implicit identities have the purpose to convince the reader, the teacher, the other, that the author knew that teachers have good and noble intentions, that he understood the moments of dissonance, that he had a solution and the proof that it worked through the testimonies of parents and teachers who tried it. The tone is not authoritative—on the contrary, it is gentle.

The relationship between teachers is portrayed as one of vivid professionalism—as a forum where ideas are put forward, cherished, and debated:

As a preschool teacher, I treasured deep discussions with my colleagues about what we wanted to see happen for children. These both heated and laughter filled discussions gradually clarified my values. Enterprise Talk evolved from that dialogue. (Drummond, 2000, p. 202)

In conclusion, the image of teachers is carefully crafted showing a transformational possibility by engaging the target reader from witness to participant in an ethical relationship with the child by modelling, informing, and responding positively.

4.3.6 Milieu: Relationship between the teacher and student.

Perhaps the strongest statement of the Drummond (2000) paper resides in defining the great teacher as “giving learners the gift of being completely present with unconditional, positive regard” (p. 201); the author used language that evoked a social relationship where the teacher cared unconditionally in a manner that encouraged students to be who they were. As mentioned before, in two instances students were referred to as “my children” or “children in my community.” The possessive pronoun indicates a strong affective relationship similar with a
parental one. Using possessive nouns and proposing unconditional, positive regard towards children, the teacher-student relationship is similar to a parental one.

4.3.7 Milieu: Relationship between the teacher and parent.

The relationship between teacher and parents is rather tangential as the word appears on three occasions in the text: twice with the purpose of seeing charts and lists and once as part of a nonverbal recognition experiment. So, while the parents’ presence is acknowledged, their role in children’s life at school is absent.

4.3.8 Milieu: Relationship teacher and the rest of the school.

The relationship with the rest of the school was marginally mentioned as part of the nonverbal recognition day experiment. Hence, the school’s role in teachers’ and students’ life does not seem to be important when it comes to enterprise.

4.3.9 Milieu: Relationship with society.

I noted that there was no mention of society in the text. The classroom was suspended in a social vacuum like in a surrealist painting. The children were with the teacher, the teacher was alone or with other teachers; there were other characters in the background, fading in the distance such as parents, principals, and secretaries. All the educational settings and processes seem severed from society.

4.3.10 Aim.

In this section I describe how my analysis of the aims and results found them both to be overlapping as the author claimed that the text was a guide based on already lived experiences and personal study. The first thing I noticed with regards to aims were the expressed beliefs of the author, which in turn grounded the expectations:

I believe the experience of enterprise is possible for all children. I believe a worthy goal for early childhood education is to send all of our children into elementary schools as responsible individuals with a passion for exploring, expressing, and cooperating. I believe that, while maintaining the richness of our diversity, we can agree upon a set of
values such as these that lie at the core of a cooperative learning community.
(Drummond, 2000, p. 202)

In terms of connotations, believe is a strong word that resonates deeply within a person, because people act on their beliefs. The anaphora previously mentioned increases the dramatics of the paragraph. The word believe also presupposes a positive expressive value, which is embedded in the meaning. The author was preoccupied with the equality of opportunity and the aims of enterprise for the future elementary students. Lastly, “cooperative learning community” is ideologically loaded with Deweyan thought where:

The primary business of school is to train children in co-operative and mutually helpful living, to foster in them the consciousness of interdependence, and to help them practically in making the adjustments that will carry this spirit into overt deeds. (p. 111)

Again, the expectation and results for children were embedded in the description of children with enterprise: For example, “having fun” (p. 202), “being playful while doing real work alone or with their peers” (p. 202), and “willing to venture with boldness into area of risk” (p. 202). I observed that verbs for children’s activities cannot easily describe objectives or expectations to be found in the ECE curricula, as most of them are concerned with children’s feelings and attitudes toward work and not quantity of knowledge.

For teachers and readers, the extremely positive tone of the paragraph, set through the series of emotional response verbs, evokes a sense of professional satisfaction that is inspirational and set the expectations. Each recommended action had a noble aim. For example: “Descriptions give children freedom to attend to their interests, to be who they are in the moment, to explore, to invent, and to create” (p. 204), or “besides teaching verb vocabulary, narrations reinforce the child’s own initiative, implicitly validating what the child chose to do” (p. 205). The direct beneficiaries of the guides are the children as the main purpose of the advice was to construct a respectful rapport with the children. The author expressed that this method would bring benefits to both actors of the teaching learning process:

Enterprise Talk provides the opportunity for you to be proactive in becoming less controlling of children, honestly representing your values and your own desire to be fully
present to them…All who are willing to explore Enterprise Talk will attain a deeper understanding of leadership in teaching and be better able to create a classroom of happy, energetic, and enterprising children (p. 208)

4.3.11 Activity.

The paragraph that spoke about the dialogue among teachers and the birth of enterprise talk was the most illustrative of the children’s activities:

My colleagues and I were happy when we saw children being who they were, individually and uniquely, engaged in actions that they chose, at once benefitting themselves and the group. We enjoyed seeing children having fun, laughing, and being playful while doing real work, alone and with their peers, achieving group goals cooperatively. We liked seeing children willingly step into something new, staying focused on their intentions until they achieved their chosen ends. We were thrilled when children recognized the significance of their personal expression and when they spontaneously celebrated everyone’s achievements. What emerged was a picture of children with enterprise, willing to venture with boldness into areas of risk. (Drummond, 2000, p. 202)

These desirable actions of children were conducive to a “classroom of happy, energetic, and enterprising children” (p. 208) and painted the ideal ECE program in large brushstrokes as illustrated through the following adverbials, which depict children as “engaged in actions that they chose,” and “having fun, laughing, and being playful while doing real work, alone and with their peers, achieving group goals cooperatively” (p. 202). These snapshots of reality are illustrating activities present in the program; results of teachers’ acts and aims achievable through enterprise talk. It can be noted that all the gerunds that showed processes, described positive emotions and enjoyment of activities, as well as “doing real work,” which can have a cooperative component. The real work part could refer to more traditional frames of teaching, learning, or the written, official curriculum. The actions of teachers, prohibitions and guides, were meant to enrich the learning experience. The prohibitions: no directions, no questions, and no praise, come in form of imperatives disguised in negative nouns, which were toned down through invitations: “I invite you to stop” (p. 204). The “no directions” was based on the fact that
a direction does not create the opportunity for that child to have the initiative to do something; “no questions” was about managing the behaviour of the children. Although the author did not state the reason, the examples of questions leads to the idea that there was a tone of disapproval of a child’s actions in managing the behaviour through questions: “What are you supposed to be doing right now? Where does your coat go? How do you think she feels when you do that? What should you say to him? Why did you do that?” (p. 204); “no praise” was justified in terms of the fact that it encouraged as approval seeking, was habitual, and might discourage other children. I observed that the reasoning of the imperatives always had the children’s best interests as subject. The negative form of nouns contained an expressive value through their purpose, for example, “to give time to connect” (p. 204), “to access something more honest, effective and consistent with your values” (p. 204) and tilted the balance of power in children’s favour by not allowing any type of aggressiveness in the communication. The same idea appeared next in the guides, all phrased as nouns. Drummond provided solutions for a range of possible teaching situations as follows: Descriptions gave children the language and freedom to express themselves, narrations encouraged emergent desirable behaviours of children, self-talk helped teacher share his experiences, nonverbal recognition allowed recognition of good behaviour through body language, intrinsically phrased rewards encouraged authentic and empathic initiatives of children for the sake of positive feelings rather than extrinsic rewards (i.e., stickers), and descriptive cue sequence provided a tool for teachers to “do what you have in mind” (p. 206) in a gradual, respectful manner. Again, the guides contained positive expressive values by requiring authenticity and integrity in the desired ends to “offer the means to express yourself with integrity and authenticity” (p. 204). This was done by choosing nouns functioning as adverbs of manner instead of adverbs (i.e., “with authenticity” versus authentically). The predominant tense of the verbs used throughout the prohibitions and guides was present tense simple, which created the impression that the statements are true as scientific facts (i.e., the earth orbits the sun).


Loris Malaguzzi was the founder of Reggio Emilia’s educational philosophy and keystone of Reggio Emilia’s network of municipal preschools (for three to six-year-olds) and infant-toddler centres (from birth to three-year-olds). Therefore, his discourse of creativity is revelatory with regards to theoretical approaches of creativity in kindergarten programs and to my case study of
the Reggio Emilia-Inspired kindergarten program. The text by Edwards, Gandini, and Forman (1998) was recommended as an invaluable resource by the Reggio-inspired program coordinator, director, and early childhood educator. The present CDA examines Malaguzzi’s (1998) chapter: History, Ideas, and Basic Philosophy: An Interview with Leila Gandini, because this is where creativity was defined.

The description of creativity in the Reggio Emilia kindergarten program focused on the following categories: essence of creativity, proprieties, teacher, student, subject, aim, activity, and result. Each category was supported by excerpts from the Malaguzzi’s (1998) text.

4.4.1 Description and analysis: Essence of creativity.

In looking at the essence of creativity, the first paragraph of Malaguzzi’s discourse, specifically targeted on creativity, revealed that Reggio Emilia had never wholeheartedly agreed with any of the known creativity theories:

Malaguzzi: We were all very weak and unprepared in the 1950s when the theme of creativity, just landed from the United States, crossed our path. I remember the eagerness with which we read the theories of J.P. Guilford and Paul Torrance. I also remember how later on those theories could be reread and reinterpreted through the perspectives of Bruner, Piaget, and the Cognitivists, the neo-Freudians, Kurt Lewin, the last of the Gestalt psychologists, and the humanistic psychologists Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. It was a difficult but exciting period; we felt that those proposals had great vigor and potential. The work on creativity seemed disruptive to many (almost too many) things; for example, the philosophical dimension of man and life and the productivity of thought. These proposals went so far as to suggest complicity with the unconscious, chance and the emotions with feelings, and so on. Yet, despite their brilliant attractiveness, we have to say frankly that after many years of work, the progress of our own experience, plus our observation and study of children and adults, have suggested to us much caution and reflection. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p.75)

Contemporary to the beginnings and boom of creativity theories, Malaguzzi (1998) described Reggio Emilia encounters with various theoretical approaches. Although enthusiastic, as suggested by the participial adjective exciting, Reggio Emilia had never entirely adopted any
particular vision or theory of creativity. In the above text, the past tense of most of the verbs and the verb remember situate the discussion of coexistence of multiple theoretical explorations in the past. The modal have to say followed by an adverb of manner frankly advance the topic in the present indicating understandings and consequences through the present perfect of suggest (“have suggested to us much caution and reflection” [Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 75]). The direct object much caution and reflection is indicative of the author’s attitude toward the practical effects of different theories of creativity in an early childhood education setting; much caution functioned as a warning to the Reggio Emilia as represented by the direct collective and general direct pronoun to us. Why caution was needed in assuming one particular theory of creativity remains unanswered in the text, but following this was the presentation of creativity through a Reggio Emilia lens. Hence, I can infer that none of the theories of creativity were 100% compatible with the Reggio Emilia fundamental beliefs.

Reggio Emilia’s approach to creativity takes the form of nine sentences that speak directly about the topic. The structure of the text expands the concept from the individual to his or her the social surroundings and relationships, to education and the society:

1. Creativity should not be considered a separate mental faculty but a characteristic of our way of thinking, knowing, and making choices.
2. Creativity seems to emerge from multiple experiences, coupled with a well-supported development of personal resources, including a sense of freedom to venture beyond the known.
3. Creativity seems to express itself through cognitive, affective, and imaginative processes. These come together and support the skills for predicting and arriving at unexpected solutions.
4. The most favourable situation for creativity seems to be interpersonal exchange, with negotiation of conflicts and comparison of ideas and actions being the decisive elements.
5. Creativity seems to find its power when adults are less tied to prescriptive teaching methods, but instead become observers and interpreters of problematic situations.
6. Creativity seems to be favored or disfavored according to the expectations of teachers, schools, families, and communities as well as society at large, according to the ways children perceive those expectations.

7. Creativity becomes more visible when adults try to be more attentive to the cognitive processes of children than to the results they achieve in various fields of doing and understanding.

8. The more teachers are convinced that intellectual and expressive activities have both multiplying and unifying possibilities, the more creativity favors friendly exchanges with imagination and fantasy.

9. Creativity requires that the *school of knowing* finds connections with the *school of expressing*, opening the doors (this is our slogan) to the hundred languages of children. (Malaguzzi, 1998, pp.75-77)

In the first sentence, the weak obligation expressed by the modal *should* stood for expressing the nature of creativity: a characteristic of the mind processes rather than “a separate mental faculty.” This statement took creativity beyond structuralist approaches to a common attribute of mind. The first clear pattern, the use of the verb *seem* in sentences two through six, keeps away the status of absolute truth. With this caveat, Malaguzzi (1998) presented creativity as emergent, supported, and involved risk-taking and interpersonal relationship. In education it depended on the concept of the teacher and the social environment; it was visible in children when teachers and adults paid attention to it. There were a series of conditions required in order for creativity to happen and prescribed ways of teaching were not it.

Point three (above) suggests an integrative conceptualization of creativity as expression by stating that the cognitive affective and imagination synthesized and supported creativity. The embedded prepositional phrases “for predicting and arriving at unexpected solutions” were the closest to a clear definition of creativity as a skill or set of skills.

The social side of creativity was revealed in points four through six where Malaguzzi spoke about interpersonal exchange as the favourable situations for creativity. Semantically, *exchange* stands for giving and receiving something of the equal value implying equity. In the social context of creativity, in point five, the passive voice of *are less tied to* with the
grammatical subject *adults* suggest an oppressive situation created by the obligation of adults and teachers to follow prescriptive teaching. The agent of the passive voice was not mentioned, avoiding thus the logical subject of the sentence and consequently the responsibility of the agent.

Point six had another keyword in imagining the concept of creativity: *expectations* as a belief that someone should or will be creative or not. Disbelief or belief in creativity at various levels of society has implications in the way creativity is viewed by children.

With regards to adults seeing creativity in children, in point seven, Malaguzzi (1998) opted for the comparative adjective more visible to illustrate its elusive nature: adults should look for creativity in processes of activities rather than the results. Point eight emphasized that teachers and their beliefs played a very important role in enhancing creativity by fostering intellectual and expressive activities (understanding and doing) and consequently created the conditions for imagination and fantasy. Point nine is a complex metaphor of creativity, which suggests a rather integrative approach of creativity where knowledge and expression and science and arts meet and allow the multimodal communication of children.

Creativity appeared in other instances in the text under various forms, such as the metaphor *magic spell* with the connotation of extraordinary, incredible performance of children:

Often when people come to us and observe our children, they ask us which magic spell we have used. We answer that their surprise equals our surprise. Creativity? It is always difficult to notice when it is dressed in everyday clothing and has the ability to appear and disappear suddenly. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 77)

Creativity was a thinking tool for children’s problem-solving or inventing:

In fact, in Reggio we know that children can use creativity as a tool for inquiring, ordering, and even transgressing the given schemes of meaning (which Piaget attributed also to the very young in the last years of his life). They can also use creativity as a tool for their own progress in the worlds of necessity and possibility. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 81)

The verb *know* unveils one of Malaguzzi’s certitudes. The statement, “we know that children can use creativity as a tool for inquiring, ordering, and even transgressing the given schemes of
meaning” (p. 81) is a belief that cannot be dismantled easily as it is armoured by in fact, which implies a reality in the Reggio program.

The creative aim of Reggio Emilia was to help all children along the way of growing up. Malaguzzi was fully aware of the heavy semantic load of creativity, and he was not accepting it as it became exclusive, an antonym of the Reggio philosophical grounding:

Our task, regarding creativity, is to help children climb their own mountains, as high as possible. No one can do more. We are restrained by our awareness that people's expectations about creativity should not weigh on the school. An excessive widening of its functions and powers would give to the school an exclusive role that it cannot have.
(Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 77)

4.4.2 Properties.

In Malaguzzi’s (1998) view, creativity was far from exceptional: “Therefore, as we do not consider creativity sacred, we do not consider it as extraordinary but rather as likely to emerge from daily experience. This view is now shared by many” (p. 75). Negating the sacralisation of creativity eliminated from the start the paradigm of the genius or the divinity. The emergent daily creativity seems more democratic and constructivist. Creativity was present in every day activity, it involved play, it can be surprising, and disappear:

Starting with these ideas, we have been trying to understand how they should be revised, yet without letting the myths of spontaneity, which often accompany the myths of creativity, mislead us. We are convinced that between basic intellectual capacities and creativity, a theme preferred by American research, there is not opposition but rather complementarity. The spirit of play can pervade also the formation and construction of thought. Often when people come to us and observe our children, they ask us which magic spell we have used. We answer that their surprise equals our surprise. Creativity? It is always difficult to notice when it is dressed in everyday clothing and has the ability to appear and disappear suddenly. Our task, regarding creativity, is to help children climb their own mountains, as high as possible. No one can do more. We are restrained by our awareness that people's expectations about creativity should not weigh on the school. An
excessive widening of its functions and powers would give to the school an exclusive role that it cannot have. (p. 77)

4.4.3 Teacher.

The first theme that emerged as a characteristic of teachers was collaboration or co-teaching; he or she is never alone in any activity of the program, and in each classroom there are always two teachers:

The teachers work in co-teaching pairs in each classroom, and they plan with other colleagues and the families. All the staff members of the school meet once a week to discuss and broaden their ideas, and they participate together in in-service training. We have a team of pedagogisti to facilitate interpersonal connection and to consider both the overall ideas and the details. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 64)

The presence of the participial teaching preceded by the prefix co means together, in different forms such as teaching pairs, co-teaching, as well as the noun pairs as in working pairs to designate teachers, showed the team shared responsibility of teaching. The sharing was also highlighted by the procedure of planning, which included the families and other colleagues. The curriculum emerged from the collective efforts of co-teachers, colleagues, and families with the pedagogistas to ensure the multidirectional flow of ideas. This way of working together was a “deliberate break from the traditional professional and cultural solitude and isolation of teachers” (p. 71) where deliberate was the key word; an adjective that implies intentional decision making:

Co-teaching, and in a more general sense, collegial work, represents for us a deliberate break from the traditional professional and cultural solitude and isolation of teachers. This isolation has been rationalized in the name of academic freedom, yet wrongly understood. Its results, certainly, have been to impoverish and desiccate teachers' potential and resources and make it difficult or impossible for them to achieve quality. (p. 71)

The second theme was teacher as researchers:
Our teachers do research either on their own or with their colleagues to produce strategies that favor children's work or can be utilized by them. They go from research into action (and vice versa). When all the teachers in the school are in agreement, the projects, strategies, and styles of work become intertwined and the school becomes a truly different school. Some of our teachers proceed in this research with more intentionality and better methods than others; the records and documentaries that result from their endeavors are significant beyond the immediate needs for action and become common objects of study, at times with so much substance as to become of interest to a wider audience. As a result, these teachers feel, and help others to feel, more motivation to grow and attain a much higher level of professionalism. (p. 87)

The teachers, participant observers, respond to what they see by asking questions, initiating face-to-face exchanges, redirecting activities, and modifying the way or the intensity of their interaction with particular children. (p. 69)

Their role as researchers was clearly indicated by using the phrasal noun “participant observer” (p. 69), which made reference to participant observation as a research method as well as the verb do and its direct object “research” (p. 87). However, the purpose of research was the improvement of educational practice and not academic reports or papers. This research has immediate application in the feedback from children, for example, modifying the way or the intensity of their interaction with particular children.

The third and last theme was professionalism, which implied knowledge and ethics of the program, as teachers needed “to learn and relearn together with the children” (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 86), and it became a formation and reformation of teachers:

We have no alternatives but in-service training. As the intelligence becomes stronger through use, so does the teacher's role, knowledge, profession, and competence become stronger through direct application. Teachers—like children and everyone else—feel the need to grow in their competences; they want to transform experiences into thoughts, thoughts into reflections, and reflections into new thoughts and new actions. They also feel a need to make predictions, to try things out, and then interpret them. The act of interpretation is most important. Teachers must learn to interpret ongoing processes
rather than wait to evaluate results. In the same way, their role as educators must include understanding children as producers, not as consumers. They must learn to teach nothing to children except what children can learn by themselves. And furthermore, they must be aware of the perceptions the children form of the adults and their actions. In order to enter into relationships with the children that are at the same time productive, amiable, and exciting, teachers must be aware of the risk in expressing judgments too quickly. They must enter the time frame of the children, whose interests emerge only in the course of activity or negotiations arising from that activity. They must realize how listening to children is both necessary and expedient. They must know that activities should be as numerous as the keys of a piano, and that all call forth infinite acts of intelligence when children are offered a wide variety of options to choose from. Furthermore, teachers must be aware that practice cannot be separated from objectives or values and that professional growth comes partly through individual effort, but in a much richer way through discussion with colleagues, parents, and experts. Finally, they need to know that it is possible to engage in the challenge of longitudinal observations and small research projects concerning the development or experiences of children. Indeed, education without research or innovation is education without interest. (pp. 72-73)

Malaguzzi suggested that teachers experience the need to develop and to be acknowledged as human beings and not as pawns of the educational system. I observed that the above paragraph was dense with musts indicating obligation and infinitives that detailed responsibilities as educators, which resonates deeply with the fundamental beliefs of constructivism (Fosnot & Perry, 2005). It also addressed the Vygotskian zone of proximal development in terms of how and when learning occurs (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 84):

Put more simply, we seek a situation in which the child is about to see what the adult already sees. The gap is small between what each one sees, the task of closing it appears feasible, and the child's skills and disposition create an expectation and readiness to make the jump. In such a situation, the adult can and must loan to the children his judgment and knowledge. (emphasis in original, p. 84)
Teachers must follow the time rhythm of children, offer a rich spectrum of activities, and grow individually through professional dialogues and research projects.

4.4.4 Students.

The first observation regarding students was the pervasive use of the noun *children*. Nowhere in the text can the word students be found with reference to children. Although *student* does not have a negative connotation or a visible ideological load, it designates a person who is in school as in an institution. The absence of the word student and choosing children indicates a less formal, closer, and even caring relationship between adult and child. It does not involve school and learning as a traditional transition into a mature ready to thicken the working class.

The second observation that can be made is that children are seen as creative and capable:

In fact, in Reggio we know that children can use creativity as a tool for inquiring, ordering, and even transgressing the given schemes of meaning (which Piaget attributed also to the very young in the last years of his life). They can also use creativity as a tool for their own progress in the worlds of necessity and possibility. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 81)

The certitude given by the verb *know* portrayed the children as capable human beings as illustrated by the modal *can*. They were able to use creativity in complex mental acts out of necessity or possibility. The same idea of capability transpired in the adjective *apt* as having a natural ability or skill (Cambridge dictionary) and the participle *explore*—to make discoveries:

As we have chosen to work with children we can say that they are the best evaluators and the most sensitive judges of the values and usefulness of creativity. This comes about because they have the privilege of not being excessively attached to their own ideas, which they construct and reinvent continuously. They are apt to explore, make discoveries, change their points of view, and fall in love with forms and meanings that transform themselves. (p. 75)

Secondly, children are autonomous meaning makers and knowledge constructors. Moreover, they are able to use multiple modes to express themselves. This characteristic was expressed
very directly through phrasal verb *making meaning*, the verb construct and its direct objects *knowledge and skills*, and the noun *construction*:

But at the same time, I would like to emphasize children's own participation: They are autonomously capable of making meaning from their daily life experiences through mental acts involving planning, coordination of ideas, and abstraction. (p. 81)

It is necessary to think about the knowledge and skills that children construct independently of and prior to schooling. This knowledge base does not belong to the “prehistory” mentioned by Vygotsky (as if it were a separate experience), but to the children's social development in process. In any context, children do not wait to pose questions to themselves and form strategies of thought, or principles, or feelings. Always and everywhere children take an active role in the construction and acquisition of learning and understanding. To learn is a satisfying experience, but also, as the psychologist Nelson Goodman tells us, to understand is to experience desire, drama, and conquest. (p. 67)

As we have chosen to work with children we can say that they are the best evaluators and the most sensitive judges of the values and usefulness of creativity. This comes about because they have the privilege of not being excessively attached to their own ideas, which they construct and reinvent continuously. (p. 75)

As they go from one symbolic language to another, the children find that each transformation generates something new. This complicates the situation and advances them. As they construct their ideas, they also construct the symbols and a plurality of codes. (p. 92)

In Malaguzzi’s (1998) vision, children were active in the construction of knowledge; they were not *tabula rasa* or conditioned by bell as passive receivers of universal truths. They were able to construct meanings, evaluate, and express them by using different modes. Also, children were responsible social beings:

Reggio Emilia children assume responsibility for some of the real chores involved in group life throughout the long day, such as setting the tables for meals, tidying up
afterward, frequently working with the cooking staff, and sharing responsibility for 
keeping the art materials in good order, strengthens an atmosphere of communal life. The 
communal feeling is also enhanced by the participation of the entire staff of the 
preschools in all aspects of the program and the frequent long meetings of all concerned, 
especially parents. (p. 41)

Twenty years of work have convinced us that even the youngest children are social 
beings. They are predisposed; they possess from birth a readiness to make significant ties 
with other caretakers besides their parents (who do not thereby lose their special 
responsibilities and prerogatives). (p. 62)

Reggio envisioned children as social beings from an early age and consequently integrated them 
into the community through simple chores, such as setting the table. The presence of all 
members of the early childhood community provided an example of the social environment with 
horizontal relationships. The multimodal communication of students enriched the thought 
processes and became a form of socialization:

As they go from one symbolic language to another, the children find that each 
transformation generates something new. This complicates the situation and advances 
them. As they construct their ideas, they also construct the symbols and a plurality of 
 codes. (p. 92)

Putting ideas into the form of graphic representation allows the children to understand 
that their actions can communicate. This is an extraordinary discovery because it helps 
them realize that in order to communicate, their graphic must be understandable to others. 
In our view, graphic representation is a tool of communication much simpler and clearer 
than words. (p. 92)

The different modes and codes of expression condition the thinking process through 
complications or simplifications of concepts. Each mode comes with its own repertoire of 
communication tools that encourage different types of thinking and socialization for common 
understandings.
4.4.5 Subject.

Most likely the most pertinent quotation that spoke about different domains of knowledge explored by both Reggio teachers and children was the following:

It is true that we do not have planning and curricula. It is not true that we rely on improvisation, which is an enviable skill. We do not rely on chance either, because we are convinced that what we do not yet know can to some extent be anticipated. What we do know is that to be with children is to work one third with certainty and two thirds with uncertainty and the new. The one third that is certain makes us understand and try to understand. We want to study whether learning has its own flux, time, and place; how learning can be organized and encouraged; how situations favourable to learning can be prepared; which skills and cognitive schemes are worth bolstering; how to advance words, graphics, logical thought, body language, symbolic languages, fantasy, narrative, and argumentation; how to play; how to pretend; how friendships form and dissipate; how individual and group identities develop; and how differences and similarities emerge. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 89)

The most obvious areas of knowledge presented in the text above are suggested through synecdoche, such as words for written and oral language, logical thought for mathematical concepts, and graphics for visual arts. The first theme that emerged was the multitude of symbolic languages present in children’s communication; they were not restricted to oral and written language, but rather enriched through drama, music, graphic languages, and extended to the realm of social communication and behaviour:

Because we are speaking of schools, we are referring to the ways in which symbols are used by children to acquire culture, grow, and communicate. I do not want to limit the domain of symbolic languages only to reading, writing, and numbers. Symbols are used as well by musicians, storytellers, and others.

Gandini: When you speak of different languages used by children, you say that children rewrite concepts using different means. They rewrite both their emotions and/or what they have perceived intellectually. Therefore, their growth of knowledge is served by
Social interaction was the second pattern that appeared under the umbrella of subject and appeared under various semantic equivalents, such as: “group experience” (p. 62), “being together,” and “new cooperative relationships” (p. 95). All of these words have positive connotations as the subject complement group experience was associated with the subject benefit, and the long-term group experience was characterized through the simile “like an emergency life raft:”

The obvious benefit that the children obtain from interactive play with peers is a most reassuring aspect of the group experience, the potential of which has wide implications not yet appreciated. (p. 62)

In such a time as this, with society and culture as they are, the fact of young children being capable of being together for several years and working closely together is like an emergency life raft. Their relationships are really something new and different from the close relationships that are inside the family, or the usual peer relationships in traditional schools. These new cooperative relationships among young children have not yet been sufficiently studied in terms of their educational potential. They offer children the opportunity to realize that their ideas are different and not coinciding with the ideas of others, and therefore they discover that they hold their own ideas and unique point of view. (p. 95)

The adjective cooperative is an ideologically loaded word, and in education resonates with Deweyan thought.

The third theme of the category is how learning occurs. According to Malaguzzi (1998) learning was inspired from subject, the constructivist theory, as it was considered the result of children’s social experience and actions. It is not limited to school and it does not consists of only intellectual endeavours as it traverses affect through desire, tenacity, and conquest and implies satisfaction. Teaching is a different activity than learning and might not converge with learning. Teaching should be based on learning and that comes through the observation of
children engaged in learning. This statement is phrased as an imperative as “stand aside and leave room for learning” (p. 82); it was a command. Teaching was conditional upon understanding what children do and should be a complementary way of learning as illustrated in the following passages:

*What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught. Rather, it is in large part due to the children's own doing as a consequence of their activities and our resources.* (emphasis in original, p. 67)

It is necessary to think about the knowledge and skills that children construct independently of and prior to schooling. This knowledge base does not belong to the "prehistory" mentioned by Vygotsky (as if it were a separate experience), but to the children's social development in process. In any context, children do not wait to pose questions to themselves and form strategies of thought, or principles, or feelings. Always and everywhere children take an active role in the construction and acquisition of learning and understanding. To learn is a satisfying experience, but also, as the psychologist Nelson Goodman tells us, to understand is to experience desire, drama, and conquest. (p. 67)

After all we have said about children, we have to discuss more fully the role that children assume in the construction of self and knowledge, and the help they get in these matters from adults. It is obvious that between learning and teaching, we honor the first. It is not that we ostracize teaching, but that we declare, "Stand aside for a while and leave room for learning, observe carefully what children do, and then, if you have understood well, perhaps teaching will be different from before. (p. 82)

To conclude, learning is the key factor on which a new way of teaching should be based, becoming a complementary resource to the child and offering multiple options, suggestive ideas, and sources of support. Learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together on a journey down the water. Through an active, reciprocal exchange, teaching can strengthen learning how to learn. (p. 83)
The discourse of a self-organized way of learning occurred in long-term, set-up situations—projects—created by teachers and inspired by the listening and observing of children. In this way, the expectations of teachers converged with children’s desires and interests, keeping the motivation high; projects were a nonintrusive and gentle way of creating conditions for learning. Each project had an expectation known and was pursued by children with interests, while adult interventions in children’s action was required to be minimal. This requirement was suggested through the use of modal verbs such as *should* and *have to* as articulated in the following examples:

A good project has a few essential elements. First it must produce or trigger an initial motivation, to warm up the children. Each project has a sort of prologue phase, in which information and ideas are offered and shared within the group. These will be used later to help the children to expand their intentions along with the adults’ intentions, suggesting a final objective. (p. 90)

*A discussion at the beginning to gather the memories, thoughts, and desire of the children, is a very effective way to start.*

Malaguzzi: Yes, because it helps the adults to make predictions and hypotheses about what could happen next. Some of these expectations will not come to pass, but others will come alive during the journey taken with the children in the course of the project. And it is not only the adults who form expectations and hypotheses; those of children—who can use their capacities to make predictions—are also needed to organize the work. The strong motivation with which the children embark will help them to feel comfortable as they go down many different paths, abandoning some, trying others. To this task they will bring different kinds of intelligences and attitudes and produce an extraordinary blooming of ideas, and also (through their negotiation) a convergence in which ideas become sharper and more selected. They feel free to do so because they are not afraid of mistakes or of demolishing their own ideas. The project’s objective serves as a permanent beacon that is always present. It gives the children enormous energy, because they know where they must arrive. All through the project, adults should intervene as little as possible. Instead they should set up situations, and make many choices that facilitate the
work of children. The adults have to continually revisit what has been happening, discuss the findings among themselves, and use what they learn to decide how and how much to enter into the action to keep the children's motivation high. (p. 91)

4.4.6 Milieu.

The first theme that emerged in the milieu category was in the form of a zeitgeist—an immoral or incapable society and was summarized by Malaguzzi (1998) in a single sentence: “We have not correctly legitimized a culture of childhood” (p. 78). The following quote presents the details of the how and why the culture of childhood is a subject of debate:

All people—and I mean scholars, researchers, and teachers, who in any place have set themselves to study children seriously—have ended up by discovering not so much the limits and weaknesses of children but rather their surprising and extraordinary strengths and capabilities linked with an inexhaustible need for expression and realization. But the results of those learned inquiries, describing new aspects of development and opening endless possibilities for practical application and ethical and philosophical consideration, have not been sufficiently seized on by educators. Instead, during this delay, metaphors and images re-emerge portraying childhood in one of two extreme ways: as blank, powerless, and entirely shaped by adults; or on the other hand, as autonomously capable of gaining control of the adult world, and the consequences are seen in all our social, economic, and political choices and investments. It is a typical, frightening example of offense and betrayal of human resources.

Specific instances are clearly visible in Europe and the rest of the Western World. We see budgetary cuts, lack of policy and planning, a general lowering of prestige for those who teach or study children, with consequent loss of young people from the profession and the growth of child abuse. We can speak of all of this bad news for children without even mentioning the disasters of war and epidemics that still ravage our planet and conscience. (p. 78)

In the author’s view, the educational research results, which unveiled the strengths and potential of children, had no echo in educational systems already impoverished by the effects of two main outdated educational theories, both expressed through synecdoche: a naively understood
progressivism (the child as “capable of gaining control of the adult world”) or as Lock’s XVIIth century tabula rasa. This tension between educational theories corroborated with the misunderstanding of the nature of education and children was conducive to a denigration and devaluation of educational systems. Malaguzzi used an understatement, “would seem to cast doubt,” to suggest that Western societies were either incapable to understand and educate or immoral: “The incapacity of societies to respond to such a child would seem to cast doubt on the nobility of our motives regarding children.” (p. 78)

The second theme that emerged from Malaguzzi’s (1998) text regards time and money: “the slaves of the clock.” The apocalyptic landscape of education was completed by a metaphor of profit with evident left ideological connotations and a rhetorical question: “If today we find ourselves in an era in which the time and rhythm of machines and profits dominate those of human beings, then we want to know where psychology, education, and culture stand” (p. 80). This approach to time reverberates in the way adults artificially impose measurements of time clock and its semantic equivalents, violently disturbing natural rhythms of living and growing. Malaguzzi agreed with Pessoa (Pessoa, as cited in Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 80):

The measure of the clock is false. It is certainly false concerning the time of children— for situations in which true teaching and learning take place, for the subjective experience of childhood. One has to respect the time of maturation; of development; of the tools of doing and understanding; of the full, slow, extravagant, lucid, and ever-changing emergence of children’s capacities; it is a measure of cultural and biological wisdom.

If nature has commanded that of all the animals, infancy shall last longest in human beings—infinitely long, says Tolstoy—it is because nature knows how many rivers there are to cross and paths to retrace. Nature provides time for mistakes to be corrected (by both children and adults), for prejudices to be overcome, and for children to catch their breath and restore their images of themselves, peers, parents, teachers, and the world.

We tend all too often today to become slaves of the clock, an instrument that falsifies the natural and subjective time of children and adults. (p. 84)
It becomes obvious that the way the schedule of children’s activities was thought about in schools was in contradiction with Reggio’s beliefs. This was expressed through the direct objects concerning time to be treated correctly and the modal has to, to express a strong obligation to respect the time of maturation of the children. In addition, the metaphor slaves of the clock as well as the predicate of the falsifies and its direct object natural and subjective time suggests a negative connotation associated with the measurement of time using the artificial clock or hour. The measurement of time by hour juxtaposed to the slaves of the clock metaphor suggests the idea of selling time and gaining something, like money. It is about a chain reaction of valuing time as money (paid by hour), which extends beyond our working age into childhood. The children become hurried into school and out of childhood before they have a chance to experience it; to learn and grow in a natural way.

4.4.7 Milieu: **Reggio Emilia as a web like cooperative community.**

Reggio is a counterculture of the zeitgeist of assigning time as an economical value, immorality, and the incapability of understanding the culture of childhood:

In such a time as this, with society and culture as they are, the fact of young children being capable of being together for several years and working closely together is like an emergency life raft. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 94)

We think of a school for young children as an integral living organism, as a place of shared lives and relationships among many adults and very many children. We think of school as a sort of construction in motion, continuously adjusting itself. (p. 62)

In our system we know it is essential to focus on children and be child centred, but we do not feel that is enough. We also consider teachers and families as central to the education of children. We therefore choose to place all three components at the centre of our interest. Our goal is to build an amiable school, where children, teachers, and families feel at home. (p. 65)

The web-like social system of Reggio Emilia was another theme of the milieu. Reggio philosophy considered families and teachers as central actors to education. Families participated in the curriculum along with the pedagogisti, “to facilitate interpersonal connection and to
consider both the overall ideas and the details” (p. 64), staff members, teachers. This system was horizontal and Reggio’s modality of working was as a network:

Thus, we have put together a mechanism combining places, roles, and functions that have their own timing, but that can be interchanged with one another in order to generate ideas and actions. All this works within a network of cooperation and interactions that produces for the adults, but above all for the children, a feeling of belonging in a world that is alive, welcoming, and authentic. (p. 64)

4.4.8 Milieu: Designing learning conditions through physical environment.

The physical environment was the last pattern to appear in the milieu. Malaguzzi (1998) described, in detail, the architecture of the space that pointed out how the design of the classroom allowed children to choose what they wanted to do and who they wanted to be with. For example, the classrooms were divided into two rooms so the children could choose to stay with the teacher or be alone. Also, the presence of mini-ateliers encouraged extended project work. Piazza and the outside space provided for a different type of social flow. The space was also used for documentation and celebrations of children’s activities. The classroom extended to the city and countryside. The environment was an interface of the cognition and affect.

To start with, then, there is the environment. There is the entrance hall, which informs and documents, and which anticipates the form and organization of the school. This leads into the dining hall, with the kitchen well in view.

The entrance hall leads into the central space, or piazza, the place of encounters, friendships, games, and other activities that complete those of the classrooms.

The classrooms and utility rooms are placed at a distance from but connected with the central area. Each classroom is divided into two contiguous rooms, picking up one of the very few practical suggestions by Piaget. His idea was to allow children either to be with teachers or stay alone; but we use the two spaces in many ways. In addition to the classrooms, we have established the atelier, the school studio and laboratory, as a place for manipulating or experimenting with separate or combined visual languages, either in isolation or in combination with the verbal ones. We have also the mini-ateliers next to
each classroom, which allow for extended project work. We have a room for music and an archive, where we have placed many useful objects both large and small, and non-commercial, made by teachers and parents. Throughout the school the walls are used as spaces for both temporary and permanent exhibits of what the children and teachers have created: Our walls speak and document. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 64)

The space was designed by teachers and other members of the community (e.g., architects, parents) as a catalyst for learning and communicating.

Their environment is set up so as to interface the cognitive realm with the realms of relationship and affectivity. So also there should be connection between development and learning, between the different symbolic languages, between thought and action, and between individual and interpersonal autonomies. (p. 68)

A special place for multimodal communication was the atelier. The studio has protected both children and teachers of the dangers of different pedagogical and philosophical misunderstandings. It was a safe place of exploration, experimentation, and research.

The atelier has always repaid us. It has, as desired, proved to be subversive—generating complexity and new tools for thought. It has allowed rich combinations and creative possibilities among the different (symbolic) languages of children. The atelier has protected us not only from the long-winded speeches and didactic theories of our time (just about the only preparation received by young teachers!), but also from the behavioristic beliefs of the surrounding culture, reducing the human mind to some kind of "container" to be filled. (p. 74)

It was, instead, a place where children's different languages could be explored by them and studied by us in a favorable and peaceful atmosphere. We and they could experiment with alternative modalities, techniques, instruments, and materials; explore themes chose by children or suggested by us; perhaps work on a large fresco in a group; perhaps prepare a poster where one makes a concise statement through words and illustrations; perhaps even master small projects on a reduced scale, stealing their skills from architects! What was important was to help the children find their own styles of
exchanging with friends both their talents and their discoveries. But the *atelier* was most of all a place for research, and we expect that it will continue and increase. (p. 74)

### 4.4.9 Aim.

In order to identify the themes conceptually related to the aim category, I mined for the semantically identical vocabulary: aim, goal, purpose, and objective; the search yielded the following quotes:

The objective of education is to increase possibilities for the child to invent and discover. Words should not be used as a shortcut to knowledge. Like Piaget, we agree that the aim of teaching is to provide conditions for learning. (Malaguzzi, 1998, pp. 81-83)

Among the goals of our approach is to reinforce each child's sense of identity through a recognition that comes from peers and adults, so much so that each one would feel enough sense of belonging and self-confidence to participate in the activities of the school. In this way we promote in children the widening of communication networks and mastery and appreciation of language in all its levels and contextual uses. As a result, children discover how communication enhances the autonomy of the individual and the peer group. The group forms a special entity tied together through exchange and conversation, reliant on its own ways of thinking, communicating, and acting. (pp. 68-69)

Our objective, which we always will pursue, is to create an amiable environment, where children, families, and teachers feel at ease. (p. 63)

In our system we know it is essential to focus on children and be child centred, but we do not feel that is enough. We also consider teachers and families as central to the education of children. We therefore choose to place all three components at the centre of our interest. Our goal is to build an amiable school, where children, teachers, and families feel at home. (p. 64)

All this works within a network of cooperation and interactions that produces for the adults, but above all for the children, a feeling of belonging in a world that is alive, welcoming, and authentic. (p. 64)
[The school] It must embody ways of getting along together, of intensifying relationships among the three central protagonists, of assuring complete attention to the problems of education, and of activating participation and research. These are the most effective tools for all those concerned—children, teachers, and parents—to become more united and aware of each other’s contributions. They are the most effective tools to use in order to feel good about cooperating and to produce, in harmony, a higher level of results. (p. 65)

Although not a pattern, the aim or objective of education was clearly stated by Malaguzzi as “to increase possibilities for the child to invent and discover,” where invent and discover are complete synonyms for create. The curriculum must have creativity as invention and discovery as final destination of education.

The pattern that appears is the particular emphasis on the positive affect of children and community; this takes the form of an adjective with positive social connotations such as amiable, welcoming, or through adverbs of manner, such as at ease, or adverbs of place with positive emotional load at home; the main aim was to provide conditions for learning and the first on the list is the positively charged community where the children feel safe and free, develop a positive sense of identity in relationship with peers, and participate in the community.

4.4.10 Activity.

In identifying the activities in Malaguzzi’s (1998) discourse about Reggio Emilia, I looked at the agents: school as entity, teachers, children, parents and verbs or participial adjectives in relationship with nouns designating the above agents or their equivalents. The following quotes are among the most important in looking at the activity category and illustrate the procedure of coding according to agents: children, teachers, parents, school.

1. Children:

Through careful interpretation, one learns that children continually attempt to draw connections between things and thereby grow and learn. Therefore, for children to be in a group is a situation of great privilege: as if inside a great, transformative laboratory. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 95):
When we see young children cooperating, we notice a sort of ethic: they do everything they can to keep the situation stable and ongoing. Some children have more advanced capacities than do others. When one such child makes a suggestion or proposal, the others accept it more willingly than if it had come up from an adult. Many of them learn the relativity of their own point of view and how to represent their ideas in a delicate way. They say, “I think,” or “In my view,” or “I do not know if my ideas are right for everybody.” Of course, conflicts also exist. Clashes of principles and ideas can be very rich, but do not necessarily need to be expressed through a direct confrontation. Sometimes children feel the disparity of their views but hold back, to maintain the harmony of the group functioning. Later, the contrasting point of view can emerge. (p. 94-95)

Twenty years of work have convinced us that even the youngest children are social beings. They are predisposed; they possess from birth a readiness to make significant ties with other caretakers besides their parents (who do not thereby lose their special responsibilities and prerogatives). The obvious benefit that the children obtain from interactive play with peers is a most reassuring aspect of the group experience, the potential of which has wide implications not yet appreciated. (p. 62)

Because we were inspired by Piaget, we opted to work with numbers, mathematics, and perception. We were then, and still are, convinced that it is not an imposition on children or an artificial exercise to work with numbers, quantity, classification, dimensions, forms, measurement, transformation, orientation, conservation and change, or speed and space, because these explorations belong spontaneously to the everyday experiences of living, playing, negotiating, thinking, and speaking by children. (p. 53)

As they work and play together, sometimes there are moments when their goal really is to establish a good relationship. (p. 94)

The objective of education is to increase possibilities for the child to invent and discover. Words should not be used as a shortcut to knowledge. (pp. 82-83)
As they construct their ideas, they also construct the symbols and a plurality of codes. Therefore, when they draw, they are not only making a graphic intervention, but they are selecting ideas and getting rid of excessive, superfluous, or misleading ones. (p. 92)

They are autonomously capable of making meaning from their daily life experiences through mental acts involving planning, coordination of ideas, and abstraction. (p. 81)

In fact, in Reggio we know that children can use creativity as a tool for inquiring, ordering, and even transgressing the given schemes of meaning (which Piaget attributed also to the very young in the last years of his life). They can also use creativity as a tool for their own progress in the worlds of necessity and possibility. (p. 81)

This whole approach causes children to be better known by their teachers. Therefore, they feel more open to challenge, more able to work with their peers in unusual situations, and more persistent because they realize that what they have in mind can be tried out. Children know that when pursuing their goals, they can make their own choices, and that is both freeing and revitalizing. It is, indeed, what we had promised the children, their families, and ourselves. (p. 87)

2. Children and multimodality:

The use of graphic expression comes from the need to bring clarity. There is also the fact that the child intuitively becomes aware about what this new code can produce from now on. As they go from one symbolic language to another, the children find that each transformation generates something new. This complicates the situation and advances them. As they construct their ideas, they also construct the symbols and a plurality of codes. Therefore, when they draw, they are not only making a graphic intervention, but they are selecting ideas and getting rid of excessive, superfluous, or misleading ones (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 92).

3. Children and teachers:

And it is not only the adults who form expectations and hypotheses; those of children—who can use their capacities to make predictions—are also needed to organize the work.
The strong motivation with which the children embark will help them to feel comfortable as they go down many different paths, abandoning some, trying others. To this task they will bring different kinds of intelligences and attitudes and produce an extraordinary blooming of ideas, and also (through their negotiation) a convergence in which ideas become sharper and more selected. They feel free to do so because they are not afraid of mistakes or of demolishing their own ideas. The project's objective serves as a permanent beacon that is always present. It gives the children enormous energy, because they know where they must arrive. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 91)

4. Teachers:

Gandini: Many teachers also ask about the outstanding project work of children in Reggio Emilia. In your view, Loris, what elements contribute to making a “good" project?

Malaguzzi: We use projects because relying on the capacities and resources of children expresses our philosophical view. Either a school is capable of continually transforming itself in response to children or the school becomes something that goes around and around, remaining in the same spot. In trying to make a good project, one has to have, above all, a pertinent expectation, shaped in advance, an expectation also felt by the children. This expectation helps the adults in terms of their attentiveness, choices, methods of intervention, and what they do concerning the relationships among participants.

Gandini: Could you speak about the choice of projects to undertake? Are they often based on something that is already part of their ongoing experience?

Malaguzzi: Yes. Sometimes we pursue something that already belongs to them, but other times we follow something new. The teachers need only to observe and listen to the children, as they continuously suggest to us what interests them, and what they would like to explore in a deeper way. It is good when the adults' own interests coincide with those of the children, so they can move easily to support children's motivation and pleasure.
A good project has a few essential elements. First it must produce or trigger an initial motivation, to warm up the children. Each project has a sort of prologue phase, in which information and ideas are offered and shared within the group. These will be used later to help the children to expand their intentions along with the adults’ intentions, suggesting a final objective.

Gandini: *A discussion at the beginning to gather the memories, thoughts, and desire of the children, is a very effective way to start.*

Malaguzzi: Yes, because it helps the adults to make predictions and hypotheses about what could happen next. Some of these expectations will not come to pass, but others will come alive during the journey taken with the children in the course of the project. And it is not only the adults who form expectations and hypotheses; those of children—who can use their capacities to make predictions—are also needed to organize the work. The strong motivation with which the children embark will help them to feel comfortable as they go down many different paths, abandoning some, trying others. To this task they will bring different kinds of intelligences and attitudes and produce an extraordinary blooming of ideas, and also (through their negotiation) a convergence in which ideas become sharper and more selected. They feel free to do so because they are not afraid of mistakes or of demolishing their own ideas. The project’s objective serves as a permanent beacon that is always present. It gives the children enormous energy, because they know where they must arrive.

All through the project, adults should intervene as little as possible. Instead they should set up situations, and make many choices that facilitate the work of children. The adults have to continually revisit what has been happening, discuss the findings among themselves, and use what they learn to decide how and how much to enter into the action to keep the children’s motivation high. There are many scientific theories about motivation, but I think teachers can learn a great deal about it by working with children. Some children enter the game right away, and do not need warming up. Others warm up during the first activities. Others warm up only when something challenges their ideas within the great market of exchanges. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 91)
They have to re-establish and clarify the frames or contours of the problem. With each step, the child goes farther and higher, as a spaceship with several stages, each pushing the rocket deeper into space. Another reason that children like to pass through graphic expression is that they feel it as something that consolidates solidarity of thought, of action, of perspectives with other children. I could say that graphic expression serves more as a tie that favours collaborative capacities, so that the game of learning among children does not end and rather allows for discoveries to continue, to follow one after another. (p. 92)

The one third that is certain makes us understand and try to understand. We want to study whether learning has its own flux, time, and place; how learning can be organized and encouraged; how situations favorable to learning can be prepared; which skills and cognitive schemes are worth bolstering; how to advance words, graphics, logical thought, body language, symbolic languages, fantasy, narrative, and argumentation; how to play; how to pretend; how friendships form and dissipate; how individual and group identities develop; and how differences and similarities emerge. (p. 89)

The more we distance ourselves from quick and temporary solutions, from responding to individual differences in a hurried way, the wider will be the range of hypotheses open to us. The more we resist the temptation to classify children, the more capable we become to change our plans and make available different activities. This does not eliminate the responsibility or usefulness of noting differences among children. Let us take them into account, let us keep an eye on them. But let us always exercise caution and learn to observe and evaluate better without assigning levels or grades. Let me add that in reading the specialized literature on evaluation, I have not found the factor of time to be treated correctly. Ferdinando Pessoa (1986) says that the measure of the clock is false. It is certainly false concerning the time of children—for situations in which true teaching and learning take place, for the subjective experience of childhood. One has to respect the time of maturation; of development; of the tools of doing and understanding; of the full, slow, extravagant, lucid, and ever changing emergence of children's capacities; it is a measure of cultural and biological wisdom. If nature has commanded that of all the animals, infancy shall last longest in human beings—infinitely long, says Tolstoy—it is
because nature knows how many rivers there are to cross and paths to retrace. Nature provides time for mistakes to be corrected (by both children and adults), for prejudices to be overcome, and for children to catch their breath and restore their images of themselves, peers, parents, teachers, and the world. If today we find ourselves in an era in which the time and rhythm of machines and profits dominate those of human beings, then we want to know where psychology, education, and culture. (p. 80)

Anyone who starts a program thinks about actions that will transform existing situations connected with the cognitive, affective, and symbolic realms; we refine communication skills; we are very active in exploring and creating along with many participants, while remaining open to change. In this manner, while all the goals are shared, still the most valuable aspect is interpersonal satisfaction. (p. 65-66)

Teachers must possess a habit of questioning their certainties, a growth of sensitivity, awareness, and availability, the assuming of a critical style of research and continually updated knowledge of children, an enriched evaluation of parental roles, and skills to talk, listen, and learn from parents. (p. 69)

Co-teaching, and in a more general sense, collegial work, represents for us a deliberate break from the traditional professional and cultural solitude and isolation of teachers. This isolation has been rationalized in the name of academic freedom, yet wrongly understood. Its results, certainly, have been to impoverish and desiccate teachers’ potential and resources and make it difficult or impossible for them to achieve quality. I remember, however, that the archetype, one teacher per classroom, was so strongly rooted when we began our work that our proposal of co-teaching pairs, which should have been seen as a welcome liberation from excessive stress, did not at first find ready acceptance among teachers. The ones who did accept it, however, soon discovered the evident advantages, and this cleared up the uncertainty. The work in pairs, and then among pairs, produced tremendous advantages, both educationally and psychologically, for adults as well as for children. Furthermore, the co-teaching pairs constituted the first building block of the bridge that was taking us toward community-based management and partnership with parents. (p. 71)
[Vygotsky] the Russian psychologist (1978) tells us about the advantages of the *zone of proximal development*; that is, the distance between the levels of capacities expressed by children and their levels of potential development, attainable with the help of adults or more advanced contemporaries. The matter is somewhat ambiguous. Can one give competence to someone who does not have it? The very suggestion sees to readmit the old ghosts of teaching that we tried to chase away. But we can dispel any risk of returning to traditional teaching by holding to our principle of *circularity* (a term not seen in Vygotsky's writings). Put more simply, we seek a situation in which the child is about to see what the adult already sees. The gap is small between what each one sees, the task of closing it appears feasible, and the child's skills and disposition create an expectation and readiness to make the jump. In such a situation, the adult can and must loan to the children his judgment and knowledge. But it is a loan with a condition, namely, that the child will repay. It is useless to assert that the readiness of children is too hard to observe. It can indeed be seen! We need to be prepared to see it, for we tend to notice only those things that we expect, but also we should not be in a hurry. We tend all too often today to become slaves of the clock, an instrument that falsifies the natural and subjective time of children and adults. (p. 83 and 84)

If teaching is monodirectional and rigidly structured according to some "science," it becomes intolerable, prejudicial, and damaging to the dignity of both teacher and learner. But even where teachers assume themselves to be democratic, their behavior still too often is dominated by undemocratic teaching strategies. These include directives, ritualized procedures, systems of evaluation (which Benjamin Bloom believed should be properly guiding models of education), and rigid cognitivistic curriculum packages, complete with readymade scripts and reinforcement contingencies. All of these strategies provide a professional justification for waste and suffering, and at the same time create the illusion of an impressive system that reassures adults at an unthinking level. Official adoption is easy. By the time the shortcomings of such a package or system do emerge, it is already too late and the damage is done. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 83)

5. Parents:
All this contributes to structure an education based on relationship and participation. On the practical level, we must continuously maintain and reinvent our network of communication and encounters. We have meetings with families to discuss curriculum. We ask for their cooperation in organizing activities, setting up the space, and preparing the welcoming of new children. We distribute to each child the telephone numbers and addresses of all the other children and their teachers. We encourage visits, including snacks among the children at their homes, and visits to parents' workplaces. We organize with parents excursions, for example, to swimming pools and gymnasiurns. We work with parents in building furnishings and toys. We meet with them to discuss our projects and our research, and we meet to organize dinners and celebrations in the school. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 66)

6. School:

We think of a school for young children as an integral living organism, as a place of shared lives and relationships among many adults and very many children. We think of school as a sort of construction in motion, continuously adjusting itself. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 62)

It has also always been important to us that our living system of schooling expands toward the world of the families, with their right to know and to participate. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 63)

The school is an inexhaustible and dynamic organism: It has its difficulties, controversies, joys, and capacities to handle external disturbances. What counts is that there be an agreement about what direction the school should go, and that all forms of artifice and hypocrisy be kept at bay. Our objective, which we always will pursue, is to create an amiable environment, where children, families, and teachers feel at ease. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 63)

4.4.11 Description of activities.

Looking at the school’s activity, I observed that all the parts of speech describing it were semantically related to the concept of perpetual dynamism and had an ethical side. The school
was: “an integral living organism,” “shared lives,” and a “construction in motion” (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 62), as well as a “world where people truly help one another” (p. 70); it was a place where divergence of ideas and difficulties appeared, but “what counts is that there be an agreement about what direction the school should go, and that all forms of artifice and hypocrisy be kept at bay” (p. 63).

The teachers’ activities were mostly portrayed with modal verbs such as need, have to, and should, all indicating some degree of obligation toward the students. This repetition of modals indicates the first theme was an indented relocation of power from the teacher to the child: “The teachers need only to observe and listen to the children” (p. 90) or,

adults should intervene as little as possible. Instead they should set up situations, and make many choices that facilitate the work of children. The adults have to continually revisit what has been happening, discuss the findings among themselves, and use what they learn to decide how and how much to enter into the action to keep the children's motivation high. (p. 91)

Team work was another theme that surfaces as a modality of teaching. According to Malaguzzi (1998) teachers always worked in pairs, which was sometimes difficult, for example: “They must see how often teachers meet to discuss, sometimes peacefully and other times more loudly,” Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 70), and they collaborated with parents, atelieristas, and pedagogistas to create the projects and set up the environment and events.

Teaching, the second theme, was not the Pavlovian activity that is mono-directional and prescribed: “The teachers follow the children, not plans.” (p. 88). Mono- directional teaching was definitely condemned by Malaguzzi by characterizing it as “intolerable, prejudicial, and damaging to the dignity of both teacher and learner” (p. 83); it had rather a different meaning: “Like Piaget, we agree that the aim of teaching is to provide conditions for learning” (p. 83) while the teacher–student direct contact became a complementary action to learning. Learning was not synonymous with teaching. In this case teachers needed the children’s guidance as to what should be explored; they observed and listened to the children in order to find their interests and make them “coincide” with their own. This strategy had the purpose of creating projects with pertinent expectations that were resonating with the children, which motivated them and brought
them pleasure; they needed to allow for mistakes; they needed to ignore the time of adults and enter the time of children. The teachers assumed the role of researchers and reacted to students’ actions by setting up a physical and social environment conducive to learning: “Respond to what they see by asking questions, initiating face-to-face exchanges, redirecting activities, and modifying the way or the intensity of their interaction with particular children. Small group activities, involving two to four children, are modules of maximum desirability and communicative” (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 69). The teacher should not evaluate the students’ work in the sense of classifications and assigning grades; they were not to make quick judgements or apply quick temporary solutions, but rather “noting differences among children” (p. 80) and allowed time for growing up. In other words, there were no prescriptive ways of teaching except the one of following the child and creating learning conditions: “To learn and relearn together with the children is our line of work” (p. 86).

The teacher–student relationship, though very present, was very gentle; the adult was meant to rarely intervene directly, and in the situation where it was direct, the knowledge was on loan and occurred under the auspices of Vygotskian zone of proximal development (ZPD), which guided the way the teacher approached the child. In order to avoid mono-directionality, Malaguzzi used the principle of circularity and the metaphor of loan:

Put more simply, we seek a situation in which the child is about to see what the adult already sees. The gap is small between what each one sees, the task of closing it appears feasible, and the child’s skills and disposition create an expectation and readiness to make the jump. In such a situation, the adult can and must loan to the children his judgment and knowledge. But it is a loan with a condition, namely, that the child will repay. It is useless to assert that the readiness of children is too hard to observe. It can indeed be seen! We need to be prepared to see it, for we tend to notice only those things that we expect, but also we should not be in a hurry. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 83)

The third and last theme was the documentation of children’s experiences, where the teachers “prepare a steady flow of quality information targeted to parents but appreciated also by children and teachers” (p. 70). This qualitative way of looking at children’s activities has multiple purposes: showing appreciation for children’s work, provoking children’s self-
reflection, changing parents’ way of perceiving their children, and creating a basis for future projects.

With regards to the parents, Malaguzzi (1998) stated that families were central to education. Families were involved in the centre’s life and they were not just silent or absent witnesses of their children’s time in Reggio Emilia program, they participated in the making of the curriculum by discussing projects and research (p. 66), build furnishings, participating in dinners, and they formed an advisory council, which met two or three times monthly (p. 64); they were present in the fabric of the curriculum and received a continuous flow of information from kindergarten. Consequently, parents had the opportunity to understand their children better and adapt their parenting. The quality of the parent–child relationship became more important than the amount of time spent together (p. 62).

There were four sub-themes of documentation of children’s experiences artificially separated that came to surface when looking at the texts about children’s activities: children socialize, do, make meaning, and communicate using multiple modes. Most activities were designated through the verbs or nouns that had at least a conceptual relationship with the activity (e.g., exercise, cooperation, play, transformation, etc.).

The first sub-theme in Malaguzzi’s (1998) experience was that the children were social beings from the early years of life as they wanted to be with their peers; children socialized by cooperation, negotiation, managing conflicts, and maintaining social harmonies. Malaguzzi used the simile of a “great, transformative laboratory” (p. 95) to highlight the effect of the group setting upon the children.

The second subtheme, to do had at least two dimensions as children “work and play” (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 94). What Malaguzzi meant through work was engaging in projects involving Piagetian-sourced concepts, such as “numbers, quantity, classification, dimensions, forms, measurement, transformation, orientation, conservation and change, or speed and space” (p. 53), while play manifested as spontaneous activity. Nevertheless, the entire experience of learning was also characterized as a perpetual “game of learning” (p. 92), with the difference that the projects had an expectation.
The third sub-theme came from children’s meaning making in different forms from drawing connections among things to using creativity to inquire and transgress meanings to logical thought, planning, coordination of ideas, and abstraction. The use of creativity occurred in the light of what children need to do—problem-solving—and in the light of possibilities, of what children were allowed and encouraged to do.

The fourth sub-theme was communicating using multiple modes, from language to graphic representations. Language should not take precedent over other modes in communication or knowledge building as stated through the synecdoche: “Words should not be used as a shortcut to knowledge” (p. 83). In Malaguzzi’s opinion, the plurality of modes was necessary for the construction of ideas and symbols and for simplification and decision-making. It was the different modes (e.g., graphic expression, [p. 92]) that facilitated collaborative learning and kept the learning going.

4.4.12 Result.

The results have been analysed at three levels: students, (local) community, and society and have been identified by looking for vocabulary semantically equivalent to result or related to it such as conjunctive adverbs implying effects or results (e.g., therefore) and verbs that presuppose results, effects, or intended consequences such as produce, acquire, discover, cause, and their direct objects. The following quotes were selected as representative for the study of this theme:

Thus, we have put together a mechanism combining places, roles, and functions that have their own timing, but that can be interchanged with one another in order to generate ideas and actions. All this works within a network of cooperation and interactions that produces for the adults, but above all for the children, a feeling of belonging in a world that is alive, welcoming, and authentic. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 64)

As we learn two-way processes of communication, we acquire a wider awareness of political choices regarding infancy, encourage mutual adaptation among children and adults, and promote growth of adult educational competencies. We have truly left behind a vision of the child as egocentric, focused only on cognition and physical objects, and whose feelings and affectivity are underestimated and belittled. (p. 66)
All people—and I mean scholars, researchers, and teachers, who in any place have set themselves to study children seriously—have ended up by discovering not so much the limits and weaknesses of children but rather their surprising and extraordinary strengths and capabilities linked with an inexhaustible need for expression and realization. But the results of those learned inquiries, describing new aspects of development and opening endless possibilities for practical application and ethical and philosophical consideration, have not been sufficiently seized on by educators. (p. 78)

I know all this could take place in such a moment as the present, when science, history, and the public conscience appear unanimous in recognizing the child as endowed with the virtues, resources, and intrinsic rights that we already mentioned. But a child so endowed paradoxically explodes in the hands of his creators; such a child becomes too overwhelming for philosophy, science, education, and political economy. The incapacity of societies to respond to such a child would seem to cast doubt on the nobility of our motives regarding children. (p. 78)

Metaphors and images re-emerge portraying childhood in one of two extreme ways: as blank, powerless, and entirely shaped by adults; or on the other hand, as autonomously capable of gaining control of the adult world. We have not correctly legitimized a culture of childhood, and the consequences are seen in all our social, economic, and political choices and investments. It is a typical, frightening example of offense and betrayal of human resources. (p. 78)

Our teachers do research either on their own or with their colleagues to produce strategies that favor children's work or can be utilized by them. They go from research into action (and vice versa). When all the teachers in the school are in agreement, the projects, strategies, and styles of work become intertwined and the school becomes a truly different school. Some of our teachers proceed in this research with more intentionality and better methods than others; the records and documentaries that result from their endeavors are significant beyond the immediate needs for action and become common objects of study, at times with so much substance as to become of interest to a wider audience. As a result, these teachers feel, and help others to feel, more motivation to grow
and attain a much higher level of professionalism. In the process, our teachers realize that they must avoid the temptation of expecting children to give them back what they already know, but that instead they must retain the same sense of wonder that children live through in their discoveries. This whole approach causes children to be better known by their teachers. Therefore, they feel more open to challenge, more able to work with their peers in unusual situations, and more persistent because they realize that what they have in mind can be tried out. Children know that when pursuing their goals, they can make their own choices, and that is both freeing and revitalizing. It is, indeed, what we had promised the children, their families, and ourselves. (p. 87)

The results of these studies guide us in the formulation of flexible projects. But there is another reason for experimenting and documenting, namely the necessity to reveal in full light the image of a competent child. This, in turn, bolsters our position against detractors and the mystification of official programs and practices. (p. 90)

At the societal level, Malaguzzi (1998) observed that although educational research pointed toward an image of a competent child, the society, the socio-political systems, and the educators remained fixed in one of the two polarized views of the child: the dominating tabula rasa to be written on by adults or progressivism’s autonomous child. Metonymies are largely used in these paragraphs to suggest categories of people (e.g., science for scientists, child for children) and to avoid direct agency. But Malaguzzi (1998) raised a question regarding the morality of this philosophical, economical, and educational inertia regarding the representation of the children by questioning the “nobility of motives” of such attitudes, where nobility was used with the sense of decency and moral integrity. Scientific research regarding the child was projected as a positive one by emphasizing the participial adjective endowed through the adverb of manner so and followed by the direct object expressed through characterization of societies as “incapable to respond to such a child.” The contradictory relationship between the resistance of society to see the child in a different light, was illustrated by the collective personal pronoun we, the negative form of the verb legitimate, at present perfect (to show a state that begins in the past and still continues), and its direct object a culture of childhood. The effects of such societal attitude were looked upon as “offense and betrayal of human resources” and the most visual metaphor of the
effect upon the child “such child explodes in the hands of his creators;” in other words the reality of a child who is capable, who has feelings, is altruist, cooperative, and has rights is destroyed.

What Reggio Emilia, as expressed in these documents, is trying to do is to let this endowed child exist, at least while they are in kindergarten. First, they created an environment that was conducive to “a feeling of belonging in a world that is alive, welcoming, and authentic” (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 64), and it was foremost a positively charged affective environment, which nourished children emotionally; teachers became researchers of children and applied the research, and as a result they were motivated to grow professionally and get to know the children. The children in turn became visible as capable human beings.

Lastly, at a societal level of discourse, Reggio realized the importance of their choice as counter-culture and its socio-political mission of establishing a balanced vision of the child as “competent” and not “egocentric, focused only on cognition and physical objects, and whose feelings and affectivity are underestimated and belittled” (p. 66), and with this came an antithesis to “mystification of official programs and practices” (p. 90).

4.5 CDA of Ontario Early Childhood Programmatic Curricula (2010).

In this section I describe and interpret the data from the draft and final versions of the Ontario kindergarten program. The first draft was published in 2010, while the final version was published in 2016 and superseded the draft version.

Given the amount of data (162 pages of text), the selection of quotes related to creativity was limited to the quotes that had at least one word with the root crea, which is the root word for creativity. The premise of this selection was that there is a direct semantic and conceptual connection with creativity when the word is from the same etymological family. The words were searched throughout the document and sorted according to their nature (i.e., parts of speech: noun, verb, adjective, and adverb), meaning, and its direct semantic relation with the theme (essence, property, teacher student).

4.5.1 Essence of creativity.

In order to determine what creativity was, several word searches were performed to determine the nature (e.g., process) and context of creativity as presented in the document. From a
morphological point of view, creativity was used as a noun in the context of play and games, as an adjective (creative) in the context of development (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8), process (p. 140), media (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 42), centre (p. 121), thinking (p. 44), and as an adverb (creatively) in the context of thinking (p. 13 and p. 69).

4.5.2 Creativity as play.
Creativity as a noun appeared twice in the draft version of the document and in both cases in association with play; first, it was presented in association with the notion of play as the “core of creativity and innovation” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 13), and second it appeared in the context of games, which were forms of play, where it was stated that the focus of the games should be on creativity and exploration (p. 128). Play as the core of creativity determined play as an intrinsic essential component of creativity in the curriculum authors’ vision, and this gives the first clue of the essence of creativity; therefore, it was necessary to scrutinize what notion of play was proposed in the Full-Day Kindergarten curriculum and how this was related to creativity.

Play was characterized as a “means to early learning” (p. 2), a “vehicle for learning” (p. 13), and again as a “means to early learning” (p. 13). All of the above collocations contained prepositions of purpose (to, for) and therefore implied that playing was done with the purpose of learning, as all described play as an action to be done in order to achieve something; in this case learning, but the quote that revealed the main connection between play and learning was the following: “Play and academic work are not distinct categories for young children, and learning and doing are also inextricably linked for them” (OME, 2010, p. 13). By stating that “play and academic work are not distinct categories for young children,” the authors seem to have expressed that there was no difference between asking four and five-year-old children to do academic work to achieve the Language Specific Expectation number 2.3, which stated that children “demonstrate an awareness of basic book conventions and concepts of print when a text is read aloud or when they are beginning to read print” (p. 81) on one side and play on the other side. In other words, play equaled academic work.
To support the play-based curriculum, the authors invoked the children’s right to play as established by the United Nations (UN) in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Article 31, and the notion of play as defined by the Canadian Council on Learning:

Play, therefore, has a legitimate and important role in early learning and can be used to further children’s learning in all areas of the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program. It is so important that the United Nations has recognized it as a specific right for all children (UNICEF, 2015).

Play nourishes every aspect of children’s development – it forms the foundation of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional skills necessary for success in school and in life. Play ‘paves the way for learning.’ (Canadian Council on Learning, as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 13)

These references to the right to play and, implicitly, the definitions of play as stated by the UN and by the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) may create a conceptual confusion as there are substantial differences between the meaning, for example “play and academic work are not distinct categories for young children” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 13), and where academic work refers to school-related work, study, and play as defined by the UN and the Canadian Council on Learning.

In the case of the United Nations, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defined play as following:

‘Play’: Children’s play as behaviour, activity, or processes initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves and it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise. Caregivers may contribute to the creation of environments in which it takes place, but play itself is non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation and is undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end. It involves the exercise of autonomy, physical, mental or emotional activity, and has the potential to take infinite forms, either in groups or alone. These forms will change and adapt throughout the course of childhood. The key characteristics of play are fun, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productivity. Together, these factors contribute to the enjoyment it produces and the
consequent incentive to continue to play. While play is often considered non-essential, the Committee reaffirms that it is a fundamental and vital dimension of the pleasure of childhood, as well as an essential component of physical, social, cognitive, emotional and spiritual development. (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013, p. 9)

This controlled by children, non-compulsory, self-motivated, non-productive, fun, uncertain, flexible notion of play was to be applied to every UN statement and in the curriculum; the UN notion of play was clearly in opposition with “play equals academic work,” because the latter is compulsory, it is not non-productive, or undertaken for its own sake.

In the case of the Canadian Council on Learning represented by Hewes (2006), the definition of play was not stated directly, but free play was reinforced from the first page of the article:

The physical and social environments in which Canadian children develop have changed over the past several decades. It is increasingly rare for children to have long, uninterrupted blocks of time to play indoors and outdoors, by themselves or with their friends. (Hewes, 2006, p. 1)

Furthermore, the Canadian Council on Learning (Hewes, 2006) brought in the focus on free play in the early childhood education setting and the educators’ role in children’s free play:

While children do need time to play without adult interruption, some active adult involvement can be beneficial, resulting in longer, more complex episodes of play. Early childhood educators support children’s learning in play by becoming co-players, guiding and role modelling when the play becomes frustrating for the child or when it is about to be abandoned for lack of knowledge or skill. (Hewes, 2006, p. 4)

In many early childhood programs, “free play” is used to fill time rather than to promote learning and development. While much learning does occur during centre time and circle time, spontaneous free play is equally important to early learning. It should be a focus of educators’ planning and interactions with children. (Hewes, 2006, p. 5)
Hence, rather than considering play as academic work, the Canadian Council on Learning explicitly made the distinction and reinforced the idea of free play with no or non-invasive adult intervention as parallel play, co-play, or play training within a child’s world. The Canadian Council on Learning (Hewes, 2006, p. 4) explicitly stated that adult interventions were made to support play and were not strategies to impose adult predefined knowledge and skills expectations.

By quoting the United Nation’s right to play and making the reference to the Canadian Council on Learning definition of play, one would think that the authors of the curriculum and the quoted sources shared the same understanding of play; nevertheless, in the case of the FDK, by making reference to the definitions exposed above, the authors undermined their own argument about academic work and play as not being different for the child. Academic work was driven by teachers and mandatory learning expectations, which described the skills and knowledge students were supposed to know and do. The expectations that drove the kindergarten curriculum were not controlled and structured by children; nothing in this document speaks about these characteristics of play, such as fun or uncertainty or non-productivity. On the contrary, the expectations induce the idea of a necessity of results, certainty, and the quantity of productivity: teachers plan, teach, and assess children, and children must exhibit the achievement of 138 specific academic expectations, which supersede authentic play and the learning it can support. The notion of play as academic work is quite confusing for teachers and therefore inapplicable. This idea is congruent with Pyle and Danniels’ (2017) results, which offered teachers’ perspectives regarding the equivalency of play equaling academic work:

These six teachers described the learning of academic skills primarily in didactic terms, emphasizing that the learning of academic concepts required direct teacher instruction and that this instruction did not occur in the context of play:

I don’t expect my phonemic awareness study that we do in our morning message and building words and playing with sounds and all that we do for 5 minutes every morning is going to happen at the centres. I don’t really think that they’re going to be like, “Oh phone /f/ /f/ oh it makes that sound.” No it’s not. (Teacher 15)
Other teachers shared this perspective, stating that trying to find a balance between the academic expectations of the kindergarten curriculum and the play-based pedagogical approach that is mandated in Ontario kindergarten classrooms presented a continuous challenge:

I found that to be really tough because it doesn’t really come naturally in play. I find it really hard to mesh the play and the literacy, and I find that most of their literacy skills come from the small-group work that I do (Teacher 1). (Pyle & Danniels, 2017, p. 279)

Creativity as thinking skills and creative process was revealed mainly through adverbs such as *creatively*, which modified the verb *to think* (OME, 2010, p. 17 and 69) and through the adjective *creative* as in “creative thinking skills” (p. 44), “creative thinking” (p. 140), and “creative process” (p. 138). The creative thinking skills could be “developed” (p. 140) or “encouraged” through learning activities designed by the teacher–early childhood educator team (p. 17 and p. 140). What it means to be creatively thinking is not referenced, however, the closest thing to a definition of creative thinking came in the arts section of the document disguised as the creative process:

The creative process is the focus of the arts. Children’s thinking emerges as they try out new theories and ideas. Children need time to revisit materials and experiences to consolidate their learning. Carefully planned experiences and organization of material enable children to explore visual arts materials, tools, and processes; music; and drama and dance throughout the day. Various learning centres in the classroom (e.g., the puppet centre, the drama centre, the art studio) provide opportunities for children to apply and extend their learning. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 140)

As commented before, the vision of creativity as a creative process tends to isolate the individual and place her or him in an ivory tower, ignoring the social aspect of creativity. Furthermore, even in the case of the creativity process, there are emergent open-ended inquiries, which here were limited by imposing activities closed by expectations. In the Full-Day Kindergarten case, the emergence of children’s thinking was in contradiction with an expectation and a predefined time constrained program.
In conclusion, although the authors traced creativity as rooted in play, there was internal inconsistency with regards to the concept of play, as it had a distorted meaning; this internal inconsistency has practical consequences as teachers are confused when asked to consider the equivalency of play and academic work. The authors also regarded creativity as thinking skills and processes, recognized its characteristic as emergent, and proposed to carefully organize the experiences and materials to meet the expectations. This decantation of the FDK language took an oxymoronic turn as the authors seemed to program expectation-driven thinking, which is also spontaneous, unexpected, and emergent in children.

4.5.3 Properties.

The characteristics of creativity or creative thinking in the draft curriculum document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010) were determined by looking at the meaning of the adjective creative and the adverb creatively and their contexts, as well as how they characterized the nouns and verbs they were modifying, such as creative, appeared in seven different contexts: “creative development” (p. 8), “creative ways” (p. 141), “creative centre” (p. 121), “creative process” (p. 140), “creative movement” (p.17, p.21, and p.134 ), “creative media,” and “creative thinking skills” (p. 44). The term creatively appeared twice as “to think creatively” (p. 13 and p. 69). These instances of creativity are detailed below.

In the case of the creative process in the document it was specific to arts; it involved trying out ideas, which implied trial and error and resulted in uncertainty:

The creative process is the focus of the arts. Children’s thinking emerges as they try out new theories and ideas. Children need time to revisit materials and experiences to consolidate their learning. Carefully planned experiences and organization of material enable children to explore visual arts materials, tools, and processes; music; and drama and dance throughout the day. Various learning centres in the classroom (e.g., the puppet centre, the drama centre, the art studio) provide opportunities for children to apply and extend their learning. (OME, 2010, p. 140)

The creative process is illustrated as emergent, spontaneous, dependent on the environment, nonlinear, and exploratory. This is expressed through the verb emerges, which alludes to spontaneity, to happening, and the infinitives to revisit to emphasize nonlinearity and
dependence on the environment, and to explore, which is about mapping new territories. Nevertheless, “carefully planned experiences and organization of the material” (p. 140) signaled Tyler’s curriculum rationale (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2004a, p. 34) and seems incompatible with emergence of thinking and the uncertain results of children’s explorations and experimentations. According to Pinar et al. (2004b), Tyler’s rationale was a “linear, administrative procedure for curriculum development” (Pinar et al., 2004b, p. 148) which unfolded as follows: “the selection and definition of learning objectives” (Pinar et al., 2004b, p. 148), “the selection and creation of appropriate learning experiences” (Pinar et al., 2004b, p. 148), and “the organization of the learning experiences to achieve a maximum cumulative effect, and the evaluation of the curriculum so that revisions become discernible” (Pinar et al., 2004b, p. 148).

Another reference to the properties of creativity is the creative thinking or to think creatively, which were mentioned in the document in the contexts of language, environmental education, and arts, however, the closest thing to a definition of creative thinking was given as an example of creative thinking in the Language: Using the Expectations section:

They can also be encouraged to think creatively – for example, to use what they already know in a different context, to represent their thinking through drawing or painting or movement, or to explore a new idea. (OME, 2010, p. 69)

Hence, creativity is about knowledge application in different contexts, multimodal expression, or exploration. Creative thinking can be encouraged through learning activities and opportunities for artistic expression:

Visual arts, music, dance, and socio-dramatic play contribute in many ways to the development of children’s thinking and communication skills. Providing children with opportunities to express themselves through the arts develops decision making skills, stimulates memory, facilitates understanding, develops symbolic communication, promotes sensory development, and encourages creative thinking. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 140)
The learning activities are designed by the Early Learning–Kindergarten team to encourage the children to think creatively (p. 13)

This notion of creative thinking can be developed:

As children learn more about themselves through the development of personal and social skills, learn to work effectively and respectfully with others through the development of self-regulation skills, and acquire the capacity for systems thinking through the development of critical and creative thinking skills, they increase their capacity to make connections with the world around them and to become environmentally responsible citizens. (p. 44)

Creative thinking can be facilitated and that seems to be the job of the early childhood educator, as it was stated in the following almost unsubstantial sentence:

Early childhood educators bring a focus on age-appropriate program planning to facilitate experiences that promote each child’s physical, cognitive, language, emotional, social, and creative development and well-being, providing opportunities for them to contribute to formative assessment (assessment for learning) and evaluation of the children’s learning. (p. 8)

Although the description of the creative process is general, the fact it was mentioned only in the arts section of the curriculum (creative movements and dance), reveals that creativity as process is anchored in the twentieth century artistic process as creative process. In the same sphere of artistic production or interpretation and use of media were inscribed the meaning of the creative centre, creative media, and creative movement, as in all contexts children were supposed to use something: media, materials, and the body to communicate or demonstrate something: “Children working at the creative centre put scraps of leftover materials that can be used in other projects in the appropriate bins on the shelf” (OME, 2010, p. 121), and “whenever appropriate, therefore, children should be encouraged to use ICT [information and communication technology] to support and communicate their learning. Current technologies were useful both as research tools and as creative media” (p. 42). Further, the “creative movement and dance provide a vehicle for response and for interpretation of something children have heard, seen, or felt” (p. 17).
The last mention of creative in the document appeared in the context of creative ways in the drama section of the expectations for *Making Connections: Early Learning–Kindergarten (EL–K) Team’s Intentional Interactions* and represented how the teacher and ECE were supposed to challenge the children: “You have so many creative ways to make the puppets move in the shadow play area. What happens when you use your hands for puppets instead? What’s the same? What’s different?” (OME, 2010, p. 141). Here the meaning of creative is “many possibilities” as in variety or flexibility, which is anchored in Torrance’s (1974) notion of divergent thinking; in this case the adults’ path of ideas and representation of puppets in an effort to determine the child to: “D1.1 demonstrate an awareness of personal interests and a sense of accomplishment in drama and dance” (p. 141) as the expectation required.

The multiple meanings, definitions, and examples of the essence of creativity reveal a cacophony of perspectives—some incongruent or insufficient (e.g., application of knowledge versus emergence of thinking), as if the authors had never agreed upon a common language and conceptualization of creativity. The most updated versions of paradigmatic thinking about creativity was found in the arts section as emergent thinking, nonlinear, and dependent on the environment (e.g., social, physical, etc.).

### 4.5.4 Teacher.

The analysis of the teacher theme in the Full-Day Kindergarten case looked at both the teacher and the early childhood educator, as most of the time they were referred to as The Early Learning–Kindergarten team (EL–K team). The teaming up of teacher and early childhood educator was clearly stated in The Role of Teacher and Early Childhood Educator section of the curriculum: *The Early Learning–Kindergarten team comprises a Kindergarten teacher and early childhood educator(s) (ECEs)* (OME, 2010, p. 7). The team was supposed to collaborate and complement each other in their educational mission; each team member had his or her own responsibilities, as follows:

Teachers are responsible for the long-term planning and organization of the program and the management of the Early Learning–Kindergarten classes. In addition, teachers are responsible for student learning; effective instruction; formative assessment (assessment
for learning) and evaluation, based on the team’s assessments of children’s progress; and formal reporting and communication with families.

Early childhood educators bring a focus on age-appropriate program planning to facilitate experiences that promote each child’s physical, cognitive, language, emotional, social, and creative development and well-being, providing opportunities for them to contribute to formative assessment (assessment for learning) and evaluation of the children’s learning. They are also responsible for implementing the integrated extended day. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8)

In order to understand the identity and role of the ECEs and teachers, the examination of their educational obligations is required. In looking at the responsibilities in the above text, I observed that from a lexical point of view, while there is a conglomeration of pedagogical jargon in the teacher’s section of responsibilities (planning, management, learning, assessment, evaluation, and reporting), the early childhood educators’ job description was almost void of official duties, with the exception of the implementation of the extended day. The ECEs can contribute to planning and assessment, but their contribution was not essential or compulsory. There was no symmetry of responsibilities between the team members with no official responsibilities for the early childhood educator during the school day. Hence, right from the start, the team was hierarchical with the ECE in the role of an assistant rather than a teacher. The order of the teacher–ECE structure is also evident in the frequency of instances they appeared in the document as individual entities and then as a team: early childhood educator (seven times), teacher (19 times), and the Early Learning–Kindergarten team (285 times). This is relevant in the context of creative thinking given that creative thinking is facilitated by the ECEs.

From the creativity point of view, the first thing I noticed was that it appeared in the document in the very complicated phrase regarding the job description of the early childhood educator as “creative development” (OME, 2010, p. 8), which occurred during the program activities. It is the ECEs duty to bring a focus on the age appropriateness of the activities in order to facilitate the creative development; the artfully entangled phrase sounds important, but it does not clarify what brings a focus, as the main verb, means. Nevertheless, this phrase signals a lack of official responsibility when it comes to planning, teaching, and assessing, as brings a focus
does not mean more than concentrate. This particular job description of the ECE invokes a language void of authenticity, which acts as a filler, because, in fact, the teacher is officially in charge and responsible for the curriculum.

Another pattern in the teacher’s and ECE’s job was to respond, to challenge, and to extend. The meaning of these actions was clarified in the following FDK quotes for responding:

In the sample responses provided, the team members purposefully plan their program based on an analysis of assessment information gleaned from previous observations. Or they adjust their practice moment by moment in response to immediate events or conversations in their classrooms that give them the opportunity to help a child make connections to prior knowledge by responding to something a child has said or done. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 26)

For challenging: “The examples under ‘Challenging’ illustrate how a team uses this information and scaffolds the children’s learning either by presenting new learning opportunities or by adding another element to the learning” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 27), and for extending: “The team members meet the children ‘at the edge’ of their learning and support them in gradually applying their thinking in different contexts” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 27). The vocabulary and the ideas of these paragraphs signal the presence of two psychological approaches to early childhood mashed into the descriptions of the team’s activity. The first approach is behaviourism, as everything the team does—from planning to teaching—is related to the change of behaviour outlined in the expectations; this is present here in a subtler lexicon, such as assessment, where assessment is evaluation, as the judgment of a child’s performance in the context of overall expectations. The second one was lexically and conceptually appropriated from Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development through vocabulary, such as “scaffold,” “support,” and meeting students “at the edge of their learning” (OME, 2010, p. 27). But the scaffolding and supporting is directly related to the expectations, as the students are scaffolded to read, not because they wanted to or needed to, but because it is required in the curriculum.

The other instances of creativity in relation with the teacher and ECE or the team were determined by selecting the quotes that had as a subject the teacher or its variants (teacher, early
childhood educator, or EL–K team) and contained at least one word that had the root crea. This was undertaken, because in the logic of a sentence where the agent (in this case the teacher) was the subject of the sentence, the responsibility of the action was not avoided, and the receiver of the action (object) was clear (Meyer, 2009, p. 221). Two themes emerged when looking at the quotes: teachers asked children to create, and teachers created an activity, artefact or environment. They are detailed below.

First, the document presented teachers and ECEs as inviting or asking children to create something with a purpose. For example, stories, signs for the centres, a rhythm to accompany a song, and a fabric pattern to represent their identity (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). These invitations and requests were initiations of closed tasks with criteria that were most likely measurable, as in creating a pattern. These activities resemble problem-solving situations in the sense that the child has a reference point and can project the concept of pattern, song, or sign. The learning situations were more about task-based projects conditioned by the teacher and ECE and not emergent creativity, as described by the authors.

Next, the document illustrated situations where the team created activities, an artefact, or environment. The following quotes were identified as belonging to activity and artefact creation: “EL–K team members create a learning centre using a filing cabinet and a table where children can work with magnetic letters” (OME, 2010, p. 72); “EL–K team members observe and create a written record of the non-verbal communication used by the children” (p. 74); “EL–K team members create sentence strips and individual word cards for the children to use in reconstructing the texts of familiar class poems” (p. 81); “EL–K team members help children create an alphabet book, using the children’s names and pictures of objects in the classroom to represent the letters.” (p. 85); “An EL–K team member creates a large number line on the floor of the classroom and asks individual children to stand beside different numbers” (pp. 97-98); “An EL–K team member has created number cards to fit into a pocket chart that contains cards with the children’s names on them” (p.101); “A team member creates a graph with pictures destinations” (p. 111); “EL–K team members create opportunities for children to improve and refine their existing physical skills and to begin to develop new ones” (p. 134).
In the above examples the word *create* was mostly used with the meaning of *make* as in a physical activity or set-up; in this case there was no trace of creativity as bringing something new into the environment. Teachers and educators were described as making things to be used for, with, or by children. Therefore, the teacher was rather a *homo faber*. The repeated use of the word *create* projects an image of imaginative teachers, when in fact they make educational materials for children, conditioning children’s activity and changing it into academic work or closed end games.

The following quotes illustrated the way teachers and ECEs were meant to create the environment, whether it is social, emotional, or physical:

- Team members make decisions about the use of materials and the focus of their teaching that are based both on the learning expectations and on their observations of the children’s needs, and they create an environment that supports language learning and literacy in many ways. (OME, 2010, p. 68)
- Showing empathy by acknowledging feelings can create a connection between children and team members. (p. 133)
- These teams should also create an environment in which children are encouraged to pose mathematical questions, explore, and investigate. (p. 93)
- Early Learning–Kindergarten teams should create a pleasant, culturally inclusive classroom in which children who are learning a new language feel not only that they belong, but also that they have a voice that is valued and celebrated. (p. 39)
- Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community to create a learning environment that supports students with special education needs. (p. 39)
- The atmosphere the team creates is vital to the emotional development of the children. The environment should be one that encourages empathy, interest in trying new things, and the development of self-confidence. (p. 35)
- Early Learning–Kindergarten teams should create contexts through which learning can take place in ways that engage children and that build on and expand their learning. (p. 35)
- The Early Learning–Kindergarten team can create an effective environment to support young children’s learning of mathematics. (p. 21)
• In so doing, they can create an effective environment to support young children’s learning and development of literacy. (p. 19)

The environment created by teachers and ECEs must meet concurrent multiple criteria that are challenging for any architect or interior designer.

The teacher-created environment is the direct object of the sentence or it was implied semantically; it was used to support or encourage learning in general (OME, 2010, p. 35 and p. 39), language and literacy (p. 19 and p. 68), mathematics (p. 21 and p. 93), emotional development (p. 35, p. 39, and p. 133), and inclusiveness (OME, 2010, p. 39). The presence of modals such as should (p. 93) in the context of environment supportive of mathematics or in the context of English language learning (p. 39) or learning in general (p. 35) and the use of can in the context of learning mathematics and language, shifts the focus from creativity to the obligation and ability to support language, mathematics, emotional development, and learning in general. Again, the meaning of to create echoes to make as in staging or setting up an environment that is conducive toward meeting the expectations. The only qualities that were especially encouraged as support were emotional response, cultural inclusiveness, mathematics, and language; these indicated a list of ranking of priorities and disciplines.

The only time teachers were encouraged to alter the environment and truly observe their students was in the visual arts specific expectations, in the Professional Learning Conversations as an example (hence, not compulsory). For example, in the professional learning conversations:

After some professional reading, members of the EL–K team decide that their current arts and crafts practices (e.g., the use of pre-cut shapes and requiring all children to create the same product) limit the children’s artistic development. They discuss how they can address this problem. They decide to put some materials with common attributes (e.g., shiny items) at the visual arts centre and observe and listen as children form their own ideas of what to create. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 151)

This unique moment in the quote portrayed for the first and last time in the document the emergence of children’s thinking and doing, and allowed creativity almost without imposed boundaries, by applying an indirect, non-intrusive pedagogy. The above quote was the only
example where children were portrayed in the document as capable of their own thinking and decision-making and teachers as thoughtful, careful observers of children.

In conclusion, there is an asymmetry of responsibilities between teachers and educators, although mandated to work together as a collaborative team. The teacher is rather a homo faber who is directed by the document to determine children to achieve outcomes by controlling and conditioning their activities, environments, educational materials and behaviour.

4.5.5 Student: The brain, the children and children and crea.
The data for this theme consisted of the vocabulary used to name students and of sentences that had children as the subject and contained at least one word rooted in crea. The reasoning for this data categorization is as follows: In the case of metonymy for children, it is revelatory with regards to the authors’ perspective on children (e.g., identifying children as a brain is at least associating children with a biological, neurological discourse). In the case of the sentences, the selection was based on the fact that they were descriptions of children or what they do and were linked conceptually to creativity by the word containing the root crea, which is the etymological root of creativity.

4.5.5.1 Vocabulary.
The first observation to be made with regards to the student theme was lexical; the students were referred throughout this document as the brain and as children. These are categories that are analyzed below.

4.5.5.2 The brain.
Looking at the instances of students as brain, I noted that although the brain was mentioned only three times in this document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 2 and p.25), the contexts of the brain occurrences represented the premise of the curriculum. The brain represented and justified biological learning theory as the fundament of the curriculum:

In order for learning to take place, the brain must be able to make connections and find patterns. As children make connections between the things they already know and new information, their brain creates patterns that help them understand the world around them.
It is therefore critical that children in the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program have multiple and varied opportunities to make connections between previous experiences and new experiences that they are having every day. When the Early Learning–Kindergarten team members see evidence that these connections are being made, they are able to plan the program to support and extend the children’s learning. (p. 25)

The above passage is revelatory from an ideological point of view. By referring to the child as the brain and presenting learning as making connections and finding patterns the curriculum makers suggested the following: First, the locus of children’s learning is in the brain; this alludes to a biological determinism and essentialism and oversimplifies the learning as a biological process; the brain is socially isolated and there is no social context of learning. Learning is reduced to a complex bio-chemical process. There seems to be a deliberate confusion between the brain and the way information travels to and from the brain through connections (synapses) and the mental connections between new and previous experiences of children; the use of words connections and patterns with different meanings in the same paragraph creates false conceptual premises for the argument of learning programming through expectations. Second, when learning does not occur, one can infer from the above quotation that the child’s brain does not make proper connections, or it cannot find patterns; the child is represented clinically by the organ and the organ becomes it. The child is depersonalized and objectified. From this I inferred that, if the child does not achieve the expectations, the child’s brain is at fault; the child then can be declared not normal, because he or she is not meeting the expectations. This is where the border between educational psychology and neurology becomes blurred and psychology comes in place taking over the biological discourse, but, “the union between neuroscience and cognitive psychology can be problematic when neural processes do not easily translate into cognitive models” (Clement & Lovat, 2012, p. 546). Furthermore, the relevance of neuroscience to education is debated in the field:

The purported “balanced dialogue” between neuroscience and education…is perceived by Turner (2011) to belie an imbalance whereby neuroscience is seen to dominate the partnership. Turner holds that the differing interests and philosophical outlooks of neuroscience and education render them incompatible and that the identification of neural
correlates of mental processes adds little to education. Similarly, Bruer (1999, 2006, 2008) and Schrag (2011) recognize the contribution of neuroscience to understanding the neural processes that support learning, but nonetheless question their potential for direct application to teaching practice. Bruer (1997) described the application of neuroscience to education as “a bridge too far.” This was because, in Bruer’s (1997, 1998, 1999, 2006) assessment, neuroscience was not perceived to be producing the sort of knowledge that teachers could readily apply in practice and, in contrast, that cognitive psychology was seen to produce knowledge that teachers could more readily employ. Bruer (2002) concluded: “At best, brain-based education is no more than folk-theory about the brain and learning” (p. 1032). (Clement & Lovat, 2012, p. 538)

This is confusing for many people, including teachers and parents, who are not knowledgeable enough to distinguish between the psychological and neurological discourses in education. For most people, including teachers and parents, grades or measuring the child against the imposed expectation is a measurement of mind performance, which happens in the brain. This is due to misinterpretations of neurological findings or neuromyths:

Without the critical stance that is implicit in interdisciplinary collaboration, there is the danger of the misinterpretation of neuroscientific findings, resulting in what have been dubbed as neuromyths (OECD, 2002). The distortions of neuroscience that typified neuromyths were denounced by Bruer (1997, 1998, 1999, 2006) and his critique has found resonance among both neuroscientists and educators. Neuromyths are strongly denounced in the literature because of their distortion of neuroscientific findings and the lack of research evidence to support their claims (e.g., Alferink & Farmer-Dougan, 2010; Geake, 2008; Goswami, 2004, 2006; Grotzer, 2011; OECD, 2002; Purdy, 2008; Purdy & Morrison, 2009; Szucs & Goswami, 2007). In general, neuromyths are generated by speculation about the implications of neuroscience for education without taking into account corroborating evidence from behavioral observations (see Bruer, 2008; Fischer, 2008). The instinct that understanding brain functioning may well lead to better pedagogical practices and thus improved learning outcomes for students had merit, but often lacked the sophisticated appreciation of the theoretical and methodological implications that are currently being fleshed out in the dialogue between neuroscience
and education (e.g., Geake, 2009; Goswami & Szucs, 2011; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2008). Among those theories and practices listed as neuromyths are brain lateralization (right and left-brain learning; e.g., Lindell & Kidd, 2011), Brain Gym® (e.g., Stephenson, 2009), and VAK learning styles (visual auditory and kinaesthetic; e.g., Purdy, 2008). (Clement & Lovat, 2012, p. 541)

Similarly, the grades that measure the fulfilment of the expectations and are the basis of the binary pass or fail system can be interpreted as signs of normal or abnormal human development and can be perceived as diagnostic tools rather than development guidelines which might be politically biased.

The link between expectations as parameters of learning and learning as “patterns and connections” was not yet very clear:

Although there is general agreement that neuroscience contributes to the knowledge of the biological parameters of learning, there is disagreement on the question of whether this knowledge can be successfully translated into usable knowledge that will assist teachers in their curriculum work. (Clement & Lovat, 2012, p. 540).

The content of skills and knowledge to be taught can be debated even within the universal frame of human development. For example, in reading, the washing out of short-term benefits of teaching reading in kindergarten is clearly documented (Suggate, Sebastian, & Reese, 2012). Hence the time invested in frustrating academic activities could be used for free play with gains that do not wash out.

4.5.5.3 The children.

The second way of identifying students in the curriculum, students as children, seemed to be a disguise of the childhood institutionalization. Looking at other Ontarian curriculums one can easily observe that they have a common frame based on expectations, but instead of using the word children, the authors opted for students, (e.g., grade one language expectations: “By the end of grade one students will…” [OME, 2010, p. 36]), which is the designation of a six to 18 year old minor residing in Ontario and enrolled in Ontarian public school (Education Act of Ontario, 1990, c 2, s 21). The image of children constructed in the FDK curriculum is far from an
affectionate or caring one as a total of 38 overall expectations and 124 specific expectations were placed on children’s shoulders; each set of overall expectations begins with “by the end of the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program, children will,” and each set of specific expectations begins with: “As children progress through the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program, they…;” the future tense and the present tense used here indicates a volition. These beginnings are always followed by verbs such as demonstrate, which is meant to measure students’ achievement of behaviour in degrees of progress. They are students and are expected to do, say, and represent knowledge and skills as established and demanded by the Ministry of Education:

Children in the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program are expected to demonstrate achievement of the overall expectations for each of the six areas of learning by the end of two years in the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program. (p. 23)

Furthermore, there seems to be a deficit model of childhood hidden in the words and assumptions of the FDK curriculum; the following quote is important as it defined the purpose of the FDK curriculum as in “to help children” do something:

The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program is designed to help children build on their prior knowledge and experiences, form concepts, acquire foundational skills, and form positive attitudes to learning as they begin to develop their goals for lifelong learning. It is also designed as the foundation for a continuum of learning from the early years to Grade 8. (p. 22)

The sense of designed is strictly functionalist and its purpose is to help, not to facilitate; the construction of help with an object (children) and infinitive (build, form, acquire, form) is a dictionary case of the meaning of help as in making it easier or possible for someone to do something by offering them one’s services or resources. Help usually presupposes that the person who is helped is in need of help, as he or she is not able to do something. Helping occurs when someone has a problem. In this case, given the fact that it is stated that children are in need of help with skills and concepts, it can be inferred that children have a deficit of fundamental skills, goals, and concepts. They are not normal yet, but with the help of the curriculum, they will
become normal and, hopefully, as identical as possible following the standardized nature of the expectations.

**4.5.5.4 Sentences: Creativity and children.**

With regards to creativity and children, the set of data consisted of sentences with *children* as the subject and contained at least one word rooted in crea. The selection was based on the fact that the sentences that described children or what children do were linked conceptually to creativity by the common root. All the sentences that had children as the subject were found in the overall expectations, specific expectations, and examples of how children demonstrated acquisition and construction of knowledge (both nouns were used in relationship with knowledge). These categories were also used to group the sentences as they illustrated general and specific actions. The hierarchy of importance was given by the operational definitions presented in the curriculum with overall expectations as the most general to specific examples of narratives or activities that children could do in the program.

**4.5.6 Overall and specific expectations.**

According to the document, the overall expectations were general descriptions of skills and knowledge to be demonstrated by children at the end of the program; the specific expectations were descriptions in greater detail of the skills and knowledge (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 23). The achievement of the expectations, meaning the learning of skills and knowledge, was stated beyond any doubt:

> Children in the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program are expected to demonstrate achievement of the overall expectations for each of the six areas of learning by the end of two years in the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program. (p. 23)

This paragraph is relevant with regards to FDK students’ identity due to the use of the passive voice, which indicates the emphasis of the action is not on the agent, but the object of the action. In this paragraph the subject of the sentence is children and the use of the passive voice hides the logical subject of the verb *are expected* and the agent is missing (i.e., Children are expected by whom?). Rephrasing the sentence in the active voice reveals a different story: someone (the adults who made this curriculum, such as the Ontario Ministry of Education) expects children in
the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program to demonstrate achievement of the overall expectations. Rephrasing the sentence positions *children* as the direct object of the sentence and *expect* gives the meaning of require, demand, or requisite. Hence, in an indirect way, by using the passive voice, the Ministry of Education is requiring children to meet these expectations.

The kindergarten expectations contour the portrait of the normal kindergarten child in Ontario by outlining children’s behaviour as desired by the Ontario Ministry of Education; children have to demonstrate by saying, doing, or representing that they have the skills and knowledge dictated by the authors of the curriculum; the expectations are adult-projected ideals to be measured against real children who are different from all perspectives; the expectations are essentially behaviourist as they illustrate a behaviour to be demonstrated by the children during and after the program, and they illustrate antiquated educational concepts, which belong to the industrial revolution and conceptually hook the curriculum to educational social engineering by engaging the epitome of behaviourism, Tyler’s rationale (Feldmann, 2005, p. 48), in creating the program. The present FDK (OME, 2016) curriculum meets the criteria by indicating the desired content to be learnt, how, and the evaluation of children’s behaviour (what they say, do, or represent) according to overall expectations. The overall expectations were expressed through the modal *will*, while the specific expectations were expressed by using simple present; *will* in this case conveys speaker’s or authors’ volition (Collins, 2005), which was enforced by the word *expectations* as requirements. The present tense of the specific expectations denotes a time tabled reading of the verbs. This is suggested through the dependent clause “as students progress through the program,” which marks the time interval of the program through the use of present tense (Cowper, 1998, p. 12). The verbs from the specific expectations express a desired habitual behaviour to be instilled during the program. The emphasis on the product, rather than the process of students’ learning, shifts the focus from the adult’s expectation to the child from the reality of the classroom to an imaginary classroom where children are to be shaped to the same final product. It resembles a manufacturing process where students are moulded according to the expectations, and teachers are accountable for the quantity and quality of the produced students, just like in the Tylerian curricular system: “The Tyler procedure is not a teacher’s statement of curriculum development; it’s a bureaucrat’s” (Pinar et al., 2004b, p. 149). The reality of a classroom in all its complexity (i.e., including students’ cultural diversity, second language
acquisition, age, socio-economic background, rhythm and type of learning, more or less visible disabilities, sensitivities) is ignored and suspended in space and time.

With regards to the overall expectations that contained the root crea, there was only one out of 38 overall expectations that mentioned creativity as a verb. It is present in the mathematics section as a patterning expectation. As such, “by the end of the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program, children will: Explore, recognize, describe, and create patterns, using a variety of materials in different contexts” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 109). In the specific expectations the verb to create appears as a predicate in the mathematics section where children were asked to create patterns as follows:

As children progress through the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program, they:

P4.1 identify, create, reproduce, and extend repeating patterns through investigation, using a variety of materials (e.g., attribute blocks, pattern blocks, a hundreds chart, toys, bottle tops, buttons, toothpicks) and actions (e.g., physical actions such as clapping, jumping, tapping). (p. 109)

In the rest of the specific expectation sentences, the verb to create occurs as a complement, which indicates the purpose of the verb designating children’s activity in language, drama and dance, music, and visual arts:

As children progress through the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program, they:

Language

1.11 demonstrate an awareness that words can rhyme, can begin or end with the same sound, and are composed of phonemes that can be manipulated to create new words. (p. 79)

Drama and Dance

D1.2 explore a variety of tools and materials of their own choice (e.g., blocks, puppets, flashlights, streamers) to create drama and dance in familiar and new ways. (p. 142)
D3.1 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create drama and dance (e.g., try out different voices for parts of a story or chant; find different ways to move to music, trying to connect the movement with the mood and speed of the music; create a sequence of movements). (p. 143)

Music

M1.2 explore a variety of tools and materials of their own choice (e.g., spoons, castanets, rhythm sticks, music software) to create music in familiar and new ways. (p. 146)

M3.1 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create music (e.g., experiment with different instruments to create a rhythm pattern to accompany a familiar song; contribute to making a variation on a familiar song with the class). (p.148)

Visual Arts

V2.1 explore a variety of tools, materials, and processes of their own choice to create visual art forms in familiar and new ways (e.g., use natural and recycled materials at a learning centre). (p. 153)

V3.1 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create visual art forms (e.g., choose materials to make a three-dimensional structure stable; choose an alternative way to fasten their materials if the first way is unsuccessful). (p.154)

There was only one specific expectation in the health and physical activity that mentioned creativity as an adjective, which characterized movement:

As children progress through the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program, they:

2.1 participate actively in creative movement and other daily physical activities (e.g., dance, games, outdoor play, fitness breaks). (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 134)

In looking at the specific expectations that contained the root crea, six out of nine specific expectations belonged in the arts; when specific expectations were analyzed from a proportional
point of view, they were revealing. Table 6 illustrates the proportion between number of specific expectations that contain crea in an area of learning per total number of specific expectations of the subject and the percentage of specific expectations that contain crea in an area of learning.

Table 6.

*Specific expectations that contain crea*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of learning</th>
<th>Number of specific expectations that contain crea in an area of learning per total number of specific expectations of the area of learning</th>
<th>Percentage of specific expectations that contain crea in an area of learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>3.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>2/30</td>
<td>3.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Activity</td>
<td>1/14</td>
<td>7.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama and Dance</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>6/7</td>
<td>28.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>28.5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers reveal a high percentage of specific expectations that contained words rooted in crea in the arts and low percentages in mathematics and language. Because children were asked to demonstrate skills and knowledge in the specific expectations, I concluded that a higher percentage of specific expectations that contained *crea* in an area of learning related to creativity with the disciplines and the grammatical subject *children*. Also, the program of activities was determined by the specific expectations as the teachers were teaching toward the meeting of the expectations. The higher the percentage of specific expectations that contained *crea* the higher the chance of programming activities where children create. The numbers reveal that according to the curriculum, children in the FDK create more in the arts than in language or mathematics.
How much art is directed for children to do by the programmatic curriculum will be presented in the subject category.

Furthermore, in the arts, specific expectations asked children to explore and use problem-solving skills, imagination, and tools to create music, visual art, and dance and drama; the children were asked to explore and implicitly to try out ideas and to let their thinking emerge because of the belief that they can. The teachers were also encouraged to teach indirectly by modifying the environment; this was evident in the visual arts section where, in the Professional Learning Conversations section, it is presented as an imaginary, possible scenario where teachers and educators reflected over their practice and modified the environment by introducing a provocation, which materialized in providing art materials with common attributes:

After some professional reading, members of the EL–K team decide that their current arts and crafts practices (e.g., the use of pre-cut shapes and requiring all children to create the same product) limit the children’s artistic development. They discuss how they can address this problem. They decide to put some materials with common attributes (e.g., shiny items) at the visual arts centre and observe and listen as children form their own ideas of what to create. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 151)

Hence, in arts the children were portrayed as capable of exploring, and as able to construct their own ideas, knowledge, and skills. The direct objects of the verb create used syntactically as a predicate or as a complement in the specific expectations were: new words, patterns, dance, drama, music, and visual art forms. The variety of the artefacts that could be created suggests that creativity is multimodal: Children can express themselves through many modes in any area of learning.

The fact that all children were considered capable of creating, by curriculum makers, suggests a democratic creativity in the sense that creativity is not reserved for adults and geniuses. This is congruent with the artistic process, and it belongs to the I-paradigm of creativity, but also traces of the creativity as an artistic endeavour persisted in authors’ creativity perspective.
4.5.7 Making connections: Ways children might demonstrate their learning.

The third examined body of text was found in the *Making Connections: Ways in Which Children Might Demonstrate Their Learning* column of the FDK document and consisted of examples of children’s possible behaviour that demonstrated the achievement of expectations: “The material in the second column provides examples of narrative modes of assessment that capture children’s learning within the contexts of relationships and environments” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 25). The following sentences were selected for analysis, because each sentence had as a subject *children* and contained the verb *create* as an active voice predicate or complement followed by a direct object. The reasoning resides in the fact that there is a clear and direct connection between the children and creativity as they are creators and they create something. The quotes are classified according to the discipline they belong to.

**Table 7.**

*Making connections between children and creativity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Development</td>
<td>“A group of children create a one-to-one chart to ensure that everyone in the group gets a place at the snack table.” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Two children work at the block centre to create a bake shop. One of the children, whose uncle owns a bakery, explains what materials are needed.” (p. 67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>“After listening to a book about farming, a child creates a farm at the block centre. ‘My silo doesn’t have any grain in it yet.’” (p. 77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A child creates a painting of a snowball melting in her pocket in imitation of an episode in a story she has read.” (p. 84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After shared reading of some alphabet books, EL–K team members help children create an alphabet book, using the children’s names and pictures of objects in the classroom to represent the letters. (p. 85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children write letters at the post office centre, make signs at the block centre; record their findings at the water centre, make a list of classmates’ names at the dramatic play centre, make greeting cards at the visual arts centre, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td>A group of children create an ordinal numbers game. Using sticky notes, they place a different number, from 1 to 10, on the back of each child in the group and then form a line. One child then organizes the children, placing them in order based on the numbers on their backs. (p. 101)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science and Technology</strong></td>
<td>“Using found materials of various geometric shapes, some children work together to create a vehicle.” (p.107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science and Technology</strong></td>
<td>After conducting a survey on pet ownership among their classmates, a group of children create a graph with separate columns showing the number of children who have cats, dogs, birds, hamsters, and fish. (p. 111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Physical Education</strong></td>
<td>“After creating a device for making rice, a child creates a set of labels to show how the device works – where the rice and water go, how to start and stop the cooker, and how to take the rice out.” (p. 127)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Physical Education</strong></td>
<td>“Children create a sequence of digital photographs showing the steps for washing hands to place by the sink or washing bin.” (p. 132)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Physical Education</strong></td>
<td>“At the puppet centre, children express emotions through the dialogue they create for their puppet characters.” (p. 133)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Physical Education</strong></td>
<td>“A small group of children create a game where they have to try to get beanbags inside a hoop.” (p. 135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Physical Education</strong></td>
<td>“Two children with a giant deck of cards create the rules for a new game.” (p. 135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drama and Dance</strong></td>
<td>“After creating their own actions to accompany a familiar chant, a group of children record them pictorially so they can teach them to other children.” (p. 142)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drama and Dance</strong></td>
<td>“A small group of children use the felt board pieces and the felt board to retell familiar stories. Some children create their own endings.” (p. 144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td>“Two children work together at the computer using simple music software to create and record a song.” (p. 146)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td>“A small group of children create a musical version of a favourite pattern book for the whole class to present at the school assembly.” (p. 148)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“A group of children create a chant to tell the rest of the class that it is time to tidy up.” (p. 150)

Visual Arts

“Some children create illustrations for the class art book using a variety of media.” (p. 152)

“The EL–K team had placed books at the block centre with illustrations of buildings from around the world. After looking through the book, a small group of children use found materials to re-create one of the buildings.” (p. 154)

“After listening to a piece of music, children at the visual arts centre create artworks to show how the music made them feel (e.g., sad, happy, scared).” (p.154)

After viewing a painting with wavy lines, a child tells a member of the EL–K team that the lines make her think of water. She creates her own art work using the same element: “This is me swimming. The wavy lines mean that the water is moving.” (p. 155)

The sentences with children as the subject and the verb create, whether as a predicate or as complement followed by a direct object, were selected and categorized, because there is a clear and direct connection between the children and creativity as they are creators and they create something:

1. Number of occurrences of create in the Making Connections document section of the curriculum and the number of pages of the section in each area of learning; the numbers were rendered as fractions in order to see how many times creativity (as create) appeared in the number of pages dedicated to a subject; this fraction was used to determine the rate of occurrence of create per one page by using the rule of three (e.g., 2/8=x/1; x=0.25);
2. Rate of occurrence of create per page; the calculated rates of occurrence were ranked; the higher the rate, the higher the probability of relating creativity with desired behaviour and area of learning;
3. Direct object of children create from the document section of the curriculum in order to determine the meaning of create.

The categories and their corresponding results are summarised in Table 8, as presented below.

---

131
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of learning</th>
<th>Number of occurrences of <em>create</em> and Number of pages</th>
<th>Rate of occurrence of <em>create</em>: 1 page</th>
<th>Direct object of <em>children create</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>0 occurrences /7 pages</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>non</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Development</td>
<td>2 instances/8 pages</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>one-to-one chart, bake shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>5 instances/20 pages</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>a farm, a painting, alphabet book, stories in writing or pictures, an appointment book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3 instances/15 pages</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>an ordinal numbers game, a vehicle, a graph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>2 instances/13.5 pages</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>a set of labels to show how the device works, set of labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education:</td>
<td>4 instances/9.5 pages</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>create a sequence of digital photographs, the dialogue, a game where they have to try to get beanbags inside a hoop, the rules for a new game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama and Dance</td>
<td>2 instance/4.5 pages</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>own endings (of stories), actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>3 instances/5.5 pages</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>A song, a musical version of a favourite pattern book, a chant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>4 instances/6 pages</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>Illustrations, artwork, artwork, buildings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In looking at the incidence of create in the context of children’s activity, the lowest rate of occurrence was identified in social development followed by science and technology as well as mathematics and language, while the highest is found in visual arts, music, drama, and health and physical education, with the rate of occurrence doubled in visual arts. These findings indicate again the predilection of using create in association with children and the arts. With regards to the direct object of create, the document included a variety of nouns indicating activities and artefacts, from games to songs, to buildings artworks, graphs, and stories. Within the document the manifestation of creativity as multimodal is clear due to the overwhelming variety. The fact that children are seen as capable of producing these activities and artefacts suggests strongly that multimodal expression is acknowledged as important for children’s creativity.

By associating create as a verb with children and by the doubling number of occurrences of create in arts, the document communicates that children should create more in the arts and that children should communicate multimodally. These facts are also pointing toward the underlying I-paradigm of creativity with an emphasis on the artistic creativity and implicitly individuality.

The focus is on what should be taught focused the analysis on the disciplines or subjects to be taught. The general overview of what should be taught in kindergarten, and implicitly, what should be taught in the case of creativity is clearly outlined in the purpose of the FDK program:

The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program is designed to help children build on their prior knowledge and experiences, form concepts, acquire foundational skills, and form positive attitudes to learning as they begin to develop their goals for lifelong learning. It is also designed as the foundation for a continuum of learning from the early years to Grade 8. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 22)

When examining the quote, I observed that the program was said to be “designed to help children” and the passive voice agent of the verb leaves the action without a visible author, thus avoiding the responsibility of the action of the predicator. The sense of designed is functionalist as its purpose is to help; the construction of help with an object (children) and infinitive (build, form, acquire) is a dictionary case of the meaning of the verb to help: to make it easier or possible for someone to do something by offering them one’s services or resources. In this case,
the help comes in forms of teaching knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Moreover, help usually presupposes that a person is in need of help, as he or she is not able to perform something independently. Helping occurs when someone has a deficiency of some sort. In this frame of interpretation, help indicates a deficiency of foundational skills, goals, and concepts in every child, in different areas. Furthermore, each one of the 124 specific expectations highlighted a deficit of the child. The dangers of thinking about children through the lens of the deficit model are well summarized by Gorski (2011):

Briefly, deficit ideology is a worldview that explains and justifies outcome inequalities — standardized test scores or levels of educational attainment, for example—by pointing to supposed deficiencies within disenfranchised individuals and communities...Simultaneously, and of equal importance, deficit ideology discounts sociopolitical context, such as the systemic conditions (racism, economic injustice, and so on) that grant some people greater social, political, and economic access, such as that to high-quality schooling, than others...The function of deficit ideology, as I will describe in greater detail later, is to justify existing social conditions by identifying the problem of inequality as located within, rather than as pressing upon, disenfranchised communities so that efforts to redress inequalities focus on “fixing” disenfranchised people rather than the conditions which disenfranchise them. (Gorski, 2011, p.155)

The what should be taught to the children for creativity points toward the subjects and the overall and specific expectations, which defined the path of learning for each area of learning. I examined what was supposed to be taught through overall and specific expectations, which subjects were given more attention through the number of the specific expectations, and where creativity was positioned in this hierarchy of importance. The premise of this analysis is that the numbers of specific expectations drive the quantity of activities in the classroom. For example, while language had 30 specific expectations, visual arts had only seven. As the program had to cover all the expectations outlined in the curriculum, I inferred that the program directed more time and activities to the subject with more specific expectations in the above case, mathematics and language.
4.5.8 Analysis of overall expectations, specific expectations, and creativity.

This analysis of creativity in the overall expectations and specific expectations was done by examining the number of overall and specific expectations dedicated to each subject, as the program was supposed to meet the specific expectations and the occurrence of creativity within the expectations. The expectations are declarative sentences, which outline quantitatively or qualitatively what is to be taught and learnt in kindergarten in each subject or discipline. Because the expectations are sentences complete in themselves (complete thoughts) the presence of a word rooted in crea in the expectations showed at least a conceptual relation with the expectation. The numbers of overall and specific expectations also transformed in percentages relative to their total number to reveal the hierarchy embedded in the numbers. Two comparisons of overall and specific expectations numbers per discipline vis-à-vis the frequency of the word rooted in crea were undertaken and organized in Table 9. The numbers have been transformed in percentages relative to the total to reveal the proportion of expectations connected with creativity and their application in the kindergarten program.

Table 9.

Numbers and percentages of overall and specific expectations containing crea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of learning</th>
<th>Total number of overall expectations</th>
<th>Percentage of overall expectations per discipline</th>
<th>Number of overall expectations that contain crea</th>
<th>Number of specific expectations in each subject</th>
<th>Percentage of specific expectations per discipline that contain crea</th>
<th>Number of specific expectations that contain crea</th>
<th>Percentage of specific expectations per discipline that contain crea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.894 %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.64 %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.894 %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.87 %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.157%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.19 %</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.157 %</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21.77 %</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.526%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.09 %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Activity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.526</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama and Dance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.526</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.157</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.157</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>App.100</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table was used to organize the data regarding the overall and specific expectations in each area of knowledge and their percentage vis-à-vis the total number of expectations. It also displays the numbers and the percentages of overall and specific expectations that contained words rooted in crea, because this shows a conceptual connection with creativity. The area of learning and subject are used interchangeably, as both designate a body of knowledge or discipline. At first glance the following observations were made with regards to overall expectations. There were 38 overall expectations to be assessed by the teacher for each and every child.

I noted that, although the early childhood educator was present in the classroom and could help with the assessment, according to the Education Act of Ontario (1990, c 10, s 264), it was the teacher’s official responsibility to assess children and report their progress. Teacher’s duties include: designing the program, teaching it, and monitoring the individual unfolding of the 38 overall expectations per child, which branch out into 124 specific expectations, for approximately 26 students per class, provide evidence for their assessment, and communicating with parents.

The overall expectations for each subject seem balanced in terms of numbers and percentages within the range of 7.9% in social and emotional development to 13.1% in language, mathematics, and arts, and with 10.5% in health and physical activity, drama, and science. However, when the overall expectations branch out in specific expectations, the small differences change into dramatic ones. The most relevant fact with regards to creativity is the almost total absence of words rooted in crea in the overall expectations. Only one out of 38 overall expectations, or 3%, mentioned creativity; this happened in mathematics where children
were expected to create patterns. Hence, I can assert that there was only one direct connection between teaching, learning, assessment, reporting, and creativity in the text.

![Percentage of Overall Expectations That Contain "Crea" Relative to the Total Number of Overall Expectations](image)

**Figure 7. Overall expectations and crea.**

In terms of specific expectations, I found the following: There were 124 specific expectations driving the curriculum, which had to be addressed in activities, monitored, assessed based on evidence for every child. The highest number of specific expectations were in language (30) and mathematics (27), while the lowest was in drama and dance (6), visual arts (7), music (7), and social development (7). The middle of the range was occupied by science, health and physical activity, and emotional development. There was a gap in terms of number of special expectations between the lowest number and the highest number as the language-specific expectation number was five times higher than drama and dance. When these numbers are transformed into percentages, where 100%=124 expectations, the difference is more visible: language had 24.19%, mathematics 21.77%, while drama and dance had 4.83 %, and visual arts and music had 5.64 %. These differences were not visible in the overall expectations numbers, masking that the curriculum makers had granted much more time and attention to language and mathematics than to the arts. These proportions must have practical effects in the applied curriculum. The asymmetry of the number of specific expectations across areas directs teachers to first address the most important and numerous expectations, in this case language and mathematics.
Consequently, the programmatic curriculum mandated that most of the time spent in school should be spent on language and mathematics activities, all under the blanket of the “play-based curriculum.” The following pie chart (Figure 9) illustrates the proportions of subject specific expectations relative to the total number of specific expectations (100%=124 specific expectations) and reveals a hierarchy of subject importance with language and mathematics on top with 24 and respectively 22% and the arts at the bottom with 5-6%, almost four times smaller. Because the specific expectations are driving the social practice of the curriculum, the programmatic curriculum tells teachers to do more language and mathematics based games and play than art-based activities. Approximately 14.5% (Figure 10) of the specific expectations contain words rooted in crea, partitioned as follows: 2.4% visual arts; 4.8% music; 4% drama and dance; 0.8% health and physical activity; 0.8% mathematics; 1.6% language.

![Pie chart showing percentages of areas of learning specific expectations.](image)

**Figure 8. Areas of learning and specific expectations.**

Next, I established the number of specific expectations contained words rooted in crea (Figure 10), because there is a conceptual connection at the level of sentences of specific expectation.
With regards to the relation between creativity and specific expectations, the specific expectations that had a connection with creativity were preponderantly in the arts; creativity was barely mentioned in mathematics and language with less than 2% of the specific expectations containing the word rooted in crea. These proportions signal a clear connection between the arts and creativity from the point of view of the curriculum maker and points toward the arts as creativity theory; this emphasis on language and mathematics directed the content of the program away from the arts. These numbers and percentages of specific expectations were meant by the Ministry to mandate the short- and long-term planning of the activities in the classroom; in terms of program planning, if the allocated times to each activity to meet expectations were approximately equal, and there was at least one activity for each specific expectation, then at least 24% of the classroom activities should be dedicated to language activities, such as reading and writing and 21% to mathematics and so on. To take this line of thinking further, the teacher must plan daily activities that address specific expectations from all the areas of knowledge (i.e., planning cycle, a guide to effective instruction in reading, kindergarten to grade 3); taking into consideration that there are 300 minutes of instructional time per day as determined by the Ontario Regulation 298 (1990), Section 3: Daily Sessions. The question: “How much time in a day do the children spend learning the skills and knowledge specific to each discipline?” is in order, and the programmatic curriculum sets up direct connection between the number of specific expectations, the program activities designed to meet them, and the time spend on each area of knowledge. The reasoning is as follows: If 24% of the specific expectations belong in the
language area, it can be inferred that at least 24% of the activities planned by the teacher are language learning related activities and that is reflected in the time line of the children’s daily activities. Thus, if we transform the percentages of specific expectations, which are considered activities that take time, into minutes, where 100%=300 minutes, the following allocated time results in language: 72 minutes; mathematics: 65.1 minutes; science: 36.2 minutes l; health and physical activity: 33.6 minutes; drama and dance: 14.49 minutes; music: 16.92 minutes, and visual arts: 16.92 minutes. With creativity present mostly in the arts, it can be easily seen that even the sum of the time lengths of three arts subjects (48.3 minutes) cannot compete with the time allocated to other areas of learning such as language or mathematics. Based on these calculations, there was a very small amount of time allocated to creativity in the Ontario Full-Day Kindergarten program.

In order to confirm these relationships, I compared these numbers with the time allocated to each area of knowledge as exemplified in the time table for the Full-Day Kindergarten provided by the Ministry of Education (2003) in A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading: Kindergarten to Grade 3 and recommended by the authors of the curriculum on page 18 of the FDK document. The schedule presented in Figure 11 represents an ideal timetable for Full-Day Kindergarten in Ontario. In order to compare and contrast the subject-specific time percentages per day given by my calculations done in the specific expectation sections, I calculated the time allocated to each area of knowledge in the example timetable. I determined this by adding the number of minutes granted to each subject. With regards to the periods of time that were shared among different disciplines, as is the case with the morning activity time, the afternoon circle time, and the afternoon activity time, I considered that long-term, the time spent on each discipline would average out due to the rotation of children in the centres, and the long-term planning of projects. The areas of learning are indicated by the proposed type of activity. For example the time spent at the water table was assigned to science as the discipline; the same happened for the block centre as mathematics, because it dealt with specific operations and concepts such as: categorization, quantity, geometric shapes, and solids. Following the above rationale, the 55 minute morning activity time was divided into nine according to the number of centres in the classroom: book corner and writing centre (language), mathematics centre and block centre (mathematics), dramatic centre (drama), sand and water centre (science), visual arts centre (visual arts), and listening centre (music) in order to find out how much average time is
dedicated to each centre; it averaged out to 6.1 minutes. Then, the centres were grouped according to areas of knowledge and the time allocated to each area of knowledge added if needed. The results were: language (12.22 minutes), mathematics (12.22 minutes), science and technology (12.22 minutes), music (6.11 minutes), visual arts (6.11 minutes), and drama (6.11 minutes). In the afternoon circle time (15 minutes), the time was divided among the two disciplines, science (7.5 minutes) and mathematics (7.5 minutes). The variables of the schedule were the computer, which was assigned to science and technology, the library, assigned to language, and the learning buddies, which was assigned to personal and emotional development due to their nature and main purpose (computer is technology, library is primarily about language, and buddies is about establishing social relationships among peers of different ages). They appear as options either in the morning block of reading and writing or the afternoon activity time. Therefore, two possible schedule scenarios were analyzed from the point of view of the time allocated to each subject, and the results were averaged. In the morning activity, the 45 minutes were split between reading (9 minutes), writing (9 minutes), library (9 minutes), learning buddies (9 minutes), and computer (9 minutes). In the afternoon activity, although the example schedule said that this block of time could be assigned to library, learning buddies, or computer, these were accounted for in the morning activity time. Therefore the 45 minutes were split between mathematics (22.5 minutes) and science and technology (22.5 minutes/22’30”).
Appendix I3-5: Annotated Sample Timetable, Kindergarten (Full Days)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>DAILY ACTIVITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45–9:10</td>
<td>Entry routines, sign in, and independent reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:10–9:35</td>
<td><strong>Circle time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• teachers choose from the following activities: daily agenda, shared writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., daily news, special person of the day), shared reading (e.g., poem,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>chant, or song), student sharing (e.g., <em>Visiting Bear</em>,” sharing groups/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>triads), phonological/phonemic awareness song/game, interactive writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:35–10:30</td>
<td><strong>Activity time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• children choose from activities at a variety of centres (e.g., sand, water,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>art, blocks, puppets, listening, writing, math, science table, book corner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• teachers may draw together a small group of students to focus on particular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learning expectations (e.g., math lesson, science focus, interactive writing,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>guided reading for students who are ready, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30–10:45</td>
<td>Snack/recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45–11:30</td>
<td><strong>Reading and writing time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• read-aloud or shared reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• follow-up discussion to make connections to students’ lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• reading response activity, which could include large-group activities (e.g.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>art, independent writing, math or science extension) or small-group activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., at literacy centres); response activities allow students an opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to demonstrate an understanding of what has been read (retell, relate, reflect,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>review)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• library, learning buddies, or computer time could occur in this block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30–11:45</td>
<td>Student sharing of response activities, clean up, and preparation for lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45–12:45</td>
<td>Lunch and recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45–1:00</td>
<td><strong>Circle time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• includes any of the following types of activities: calendar, shared writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(often a poem, song, or chant dealing with science or mathematics), graphing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>activity, interactive writing activity dealing with science or math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00–1:30</td>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• whole-class introductory activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• independent practice as students work on the activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• whole-class reflection and connecting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The *Visiting Bear* is a classroom teddy bear that goes home with a different child each night. The host child, with the help of his or her family, writes a journal entry or creates a piece of art describing the bear’s activities with the family. The next day the child can share with the class what the bear “did”.

13.34 A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, Kindergarten to Grade 3
Figure 10. Annotated sample timetable (OME, 2003, Appendix 13.34)

The schedule for the FDK (300 minutes of instructional time) had two options with computer, library, and learning buddies in the morning activity time or in the afternoon activity time. The possible schedules are outlined in Table 10 and 11.

Table 10.

Possible schedule one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45-9:10</td>
<td>Entry routines, sign in, and independent reading: Language (25 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:10-9:35</td>
<td>Circle time: Language (25 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:35-10:30</td>
<td>Activity time (55 min.): Book Corner and writing, language (11 min.);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blocks and mathematics, mathematics (11 min.); Science, water, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sand tables, science and technology (16.5 min.); Music (5.5 min.);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual arts (5.5 min.); Drama (5.5 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-10:45</td>
<td>Snack and recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:30</td>
<td>Reading and writing time including computer, learning buddies, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>library: (45 min. as follows: Language (27 min.); reading (9 min.);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>writing (9 min.); library (9 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer: Science and technology (9 min.); Learning buddies:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal and emotional development (4.5 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-11:45</td>
<td>Student sharing of response activities, clean up, and preparation for lunch (15 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal and emotional development (7.5 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:45</td>
<td>Lunch and recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45-1:00</td>
<td>Circle time (15 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics (7.5 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science and technology (7.5 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:30</td>
<td>Mathematics (30 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-2:15</td>
<td>Activity time or large group activity (45 min.) (library, computer, learning buddies were taken into account in the morning activity time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science (22.5 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics (22.5 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15-2:30</td>
<td>Snack and recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-2:45</td>
<td>Prepare to go home (15 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-3:30</td>
<td>Gym or outdoor activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical activity (45 min.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Possible schedule two**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45-9:10</td>
<td>Entry routines, sign-in, and independent reading: Language (25 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:10-9:35</td>
<td>Circle time: Language (25 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:35-10:30</td>
<td>Activity Time: (55 min.) Language (11 min.); Mathematics (11 min.); Science (16.5 min.); Music (5.5 min.); Visual arts (5.5 min.); Drama (5.5 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-10:45</td>
<td>Snack and recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:30</td>
<td>Reading and writing time (library, computer, learning buddies are taken into account in the afternoon activity time): Language (45 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-11:45</td>
<td>Student sharing of response activities, clean up, and preparation for lunch: Personal and emotional development (15 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:45</td>
<td>Lunch and recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45-1:00</td>
<td>Circle time (15 min.) Mathematics (7.5 min.); Science (7.5 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:30</td>
<td>Mathematics (30 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-2:15</td>
<td>Activity time or large group activity (45 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science (9 min.); Mathematics (9 min.); Library, language (9 min.); computer: Science and technology (9 min.); Learning buddies: Personal and emotional development (4.5 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15-2:30</td>
<td>Snack and recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-2:45</td>
<td>Prepare to go home (15 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-3:30</td>
<td>Gym or outdoor activities: Physical activity (45 min.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data presented in both example timetables were restructured according to the area of learning and the time spent on it daily. The restructuring of day activities for both possible schedules, and their duration according to their areas of learning, were tabulated and added in order to determine the total time per day dedicated to each area of learning (e.g., mathematics). Then they were averaged out for each discipline and schedule, and the resulting times and percentages per disciplines were averaged. Table 12 presents the restructuring of the allocated time for each area of learning, the total time for each area of learning, and the time averages for each area of learning.

Table 12.

Allocated times, totals, and averages for each area of learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of learning and its time average and percentage</th>
<th>Schedule 1: Morning reading and writing time with computer, learning buddies, and library</th>
<th>Schedule 2: Afternoon activity time with computer, learning buddies, and library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Entry routines, sign in, and independent reading: 25 min.</td>
<td>Entry routines, sign in, and independent reading: 25 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average: 102.1 min.</td>
<td>Morning circle time: 25 min.</td>
<td>Morning circle time: 25 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.83%</td>
<td>Activity time: 11 min.</td>
<td>Activity time: 11 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading and writing time: 27 min.</td>
<td>Reading and writing time: 45 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 89.2 minutes=29.33% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
<td>Library: 9 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 115 minutes=38.33% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Activity time: 11 min.</td>
<td>Activity time: 11 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathemarics</td>
<td>Circle time: 7.5 min.</td>
<td>Circle time: 7.5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average:</td>
<td>Mathematics 30 min.</td>
<td>Mathematics 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.25 min</td>
<td>21.41%</td>
<td>21.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity time or large group activity: 22.5 min. (mathematics or science)</td>
<td>Activity time or large group activity: 9 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 71 minutes=23.66% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
<td>Total: 57.5 min.=19.16% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and technology</td>
<td>Activity time: 16.5 min.</td>
<td>Activity time: 16.5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average:</td>
<td>Computer: 9 min. (Science and Technology)</td>
<td>Circle time: 7.5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.75 min.</td>
<td>Circle time: 7.5 min.</td>
<td>Circle time: 7.5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.25%</td>
<td>Activity time or large group activity: 22.5 min. (mathematics or science)</td>
<td>Activity time or large group activity: 9 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 55.5 min.= 18.5% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
<td>Total: 57.5 min.=19.16% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and physical activity</td>
<td>45 minutes at the end of the day=15% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
<td>45 minutes at the end of the day=15% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance drama:</td>
<td>Activity time as a choice: 5.5 minutes=1.83% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
<td>Activity time as a choice: 5.5 minutes=1.83% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 min.</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Activity time as a choice: 5.5 min.=1.83% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
<td>Activity time as a choice: 5.5 min.=1.83% from the total 300 min. instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 min.</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visual arts  
Activity time as a choice: 5.5 min. = 1.83% from the total 300 min. instructional time  
5.5 min. = 1.83%

Social development  
Learning Buddies: 4.5 min.  
12 min.  
Student sharing of response activities: 7.5 min.  
Total: 12 min. = 4%

Emotional development  
Learning Buddies: 4.5 min.  
12 min.  
Student sharing of response activities: 7.5 min.  
Total: 12 min. = 4%

The results were compared with the calculations obtained by looking at the percentages of expectations and possible allocated time for each area of learning as illustrated in Table 13.

**Table 13.**  

Percentages of expectations and possible allocated times for each area of learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of learning</th>
<th>Average times and percentages as calculated from <em>A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, Kindergarten to Grade 3</em> timetable</th>
<th>Average times and percentages as calculated based on the proportions given by specific expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>102.1 min. = 33.83</td>
<td>72.57 min. = 24.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>64.25 min. = 21.41%</td>
<td>65.31 min. = 21.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>48.75 min. = 16.25%</td>
<td>36.27 min. = 12.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Activity</td>
<td>45 min. = 15%</td>
<td>33.87 min. = 11.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Specific Expectations</td>
<td>Programmatic Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance drama:</td>
<td>5.5 min. = 1.83%</td>
<td>14.49 min. = 4.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>5.5 min. = 1.83%</td>
<td>16.92 min. = 5.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual arts</td>
<td>5.5 min. = 1.83%</td>
<td>16.92 min. = 5.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social development</td>
<td>12 min. = 4%</td>
<td>16.92 min. = 5.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional development</td>
<td>12 min. = 4%</td>
<td>26.61 min. = 8.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the comparison, what is proposed in terms of expectations, is more balanced between the time and subject relationship, rather than the classroom reality constructed based in the *A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, Kindergarten to Grade 3* recommendations. Hence, while in the programmatic curriculum 5.64% of the specific expectations were allocated to the arts, in the proposed timetable only 1.83% of the activities are arts-based. These numbers present a time scheduling of children dedicated to reading, writing, mathematics and science, with 45 minutes of physical activities and just a few sprinkles of the arts and personal development education. This hierarchy of activities and expectations reveal that personal development and the arts are neglected areas of learning.

### 4.5.9 Milieu.

The first analysis of the milieu of the Full-Day Kindergarten was done by looking at the chronology and the political context of the FDK program. As per the requirements of the critical discourse analysis, the document must be analyzed as a social text. To understand the document as a social text as a discourse, which forms and is formed by society, a brief look at the history of Early Childhood Education in Ontario is necessary. Its beginnings are concisely presented by the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) in *Kindergarten Matters: The Importance of Kindergarten in the Development of Young Children* (2001, p.3) which states that kindergarten programs appeared in Ontario in the 1870’s, developed during the 1900’s and World War I and World War II, and expanded between the 1970’s and 1990’s when almost all kindergarten aged children were enrolled in the program.

Because early childhood education in Ontario is not compulsory, it has always been at the mercy of governments in terms of public funding. Karia (2015, pp. 3-6) presents concisely several
important milestones that determined its dynamics directly linked by the political context. According to Karia (2015, pp. 3-6), the year 1989 marks the initiative of the provincial Liberal party to introduce the half-day junior and senior kindergarten in Ontarian public schools and full-day senior kindergarten programs. Between 1990 and 1995 there was a power shift from the Liberal Party to the New Democratic Party, which not only continued but also provided additional funding for the renovations of junior and senior kindergarten classrooms. Karia (2015, pp. 3-6) also states that the elections of 1995 put a stop to all these plans, as the winning Progressive Conservative Party decided to reduce the junior kindergarten grant by half. In 1996, the province witnessed further cuts and stops of junior kindergarten projects, which amounted to 42.1 million CAD. Furthermore, the Education Amendment Act in 1996, introduced by the Education minister, specified that the school boards were no longer required to offer kindergarten programs; this initiative concluded in the loss of 20,000 junior kindergarten spaces and 1400 teachers’ jobs according to ETFO (2001). The district school boards were amalgamated, and this caused a regrouping of boards in such manner that by 2001, only one board was not offering the kindergarten program.

According to Karia (2015, pp. 3-6), in 1998, representing another milestone under the Progressive Conservatives, the implementation of the first Ontarian ECE policy was carried out: a curriculum with specific expectations for children, and this was revised in 2006 and replaced in 2010 with the FDK Program by the Liberal Party government, which has been running the province since 2003. In 2007 the Ontario Liberal Party announced the introduction of the FDK for four and five-year-olds in their electoral agenda; in 2007 Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty appointed Dr. Charles E. Pascal as his special advisor on early learning and asked him to recommend the best way to implement full-day learning for four and five-year-olds. The commissioned report With our Best Future in Mind was released in 2009 and among Dr. Pascal’s recommendations were: full-day early learning programs for four and five year-olds in schools to have a mixed staffing model of teachers and ECEs and be paid by parents in school extended programs (before and after school); support for families with children aged zero-four including paid by parents or subsidized childcare in Family or Best Start Centres; lastly, a recommended enhanced parental leave. After negotiations and adjustments, the FDK was created and the implementation was phased in as follows, according to the Ministry of Education (2012, Full-Day Kindergarten—Key Facts):
• September 2010: 15% of the total kindergarten population (35,000 four and five-year olds)
• September 2011: 20% of the total kindergarten population (50,000 four and five-year olds)
• September 2012: 49% of the total kindergarten population (122,000 four and five-year olds)
• September 2013: 75 per cent of kindergarten students

With regards to the form it took and how much money had been spent, everything was officially summarized by the Ministry of Education in the *Full-Day Kindergarten—Key Facts* (2012). Below are outlined some of points made in the document:

1. Average class size: 26 students with a teacher and a registered early childhood educator, who work as a team
2. $200 million in support from the Ministry of Education for the program in year 1, $300 million in year 2 and $675 million in year 3
3. Research says every $1 spent on early learning repays a seven-to-one return on investment
4. The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten Program document combines The Kindergarten Program (2006), Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) and Every Child Every Opportunity (Charles Pascal)
5. The program is child-centred and play-based—promoting children’s physical, cognitive, language, emotional, social and creative development and well-being.
6. There is a team of two educators in the full-day kindergarten classroom—a registered ECE and a certified teacher, with a “duty to co-operate” on:
   a. planning for and providing education to students
   b. observing, monitoring and assessing the development of the students
   c. communicating with families
   d. maintaining a healthy physical, emotional and social learning environment
   e. performing all duties assigned to them by the principal (Ministry of Education, 2012, p.1)
Other key factors of the history of this curriculum are the *Ontario Early Years* reports, which summarized political intentions and framing of thoughts regarding ECE. The following chronology as documented by Winick (2013) denotes the variability of government interest in the policies and practice of ECE:

1944 Minister of Education issues Programme for Junior and Senior Kindergarten and Kindergarten Primary Classes of the Public and Separate Schools.

1979 La Pierre submitted his report “To Herald a Child” with the Ontario Ministry of Education.

1999 McCain and Mustard publish “The Early Years Study”.


2007 McCain, Mustard, and Shanker publish “The Early Years Study 2”.

2007 “With Our Best Future in Mind” is published.

2007 Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators is established.

2011 McCain, Mustard and McCuaig publish “The Early Years Study 3”. (Winick, 2013, p.41)

The above list of Ministry policy documents relative to the early years reveals significant gaps, which might be interpreted as low government interest in the research and policies of ECE before 2007. However, the yearly reports since 2007 prove a change in attitude with regards to young children and preschool education. This change coincides with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (Doherty, Friendly, and Beach, 2003) OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Canadian Background Report, which identified the following “challenges for the future” (p. 88) in the Canadian ECE context:

1. Building a common pan-Canadian purpose and vision for [Early Childhood Education and Care] ECEC.
2. Creating a coherent system of ECEC that simultaneously supports parental labour force participation, healthy child development and populations in need of additional or specific forms of support.
3. Building on what is known about processes that support quality in ECEC.
4. Maintaining and fostering collaboration among the federal, provincial/territorial and local governments, and between these governments and Aboriginal communities. (Doherty et. al, 2003, p. 88)

The report highlighted the lack of state and provincial support given to zero to five-year-old Canadians and parents’ enormous efforts to arrange child care during one of the most important growth periods for children. The lack of support was obviously reflected in the second challenge as it speaks about creating an ECE program that meets the criteria of a “parental labour force” (Doherty et. al, 2003, p.88) specific population support, and healthy development of children. The lack of a coherent ECE system is also seen as a priority and detrimental to the economy. This is signalled by phrasing the parental support as “parental labour participation” (Doherty et. al, 2003, p.88). These recommendations resurfaced in 2006, in the OECD’s Starting Strong II report, which focused on the policy and delivery issues of child care in 20 countries, including Canada. The issues listed above are reported again as findings of the 2003 report. However, it also pointed out that “a 2003 federal/provincial/territorial agreement on early learning and child
care (USD 350 million per year by 2007-08) has increased the level of investment in early childhood education and care services” (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006, p. 303).

This federal agreement initiative had a short life as Conservatives won the election and the agreement was replaced by other child care incentives, such as a $250 million a year transferred to provincial and territorial governments, and the Universal Child Care (Akbari & McCuaig, 2014, p.4). None of the above measures addressed the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development concerns.

The year 2007 represented the beginning of a new stage for ECE at the provincial level as the Liberal Party proposed in their electoral platform the introduction of Full-Day Kindergarten, won the elections, and have been governing the province since 2007. Friendly (2008) concisely presented the beginnings of the full day kindergarten program at the time:

In 2007, Ontario, Canada’s largest province, began to develop integrated “full-day early learning” for all four and five year olds. In the initial phase, several key challenges have emerged: first, merging the public kindergarten system with market-driven childcare; second, financing the new program; third, maintaining stability in user-pay childcare as four and five year olds move to the new program; fourth, determining staffing models, bridging differences between kindergarten and childcare staff; and fifth, managing the phase-in. How Ontario meets these challenges will have major implications for the future of ECEC programs across Canada. (Friendly, 2008, p.1)

As promised, the creation and introduction of FDK in all Ontario schools starting in 2010 for four and five-year-olds represents the most dramatic change in the Ontarian ECE field.

4.5.10 Milieu: Environment.

In order to see possible relationships between environment and creativity as it manifested in the written document, I searched the word environment in the text and looked for words rooted in
create in the sentences where it appeared. Most co-occurrences of crea words and environment happened in the context of sentences where, from a syntactical point of view, the subject was the teacher–ECE team; the verb was in active voice present tense simple, which denotes clear agency and the direct object is the environment, in most cases modified by an adjective. The logic of the sentence was about teachers creating environments always with the expectations in mind. For example:

The teams can also make use of drama, music, visual arts, and media texts to help children develop their communication and literacy skills. In so doing, they can create an effective environment to support young children’s learning and development of literacy. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 19)

The Early Learning–Kindergarten team can create an effective environment to support young children’s learning of mathematics by planning daily hands-on experiences that focus on a particular mathematical concept and by identifying and embedding significant mathematics learning experiences in play, daily routines, and classroom experiences. (p. 21)

The atmosphere the team creates is vital to the emotional development of the children. The environment should be one that encourages empathy, interest in trying new things, and the development of self-confidence. (p. 35)

Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community to create a learning environment that supports students with special education needs. (p. 39)

Team members make decisions about the use of materials and the focus of their teaching that are based both on the learning expectations and on their observations of the children’s needs, and they create an environment that supports language learning and literacy in many ways. (p. 69)

These teams should also create an environment in which children are encouraged to pose mathematical questions, explore, and investigate. (p. 93)
In analysing the above quotes, I noticed that teachers and ECEs were advised, through the use of modals (can, should), to create environments. Out of six sentences, four were about effective environments to support children’s literacy and mathematics, one was about supporting children with special needs, while the last one was about emotional development of children. This created an obvious hierarchy of types of environments that should be created by teachers: language, mathematics, and the emotional regulation and integration of special needs. Moreover, the repeated use of the adjective effective as “successful in producing a desired or intended result” (Oxford Dictionary) points to expectations, as effective implies measurement and a system of reference or evaluation.

The word environment was followed through the document to analyse the types of environment the authors envisioned. There were approximately 119 instances of the use of the word, which was used to denote three meanings as follows: children’s social relationships, school physical environment such as learning centres, and as nature or outdoors in the context of environmental education. As a noun, environment was described by an adjective or an adjunct noun implying possession or belonging (e.g., school environment); the repeated co-occurrence of the word environment and certain adjectives or adjectival phrases determines a strong association of meanings and becomes relevant in the analysis. The following paragraphs illustrate the most important collocations or co-occurrences found in the curriculum text: play-based environment, physical environment, social environment, and school environment, which include the learning environment. The strongest connection between creativity and environment in this examination was a conceptual one: creativity as play.

4.5.11 Milieu: Play-based Environment.

The most evident use of play-based environment was present in the introduction section of the curriculum where the goals of the FDK curriculum were presented. The collocation appeared twice on the page: first as a context for development of all children and second as one of the goals of the program:

The purpose of the program is to establish a strong foundation for learning in the early years, and to do so in a safe and caring play-based environment that promotes the
physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of all children. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 1)

The goals of the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program were as follows:

- to establish a strong foundation for the early years by providing young children with an integrated day of learning
- to provide a play-based learning environment
- to help children make a smoother transition to Grade 1
- to improve children’s prospects for success in school and in their lives beyond school

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 1)

The term play-based environment was also mentioned as the best environment for the development of children’s communication and self-regulation:

Social, emotional, and cognitive self-regulation and the ability to communicate with others are foundational to all forms of learning and have been shown to be best developed in play-based environments. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 7)

The last sentence above has an expressive value as it classified self-regulation and communication as foundational to learning. The statement used the passive voice, present perfect tense and is heavily loaded with psychological jargon; the tense–voice combination is commonly used to express scientific results, which are supposed to seem impersonal, universal, and objective while it creates the illusion of a very professional image for those who understand it. This creates the premises of a common-sense validity, which invites acceptance without critical questioning, such as: “How has it been shown? By whom has it been shown? What kind of play environments?” and most important: “Does this apply to curriculum maker’s definition of play environment?”

The last collocation of the play-based learning environment was found in the Role of Teachers and Educators section (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8), and it came as an adverbial phrase describing where the teaming up of the two educators is supposed to happen. In this case play-based learning was part of a string of adjectives, which all modify the noun
environment as follows: “Early childhood educators and teachers will have the benefit of a collaborative and complementary partnership to support children and families in a high-quality, intentional, play-based learning environment” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8). All adjectives included in the phrase mark an experiential feature: While high quality connotes a well-furnished, well-resourced room and program, intentional directs the interpretation toward goals, in this case expectations. On the other hand, play-based suggests children’s authentic play. However, as previously mentioned, the authors suggested there was no difference between play and academic work—there was no indication of emergent play, of children’s initiative of or contribution to the activities, or for children’s spontaneity. For example, children will have to:

DM5. sort, classify, and display a variety of concrete objects, collect data, begin to read and describe displays of data, and begin to explore the concept of probability in everyday contexts. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 97)

Or: “communicate in writing, using strategies that are appropriate for beginners” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 90).

The environment is set up by adults to create a version of play, while the document promoted learning expectations where the children were involuntary and unknowingly learning writing, reading, mathematics, and science, because “play and academic work are not distinct categories for young children and learning and doing are also inextricably linked for them” (p. 13). However, following the document’s example, if there is no difference between play and academic work for children, why must the teachers “plan for a daily block of time for play” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 37)? This suggests another inconsistency in the logic of the curriculum maker with regards to the concept of play.

4.5.12 Milieu: Physical environment.

The collocation, physical environment, appeared mostly in the beginning of the document in three contexts. First it appeared as a component of a healthy school approach, as the subject in the description of the component (i.e., Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 4) and as personification in the context of describing what children can do to demonstrate their learning (OME, 2010, p. 4); after that it revealed its purpose as learning about healthy, active living
As a subject the physical environment was associated with the following actions in the document: “can affect” (OME, 2010, p. 4), “includes,” “would include” (OME, 2010, p. 4), and “invites active participation and provides challenges” (OME, 2010, p. 4). If include and would include are used in the context of defining the physical environment by indicating what the physical environment is, the use of an active voice in invites and provides challenges alludes to the personification of the environment making the human actors in the school building and surroundings disappear along with the responsibility. The same idea of personification transpired in the repetition through rephrasing on page four, where the physical environment had powers: “The physical environment can affect both conditions for learning and opportunities for physical activity and healthy living” (OME, 2010), and “the design of the built environment can enhance or restrict opportunities for physical activity and healthy living” (OME, 2010, p. 4). The repetition of environment as a learning altering factor came as a recognition of the huge teaching learning potential of the environment. However, the presence of modal verb can highlighted a possibility and neutralized the environment as a fundamental to education, giving priority to vertical social relations where children have to demonstrate their learning and teachers make use of the environment (OME, 2010, pp. 13 and 14).

Finally, physical environment appeared three times accompanied by the adjective healthy in the beginning of the document, where it was presented as a component of a healthy school (OME, 2010, pp. 3 and 4). The sentences that defined healthy physical environment referred to the cleanliness of the school, the healthy food choices, and the absence of carcinogens in the environment, including the cleaning products.

To summarize, according to the document, a physical environment exists with no evident actors to shape it, and it can have a huge impact on the learning by inviting, including, enhancing and is essential in assessment of learning. The statements were so general that they could be applied to any school grade and do not highlight its crucial importance in early childhood. There was no mention that children who are four and five-years-old were spending approximately 105 hours per week in this environment, and this amount of time was most likely more than they
spend with their family. These early age experiences of the school environment were not charged with a *home-like* feeling, but the *school* feeling. The *school feeling* signals the entering into a physical environment of *work* where meeting the expectations end up in the exchange value of good grades.

### 4.5.13 Milieu: Social environment.

Another collocation that appeared in the beginning of the document was the *social environment*. The collocation appeared eight times and is mostly accompanied by the adjective “supportive” (OME, 2010, p. 3 and p. 44); the other adjectives that characterize the social environment are “inclusive” (OME, 2010, p. 44), “new” (OME, 2010, p. 38), and “safe” (OME, 2010, p. 44).

In the case of the social environment as *supportive* I observed the word acting as a subject: “A supportive social environment has a positive impact on children’s learning” (OME, 2010, p. 4), and “a safe and supportive social environment in a school is founded on healthy relationships” (p. 44); as subject complement: “The four components are as follows: 1. a supportive social environment (p. 3); as an indirect object: “Children, members of Early Learning–Kindergarten teams, and parents all benefit from a supportive social environment (p. 3), and a direct object: “These ‘determinants of health’ include income and social status, social support networks, education and literacy, employment and working conditions, physical and social environments (p. 4). These sentences were simply general statements, which referred either to the benefits of the social environment highlighted by the verb phrase *has a positive impact* when the collocation is a subject (p. 4 of OME, 2010) or the verb *benefit* in the case of indirect object, or they are part of classifications (p. 3 and p. 4). Despite the jargon, the sentences were not substantial and stated common sense truths that could be applied to anything and any school level—they were “glittering generalities” (Shabo, 2008, p. 30).

In the cases of the other adjectives, the term social environment acted as a subject: “A safe and supportive social environment in a school is founded on healthy relationships” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 44) or as an indirect object:

In planning programs for children with linguistic backgrounds other than English, Early Learning–Kindergarten teams need to recognize the importance of the orientation process, understanding that every learner needs to adjust to the new social environment
and language in a unique way and at an individual pace. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 38)

These statements are both experiential and relational, as the document stated its beliefs and directed social behaviour by envisioning the type of social relationship the educators’ team should enact at the beginning of the kindergarten by recognizing the importance of the orientation process. The text continued by providing examples of behaviours children might have such as a “silent period” or use of body language and illustrated various multimodal possibilities of communication of teachers with English as a second language (ESL) students (e.g., pictures and gestures). Moreover, the author(s), by using the modal should, asked teachers to “create a pleasant, culturally inclusive classroom in which children who are learning a new language feel not only that they belong, but also that they have a voice that is valued and celebrated.” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 39).

According to Kymlicka (2013), cultural inclusivity or multiculturalism is a trade mark of the neoliberal discourse of multiculturalism, whose aim is to create a market actor:

“As such…the ultimate goal of neoliberalism is not just radical individualism, but rather the creation of subjects who govern themselves in accordance with the logic of globalized capitalism” (McNeish, 2008:34). Viewed this way, the persistence of multiculturalism in the face of neoliberalism is a Pyrrhic victory, obscuring its fundamental transformation. The original aims of multiculturalism—to build fairer terms of democratic citizenship within nation-states—have been replaced with the logic of diversity as a competitive asset for cosmopolitan market actors, indifferent to issues of racial hierarchy and structural inequality. Indeed, the ability of neoliberalism to appropriate the discourse of multiculturalism has been so great that many people assume multiculturalism is a neoliberal invention. Zizek famously stated that multiculturalism emerged as the “cultural logic of multinational capitalism” (Zizek, 1997). The historic link between multiculturalism and national projects of social liberalism has been erased from memory, washed away by the hegemonic forces of neoliberal change. (Kymlicka, 2013, p. 113).
A supportive social environment is also addressed in a separate section as a component of the educational approach “of creating a healthy school” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 3). The supportive social environment was detailed on page four, where the supportive social environment was renamed as school climate:

‘School climate’ may be defined as the sum total of all the personal relationships within a school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion and are modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p.4)

In all the above cases supportive environment was defined or described as playing the role of a subject and subject complement; in the other instances, it had a positive connotation due to its direct connection with words containing inherently positive meanings such as benefit, positive impact, and healthy relationships. This collocation was used to indicate the ethical principles and practices that guide the social relationships:

A supportive social environment has a positive impact on children’s learning. Children are more able and more motivated to do well and achieve their full potential in schools that have a positive school climate and in which they feel safe and supported. ‘School climate’ may be defined as the sum total of all the personal relationships within a school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion and are modeled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm. Children, members of Early Learning–Kindergarten teams, and parents all benefit from a supportive social environment, and there are various practices that can foster such an environment – from formal measures (e.g., school policies, programs, and guidelines that promote inclusion and the removal of systemic barriers; bullying prevention, healthy foods, and anaphylaxis protocols; clubs and organized support groups) to informal behaviour (e.g., occurring within unstructured peer interaction or free play). (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 4)

The ethical principles and practices, which guide the social relationships: mutual acceptance and inclusion, culture of respect, various practices that can foster such an environment, have both experiential and expressive values. Nevertheless, the use of supportive environment was at a
hypothetical level as the context is general and constructed using present tense simple. This collocation and its contextual sentences are vague and could be characterized as glittering generalities:

*Glittering generalities is a colourful term for the appealing, but vague words that often appear in propaganda. Rather than explaining the use of these words, the propagandist leaves them to stand alone as a defense of his or her position. Without context or specific definitions, they serve the sole purpose of evoking certain feelings in the audience. If everything proceeds according to plans, these feelings then translate into unquestioning approval of whatever the propagandist says (emphasis in original, Shabo, 2008, p. 30)*

For example: “Children, members of Early Learning–Kindergarten teams, and parents all benefit from a supportive social environment” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 4). This collocation and its contextual sentences were also used with modals, which questions the reality of a concept. The phrase *school climate* is represented as “the sum total of all the personal relationships within a school” (OME, 2010, p. 4) and temporal clauses that condition or fault the agency (“When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion and are modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm.” [OME, 2010, p. 4]): The *mutual acceptance* was a substitute for tolerance.

The next collocation that regarded environment was *new social environment*. The association with *new* as in new social environment (OME, 2010, p. 38) referred to the teacher and ECE and her or his desired behaviour in the case of children whose mother tongue was not English. In this case the teachers needed to recognize that the orientation process is important, while “understanding that every learner needs to adjust to the new social environment and language in a unique way and at an individual pace” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 38). All these actions were supposed to happen during planning the lessons. This seems to be another glittering generalization with no real application, as recognizing and understanding do not necessarily lead to supporting the English language learning child. The substitution of the word *child* with *learner* removes the image of the children from the context and is further left in the background of the action as direct object of the teachers’ and educators’ understanding.
Another singular adjective of social environment was *inclusive* and was in the context of detailing what healthy relationships are and are not:

Healthy relationships are based on respect, caring, empathy, trust, and dignity, and thrive in an environment in which diversity is honoured and accepted. Healthy relationships do not tolerate abusive, controlling, violent, harassing, or inappropriate behaviours. To experience themselves as valued and connected members of an inclusive social environment, children need to be involved in healthy relationships with their peers, the Early Learning–Kindergarten team members, and other members of the school community. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 44)

The *inclusive* adjective almost came as a given and was not mentioned in other social environment contexts. The *inclusive social environment* was a part of an indefinite adverbial clause, which expressed the reason of the main verb *need* with the meaning of *require*. The infinitive *to experience* had expressive value as it implies direct and desired social effects at individual level.

A frequent association that was made with the social environment was *healthy relationships*, which appeared eleven times on page 44 of the 2010 Ontario kindergarten curriculum text and three times in the same sentence with *environment*. Hence a direct connection was established between healthy relationships and social environment where “healthy relationships are based on respect, caring, empathy, trust, and dignity, and thrive in an environment in which diversity is honoured and accepted. Healthy relationships do not tolerate abusive, controlling, violent, harassing, or inappropriate behaviours” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 44). Healthy relationships are part of the social environment, and *healthy* has an expression value, which modifies *relations*. I further argue that:

Several provincial policies and initiatives, including the “Foundations for a Healthy School” framework, the equity and inclusive education strategy, and the Safe Schools strategy, are designed to foster caring and safe learning environments in the context of healthy and inclusive schools. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 44)
The above quote has an inter-textual message and sends the reader to at least three sources to find out the meaning of healthy relationships. Furthermore, “these policies and initiatives promote positive learning and teaching environments that support the development of healthy relationships, encourage academic achievement, and help all children reach their full potential” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 44). There was an expressive value embedded the vocabulary that has a neoliberal connotation such achievement and full potential and positive learning environment.

4.5.14 Milieu: School environment.

The school environment was another frequent referent for the school space and time and it appeared in the context of children’s transition from home to school. In this process, the author stated that children “face” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8, p. 50) or “experience” (p. 11) a transition and not an environment. The negative connotation of face as in confronting or dealing with something difficult suggested that transitioning may be a rather unpleasant experience for children. It was suggested that children adapt to the school environment at various rates (p. 50). The adaptation to the school environment was so important, as in modifying children’s behaviour to fit the environment, that it was inscribed in the expectations. As such, the kindergarten students (four and five-years-old) will,

begin to demonstrate self-control (e.g., be aware of and label their own emotions, accept help to calm down, calm themselves down after being upset) and adapt behaviour to different contexts within the school environment (e.g., follow routines and rules in the classroom, gym, library, playground). (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 65)

The relationship did not seem to be mutual as the most important actors in charge of the modification of the environment were subjects to modal verbs such as can and may, which expressed a possibility and not necessity:

In their relations with families, members of the Early Learning–Kindergarten team can play an important role in facilitating the significant transition that children face between their home and the school environment. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8)
At the start of the school year, teachers and families may collaborate with other significant education partners, such as early childhood educators and school and community resource teams, to ensure that the child experiences as smooth a transition to the school environment as possible. (p. 11)

In direct connection with the school environment was learning environment, which appeared 19 times in the document. The learning environment was present in the overall presentations of expectations in literacy and science in the context of distribution of “meaningful and inclusive” (p. 70) materials in the learning environment and the quality of the learning environment as “active, hands-on, child-centred, and inquiry-based” (p. 112).

Some of the instances of the learning environment were further accompanied by other adjectives or adjectival phrases such as: “play-based” (p. 1 and p. 8 of OME, 2010), “differentiated” (p. 26), “whole” (p. 36), and “new” (p. 38). All the above qualities were chosen by the curriculum maker to describe his or her vision of an ideal program for young children, and at the first glance all the adjectives have positive connotations. Nevertheless, as explained earlier in the analysis, some adjectives such as play-based should be read as directed instruction and as direct instruction. In the case of the differentiated environment, which occurred once on page 26 of the document (OME, 2010), the meaning is not clear. Its presence was in the context of how children could demonstrate their learning or achievement of the expectations:

Four- and five-year-old children learn though active engagement, activities, observations, experimentation, and social interaction with others. The social and physical environment invites their active participation and provides challenges to master and problems to solve. These examples illustrate how learning happens for young children in a differentiated learning environment. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 26)

In analysing the paragraph concerned with the semantics of differentiated, the meaning could not be predicted from this particular context. The adjective differentiated was clarified in the context of differentiated learning as “instruction appropriate for each child” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8), which could be delivered as “whole-class instruction, small-group learning, independent learning, and activities at learning centres” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8). The following quotes are statements about the differentiated environment:
Universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 36)

Differentiated instruction is effective instruction that shapes each student’s learning experience in response to his or her particular learning preferences, interests, and readiness to learn. (p. 39)

Based on these quotes, differentiated gives a clue to interpretations regarding the process of instruction as individual instruction in the context of a class with an average of 26 students (Ontario Regulation 132, 2012, s 2). The expectations were placed upon the shoulders of the educators to design, teach, and assess lessons in all subjects for all students while instructing every child according to his or her needs and interests. The author pressed teachers for performance as the adjective effective suggests, even if effective modifies the noun instruction, but instruction cannot be effective; people are effective and its expressive value is intrinsic. With regards to creativity and differentiated instruction the only connection that can be made is through the learning expectations as they are associated with both creativity (e.g., create patterns) and differentiated instruction:

Assessment enables Early Learning–Kindergarten teams to determine how well their planned activities and teaching strategies are working, and to make any changes needed to enable children to achieve the learning expectations. Differentiated instruction will be needed to meet children’s individual needs. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 30)

Differentiated instruction was described as employed by teachers to meet the expectations, including the ones that are about children’s creations such as: “P4. explore, recognize, describe, and create patterns, using a variety of materials in different contexts” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 97).

The curriculum had an entire section dedicated to learning environment, where the “key components of the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program learning environment” (p. 35) are detailed. According to their definition, the learning environment consisted of use of indoor and outdoor spaces, use of time, and appropriate and varied human and material
resources. The text also directed the team to ensure that the environment was inclusive, safe, and comfortable, yet challenging and that the children’s instruction is done individually, in group, or as whole class according to children’s needs. It also presented examples of learning centres on pages 35 and 36 as follows:

- The book corner, writing, word-study, and listening centre;
- The block centre;
- The dramatic play and puppet centres;
- The sand and water centres;
- The mathematics centre;
- The visual arts centre. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, pp. 35-36)

The purpose of designing the learning environment was stated on the same page as follows:

The whole learning environment should be designed to meet the needs of young children and allow them to demonstrate their progress towards achieving the overall expectations in a variety of ways. In some cases, examples of materials, resources, and learning centres are mentioned in the specific expectations in order to support Early Learning–Kindergarten teams in creating the appropriate environment for young children. (p. 36)

This statement asked the teachers to design an environment that was used for the assessment of expectations. It was a set up for children to become what the document wants them to become at a macro scale: a worker in a line of production with different work stations, which are mimicked by kindergarten centres where activities are designed to meet expectations of Ontarian adults and what they consider to be needs and wants of children. The collocation disappeared after that leaving readers with examples of interactions provided in the specific expectations. The knowledge is also compartmented according to centres, as if there is no relationship between water and mathematics and painting.

### 4.5.15 Parents.

When analysing the text for possible associations between parents and creativity, I found that there was only one instance where these words happened to be in the same sentence. The instance was located on page 10 in The Role of Parents, where suggestions regarding ways to
involve parents in the curriculum were made: “Invite parents to come to the classroom to tell or read stories in their first language, or to create dual-language books for the children” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 10). The word invite establishes a relational value, as in the parent has to be invited in the space of the school. Invitations are usually celebratory in nature and are occasional; they are not part of daily lives or routines. Thus, the discourse says yes, parents might be part of the community, but they need to be invited. The second observation was that the verb create had the meaning of hand-made with a direct object books modified by the noun phrase dual-language. It was obvious that this note was about people whose first language was not English and their inclusion into the community. Asking the parents to create artefacts in two languages is a tokenistic approach of a culture, language, or civilization.

The frequency of association of the words parents or guardians and creativity (once in 156 pages), as well as the derailed meaning of creativity as hand-made leads toward the conclusion that parents or guardians have little or nothing to do with creativity. There were no instances of the association of principal and creativity. The closest the document got to making the link was when the document communicated that the principal’s connection with creativity was through his or her duty to “provide leadership in developing a vision and philosophy to guide pedagogy” (OME, 2010, p. 11). But the connection is of no consequence, because it did not say or suggest what kind of philosophy or pedagogy they should adopt.

Another component mentioned in the curriculum, which can be part of the milieu was “the community partners” (OME, 2010, p. 11). In the text dedicated to the topic there was no signal of a possible association between creativity and the relationship to be developed with the community.

Finally, the image that was meant to portray the curriculum embedded in community on page 11 of the document (OME, 2010) failed to communicate that visually, as each element that represents people are isolated by shape and colour and relationships, are represented by rectangles protruding an egged-shaped form. There was no communication between the elements of this image, nor compositionally or chromatically, except the dark hues of blue violet red and green which create a sombre atmosphere.
4.5.16 Aim.

Data generation for this section consisted in locating associations between key words, which were representing aims of the curriculum and create to establish some kind of conceptual relationship. The first finding was the two-page section that detailed specifically the purpose and goals of the program was void of any linguistic connection with creativity. It started by quoting the then minister of education, Leona Drumboski, almost as the motto or the main idea behind the curriculum:

*Full-day learning is part of our overall plan to help more children get a strong start in school, so they can go on to have successful, rewarding lives. By giving them more opportunities at a young age, we’re giving our children a brighter future.* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 1)

The logic of this sentence indicates that the dependent clause answering *what for* or *why* is “so they can go on to have successful, rewarding lives” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 1). What was of importance is hidden in dependent clauses introduced by the conjunction *so* with the meaning of *so that* and adjectives *successful* and *rewarding*. While *so* implies the
consequence and purpose of the action stated in the main sentence get a strong start, the modal can indicates a possibility and going to have redundantly states the predicate. The direct object is a successful, rewarding life, which was the main logical purpose of this alembicated sentence. The quality of life stated by the ex-minister of education was successful and rewarding. By introducing successful and rewarding the authors suggested that children would succeed (in what is not told) and would be rewarded, as in giving something for their effort—as in barter. Successful and rewarding also introduced the idea of competition (one is usually successful in a competition as it a binary system: You either succeed or you fail) and reward, as in a grade for the quantity and quality of the acquired knowledge and skill, which translates in bartering your time for a grade that later changes easily in a salary for one’s work. Successful and rewarding are based on an imagined future and an imagined child—a desire, a dream. Because it was mentioned first, the language used to describe this program was suggestive of an economic view of life, where a successful life is more important than other things. The next sentence was about giving as it is repeated in two contexts as giving opportunities and as giving a future. Choosing the verb to give as the main verb of the sentence and as an adverbial showing how, creates the impression of charity or generosity, as in someone has something and gives it away. It creates the illusion that a person or a government can give a future to someone; this is misleading as a minister can only administer, manage, or redistribute the money the public gives through educational taxes. The government was not giving away anything.

The next passages deal with the purpose and goals of the program as follows:

The purpose of the program is to establish strong foundation for learning in the early years, and to do so in a safe and caring play-based environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of all children. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 1)

And the goals of the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program were as follows:

- to establish a strong foundation for the early years by providing young children with an integrated day of learning
- to provide a play-based learning environment
- to help children make a smoother transition to Grade 1
• to improve children’s prospects for success in school and in their lives beyond school. (p. 1)

There was a clear repetition of establishing a foundation, both in the purpose and the first goal of the program, which established a strong foundation for learning in the early years in the document. How this foundation was established is not explained on page two:

Early learning experiences are crucial to the future well-being of children, and establish the foundation for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that will affect later learning and behaviour. (p. 2)

Children’s experiences seemed to be all about the future as suggested by the modifying noun future and the tense of will affect. There was no present for the sake of the present, for the sake of a childhood that children may enjoy. There was no time of present in the curriculum. Further to no present time in the expectations, every expectation or behavioural modification was about demonstrating achievements:

The learning expectations outlined in this document represent the first steps in a continuum of programming from the early years to Grade 8. They describe learning achievements that provide the foundation for successful future learning experiences. (p. 22)

Hence, every expectation or behavioural modification was a future child that had to demonstrate basic proficiency in language, mathematics, science, and the arts. From page 50 to page 156 the document kept demanding four and five-year-olds demonstrate their knowledge and skills: to do, say, or represent something by outlining 38 behaviours. These behaviours needed to be documented as an assessment in order to be ready for grade one.

The verb play was not used in the curriculum: Play was mostly used as a noun. Children do not play for the sake of playing; they were to play games and activities, which were structured by adults to meet the learning expectations and in an environment that is structured by adults, to meet the learning expectations. The second goal might address the play, as one could infer that by providing a play-based environment, children play, but the modifying noun learning suggests that learning is about learning what the adults want; teachers set up a play-mimicking situation
where children will try to play, but we are going to play with what the teacher wants and how the teacher wants; there is no open-endedness, because there are always expectations to be assessed. The continuum of expectations as preparing for first grade and beyond is clearly stated in the fourth and fifth goals.

The only context where one can link the aims of curriculum with creativity was found by looking at expectations and crea, which has been analysed before: Children were asked to create patterns in mathematics, that is to create a prototype and to copy and repeat something, which is an industrial and scientifically applied concept: “Overall Expectation P (patterning) 4: explore, recognize, describe, and create patterns, using a variety of materials in different contexts” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 109). According to the document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010), learning activities in kindergarten were designed by the Early Learning–Kindergarten team to encourage the children to think creatively, to explore and investigate, to solve problems, and engage in the inquiry process, and to share their learning with others.

4.5.17 Activity.

The word activity appeared 53 times in the document and was mainly associated with physical (24 times) guided activity (9 times), new, mathematical, reading, writing, role-playing, planned, quiet, daily, bird watching (2 times), and planting and growing (1 time). There was no direct connection between the word activity and creativity.

Activity or activities appeared in two contexts. The first context and most predominant was as a type of activity specific to a discipline (e.g., bird watching, planting, growing are under science and technology) or modified by a noun or adjective that clearly indicated a domain (art activities, role play activity, mathematical activity). The second context was to define a teaching and learning social relationship between teacher and child. Principals, parent(s), and communities were not directly associated with the word activity or its plural.

The classification of activities in domains, such as art activity and science activity highlight an experiential feature of the way skills and knowledge are expressed in the document. There were imposed boundaries among disciplines, where for example mathematics and music might not have much in common. This separation might portray knowledge as encased in separate bodies of knowledge (colour as art and not optics). The separation was also reflected by
the way the classroom was supposed to be organized in specialized centres where the visual art centre was separated from the writing centre with no connection whatsoever, even though graphic design and illustrations are traditional art forms, which are intrinsically related to writing. The compartmentation is rather a modern way to see the world, and it certainly misses opportunities of transdisciplinary connections and seeing the world as interconnected and interdependent.

The second context and implicit category was activity as a social relationship. This category was given by the adjectives or nouns that modify the noun activity and its plural. There were two types of subthemes that appeared based on who was initiating the activity: the teacher or the student. These were given by the curriculum text:

There should be a balance between educator-initiated and child-initiated activities – times when member of the team guides the children’s learning and times when children are given opportunities to choose activities to demonstrate their knowledge. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8)

Activities should range from team-directed to child-initiated activities, with the goal of encouraging children to develop independence in their language learning. (p. 70)

The children-initiated activity was done in the context of a carefully teacher-designed environment, which allows and encourages separate pursuits of interests, such as science centre or water centre. The second category was about whom was in control of the activity as illustrated by participial and regular adjectives: shared, guided, and independent activity. In the math, science and technology section the same idea of control of activity was rephrased as free exploration, focused exploration, and guided activity.

An example of a guided activity is guided reading. Because, in guided reading, children read a text with a minimal amount of teacher support, a decision about whether to use guided reading in Early Learning–Kindergarten programs should be based on the learning behaviours, strengths, and needs of individual children. When children understand print concepts, know letters and sounds, and can recognize some sight words, they are ready to participate in guided reading. Therefore, guided reading is not appropriate for children
who are still developing these skills. These children require group shared-reading lessons to meet their needs. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 19)

All the above citations illustrate the gradual release of responsibility model by Pearson and Gallagher (1999), which is rooted in the Vygotskian model of learning through scaffolding. The quote above was about reading instruction and showcased a valid pedagogical practice for reading, which is widely used by elementary-aged students (e.g., Bainbridge & Heydon, 2017). Nevertheless, this activity was about formal teaching strategies used in formal teaching of reading and writing for older children. However, presenting reading as authentic play when the reading practices in the document were outlined as in what when and how reading is to be done is deceiving.

The control of learning towards meeting the learning expectations was also evident in the section Using Assessment in Planning Instruction of the document:

In order to support children’s individual progress, EL–K team members should plan a variety of learning experiences, including intentional instruction. On the basis of information gathered from ongoing assessment, they should make decisions about the kinds of support, instruction, and materials they need to provide. Children will be involved in small-group, whole-class, and individual learning experiences that address their needs, ideas, and interests and that are within the range of things they can do with and without guidance (in their zone of proximal development). The duration and purpose of groupings will vary, depending on the length of time the children have been in school, the age and needs of the children, and the focus of instruction. Children develop knowledge and skills in the various areas of language learning at different rates and in different ways. As EL–K team members plan activities to meet children’s individual needs, they may ask such questions as the following: What can this child do? What does this child know? What does this child need to learn next, and what will support his or her learning in order to meet the overall expectations? (emphasis in original, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 69)
When planning activities, the teachers and early childhood educators were to examine what the child already knew and was able to do and plan his or her learning with the overall expectation as term of comparison.

This control of learning was also manifested in another social dimension of activity as paired, group, or whole class activities. The comparison of a real child with the imaginary possibility of what a child is able to do and know, as the document outlined in the learning expectations, suggests the imposition of an adult-centred agenda, rather than child-initiated and directed or even centred program:

When they are ready to participate, in paired, small-group, or whole-class activities, some children will begin by using a single word or phrase to communicate a thought, while others will speak quite fluently. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 38)

Most of the instances of activity are defining the teacher–student or student–student relationship as directed by the teacher.

Regarding the other actors in the curriculum, the text did not show any association between activity and creativity on one side, and the principal, the parents, and the community on the other side. Nevertheless, activity presupposed a verb as its meaning suggests, and the search for types of activities or actions of curriculum actors led to the figures that the document was using to illustrate the actors of the curriculum.

There were five diagrams that presented the system. The first image (Figure 13) shows a general view of the system and was followed by close-ups of the components: the child, the EL–K team, the family, and the community. Each close-up provides visual and linguistic text that is pertinent to its role in the system. There is an absence of any form of creativity from linguistic or conceptual points of view. How the curriculum conceptualized the child and childhood might offer insights regarding the kind of ethical relationships should be enacted by the actors of the curriculum. The conceptualizations of the child and creativity have both experiential and expressive value as they display ontogenetic and valued information.
Figure 12. Interrelated systems (OME, 2010, p. 1)

Figure 13 presents the system and the position of each actor vis-à-vis the child. It does not have a title hence the readers must presume that the title of the section—The Full-Day Early Learning—Kindergarten Program: Vision, Purpose, Goals—applies to the image. A concentric image of different flat shades of blue, green, purple, sienna, and blue-green juxtaposed equally thick silhouettes of circles with four symmetrical diagonal diameters that impales or overlaps on the adjacent circle. At the bottom and top of the circles the names of the actors of the curriculum are written in white and capital letters; the labels are vertically aligned and doubled with child as the symmetry axis. There is an uneasy similarity between the circle diagram and overlapped gears or cogs with the child’s circle as the smallest one. Compositionally, in the Western tradition of visual art, the meaning of the circle is ambivalent: “Feelings of pressure and anxiety mixed with those of security and protection” (Frutiger, 1989, p. 47) as well as movement. The use of dark tones and cool colours triggers associations and feelings of loneliness and fear in the context of an American geographical space (Birren, 2013) and creates a rather sombre, serious atmosphere. The colour and shape coding does not suggest a happy childhood. The geometric shapes, which are predictable, controllable, known, and closed, or the dark cool colours are not conducive to a beautiful, or at least an optimist, image. The interconnectedness and interrelationships among these circle-shaped systems are portrayed with four rectangular protuberances positioned diagonally on each circle, which resemble gear teeth. There is no suggestion of an organic
communication or exchange among the systems from a visual point of view. They are solidly coloured, juxtaposed, and seem to function mechanically as a gear train: If one cog moves the rest moves in a predictable way. With regards to the text, the first observation is that the child is in the centre of the diagram and seems alone as the noun is singular. The child also represents the symmetry axis of names of the system components, which appear twice in the following vertical order: family, school, community, and world. The lettering follows the circular shapes around the child aligning it like a secret code to unlock something like a murder mystery clue.

In conclusion, the first image, which represented the universe of a child according to the curriculum, is quite gloomy: from the compositional point of view the concentric image is reminiscent of mechanical devices, constricting and connecting it to a mechanistic view of the world alluding to a positivist predictable outcome. Chromatically the image is coded using cool colours, which creates a rather cold atmosphere suggesting something sombre. The use of cool colours is antithetic to any childhood representation both as a system and as period of human life. It is shrouded in dark colours and seems to be a mechanical device with predictable results if things are properly aligned. The system presents the child’s life—compartmented and isolated. Children’ social life and learning cannot be confined to a simple diagram that creates the illusion of controlled environments like a social incubator of a human being.

4.5.18 The child.

The next diagram (Figure 14) shows the child as an oval shape with a circle in the centre. It is coloured in light blue with a darker shade of turquoise in the centred circle. Floating around the circle are larger spots of colour of burnt sienna, turquoise, ochre, and purple, which mark the lettering of the following participles from left to right, top to bottom: “talking, predicting, running, building, reading, sharing, measuring, climbing role playing, balancing, writing, counting, sorting, inquiring, drawing, experimenting, exploring, socializing, classifying, self-regulating, pretending, and respecting.”
Figure 13. The child (OME, 2010, p. 6)

The participles are capitalized and seem to modify the noun *child*. They signal the ideal activities of a kindergartner in the vision of the document. I categorized the participles into six domains: physical activities—climbing and running; language—reading, writing, and talking; mathematics—predicting, counting, sorting, classifying, measuring, and building; science—balancing, inquiring, experimenting, and exploring; social skills—sharing, socializing, self-regulating, and respecting; visual arts—drawing; drama—role-playing and pretending. Creativity is not present as an activity, and I noted it in the absence of music and dance activities. Mathematics and science activities are the most present and are followed by the social skills. With the exception of role-playing, pretending, and drawing the child is not involved with the arts, while she or he is just expected to run and climb as physical activities.

Compositionally, the diagram resembles an egg or a cell with the child as the yolk and the rest the albumen and shell. The image of the blue egg cues imagining the child developing in the rich nutrient-protected environment, which is represented by these activities coded with different colours. Chromatically, the dominant blue codes this in the Western world as a masculine presence. The white lettering is in contrast with the blue, and it is somewhat airy. While the colour coding and shape coding are organic, the activities and their hierarchy according to their type suggest a preference of the curriculum maker toward a masculine child.
inclined toward mathematics and science and socially competent: able to socialize and to self-regulate.

4.5.19 The teachers and early childhood educators.

The diagram representing the EL–K (Figure 15) differs in shape, position relative to the centre, and position of outgrowths protruding the space of the next egg shell like shape representing the family.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 14. The EL-K team and the school (OME, 2010, p. 7)**

As such, the school and EL–K team circular shape shifted places with the family one changing the dynamic of the system. In the first diagram (Figure 13) the family was closer to the child, whereas here the EL–K team is positioned right next to the child. The outgrowths representing the interconnectedness between components also changed directions, from diagonal implied diameters to vertical and horizontal ones, while the circle morphed into ovals. The word *child* is placed in the centre in a turquoise circle. Small vertical protuberances with rectangular shape are growing out of both the child circle and the egg-like shape representing the school and EL–K team. Just like in the child diagram, different coloured bubbles float around carrying the following capitalized participles: planning, including, extending, listening, communicating, differentiating, respecting, talking, modelling, reflecting, supporting, thinking, engaging, responding, challenging, monitoring, guiding, facilitating documenting, assessing, observing, and scaffolding.
The changes from the initial diagram denote inconsistency in representation of the constructed system. The order shift of family and school is about the imagined and desired relationship between the school, child, and the family where the teacher and the ECE have a more important role in the child’s life than the family. With regards to the shapes and colour of the diagram, I noticed that the word child is trapped and alone in a turquoise bubble with four rectangular outgrowths placed vertically and horizontally. They are echoed by the purple egg like shape with rectangular protuberances representing the school and EL–K team. These seem to represent communication and interconnectedness of the system. The outgrowth’s size in relation to the shape is quite small and suggests that whatever information goes back and forth between the compartments has a small rate of flow and speed. The purple background has authoritative connotations, because in Western civilization, purple has long signified authority and royalty (Samara, 2006) and is usually not associated with childhood or happiness. The text consists in labels of the spaces: child, school, EL–K team and the verb participles that appear to float inside the egg. The participles mirror ideal activities of the EL–K team, which mostly refer to three broad categories: preparation of classes, relationship with students, and relationships with family.

The relationship of teachers and ECEs with children was portrayed as dual; on one hand the team respects, includes, supports, engages, responds, challenges, guides, facilitates, differentiates, models and scaffolds, while on the other monitors, observes, documents and assesses. The child is always under surveillance in a controlled environment. This is where the logic of the second category of class preparation comes into place as the teacher has to think, plan, reflect, include, extend, or to differentiate. The relationship to family might be reflected by only two verbs: communicating and respecting.

4.5.20 Family.

The family diagram (Figure 16) displays the activities and characteristics of an ideal Ontarian family.
The sienna oval surrounds the child and the EL–K team. The child is still in the turquoise bubble, while the team intervenes between the child and the family. Meanwhile the family is supposed to be: guiding, asking, supporting, engaged, encouraging, participating, sharing, responding, communicating, active, teaching, playing, and observing, as indicated by the text carried around by other coloured bubbles. Most of these adjectives (if we take in consideration parallelism between active, engaged and the participles) seem to apply to both the team and the child, but mostly the team. Interestingly, the family is the one that teaches and not the EL–K team. The only connection between the activity of the parents and creativity is the participle playing, which alludes to this form of creativity.

4.5.21 Principal.

The principal diagram (Figure 17) comes in a light blue with the same small coloured circles, which gravitate towards the child, EL–K team and the family. The jobs of principals are as follows according to the image: advocating, planning, listening, thinking, supporting, communicating, facilitating, respecting, modelling, and team building. These verbs denote managerial functions and concern the communication between adults rather than the direct relationship with children, as the only activities that might involve direct social contact with students are communicating and modelling while the others are directed towards teachers, educators and parents. Again, the colour coding is based in contrast between the white lettering and the shade of purple, which has rather serious connotations which set the tone of this visual conversation. It seems that the main attributes of a principal was to maintain and unidirectional manage social relationships within the school and outside as every act has a purpose: modelling,
thinking, communicating, and facilitating, the present participles are creating the illusion of continuous processes. The only connection with creativity in the classic sense of mental activity are the planning and thinking as one very while the other verbs transform the principal in a social alchemist with a precise mission: team building, facilitating, supporting, and communicating.

![Diagram of Principals]

**Figure 16. Principals (OME, 2010, p. 10)**

4.5.22 Community.

The last image illustrating the community (Figure 18) has surprising details when I looked at the diagram through the lens of children’s social relationships.
The order of ellipses is different from the other, with the child in the centre, the EL–K team and principal next, family third and lastly the community. Each ellipse seems to restrict the child more and more, by visually surrounding it and holding him or her hostage, with the community as the last constriction. The chosen colour to represent the community and society is a shade of olive green, which is in complementary relationship with the dark red sienna of the family section. The diagonal diameters appear again, while names of different places or spaces are populating the community ring: natural/green spaces, places of worship, community organizations, businesses, social/cultural context, extended family, library, and family resource centre. Whether these spaces are occupying these places in real life is debatable, as for example the socio-cultural contexts or sometimes their parallelisms dictate the rhythms and succession of the events in a day. Another question related to the hierarchy of this worldview is why the green space, which ideally should be the everyday living environment of a four-year-old, is placed in the out-of-touch areas for children, after the principal. This last diagram speaks again about the school system where children’s futures and needs are imagined by adults, with sports and green spaces out cast on the fringes of their world.

4.6 CDA of the 2016 Ontario Kindergarten Program.

The second text I analyzed was the 2016 Ontario Full-Day Kindergarten program, which is the final version of the FDK curriculum in Ontario. It represented the final stage of the educational Liberal overhaul of early childhood education and it was implemented in September 2016, superseding the draft version of the document. The curriculum is extensive, with over 300 pages structured in four sections:

1. A Program to Support Learning and Teaching in Kindergarten
2. Thinking about Learning and Teaching in the Four Frames
3. The Program in Context
4. The Learning Expectations

The analysis of creativity was done by locating the words that shared the same root-bound morpheme of creativity, crea, analyzing them from a syntactical and morphological view and
interrogating the context using the adapted version of Dillon’s (2009) questions of curriculum and social determinants, ideologies, and effects.

**4.6.1 Description and analysis.**

From a morphological point of view, *crea*, as a bound root, forms the following words:

- Noun: creativity, creating
- Verb: (to) create, creates, created, creating
- Adjective: creative
- Adverb: creatively.

The classification into different parts of speech rooted in *crea* is important in the conceptualization of creativity as it defines the role of creativity and its meaning within a sentence as a complete, logical thought present in the document. By looking at its meaning, role in the text, and by probing the text using Dillon’s (2009) questions of curriculum, I could examine the discourses driving the text, the social practices it promoted, and, consequently the ethics of the practice. For example, *creative* as an adjective modifies or describes a noun and that offers insight in how creativity is conceived and what resources are drawn upon to interpret it. To further exemplify I analysed the following quote:

> As children learn through play and inquiry, they develop – and have the opportunity to practise every day – many of the skills and competencies that they will need in order to thrive in the future, including the ability to engage in innovative and complex problem-solving and critical and creative thinking; (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 11)

In this particular excerpt, creativity takes the form of an adjective, which describes a distinct type of thinking. Therefore, creativity is directly linked with a type of thinking—a mental operation—that is different from problem-solving and critical thinking. Syntactically, it belongs to a reduced adjective clause introduced by the present participle *including*. This fact signals a logical relationship, which makes the direct object of including part of the skills and competencies “that they will need in order to thrive in the future,” where the pronoun *they* stands for children. Because competencies and skills are the direct object of *develop*, I can infer that children develop the ability to engage in creative thinking, which they will need in order to thrive in the future.
Therefore, the ability to engage in creative thinking is something children develop. This idea clearly connects creativity with thinking and stages of development, which draws on a Piagetian view of cognitive development and moreover, that this is a general statement, which could be applied to any children or child, tends to erase individual differences and treat children as an amorphous group. This generalization is part of a rhetoric that underlies the developmental theory of childhood (Iannacci, 2015; Thompson, 2014; Whitty, 2010).

The future projection and the modal verb of necessity need was present in the adjective clause, which described children’s skills and competencies in the main clause, signal skills and competencies necessary for the future and introduces the idea of social programming of cognitive functioning for the future. It projects our desires as adults onto the children as necessity, and thus ignoring the child as a human being in the present. This concept is also found in the kind of social engineering proposed by Tyler’s rationale (Pinar et al., 2004a, p. 34) and justifies the use of power in adult–child relationships. It creates a normal social practice of means to an end where children are objects of adult desires and expectations, and it establishes the premises of a systematic approach of the adult-led teaching of children and ignoring the multidimensionality and modality of learning. The analysis of this example is meant to clarify how the logic of the sentences and its semantics are interpreted and indicate how larger societal discourses entrenched in different ideologies become social practice.

The first category of words analyzed in context is creativity as a noun, because it was the most relevant when identifying theories of creativity present in the document. The word appeared 16 times in the document in the following sections:

**Table 14.**

*Analysing creativity as a noun*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1: A Program to Support Learning and Teaching in Kindergarten (5 times)</td>
<td>1.1 Introduction: Vision, Purpose, and Goals (one time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1 Introduction: Fundamental Principles of Play-Based Learning (one time)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Play-Based Learning in a Culture of Inquiry: Play as the Optimal Context for Learning: Evidence from Research (2 times)

1.2 Play-Based Learning in a Culture of Inquiry: Play-Based Learning in an Inquiry Stance: The Critical Role of the Educator Team: Co-constructing Inquiry and Learning (one time)

### Part 2: Thinking about Learning and Teaching in the Four Frames (8 times)

2.1 Thinking about Belonging and Contributing: Developing a Sense of Belonging and Contributing through the Arts (3 times)

2.4 Thinking about Problem Solving and Innovating: Supporting Children’s Development in Problem Solving and Innovating (1 time)

2.4 Thinking about Problem Solving and Innovating: The Role of Play in Inquiry, Problem Solving and Innovating (2 times)

2.4 Thinking about Problem Solving and Innovating: The Role of Learning in the Outdoors in Problem Solving and Innovating (2 times)

### Part 3: The Program in Context (1 time)

Considerations for Program Planning: The Role of the Arts in Kindergarten (1 time)

### Part 4: The Learning Expectations (2 times)

1.6 Problem Solving and Innovating (2 times)

The first observation I made when looking at the keywords of the titles was that creativity was threaded through the context of the sections regarding vision, play-based learning, arts, outdoors activities, and problem-solving in early childhood education. When looking at the relationship between the word *creativity*, its occurrence in different parts of the document, and their correspondent number of pages dedicated to each section I noticed the following:

- Part 1: A Program to Support Learning and Teaching in Kindergarten has 29 pages and 5 occurrences of the word creativity
- Part 2: Thinking about Learning and Teaching in the Four Frames has 57 pages and 8 occurrences of the word creativity
- Part 3: The Program in Context has 57 pages and 1 occurrence of the word creativity
Part 4: The Learning Expectations has 203 pages and 2 occurrences of creativity

The following pie chart (Figure 19) illustrates proportions of parts of the document in relation to the number of instances present in the document. The pie chart shows there is a division between the last part of the document and the rest in terms of proportions, as 66% is dedicated to learning expectations or what children should know and be able to do by the end of the two-year program. This is the part teachers are accountable for in the phrase: “All program expectations must be accounted for in instruction and assessment” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 116). The text is not balanced in terms of frequency and number of pages allocated to each section. It is clearly shown that part four has two thirds of the number of pages and only two occurrences of creativity. There seems to be a weak association between the learning expectations (skills and knowledge to be assessed) of the curriculum and creativity as a noun.

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Figure 18. Parts of 2016 FDK and occurrences of creativity.

The highest frequency of the word is in part two where the frames of learning and teaching are described, which indicates a strong connection between thinking about learning and teaching in the four frames with the teachers thinking process, teaching, and creativity.

Creativity first appeared in the Vision section of the document as a direct object of develop in the context of a subordinate clause, which designates the purpose of the predicate provide and subject kindergarten program as follows:
The Kindergarten program:

- provides every child with the kind of support he or she needs in order to develop:
  - curiosity, creativity, and confidence in learning. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 10)

From a syntactical point of view, the sentence consists of a main clause and adjective clause, which modifies the noun support as the direct object of the main clause. The subject of the main clause is the kindergarten program and the predicate is provide. The meaning of the verb is completed by the indirect object every child as the receiver of the action and the direct object support. The term support was further modified by the adjectival clause he or she needs in which the pronouns stand for child. Creativity acts as a direct object of the verb develop, which in turn is part of an adverbial indicating the purpose of providing support.

Experientially, creativity seems to be a personality trait that is universal and from the same category as curiosity and confidence; children develop creativity and the program provides needed support to develop it. The presence of the verb develop may indicate a developmental discourse underpinning the sentence. Furthermore, creativity was one of the aims of the program as indicated by the adverbial of purpose. This suggests that creativity was held in high regard and has a positive expressive value.

The kindergarten program as a subject of this sentence is a metonymy for the apparatus as it is personalized, because the program cannot provide, but humans provide. The program, as a system created by people for people, was a provider of individualized necessary support as suggested by the adjective clause he or she needs. Teachers are part of the apparatus and are included in this subject. Hence, the main role of teachers in this excerpt was to provide support. The subject and activities of the program are to be included in the program as areas of knowledge and skills encompassed in the support.

The children were portrayed as developing creativity and as in need of support. The predicate need projects the image of a child who needs support in developing creativity or curiosity, and he or she is incomplete and will be considered incomplete or incompetent without this program. Furthermore, the students were referred to as every child and he or she. The
support she or he needs is problematic, because when we emit such expressive thoughts, we compare the child to an imaginary desired ideal and risk not to see the real child. The use of the singular pronoun when referring to needs and providing support suggests an individualist approach of teaching and learning. When this individualist approach to teaching and learning further intersects with the verb *develop*, it results in individual development and needs. These characteristics (universality, individualism) might place creativity under the I-paradigm with the belief that its outcome can be changed if it is properly and individually supported.

The next occurrence of creativity played the role of direct object of *honour* as a verb:

- In play-based learning, educators honour every child’s views, ideas, and theories; imagination and creativity; and interests and experiences, including the experience of assuming new identities in the course of learning (e.g., “I am a writer!”; “I am a dancer!”). (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 12)

Creativity experientially is an attribute possessed by every child as the determiner *every* and possessive (’s) indicates, and it belongs in the same conceptual category with imagination. Because it is the direct object of *honour* as a predicate, it designates an expressive value. Creativity is valued and teachers ECEs should keep it in high regard.

I noticed that the student was addressed as *child*, which is a word less formal than student. This signals the fact that there is a less formal relationship between students and teachers. The children were also addressed as singular (child) and was accompanied by the determiner *every* (child’s). Creativity belongs to the child and is in the same category as imagination making it a trait of the mind and universal (as belonging to every child, as a generalization). Second, the subject of the sentence is clearly *educators* and included the teacher and the early childhood educator. The predicate *honour* designates an attitude toward the child: respect and kept in high regard. Therefore, the child’s creativity should be respected or kept in high regard by teachers and ECEs. Children were to be portrayed in the light of their rights as a full human beings. The relational value that transpired in this quote is the document telling the teachers how to imagine the relationship with the child. This seems to promote a different discourse of childhood, one that is anchored in the UN rights of children as equal human beings discourse as well as the child as capable of creativity and imagination.
The phrase *in play-based learning* situated creativity in the hybrid context of learning through play and addresses both activity and subject. Play-based learning might not include play as I imagine or not as a child-led, independent activity, as the learning in the program is inextricably tied to learning expectations, hence it is hijacked and adult-led.

The idea of a democratic creativity as in the creativity I-paradigm, expressively stated that all children are viewed as *every child’s*, because this indicates a generalization about children and views them as individuals rather than members of a community. The next statement regards creativity as something good as a value and links play with creativity, where play is some kind of nucleus of creativity:

Play is a vehicle for learning and rests at the core of innovation and creativity. It provides opportunities for learning in a context in which children are at their most receptive. Play and academic work are not distinct categories for young children, and learning and doing are also inextricably linked for them. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 18)

The following sentences seemed very familiar to me. The familiarity resides in the copying and pasting of the same paragraph from the draft curriculum:

Play is a vehicle for learning and lies at the core of innovation and creativity. It provides opportunities for learning in a context in which children are at their most receptive. Play and academic work are not distinct categories for young children, and learning and doing are also inextricably linked for them. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 13)

The copying and pasting of this particular quote signals that this was a fundamental belief of the curriculum. This was the main assumption where the equivalency among creativity, play, and academic work was carefully crafted and became part of the reasoning behind the driving expectations of the curriculum. There is an underlying collision of discourses of play. On one side, there is play as in purely chosen and directed by children and their interests, which are unaltered by adults’ involvement, and on the other side there is the expectation-driven, adult-set and manipulated.

The argument regarding the relationship between play at the core of creativity or play equals academic work was explored in the analysis of the 2010 draft version of the curriculum.
and applies here as well. As shown in the previous analysis, there was a fundamental difference between play and academic work and the equivalency between the notions created a conceptual confusion of play, and consequently creativity, which was reflected in the educators’ social practice of the curriculum. The same idea was addressed in the next excerpt from the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)’s Statement on Play-Based Learning, which appeared on page 19 of the document:

Research also demonstrates that play-based learning leads to greater social, emotional, and academic success. Based on such evidence, ministers of education endorse a sustainable pedagogy for the future that does not separate play from learning but brings them together to promote creativity in future generations. In fact, play is considered so essential to healthy development that the United Nations has recognized it as a specific right for all children. (emphasis in original, CMEC as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 19)

The instance of creativity in this context is part of the adjectival clause, which modifies the direct object pedagogy and acts as the purpose of the action brings them together (learning and play) to encourage creativity. Again, creativity is something that needs support and seems to be a very desirable trait of the future generations. It was a goal hidden in an alembicated sentence about the future, which includes the pedagogy and generations and their creativity. The discourse was strengthened by two pillars that grant it legitimacy: research and the United Nations. When two major players in the field are brought in to sustain a case it is hard to argue the contrary, but a close review reveals that research is indirectly linked to creativity. Research is about play and so is the United Nations, which proclaimed children’s right to play (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013). Nevertheless, this statement does not have legs to stand on, as the United Nations has a different definition of play, which does not equate play and academic work, and this makes a fundamental difference in interpreting the paragraph. The reader’s common sense is played as play is used interchangeably denoting academic work, free play, and the right to play (without adult interference). This paragraph does not make sense, because every time the word play was used, it had a different meaning: academic work, free play, and the right to play (without adult interference).
The next appearance of creativity is in the context of the summary of the creative collaboration process between the teachers and students:

The examples in the previous section illustrate how educators, in their interactions with the children, constantly engage in a creative collaboration with them to co-construct thinking and learning. The process can be summarized as follows:

As educators collaborate with the children to:

- formulate questions, select materials,
- stimulate and support creativity,
- think aloud about various perspectives and interpretations,
- think aloud about multiple possibilities or solutions,
- solve problems, and
- document thinking and learning,

they intentionally and purposefully:

- listen,
- observe,
- document,
- analyse documentation, considering a range of possible meanings and perspectives and making connections to the overall expectations, and
- provide feedback through questions and prompts that effectively extend thinking and learning. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 24)

The sentence was constructed using parallel actions, which illustrated the possible steps or actions of the collaborative process. The sentence consists of a temporal clause introduced by the
subordinate conjunction as and a main clause with a compound predicate, which illustrated the actions of the educators. The predicates are characterized through the adverbs intentionally and purposefully, which semantically indicate decision and goal. The subject of both clauses is educators as they are the people doing the action. Creativity appeared in the temporal clause that indicates the time of the action of the predicate. The subordinate conjunction as signaled parallel actions between the main and the temporal clauses. Therefore, the educators’ role was to collaborate with children. Children appear as partners as the word collaborate implies, which means that they should be somewhat in charge of their learning. Collaboration is done with a purpose, and this is where creativity is to be found. Acting as a complement indicating the purpose, stimulate and support creativity, implies the following: epistemologically, creativity can be stimulated as some kind of Pavlovian reaction, creativity is good and attainable, and creativity is a universal trait. This seems to be a kind of experimental set up, a laboratory, where educators do research and document what is going on, draw conclusions, and adjust and manage the conditions and interactions to optimize results. The traditional relationship is changed and extended, but still unilateral, as the teacher is setting up and manages or manipulates with clear purposes or expectations.

The art and creativity correlation was explored in the next excerpt:

Creativity does not occur in a vacuum. Art making is a process requiring both creativity and skill, and it can be cultivated by establishing conditions that encourage and promote its development. Teachers need to be aware that the atmosphere they create for learning affects the nature of the learning itself. A setting that is conducive to creativity is one in which students are not afraid to suggest alternative ideas and take risks. (The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: The Arts, 2009, p. 19). (Ontario Ministry of Education, as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 51)

Presented in the Thinking about Belonging and Contributing: Developing a sense of Belonging and Contributing through the Arts the quote from the Grades 1-8: The Arts (OME, 2009) curriculum spoke about the nature of creativity and its conditions. When looking at the first sentence, I noticed the strong tone of the statement through the negative of the verb occur. Its present simple tense suggests a general truth and it refers to the conditions and environment of

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creativity occurring in a vacuum, where the vacuum refers to the absence of any social or physical environment, which might influence the occurrence. This was clearly an experiential statement, which highlights the importance of the social environment in creativity in art. This fact places creativity under the We-paradigm of creativity when placed in an arts context.

The next occurrence of creativity was present in the reduced attributive requiring both creativity and skill, which modified the noun process as art making. It spoke about the necessary conditions of art making as a process through the use of the present participle requiring. Hence, this clearly links creativity and the art making process by presenting creativity in a cause and effect relationship with the art making process. Creativity is experientially an intrinsic part of art as the process of art making.

Creativity was also present in this quote as a predicate of an adjective clause, which modified the noun atmosphere and its adjective clause they create for learning, which was used to refer to a particular mood or feeling that one has in a particular place or situation, and in this case the classroom. The main clause spoke about the necessity of teachers’ awareness to realize the impact of the mood or feeling on children’s learning suggested through the verb need followed by the direct object to be aware, which means to realize or to know and the direct object clause “that the atmosphere…affects the nature of the learning itself.” Teachers are creators of social contexts, which influence the learning process. The specific details on what kind of mood or feeling is necessary for creativity to occur are presented in the next sentence that contains the third instance of creativity in this quote.

The third instance of creativity appeared in the attributive, which modified setting as environment and its meaning seemed to refer to a goal through the choice of the adjective conducive where “a setting that is conducive to creativity is one in which students are not afraid to suggest alternative ideas and take risks.” It was characterized by another attributive, which contains a negative predicate with an adjective that portrays a feeling: afraid, which modified the noun students. Again, the present tense simple suggests the axiomatic character of the sentence, which renders it like certitude. Although in the context of art making, the statement about creativity was generalized and presented its environmental conditions of occurrence: students’ lack of fear of expressing alternative ideas or risk taking. These necessary conditions to become
creative provide details about the type of teacher and student relationship: students are empowered by teachers to take risks and to think and express different ideas. This act presupposes open-ended tasks that are impossible to assess in a context of a binary evaluative frame and links the discourse of creativity with Guilford’s (1950) and Torrance’s (1968) creativity as flexibility. This underlying discourse of creativity places creativity under an I-paradigm.

First, this quote linked creativity with the art making or creating discourse. Second, it seems to connect creativity to the We-paradigm of creativity as the teacher and his or her interactions are recognized to influence the outcome. This statement seemed to serve as a warning to authoritative styles of teaching, which was meant to control behaviours though fear. Third, it alluded to creativity as a mental ability, which presupposes flexibility and risk-taking. The student was portrayed as capable of thinking and risk-taking if they were not afraid to do so. Hence, the social environment, as set up by the teacher, plays a crucial role in students’ creativity.

Teaching about the value of creativity in kindergarten is addressed in the next quote:

Similarly, explicitly identifying innovations in the world around them will enable children to recognize the impact of others’ innovations on their own environment and experiences. For example, educators can ask such questions as the following to provoke children to consider the value of creativity in a range of areas:

- “How do you suppose people got a drink of water at school before the water fountain was invented?”
- “What do you think the artist was trying to do when she created this sculpture?”
- “I wonder what winter coats were like before zippers were used.”
- “I used to send a letter to your parents on paper, but now I send them an e-mail. Why do you think I made that change?” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 90)
At the syntactic level, the next occurrence of creativity appeared as part of a purpose complement with creativity as a genitive prepositional phrase with value as the object of possession. The sentence has *educators* as the subject and *can ask* as a predicator indicating possibility and questions as a direct object. The purpose complement *to provoke children to consider the value of creativity* represents the reason behind the inquiry.

At the expressive level I can imply that creativity is a good thing when it has value attached to it and this reflects more of a pragmatic approach of creativity. Innovation, or the creation of something of value, is rather the focus here; creativity is highlighted through scientific or artistic progress as illustrated by the provided examples (zippers, fountains, email and sculpture). When it comes to social identities the educator is portrayed as an initiator of dialogue with an agenda in mind as in leading the children to uncover the value of creativity. The child is portrayed as capable of reasoning, as able to identify the practical achievements of science and arts through the answers (e.g., wells vs. water fountains, buttons vs. zipper, art expression through sculpture) and decipher the cause and effect universal relationship (why do I use email vs. paper?).

The social relationship between the teachers and children is one of a questioning to provoke evaluative thinking where the conversation is initiated by the teacher with an expected outcome in mind, as in identifying the value of creativity in everyday life. Creativity in these stances is the type of accomplishment that is revolutionary and fundamentally changing the world we live in. It is drawing from a Genius approach to creativity (e.g., Gideon Sundback as the inventor of the zipper).

The activity associated with creativity was the inquiry that was meant to determine the children to think about creativity in their life. The predicator of the sentence *can ask* indicates a possibility and is completed by the questions that embed the teachers’ intent and expectation. The expectation is mainly outlined in the purpose complement (why?) *to provoke to consider children the value of creativity*.

Considering the value of something implies a judgment or evaluative thinking as in determining its worth in money, in importance, or in usefulness. Provoking thinking in terms of value is clearly the job of the teacher. This type of evaluation of creativity connects creativity
with value, which is innovation and is specific to a neoliberal discourse—always in search for the “market- and product-driven, characterized by product development, industry expansion and marketability” (Harris, 2014, p. 18).

The subject cannot really be pinpointed, although the text made reference to achievements from two disciplines: arts and technology. These instances of creativity appeared under the Problem Solving and Innovating frame as a broad learning area:

This frame encompasses children’s learning and development with respect to:

- exploring the world through natural curiosity, in ways that engage the mind, the senses, and the body;
- making meaning of their world by asking questions, testing theories, solving problems, and engaging in creative and analytical thinking;
- the innovative ways of thinking about and doing things that naturally arise with an active curiosity, and applying those ideas in relationships with others, with materials, and with the environment. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 15)

By pinpointing the frame of learning and its contents, I can infer that creativity is almost a perfect synonym with creativity with value, which is innovation as it addresses achievements from the arts and technology. Creativity is about product development and marketability in both arts and technology, which are the cornerstones of appropriation of creativity by the neoliberal discourse.

Due to the fact the plural noun educators was the subject the sentence exemplifies the actions the subject has the possibility to do, and in this case ask questions in a convoluted way to induce learning including evaluative thinking and reasoning.

The environment of creativity, in this particular instance, was the children’s immediate environment and experiences from zipping up the winter coat to email; the educators attempt to thought provoke children, and this action of provoking involves the presence of an educator. Hence, most of these experiences happen in an enclosed educational setting.
The next excerpt, which contained the word *creativity*, acted as a motto of the section, The Role of Play in Inquiry, Problem Solving, and Innovating and is a quote from Fullan’s (2013) *Great to excellent: Launching the next stage of Ontario’s education agenda* paper and is somewhat puzzling, because of the date of the publication. There seems to be an anachronism between a statement in present tense formulated in 2013 and a document that was published and applied in 2016, unless the statement applies to the current document. The analysis is using the latter as a premise:

*Our [Full-Day Kindergarten] program promotes the development of self-regulation, social-emotional learning, inquiry skills, and play-based learning that fosters creativity, imagination and problem solving.* (emphasis in original, Fullan, 2013, as cited in Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 91)

Because the quote was meant to characterize the current document it is necessary to identify the paper. The author stated he was the advisor of the Premier and the purpose of the paper was to: “Review key aspects of the journey, and set the tasks for the next phase” (Fullan, 2013, p. 1). In this context of looking at nine years of ECE programming, Fullan considered that “Ontario unequivocally has developed from good to great” (p. 1), and we needed to find the way from great to excellent. In this context the final curriculum was the last stage of the early childhood education project and crowned the educational efforts of the Liberal government as suggested by the possessive adjective *our* form *our program*. Again, the use of a quote from a draft in 2013 to be applied to a current curriculum published in 2016 seems anachronistic, unless there are no fundamental differences between the documents. Whether there are fundamental differences, is to be established in the following pages.

This particular statement is of importance to the identification of creativity as it appeared at the beginning of the section that linked play and creativity, and established a conceptual connection between play, learning, and creativity. At a syntactic level the subject is *the program* and the predicator is *promotes* with *play-based learning* as the direct object and *creativity* as the direct object of the adjectival clause *that fosters creativity*. The subject *the program*, which acts as a metonymy for the state apparatus for ECE education, promotes play-based learning. The choice of the present tense indicates certain facts as in the program actively encouraging play-
based learning, which in turn fosters creativity. The adjectival clause establishes a causal link between creativity and play-based learning and the program. Play-based learning is an expression to designate learning in school and is not to be confused with play as an activity initiated and carried out by children. The choice of the words play-based learning made it clear that the sentence is not about free play.

Expressively, creativity is believed to be something good and aimed for, hoped for, and justifies the choice of play-based learning in the kindergarten program. Relationally, the text was persuasive and told the audience, including teachers and ECEs, what the program promoted, where promote has an expressive value indicating what is desired (e.g., one promotes inquiry skills, because they are valued and desirable). The choice of promote as a predicate and the program as a metonymy for the ECE Ontario system speaks about the desired profile of the student after graduation of kindergarten, because if the program promoted, for example, self-regulation, the promotion indicates that self-regulation was a desired quality and trait for a kindergarten student.

The next quote highlights the deep connection between play and creativity.

Play is a vehicle for learning and lies at the core of innovation and creativity. When playing, children for generations have used their abundant imagination to create new and different uses for such things as a stick, a rock, or a box. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 91)

At syntactic level, creativity appeared in a compound sentence with clauses coordinated by a conjunction and implies a connection and addition. Creativity appeared as a prepositional phrase indicating the place of the subject as the predicator lies referred mostly to a physical position. This creates a mental image where the core is the most important part of something. This clause is linking even more creativity with play, defining it as an integral part of creativity by placing it at the core of creativity. The next sentence of the paragraph further elucidated the nature of creativity as in the Torrance tests of creativity (1974): the product improvement task, where children are asked to redefine the objects or their uses. This indirect reference to Torrance tasks ties creativity with play under the I-paradigm of creativity. There was no direct reference to the educator, but the students were present through the possessive adjective their, which showed
them as possessors of creativity. Creativity seemed a matter of individual stimulation and support through play and open-ended tasks, which further supports the I-paradigm of creativity.

The association between outdoor play and creativity is presented in the next quote:

Outdoor play also supports children’s problem-solving skills and nurtures their creativity, as well as providing rich opportunities for their developing imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness. (Council for Learning outside the Classroom, 2009, as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 92)

The next occurrence of creativity was present in the beginning of the Role of Learning in the Outdoors in Problem Solving and Innovating section of the document, and it was part of the quote that stood as a motto for the section. The quote belonged to the Council for Learning outside the Classroom, “a registered charity existing to champion learning outside the classroom,” which was active in the United Kingdom. The choice to start with a statement about outdoor play highlights the importance of this concept in the document. Hence, the quote was about the belief of the authors about outdoor play and has experiential value.

At a syntactic level the word creativity acts as a direct object of the predicate nurtures in the context of a compound sentence. The verbs are coordinated by the conjunction and, which suggest addition and agreement between clauses. The subject outdoor play realizes the action nurtures with the recipient their creativity where their stands for children’s. The present tense of the sentence signals a statement expressed as a general truth and reveals the experiential content of creativity as something pre-existent, which can be supported while growing by outdoor play. The document did not provide a concise definition of the outdoor play and its meaning. Hence, I traced the references that mentioned outdoor play: G2G, which was cited in this document referred to outdoor play as:

Playtime is NOT wasted time. Children need unstructured time to play and explore without adult interaction in order to develop social independence and creativity. This does not mean children run around unsupervised and unmonitored. Unstructured play means that a child directs their own playtime and entertains him/herself.
Today, children spend their time in highly structured, adult-led activities (soccer, baseball, ballet, etc.) or in passive activities like television and video games. This structure needs to be balanced with some free play where the child’s mind can wander and explore in its own way.

The outdoors is the perfect place to promote a child’s free play. Nature provides a variety of sounds, colours, textures, and places for children to discover. These are opportunities for children to learn problem solving skills, motor-function, social-skills, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence. (g2g Outside, n.d., https://g2goutside.wordpress.com/benefits-of-outdoor-play/).

This clearly links outdoors with free play and defines it as unstructured play. More evidence pointing to outdoor play as free play came from the document. The collocations of outdoor play in the curriculum document reveal that in the quotes that referred directly to outdoor play and children during outdoor play, children choose their activity:

- “Children choose a physical activity such as climbing or playing with a ball during outdoor playtime.” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 169)
- “During outdoor playtime, a small group of children engage in a game of hopscotch.” (p. 174)
- “Children choose a physical activity such as climbing or playing with a ball during outdoor playtime.” (p. 267)

The agency of children and lack of adult involvement in the above statements further sustains the idea of outdoor play as unstructured play outdoors. Hence, coming back to creativity and outdoor play as nurturing it, the idea of free, unguided, unstructured play is supporting the development of creativity. I also noted that creativity here appeared as an innate trait. These characteristics have experiential value as they speak about the nature of creativity and its development. They place it under an individual developmental umbrella within a community of children who learn to self-regulate; to choose by themselves.

The choice of using this particular quote at the beginning of the section speaks about its expressive value: creativity is a desirable trait that deserves to be nurtured in children. From a
relational point of view the author of the quote, as it could be implied, was held in high regard and their opinion should be respected. The quote mainly concerns two major themes directly: first the nature of creativity as something good; then its proprieties as it can be developed; third comes the environment of the creativity development in children as outdoors as outside the classroom, and a forth point concerns how creativity is developed through unstructured and free of adult intervention. There was no direct reference to the educator, and this fact reinforces the idea of free, unstructured play. Students were present through the possessive adjective their, which modifies the noun creativity, and clearly makes it specific to children.

Creativity appeared toward the end of the section 2.4 Thinking about Problem Solving and Innovating and again highlighted the connection between play, interactions in nature, and creativity: “In addition, play and interactions in nature develop the capacity for creativity, problem solving, and intellectual development in children (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 93). The sentence was introduced by the preposition in addition, which suggests additional information or statements about the subject. The syntactic analysis reveals a multiple subject (play and interactions in nature) the predicator develop, with the receiver of action as direct object capacity and prepositional phrase for creativity, which indicates the type of capacity. Again, creativity appeared as a type of desired capacity development, which from an expressive point of view, denotes something good and desirable. From a relational point of view, the reader’s trust was to be gained by providing evidence of research, which supports the statement as this is a quote from a research paper. Experientially, the quote implies that creativity can be developed through the interactions and play outside the classroom. It is as a different concept from problem-solving and intellectual development but is in the same category of the direct object of action along with them. The presence of the educator might be considered here as part of interactions, which can imply social interaction. However, the indirect reference regarding the involvement of the educator, and the fact that play here has the meaning of unstructured outdoor play as demonstrated earlier, dilute the importance of the role of teachers in creativity development. The environment of creativity development was clearly outdoors as suggested by the prepositional phrase in nature, which clearly indicated location or setting of the subject. The natural environment, as opposed to classroom, is present in the subject making it essential to the action, which in this case represents the subject (play and interactions in nature).
The next excerpt presents creativity as an innate trait and portrayed how educators should view children through this lens:

Educators who see children as capable and competent provoke children’s awareness of their own innate creativity and that of others in a wide variety of ways in order to stimulate their imagination further. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 105)

Creativity is present in the The Role of the Arts in Kindergarten section, and it came in as a trait from an experiential point of view. The adjective innate, which modifies creativity, suggests that all children are born creative making it a universal trait. This idea is indicative of a democratic view of creativity, which belongs to an I-paradigm.

Syntactically, the subject of the sentence is educators, so this particular statement linked art as the title of the section suggests to children’s creativity and educators. The subject is followed by an adjectival clause, which specifies the type or category of educators who can do the action present in the predicate provoke and its receiver children’s awareness of their own innate creativity and that of others. The restrictive adjectival clause who see children as capable and competent marks a clear distinction with regards to the specific belief or vision of the children the educator must have in order to carry the action of the predicate (provoke and awareness), qualifying this statement as an experiential one with regards to educators. Hence, only the educators with this belief provoke children’s awareness of creativity. The purpose of the provocation initiated by teachers was to stimulate their imagination. The provocation of creativity awareness was done in a variety of ways, which were detailed in the next sentences of the paragraph and consists of providing tools, materials, and opportunities. This has the implications of a multimodal approach of stimulating the imagination. The convoluted sentence also highlighted the interaction between the children and educators where the educators deliberately stimulated knowledge about self. They were provocateurs of self-cognition and consequently identity. The phrase, awareness of their own innate creativity, as the direct object of the predicator provoke indicates the experiential value of the entire statement when looked at through the student category analysis lens. Children were seen as creative, but not aware of this quality, and it was the job of the educators to make knowledge of self-possible. The getting to
know oneself process is implied through the adjective own and possessive adjective their, which modifies creativity and emphasized the possession of this trait.

The children were portrayed in the adjectival clause and as possessors of awareness of creativity in the direct object of provoke. This suggests a vision of able, knowledgeable, and able to be self-aware of possibilities as children. This characterization of children seems to be rooted in a discourse of childhood as children’s human rights discourse, which represents children as capable participants, as social actors, and not as passive receivers.

Relationally, the text was meant to clarify who are the educators and what kind of role they had with regards to children’s awareness of creativity, as well as what the purpose was for this action. The last excerpt that referred to creativity was a word in the document about how children develop appreciation for creativity:

*Children develop a sense of appreciation for human creativity and innovation ... [by]*
*Bringing all their senses to exploring the constructed world ... [and by] Learning to appreciate beauty, creativity and innovation in art, architecture, and technologies.*
(emphasis in original, New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 225)

This quote represented the introduction of the fourth frame of Problem Solving and Innovating for ECE in Ontario and, as the reference pointed out, it belongs to the New Brunswick curriculum: *Framework for Early Learning and Child Care*. Creativity appeared twice in the quote in the context of appreciation for human creativity and learning to appreciate creativity. The fact that it was used as a motto points to the experiential value of the quote as this statement summarized the beliefs with regards to the frame: children’s appreciation of creativity is developed by learning to appreciate. The statement as selected from the New Brunswick curriculum seems to be circular in reasoning, but it is about the fact that appreciation implies a judgment, and the process of thinking about and emitting a critical thought is something to be learnt by children. Furthermore, it is most likely socially constructed as highlighted by the adjective human, which modifies creativity. Because at the syntactic level children is the subject and the predicator is develop (a sense of appreciation), it is clear that the authors assumed a developmental view of the universal child and is conducive toward the I-paradigm of creativity.
The other actors involved in the creativity appreciation seem to be conspicuously absent; there is a social void around the children who develop. In exploring the constructed world through the senses, which clearly places the child in a both Piagetian and social constructivist perspective as the world is becoming known through senses, while learning to appreciate constructed bodies of knowledge, is expressed through aesthetic categories (beauty) or domains such as the arts, architecture, and technologies. According to this text, there was a direct connection between marginalized bodies of knowledge such the arts, including aesthetics, and creativity.

The next stage of analysis examined the instances of creative in the text. Creativity as an adjective manifested in two important collocations in terms of number of occurrences present in the document: creative thinking (19 times) and creative ways (11 times). The following quotes regard the hypostases of creativity as thinking. The first observation was that creative thinking speaks about the experiential value of the collocation: creativity as a type of thinking. Hence, it can be considered a mental process specific to humans:

Learning through exploration, play, and inquiry – As children learn through play and inquiry, they develop – and have the opportunity to practice every day – many of the skills and competencies that they will need in order to thrive in the future, including the ability to engage in innovative and complex problem-solving and critical and creative thinking; to work collaboratively with others; and to take what is learned and apply it in new situations in a constantly changing world. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 11)

The first appearance of creative skills was in the Pedagogical Approaches: Learning through Exploration, Play, and Inquiry section of the document as part of a reduced adjective clause introduced by the present participle including, which modifies the nouns skills and competencies. The modified nouns are direct objects of develop with they (children) as the subject. Skills and competencies are followed by an essential adjective clause that they will need in order to thrive in the future, making this statement an imaginary projection of children’s future, which acts as a justification to this pedagogical approach and its aim. This is a belief regarding these skills that includes engaging in creative thinking. The use of verb need highlights a necessary condition of thriving and, therefore, it is an experiential characteristic of skills and competencies, which,
according to the author, included creative thinking. Furthermore, creative thinking is different from other forms of thinking, as there is a clear distinction between creative thinking, problem solving, and critical thinking. The statement “they develop – and have the opportunity to practice every day – many of the skills and competencies that they will need in order to thrive in the future, including the ability to engage in innovative and complex problem-solving and critical and creative thinking” (p. 11) suggests that creativity is an ability that develops. The verb develop associated with creativity is ideologically loaded pointing towards a Piagetian view of cognition. This statement also has an expressive value as this implies an intrinsic good thing or has a positive desired impact as well as a relational value as it is a direct transmission of belief to the reader. There is no question to the truth and validity of these beliefs, which are to be applied by educators and accepted by readers. The main actors of this quote are the children as implied by the subject they, which functions as the noun children mentioned in the introductory adverbial time clause as children learn through play and inquiry. The same adverbial clause contains the activity conducive to creativity: learn and modality, play and inquiry. The main activity is learn, which semantically, at least from a pedagogical point of view, can have multiple meanings from transmission to discovery or directed, guided, and independent. The association with the modality play and inquiry, which implies some kind of self-determination of activities creates the idea of a romantic vision of childhood education where happy children play in nature, socialize, and inquire about anything, and where learning occurs naturally and it is not imposed by adults. This is misleading as the documents outlined rigorous expectations, which were to be fulfilled and taught during these two years, where there was a schedule in place that ordered the day and divided it into breaks and periods, and it told you when to eat, play, and learn in centres, or go the library.

The next instance of creative appeared in the presentation of the Problem Solving and Innovating frame description as follows:

Problem Solving and Innovating. This frame encompasses children’s learning and development with respect to:
• making meaning of their world by asking questions, testing theories, solving problems, and engaging in creative and analytical thinking; (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p.15, p. 87)

This particular quote appeared twice in the document and was worded identically on page 15 and page 87. This instance of creative thinking specified the way the program was conceptually organized, where a frame is a broad area of learning. There were four frames: belonging and contributing; self-regulation and well-being; demonstrating literacy and mathematics behaviours; and problem solving and innovating. Each was aligned with four foundational conditions needed for children to grow and flourish or ways of beings, and they were: engaging, well-being, expression, and belonging. Creative thinking was to be learnt and developed by students within the frame of problem-solving and innovating. The title of the frame itself alludes to creativity but is a special type of creativity: innovation. The word itself is usually used in science rather than art evoking a technological aspect of life and progress. It is part of the neoliberal way of framing creativity as something financially valuable. Creative thinking appeared as a part of a present participle of the phrasal verb to engage in as a modality with respect to making meaning of their world. Because it is about how knowledge, skills, and attitudes are organized, this quote was both experiential and expressive. First, the authors believed that children made meaning of their world by engaging in creative thinking, hence creative thinking was a means and ends—a valuable characteristic. The learning and development of children were activities of children, where making meaning was an all-encompassing cognitive process, which implies understanding what is expressed and is represented.

The next instance of creative thinking was about the transdisciplinary nature of creative thinking and its relationships to contexts as determined by teachers.

In connection with this frame, it is important for educators to consider the importance of problem solving in all contexts – not only in the context of mathematics – so that children will develop the habit of applying creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills in all aspects of their lives. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 15 and p. 87)

This particular quote appeared twice in the document and was worded identically, which made it particularly important as the repetition of a statement usually is done to make the reader
remember or memorize it. Syntactically, *creative thinking* appeared in the adverbial clause, which modifies the verb *to consider* with the logical subject *educators* (“to consider...so that the children will develop the habit of applying creative...thinking skills”). The adverbial clause was introduced by the subordinate conjunction *so that* indicating the purpose of *to consider*. The subject of the adverbial clause is *children* and the predicator is the verb *develop* in future simple indicating a future action. *Creative thinking* plays the role of a direct object of *applying*, which in turn is used in association with *of* and *habit*, which clearly shows the nature of habit. Hence, the purpose of an educator’s consideration of problem-solving in all contexts is to form children’s habit of creative thinking in all contexts.

When looking at *creative* in the context of *creative...thinking skills*, I noticed that *creative* modifies *thinking* as a noun (indicating the process), which in turn behaves like an adjective modifying *skills*. It is also part of the enumeration of creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Experientially, this speaks about the nature of the creativity as a thinking process and as skills; as a particular ability different from other types of thinking. Furthermore, it can be nurtured by providing the opportunity to problem solve in all contexts. Hence, creativity can be developed by forming the habit of creative thinking.

When thinking about the area of knowledge, creative thinking seems to be subsumed to problem-solving along with analytic and critical thinking, and it is as transdisciplinary as it can be developed by providing opportunities in all contexts, not only mathematics.

An educator’s role in the students’ creative thinking appeared in an expressive sentence that contained an impersonal subject *it* followed by an adjectival predicate *is important [for]*, which is indicative of an opinion. The collocation *important for* has the meaning of having great value or effect for people, with educators as an indirect object receiving the opinion; *to consider problem solving* is a direct object and highlights what is important; *in all contexts* is an adverbial of place, where contexts designate areas of knowledge or disciplines. Hence, an educator’s role is to consider or think about problem-solving in all disciplines, and to develop creative thinking skills habits. The educator’s role is one of provider of opportunities to problem-solve and to form habits of thinking. Students were portrayed as capable of developing and forming habits, and this
was the purpose of determining that the educators consider problem-solving across contexts. They were to become problem-solvers.

Educators were to think about problem-solving in all contexts and disciplines and provide opportunities for children’s habitual creative thinking. The aim of the action of teachers was to form children’s habit of creative thinking. Experientially, creativity is part of problem-solving along with analytical and critical process, which manifests across contexts. It can become habitual. Educators are providers of opportunities, which can form children’s habits of thinking, including creative thinking. Children were portrayed implicitly as potential problem-solvers and creative thinkers. The ability to problem-solve is a trademark of the neoliberal discourse in education as it subsumes creativity to innovation, and it directs creativity towards a narrow frame of interpreting creativity as a tool to solve work-related problems, to increase productivity, to marketability, to creativity with value (Harris, 2014).

Relationally, this quote represented an opinion disguised in an impersonal subject (it) and an opinion adjective important. The author told the audience, including teachers, what was important and the purpose: to form children’s habits of creative thinking. Hence, creativity in the form of habit is valuable.

Creative thinking appeared in Thinking about Belonging and Contributing: Developing a sense of Belonging and Contributing through the Arts section with reference to a specific area of knowledge: the arts. Providing children with opportunities to express themselves through the arts:

- develops decision-making skills;
- stimulates memory;
- facilitates understanding;
- develops skills in symbolic communication;
- promotes sensory development;
- encourages creative thinking; (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 51)
The sentences have a common gerund subject providing expressing a process or action. Creativity in the form of an adjective creative is part of an enumeration of independent clauses marked by semicolons, whose predicates are all in present tense simple suggesting facts. The verbs of predicators are transitive and seem to have a positive connotation by presenting or describing a positive effect on children (e.g., develops, stimulates, facilitates). Hence, creativity is part of a positive expressive value.

Creative thinking represented a process as suggested by the gerund of the verb think. It was a personal process as it clearly referred to child’s creative thinking, which needed to be encouraged through opportunities. Teachers were indirectly present in the sentence in the subject providing as the ones entitled to provide were the adults around the children: parents or guardians and teachers. They were the providers.

Children were the indirect object of providing and played the role of recipients of providing. Consequently, they were affected by the action of providing. The direct object of providing is opportunities, which is followed and modified by the infinitive to express to specify its nature. Themselves is a reflexive pronoun to refer back to the logical subject of the verb express and can be interpreted as children’s self-expression. The purpose of the entire subject, then, was to provide information with regards to a specific type of action required and having the result specified in the predicates (e.g., “encourage creative thinking”).

Children were present as objects of the verbs providing and express through the noun children and the reflexive pronoun themselves. In the first instance they were the receiver of providing the opportunities while in the second instance themselves referred back to children as main actors and subjects of to express. This speaks to the type of social relationships conducive to creativity in the form of creative thinking: teachers or adults providing the opportunities as in allowing space for self-expression, while children were communicating their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. This sentence puts creativity in the light of a cause and effect relationship with self-expression and the arts. This is conducive to a We-paradigm of creativity, because it recognizes the importance of the social, emotional, physical environment provided by adults and teachers in the context of children’s creativity.
When looking through the environment lens, “providing opportunities to express themselves” can be interpreted as providing the space, time, and freedom to self-express. It can refer to the mental and emotional safety of the children as well as the physical resources, such as tools. It is the opposite of an oppressive environment, which seeks to silence independent thinking and self-expression.

In light of the activities conducive to students’ creativity, providing opportunities as a subject referred to a specific domain, and it could be assumed that these opportunities of self-expression should happen in arts: visual arts, music, and dramatic arts, and creativity could be encouraged through self-expressive art activities. In order to be able to self-express multimodally through the arts, one should be literate in the arts; this presupposes some kind of learning before self-expression, and it is conditioned by literacy in the arts. Consequently, self-expression through the arts should not be interpreted as a naïve free time. Creativity is implicitly conditioned by literacy in the arts, so the children are able to self-express.

When thinking about the curriculum subjects, it is clear that the opportunities for self-expression and encouragement of creativity should be offered or provided in the arts. The quote appeared under Thinking about Belonging and Contributing: Developing a sense of Belonging and Contributing through the Arts, where the gerunds belonging and contributing suggested that art needed an audience—in this case the community. Creativity in the arts needs an audience as creative thinking happens during the self-expression. This act can be interpreted as belonging to the We-paradigm of creativity as it provided an interactive social context where the creative thinking happens. Nevertheless, all the benefits listed are personal development achievements, which refer to the individual, and these facts ascribe creativity to an I-paradigm of creativity.

The next quote provided the reasoning behind teaching and learning creative thinking:

Researchers acknowledged that the need to engage in problem-solving and critical and creative thinking has “always been at the core of learning and innovation” (Trilling & Fadel, 2009, p. 50). Children in Kindergarten are growing up in a competitive, globally connected, and technologically intensive world. Educators need to provide opportunities, explicitly and intentionally, for children to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will need for solving a wide variety of problems. It is therefore essential for children
to develop the skills required for problem solving, creative and critical thinking, and innovating; confidence, curiosity, and the willingness to take risks and to see mistakes as opportunities for learning; and the ability to collaborate and to build and maintain relationships. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 87)

The same idea of educators as providers of opportunities to develop children’s thinking appeared on page 87 in the third sentence of the paragraph, where the noun educators played the role of the subject, the verb need was a predicate followed by to provide opportunities as a direct object and the prepositional phrase for children as the indirect object. The adverbs of manner explicitly and intentionally highlight how the action should be done, thus underlining the agency of teachers as both of them refer to deliberate, clear, and open action. This structure of the sentence clearly indicated the role of educators as providers and children as beneficiary of the action.

The paragraph started with a sentence whose subject was researchers and the predicator, the verb acknowledge, which has the meaning of reporting and admitting of truth. This was followed by a that clause, which acts as a direct object that provides details about what they acknowledge, or the findings: The need to engage in problem-solving and critical and creative thinking has “always been at the core of learning and innovation.” This clause was about the need to engage in creative thinking as essential to learning and innovation by using a prepositional phrase at the core, which can be interpreted as the basic and most important part of something; in this case learning and innovation. This speaks about the nature of creative thinking as a need and as some kind of necessity, which occurs naturally, such as the need to eat and socialize. The use of present perfect with always as an adverb of frequency suggests that this act has occurred at all times in the past until now. This is a statement of truth and qualifies it as an experiential statement, which highlights a scientific fact through the main clause with researchers as experts on the matter. The reference provided validates this statement as true and, consequently, has expressive value as well as relational value: It establishes a trust relation with the reader, because it is not an opinion without evidence.

The need to encourage creative thinking was characterized as essential to innovation and learning, where to encourage can be interpreted as to motivate, to make happen, to provide resources such as time, space, and materials. The impersonal subject it followed by an adjectival
predicate *is essential* is indicative of an opinion and aim; it has an expressive value indicating the necessity of an action. The indirect object *for children* is the recipient of the opinion, while *to develop skills* is the direct object, which shows what is essential. The direct object *skills* is modified by a reduced relative clause that also indicates the purpose of skill development, which is creative thinking. Again, the idea of necessity of development of creative thinking skills speaks about the nature of creativity as a skill that needs opportunities to develop. Students were portrayed as receivers of opportunities, while educators were portrayed as providers. From an activity point of view, creativity is a skill that needs engagement. There was no subject mentioned here, and by taking a look at the frame I deduced that creativity should be found in the disciplines covered in this frame. Then, looking at the overall expectations, which indicated what should be assessed in terms of knowledge and skills, problem-solving and innovating covered all disciplines. However, the only instance of creativity as a verb *create* as in *children create*, appeared in expectation 18 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 313), which concerned patterning in mathematics, and was part of demonstrating literacy and mathematics behaviours. Hence, creativity as problem-solving is transdisciplinary, but as a creative process of creating a pattern is specific to math. The paradigm of creativity that emphasizes the relationship between the child and the teacher places creativity in between I- and We-paradigms of creativity.

Creativity was seen as a necessity and essential, and the main reason for growing up in “a competitive, globally connected, and technologically intensive world” (OME, 2016, p. 87). It was no longer about the future, but the present. It seemed to refer to a larger context, which was part of the common sense set of beliefs, as outside there was a competitive world. In other words, creativity is necessary to live in a competitive global world. These tie in with a globalization discourse, being a neoliberalism discourse of survival of the fittest and being the most creative: It is the discourse of creativity as a pragmatic and necessary for survival discourse. The survival creativity discourse was also present in Torrance’s theory of creativity (1974), which clearly placed creativity in an I-paradigm frame of creativity.

Environmental education also became part of the creativity discourse through children’s creative thinking as presented in the next quote:
As children learn more about themselves through the development of personal and social skills, learn to work effectively and respectfully with others through the development of self-regulation skills, and acquire the capacity for systems thinking through the development of critical and creative thinking skills, they increase their capacity to make connections with the world around them and to become environmentally responsible citizens. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 104)

The last paragraph of the environmental education section under the Considerations for Program Planning mentioned creative thinking skills as part of a temporal clause in a complex sentence. Its main clause is a positive statement, which suggests that students increase the capacity to make connections and become environmentally responsible citizens. Again, experientially, creativity appeared as a skill to be developed by children. In this case it was a modality of acquiring the capacity for system thinking through creative thinking along with critical thinking, and it had an instrumental role in the students’ becoming responsible citizens. Direct references to educators were missing from this paragraph, suggesting that learning is a highly individual process. It is also a universal process, because all children follow the same path in becoming environmentally responsible citizens.

From an activity point of view, the purpose of developing creative thinking is students’ acquisition of the capacity for systems thinking, which means that students are supposed to develop creative thinking. The creative thinking development is an individual process and presupposes development. These facts trace creativity to developmental theories, which place creativity under the I-paradigm.

As this paragraph appeared under environmental education, I can infer that this was the subject where creativity of children should manifest. This means that creative thinking is transdisciplinary in nature.

The next occurrences of creativity appeared in The Role of the Arts in Kindergarten, Considerations for Program Planning section and seemed to provide another reasoning concerning teaching and learning arts and through the arts:
Experiences in the arts foster creative thinking in a variety of areas, not only within the arts themselves. When the learning environment provides opportunities for children to create art in any form, communication between various parts of the brain is stimulated. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 104)

Experientially creativity appeared as a form of thinking and not doing and acted as a direct object of the predicate foster with the subject experiences in art. Creative thinking was followed by an adverbial, which indicated the place to foster in a variety of areas, where areas designate disciplines. This suggests a transdisciplinary nature of creativity. This statement is a generalization and the next sentence particularizes the meaning for children. It is a complex sentence formed by an adverbial temporal and a main clause, which illustrates a cause and effect relation. The main clause stated the neurological effect “communication between various parts of the brain is stimulated” where the student was represented by the word brain. The quote was preceded by a reference that supports this point of view. The temporal was introduced by the relative adverb when and contained the infinitive to create as an adjective, which modified the noun opportunities. The teacher was present in the learning environment, which provides, hence the role of the educator was to provide opportunities to create art.

The verb to create followed by the direct object art in any form indicated the activity students were supposed to do while the subject or discipline was embedded in the direct object, the arts. This supports the direct link between art and creativity. The aim of creating art was stated in the effect as the main clause of the sentence: “communication between various parts of the brain is stimulated.”

The embodiment of student as an organ represents a developmental biological point of view, which “can promote reductive and deterministic ways of understanding the developing child, masking phenomenological, psychosocial, or cultural influences” (Busso & Pollack, 2015, p. 1). Creativity is reduced to a physiological process, which can be controlled through environmental changes and activities, reducing the complexity of the concept and restricting it to medical research and findings.
The next quote that mentioned *creative* was an excerpt from the Ontario arts curricula, which can be characterized as overt intertextuality meant to highlight the benefits of active engagement in arts:

By being actively engaged in arts activities, students become motivated and can develop the ability to be persistent in tasks; through their successes, they develop self-confidence. In addition, participation in the arts gives them opportunities to develop social skills, such as skills in conflict resolution, self-control, and collaboration, as well as social tolerance and empathy. They can also learn to take creative risks in a safe environment. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 105)

This excerpt emphasized the benefits of art activities and adopts a strategy of persuasion of using arts as a school taught subject. The role of arts here is instrumental as in using arts to teach skills and knowledge that are not specific to arts as a body of knowledge. Art for the sake of art is not present here, as it might be considered a waste of time or an unproductive task. There are two reasons to quote another curriculum from the same province, but at a higher level. First is to stress the continuity of the school system in Ontario, and second, because whatever is stated there applies in this curriculum as well.

Creativity appeared in the form of *creative risks* in the last sentence, which is an addition to previous benefits as indicated by the adverb *also*. *Creative* is an adjective modifying *risks* as part of the idiom *to take risks* and is part of a direct object completing the meaning of the predicate *learn*. With the subject *they* (as children) and the adverbial *in a safe environment*, the meaning of this sentence is suggesting that, experientially, creativity implies taking risks. However, these risks are taken in safe environment, where *safe* also implies that the educators should not punish taking risks or results that might be considered mistakes. Although there is no express mention of educators, I can infer that the teachers are making the environment safe. Clearly students are learning through the arts as activity: They are learning to take creative risks. The subject was clearly arts as the statements are present in the role of arts section of the document and speaks about the benefits of art education. The aim of taking creative risks was not stated, but taking the risks was the aim of art activity.
Again, creativity was part of a transdisciplinary frame of mind here, and the arts were a vehicle for learning social and cognitive skills. The educator was present in providing the safe environment for risk-taking, which was associated with creativity. Again, although it is recognized through the plural that students were learning in a community, the students’ skills were generalized and applied to students as a mass of people. The transdisciplinary nature of skills that are emphasized in this paragraph undermine the importance of arts as a legitimized body of knowledge and present it as an instrument towards achieving other goals, which in the authors’ view were more important than arts themselves. It marginalizes the arts by putting first the aims such as: motivation, self-confidence, social cohesion, conflict resolution, or taking risks.

The next paragraph of the same section was written in the same persuasive style and similarly emphasized the benefits of learning in the arts:

The arts provide children with a vehicle to explore and express their thoughts and feelings. Communication happens through creative expression. When children manipulate materials, explore music and movement, create symbols, and engage in imaginative expression (e.g., visual art, storytelling), and dramatic play, they are communicating. Creating and designing fuse together the cognitive, emotional, and physical domains – thinking, feeling, and doing. The creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps consolidate children’s learning; enhances their creative, problem-solving, and critical-thinking skills; and strengthens their memory and sense of identity. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 105)

Creativity was present in three instances as an adjective modifying the noun expression, as a gerund, and as an adjective modifying the present participle thinking and, indirectly, skills.

The first occurrence of creativity was as creative expression as a modal adverbial describing how communication happens. It was part of an experiential statement as suggested by the present tense of the verb happens. The following sentence particularizes the statement to children through a temporal clause, which art activities are communication. This is followed by another sentence that has a multiple gerund subject part, which is creating. The sentence describes what the process of creating does as fuse(s) mind, emotions, and doing. Again, the
statement has an experiential value, because it was treated as a general truth through the use of present tense simple. Creativity was conceived as a process that is general, universal, and applicable to each individual. Creating here refers to creative expression or the act of expressing through the arts as the following sentence continues the idea, which is then applied in the case of children and stresses the benefits for children. Creativity takes two forms that are clearly distinct: creative expression and creative thinking skills. It seems that, experientially, creative expression is different from creative thinking skills and specific to the arts. Creativity in the form of creative expression seems to be rather synergistic and multimodal as it implies fusing the emotional, cognitive and operative domains, as well as different modes of expression. Creative thinking skills on the other hand seem to be specific cognitive skills, which are transferable to other domains of knowledge. The relation between this type of creativity is one of support as highlighted by the verb enhance, which is the predicator connecting the creative expression and the direct object creative thinking skills. Again, the emphasis of creativity falls on the transferability of creative thinking skills rather than what art has to offer as a specific body of knowledge and skills: Creativity in art is instrumental.

The subject of the paragraph was the arts, while the aim of creative expression in the arts was first to communicate in a variety of modes. Hence, I argue that students must be literate in multimodal ways of expression. The second aim of creative expression was to help consolidate, enhance, and strengthen. All these verbs have positive connotations and portray transferable effects of creative expression on learning, skills, memory, and identity. From an activity point of view, creative expression implies an art activity whose actors are the children. The teacher was not visible in this paragraph, but this persuasive text seems to be addressed to teachers as it makes the case for arts teaching and literacy.

Creative thinking appeared again as a form of thinking in 3.2 Building Partnerships: Learning and Working Together, Children, which detailed the role of children in the teaching learning social relationship:

To help children develop their capacity for learning, the educators create a warm and accepting learning environment that supports creative and complex thinking, while also giving the children opportunities “to extend their ideas and actions through sensitive,
informed, well-judged interventions and support” (New Zealand Ministry of Education, as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 108)

Although this was supposed to address children’s role as it was part of the children section, the subject of the excerpt is the educators, their actions and purpose: to help children develop. The complex sentence consists of a main clause and an adjectival clause, which modifies the first object of main clause environment, and a temporal clause that ads extra information regarding parallel actions, as indicated by the conjunction while. Creativity takes two forms as a predicator in the main clause create and as an adjective in creative thinking in the adjectival clause.

In the first instance create is a verb and the predicator of educators, which indicates the action of educators. The meaning is complete when the direct object is added as create a …environment. When looking at the adjectives and the adjectival clause, which modifies the environment, I can deduce that the environment refers to the social environment as indicated by the adjectives warm and accepting and to cognitive stimulating environment as the adjective clause that supports creative and complex thinking indicates. The conjunction while introduces additional information that indicate a concurrent action with the action in the main sentence and highlights the other actions teachers do as stated in the adverbial of mode (how?) “through sensitive, informed, well-judged interventions and support” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 108). The educators are to intervene and support, which in practice means adult involvement in the learning process. The degree of involvement should be informed, well-judged, and sensitive, which means that teachers should be very knowledgeable when it comes to their students.

Children appeared here as an indirect object as the receiver of help and give (“to help children, give children”), and this signals a unidirectional type of relationship, as in children receive opportunities to extend their ideas and actions. Children were also portrayed in need of help, which might be problematic as it portrays the children in a lack of something light.

The subject is the type of social relationship that should be established between students and teachers through the environment and given opportunities. The aim of creativity here was clearly stated at the beginning of the sentence by using the predicator create: to help children develop their capacity for learning. Children here are portrayed as in need of help when it comes
to their development. Help has a medical connotation as it portrays someone not capable of accomplishing something or taking care of themselves. Therefore, lack of learning is considered as pathologic and needs interventions and support. In this case lack of learning is demonstrated through not achieving the expectations.

The same theme of educators as providers appeared in the educator section of the same subtopic two Building Partnerships: Learning and Working Together:

By creating a learning environment that promotes the development of collaborative skills and critical and creative thinking skills, educators also help children become thoughtful problem solvers and effective communicators. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 113)

First, creativity took the form of a gerund, which is part of a modal adverbial (“How do educators help children? By creating a learning environment”) indicating that educators is the logical subject of the action creating. Creating an environment has the meaning of setting up the scene. The participial adjective learning puts the agency of the action on children. The adjectival clause that promotes the development of collaborative skills and critical and creative thinking skills indicates the aim and suggests that the environment is one that makes the development of creative thinking skills happen. It is the subject of development as indicated by the preposition of as part of adjectival clause which modifies the noun environment. The environment is personified and attributed with action. The environment is purposefully created by teachers and seems to be a laboratory set up ready to experiment on the cognitive development of children. Educators appear as a subject in the main clause, which has as a predicate help and indirect object children, indicating that they are the ones affected by help. The use of help is somewhat problematic as it portrays the children in need of help, which has negative connotations.

The third part of the analysis examined creativity as an adverb: creatively. Creativity in the form of the adverb, creatively appeared in How Do Children Learn through Play? in the context of learning experiences:

The learning experiences are designed by the educators to encourage the children to think creatively, to explore and investigate, to solve problems, self-regulate, and engage in the
inquiry process, and to share their learning with others. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 20)

The sentence is in passive voice with learning experiences as a subject, by the educators as agent and are designed as a verb in present tense. Creatively modifies the infinitive to think, which clearly places creativity in the cognitive domain. The role of educators was clearly stated through the agent of the passive voice: to design, which means to plan. The purpose of the design is multiple and among them first is to think creatively. Hence the aim of the action is linked with creativity in cognitive form. Subject of creativity is learning experiences, which can be interpreted as any learning experience across the disciplines. The environment is embedded in the learning experiences and becomes part of the teacher’s planning process. Children are supposed to think creatively across the curriculum where children are affected by encouraged as an indirect object. This paragraph clearly shows that the educators control the environment, determining what children are exposed to, and what should be their expectations with regards to four and five-year-olds.

The next quote concerns the learning environment through a different lens: facilitation of social interaction. In what ways can we, “organize and use the space creatively, efficiently, and flexibly to accommodate multiple purposes, such as brief large-group meetings and opportunities for small-group and individual work?” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 30). Creativity appeared here as an adverb modifying the predicator can organize and use in a question addressed to teachers as creators of environment. Relationally the document identified with the teachers through the use of the personal pronoun and subject we. Teachers were meant to reflect over the issue and use this question as part of a check list when designing and redesigning the environment. Creatively is followed by the direct object the space, where space designates the classroom. Teachers were supposed to organize and use the space creatively with multiple purposes. The idiom such as provides a concrete situation of accommodation, which is meant to illustrate the purposes. The example refers to the way children and teachers interact: large group, small groups, and individual work. Students were indirectly present here in the words group and individual. Students meet and work just like in an adult work environment. They do not play. Experientially this becomes part of the teachers’ job description, while expressively creatively is a qualitative expression of teachers’ actions. Creatively is a way that is connected with
somebody’s ability or desire to produce something new, hence it is about teachers’ ability to create an environment with multiple purposes. Relationally this question becomes prescriptive in terms of classroom design. The classroom is meant to meet and work individually or in teams.

Creatively was also used to characterize as part of a modal adverbial to talk about students’ potential to respond creatively in the context of the environment as the third teacher:

1.3 The Learning Environment

The learning environment is often viewed as “the third teacher”: it can either enhance learning, optimizing students’ potential to respond creatively and meaningfully, or detract from it. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 29)

Creatively was part of the argument of considering the environment the third teacher. The main assumption here is that children respond to the environment as part of an adaptation, as part of our evolutionary nature, which presupposes that our survival depends on how we adapt ourselves to the environment. The same idea seems to part of Guilford (1950) and Torrance’s (1974) theories of creativity, which sit under the umbrella of the I-paradigm of creativity. The environment plays an essential role in the learning process as adaptation. Experientially, it is assumed that all children have the potential to be creative, but its optimization is done through the environment as students respond and react to the environment be it social and physical.

Based on this premise, the syllogism is taken further to highlight the fact that the creative responses of the children can go either way if the environment is not controlled. Again, we get the idea of controlling the environment as in a laboratory set up. The aim transpires in the modal adverbial optimizing students’ potential to respond creatively and meaningfully, while the subject is clear: the environment. The activity is about students’ response to the environment and someone’s (inferred to be teachers’) efforts to design and plan the environment.

In the same section of the document creativity takes the forms of a passive voice of create:

The space, with all the objects in it, including the various materials and resources for learning, is created and arranged as the children’s learning process unfolds – it is
constantly being negotiated by and with the children. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 29)

This time the environment referred to the space or the physical environment, which is the subject of the sentence. The predicator is created and arranged is missing its agent, but I can infer that the environment is created by teachers. Hence, the role of the teacher is to create the space. The temporal clause as the children’s learning process unfolds suggests a dynamic creation of the space as it is modified by achievement of learning. The next sentence clarified how the space is modified: through negotiation as suggested through the use of a passive present progressive of the verb negotiate. There were two agents that perform the negotiation: one explicit—the children as indicated by the preposition by and one implicit, suggested through the preposition with. The implicit agent is probably the educators, which are mandated to design the environment. The use of the passive voice and the implicit agency of teachers and ECEs personify the subject environment and create the impression that the environment becomes in charge of children’s learning.

Children were portrayed as active participants, as agents in the creation of the physical space as negotiators. The word negotiate might be problematic as it is appropriated from economy and implies some kind of give and take in terms of benefits. Having to negotiate in a situation usually implies a power struggle, dialogue, and agreement. The children might have a say in the design of the environment if they are allowed to have an input in the learning. But the child cannot negotiate the learning expectations, which are the driving force of the programmatic curriculum. If the environment is the third teacher, and teachers have to teach towards achieving the expectations, it follows that the environment should follow the same path of meeting the learning expectations.

The aim was embedded in the prepositional phrase for learning, which designated the purpose of materials and resources. Nevertheless, when the word learning is interrogated (as in what learning?) the answer is to be found in the expectations, which are to be assessed and are driving the curriculum. An atypical form of creativity is creation and refers to the environment. The role of the educators in the creation of the environment is outlined in the next paragraph:
The educators’ anticipation and recognition of the children’s learning needs throughout the day and over time, based on their observations and analysis (assessment for learning), also drive the collaborative creation of the environment. In addition, the educators’ practice of discussing, displaying, and sharing the children’s work as well as documenting the children’s learning through photographs, transcripts, and video clips – that is, the practice of making the children’s learning visible – contributes to the creation of a learning environment that reflects and helps extend the children’s interests and accomplishments. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 20)

The document provides extra information about the way the environment is designed and that is suggested by the use of the adverb also and the idiom in addition to. Creativity appears as the noun creation and has the meaning of a process that is the direct object of the predicator drive and is part of the predicate contribute to. Both sentences have as a multiple subject the actions of educators as indicated by the possessive (the educators’ anticipation and recognition, the educators’ practice) and the possessive adjective their (their observations and analysis). The genitive indicated by the preposition of relates to teacher’s actions with children’s learning needs and has the meaning of concerning. The same relation appears between practice and discussing, displaying, and sharing documenting. This portrays an environment heavily impacted by the teachers’ parallel action of setting up the environment pre and post learning, each with different purposes, respectively, to induce learning and to demonstrate learning. Hence, educators are creators and designers of environments.

Experientially, creativity as a process of creating the environment has a social dimension as indicated by the adjective collaborative, which referred to collaboration among teachers as well as collaboration among students and collaboration between students and educators.

Children appear as possessors of learning needs of work, of interests, and accomplishments, and twice of learning. Children have needs, which are anticipated and recognized, they work and produce work, and they learn (twice), they have interests and accomplishments. Children portrayed as in need is problematic; children’s work represents a trace of an economic paradigm of teaching and learning, they learn, and they accomplish. Hence, in terms of frequency, children’s learning most influences the environment as it appears twice in
the paragraph. Children’s learning is dictated by the expectations in the document, therefore the expectations are driving the environment. The expectations are also indirectly present in children’s work (as they work toward meeting the expectations) as well as accomplishments (as children meet the expectations), and the children’s needs are determined when using the expectations as term of comparison. Children’s interests are also driving the curriculum, but they seem minor in comparison with the rest and do not fit in the schema of expectations. When questioning what is missing from children’s activities, what stands out the most is the absence of play as an adult-free activity.

In all cases the prepositional phrases are conceptually related with the actions of teachers as they are turned into nouns. Children’s needs, work, and learning accomplishments are objects receiving the actions of the teachers. Hence, the environment is influenced by what teachers do with the needs, accomplishments, and the learning of children. The collaborative creation of the environment and the creation of a learning environment reside in unidirectional action of teachers on children’s activities, which is not what collaborative might suggest as collaborative involves working together.

Experientially, creativity as a process noun creation refers to designing an environment, and the authors of the environment are the teachers. Children were not direct contributors here, as teachers act as gate keepers to the environment. Expressively the creation of the environment is an addition and its role is to mainly document what is going on in the classroom. This was done by teachers. Relationally, this quote is about how the environment is done or should be done, and although it suggests that children and teachers are partners, a closer look reveals that the main actors who act like filters are the teachers.

In the same concept of environment design is a quote that acts as a motto for the section, Rethinking the Learning Environment:

*We need to think about creating classroom environments that give children the opportunity for wonder, mystery and discovery; an environment that speaks to young children’s inherent curiosity and innate yearning for exploration is a classroom where children are passionate about learning* (emphasis in original, Heard & McDonough, as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 29).

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Because this excerpt acted as a motto and is part of a research study, its main idea drives the understanding of the section. Relationally, this quote is most likely addressing teachers or the person in charge of the design or creation of the classroom environments through the subject we (as the ones who create the environments) and acts like advice. The verb need highlights a necessity, while its direct object to think about reflects the planning stage of the environment design. Creativity appears in the -ing form of the verb suggesting a process that has as a direct object: classroom environments. The adjective clause that modifies environment specifies what should the environments do (give children the opportunity). The action of giving is transferred to the environment, which is almost personified. Teachers create the environment that provokes enthusiasm, which is in tune with children’s curiosity and yearning. The subject as an area of knowledge was about interior design as a tool in children’s learning and how they respond to perceived needs through the environment. Expressively it emphasized the role of the constructed environment in learning. Children were portrayed as curious and innate explorers through the genitive’s (children’s) as well as potentially passionate about learning. These are all positive traits, which give expressive and experiential values to the statement when looking at children.

The same idea of teachers as creators of the learning environment was present on page 30 and concerns the use of the space:

Educators plan and begin to create the learning environment before the children arrive in the classroom, using their understanding of children, of their development, and of how they learn, and looking at the space from a child’s perspective. They place materials and resources where children can see them and ensure that children have plenty of light and a view of (and if possible, access to) the outdoors. They consider how to create an environment that will support children’s learning and accommodate a diversity of choices and needs in terms of space, time, and the use of materials. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 30)

Creativity appeared in the form of the infinitive to create as part of the direct object of the predicates plan, begin, and consider. The subjects of sentences are teachers and they, where they stand for teachers. The infinitives are accompanied by their on direct objects, which complete their meaning to create the learning environment and to create an environment. While in the first
instance the sentence consists of the main clause and a temporal clause indicating the time of planning and beginning (before children arrive in the classroom), in the second instance the sentence consists of a main clause and to adjectival clauses that modify the noun environment (“that will support children’s learning and accommodate a diversity of choices and needs in terms of space, time, and the use of materials”), which refer to the qualities of environment.

In the first instance I observed that the time of the creation of the environment was before the children arrive in the classroom. This act excludes the children from participating in the design and arrangement for resources in the classroom. Hence, the design and creation of the classroom was not co-constructed with children, but was created for children by adults (teachers). What kind of environment are they supposed to create according to the document was clarified by the second instance of create an environment, “that will support children’s learning.” When I interrogated the text learning of what? and the answer is provided by the definition of expectations: “what the children are expected to know and be able to do” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p.115), or in other words the knowledge and skills outlined by the document. Therefore, planning and beginning to create the environment of the classroom, is where the teachers consider the knowledge and skills children are supposed to demonstrate. That was their role as stated in the document.

In the first instance of create here were physically absent from the process as suggested by the conjunction before, which indicates that the action in the main clause (planning and beginning) happens first and children’s arrival second; children are in the teachers’ minds, as suggested though the word understanding, but they are not participating.

The aim of the design refers back to the qualities of the environment, which are found in the adjectival clause that will support children’s learning, where children’s learning is about the expectations.

From an activity theme point of view, teachers plan and begin and consider with the learning expectations in mind, which excludes children from co-constructing the environment—at least at the beginning. The setup of the environment is not emergent but predetermined.
When looking at creativity as an adjective, one of the collocations that stood out in terms of number of occurrences as creative ways (11 occurrences). Creative means the use of skill and the imagination to produce something new, so creative ways is about using the imagination and skills to produce new ways, methods, or strategies:

Educators find creative ways to support children in making independent and informed choices within the learning environment. For example, educators consider how the nature, placement, and quantity of materials in the environment might affect the children’s play, taking into account the intent of the learning. They engage children in negotiating the organization of the materials. They discuss how and where the materials might be stored so that children can access them readily. Educators can put in place various kinds of supports, such as photos and labels, to help children make and act on independent choices as they play and interact in the learning environment. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 32)

In co-constructing the environment, creative ways appeared as a direct object of the verb find with the subject educators and a purpose adverbial to support children in making independent and informed choices within the learning environment. The rest of the paragraph comes to support this predicate by exemplifying possible creative ways as indicated by the idiom for example and referred to the way space is negotiated and organized by the children and how educators might support them for example through labelling and photos. The meaning of creative refers to everyday creativity, as in solving a problem or as in how do we organize and label the space for learning. Given that the subjects of each sentence from the paragraph is teachers or the pronoun they, I can say that the creativity here is about teachers’ creativity in finding ways to support children when accessing resources or designing the physical environment. When looking at the teachers’ actions and modality the following verbs were used: teachers consider how…taking into account the intent of the learning, engage children, discuss, and put in place support. The verbs seem to reveal stages of the design of the environment: The first action consider was as in thinking about and making a decision. The modality of taking this decision or the criteria that guides these decisions were outlined in the modal adverbial through the idiom taking into account (the intent of the learning), as into consider particular facts and circumstances when making a decision about something. In this case the teachers are making a
decision based on the intent of learning, making this a closed task as their intentions are driving the organization of the environment. What are their intentions? Their intentions should be, as mandated, the expectations as outlined and prescribed in the curriculum document. So, the expectations of the curriculum are the intentions of the teachers transferred in the physical environment.

Children were pictured as engaged by the teachers in negotiating and organizing the materials, where *engage in* as a phrasal verb refers to take part in something, as interacting with the environment. They were also portrayed as in need of help to make and act on their choices. They were acting in a closed task environment with predetermined choices.

The next occurrence of *creative ways* appeared in the overall expectation, 22: “As children progress through the Kindergarten program, they: communicate their thoughts and feelings, and their theories and ideas, through various art forms” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 116) under Conceptual Understandings, where “conceptual understandings are statements of essential ideas that accompany each of the overall expectations. Conceptual understandings include concepts, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 116). Also: “The arts provide a natural vehicle through which we can explore and express ourselves in a variety of creative ways” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, pp. 134, 179, 252, and 294). The role of conceptual understandings in the applied curriculum is to drive the curriculum in terms of what ideas, understandings and skills are to be taught:

Educators strive to internalize the overall expectations, reviewing the conceptual understandings that accompany them to see the broader ideas, skills, and understandings that flow from them. Educators keep the overall expectations in mind as they interact with the children in play and inquiry. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 25)

They are connected to the overall and specific expectations and become part of the teaching process: planning, teaching, and assessing. This is about beliefs, which are transmitted through the teaching and highlight an experiential concept that is to be transmitted. Therefore, the above conceptual understanding is part of all frames of learning making it fundamental to teaching.
The main understanding of this quote regards the role of arts in our lives as a vehicle of exploration and expression. Creative ways, in this particular situation, is an adverbial where ways refer to modality, as in a manner of expressing and exploring, while creative means involving the use of skill and the imagination to produce something new or a work of art. The entire sentence links art with creativity, exploration, and expression, where arts can be used to naturally express your ideas or feelings or as a way of achieving something; natural refers to having an ability with which you were born.

The subject was arts and the underlying role in the education of kindergarteners; it is about teaching in the planning stage where teachers determine what understandings, skills, and attitudes they should teach.

The we personal pronoun communicates agency and power, and because it is part of a document that directs teaching in Ontario in kindergarten, it highlights the executive power of this particular belief. Teaching art might seem compulsory, but when the natural vehicle is to be interpreted—natural as in born with—might justify a laissez faire attitude when it comes to art teaching. The arts are discrete bodies of knowledge, hence exploring and expressing in creative ways presupposes literacy of teachers in these areas of knowledge.

The instances of creativity in creative ways appeared in two specific expectations, which were to be assessed by teachers: 1.10 that is to be assessed under two learning frames, 4.5 Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours and 4.6 Problem Solving and Innovating, and 11.9 that is to be assessed under 4.5 Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours, in the context of retelling experiences, events, or stories in proper sequence. They are as follows:

As children progress through the Kindergarten program, they:

1.10 retell experiences, events, and familiar stories in proper sequence (e.g., orally; in new and creative ways; using drama, visual arts, non-verbal communication, and representations; in a conversation). (p. 192, p. 307, and p. 263)

11.9 retell, orally or with non-verbal communication, familiar experiences or stories in proper sequence (e.g., in new and creative ways, using drama, visual arts, non-verbal
communication, and representations; in a conversation). (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 211 and p. 311)

The emphasis of the expectation was on reproducing information in chronological order as the predicator retell and the adverbial in proper sequence indicate. Creative ways appeared in the context of examples of retelling the narratives as modalities of retelling as adverbials and are almost identical in meaning. In new and creative ways as a mode of retelling leaves the task open to other modalities that the document does not mention. The main actors here are the children who are asked to retell stories in proper sequence in any modality they choose or has been chosen for them in new or creative ways.

The fact that creative ways appeared as a modality of the predicate presupposes literacy in the mode of retelling. The expectations are also part of a power relationship between teacher and student as the teachers assess the skills and knowledge outlined in the expectations. They gather and interpret information and emit a judgment with regards to the knowledge and skills children have demonstrated as mandated by the curriculum and its supporting documents:

*Assessment is the process of gathering and interpreting information that accurately reflects the child’s demonstration of learning in relation to the knowledge and skills outlined in the overall expectations of The Kindergarten Program. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve learning and to help children become self-regulating, autonomous learners.*

(emphasis in original, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 36)

Educator teams analyze the documentation to determine the growth of the child’s learning in relation to the knowledge and skills identified in the overall expectations set out in The Kindergarten Program.

They focus their observations on concepts, skills, applications, and characteristics that are described in the Kindergarten program expectations. (p. 41)

Educators have to compare every child to the imaginary ideal, universal child portrayed in the expectations, and report that to the parents and the system. The expectations are a Procrustean bed, which dictate the normalization and standardization of early childhood, ignoring the reality of Ontario four and five-year-old children. What happens if children do not meet the
expectations, or in other words, do not fulfill the wish of our current provincial government? Whomever falls outside this schema is to be considered not normal or abnormal and is assisted through accommodations and modifications of the programmatic curriculum to meeting those expectations. The only ways out of this situation are private or home schooling, and these are impossible for parents or legal guardians with a low socio-economic background, as one is financially beyond reach while the other presupposes a stay at home parent, which translates in little to no income.

The next quote addressed creative ways in the context of expectations and provides an insight into the type of dialogue that teachers perform in the classroom when assessing expectations. In this particular case, the dialogue illustrates possible teacher questions addressed to students in the context of specific expectation 30.2, the overall expectation 30, under Belonging and Contributing: The Educators’ Intentional Interactions section:

You have so many creative ways to make the puppets move in the shadow play area. What happens when you use your hands for puppets instead? What’s the same? What’s different? What do you think makes that happen? (emphasis in original, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 149)

The excerpt illustrates what a teacher would say to challenge the thinking of a four or five-year-old in the context of assessing the following specific expectation:

30.2 explore a variety of tools, materials, and processes of their own choice (e.g., blocks, puppets, flashlights, streamers, castanets, rhythm sticks, natural and recycled materials) to create drama, dance, music, and visual art forms in familiar and new ways. (emphasis in original, Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 149)

Creative ways is the direct object of have with the subject you (the student). The collocation is modified by the determiner many and the adverb so, which means a large number of creative ways. This association of quantity and collocation creative ways indicates real numerous possibilities of moving the puppets and is conducive to the concept of flexibility.

When looking at the succession of sentences, the type and the logic of relationship among them, it is noticed that the paragraph starts with a fact statement, and then it moves to a question
regarding the effect of substituting the material, which exemplifies one of the many creative ways, followed by another ones regarding similarities, differences and cause. The task is closed as in solving the problem of making the puppets move and the questions illustrate the mental processes involved in a problem-solving situation: prediction, comparison and contrast, and cause-effect. This dialogue is not about exploration, as in creating the problem and solving it, it is about a problem imposed by the teacher, which should be solved by the child. The child is present here as we imagine the scenario and that she or he would respond to such questions, but what happens to a child that does not answer this line of questions?

Relationally this was meant to illustrate the reality of a classroom. The assessment of the children was individual and focused strictly on the mental processes involved in problem-solving. There was no evident connection between belonging and contributing, and in this particular challenging situation I fail to see the logic in how substitution, prediction, and determining cause and effect when it comes to puppet movement is connected with belonging and contributing? What happens if the child does not conform to document’s master plan carefully crafted in a question form? The subject of this expectation should be drama, but it ends up in a problem-solving situation, while from an activity point of view the teacher keeps asking questions that are not directly connected to belonging and contributing when:

This frame encompasses children’s learning and development with respect to:

- their sense of connectedness to others;
- their relationships with others, and their contributions as part of a group, a community, and the natural world;
- their understanding of relationships and community, and of the ways in which people contribute to the world around them. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 47)

The educator here is assessing children’s ability to problem-solve a closed task by examining it scientifically, rather than looking at connectedness, relationships, and community.

An atypical use of *creative* appears in the context of time use:

Both in the classroom and out of doors, the learning environment allows for the flexible and creative use of time, space, and materials in order to respond to children’s interests.
and needs, provide for choice and challenge, and support differentiated and personalized instruction and assessment. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 13)

The subject of the sentence is the learning environment and the predicator is the phrasal verb allows for followed by the direct object flexible and creative use of time, space and materials. The purpose of the action is given by the subordinating conjunction in order to followed by the infinitives: to respond (to children’s interests and needs), to provide for choice and challenge, and support...instruction and assessment.

The learning environment was personified with the consequence of misplacing the agency of the creators of environment. The direct object flexible and creative use of time most likely refers to the scheduling of activities as in creating time for spontaneous teachable moments. The teachers were absent, but implied in the purpose as providing choices and challenges, and instruction and assessments are teachers’ mandated activities. Children were portrayed as having needs and interests, where the noun needs can be interpreted as needs in the context of expectations. The relationship between teacher and children was hiding in the infinitives, which highlight teachers’ duties: teachers, and not the environment, are responding to identified needs and interests, are providing choices and challenges, and are instructing and assessing. This sequence of activities mirrors Tyler’s rationale (Pinar et al, 2004a, p. 34) where the environment is personified and attributed with pedagogical duties.

4.6.2 Creativity as a verb: Create.

The first instance of the verb, which was examined, concerns the reasoning of the early childhood education program in Ontario:

The Ontario government introduced Full-Day Kindergarten – a two-year program for four- and five-year-olds – as part of its initiative to create a cohesive, coordinated system for early years programs and services across the province. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 4)

To create plays the role of an adjective describing the noun initiative and is followed by the direct object the system, and is preceded by its modifying adjectives: cohesive and coordinated. In turn initiative includes logically Full-Day Kindergarten, with as part of signals. Hence the
Ontario government has the initiative, a new plan for ECE in Ontario, and that includes the Kindergarten program. There is no doubt of agency here, and it is clearly stated that the kindergarten program should be part of the system; it follows that the system should be *cohesive* and *coordinated*.

The system in this particular case refers to an assemblage of governmental social institutions paid by the distribution of Ontarians’ taxes, which provide social services according to the governmental agenda and the legal norms that regulate the functioning of the institutions. Two adjectives modify the meaning of the system: *cohesive* refers to the internal logic of the system and *coordinated* refers to the kindergarten program in relation to the entire public education system on a vertical axis: kindergarten, grade one through eight, and high school. It positions kindergarten as the entry of children into the system, which creates their educational path and affects their future. It also positions kindergarten as the foundation of the formal education and preparatory for grade one.

From a teachers’ perspective this system mandates what is taught, how it is taught, and how and when to evaluate children’s progress in relation to the expectations outlined in the kindergarten curriculum. From a child’s perspective, kindergarten means learning what is taught, demonstrating the proficiency of knowledge and skills that are taught, and being evaluated by comparing their performance against what they should be able to do and know, as stated in the document.

The aim of the system was “to establish a strong foundation for learning in the early years, and to do so in a safe and caring, play-based environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of all children” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 8). The result of the system was outlined in the document as “the program recognizes that the needs of learners are diverse, and helps all learners develop the knowledge, skills, and perspectives they need to be informed, productive, caring, responsible, healthy, and active citizens in their own communities and in the world.” (p. 4). The hoped-for result is contoured by the adjectives, which modify the word *citizens*. The society is atomized in citizens; hence the approach of the system is individual.
One of the most relevant instances of the verb *to create* appeared in the Venn diagram (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 25) (Figure 20), which illustrated the way children and students interact during the day. *Create* appears in the areas that denote the independent activities of each category. Children “create roles and scenarios,” while teachers “create a safe, inclusive learning environment that functions as a ‘third educator’.” These two instances speak about the fact that creativity is not a child (or children)–teacher shared activity. It is looked at as an individual pursuit or as a horizontal activity among students. When it comes to portraying students I noticed that their action to create had, as a direct object, *roles and scenarios*, which indicates the discipline within which they create: drama as a form of art. Children’s creativity is aligned again with a form of art and expression confining it to the I-paradigm.

![Figure 20. What children and educators do to co-construct learning](image)

**Figure 20. What children and educators do to co-construct learning** (OME, 2016, p. 25)

Teachers on the other hand, are creating the third teacher—the environment. The third teacher is a concept that is borrowed from the Reggio Emilia approach to education, so the third teacher is placed in the intersection of discourse between the two programs. Is this notion of the third teacher authentically understood and applied in the Ontario kindergartens? The importance of aesthetics in Reggio Emilia is paramount, by creating a home away from home for children,
where architecture provokes and enables social interactions at all levels of the community. Tarr (2001) illustrated the atmosphere and purpose of the Reggio environment when talking about the architecture of the school, classroom, and the studio:

The schools reflect a diversity of ages and architectural styles, yet each school is designed around a piazza that reflects the central piazzas of the city. These are not solely vehicles for moving through to get someplace else but serve as gathering places for children from all the classes and comfortable meeting spaces for parents and teachers.

Reggio educators include aspects of a home into the school: vases of flowers, real dishes, tablecloths, and plants. There is attention to design and placement of objects to provide a visual and meaningful context. The objects within the space are not simplified, cartoon-like images that are assumed to appeal to children, but are beautiful objects in their own right. For example, dried flowers hang from the ceiling beams, and attractive jars of beans and seeds are displayed on shelves in the dining area of Arcobaleno Infant-Toddler Centre.

Manufactured and natural materials available for art projects are carefully displayed in transparent containers, or objects are set on or before mirrors to provide multiple views and capture children's attention. The strong role of the arts in Italian culture is clearly evident in the place of the atelier (art studio), mini-ateliers adjacent to each classroom, and the role the atelierista (artist-teacher) plays in supporting children and teachers in their work. (Tar, 2001, p. 37)

The walls hold the history of the life within the school in the form of documentation panels of children's words and photos that synthesize past projects and chronicle current ones. Children's work and words are highly visible within the space; this communicates clearly to the children, their parents, and the community respect and value for children's abilities and potential and creates another form of transparency and osmosis between the school and surrounding community (Tar, 2001, p. 38)

Tarr (2001) also painted a picture all too familiar of the Canadian and US kindergarten classrooms, which highlights the discrepancy between the two:
As we enter the school there is traditionally a corridor for human traffic to move through and into self-contained classrooms as quickly and quietly as possible. The classroom space is a discrete entity that is subdivided into “centres” including art, writing, sand/water, reading, math, manipulatives, blocks, science, and a domestic/house or dramatic play area. There is also a meeting area. The room may appear crowded with the amount of furniture and shelves in the space. Consider what is allowed into this space. On the walls are commercially made (along with some teacher-created) charts or posters. Adjacent to the calendar, or included as part of it, a weather chart. Along the top of the chalkboards, or just underneath, are strips depicting the alphabet and numbers to 10. Charts identifying colours and shapes are posted on available bulletin board spaces. There may be seasonally related posters, or pictures of community helpers (doctor, firefighter, police officer, letter carrier), or information posters on dinosaurs, parts of the body or animals, depending on the current theme of study. The bulletin boards will be backed with coloured papers and surrounded by a scalloped decorative border. Each bulletin board may be decorated in a different colour of paper with a different scalloped border. (Tar, 2001, p. 35)

The centres were an Ontario kindergarten reality up until the summer of 2016. The final version of the Ontario Kindergarten curriculum does not mention the centres, but they mention the learning areas. The following are just a few examples from the current document, which reveal that the instances of learning areas come as presented in the context of a kindergarten space:

8.4 demonstrate control of small muscles (e.g., use a functional grip when writing) while working in a variety of learning areas (e.g., sand table, water table, visual arts area) and when using a variety of materials or equipment (e.g., using salt trays, stringing beads, painting with paintbrushes, drawing, cutting paper, using a keyboard, using bug viewers, using a mouse, writing with a crayon or pencil) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 178)

Extending:
The educators observe that a few children always choose to go to the reading area and/or the writing area but rarely visit any of the other learning areas. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 161)

Doing:

Children write letters to one another and to family members, make signs in the blocks area, record their findings at the water table, make a list of classmates’ names in the dramatic play area, and make greeting cards in the visual arts area. (p. 199)

Are appropriate materials placed throughout the classroom (e.g., manipulatives; found materials; magnetic letters and words from the name wall; materials to represent their thinking such as writing and drawing tools, various kinds of paper, and large pieces of paper for representing thinking in the blocks and dramatic play areas)? Are the materials organized to provide easy access for all children? (p. 74)

The above quotes illustrate possibilities in terms of activities, but also talk about where these activities occur in the learning areas, for example: the block area, the writing area, the visual arts area. These areas are very familiar, and one of the reasons behind the familiarity resides in the similarity with the draft version of the curriculum:

Children should be provided with large blocks of time and adequate space to work at learning centres. Some examples of learning centres are:

- the book corner, writing centre, word-study centre, and listening centre;
- the block centre;
- the dramatic play centre and puppet centre;
- the sand and water centres;
- the mathematics centre;
- the science and technology centre and discovery centre;
- the visual arts centre. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 35 and p. 36)

One can easily put the equal sign between the learning areas and learning centres as the only difference is avoiding the word centre, which most likely has no place in a co-constructed
environment or a Reggio-inspired curriculum where the children’s interests are driving the curricula and the co-construction of the environment. There is a major difference between a “children’s place and a place for children” (Rasmussen, 2004, as cited in Strong-Wilson & Ellis, 2007, p. 43) where the first one is constructed by children, or through the eyes of children, while the other is a space imagined by adults for children. Predetermined spaces or spaces for children can silence students’ voices when it comes to choosing and co-constructing the environment.

Other instances of create that are very important are the ones present in the overall and specific expectations provided in a chart on pages 306 to 318 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016), because they illustrated what children should be able to do during and at the end of the program. The only overall expectation that contained the word create was in the context of mathematical behaviours and concerns patterning. The related specific expectation also contained create in the context of patterning:

As children progress through the Kindergarten program, they:

18. recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns, and extend, translate, and create them, using the core of a pattern and predicting what comes next. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 313)

18.4 create and translate patterns (e.g., re-represent “red-blue-blue, red-blue-blue, red-blue-blue” as “circle-square-square, circle-square-square, circle-square-square”). (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 314)

The wording of the expectations is almost identical with the expectations of the draft curriculum.

By the end of the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program, children will:

P4. explore, recognize, describe, and create patterns, using a variety of materials in different contexts. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 97)

As children progress through the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program, they:

P4.1 identify, create, reproduce, and extend repeating patterns through investigation, using a variety of materials (e.g., attribute blocks, pattern blocks, a hundreds chart, toys,
Almost all the verbs describing what the children should be able to do, including create, are identical; their positions differ as in explore, recognize versus recognize, explore, but this act does not affect the meaning of the expectation. The main differences are the use of verb translate (patterns) and modality, “using the core of a pattern and predicting what comes next” in the final version (OME, 2016) versus modality “through investigation, using a variety of materials (e.g., attribute blocks, pattern blocks, a hundred chart, toys, bottle tops, buttons, toothpicks)” and actions “(e.g., physical actions such as clapping, jumping, tapping)” in the draft version (OME, 2010). However, translation of a pattern implies re-representing it by using one of its characteristics (e.g., shape or colour), which can be interpreted as reproducing a pattern. What was missing in the final version was the multimodality of the pattern as suggested by the adverbial of mode “using a variety of materials (e.g., attribute blocks, pattern blocks, a hundred chart, toys, bottle tops, buttons, toothpicks) and actions (e.g., physical actions such as clapping, jumping, tapping)” (OME, 2010, p. 109). Given that most of the verbs are identical in both cases, I can state that the intended meaning is very similar with the one presented in the draft version of the curriculum. In fact, all the specific expectations of the final version of the curriculum, which contain the verb create, have an identical correspondent in the draft version of the curriculum, either by copying and pasting the expectation or by condensing the draft version expectations.

The following were expectations present in both versions of the curriculum. As such the specific expectation 1.11 listed under the language section of the draft version of the curriculum on page 79 (OME, 2010) is worded identically with the specific expectation 1.11 of the final curriculum on page 307 (OME, 2016):

1.11 demonstrate an awareness that words can rhyme, can begin or end with the same sound, and are composed of phonemes that can be manipulated to create new words (OME, 2010, p. 79)

1.11 demonstrate an awareness that words can rhyme, can begin or end with the same sound, and are composed of phonemes that can be manipulated to create new words (OME, 2016, p. 307)
The same copy-paste method was also applied in the case of the specific expectations that contain the verb *create* in the draft version in drama, visual arts, and music. For example,

Drama: D3.1 (draft version) = 23.1 (final version)

D3.1 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create drama and dance (e.g., try out different voices for parts of a story or chant; find different ways to move to music, trying to connect the movement with the mood and speed of the music; create a sequence of movements). (OME, 2010, p. 143)

23.1 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create drama and dance (e.g., try out different voices for parts of a story or chant; find different ways to move to music, trying to connect the movement with the mood and speed of the music; create a sequence of movements). (OME, 2016, p. 316)

Visual Arts: V3.1=23.2

V3.1 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create visual art forms (e.g., choose materials to make a three-dimensional structure stable; choose an alternative way to fasten their materials if the first way is unsuccessful). (OME, 2010, p. 154)

23.2 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create visual art forms (e.g., choose materials to make a three-dimensional structure stable; choose an alternative way to fasten their materials if the first way is unsuccessful). (OME, 2016, p. 316)

Music, M3.1=23.3

M3.1 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create music (e.g., experiment with different instruments to create a rhythm pattern to accompany a familiar song; contribute to making a variation on a familiar song with the class). (OME, 2010, p. 148)

23.3 use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create music (e.g., experiment with different instruments to create a rhythm pattern to accompany a familiar song; contribute to making a variation on a familiar song with the class) (OME, 2016, p. 316)
The second method of copying and pasting consisted in condensing the draft version’s specific expectations that have the same predicate into one by enumerating all disciplines where the learning should happen. For example: V1.1 (OME, 2010, p. 151), M1.1 (p. 146), and D1.1 (p. 141) all share the same predicate: “demonstrate an awareness of personal interests and a sense of accomplishment,” which is followed by an adverbial of place indicating the discipline: “in visual arts, in music, in drama and dance:”

V1.1 demonstrate an awareness of personal interests and a sense of accomplishment in visual arts (e.g., contribute pages to a class book using their own ideas; offer to make a puppet for a play; create a sculpture from clay). (OME, 2010, p. 151)

M1.1 demonstrate an awareness of personal interests and a sense of accomplishment in music (e.g., contribute their own ideas to a class song; create their own accompaniment to a song). (p. 146)

D1.1 demonstrate an awareness of personal interests and a sense of accomplishment in drama and dance (e.g., contribute their own ideas to role playing; create their own actions to accompany a song or chant and/or follow actions created by a classmate). (p. 141)

In the final version of the curriculum, they appeared in a condensed form by using the stem predicator and enumerating the disciplines in the adverbial:

30.1 demonstrate an awareness of personal interests and a sense of accomplishment in drama and dance (e.g., contribute their own ideas to role playing; create their own actions to accompany a song or chant and/or follow actions created by a classmate); in music (e.g., contribute their own ideas to a class song); and in visual arts (e.g., create a sculpture from clay). (OME, 2016, p. 318)


The same condensing method was applied in the case of the V2.1 (OME, 2010, p. 153), M1.2 (p. 146), and D1.2 (p. 142) specific expectations of the draft version and specific expectation 30.2 of the final version (OME, 2016, p. 318):
D1.2 explore a variety of tools and materials of their own choice (e.g., blocks, puppets, flashlights, streamers) to create drama and dance in familiar and new ways. (OME, 2010, p. 142)

M1.2 explore a variety of tools and materials of their own choice (e.g., spoons, castanets, rhythm sticks, music software) to create music in familiar and new ways. (OME, 2010, p. 146)

V2.1 explore a variety of tools, materials, and processes of their own choice to create visual art forms in familiar and new ways (e.g., use natural and recycled materials at a learning centre). (OME, 2010, p. 153)

30.2 explore a variety of tools, materials, and processes of their own choice (e.g., blocks, puppets, flashlights, streamers, castanets, rhythm sticks, natural and recycled materials) to create drama, dance, music, and visual art forms in familiar and new ways. (OME, 2016, p.318)

These similarities between the expectations of the documents, which contained the verb create, mean that the findings of the draft version regarding creativity and expectations were applied to the final version.

Experientially creativity manifested mainly in the arts through exploration and awareness and involved problem-solving and imagination, which clearly links creativity to Guilford’s (1950) and Torrance’s (1974) theory of creativity.

The expectations were aims and standards in the same time. Being standards of achievements, they portray what a child should do now, during, and at the end of the program. They contour the portrait of an ideal normal four and five-year-old child desired in Ontario. The expectation began with a temporal clause stem: “As children progress through the Kindergarten program, they:” which was followed by different verbs outlining cognitive or skill-related behaviours to be learnt and demonstrated by the child. For example:

As children progress through the Kindergarten program, they:
18. recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns, and extend, translate, and create them, using the core of a pattern and predicting what comes next. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 236)

18.4 create and translate patterns (e.g., re-represent “red-blue-blue, red-blue-blue, red-blue-blue” as “circle-square-square, circle-square-square, circle-square-square”). (p. 237)

In this particular case the child learns about and is taught to recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns, and extend, translate, and create them, and then is assessed and evaluated by the teacher based on the evidence that demonstrates his or her ability to do the above operations.

Although the expectations were formulated using the plural noun children and the personal pronoun they, the assessment and reporting is done individually. Hence every child is assessed and evaluated individually. It follows that creativity in terms of patterning is individual, as it is to be assessed individually. In the main disciplines of language and mathematics, which are cleverly disguised in the pedagogical jargon “literacy and mathematical behaviours,” children are to create patterns and manipulate phonemes to create new words (OME, 2016, p. 307). What is assessed and evaluated here might not be creativity as patterning implies repletion. The only thing that is created is the core of the pattern, which can be arbitrarily chosen following a quality or more (e.g., colour, size, shape). It follows that what is tested is their ability to comprehend and apply the concept of repetition based on a quality.

Only one out of 31 or (3.1%) overall expectations that contained the verb create and had as an agent the children, was in patterning (overall expectation 18, OME, 2016, p. 313). The language expectation 1.11 was a specific one, so although it must be accounted for, it is not reported on. There are five other specific expectations that contained the verb create in the sentence (not examples): four in the arts (23.1; 23.2; 23.4; 30.2) and one in mathematics (18.4). In total there were six out of 126 (4.76 %) specific expectations that contained the verb create in the expectations. The absence of creativity in the specific expectations, which drives the operational curriculum, speaks about the lack of importance of the concept in kindergarten program. Given that creativity in the specific expectations is correlated with the arts, I counted the specific arts expectations in the document that are specific to the arts and found that 16 out of 126 specific expectations were exclusively dedicated to the arts, which results in 12.69%. This
fact positions, not only creativity as marginal, but also the arts as a valid body of skills and knowledge.

The teacher has to teach, assess, evaluate, and report on this math expectation (patterning) as all expectations need to be accounted for. How is this expectation based on the needs and interest of the children in a real classroom? How does the document know what is the interest of Thea, a four-year-old girl who is attending kindergarten at a local school in Ontario? Where is Thea’s universal right to play reflected in this particular expectation? What if Thea is not interested in patterns? It follows that teachers have to somehow convince and persuade Thea to create a pattern or state that Thea is not able to create patterns. There are two ways to convince, determine, or force the learning of a concept: set up the environment and restrict it towards patterning and to one-on-one, direct teaching. In both cases it is not the child driving the learning, it is the teacher. Hence, it does not matter if the child is interested or not or needs it or not (why would a child need to learn about patterns such as circle, square, square when they are four or five? Because the ministry says so or because it is useful later in grades one, two, and three); the child has to learn about, recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns, and extend, translate, and create them.

These questions regarding the compulsory nature of the expectations highlight the power relationship between the teacher, as mandated by the ministry or state to do something, and the child who has his or her interest and wants to succumb to the documents’ wills and wants. The document is prescriptive and becomes the building block of the consensus where the ideology of the document becomes a social practice and is imposed on the will of four and five-year-old children.

The reflection over this particular math overall expectation and its identical version in the draft curriculum prompted the comparison between the other overall expectations of the two documents. As such, each overall expectation from the final curriculum as examined and compared to the overall expectations from the draft curriculum.

The comparison proved that some of the expectations from the draft curriculum were identical in wording; some of them were generalized by removing modality, while others were rephrased, but the overall meaning was kept. The details of the analysis are presented below.
When comparing overall expectation one of the 2016 document (‘communicate with others in a variety of ways, for a variety of purposes, and in a variety of contexts’ [OME, 2016, p. 306]) and overall expectation one, from language of the 2010 document (‘communicate by talking and by listening and speaking to others for a variety of purposes and in a variety of contexts’ [OME, 2010, p. 72]), I observed that they are almost identical. What was missing in the final version is the modality ‘by talking and by listening and speaking to others,’ making the expectation applicable to all frames of the curriculum. However, when looking at the specific expectations under overall expectation one from the 2016 document, it becomes clear that this expectation was about learning language as all of them cover the Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours frame and two of them are exclusively covering the literacy behaviours related to language (‘1.1 explore sounds, rhythms, and language structures, with guidance and on their own’ and ‘1.11 demonstrate an awareness that words can rhyme, can begin or end with the same sound, and are composed of phonemes that can be manipulated to create new words’ [OME, 2016, p. 306]).

The following eight expectations are identical in both 2016 and 2010 program documents (Table 15):

**Table 15.**

*Identical expectations in the 2010 and 2016 FDK curriculum documents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010 FDK Document</th>
<th>2016 FDK Document</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“1. identify and use social skills in play and other contexts” (p. 52)</td>
<td>“3. identify and use social skills in play and other contexts” (p. 307)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“5. demonstrate a beginning understanding and critical awareness of media texts” (p. 72)</td>
<td>“12. demonstrate an understanding and critical awareness of media texts” (p. 311)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“1. demonstrate an awareness of the natural and built environment through hands-on investigations, observations, questions, and representations of their findings” (p. 114)</td>
<td>“14. demonstrate an awareness of the natural and built environment through hands-on investigations, observations, questions, and representations of their findings” (p. 311)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“NS1. demonstrate an understanding of numbers, using concrete materials to explore”</td>
<td>“15. demonstrate an understanding of numbers, using concrete materials to explore”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and investigate counting, quantity, and number relationships” (p. 97) and investigate counting, quantity, and number relationships” (p. 311)

“G3. describe, sort, classify, build, and compare two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional figures, and describe the location and movement of objects through investigation” (p. 97)

“17. describe, sort, classify, build, and compare two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional figures, and describe the location and movement of objects, through investigation” (p. 313)

“1. demonstrate a sense of identity and a positive self-image” (p. 60)

“25. demonstrate a sense of identity and a positive self-image” (p. 317)

“3. demonstrate an awareness of their surroundings” (p. 60)

“28. demonstrate an awareness of their surroundings” (p. 317)

“3. demonstrate an understanding of the natural world and the need to care for and respect the environment” (p. 114)

“29. demonstrate an understanding of the natural world and the need to care for and respect the environment” (p. 318)

The next eight overall expectations from the 2016 document are very similar to the 2010 overall expectations and have the same meaning by keeping the behaviours to be evaluated. They are juxtaposed in the next lines to demonstrate the similarity.

Table 16.

**Similarity of overall expectations in the FDK curriculum documents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Subject</th>
<th>2010 FDK Document: Overall expectation</th>
<th>2016 FDK Document: Overall expectation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Social Development</td>
<td>“2. demonstrate an ability to use problem-solving skills in a variety of social contexts” (p. 52)</td>
<td>“4. demonstrate an ability to use problem-solving skills in a variety of contexts, including social contexts” (p. 308)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Activity</td>
<td>“1. demonstrate an awareness of health and safety practices for themselves and others and a basic awareness of their own” (p. 130)</td>
<td>“6. demonstrate an awareness of their own health and well-being” (p. 308)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Social Development</td>
<td>“3. demonstrate a beginning understanding of the diversity in individuals, families, schools, and the wider community” (p. 52)</td>
<td>“5. demonstrate an understanding of the diversity among individuals and families and within schools and the wider community” (p. 308)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>“2. demonstrate understanding and critical awareness of a variety of written materials that are read by and with the EL–K team” (p. 73)</td>
<td>“11. demonstrate an understanding and critical awareness of a variety of written materials that are read by and with their educators” (p. 310)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics M2</td>
<td>“measure and compare length, mass, capacity, area, and temperature of objects/materials, and the passage of time, using non-standard and standard units, through free exploration, focused exploration, and guided activity” (p. 97)</td>
<td>“16. measure, using non-standard units of the same size, and compare objects, materials, and spaces in terms of their length, mass, capacity, area, and temperature, and explore ways of measuring the passage of time, through inquiry and play-based learning” (p. 313)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>“P4 explore, recognize, describe, and create patterns, using a variety of materials in different contexts” (p. 97)</td>
<td>“18. recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns, and extend, translate, and create them, using the core of a pattern and predicting what comes next” (p. 313)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics DM5</td>
<td>“sort, classify, and display a variety of concrete objects, collect data, begin to read and describe displays of data, and begin to explore the concept of probability in everyday contexts” (p. 97)</td>
<td>“19: collect, organize, display, and interpret data to solve problems and to communicate information, and explore the concept of probability in everyday contexts” (p. 314)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and technology</td>
<td>“4. use technological problem-solving skills (questioning, planning, predicting.”</td>
<td>“24. use technological problem-solving skills, on their own and with others, in the process of”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next category of comparison refers to expectations that are identical, because they were compacted by keeping the same behaviours and enumerating the subjects. For example, the following expectations regarding the arts were compacted from three in the draft, to one in the new document. They all referred to visual arts, music, and dance and drama:

Drama D4: express responses to a variety of forms of drama and dance, including those from other cultures (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 144)

Music M4: express responses to a variety of forms of music, including those from other cultures (p. 149)

Visual Art V4: express responses to a variety of visual art forms, including those from other cultures (p. 155)

This was how the arts were presented in a compacted form under expectation 21 in the final version:

21. express their responses to a variety of forms of drama, dance, music, and visual arts from various cultures and communities (OME, 2016, p. 249)

The same applied to the overall expectations for visual art V5 and music M5 from the 2010 document:

V5. communicate their ideas through various visual art forms (OME, 2010, p. 151)


They were also condensed in the overall expectation 22 in the 2016 document: “Communicate their thoughts and feelings, and their theories and ideas, through various art forms (OME, 2016, p. 252). The same process of compacting was applied for the following expectations from the draft version:
Visual Arts V3. use problem-solving strategies when experimenting with the skills, materials, processes, and techniques used in visual arts both individually and with others. (OME, 2010, p. 151)

Music M3: use problem-solving strategies when experimenting with the skills, materials, processes, and techniques used in music both individually and with others. (OME, 2010, p. 148)

Drama D3. use problem-solving strategies when experimenting with the skills, materials, processes, and techniques used in drama and dance both individually and with others. (OME, 2010, p.141)

These expectations were summarized into the expectation 23 in the new document:

23. use problem-solving strategies, on their own and with others, when experimenting with the skills, materials, processes, and techniques used in drama, dance, music, and visual arts. (OME, 2016, p. 316)

For expectation 30: “Demonstrate an awareness of themselves as dramatists, actors, dancers, artists, and musicians through engagement in the arts” (OME, 2016, p. 318), it was created by compacting the visual arts V1 (OME, 2010, p. 151), Drama D1 (p. 141), and music M1 (p. 145), and for expectation 31: “Demonstrate knowledge and skills gained through exposure to and engagement in drama, dance, music, and visual arts” (OME, 2016, p. 318), it was condensed from music M2 (OME, 2010, p. 145), drama D2 (p. 141), and visual arts V2 (p. 151).

The next level of comparison regards the expectations that are formulated differently: The overall expectations seven, eight, and nine. Although there was no identical wording in the draft version, when I researched the texts, I realized that there were two characteristics that made the expectations identical in meaning: First, they belonged to the same area of learning, and second, they branched out in identical or almost identical specific expectations. Because specific expectations are compulsory (all expectations must be accounted for) and are logically derived from the overall expectations by providing details and possibilities, it follows that teachers are supposed to assess the specific expectations. The following specific expectations listed under the overall expectations seven, eight, and nine are identical with the ones from the draft version.
The overall expectation seven from health and physical activity stated: “participate actively and regularly in a variety of activities that require the application of movement concepts” (OME, 2016, p. 308) and was rephrased to expectation two from the health and physical activity (OME, 2010): “participate willingly in a variety of activities that require the use of both large and small muscles” (p. 130). They shared the same specific expectations as follows: Specific expectations from the final document from 2016: “7.1 participate actively in creative movement and other daily physical activities (e.g., dance, games, outdoor play, fitness breaks)” (p. 174), is identical with specific expectation from health and physical activity 2.1: “Participate actively in creative movement and other daily physical activities (e.g., dance, games, outdoor play, fitness breaks)” (OME, 2010, p. 134). The 2016 specific expectation 7.2: “demonstrate persistence while engaged in activities that require the use of both large and small muscles (e.g., tossing and catching beanbags, skipping, lacing, drawing)” (OME, 2016, p. 309) is identical with health and physical activity specific expectation 2.2 of the draft version: “demonstrate persistence while engaged in activities that require the use of both large and small muscles (e.g., tossing and catching beanbags, skipping, lacing, drawing)” (OME, 2010, p. 135).

The same idea applied to specific expectation 7.3 of the final version of the document: “Demonstrate strategies for engaging in cooperative play in a variety of games and activities” (OME, 2016, p. 175) and with the health and physical activity specific expectation 2.3 from the draft version: “Demonstrate strategies for engaging in cooperative play in a variety of games and activities” OME, 2010, p. 135).

The same method of copying, pasting, and tweaking without changing the main idea of the specific expectations, was applied in the case of overall expectation eight of the final document: “develop movement skills and concepts as they use their growing bodies to move in a variety of ways and in a variety of contexts” (OME, 2016, p. 309), which borrowed the specific expectations from the draft version of health and physical activity: “Develop control of large muscles (gross-motor control) in a variety of contexts” (OME, 2010, p. 136).

The specific expectations for 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3 under health and physical activity in the draft version (OME, 2010, p. 137) are listed on pages 176 and 177 in the 2016 document:
8.1 demonstrate spatial awareness in activities that require the use of large muscles. (OME, 2016, p. 176)

8.2 demonstrate control of large muscles with and without equipment (e.g., climb and balance on playground equipment; roll, throw, and catch a variety of balls; demonstrate balance and coordination during parachute games; hop, slide, wheel, or gallop in the gym or outdoors). (p. 176)

8.3 demonstrate balance, whole-body and hand-eye coordination, and flexibility in movement (e.g., run, jump, and climb; walk on the balance beam; play beach-ball tennis; catch a ball; play hopscotch). (p. 177)

The only difference resides in using the verb begin in the draft version, which placed the action to control large muscles, balance, coordination, and flexibility on a continuum and does not distort meaning.

I noticed minor modifications of the specific expectation texts in the case of the specific expectations listed under overall expectation nine from the 2016 document and expectation three in the language document in the 2010 text. For example, in the draft version, use reading strategies became demonstrate literacy/reading behaviours in the 2016 document, but the aim of the expectations and the provided examples were identical:

9. demonstrate literacy behaviours that enable beginning readers to make sense of a variety of texts. (OME, 2016, p. 309)

9.1 use reading behaviours to make sense of familiar and unfamiliar texts in print (e.g., use pictures; use knowledge of oral language structures, of a few high-frequency words, and/or of sound-symbol relationships). (OME, 2016, p. 309)

3. use reading strategies that are appropriate for beginning readers in order to make sense of a variety of written materials. (OME, 2010, p. 87)
3.1 begin to use reading strategies to make sense of unfamiliar texts in print (e.g., use pictures; use knowledge of oral language structures, of a few high-frequency words, and/or of sound-symbol relationships). (emphasis in original, OME, 2010, p. 87).

The same copy, paste, tweak procedure was applied to:

- the overall expectation 10 (OME, 2016, p. 310), which corresponds to the draft overall expectation 4 in language (OME, 2010, p. 72) and it shared specific expectation 4.1 through 4.6 in the final version (OME, 2010, pp. 72-74)
- the overall expectation 13 (OME, 2016, p.310), which corresponds to the draft overall expectation two in science and technology (OME, 2010, p. 117), and it shares the specific expectations 2.1 through 2.4 in the final version (OME, 2010, pp. 117-122)
- the overall expectation 15 (OME, 2016, p. 314), which corresponds to overall expectation number sense 1 in mathematics (OME, 2010, p. 97), where all specific expectations and examples were worded almost identically. The differences resided in replacing the word writing with “text, attributes with similarities and differences” and the use of begin.

The only expectations that were not present in the 2010 document was overall expectation 26: “Develop an appreciation of the multiple perspectives encountered within groups, and of ways in which they themselves can contribute to groups and to group well-being” (OME, 2016, p. 317) and 27: “Recognize bias in ideas and develop the self-confidence to stand up for themselves and others against prejudice and discrimination which concern group interaction and bias, self-confidence, prejudice and discrimination” (OME, 2016, p. 317). Given that only two out of 31 expectations are not accounted for in the draft version of the curriculum, it follows that the overall expectations in terms of skills and knowledge to be taught, learnt, assessed and evaluated are almost identical. Hence, the findings with regards to overall expectations and creativity from the analysis of creativity apply here as well.

The next quote where create is present is an excerpt from the Ontario Ministry of Education (2016) document on page 87, which illustrated a second intersection of the Reggio Emilia program and Ontario kindergarten program and regards the image of the child as well as teachers’ or adults’ practices:
We don’t have to teach [children] to ask “why?” because inside each human being is the need to understand the reasons, the meaning of the world around us and the meaning of our life. ... But children not only ask “why?” They are also able to find the answers to their whys, to create their own theories. ... Observe and listen to children because when they ask “why?” they are not simply asking for the answer from you. They are requesting the courage to find a collection of possible answers.

(emphasis in original, Rinaldi, 2006, as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 87)

The quote appears at the beginning of the section Problem Solving and Innovating: What Are We Learning from Research? of the 2016 document and acts as a motto to the section. Because of the motto positioned in the text, it is implied that the author was held in high regard and her opinion should matter when considering the program, as in knowledge skills and pedagogical approaches of problem solving. Creativity appeared in the form of the verb create as part of the predicate whose subject is they, the children. Rinaldi, as cited in the 2016 document, affirmed that children were able to create their own theories, where theory was about generation of knowledge and reasoning. Making meaning and reasoning does not happen in isolation, but rather in “the world around us and the meaning of our life.” Children are ontologically part of us and part of the meaning of life, and they are inextricably connected to the world. The need to understand the world is inscribed in the human being. Children were portrayed as capable, not only of capable of reasoning and making meaning, but also as creators of theories, as problem creators and solvers. The role of the adults is to observe and listen, and provide courage or motivate that, provoke them. It is not to assess them or evaluate them.

The next instance of the verb create regards the relationship between creativity and the principals is illustrated by the following quote:

Principals support and value the development, implementation, and evaluation of coherent programs, and provide leadership in developing a vision and philosophy to guide pedagogy. They create a positive school climate by implementing school-wide policies and practices that respect all educators and children and their families. (OME, 2016, p. 113)
Here the role of the principal regards the positive school climate “in which all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted and which promotes positive, respectful interactions and healthy relationships” (OME, 2016, p. 6). Their interaction with children was not direct but mediated through the type of social relationships within the community and within the legal norms, which provide the values and educational philosophy that dictate the pedagogical practice.

With regards to the community as a partner of the school there is only one instance of create on page 114, as follows:

Schools and school boards can play a role by coordinating efforts with community partners. They can involve community volunteers in supporting and promoting a focus on play and inquiry-based learning both inside and outside the school. For example, community partners can be included in events held at the school, such as meetings or programs to help ensure children’s smooth transition to Kindergarten. Educators may also find opportunities for children to participate in community events, such as programs offered in public libraries, community centres, museums, and provincial parks and conservation areas. Such opportunities are especially beneficial when they support children’s learning in the Kindergarten program, are designed for educational purposes, and provide descriptive feedback to the children. In choosing community partners, schools should build on existing links with their local communities and create new partnerships in conjunction with ministry and school board policies. (OME, 2016, p. 114)

In this particular instance, create comes to highlight the compliance of the new partnerships with the ministry and school board policies, as in following the laws and regulations, which outline under what conditions and circumstances these partnerships should be formed. Participation in the events, direct implication, or embedding the kindergarten program in the community is not compulsory as implied by the modal verb may in educators may also find opportunities.

When examining the document for instances of children’s creativity, I interrogated the text: What do children create? Hence the sentences had to have children as subject and create as a predicate. The answers then came from the section Ways in Which Children Might
Demonstrate Their Learning from the curriculum, which represents the examples of children’s actions that constitute evidence of learning the knowledge and skills outlined in the curriculum:

The material in this column provides examples of ways in which children make their thinking and learning visible to themselves and others – saying, doing, and representing – within various contexts and relationships. Children are not required to demonstrate their learning in all three ways. (OME, 2016, p. 118)

When reading the text in the column for instances of children create or child creates, I noticed that most of the instances of children create are copied and pasted from the draft document. For example, “two children work with the blocks to create a bake shop” (OME, 2016, p. 145) from the 2016 document is identical with “two children work at the block centre to create a bake shop” of the draft document (OME, 2010, p. 67). The same situation applies to the following instances of children’s creativity:

- “A small group of children create a game where they have to try to get beanbags inside a hoop.” (OME, 2016, p. 175 and p. 270; OME, 2010, p. 135)
- “create the rules for a new game” (OME, 2016, p. 176 and p. 135; OME, 2010, p. 148)
- “After listening to a book about farming, a child creates a farm in the blocks area” (OME, 2016, p. 190; OME, 2010, p. 77)
- “children work together to create a vehicle” (OME, 2016, p. 247; OME, 2010, p. 107)
- “A child in the dramatic play area decides to create an appointment book for the ‘doctor’s office’” (OME, 2016, p. 201; OME, 2010, p.90)
- “A small group of children decide to make an alphabet book using their names” (OME, 2016, p. 205; OME, 2010, p. 85)
- “A group of children create an ordinal numbers game” (OME, 2016, p. 223; OME, 2010, p. 101)
• “A group of children create a graph with separate columns” (OME, 2016, p. 241, p. 248, and p. 293; OME, 2010, p. 111)

• “She creates her own art work” (OME, 2016, p. 251; OME, 2010, p. 155)

• “The children create a sequence of digital photographs showing the steps for washing hands to place by the sink or washing bin” (OME, 2016, p. 171 and p. 270; OME, 2010, p. 132)

• “Using puppets, children express emotions through the dialogue they create for their puppet characters” (OME, 2016, p. 271; OME, 2010, p. 133)

• “A small group of children create a musical version of a favourite pattern book” (OME, 2016, p. 298 and p. 296; OME, 2010, p. 148)

• “Two children work together at the computer using simple music software to create and record a song” (OME, 2016, p. 149; OME, 2010, p. 146)

In other instances of children create, which are present in the 2016 version of the curriculum are to be found in the 2010 draft version in a modified form where create was replaced by construct or make. For example: “Children create a replica of one building” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 137) is equivalent in meaning to: “Children in a small group use a variety of materials to construct a model of a building in their community that has significance for them” (OME, 2010, p. 67) or “they can co-create a sign for the blocks area” (OME, 2016, p. 157) appeared as “Children write letters at the post office centre, make signs at the block centre” (OME, 2010, p. 89).

Although the search was not exhaustive, the majority of described situations paint a picture of what children create means. Moreover, the similarity of direct objects from the 2016 document and the 2010 document, just like in the case of expectations, is evident. Hence the comments made in the context of the draft version apply here as well.

These instances of children’s creativity constitute evidence of creativity in the classroom, therefore teachers teach how to create, observe the behaviour create, asses it, and evaluate it.
The direct objects are ends or aims. Each behaviour can be assessed based on the process or product when looking at the type of behaviour and products that might become part of students’ assessment and evaluation through documentation. First, I noticed that they covered all areas of learning from physical education as indicated by creating games with bean bags, to language (creating appointment books, alphabet books), to mathematics (creating an ordinal numbers game, graphs), arts (artwork, dialogue, photos), and science and technology (buildings, bakeshop, designs). These links reveal that create is transdisciplinary and multimodal. Creativity has two forms here: as a representation of something, which is a synonym for make an artefact, do, or bring (something) into existence, such as games.

In regard to teachers, the document suggested teachers are to examine creativity based on the evidence of children’s ability to construct structures, to create artworks, songs, games, books, and graphs. These instances presuppose individual assessment and evaluation in a binary system of pass or fail or needs improvement.

Relative to children, the document here seems to know that children need and are interested in these topics of create, that a four-year-old is very interested in and would like to create a graph or an ordinal numbers game. One occurrence of create stood out because of the number of its instances: create a graph, as it seems that creativity is representation in math. Why would a four-year-old do graphs as in translating quantities in representations? How does the document know? And what if the child is not interested in graphs?

From the point of view of teacher–student relationship the document illustrated a situation where teachers got a glimpse at what creativity might look like as portrayed through concrete examples of imaginary processes and products. The document illustrated desired results and behaviours, ends, and provided clues with regards to activities that are conducive to such ends. As such, graph and book making, constructing buildings and structures are likely to become part of the operational curriculum and are trajectories of learning even if they do not reflect the children in the classroom’s authentic choices or interests.

The only instance that connected parents and creativity came in the form of help to create dual-language books:
Invite parents, other family members, or members of the community (e.g., Elders, grandparents, retired volunteers) to come to the classroom to tell or read stories in their first language, or to help create dual-language books for the children. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 111)

To create here has the meaning of actually making or doing, which reveals a tokenistic approach to language and creativity.

The next chapter describes the operational curriculum of the kindergarten classroom in the fall of 2012, starting with the school, and moving to the class, classroom environment, and methods of teaching and coming full circle to school as a community.
Chapter 5

5 Ethnographic Observation of the Operational Curriculum: Description and Analysis

This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the operational curriculum of a kindergarten classroom in Ontario that was involved in the genesis of the Full-Day Kindergarten in Ontario. I selected the classroom to help respond to my research questions as it provided opportunity to observe discourses of creativity in action in a classroom and their implications for children and teachers. Data collection relative to the classroom took place over six weeks and corresponded with a cycle of learning, which had Halloween as the main topic of inquiry. The descriptions are based on my field notes and observations. Included in the data were documents provided by the teacher, photos, and video, and audio recordings of the activities. The data were categorized as much as possible using Dillon’s (2009) The Questions of Curriculum, which were adapted to fit the purpose of this study.

As a definition of creativity had to be indirectly interpreted based on the observation, I structured the description by painting in large brushstrokes, the main elements of creativity and their play in the operational curriculum (teacher, student, subject, milieu, aim, and activity). I start with the description of the school as part of the milieu and the teaching team, including the physical design of classroom as it fulfilled the role of the third teacher. Then I look at the timetable based on the template planner provided by the teacher, and I identify a possible time allocation based on subjects where indoor and outdoor play was not an integral part of the taught curriculum. Fourth, I describe how the subjects were taught by identifying the main themes and topics of inquiry, providing examples of activities, and by looking at assessment and evaluation practices required by different levels of school management. The last part of the description concerns with the role of parents in the kindergarten curriculum.

5.1 The School

The school was situated in the heart of a middle-class neighbourhood, and it was reachable by bus. According to the Report Card on Ontario’s Elementary Schools (Cowley & Easton, 2014) the average parents’ income from this school was just below 90,000 CAD per year. The school went from grades K to 8, and the school’s facilities were two gyms (one big and one small), a
music room (sometimes music happened in the main hallway), a library, and playgrounds for kindergartners and the rest of the students.

5.2 The Class

Entering the school through the north entrance, on the right was the big gym, small gym, and the library. Further down the hallway, on the right were the main entrance (east) and the Principal and Vice principal’s offices. Turning left was the staff room and kindergarten classrooms. The responsibility of teaching the Ontario Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) curriculum rested mainly on the shoulders of the following people: the elementary teacher and the early childhood educator for language, mathematics, science, personal and social development, visual arts, and dance and drama; a specialist teacher was responsible for music, physical education, and technology (computers), and there was also a librarian.

There were 12 junior kindergarten students (four girls and eight boys) and 14 senior kindergarten students (eight girls and six boys) with a total of 26 students. Out of 26 students, 19 had parental consent to participate in this study. I was introduced to the class as another teacher who would help in the classroom, therefore my presence became a part of the routine of the classroom.

In terms of the tenor of the class, I observed immediately that the children listened attentively to the teachers and ECE and were very familiar with the norms, which were a set of rules of behaviours explicitly taught by the teacher. A simple show me the norms from the teacher would calm children down and get them ready to pay attention to the teacher or early childhood educator. Occasional conflicts in the room, such as a child not sharing or talking disrespectfully to another child were immediately corrected and remediated by the team in the form of asking the student to be aware of the misbehavior and reflect on the consequences of his or her actions. These incidents were also documented in writing by the teacher or early childhood educator. There was only one incident that involved a child not sharing during my observation time. Overall, the children in the classroom seemed cooperative and responsive to adult requests.
5.3 Classroom Environment

The classroom layout was designed by the classroom teacher and ECE and was divided into learning areas, which they named centres: writing centre, a multipurpose centre with a Smart Board and used for reading, listening centre, math centre, science centre, building centre, water centre, sand centre, and art centre (see Figures 21-30). The size of the space allowed only individual or group work for up to six children per centre, so the teacher often intervened in the dynamics of the centres by redistributing students to other centres. The only space that accommodated whole class activities was the multipurpose rug area next to the Smart Board, which was used for shared reading, meetings, yoga, and Smart Board activities (e.g., music or watching cartoons at the end of the day). The position of the centres was fixed and adapted through the materials provided. For example, at the water centre the materials provided by the ECE–teacher team were changed from water cans, plastic measuring cups, and funnels to Halloween-themed plastic animals such as bats and mice, which were used to teach the mathematical concept of sorting according to common attributes. The art centre, which consisted of an arts and crafts table and a double paneled easel, changed the subject of study and observation and techniques according to the theme. For example, the Halloween theme invited children to study gourds through drawing and baking. The writing centre was used to reinforce writing by proposing different projects from birthday cards to books on Halloween and employed a pen and pencil approach where ready-made word strips were copied for different purposes, such as making the cover of a book. The listening centre was rarely used, and it featured a CD player with ear phones. The math centre focused on counting, sorting, and construction or connecting and was surrounded by a display of children who created numeracy posters with numbers from one to ten. The science centre was designed for children to explore natural materials such as small wood logs, leaves, and pinecones. On the wall a poster indicated in print what scientists do. The drama centre included toy furniture, appliances, and hand puppets as well as costumes for dressing up. The sand centre focused on beach toys, which focused on the qualities of sand.
Figure 20. Doorway, writing centre, and the arts and crafts tables.

Figure 21. The house centre
Figure 22. The Ontario kindergarten classroom layout.
Figure 23. The arts centre.

Figure 24. Smart Board and shared reading centre.
Figure 25. Free choice books and board games.

Figure 26. Building centre.
Figure 27. Water centre, homework cubbies, next room and washroom.

Figure 28. Science centre.
Children had limited freedom when choosing centres. Some of them were given jobs (as assigned by the teacher) as the teacher and the ECE monitored the students’ individual choices and were directed to centres in order to vary their interaction with the centres. During the period of data collection, I observed two instances (described below) where the children were directly involved in having a say in what they wanted in a centre. Students’ activity choices were confined to the area of the kindergarten school yard, centres in the classroom, the gym, and the library; they did not have a say as to when, where, or with what to play with the exception of indoor and outdoor play time when they were allowed to choose from provided and selected by teacher toys.

5.4 The Timetable and Areas of Learning

Most of the core areas of learning (language, mathematics, science, visual arts, and drama) were taught by the teacher and the early childhood educator, while music, physical education, and technology (computers) were taught by another teacher, Mrs. F. There was also another teacher during library time, who took over the class. While Mrs. F was teaching, the homeroom teacher planned and prepared the curriculum, and the early childhood educator was accompanying the students and assisting in activities.

Planning time was restricted to 30 minutes per week, and according to the teacher’s planner and my observations this occurred twice: the first thing in the morning on day one (15
minutes) and day three (15 minutes) before the children’s arrival (8:45-9:00 am). The teacher’s planning time alone was 200 minutes per week, which occurred while children were taught music and physical education by the other teacher, Mrs. F. This situation occurred due to the fact that teachers and ECE were under different contracts with the boards and each contract specified the amount of planning time for the position.

The instructional time was structured according to a five-day timetable that was covering 300 minutes of instructional time per day divided in different activities focused on subjects. The planning templates for day one through five from Tables 18-23 were directly copied from teacher’s planner, which was used to plan the instructional day. Any sensitive information was deleted to protect the identity of teachers, ECE, and students. Each day was planned by the teacher in collaboration with the early childhood educator, but the teacher had the lead with regards to the theme of inquiry and activities. The ECE usually contributed with ideas regarding hands on activities in the arts, science, and mathematics (e.g., mixing colours in arts, baking pumpkins and muffins in science, and sorting the animals in mathematics). The table below is a compilation of the timetable for a week based on the template provided by the teacher. Not all subjects mentioned in the written curriculum are present in the timetable, as science, mathematics, visual arts, drama and dance, and writing were embedded in the small group activity time. The only disciplines clearly mentioned in the schedule were: reading, music, movement, gym (physical education), computer (technology), library, meeting and getting ready for lunch (personal development), video book (reading aloud on Smart Board), indoor play, and outdoor play. A special case is exchange take home reading, which stood for a reading with parents program and consisted of the child choosing a leveled book to read with parents at home. I calculated the minutes allocated to each instructional block of time based on the subjects and disciplines as outlined in the teacher’s planner. The first clear observation was that play appeared as a separate notion and was not integrated in the process of teaching. It was either outdoor or indoor and consisted in play without adult interference. The outdoor playground was designated to kindergarten and had two sand pits, was asphalted, and fenced, and several games, such hopscotch, were painted on the asphalt. Children were provided with some large outdoor toys, ride-ons, sand toys, balls, chalk, and skipping ropes. Children played in the fenced environment with no natural elements. They were socializing, pretending, competing, and solving problems of a social or physical nature. The indoor play referred to time spent indoors with no explicit direct
teaching. However, the environment with its centres offered no other choices but the centres, so the children had to use the materials in the centres during this predetermined time of free play.

When looking at the schedule, I noticed that the only subjects of the curriculum that clearly appeared as distinct subjects were: reading (exchange take home, independent, shared, aloud), gym (physical education), music, music and movement (dance), computers (technology), and library. These were fixed times and subjects. The teaching and learning of the rest of the subjects (science, visual arts, mathematics, and writing for language) occurred during small group activities and involved the rotation of the students among centres. The rotation was done daily and was coined as jobs, which students had to do (e.g., finishing a collage) as assigned by the teacher. The rotation was assigned during the morning meeting and or the afternoon meeting by placing children’s name on the centre hanger during the meeting.

In order to see if there is a hierarchy of areas of learning I decided to examine how much time was dedicated to each subject or area of learning. This was based on the premise that privileged bodies of knowledge have a bigger presence in the classroom in terms of allocated time. Figuring out how much time was dedicated to each subject, especially the ones that were present in the full day Kindergarten curriculum but are not mentioned in the planner, was challenging as I had to approximate using the five-day cycle of 1500 minutes per week of instructional time (Table 17, instructional week at a glance).
### Instructional week at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor play 40’</td>
<td>Outdoor play 40’</td>
<td>Outdoor play 30’</td>
<td>Outdoor play 40’</td>
<td>Outdoor play 40’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange take home reading, independent reading, small groups activity, meeting, play 95’</td>
<td>Exchange take home reading, independent reading, small groups activity, meeting, play 95’</td>
<td>Exchange take home reading, independent reading, small groups activity, meeting, play 95’</td>
<td>Exchange take home reading, independent reading, small groups activity, meeting, play 95’</td>
<td>Exchange take home reading, independent reading, small groups activity, meeting, play 95’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading aloud, shared reading and music and movement 25’</td>
<td>Gym 20’</td>
<td>Gym 20’</td>
<td>Reading aloud, music and movement 25’</td>
<td>Reading aloud, shared reading 25’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting ready for lunch 5’</td>
<td>Getting ready for lunch 5’</td>
<td>Getting ready for lunch 5’</td>
<td>Getting ready for lunch 5’</td>
<td>Getting ready for lunch 5’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch 60’</td>
<td>Lunch 60’</td>
<td>Lunch 60’</td>
<td>Lunch 60’</td>
<td>Lunch 60’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor play 40’</td>
<td>Outdoor play 40’</td>
<td>Outdoor play 40’</td>
<td>Outdoor play 40’</td>
<td>Outdoor play 40’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting, small groups activity, Indoor play 80’</td>
<td>Meeting, small groups activity, Indoor play 80’</td>
<td>Meeting, small groups activity, Indoor play 80’</td>
<td>Meeting, small groups activity, Gym 20’</td>
<td>Library 20’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissal 15’</td>
<td>Dismissal 15’</td>
<td>Dismissal 15’</td>
<td>Dismissal 15’</td>
<td>Dismissal 15’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As such, I started with the known figures: outdoor play (390 minutes per 1500 instructional time), which is equivalent to 26% of the weekly instructional time; the indoor play was usually part of the morning and afternoon block, blended with small group activities and represented an independent continuation of centre activities. However, there were two instances, during day two and day five where specific time for indoor play was clearly mentioned, day two: indoor play for 25 minutes (morning) and day five indoor play for 40 minutes (afternoon). The average was 50 minutes of indoor play per day, which resulted in 250 minutes per week (16.6%).

The rest of the subjects were blended in instructional blocks of time. However, the time dedicated to reading was specifically named in the program. As such: during day one of the cycle reading was embedded in the morning block of 120 minutes, exchange take home reading, independent reading, small groups activity, meeting, play were 95 minutes and reading aloud, shared reading, and music and movement were 25 minutes.

Day two had 55 minutes dedicated to reading during the morning bloc of instructional time: exchange take home reading, independent reading, and shared reading; day three the teacher dedicated 10 minutes to exchange take home reading, independent reading, small groups activity, and 25 minutes to reading aloud and shared reading; day four included exchange take home reading and independent reading, which were embedded in the morning block of 95 minutes along with play and small group activities and had a separate 25 minutes for reading aloud,
music and movement; day five had reading, which was embedded in the morning block for 120 minutes and included exchange take home reading, independent reading, small groups activity, meeting, play 95 minutes and had a separate session of reading aloud and shared reading for 25 minutes.

Although it was hard to figure out exactly how much time was dedicated to read aloud and shared reading, it was clear, from my observations, that these activities were done daily. If we use day two with 55 minutes as a reference point, as it is the only one with clear time allocation, to the following forms of reading: exchange take home reading, independent reading, reading aloud and shared reading, then the weekly reading time amounts to a minimum 275 minutes. Another component of reading was the video book played on the Smart Board at the end of each day, with the exception of day four, which consisted of another 15 minutes of reading aloud. This totaled 60 minutes per week. Library was also part of the reading time as it consisted in a short, shared reading session of a book by the librarian and choosing a library book to read at home. Twenty minutes per week was assigned to library time. Therefore, if all times allocated to reading are added, the total is 355 minutes out of 1500 minutes per week. This time allocation does not include writing as a language component.

The rest of the instructional time was split between the other disciplines. The only subjects clearly mentioned in the planner were:

- Physical education: 60 min per 1500 minutes weekly instructional time
- Transition: 25 minutes per 1500 minutes weekly instructional time
  Computer 40 min per 1500 minutes weekly instructional time
- Music: 40 minutes per 1500 taught by the specialist teacher and 20 minutes taught interdisciplinary with a total of 60 minutes per week

If music and physical education had each 60 minutes per week, I can infer that all other disciplines were given 60 minutes per week as follows: dance and drama and visual arts each had with 60 minutes per week, writing 60 minutes per week, mathematics 60 minutes per week, and science with 40 minutes per week as it had the technology component with another 40 minutes. Personal and social development, which, in this particular case, referred to meetings, took about five minutes in the morning and five minutes in the afternoon, and was approximately four times
per week. This amounted to 40 minutes per week. Hence, the calculation behind the 1500 minutes of instructional time divided among subjects might have looked like this:

**Table 18.**

*1500 minutes of instructional time allocated to areas of learning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Time allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Social development</td>
<td>40 min. meetings and 25 min. transition time; total of 65 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>275 min. read aloud, shared reading, independent reading and home exchange reading; Video book: 60 min.; Library: 20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>40 min. and 40 min.; total 80 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual arts</td>
<td>60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama and dance</td>
<td>60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor play</td>
<td>390 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor play</td>
<td>250 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total time</strong></td>
<td>1500 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that the outdoor and indoor play accounted for 640 minutes or 42% of the total instructional time. The rest of the time of 860 minutes was divided among the other areas of learning. It is clear that, out of the 860 minutes dedicated to teaching, almost half (355 minutes reading and 60 minutes writing = 415) was consumed by language, and in particular reading. The next in line comes science and technology followed by personal development. After them the rest of the disciplines.
This allocation of time reveals a hierarchy with play as the main activity of children, followed by 415 minutes of weekly language instruction, 80 minutes of science or technology and the rest of the subjects. The large amount of time spent on language instruction translated into a strong emphasis on literacy in the classroom, where the children were continuously exposed to print in any form or shape from independent reading to songs about the alphabet, to at least one book per day shared reading in the classroom whether this was their interest or not.

Table 19.

*Teacher’s planner day one*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1/6</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Helper of the day:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45-9:00</td>
<td>Arrival: Planning with Ms. ECE’s Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supply teacher: Computer generic login: xxx, password: xxxxx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On desktop go to Hand Out then Mrs. Teacher’s Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:40</td>
<td>Outdoor play: Take attendance at 9:00. Helper of the day takes attendance to the office with a friend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40-11:15</td>
<td>Entrance routines, Sign in:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent reading, exchange take home reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small group activities:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:40</td>
<td>Tidy up: Clear all the tables, wipe them for lunch, put book baskets on tables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read aloud/music and movement/shared reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:40</td>
<td>Get ready for lunch: send children to get their lunch pails and sit at tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:45</td>
<td>Lunch: Supervised by an adult lunch room supervisor. Children sit at designated tables to eat lunch. When finished, put lunch pails away in bins, use washroom, return to table to look at book until 12:05 when Ms. ECE’s name returns to dismiss children to outdoor play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Prep with Mrs. Prep Teacher’s name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outdoor play, meet the children outside, take attendance at 12:45. Helper of the day brings attendance to the office with a friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:25-1:45</td>
<td>Meeting at carpet:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small group activities:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-3:00</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Book software: Saved in favourites, login: xxx password: xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:15</td>
<td>Dismissal routines: Hand out mailbags to bus children first then walkers and program. Bus children line up at door and wait for an adult to bring them to the bus line at 3:20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15-3:30</td>
<td>Bus children:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bus Duty</strong></td>
<td>After school program:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. ECE’s Name</td>
<td>Children picked up by adult at door:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 20.

**Teacher's planner day two**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45-9:00</td>
<td>Arrival: JK/SK yard duty at the gate beside primary playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:40</td>
<td>Outdoor play: Take attendance at 9:00. Helper of the day takes attendance to the office with a friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40-11:15</td>
<td>Entrance routines: Sign in: Independent reading, exchange take home reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared reading:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Message:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snack: whole group at designated tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:20</td>
<td>Gym: Take students to the gym:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:35-10:55</td>
<td>Gym: Prep Mrs. Phys Ed meets us in the gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:55-11:15</td>
<td>Music: prep with Mrs. Phys Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:40</td>
<td>Play: Big blocks closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tidy up: Clear all the tables, wipe them for lunch, put book baskets on tables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Yard Duty**
Supply teacher: Computer generic login: xxxxx password: xxxx

Teacher’s Name
On desktop go to **Hand Out** then Teacher’s Name

**Date:**

**Helper of the day:**
11:40 Get ready for lunch: send children to get their lunch pails and sit at tables

11:45-12:45 Lunch: Supervised by an adult lunch room supervisor. Children sit at designated tables to eat lunch. When finished, put lunch pails away in bins, use washroom, return to table to look at book until 12:05 when Ms. ECE’s name returns to dismiss children to outdoor play.

12:45 Outdoor play, meet the children outside, take attendance at 12:45. Helper of the day brings attendance to the office with a friend

1:25-1:45 Meeting at carpet:

Small group activities:

Play

2:45-3:00 Reflection

Book software: Saved in favourites, login: xxxx password: xxxx

3:00-3:15 Dismissal routines: Hand out mailbags to bus children first then walkers and program. Bus children line up at door and wait for an adult to bring them to the bus line at 3:20.

3:15-3:30 Bus children:

Program

After school program:

Ms. ECE’s Name

Children picked up by adult at door:
### Teacher's planner day three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 8:45-9:00 | Arrival: Planning with ECE’s Name  
Supply teacher: Computer generic login: xxxx, password: xxxx  
On desktop go to Hand Out then Mrs. Teacher’s Name |
| 9:00-9:40 | Outdoor play: Take attendance at 9:00. Helper of the day takes attendance to the office with a friend.  
Entrance routines, Sign in: |
| 9:30 | Independent reading, exchange take home reading  
Meeting: message |
| 9:40-10:20 | Prep with Mrs. Prep Teacher’s Name  
9:40: Music  
9:50-10:10 Gym  
10:10-10:20: Music |
| 10:20 | Small group activities:  
Play |
| 11:15-11:40 | Read aloud:  
Shared reading:  
Tidy up: Clear all the tables, wipe them for lunch, put book baskets on tables |
<p>| 11:40 | Get ready for lunch: send children to get their lunch pails and sit at tables |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:45</td>
<td>Lunch: Supervised by an adult lunch room supervisor. Children sit at designated tables to eat lunch. When finished, put lunch pails away in bins, use washroom, return to table to look at book until 12:05 when Ms. ECE’s Name returns to dismiss children to outdoor play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch duty</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:05</td>
<td>ECE’s Name returns to dismiss children to outdoor play.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mrs. Teacher’s Name

Next Door

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Outdoor play, meet the children outside, take attendance at 12:45. Helper of the day brings attendance to the office with a friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:25-1:45</td>
<td>Meeting at carpet:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small group activities:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-3:00</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Book: Saved in favourites, login: xxxx PW: xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15-3:30</td>
<td>Dismissal routines: Hand out mailbags to bus children first then walkers and program. Bus children line up at door and wait for an adult to bring them to the bus line at 3:20.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bus Duty**

Ms. ECE’s Name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bus children:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After school program:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children picked up by adult at door:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 22.

*Teacher's planner day four*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45-9:00</td>
<td>Arrival: Bus Duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:40</td>
<td>Prep with Mrs. Prep Teacher’s Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40-11:15</td>
<td>Entrance routines, Sign in:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:40</td>
<td>Tidy up: Clear all the tables, wipe them for lunch, put book baskets on tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40</td>
<td>Get ready for lunch: Send children to get their lunch pails and sit at tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:05</td>
<td>Lunch duty: Supervised by an adult lunch room supervisor. Children sit at designated tables to eat lunch. When finished, put lunch pails away in bins, use washroom, return to table to look at book until 12:05 when Ms. ECE’s name returns to dismiss children to outdoor play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Outdoor play, meet the children outside, take attendance at 12:45. Helper of the day brings attendance to the office with a friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:25-2:20</td>
<td>Meeting at carpet:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small group activities:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:20-3:00</td>
<td>Prep with Mrs. Prep Teacher’s name: Computer Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Book: Saved in favourites, login: xxx password: xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:15</td>
<td>Dismissal routines: Hand out mailbags to bus children first then walkers and program. Bus children line up at door and wait for an adult to bring them to the bus line at 3:20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bus children:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After school program:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children picked up by adult at door:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Teacher's planner day five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 5/10</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Helper of the day:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45-9:00</td>
<td>Arrival: JK/SK yard duty at the parking lot gate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yard Duty</strong></td>
<td>Supply teacher: Computer generic login: xxx password: xxx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Teacher’s Name</td>
<td>On desktop go to Hand Out then Mrs. Teacher’s name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:40</td>
<td>Outdoor play: Take attendance at 9:00. Helper of the day takes attendance to the office with a friend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40-11:15</td>
<td>Entrance routines, sign in:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent reading, exchange take home reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small group activities:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:40</td>
<td>Tidy up: Clear all the tables, wipe them for lunch, put book baskets on tables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read aloud:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared reading:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40</td>
<td>Get ready for lunch: Send children to get their lunch pails and sit at tables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11:45-12:45  Lunch: Supervised by an adult lunch room supervisor. Children sit at designated tables to eat lunch. When finished, put lunch pails away in bins, use washroom, return to table to look at book until 12:05 when Ms. ECE’s name returns to dismiss children to outdoor play.

12:45  Outdoor play, meet the children outside, take attendance at 12:45. Helper of the day brings attendance to the office with a friend

1:25-2:05  Prep by Mrs. Prep Teacher’s Name:  Gym: 1:25-1:45  Library: 1:45-2:05

2:05  Play

2:45-3:00  Reflection

Book: Saved in favourites, login: xxx password: xxx

3:00-3:15  Dismissal routines: Hand out mailbags to bus children first then walkers and program. Bus children line up at door and wait for an adult to bring them to the bus line.

Bus children:

3:15-3:30  After school program:

Bus Duty  Children picked up by adult at door:

Mrs.
Teacher’s Name
5.5 The Teachers, ECE, the Students, and the Operational Curriculum: Blurring the Boundaries of Areas of Learning

Most of the planning of the operational curriculum was done by the homeroom teacher in collaboration with the early childhood educator. They used cues from the children in planning and guiding their interests. Most of the direct teaching happened in reading, writing, science, arts, and mathematics while the other subjects were less structured. The teacher’s planning of activities drew from various sources such as professional articles, curriculum documents, and school documents. These activities were planned with the early childhood educator during the little planning time they had together or during the moments while they were supervising the children. I noted that most of the arts and craft activities, which necessitated fine motor skills, were overviewed by the early childhood educator while the more academic tasks were directed by the teacher.

When I started the observations of the classroom the main theme of exploration was autumn. This transformed into a Halloween theme during the first week of observation, because Halloween was coming. The teacher and the early childhood educator planned activities related to this particular theme, which evolved from exploring gourds to skeletons as topics. The boundaries of learning areas were blurred when necessary as in teaching parts of the skeleton through shared reading or songs. The exploration of Halloween started in the arts centre with an observational drawing of different gourds and a scientific inquiry into bones in the science centre. The exploration of gourds was enhanced when the gourds as food provided children with the opportunity to look at healthy eating by baking and tasting pumpkin muffins and cooked pumpkin.
Science was taught interdisciplinary and grew into arts, crafts, dance, and baking activities. For example, in science, the observations of gourds in arts initiated by the teacher lead to the dissection of the gourds which provided the opportunity for scientific inquiry (e.g., seeds) and sensory activities.

During the first week of observation, in the science centre, the teacher proposed exploring natural materials through transparent surfaces. Among the exploration of material, the teacher set up an experiment with carrots tops, and the carrots were put into two different dishes: one dish was watered, the other was not. This experiment concluded quickly as the children were not
showing interest in it, but not before it was reviewed orally in a short inquiry session children’s predictions and findings.

![Figure 33. October 18: Science centre.](image1)

The Halloween theme was approached by proposing skeletons as a second topic of exploration. The morning of October 24, 2012 began with the teacher posing the sign-in question: “Do you have a skeleton inside you?” The sign-in question was a way to practice the writing of one’s name or yes and no and involved answering the question with yes or by writing their name.

![Figure 34. October 24: Sign-in question and x-rays in the science centre.](image2)
The same day the teacher displayed a natural-sized skeleton in the science centre and brought in a box with plastic bones to be explored by children. On the light table she placed x-rays of feet to stimulate children’s curiosity. During the morning session at meeting time, the teacher told the children that a doctor would be visiting the class to talk about bones and how to keep them healthy. The teacher initiated an inquiry into bones by encouraging the children to manipulate, observe, compare, and assemble them.

Figure 35. October 24: The skeleton and opening the box of bones.

Figure 36. October 24: The ribs and playing with bones.
The inquiry session was followed by a shared reading on the Smart Board about healthy bones and a game where children had to position correctly different parts of the skeleton:

![Image of shared reading](image1.png)

**Figure 37. October 24: Shared reading.**

In the afternoon children were told that they would have a visit from a real doctor to talk about bones. The teacher asked the children what questions they would like to ask the doctor and she compiled a list of children’s questions to be addressed to the visiting doctor (Figure 39).

![Image of recording questions](image2.png)

**Figure 38. October 24: Recording questions.**
The doctor’s visit on November 11, 2012 resulted in discussions about the importance of good nutrition to have healthy bones, in answering the questions posed by children, and new ones about mending broken bones (Figure 40). The visit culminated with the children’s attempt to assemble the skeleton (Figure 41).

Figure 39. Talking about nutrition and x-ray hands.

Figure 40. November 6: Figuring out the skeleton and construction paper casts.
In the following days the inquiry into broken bones inspired children to create casts out of construction paper and colour them. The inquiry into broken bones was taken further by children when the teacher and ECE proposed the transformation of the drama centre into a hospital. The children, however, had a different plan and suggested changing the drama centre into a vet clinic, so the teachers asked the children to vote. The majority of students chose the vet clinic and the vet clinic was up and running the next day (Figure 42).

Figure 41. November 6: Voting for the vet clinic before reading Bear Feels Sick.

During the next day’s literacy block, the teacher read with children *Bear Feels Sick* (Wilson & Chapman, 2012) (Figure 42), which furthered the children’s interest in the vet clinic and prompted them to create advertising posters for the clinic (Figure 43): Their interest drove the inquiry into writing and drawing.
The theme also evolved in the arts centre with collages of animals beginning with bears and then exploring other animals including dinosaurs (Figure 44).

These science and art explorations were interdisciplinary as they were placed at the intersections of subjects and fused organically, because they were led by the children’s inquiry and curiosity.

5.6 Interconnected Areas of Learning

In this section I describe how the knowledge of specific areas of learning were taught in the operational curriculum. This data is relevant to the subject category of Dillon’s (2009) questions of curriculum analysis schema. Although the disciplines were treated as discrete bodies of knowledge in the programmatic curriculum, the teacher and the early childhood educator made every effort to connect the subjects to the main theme of inquiry. For example, in mathematics
when they were studying data management through sorting activities, the teacher and ECE provided manipulatives that were of declared interest to the children, such as animal figurines. In reading, every book they shared addressed children’s inquiry, and the arts were used for scientific inquiry into colour mixing.

5.6.1 Mathematics.

During my stay at the school, the main topic of learning in mathematics was data management with the following expectations as communicated by teacher:

Data Management and Probability

DM5. sort, classify, and display a variety of concrete objects, collect data, begin to read and describe displays of data, and begin to explore the concept of probability in everyday contexts.

DM5.1 sort, classify, and compare objects and describe the attributes used

DM5.2 collect objects and data and make representations of their observations, using concrete graphs

DM5.3 respond to and pose questions about data collection and graphs

DM5.4 use mathematical language in informal discussions to describe probability

The following text was provided by the teacher and was used as a learning cycle plan:

FDK Learning Cycle: Data Management, Sorting

Background Information: The FDK teachers and ECEs decided to focus on sorting and classifying for our LC. Sorting and classifying are skills that are important to have if students will be successful in data management activities. Sorting involves, “examining objects, identifying similar attributes, and organizing objects that go together into groups.” Children will then classify, which involves identifying a common characteristic of all items in the group. We will first perform a diagnostic assessment of the SK students in our classes. All students will first be asked the question, “What do you do when you
sort? (Note that the materials for sorting are not shown to the students yet.) Next, students will be asked to sort the buttons (we will use the ones purchased, not buttons we have collected), and then asked to name the sorting rule. Following extensive group activities focusing on listing and describing attributes as well as numerous sorting activities using a variety of materials, we will perform the final diagnostic. The same scoring system will be used for both diagnostics so that we can compare. We will also record in anecdotal form any comments we feel are relevant to the assessment for each child.

LC Scoring for Diagnostics: Total Score /5

1. Question 1: What do you do when you sort? Score 1 point, the students answer should include one or several of the following words in their description; alike, same, different, similar.

2. Activity: Sort the buttons.

Score 1 Point: student sorts by obvious or common attributes such as shape, colour, and size; Score 2 Points: student sorts by less common or obvious attributes such as number of holes, raised edges, point/curved, 3 or corners etc. (If child sorts according to two attributes, please record this in the anecdotal comment box provided.)

State the sorting rule: Score 1 Point: student states a general rule, such as red goes here yellow here and green here. Score 2 Points: student states the specific rule, such as “I sorted by colour.”

Teaching Strategies:

- Use vocabulary such as same, like, similar and different during instructional activities.
- Describe/list attributes of objects (looks like, feels like, sounds like etc.), may do this with partners using magnifying glasses.
- Game: work with a partner, think of ways the two children are the same, then different.
• “I Spy Game,” Nelson Math, sorting section: For example, “I spy with my little eye, something that is square.”
• Game: which one doesn’t belong?
• Identify/Name groups that have been created.
• Ask, how are these objects alike?
• What other items could go in this group, why?
• “Can you sort these objects in another way?”
• see also activities starting at page 50 in Guide to Effective Instruction in Mathematics, Data Management and Probability
• use story Frog and Toad are Friends, teacher has copies.

Table 24.

Learning cycle: Sorting diagnostic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Question: What do you do when you sort?</th>
<th>Sort the Buttons:</th>
<th>Name the sorting rule.</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
<th>Student Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Score 1, need words such as alike, same, different, similar</td>
<td>Sore 1 Point: obvious attributes such as colour, size and shape.</td>
<td>Score 1 Point: student names the general rule, reds here, yellows here etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Score 2 Points for less common attributes such as number of holes, raised edges etc.</td>
<td>Score 2 Points: Student states specific rule (i.e. I sorted by colour).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Column Totals:

Column Average:

In the math cycle I observed that the topic was introduced at the water table during week three of my observation. It was introduced by colouring the water green and populating it with
Halloween-themed plastic figures, such as rats, spiders, and bats. Some of the children started sorting without any guidance or help (Figure 45).

![Figure 44. October 30: Water centre, sorting Halloween figurines.](image)

This activity was followed by whole class direct instruction provided by the ECE where the sorting of manipulatives was based on the attribute of colour (Figure 46). The sorting materials were displayed all week in the math centre to be used by children during small group activity time.

![Figure 45. October 30: Sorting by colour.](image)

Every opportunity was taken to teach and reinforce the concept of sorting. For example, on November 5, 2012, the children were asked to bring in a Halloween treat. The sign-in question reminded them of that (Figure 47). Before Halloween a letter was sent to parents suggesting them to sort treats with the children.
During math time the children put together all treats and as a whole class activity; the ECE launched an inquiry into how they can be sorted. The children came up with different criteria of sorting such as colour and type (candies, chocolates, and gummies). During week four of observation the teacher assessed each child’s skill to sort based on attributes using the assessment sheet. The assessment took place either individually or in small groups and consisted of sorting buttons based on different attributes such as shape, colour, or combined attributes. The sorting activity was introduced as part of the story *A Lost Button* (Lobel, 2003), which was read in the morning, where Toad, one of the main characters loses its button (Figure 48).

**Figure 46. November 5: Sign-in question.**

**Figure 47. A Lost button and teacher recording assessment results.**
Figure 48. November: Sorting diagnostic assessment.

The results of the diagnostic assessment were documented to determine what the children knew in comparison to what was required in the expectations as it can be seen in Figure 51 (the names have been covered to protect the identity of children). The results of the diagnostic assessment were recorded by the teacher and were to be reported to the parents.

During week five of observation the early childhood educator reinforced the concept of sorting by initiating another sorting activity of animal figurines. The animal topic was suggested by children in the context of having a vet clinic in the house centre.

Figure 49. November 5 and 21: Sorting and counting

During the last week of the observation at the craft table, a peg board centre was created to reinforce the concept of sorting and introduce numeracy.
Figure 50. November 2012: Sorting diagnostic assessment.

Numeracy was formally introduced on November 20, 2012 with the sign-in question. The children were taught sequencing and practiced it at the writing table. The writing centre was
equipped with exemplars of the numbers four and five, small white boards, and white boards markers. The children were provided the opportunity to practice writing the numbers four and five by copying the exemplars. Some of the children at the writing table took the writing numbers task further by writing all numbers up to 10.

![Image of whiteboards with numbers written on them.]

**Figure 51. November 20 and 21: Sign-in questions.**

The exploration of five as a number was furthered through a ten minute Smart Board activity right before lunch with the whole class counting up to five, representing the number through virtual manipulatives. The writing of 5 was reinforced through a mnemonics text: *down and around goes fat old five a hat on top and see what you got.* Every child had an opportunity to practice writing 5’s on the Smart Board or in the air by gesturing the sign and repeating the mnemonic text.

![Image of children writing on whiteboards.]

**Figure 52. November 20: Introducing numeracy.**
My observation ended here at the end of a new learning cycle in mathematics on numeracy.

5.6.2 Language: Writing and reading.

The reading and writing topics were guided by the themes chosen by children. For example, when I started my observation, children were in the process of making Halloween books. The writing centre was equipped with Halloween tracing stencils with written nouns representing the image. Children traced the images and copied the nouns. The pages were compiled and stapled together in a Halloween book. Some of the children were connecting ideas and the images in an attempt to create a story which was read and shared with other children.

![Tracing Halloween stencils and making the book.](image)

**Figure 53. Tracing Halloween stencils and making the book.**

The same idea of creating a book was taken further by creating original illustrations for shared stories. For example, after reading the story *There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Bat* (Colandro & Lee, 2005) some students had the initiative to use the story to create their own drawings and copied the text from the book.
Writing was also an independent activity in the writing centre, which encouraged writing for the sake of writing, situated between experimenting with letters and signs that did not necessarily make any sense to other readers but the child.

The constant theme, which appeared in very pragmatic contexts, was the writing of names. It was directly taught and continuously reinforced by asking children to write their or their friends’ names on tags or artwork, Smart Board, or on the sign-in board when they came
into the classroom. Each child had to do this job, and they were usually taking turns with one of the volunteers in the classroom.

One particular activity that was done was on a child’s birthday, which was the writing of a birthday card where the children had to copy *Happy Birthday*, sign their name, and decorate the card.

![Figure 56. Writing a birthday card for a classmate.](image)

Reading was a constant, every day activity with an interdisciplinary approach, whether as an individual centre activity or as a shared activity during the literacy block. Reading the names, as in recognizing them at first sight, was practiced every day either by choice when it came to choosing or the assignment of the centres. Almost every morning session began with having a shared reading and planning the day including centres. The distribution of children in the centres was done based on a combination between children’s preferences and things they had to do or so-called jobs. A child had to do a job when a product was not completed (i.e., an artwork).

Another activity that involved both individual and shared reading was the *helper*, where a child was chosen to share something about him or her. The text was created by the teacher and projected on the Smart Board. The helper would stand in front of the Smart Board and share the reading of the text while playing with the words or writing on the Smart Board.
The following is an example of a verbatim, transcribed helper moment with Calvin (pseudonym), a kindergarten student who was designated the helper of the day on October 25, 2012. He was at the Smart Board ready to write. The text was a fill-in-the gap type of exercise and read:

   Teacher: Hi, boys and girls. The Helper today is Calvin. Calvin has _ syllables in his name. His name starts with the letter _. His name ends with the letter _.

   The children were reading together at the request of teacher.

   Children: Hi, boys and girls. The Helper today is Calvin.

   One child says while clapping: Cal-vin. Calvin has 2 syllables.

   Teacher: How many?

   Children: Two syllables.

   Teacher: Good. Let’s read it.

   Teacher (reads together with children): Calvin has 2 syllables in his name. While Calvin is writing the number 2, let’s clap his name: Cal-vin…and let’s write number 2 in the air; around and down and back on the railway track. Let’s do it again; around and back on the railway track.

   A child: It’s looking in the mirror (about Calvin’s 2).

   Teacher: You know what, Calvin? Your 2 is looking in the mirror.

   Calvin corrects his number. The teacher guides him: Start at the top: around and…

   Calvin (while correcting the 2): Around and down and back on the railway track.

   Teacher: Good. Perfect. Can we read back? (together with children) Calvin has 2 syllables in his name. Let’s read. His name starts with the letter C. So, Calvin can you print a C? (Calvin is writing C on the Smart Board text.)
Teacher: The bottom says. His name ends with the letter…Let’s bridge it: Caalviin. It ends with N and it starts with C. Let’s clap Calvin again: Cal-vin. His name ends with the letter N.

Calvin is writing N on the Smart Board text.

Teacher: Calvin can you point while we read the whole thing? Everybody get your pointers out (teacher shows the index finger).

Teacher reads with children: Hi, boys and girls. The Helper today is Calvin. Calvin has 2 syllables in his name. His name starts with the letter C. His name ends with the letter N. Could we clap for Calvin? (Kids clap their hands for Calvin.)

This small moment in time reveals the strategies employed when teaching the letter-sound connection. Conducting this type of exercise every day was directed towards building children’s phonetic awareness and was reinforcing print literacy practices. The completed exemplars of the helper of the day moments were collected in a journal as part of the documentation.

The other activity that necessitated reading names was the distribution of students at the centres when they were putting the names on the hanger with the centres:

![Figure 57. Centre hanger.](image)
One of the teaching and learning moments on the days I observed were shared reading. Most of the texts were chosen by the teacher by using children’s interests and were connected to the theme of exploration. For example, on November 5, 2012, before lunch, in the context of learning the colours and mixing them, the children explored mixing red and white by rolling marbles in colours of paint on a tray. The teacher chose as the reading of the day: *Red is Best* (Stinson, 2011); the story is about the favourite colour of Kelly, a child, and how this is reflected in all her choices of clothes and cups. All children were sitting on the carpet in front of the Smart Board. The teacher was sitting in front of the Smart Board on a small chair with a bag of red clothes next to her. The teacher began by asking the children if they knew the story. Then they read the title together. Next, she asked one of the students, who happened to have a red shirt with the word red written on it, to stand up. Then she asked the children if they saw the word red on his t-shirt. The children recognized the word and the teacher read the word. She thanked the student and asked him to sit down in the audience. The teacher started reading the book, sharing it with the children, and pointing out the words. As she was reading about Kelly’s different red clothes, she handed over to the children the red clothes: mitts, pajamas, boots, and jacket. When she finished reading the story she asked the children to put their thumbs up if they were wearing red. Then she asked them to think if they had a favourite colour. After that she asked them to turn to a friend and share with them their favourite colour. The children shared their favorite colour and then had lunch. The next day they practiced mixing colours of paint in a Ziploc bag.

Figure 58. November 6: Mixing colours of paint in a plastic bag.
This reading moment was carefully prepared by the teacher in conjunction with the early childhood educator who carried on the direct teaching of the colour mixing next day.

Another example was the reading of the book *One* (Otoshi, 2008), which addressed many dimensions of the curriculum: counting, bullying, and literacy, but was shared in the context of numeracy.

![Image of the book *One*]

**Figure 59. One.**

Independent reading was fostered in three ways. The first one was by exposing the children to a variety of themed, multimodal printed texts in the reading area and environment (e.g., posters). During centre time children were encouraged to play with language games or read books.

![Image of thematic books]

**Figure 60. Thematic books.**
The second way independent reading was fostered, which was not very present during the instructional time was the Take Home Reading weekly program where leveled reading books were sent home with the child to be read with the parents or guardians. The exchange of books happened during mornings when each child chose a leveled book, which were colour coded. The children were very aware of their reading level and chose a book from a colour-coded bin situated on the shelves next to the Smart Board. Each child had his or her own reading bag, which consisted in one leveled book and a log-in, where the parent(s) were supposed to record the date and the book, which was read with the child.
The third way to encourage independent reading was through the *I Can Read* booklet, which was compiled by the teacher and the ECE and consisted of texts taught during instructional time. The parents were asked to read weekly with the children the texts provided in the *I Can Read* booklet through a letter that was the first page of the booklet. The letter to parents served as the
introduction to the reading program and provided instructions regarding the reading strategies they should employ, the frequency of reading time, as well as the reward in the form of praise for efforts. The following images provide an example of the booklet compiled by the teacher and educator.

Figure 65. Cover of I Can Read booklet.

Figure 66. Letter to parents.
The book did not contain narrative texts and relied heavily on songs and poems as mnemonics for letters, first sight words, and numbers. The poems were thematically related to fall and Halloween as themes of the learning cycle.
With regards to the contents, the book clearly shows the reliance on memorization and
mnemonics to retrieve information focused on the strategies of reading where learning to read is
a staged process as the sentence, “this is the beginning stage of reading” suggests.

The alphabet appears as a homework topic twice, which highlights its importance in the
curriculum. Reading takes over not only the classroom time, but also home time. The assessment
of children’s reading was taken up by the teacher and during the period of observation focused
on the recognition of upper case letters. Each child was assessed periodically every three months
and their progress was tracked by the teacher.
The assessment was colour-coded as follows: the yellow highlighted letters were recognized by the child in September, while the orange highlighted letter was used to mark the letters known by the student in November, 2012. A typical assessment lasted between five and 10 minutes and was conducted as following: the teacher asked, “What is the name of this letter?” and pointed to the letter, and the student had to answer the question. Although the teacher tried to make the assessment as casual as possible, the students, suggested through their body language, were aware they were being evaluated. For example, while Morris (pseudonym) was being assessed his facial expression changed from smiling to not smiling, especially when he did not know the letter. With the increased number of unrecognized letters (which were not marked orange) his demeanor changed further, and he seemed quite worried and frustrated. Morris’ “I don’t know”s were softer and softer until they became whispers. It was clear that he understood that the teacher was evaluating him, and that he was not performing up to the expectations of the teacher, and that really bothered him. By the end he was ready to say sorry, as if he did something wrong.

5.6.3 The arts: Drama.

Drama was fostered indirectly and mainly through the drama centre. During my observation time I had not seen any direct teaching of drama, but the drama centre changed, at the suggestion of children, from a house centre into a vet clinic. Their interest in skeletons and bones as well as the direct teaching in this unit merged children’s interests in animals. The teacher and the early childhood educator used the environment as a teaching tool to facilitate the use of vocabulary in their imagined vet clinic scenarios.

Another modification of the environment, which furthered children’s dramatic play, was by setting up the hand puppet theater. This allowed a different type of storytelling and dramatic play with animal hand puppets.
5.6.4 The arts: Music.

Music as a subject was approached in two contexts. First it was used as a vehicle for learning the content and concepts taught in other subjects. For example, during the first week the children were practicing the *Alphabet Song* in order to memorize the letters, and in the second week they were exposed to the *Skeleton Dance* song, which consolidated their knowledge about the anatomy of the human body. The children were also having formal music lessons with another, specialized teacher. The lessons consisted of memorizing new songs and rehearsing them repetitively by echoing the teacher and the music played on the CD player. One example was the *Road Safety* song. The teacher would review the lyrics with the children and then played the *Road Safety* song on the CD player. Children were reproducing the song as they echoed the song played on the CD. The songs were not connected with the classroom instruction themes.

5.6.5. The arts: Visual arts.

Visual arts were mainly taught through activities at the arts centre during centre time; they revolved around arts and crafts, which were related to the theme of inquiry. Nevertheless, if the children manifested interest in a special topic, then usually the ECE would take up the opportunity to allow exploration of materials and topics. During my observation time, direct teaching of the skills and knowledge were taught by the teacher only in the case of craft cut-outs or collages or mixing colours at the centre. The elements of art that were addressed during my observation were colour and texture: texture was taught indirectly through drawing by observing and attempting to reproduce the texture of various gourds, while colour was addressed in the
following weeks thorough mixing colours of paint. The experience of colour mixing was framed as an experiment by using everyday objects in unexpected combinations. For example, different primary colours of paint were put by the ECE in a Ziploc bag and the children were mixing the colours with by squishing and pushing the paint in the bag. The colours fused and mixed creating secondary and tertiary colours. Another experiment consisted of mixing two colours of paint by rolling a marble. As it went through both colours of paint, the marble mixed the colours creating other colours. In this particular case, the ECE mixed red and white to obtain pink. The independent activities echoed these experiments, and many children started applying the idea of mixing colours in their artwork during free play. However, they were not taught basic skills in painting such as wash the brush, dry the brush, and move on to the next colour. The same thing applied to drawing: There was no guidance with regards to the analysis of the textures and their efforts to reproduce them.

The main principle of art that was taught indirectly through cut-outs was symmetry. In the context of creating Jack-o’-Lanterns, symmetry was explored by cutting out geometric shapes for the facial features and by copying facial expressions. In the context of learning about skeletons symmetry was taught indirectly by creating a pasta collage, which represented skeletons. This activity was conducted by the ECE and focused on gluing skills.

Figure 71. October 18: Observational drawings and October 25: Jack-o’-Lantern.
Figure 72. October 23: Facial expressions.

Figure 73. October 24: Pasta skeletons.
Technology was taught by the specialist teacher once per week and was took place in the school’s computer lab. The lessons consisted of learning how to log on, access educational games, and play games. The games were related to language and mathematical curricula and were based on the winning or losing a game or the principle of reward. Learning to follow the instructions was essential for winning a game. For example, one of the games focused on sorting animals into birds and other animals as instructed orally.

Figure 75. November 6: Computer time.
By the time of my observation, most of the children had no issues with logging in or accessing the games.

5.6.7 **Dance and movement.**

Dance and movement were an integral part of the Halloween theme and was usually used to provide active relaxation and calming down. Dance was taught indirectly through videos projected onto the Smart Board and consisted in mimicking the movements displayed in the video. One example was the *Chicken Dance* when children were copying the moves presented in the video. The second opportunity for dance was during community events. During the time of observation, the school organized a Halloween dance-a-thon for all primary grades. Children had one hour to dance away for Halloween. Movement was also taught in the context of daily short yoga sessions, which were held by the teacher right after lunch break and outdoor play. The teacher directly taught easy poses and breathing techniques, which allowed active relaxation and awareness of body (Figure 75).

![Figure 75](image)

*Figure 75. November 5: Doing yoga, child's pose.*

5.6.8 **Physical education.**

Physical education was taught by a specialist teacher in the gym in short 20-minute periods, consisted of a short stretching session and were followed by active games. These games focused on hand-eye coordination (e.g., passing the ball) and muscles such as bean bag relays and parachute games. The rules of the games and safety tips were stated at the beginning of each game. After that the children played that particular game for the rest of the time.
5.6.9 Independent indoor play.

Part of the instructional time was independent indoor play. This occurred without adult intervention or guidance and took place at any centre they wished. For safety reasons, the only restriction was no more than five students per centre. The free time was used by children to create their own scenarios and solve their own problems. For example, on October 29, 2012 a group of five girls decided to create a home for their pet animals and came up with an elaborate structure created in collaboration: Each structure had a well-defined purpose.

![Image of children creating a structure](image.jpg)

**Figure 77. The house for pets.**

Another example was a Lego structure created by a group of boys. The image depicts a rectangular prism that was constructed from Lego blocks. The remarkable structure was about 40 cm high and had levels inside (Figure 79).
Both the water table and the sand table were places where children loved spending their play time as they were constantly exploring the physical proprieties of sand and water.

5.7 The School as a Community and as an Assessor

Examining the school and community as part of the kindergarten program was necessary to determine the role of school and community in children’s creativity, as they are part of Dillon’s
(2009) questions of curriculum schema. The only event that involved the entire school as a community was the dance-a-thon Halloween festival where children danced to Halloween songs in the gym on October 31, 2012. The children danced for an hour before lunch and the gym was decorated for Halloween.

Nevertheless, another contributing factor to school planning was the School Improvement Plan, which was adopted by all teachers and grades, and is particular to each school based on its needs. This particular document outlined the strategy to improve students’ level of literacy in language and mathematics and was one of the few documents that were given to me by the teacher. The evaluation form consisted of two parts: an initial assessment, which identified the issues and a second part, which reported on the progress of the child.

The school goal plan report consisted of four parts: school goals for literacy, school plan for literacy, school goals for numeracy, and school plan for numeracy. The school goal section was further divided into two categories: school goal(s) and measure of success. The school goal clearly stated that the purpose of this plan was to “implement high yield strategies and signature learning experiences that will support an improvement in our students’ abilities to articulate/communicate their thinking through oral and written expression in both Literacy and Numeracy” (School Improvement Plan).

Three distinctive language characteristics are observable here. First is the classification of the plan in goals and measures of success, which clearly indicates an accountability trait and roots the discourse in the economics discourse. This is further demonstrated in the use of borrowed terms from economics discourse were high yield, as an adjective phrase, highlights the idea of a high return on investment or resources, physical or human. The second characteristic is given by the use of adjectives oral and written, which indicates the modality of expression of students. They are highly restrictive and fail to at least acknowledge other modalities, such as visual expression. The third observable trait was its reference to only two specific domains: literacy and numeracy. The terms literacy and numeracy are not to be interpreted in a broad sense, but in a restricted one as in reading and problem solving in the context of mathematics.

The measure of success component provided the practical implications of the goals as it specified the subjects and performances: two students almost ready to pass the level are selected
in October and targeted to pass the level by February. The fact that the goal(s) and performance are mentioned first is a clear indication of the use at least at conceptual level of Tyler’s rationale, here the objective precedes the reality and strategies are implemented to achieve those goals. The school plan regulated very practical details of how the goals are to be achieved as to what strategies were to be used, monitored, and to what degree success is considered. The teacher conformed to this improvement plan and chose two students who were not performing at the desired level and focused her efforts towards them. The initial assessment and progress were recorded and presented to the principal (Figure 81).

Figure 80. Children’s evaluation as required by the school improvement plan (SIP).
The school board, as part of the system, was also assessing the students through a Phonological Awareness Screening program, which consisted of assessing each child’s phonological skills and knowledge. The summary that was provided to me by the teacher consisted of bar graphs which compared the class evaluation results with the system results on the following categories: rhyme recognition, rhyme production, sound blending, identification of beginning sound, identification of ending sound, identification of middle sound, segmentation, and deletion. The class and system results were represented by bars next to each other for easier comparison. The bars/results were colour coded as follows: red – below, yellow – emerging, and green – have skill. According to the summary, the observed class was labeled as emerging or have skill in all categories. The results of this evaluation were received before I concluded the observation, but provide indirect information with regards to the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher’s reading program.

The second document of phonological awareness screening consisted in a report which summarized individual screening results of the children in a table. The children were evaluated using the same categories: rhyme recognition, rhyme production, sound blending, identification of beginning sound, identification of ending sound, identification of middle sound, segmentation, and deletion. Each category had a score from 0 to 3, except for deletion which had a score from 0 to 12. The scores of each category were added up and the sum represented the total score of the child with a maximum score of 33. Most of the observed children had overall scores between 21 and 29. Attached to the report was a note stating: “Your kids are developing some nice PA [phonological awareness] skills. I would recommend further opportunities to play with sound segmenting and blending”. These assessments of the children define them in terms of out-of-the context skills and represent the standardization of the child where a normal child is defined in terms of recognition of rhymes, for example. They also represent an indirect evaluation of the teacher as the informal note provides advice. These recommendations by the language expert has implications for children from the way they may be perceived by the teacher as what is he or she missing to and further social interactions as well as the way parents will perceive and construct their child’s identity. The classroom teacher is also tacitly ranked by this report.
5.8 Parents

Parents had a satellite role as the communication was done through the I Can Read booklet in reading. Every time a book was read the parent(s) had to complete the log and the teacher would reward the children with a sticker. This represented another way to extend schooling beyond the school board property.

The second mode of communicating with parents was through notes sent home, which involved the academic task that children were learning. For example, in the context of data management and sorting, which took place before Halloween, a note was sent home outlining possible sorting activities with Halloween treats. This was another way to reinforce and extend expectations (this time related to data management) into the home.
The third mode of communication was through monthly newsletters as the one for November 2012. The text of the letter was provided by the teacher. The newsletter provided insights into activities of the month and advice, which reflected the theme, and in this particular case health and safety.

The communication with parents was a one-way street most of the time and consisted of informative notes and suggested activities with children. The academic curricular requirements extended beyond the time of the classroom into home time. Therefore, the main role of the parents was to help children learn reading, and home time, slowly but surely, became homework time in reading and mathematics.
The next chapter examines the discourses of creativity of the teacher, the early childhood educator, the principal, the parent or guardians and the children, and the role they played in the operational curriculum in the context of interviews by analysing the transcribed text through the lens of Dillon’s (2009) modified questions of curriculum.
Chapter 6

6 Main Actors of the Operational Curriculum: The Interviews

This chapter looks at the discourses of creativity of the main actors of the kindergarten curriculum: the teacher, the early childhood educator, the principal, the parent or guardians and the children, and the role they played in the operational curriculum. Actors’ perspectives on creativity provides another reference point for the triangulation of findings and acknowledge the complexity of the educational system as a social net based on power relationships. For example, the teacher’s notion of creativity can influence the pedagogical and ethical approach when interacting with children. The early childhood creativity mythic approach of creativity (Sawyer et al., 2003; Eisner, 1974) of a teacher has implications in the way art is taught in the program. One of the myths as postulated by Eisner (1974) stated as follows: “Children develop best in art if left to their own resources, provided they have plenty of art materials and support from the teacher” (p. 89). If the teacher holds this belief, then this particular view is going to trickle down in the way art is taught in kindergarten and the teacher will act “as a fountain of emotional support and a dispenser of art materials” (Eisner, 1974, p. 91). Although this is a valid starting point of the child’s art education, providing conditions for self-expression in art is not enough, according to Eisner (1974):

Now it should be clear, especially to those who have worked long and hard on the problems encountered in painting, sculpture, graphics, and the like, that the skills needed for artistic expression are not acquired simply by getting older. Artistic development is not an automatic consequence of maturation. On the contrary, many of the skills art teachers and artists possess were taught by people more competent at the time; many of the skills were acquired through self-instruction-by ruining some expensive sheets of water colour paper, by having a clay sculpture crack in the kiln, by seeing a pot collapse on the wheel. It was from these kinds of experiences, as well as from experiences gained by seeing competent and inspired work, that learning occurred. Why should it be assumed that children need so much less?

I must confess that I am always puzzled by the insistence of so many nursery and infant school teachers that children need to use upright easels to be able to express themselves
in art. Those easels are generally set up at an 80° angle, a sheet of newsprint is clipped on at the top, thin tempera paint is provided, and then the children are provided with camel hair brushes which usually have little resiliency. No experienced painter would consider working under such a handicap; but a five-year-old, it seems, must cope with running paint, on a sheet of paper not intended for paint in the first place, using brushes that cannot be managed or controlled, all in the name of “free expression.” The point here is that the ability to use visual form as a vehicle for expression is in large measure a learned ability and that the teacher has a much more complex task than simply providing materials and encouragement. Positive teaching does not have to be insensitive or mechanical. Without positive teaching, students, I fear, will continue to come out of the schools with a conviction that develops at about age nine or ten, the conviction that they neither have ability in, nor can gain a keen sense of satisfaction from, the visual arts. (p. 91)

Based on the premise that a particular view of creativity can influence the pedagogical and ethical approach when interacting with children, I used semi-structured interviews to gain insight with regards to the social determinants, ideologies, and effects of the discourse of creativity at play. All interviews were conducted during participant observation on school grounds. All interviewees, or their legal guardians, in the case of children, signed the Letter of Information and Consent (see Appendix A-B).

Two categories of actors were interviewed: children and adults. In the case of the students the process unfolded as follows: Prior to the participant observations the teachers and early childhood educators contacted the parents, described the purpose of the study, and invited their children’s participation in the study, which included an interview. After I received the written consent of the parents, I interviewed five students. At the beginning of the first day of participant observation, the teacher introduced me to the children as a fellow teacher. During the first and the second week of observation, the teacher and ECE encouraged students to interact with me. The interviews with children occurred during the third and fourth week of participant observation. I usually used a hand puppet or a puppet as a conversation friend or, depending on the situation and child, I engaged with him or her in various activities, such as drawing. Each interview started with the question: “What do you do at school?” Depending on the child’s
willingness to participate, the interview continued by asking details about daily activities or his or her artefacts.

The interview process with adults occurred as follows: Prior and during participant observation, I contacted the teachers and principals and scheduled the interviews. All the interviews took place during participant observation. With regards to parents’ interviews, the teachers or ECE contacted prospective parents, described the purpose of the study, and invited their participation at kindergarten site. Before each interview commenced, the interviewee was asked to review and sign the Letter of Information and Consent form required for participation in this study (see Appendix B). All interviews were conducted face-to-face and were audio recorded in their entirety. In the semi-structured interviews with adults I used the adapted predetermined questions from Dillon’s analysis of the curriculum to guide the conversation. The order of the questions was not fixed and the wording was changed in most instances:

1. Nature of creativity as represented in curricula: What is it?
   a. Essence or substance: What, at bottom, is it?
   b. Properties or character: What is it like?
2. Elements of creativity as represented in curricula: What are the things that compose the particular educational vision of creativity?
   a. Teacher—the role(s) and characteristics of the teacher
   b. Student—the role(s) and characteristics of the student(s)
   c. Subject—what should be taught to whom in which circumstance for creativity to occur?
   d. Milieu: time/timing and place, circumstance, surrounding conditions, contexts, environments, eras, successively larger circles—classroom, school, community, society—surrounding the concept of creativity
   e. Aim: educational purposes, goals, objectives, aspirations, intents, ends in view
   f. Activity - How should a student act? How should a teacher act? How should teacher and student interact? How should teacher and parent interact? How should student and parent interact? How should student and student interact?
g. Result: What comes of it? Who learns what? What comes of the interaction of student-teacher, parent, and community? What will the creative student look like? How will the creative person be seen to act, feel, think, and live?

Each interview was transcribed and the texts were analyzed using the same questions.

6.1 The Teacher Interview Analysis

The interview occurred after class on November 22, 2012 and lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes. The classroom teacher had more than 20 years teaching experience at the primary level. She was constantly researching, reflecting, and revising her pedagogical approaches and methodology by using numerous resources to inform her practice. As a mother of three children, she always drew from her experiences as a parent to inform her choices. Her calmness, positive attitude, and willingness to share her experiences were reflected in the length and depth of the interview.

The analysis of the interview was structured on the Dillon’s questions of curriculum and the discussion of each topic is presented below.

6.1.1 Nature of creativity.

Mrs. T. (pseudonym) defined creativity as a higher order of thinking: “The kind of thinking that solves problems. So not so much creating something, but also creating something but not necessarily artwork so it could be structure” that manifests in all disciplines. When providing examples, she drew from her experience as a teacher and illustrated the concepts with examples from the classroom. The idea of creativity as problem solving is more than solving a well-defined task; it is characterized as a process, which involves not only solving the problem but creating it, after the student becomes literate in the medium they choose to work with or the media they are exposed to. It has stages: understanding the materials, emergence of problem, planning, executing, using and reflecting:

Initially they don’t have a plan, initially they just kind of mucking around and they’re getting to understand the materials and interact with the materials but eventually once they understand the materials, then they start making a plan and then they start executing the plan and then they will actually use it to play with it; so in terms of the components I
think would be planning then executing the plan and then interacting with it and then hopefully reflection upon what they’ve done. (Mrs. T.)

Mrs. T. expressed that the creative process did not occur in a social vacuum; it involved learning from one’s peers by copying or mimicking and developing the ideas from that point onwards:

I mean sometimes another child will look at somebody else’s and then they would want to do the same thing and they will in a sense copy but I think that’s the starting point for that child because they don’t have that process that creative process or it’s not well-established or developed I should say so that another child would look at something else and they will also learn from each other in that way and that creative process would begin. (Mrs. T.)

The process of creating something involved bouncing ideas especially through oral language, which helps clarifying the problem and solving it. Creativity had a social component, which was evident in the context of a community of learners:

The oral language it’s so important and I think it even as adults if we, we talk about something then it becomes clearer to us whether it’s a problem or even if it’s something we’re trying to understand more clearly if we speak about it then becomes clearer; so I think the social is really important. That way talking to each other and building may be like a synergy between the children; so that one might say oh let’s do this I’m going to do this and then another will say something else and then there’s the back and forth. Yeah absolutely it’s not in isolation. (Mrs. T.)

This discourse of creativity seems to draw from many theories simultaneously from a Piagetian developmental view of the child, and a Vygotsian perspective where creativity clearly has a social dimension. It also refers to the creative process as a phased one with stages in which literacy and emergence of ideas are intrinsic parts just like in Wallace (1926).

6.1.2 The teacher.
Mrs. T.’s interview suggests that she saw the role of the teacher as to provide opportunities depending on the curricular expectations. It starts with getting to know the children, to envision the ends in view, and to find out how much they are capable of. She asked rhetorically, a very important question, which indirectly addressed the challenges of universal design (UD), which remained unanswered or answered vaguely by reiterating the idea of a teacher as providers of opportunities.

I think our role is certainly to provide a lot of opportunities to materials and the difficult thing is to know where well is not difficult it just takes time to know where children are and to know where to take them and what they’re capable of maybe. So I think our role would be to again not to say okay we’re all going to… And they’re all at such different stages so how do you teach one thing, one concept to the whole class when they’re all at different stages? So I think our role is to be very broad and to provide as many opportunities for children as possible depending on what the expectation is so. (Mrs. T.)

The role of the teacher, however, for Mrs. T., goes beyond providing opportunities. It was about diagnostic assessment, and pedagogical approaches such as challenging and open-ended inquiry to “move them on,” and to “thinking differently.” The different thinking combined with open-ended inquiry suggests the idea of divergent thinking as postulated by Torrance (1974). Mrs. T said,

I think that is our role, as much as we can to see where the child is and then move them on; so maybe challenging them a little, or ask them questions that are opened ended questions so maybe that they start thinking a little differently.

To summarize, Mrs. T. defined the teacher’s role as to provide opportunities in terms of physical resources as well as opportunities and situations where children are challenged appropriately, according to their stage of development in order to meet the expectations. Meeting the curricular expectations is a very challenging task when applied into practice as the rhetorical question of teaching one concept to individual children that are at different stages of development. Imbedded in Mrs. T.’s responses, was the sense of the pressure of imposed expectations on children. The obligatory natures of such pedagogical aims are suggested through the modal have
to. The imposed measuring or testing reading and writing creates a hierarchy of priorities and urgencies when teachers plan, teach, and assess forcing them to use a Tylerian teaching-to-the-task-based approach as teachers try to “to drill them with the letters or get them over doing the reading,” (Mrs. T.) leaving no time or resources for literacy of other modes. The consequences of this induced approach, as Mrs. T’s interview suggests, can stifle the children and create resistance and aversion towards learning and opens the doors of pathologizing the children:

That’s where I think you have to be careful in early years, literacy is important absolutely, but if we’re only measuring...if that’s all we’re measuring their reading and their writing and we’re not looking at all those important things...then...and if that’s where our focus is, then we’re not allowing them to be creative and to express themselves through... in other areas or through other media, I guess. So, then we’re stifling them...so especially the child that’s not strong in literacy but then we say ok we really have to get them reading we really have to get those letters so we spend all this time trying to drill them with the letters or get them over doing the reading when really we should be letting them ... think. So that’s ...and I just think we need to be really careful about that in early years. That’s not just to say we shouldn’t be doing the literacy, you know, I don’t mean that but we really need that balance and even I would suggest for early years more to the side of letting them play and create. (Mrs. T.)

The same quote highlights the nonlinearity of a child’s development when it comes to multimodal expression. The unbalanced subject approach, which emphasizes rote learning and drilling when children are not measuring up to the curricular expectations, can create adversity and resistance on children’s part and tends to overlook the development of higher order thinking such creativity, which manifests in other modes than writing. The teacher was genuinely concerned about such unbalanced learning situations and suggests playing and creating as reading and writing will eventually occur:

So that’s...and I just think we need to be really careful about that in early years. That’s not just to say we shouldn’t be doing the literacy, you know, I don’t mean that but we really need that balance and even I would suggest for early years more to the side of letting them play and create. (Mrs. T.)
The importance of an emotionally safe environment where children feel empowered rather than stifled by teachers’ duty to meet the expectations of the curriculum was exemplified through a real-life story where a child refused to learn to read as anxiety took over when the teacher attempted to do direct teaching of reading. Mrs. T explained:

A little boy a couple of years ago, actually I can show you the picture because it was in my workshop I took it out because of his picture but he had…It was almost an aversion to print and it wasn’t high stress or anything. it was just over doing the shared reading or come on over and read a little book with me and he would just shut right down and so I thought, you know, what I’m not going to ask him I’m just gonna do this because it would just get him so anxious; but in other areas he expressed himself so wonderfully he would have sit and listen to a book like the Lorax and this is one particular year he was in JK and I read the book in parts because it was quite long and he would go home and say: “Oh, I can’t wait to go back tomorrow to find out what’s going to happen.” And he had all these insights into this book and I thought you know if I was so worried about his literacy and that’s where I was going to spend all my time with him because he doesn’t get it that would’ve been really an injustice to his learning because he expressed himself in other ways and maybe he did have a little bit of learning disability, it was too hard to tell, but to me what was more important was he was feeling good about who is he was and was able to express himself.

Such situations raise ethical questions concerning children and their rights: If the experience of learning becomes a traumatic one at such young age, what are the long-term consequences of such actions for students? Why should learning be an experience that is causing anxiety in children? The right to a emotionally safe environment is being infringed upon due to societal expectations and desires that have little in common with the reality of four and five-year-olds.

The importance of multimodal literacy, communication, and the emotionally safe environment was clearly illustrated through the above narrative from Mrs. T., where anxiety took over a child’s ability to function due to over teaching, which is fed by the fear of not meeting the expectations by the end of the kindergarten program. Nevertheless, the teacher noticed the presence of an imbalanced subject approach, which was driven by measurement and achieving
the expectations through testing (e.g., Developmental Reading Assessment [DRA]) at the expense of other modes of communication:

And that’s how...and you know with children too that...ah...some may be ah...in terms of literacy sometimes not strong and then you see their creativity and their thinking and you think OK they’re gonna be ok. Maybe they are not reading at a level that we want or that stuff we’re measuring with the DRA the reading level, but when you see what they can produce ...and not because it’s a product, but what they can do and the thinking involved in other things, you know that the reading will come and the writing will come and maybe that’s not their strong areas, but they’re expressing themselves in other ways...and that’s where I think you have to be careful in early years, literacy is important absolutely, but if we’re only measuring...if that’s all we’re measuring their reading and their writing and we’re not looking at all those important things then...and if that’s where our focus is, then we’re not allowing them to be creative and to express themselves through...in other areas or through other media, I guess. So, then we’re stifling them...so especially the child that’s not strong in literacy but then we say ok we really have to get them reading. We really have to get those letters; so, we spend all this time trying to drill them with the letters or get them over doing the reading when really we should be letting them...think. So that’s...and I just think we need to be really careful about that in early years. That’s not just to say we shouldn’t be doing the literacy, you know, I don’t mean that but we really need that balance and even I would suggest for early years more to the side of letting them play and create. (Mrs. T.)

The testing of children in reading, writing and math creates an urgency to teach towards the test and a list of priorities when it comes to what subjects and subject specific skills and knowledge should be taught. The urgency was expressed by Mrs. T. repeating the modal have to and adverb really in the context of teaching a child who doesn’t read yet: “we really have to get them reading; we really have to get those letters.” This expectation of reading when the child is four or five years old is imposed by the curriculum and when the child is not performing at the required reading level, then drilling happens as a remedial measure to achieve the expectation. This creates a hierarchy of subjects to be taught with print literacy at the top, with more time and
resources invested in teaching it. This situation creates an unbalanced curriculum and the teacher’s recommendation clearly underlines this idea:

I just think we need to be really careful about that in early years. That’s not just to say we shouldn’t be doing the literacy, you know, I don’t mean that but we really need that balance and even I would suggest for early years more to the side of letting them play and create. (Mrs. T.)

6.1.3 Milieu: Environment.

The kindergarten class had 26 students, all with different strengths and challenges that needed to be addressed, including children’s socially inappropriate interactions, which were named behaviours. The physical space was just enough to accommodate 26 students. Another layer of complexity was added when simultaneously distributing children in centres, whole class activities, and one-on-one interaction. Mrs. T. relayed how the size of the classroom in terms of number of students, the diversity of needs of the students, as well as the physical space, had an impact on the quality of the program:

Mrs. T.: We do what we can but it’s not ideal and I think often some of the children certainly need more attention or need more than others and some of them need that one on one not even in terms of behaviour, but in terms of just sitting down with some basic skills. So, what the arts Centre the basic skills of using scissors and using a paintbrush and using glue, all those things that they need to have that as well and some of them do some of them don’t; so we want to be teaching those things; so when we teaching those things, then, you know, are we building on...with the other children during the scaffolding. So is it possible? I don’t know I think it’s…I see are lot of good things happening I see a lot of developments so I’m hopeful that it is happening, but probably not as much as it could be I think with that ratio...

Beatrix: In comparison to last year, last year I understood that you had fewer students

Mrs. T.: Yes, we had 22.
Beatrix: So, there is a four [child] difference here. You feel any difference in the classroom?

Mrs. T.: Yes, four children make a huge difference in which...Just the bodies in the room...ah...and the behaviours. And last year we didn’t have the same behaviours; we have few behaviours this year that demand a lot of attention so I don’t know maybe you have 26 and there’s no behaviours it would be a lot easier.

The physical space and the design of the room were created by the teacher and the ECE, with the teacher taking the leading role as, “together more or less” reveals. The curriculum document requirements with regards to centres were very apparent in the teacher’s comments about the physical environment through the use of modals of necessity must and can in, “there are certain centres you must have” and “you can’t have a kindergarten classroom without a writing centre.” The emphasis on different centres depended on the teacher’s preferences for subjects and values:

I think in different classrooms we emphasize different centres differently depending on the teacher and what the teacher values. So, for me [to me] the building is very important; the arts centre is very important. The sands, the water... the science centre and then of course the writing centre. (Mrs. T.)

The environment was dynamic as the teacher reflected over the practice and purpose of the environment. The numbers of compulsory centres, flow of activities, and students’ access to materials were taken in consideration when designing the room:

So, one of the things is that for things to flow nicely. For children to be able to access materials independently, to have space depending on what’s going on for various activities. So I consider all those things when setting it up and I’m actually, I’m...maybe it’s a smaller room but I mean I still change things around I’m kind of notorious for saying oh wait a minute I don’t like this...like the other day I changed these tables oh something’s wrong with this it’s not working somehow and sometimes you don’t know until children are in the room how it’s going to work but...and I mean there are limitations because the water table which is wonderful to have a water table, but it’s not going anywhere it’s built in.
We have a Smart Board and I think if I had my choice I wouldn’t have right there, I would probably have it over a little more so there’s you know ...we have to have the tables for lunch and we don’t want them on the carpet... they really should be on the floor for cleaning so there’s a lot of limitations but I spend a lot of time thinking about the set-up of the classroom. (Mrs. T.)

The way centres were positioned and emphasized in the activities was according to the teachers’ values, preferences, and flow. Although some centres were built in, the design could change when teachers deemed them necessary, based on their understanding and observations of classroom dynamics:

I guess together more or less. Well there’s certain I guess there are certain centres you must have but I think in different classrooms we emphasize different centres differently depending on the teacher and what the teacher values. So for me to me the building is very important; the arts centre is very important. The sands the water...the science centre and then of course the writing centre. You can’t have a kindergarten classroom without a writing centre. However, I’m starting to rethink that too because I’m thinking well that’s not the only place you write it’s not the only place to write, you write everywhere so maybe we shouldn’t have a writing centre maybe it should be writing everywhere and I think that’s actually was beginning to happen here. So initially we had the writing table but then sometimes that is used for other things and actually this year I moved the…last the year the writing table was over here we had the snack centre by the sink because we felt the important to have this place near the sink for cleaning up and everything but there was just a kind of a disconnect so I thought then I started thinking well when the kids are at the arts centre they could be writing creating their works of art and writing as well so I put the writing table next to the arts centre and I think what’s happened is it has started to kind to blend together and sometimes they move over to the writing table while they’re doing. (Mrs. T.)

In this classroom, the change in the physical environment also came as a response to children and emerged and was expressed interest in certain topics (e.g., the study of bones and that
evolved into a science and health-related interest of the children, who decided that they needed a vet centre). Mrs. T said:

Well I think...that’s that whole emerging curriculum, which is very new to me...I mean I think in some way emergent is what’s going to emerge with certain materials so it comes from them. That’s emergent as well and again what I said before about being aware of what their needs are and what their interests are so things come out...So on a small scale that is emergent but on a bigger scale in terms of I think with the drama centre I was kind of excited about that because I could see it happening so it was my awareness of them which that was a new experience for me in that way. When they started after the bone doctor came in and they were making casts; that was totally spontaneous from their part making casts for their arms at the arts centre; so I said to them: Oh where would you, if you broke your arm where would you go? What would happen? I’d go to the doctor’s, I go to the hospital and I think I said oh would you like to have a doctor’s office or hospital here? And some of them said oh yeah and that was not... I don’t think that was on the carpet with the whole group I think it was but a few of them and I said: OK what can we do? How can we do that? And they said we could turn the house centre into a hospital. And then from there so when all the children were on the carpet, we talked about it. When we talked about it I didn’t expect a vet centre to come up, but somebody there could be a vet centre as well. So we had a doctor’s office, a hospital or a vet centre and...And then we voted and the vet centre won. So that’s how that came up...So that was...For me that was exciting, plus they’ve really used it well, they’ve played in there really nicely. (Mrs. T.)

The teacher contrasted this event with her observations from the previous year when the adults created the hospital centre as part of the cycle of activities, but the children’s response had not been enthusiastic:

Last year we had some students, second year medical students come, they are called Teddy Bear doctors and was a really good program. They had different centres. They came for maybe about an hour and a half and they showed them what it meant to have an x-ray if they broke their arm how you get a cast or you had needed a needle. So they
rotated through the centres and...we thought that’s a good opportunity for them to have a hospital or a doctor’s office, and we did...and it fell flat. They...it lasted for about two days and then nobody went there. And I thought why aren’t they going to the doctor’s office? They usually love that! But for some reason, it just, they just lost interest. But with this it’s coming from them and the interest is being sustained. (Mrs. T.)

Mrs. T. commented that making room for children to be curriculum contributors, by responding to their interests and giving them a voice, was something that had a powerful impact on their learning and creativity. This was because the starting point was different and allowed in the guiding and expanding of the children’s thinking as opposed to imposing a model of thinking and it touches intentionally or not the expectations:

Because, again we’re going back to the child and what the child’s interests and needs are, and so we’re working...we’re at a starting point...we’re starting where they are, as opposed to where we are. So if we want to teach something, that’s what we want for them, it’s not what they want...so then if it’s coming from us...I don’t know how to say this....how can...if it’s coming from us...we are trying to model their way of thinking as opposed to maybe guiding it and expanding it. So, if it’s emergent that’s where they already are so why not take where they are and develop it and use it. And because in anything we do in here really I mean we’re covering all aspects of the expectations, all the expectations, we’re hitting on them. It may not be intentional and I know sometimes we need to do some intentional teaching, but you know, just yesterday when we were talking about the art centre we had geometry came in to it...and you know that just emerged they are thinking mathematically and they are at the art centre and there is so much crossover. In every....you’ve got in science there’s math, when they’re building there’s math, at the art centre there’s math and of course the language is on-going so yes I would say yes. (Mrs. T.)

When asked about the role of school as a community in creativity, the Mrs. T. emphasized the idea that creativity should be promoted. The use of should as a modal of necessity was used to contrast to the present situation. In Mrs. T.’s opinion the school as a community was more concerned with testing in terms of EQAO and phonological awareness.
The emphasis on testing, “is coming from above,” where the preposition above indicates a higher authority in charge of education. The causal relationship is clearly stated and I can infer that most of the resources were dedicated to the tests—as in teaching to the tests:

Oh, in the school! Well it’s…I think it should be promoted the same way it would be as the role of the teacher to embrace creativity. I’m not sure if that’s...Happens because there is, I think it’s more difficult because of the expectations in terms of the EQAO and you know the phonological awareness testing. So this is where what’s coming from above the emphasis on that and not on creativity. (Mrs. T.)

According to the teacher, the reason behind this state of things is the measurement and accountability movement in education:

Because it’s accountability and you can measure it. That’s what I think where there are not you can measure it you have numbers. What then numbers really actually mean to? I think it does tell you something but it’s about looking and it’s about comparing. (Mrs. T.)

The measurement results in comparison, and consequently, competition between children, schools, boards, and countries. It ends up in a race towards “who is the best at” at a global level:

But look at the students from Japan they’re doing this and there’s so skilled at math and science they’re going to be you know leading this thing and the other thing and in Canada we need to be leaders in that field too, we need to have more students be able to do this. Well, how do you know, how do you measure it other than through testing? Maybe there are other ways but that’s the way…that’s just my take on it I don’t know if that’s true. But I mean what comparing one board with another one school with another comparing one board with another comparing one province with another comparing one country with another I think that’s where it all comes from. Universities look at that MacLean there’s universities score top or whatever they’re doing you know what it is it’s about how much money they’ve got research grants and everything. Well that’s great but does that mean they really that much better? (Mrs. T.)

The quote above raises the question with regards to the authenticity of learning and ethics of testing when put in the context of individual learning as they are conducive to a teaching to the
test approach rather than taking in consideration the authentic purpose of teaching, learning and assessment:

I think that no matter what we say we would teach to the test...so we can have results. Even with the phonological awareness that we have, I’m not…Maybe I’m wrong, but I feel…You could get them to rote answer the questions, you can teach them to rhyme but did they really get rhyme? You can teach them to listen for the sounds and I absolutely that’s valuable it’s important that but if the way we are teaching gets it through rote learning then where are they going to go with it? Whereas if they are learning it in an environment where it’s emerging through really good literature which I think what’s happening as well I’m not saying that we teach it that way but just back to it, I think it is easy to teach to the test. (Mrs. T.)

Again, the teachers are under the pressure of testing and getting results, which ends up in a Tylerian approach of education here the task is passing the test. Given that the testing is about literacy of the print mode and mathematics, it follows that these subjects are prioritized in the classroom in terms of time and resources. However, the curriculum’s emphasis on inquiry as a pedagogical method related to creativity, changes the situation, but it is taking time to implement, as Mrs. T. said, “again I have to say it is changing because now we’re getting into the inquiry and that is at all levels but that’s taking time to change. But what’s the role? I think it should.”

Creativity, at the school level, was presented as manifesting through artistic creativity through school-wide events, such as dance festivals, but that depended on the administration and their views, where the administration is a metonymy for the administrative apparatus at local level:

Schools should be embracing creativity as…At all levels and there are things and again this be leaning towards maybe in terms of creativity towards the arts but there are opportunities dance festivals that the board...has a dance festival every year we I have been able to take the children but of course it’s up to individuals too but some schools would be promoting it more depending on the administration too what their philosophy is and what their beliefs are. But I think, yeah, the role of the school would be to promote
because again I think it’s higher-level thinking and that’s what we want we want the children to be thinkers. (Mrs. T.)

The aim of teaching creativity was defined by Mrs. T. in terms of long-terms goals and immediate ones. The closer to the present aims referred to the ability to solve everyday problems, while long-term aims refer to individual success and responsible citizenship. The component of the responsible citizenship is closely related to critical thinking and fundamental values of the human beings:

Mrs. T.: Well, gee a lot of reasons we want the children to go out in the world and to be able to problem solve just everyday problems and that’s…You have to be creative thinker who solves problems. We want children to be successful in terms of later on in their own life whatever their career choices is or what they choose to do and it’s…it’s, again, it’s thinking you want to be able to think critically because that’s…Then again I think it’s just higher-level thinking so it’s thinking critically creative? I don’t know if you call it creative but it’s thinking out of the box thinking even who are you gonna we vote for? Are you just going to listen to everything they say? How do you know who to vote for? What do you really believe? I mean…To answers all those questions philosophical questions I think that’s really important for our human race for people to be thinkers. So you know children are our future and it’s not just them it’s about our society: What kind of citizens do we want? We want them to think about what they’re doing and why are they doing what are they doing. In terms of being all those things without getting into religion, I do not know if it’s religion but values and morals and you know why do we treat each other the way we do …there is a religious base for it, but we do not teach it from that point of view that reference point here we can’t, but there’s still reasons that we…you know that we do not bully that and...

Beatrix: Yeah...fundamental values

Mrs. T.: Values, absolutely yeah, I think yeah!

6.1.4 Parents.
The roles of the parents regarding children’s creativity, for Mrs. T., refer to parents’ education and critical thinking, which concern creating the home environment and monitoring children’s activities as well as making informed choices. The factors of most concern for Mrs. T. were the type of toys, electronic and video games the children were exposed to as well as the time dedicated to playing with these, as the consequences were, in Mrs. T.’s opinion, the modification of the child’s brain:

I think parents really need to think about their environment as well just like the classroom…what kind of toys they allow in their home, what kinds of electronic games that their children are exposed, to how much time to spend in front of an electronic game or TV. I think is crucial and I don’t think that we realize and I’m sure the researchers are realizing, they’ve done the studies as a society I think we realize how we’re changing the brains of the youth by exposing them to all of these different things; so I think the role of the parent is to educate themselves and to be aware of what’s out there and what’s coming in to the home and to be a parent. I often hear parents say well you know he wanted to do this. Oh well you are a parent to be a parent and to make those choices so just likewise of what we are saying before about what do we want and what’s our goal maybe we want these children to grow up to be... they are going to be parents so they’re going to have to make choices for their children to be really thinking about how everything affects our thinking and then, you know, there’s consequences to everything we do, which is kind of tough because it’s scary! (Mrs. T.)

The neurological discourse is present in the teacher’s discourse through mentioning the word brain and its damage when excessively exposed to video gaming or other electronic media. However, Mrs. T. also expressed that parents have to learn how to take risks, to deal with uncomfortable situations, and areas of knowledge in order to model risk taking and implicitly creativity:

But parents have to feel secure with themselves and parents have to feel like they could take risks and I think in terms of parenting whether it’s...I guess even in creativity if they’re not feeling secure how can they foster it in their own children? Maybe a parent might recognize that and say: okay I’m gonna really take these risks. It’s kind of like the
teachers that they say they have trouble teaching math because they hated math when they were in school so when they’re teaching it is like they are not comfortable teaching it. It’s the same thing they’re going to pass that on to the children. So in terms of the relationship, I don’t know parents have to just jump in and do it (laughing) just go for it and have fun. (Mrs. T.)

6.1.5 Activity.

When speaking about the teacher–student relationship, conducive to creativity, the teacher mentioned three main characteristics: trust, a high level of comfort where children can express themselves, and mutual respect. The teacher, on the one side sets the day and the children take it over, but act within the frame of the curriculum as limits. There is a social hierarchy where children understand that the person in charge is the teacher:

The social relationship…Well I suppose in here it is very social, isn’t it? With the child and the teacher…I think there should be trust…very important. I think, I guess as in any relationship a level of comfort, a high level of comfort so that the child feels that they can express themselves in that relationship. I feel like I’m getting into role again of the teacher, but yeah I guess I’m trying to, when you said social, and trying to separate…okay…social from the teacher is the teacher and the teacher sets the day really, but we’re handing it over to the children; but in the background there is this framework that the teacher has set so within that there is the social so…okay so yeah, the relationship is I think mostly of trust and respect too; so I think there is a hierarchy that the child knows that you are the teacher, you are the adult there and there is a hierarchy and recognizes that but on…at the same time there should be an absolutely mutual respect for the child and the teacher expects respect from the child and we need to respect the child so I don’t know if that’s assertive if that answers the questions. (Mrs. T.)

The trust relationship is paramount to creativity, because risk-taking as part of creativity needs to be fostered through choice and careful, considerate criticism:

Mrs. T.: Risk-taking?

Beatrix: Yes, probably risk-taking is a better word.
Mrs. T.: Okay I think that’s what really we have to try and foster because you see a lot of the children that are not risk takers and that it’s something like wow. Like (student’s name) would be one, she doesn’t like to take risks. I think…Maybe that’s the word…she is afraid, I don’t know what’s she’s afraid of but if you ask your question is like...

Beatrix: I’ve also noticed that she kind of freezes!!

Mrs. T.: Yes.

Beatrix: So in a way her facial expression…because there’s nothing else to read her

Mrs. T.: You are right.

Teacher: That’s why probably I related it to fear, it shows fear of an adult, fear of something…and I was wondering if…What is going on there?

Mrs. T.: And I…With children that are like that…again back to you want them to trust you, you want them to be comfortable here on the other hand there’s still rules and most children understand that these are the rules and sometimes we, you know, we are not perfect so we may mistakes and that’s okay, nobody’s perfect, but some children will not, yeah, will cross the line, or there are so afraid to so yeah so the word fear…risk taking...

If we can to foster that. I don’t know I think in this environment here we do try to foster that because there’s so much choice and there is really acceptance there is so much acceptance of what they do. And I know we try to move them forward but I don’t think there’s never criticism unless there’s something you know okay this was really not a good thing to do because… yeah it’s an important thing.

In the teacher’s opinion, the result of teaching creativity should be a creative person who is able to create and solve problems in everyday life contexts. The creative person draws on the expert skills, knowledge, and past experiences to create something. The process is not confined to arts or a specific discipline, but it can manifest in any context from arts to cooking. The personal creative process is defined in terms of an individualistic pragmatic approach, where the person has a vaguely defined task, which becomes clearer in the process of doing by analyzing the purpose, conditions, and resources and synthesizing them to solve the problem. The teacher
illustrated this by providing very concrete examples from her past and present experiences from making a piece of art as a memento of a dear person or improvising a dinner:

Oh, yeah, and I was saying that initially I would’ve thought about the arts but I don’t think that anymore again is just…One of my daughters, well she got her degree in visual arts and you know she’s not really creative in…I mean she does some artwork but that’s not really where her…It’s not in producing things…oh, my gosh, you ask her to do something like…well, ok, as an example when my dad died we went to Montréal was she in high school? And you know, it’s last minute you bring the pictures so we said: daughter’s name here is the pictures, do something with it. So she took the pictures, she got them on and she arranged them like in 10 minutes. For me, it would’ve been how I’m going to put this…what I’m going to do with it so to me that was creative thinking…It was…well, she did create something, she created a poster. So she was able to take something, and do something with it and there was a goal it wasn’t just creating something to look pretty or beautiful or artistic or whatever. There was a purpose to it and she was able to do that so again a creative person is somebody who can, I mean it could be in anything they could be in the kitchen cooking but they don’t have a recipe. What’s in the fridge tonight? Okay I got this, I’ve got this, I’ve got this, but I don’t have a recipe. What am I going to make? Okay I’m going to take these things and I’m going to do something with it. I don’t know if that’s… Again it’s about being able to think about things in a certain way without saying okay this is what you’ve got to do or I need I need a booklet to do it I can’t think on my own and solve problems… That’s a creative person I think. (Mrs. T.)

This vision of the result of creativity belongs to an I-paradigm of creativity, where the individual is quickly solving a difficult problem in an unexpected way with outstanding results when compared to others. The competitive discourse of neoliberalism is present here in the comparison to others and glorification of finding immediate, effective solutions, which have never been thought of or done before.
6.2 The Early Childhood Educator Interview Analysis

Mrs. ECE’s (pseudonym) focal areas of responsibility in the classroom included the art projects, baking, toileting the children, cleaning up accidents, and displaying children’s work. She had twenty-four years early childhood education experience, three in the Full-Day Kindergarten. The interview took place in the classroom after school on November 20, 2012.

6.2.1 Nature of creativity.

When I asked about the nature of creativity, Mrs. ECE stated that creativity was “a way of thinking,” as “thinking outside of the normal way of thinking,” which could manifest in all aspects of life. She linked creativity with imagination, expression, and the freedom to express thinking. According to Mrs. ECE, creativity was a cognitive process that had an important social aspect as underlined by the condition of freedom of expression as the wrong answers were not laughed at, nor would they hurt the child’s feelings. This freedom of expression could be granted in a social context that allowed its existence by creating a safe, affective environment where fear of making mistakes was short-circuited by lack of evaluation. This fact roots this vision in the We-paradigm of creativity. When I inquired about creativity within the curriculum, Mrs. ECE stated that the play-based curriculum was inspiring creativity by allowing children to explore the centres and beyond. She explained that the program was flexible and this flexibility allowed children to diverge from the adult conceived agenda to their own agenda. This is a different reading of the curriculum where children are allowed to be curriculum makers, by listening to and respecting their choices, and following their lead.

Tracing the origins of Mrs. ECE’s vision of creativity proved to be difficult when asked to refer to a particular text or theory. Instead she clearly referred to her extensive experience as a reliable source:

I mean I’ve read lots of things, I’ve taken lots of courses, you know, I’ve been in this field for twenty-three, four years, you know, that kind of thing, so I’ve seen it and I’ve seen that, you know, children that are able to feel comfortable, expressing their creativity, being able to feel that, you know, that things are not always right or wrong. There’s lots of things that are just are and that can be fine that I feel that they grow...they grow very
uh what’s the word I’m trying to think of…they feel more confident about themselves, they feel that they can take on new things and challenges. (Mrs. ECE)

6.2.2 The teacher: ECE.

The role of the ECE was “to go with it,” to “let them,” and “to observe, to facilitate creativity.” The use of the phrasal verb to go with it suggests agreeing with the idea of relocating the control of activities to children. The same idea of relocating the control transpired in the choice of the verb let and indirect object which receives the action of let them where them stands for children. The meaning of let is to allow it to happen:

If uh if uh…they have other thoughts than where you thought things were gonna happen, and what things were gonna happen, then you have to go with what…what they are thinking, where they’re at, see where they’re at and uh..uh…continue…continue…put questions…ask them you know ask them things about what they’re doing…that kind of thing. I think that we’re there just to a…I feel like they are the leaders and we have to be following their lead and bringing and bringing in materials and ideas and things that can build on what they are doing. (Mrs. ECE)

The ECEs roles as observer and facilitator, as provider of freedom of initiative, contours a portrait of an ECE that is not imposing expectations on children, but rather allows the existence of children’s voices in the curriculum making it relevant to children’s present. However, when it comes to the particular roles of teacher and ECE there seems to be a schism anchored in different fundamental views of children and specific roles. The teachers’ role is about taking the lead when dealing with school:

I think that a lot of…a lot of time (teacher’s name) takes the lead role in it and she is a lot more familiar with the school policy, the school particulars, with testing that has to be done, the report cards and those kinds of things so I think she is always taking the lead in that. (Mrs. ECE)

The choice of word school denotes the institutionalization of learning where kindergarten is no longer kindergarten, but school. The teacher’s role is within the school as an institution as
denoted by the words chose to describe her activity: policy, particulars, testing, and report cards. It is about the administrative, managerial side of the program which here is school.

The same idea is revealed in the context of the ECE’s opinion about how their understanding of children plays in the classroom:

But I think that but I feel that mine is more of a play-based program that I came from…and uh…being very…uh…different ideas from the younger, the infancy up where hers is probably more of, you know, kindergarten as a starting point, where I’ve always worked in an atmosphere where we’ve had infants up to kindergarten and then didn’t see the rest of it so I think it’s coming at it from two different angles and I don’t know. (Mrs. ECE)

The program is viewed at a meeting point between two different views of the child’s timeline: kindergarten as the starting point of school and end of daycare closer to infancy. The ECE communicated that her area was more play-based, because she saw children as children and not as preschoolers. These discourses seem to collide in the classroom when it comes to roles and the ways they are set up by the Ministry through the FDK document and by the board through delivery of the program. According to Mrs. ECE’s statements, although the teachers and ECEs are equal partners, there was no built-in time in the schedule for collaborative planning. Teachers have planning time, but the ECEs were not part of it, and this was one of the biggest barriers towards building a real co-teaching team:

Unfortunately, the way this program is set up didn’t give us a lot of planning together at all, which I think is our biggest issue I would say because when we don’t have the time that we can both sit down and say so where is this heading, here you know what ideas do you have we have to do a lot of it like you know first thing in the morning at the end of the day passing you know in passing throughout the day that kind of thing. I think that that is one of the biggest barriers to this program would be that collaborative planning time for the two of us that was you know for any of it, any time would be very beneficial specifically for me because the teachers have it, they have planning time, they have prep time and we weren’t given any. We are hoping that you know in the future that increases that you know, not increases that that starts to happen. (Mrs. ECE)
The roles of the ECEs and teachers was unclear with the exception of the teachers’ responsibility to sign the report cards and lead the parent teacher conference:

Like, the board has never given us a very clear definition of what our roles are…the small job description that we have is very vague and if someone says that basically our roles are the same, the only difference is that the teachers have to sign the report cards and have to be present at parent teacher interviews or have to lead parent–teachers interviews, we are supposed to be present and involved. (Mrs. ECE)

The lack of collaborative planning time was affecting the program and, implicitly, creativity as it could provide time to “work out any…struggles” and to focus on children who might have issues and simply plan “time to discuss what’s happening, what we’d like to see what our plans are” (Mrs. ECE).

6.2.3 Students.

Mrs. ECE indirectly corrected me when I asked about the students by rephrasing students as children. All children were seen as capable of creativity and creativity was a matter of confidence: “I think all children have creativity. I think some…it has…they feel more confident in it maybe…they feel more confident to freely being able to express that. So, I think children that are…confident” (Mrs. ECE). This highlights the concept of a democratic view of creativity and anchors it in an I-paradigm of creativity. Nevertheless, the idea of confidence implies a social evaluative component. This was further exemplified by Mrs. ECE:

I think that like say if I put my hand up to answer some things and it’s not right, that that’s OK. Or that I try to build something that I have envisioned in my head and I can express it…and not have my feelings get hurt because it’s not what someone else might think it should be.

Hence, confidence and implicitly creativity manifested in a safe affective environment where right or wrong is suspended and different was allowed to exist:

Feeling like, you know, oh I might get laughed at, you know, I don’t have the right answer, that putting up your hand or asking questions or coming over to say you know
I’m trying to build something and I’m looking for this and bringing out whatever it might be…just to say OK, what else can I help you with…I think we’re there just to help them just to help them bring that out.

6.2.4 Subject.

The safe environment appears as a subject that is relevant in personal and emotional development. The subjects to be taught when talking about creativity are about learning in an emotionally safe environment where the mistakes are not envisioned as wrong answers, but rather as a normal part of learning:

Feeling like yeah, oh I’m wrong…feeling like, you know, oh I might get laughed at, you know, I don’t have the right answer, that putting up your hand or asking questions or coming over to say you know I’m trying to build something and I’m looking for this, and bringing out whatever it might be…just to say OK, what else can I help you with…I think we’re there just to help them just to help them bring that out. (Mrs. ECE)

The absence of the academic subjects when talking about what was necessary to learn in order to become creative, is visible. The ECE referred to a method of learning to be creative through trial and error where error is necessary and paramount to the creative process. The error then should not be considered as a lack of knowledge and skills but an integral part of the learning process.

6.2.5 Milieu.

The student–teacher relationship, as stated by Mrs. ECE, was a parental one and was marked by empathy and care. Empathy manifested in the form of reflections by walking in students’ and parents’ shoes in the context of creating safe social environments by using the first person pronoun to designate an imagined situation where she is a child in the classroom:

I think that like say if I put my hand up to answer some things and it’s not right, that that’s OK. Or that I try to build something that I have envisioned in my head and I can express it…and not have my feelings get hurt because it’s not what someone else might think it should be. And I think that in those kinds of environments children feel safe to express their creativity. (Mrs. ECE)
The parental relationship that she built with the students was present in the way she reflected over the way the relationship was approached. This empathetic act is present in the compound interrogative sentence with a conditional as subordinate, which indicates an imaginary present situation:

If that was my child, what would I want them to feel? And what would I want them to be able to feel that they can express, they can...they can try new things, they can you know...they can ask questions and I think that being a parent has helped me in a great deal with that. (Mrs. ECE)

Caring manifests in the way the educator forms the affective bond with children, which encourages communication within the classroom whether with teacher or peers. The act of caring manifested in the choice of adjectives, which Mrs. ECE described in the effect of the relationship on children: comfortable and confident.

I think that when you form a bond with the children that are in your classroom I think that it helps them feel more comfortable about...about being able to uh...express themselves, feeling confident that you know they can tell you, they can talk to you and feeling that they will be able, they will be heard, and uh...that they are comfortable with you in the classroom as well as their friends and peers and, you know, I think in kindergarten it’s a real learning curve of...of like lots of different people coming from lots of different backgrounds and they have to see where they fit in and how all these...these social groups get together, that kind of thing. (Mrs. ECE)

The excerpt above also speaks about the student–student relationships. In Mrs. ECE opinion these relationships were about learning to socialize and being comfortable in a highly diverse group. The ideal relationships between students was envisioned as fitting in and getting together while feeling confident and comfortable in the group: “They have to see where they fit in” suggests a pre-existing social structure, which does not accommodate students, but rather requires students’ adaptation to it.

The teacher–ECE relationship was characterized as, “all it’s one of the many relationships you get put in, where you spend all day with each other and try to work it out”
(Mrs. ECE). This relationship was marked by a confusion of responsibilities, as the superlative of the adjective *vague*, which Mrs. ECE used to describe the job description highlights:

> The small job description that we have is very vague and if someone says that basically our roles are the same, the only difference is that the teachers have to sign the report cards and have to be present at parent teacher interviews or have to lead parent–teachers interviews, we are supposed to be present and involved. Uh…other than that, but the rest is just very vague…it’s very, you know…so…yeah it works differently in every classroom by the sounds of it.

The confusion seems to be generated by what is said and what is done with regards to the ECEs responsibilities. While the job description, according to Mrs. ECE, is not very different from the teacher’s with the exception of the administrative tasks, such as signing the report cards and leading the parent teacher conference, in practice the lack of allocated or built-in collaborative planning time created a hiatus during the day between the teacher and the ECE. The confusion was furthered by the board’s silence with regards to the matter: “Like the board has never given us a very clear definition of what our roles are” (Mrs. ECE). The legitimacy of this issue is further sustained by the ECE union’s efforts to make collaborative planning part of the bargaining process:

> First, the board is very aware that ECE’s as a whole are looking to get some planning time; our union is trying to work that into a contract given the status right now on contracts and negotiating and that kind of stuff. We are not very hopeful that this time around we’re going to get much we’re still hoping but we’ll see. So, we are trying to …our contract get some collaborative planning time…and yes we have talked to a…many people in the board. (Mrs. ECE)

The immediate school community played an important role in children’s creativity as an audience and as feeling part of a bigger community when children were taking part of assemblies. The intergenerational programs, such as reading buddies, where older children are visiting kindergarten were also mentioned, but the benefits of such interactions were not talked about. It was rather the hassle that the teachers and ECEs go through in order to set up the programs, such as timing the schedules that are highlighted:
And I think there’s lots of classrooms that do it, that some of the older classrooms that come in to the younger ones and pair them up. I think there’s whole bunch of things that I think come to play with that. One, how many teachers are that want to do that on either end and fitting it in, times, times like your timetable so, you know, someone might have something available that they’d like to do on Tuesday morning but we already have Gym and phys. ed. or something like that…so it’s something like your schedule smash together and that kind of stuff I think, you know, sometimes having too many things going on can distract from other things that are happening in our classroom too, so you have to kind of have a balance of how many things outside of our classroom do we want going on, do we want to be involved in because I think most of the creativity is happening within our classroom and so, you know. (Mrs. ECE)

The larger outside school community played an important role in children’s creativity through the opportunities of learning through extracurricular activities that may have been available. However, providing the opportunities was related to being able to afford them—to the socio-economic status of the parents. In this sense, the community might expose children to other areas of knowledge that could be offered or not in the classroom and have the potential to cultivate talents. These opportunities depended not only on the socio-economic status of the parent(s), but also on the geographical position of the community as rural versus urban.

The school as a community also has a role in creativity, as in having an audience for creativity and sharing it whether is an activity or an object. However, sharing the experiences can be difficult and depend on various factors from scheduling to the openness of the teachers. One important sharing event, mentioned by Mrs. ECE, was the assembly as a community event:

It happens in lots of classrooms and it happens with stuff that we go down to the gym for assemblies…we see the older kids involved in many different things you now the older kids involved and many different things and I think the children from early on can see what’s happening and you know what’s to come kind of thing so.

6.2.6 Parents.

The student–parent relationship was, according to Mrs. ECE, the most important in a children’s life and creativity, and it started from birth. The parents’ role was to let “children have a say,
hearing what they have to say making sure that they are comfortable, empowered and feeling that they have some control over things.” (Mrs. ECE). Empowering children might represent a challenge for parents, especially if they inherited different cultural views regarding childhood. As such, parents need to reflect over and re-evaluate practices:

I think parents need to sometimes step back and think…and think is this what I want from my child? Is this how I want them to grow up? Or do I want? How do I want them to feel about themselves? And I mean lots of people come from various backgrounds and I think you have to re-evaluate some of the things that maybe you were told and you felt and re-evaluate how that changed you, how that made you…and whether that as a positive thing or a negative thing and constantly, my children are older, so constantly be re-evaluating, thinking about, you know, like: how do I want them to grow up? What do I want? And instill that in them and constantly keep communication open. (Mrs. ECE)

However, Mrs. ECE also noticed the parents’ desire to have children conform to norms, or what they imagined as appropriate behaviour in the school and in the context of being a creative person in general versus a creative person at school:

Mrs. ECE: I think that sometimes people want their children to be quiet and uh…listen and not speak out and those kind of things at school because that’s maybe where they see us that the proper energy that the teacher’s telling you and you know, you go, you are maybe expected to be more of the norm and not about oh but I’m thinking this way and I’m thinking in a different direction and I think sometimes parents will prefer that their child is kind of you know.

B: Normal?

Mrs. ECE: I don’t know. Yeah maybe…they don’t waver at any way…they never…they never… uh they do everything in the right way or what people think it’s the right way. They never waver from that.

The puritan discourse of childhood social norms surrounding what is appropriate behaviour are in contradiction with creativity in general, where speaking out seems to be a sin against the system and might cause trouble. Hence there seems to be an adaptability discourse of the creative
person who needs to adjust his or her behaviour according to the perceived norms of social environment they are in. The school is one where expressing oneself freely is frowned upon by parents. Keeping communication open with children no matter the age as well as constant re-evaluation of parenting practices, and empathy are the ingredients of fostering creativity in children.

6.2.7 Aim.

Mrs. ECE envisioned the aims of the curriculum and, implicitly, of creativity as embedded in the curriculum as, “letting the children...have more uh...more decision making, more ownership of what’s happening in the classroom from kindergarten on and continuing that through the... the years in school and letting...uh, letting them be able to express themselves” (Mrs. ECE). Again, the presence of the verb let as in allow with the indirect object receiving the action the children indicates a power relationship between the adults and children. Children are empowered here by the adults through the choice of letting. There is no question that children are able of decision making or ownership or the ability to express and communicate.

The educational aims of teaching creativity were presented through the lens of social and personal identity where the children were allowed to be curriculum makers as highlighted by the adverbial into letting the children...have more uh...more decision making, more ownership of what’s happening in the classroom. Decision making as well as multimodal self-expression were, according to Mrs. ECE, the aims of teaching creativity, not only in kindergarten but also in the following grades:

I think that moving it along into letting the children...have more uh...more decision making, more ownership of what’s happening in the classroom from kindergarten on and continuing that through the... the years in school and letting...uh, letting them be able to express themselves. And I think that if they start to learn that in kindergarten, that some of those things will continue on into grade one into...and make them feel more confident in being able to express themselves in many, you know, in many different ways. (Mrs. ECE)
These particular characteristics of aims of creativity and, implicitly, the curriculum place the discourse of creativity at the intersection of the We-paradigm of creativity discourse and children’s rights discourse where children are seen as contributors and capable.

6.3 The Principal’s Interview Analysis.

The principal seemed open to discussing issues surrounding the concept of creativity in education. The interview was the only time I had seen him in person; he was never with the children during the time of data collection.

6.3.1 Nature of creativity.

When discussing the concept of creativity in general the principal referred to creativity as self-expression and, “allowing one to imagine and bring that imagination into reality,” as well as, “out of the box thinking.” He stated that “creativity is the mother of invention” and leads to progress. Creativity is a democratic notion meaning that every person has it, and can be fostered through an open-ended approach of education:

I think the way the curriculum is used is different than the way it’s been implied to be used. I find that it is open-ended enough, and if you read very carefully, it does really …the application, the thinking process. They’re pushing more towards that than the knowledge base which allows for more creativity. So you’ve got to take that inquiry based learning and focus on that to a greater extent. (Principal)

Creativity can go as children age, because of two factors: the children’s desire to fit in the box and the traditional teaching of the curriculum, which becomes much more demanding in terms of acquiring knowledge:

But as they progress to the grades you see that change. Again, it’s still that old traditional approach of teaching in a lot of classrooms. It’s spewing out information, they’ve given you everything that you need, do it, learn. (Principal)

The curriculum was not the only factor, according to the principal, which determined teachers’ approach teaching to learning in a traditional way. In the principal’s opinion, teachers’
misunderstanding the aim of EQAO was another reason to employ closed tasks and overt practice, which diminished creativity:

EQAO is a snapshot. I think the way the questions are designed, they allow to show us certain amount of creativity they want to see how a child is thinking, not necessarily is it right or wrong you now the focus in EQAO is to see the process to understand how the child is thinking, but again, I think people are still hung up on the essence of the EQAO and there’s a lot of misunderstanding cause people are driving we’ve got to practice, we’ve got to practice, we’ve got to do it this way, we’ve got to do it this way, we’ve got to show this, we’ve got to show this. And then I think that for the most part diminishes creativity. (Principal)

Competitiveness was another factor, the principal added, which might have a detrimental effect on children’s creativity, as it sets goals and closed tasks, which do not allow “going into the creative realm,” according to the principal. This opinion was a generalization in the context of speaking about competitiveness among schools, which the principal put in the following way:

I know in competitions, at least in sports, you’re focused you are on a strive to get to that certain point, so there are focused structured things that you put in place; so I can see the same things happening between a school and another school if there’s something happening in there so…I think competitiveness may not support creativity in a proper sense. (Principal)

Creativity in children could be supported through inquiry-based learning, as the principal explained:

I think the way the curriculum is used is different than the way it’s been implied to be used. I find that it is open-ended enough, and if you read very carefully, it does really …the application, the thinking process. They’re pushing more towards that than the knowledge base which allows for more creativity. So you’ve got to take that inquiry based learning and focus on that to a greater extent.
He exemplified the inquiry-based learning in the context of Ontario FDK program where the program fostered children’s creativity through open ended inquiry:

> Whereas if you start in FDK, inquiry is the focus, and the kids are learning and are absorbing everything from their environment and are thinking in creative ways and coming up with ideas about why things are the way they are, without being told all this information. (Principal)

However, the increasing requirements for a content-based curriculum as children progress through the grades are holding teachers back due to the amount of knowledge demanded by curricular expectations. The teachers feel compelled to rush through the content or knowledge, first as highlighted by the repetition of the phrase “you need to cover this.” In the principal’s opinion, this approach of the curriculum was not the intended one, because the curriculum was pushing more towards the thinking process and the application. The principal stated:

> And I think that’s holding teachers back. It’s the curriculum, because it says you need to cover this, you need to cover this, you need to cover this. So people are streamlined in focus of getting aspects of the curriculum done, whereas if they looked at it in a more general sense, they can bring in more of that inquiry based learning and creativity and still make sure that they’ve hit everything that it needs to be hit. (Principal)

From these statements it is clear that the principal referred to creativity as an individual trait and process, which was very close in meaning with Torrance’s divergent thinking (Torrance, 1974) which can go or “slump” (Torrance, 1968). Nevertheless, the use of the gerund allowing as a subject complement to the implied creativity is suggests a structure of power in which the actor is entangled and depends on. The verb allow presupposes some kind of permission from a superior or circumstances. In this sense, creativity has a social component as the actor requires permission to be creative—to think out of the box. This fact places creativity somewhere between the I- and We-paradigm, where creativity is present in every person but it is influenced by the social environment. As a trait it can go as children grow, because of three main reasons: The first one is children’s desire to fit in the box, where the box is a metaphor for the social system they live in; in this case the school. This means that the school itself does not promote creativity as a social norm. The second factor is competitiveness, which, in the principal’s
opinion, due to its nature does not allow going into a creative realm. The third actor is the curriculum and its interpretation. The principal expressed that the curriculum was open-ended and gave the possibility of teaching by using an inquiry approach to learning, but the teacher relies on the traditional methods of teaching to deliver the knowledge base necessary to progress the grades.

There seems to be an indirect blaming of teachers for the way creativity is fostered, especially in the years following kindergarten. Whether his argument stands up is a matter of debate, because when the teachers are required to teach using an open-ended inquiry approach, such as in kindergarten, creativity is fostered. Hence, most likely the curriculum and its high academic demands, as well as EQAO as a measurement of not only students’ performance but also teachers’ efficiency, are conducive to more traditional approaches to teaching.

6.3.2 Teachers.

When discussing the topic of teachers and creativity, the principal relayed that the role of the teacher was to facilitate learning as a process rather than directing it as is the case of a “traditional” teacher. The teacher should ask questions, observe, and facilitate students’ thinking and creativity: “They see things in different ways, they can express it, and communicate this, there is no right, there is no wrong, let’s go with it.” (Principal). These traits of the ideal teacher are contrasted with the current, at the time situation, where the traditional paper-to-pencil approach as in reproducing information was the norm:

So when those kids are getting older, there’s more paper to pencil, more structure in the classroom, less freedom to explore. And they’re focus, you know, you’ve got to bring in really rich open-ended tasks. I think that’s where these teachers need to go. Is to bring these tasks that are relevant, make it meaningful because then you’ll get the motivation from your students, but you have to leave them open ended enough that kids can use their creativity to explore things in different ways. (Principal)

By contrasting the ideal and the current state of matters the principal highlighted the major role of the teacher in children’s creativity through their approach to teaching and learning. Ideally, the teacher is a facilitator of learning, who deliberately uses an open-ended inquiry approach, which motivates children to have an active role in learning. These statements highlight the importance
of teachers’ roles as managers in the classroom. The what that needs to be taught is prescribed by the document, while the how when, as well as the social norms of the delivery of the curriculum, are to be managed by the teachers.

6.3.3 Student.

In the principal’s opinion, the creative students were effective communicators who were not inhibited by social norms, but, as he put it, “who stand out because of their creativity” and have “love of learning.” The principal continued:

Creative students are students that can communicate effectively, that don’t feel those inhibitions around them because of the norms that society has, or like kids, you can see some kids, who stand out because of their creativity, because of their ability to just break from the norms of the class, and it’s getting tougher and tougher, because all kids want to fit into one nice box, right? You see it more when they are younger and as they age, it goes; and that’s… a shame because it’s when they got all this background and their knowledge is growing, that they can be more creative in a more practical sense. Right? So, the creative kids…they are able to communicate. You see this…this love of learning or exploration in these kids. (Principal)

As stated in the quote above, students’ creativity can disappear, because of students’ desire to “fit in the box,” as in conforming with the societal norms and in this particular case the norms of the school. Here the principal did not mean the code of conduct, but rather the curriculum:

Because I think the curriculum for one, as kids get older, teachers are more adamant about they need to know this, they need to know this, they need to know this. Again, it’s still that old traditional approach of teaching in a lot of classrooms. It’s spewing out information, they’ve given you everything that you need, do it, learn. (Principal)

Hence, when immersed in a system, which does not foster creativity through expressed and acted values, motivation, and social practice, students’ creativity remains in a latent state or disappears. Students, the principal shared, were trained to conform and follow prescribed rules and content through behaviorist techniques based on reward and punishment as enforced by the traditional approaches of teaching as well as the grading system of assessment and evaluation. The focus
was on reproducing information rather than creativity and critical thinking. This positioned students as the receivers of the curriculum where they have no say in what, when, how are they going to learn.

6.3.4 Subject.

With regards to the subject specificity of creativity, the principal related it to the possibility of exploring the subject through the degree of structure and content required. He stated that some subjects were more open to creativity as they were less heavy when it came to the content being taught. The solution to this conundrum was to “open them up” (Principal) by approaching them through process and critical thinking.

The principal did not see creativity as a synthesizing, transdisciplinary trait but rather as applicable separate bodies of knowledge. The inquiry approach seemed to be conducive to creativity as divergent thinking as a problem-solving approach as the expectations drive learning and teaching. The student does not contribute to the curriculum expressed interests. The expectations for each subject were still used as standards of achievement and aims. This was clearly highlighted by of the verb hit:

And I think that’s holding teachers back. It’s the curriculum, because it says you need to cover this, you need to cover this, you need to cover this. So people are streamlined in focus of getting aspects of the curriculum done, whereas if they looked at it in a more general sense, they can bring in more of that inquiry based learning and creativity and still make sure that they’ve hit everything that it needs to be hit. (Principal)

The student is looked upon rather through what he or she is missing and needs to know when compared to the expectations as illustrated through the repetition of they need to know this. This perspective draws on John Locke’s tabula rasa discourse of childhood (Kehily, 2004) where the child is always an adult-in making who has educational needs, which must be addressed by the adults. This amounts to a power relationship where tacit consent and conforming is built every day without questioning.
6.3.5 Aim.

The aim of teaching creativity is moving progress forward and moving society forward. The forward movement has a very positive connotation here. The idea of progress is a trademark of neoliberalism thought through its direct connection to capitalism (Gill, 1995) and has an impact on how disciplines are viewed and prioritized in the classroom as the free market and economy make their way into education by portraying what is necessary to survive or be successful in the society:

But if you look in the business world and you look at those businesses that are very successful Microsoft, Apple, these thrive on creativity, their employees have to think out of box, have to keep redesigning, redeveloping, to move technology forward. (Principal)

With regards to the teacher–student relationship, the teacher must establish a relationship that fosters affective safety when taking risks, where the teachers offer support and guidance towards the next steps. This is in opposition to a structured environment where there is no encouragement “to go off this path” (Principal). The relationship is presented only from the teacher’s point of view that is in charge of setting out the social norms in the classroom as well as the motivation and willingness to deal with unpredictability of creativity. The principal was suggesting, indirectly, that the environment should resemble the society by providing opportunities to take risks and demonstrate achievement of expectations in different ways, as in having the freedom to choose how to achieve and demonstrate achievements:

You can get them to show you the same curriculum expectations in different ways and that’s where I think we have to stretch and grow. It’s by keeping that open ended part, so that you can see kids learning, but interpret it in a different way. (Principal)

In the teacher–student relationship, the teacher is in charge of creating an environment that fosters risk-taking as a condition of creativity as divergent thinking and problem solving. Again the emphasis is not on the community of learners and collaboration, but rather individual creative efforts measured against the expectations.

The parent’s role is the same as that of an educator, to create a social environment conducive to creativity to provide motivation and support. The responsibility of the parent is
clearly stated through the verbs *listen, understand,* and *move;* the adverb *forward* and the direct object *child* with that parent as an implied subject. The home environment and the parents’ role intertwine when it comes to children’s creativity. The principal advised against using the TV as a babysitter and to use the time to interact with the child and to guide to expose them to museums and experiences that give them the background knowledge “to start the wonder going” (Principal).

The parents’ role is again focused on the individual needs of the child and focuses on to dimensions: communication and creating an environment conducive to creativity and building a knowledge base. The absence of the parent as a curriculum informant is notable. The only school parent communication mentioned is in the context of reporting, “so the curriculum has to promote that type of thinking and again that type of assessment to see because we do have to report to parents, we do have to be accountable for what we’re doing” (Principal). Hence the parents have no say with regards to curriculum. They gravitate around the system without any direct input and act as receivers of reports of students’ performance when compared to the expectations of the curriculum.

The classroom environment should sustain the inquiry-based approach of learning, which fosters independent learning and communication. This was illustrated through an example of activity in kindergarten, which involved the exploration of a non-Newtonian fluid that behaves both like a fluid and solid in different conditions:

Well, if you look at the FDK, that is an environment that is inquiry based, as much as it can be at this point, and you can see wonder in these kids’ eyes, you can see them coming up with ideas. They are now doing an “ooblek” stuff, what is that stuff, with a cornstarch in the water and just to look on their faces if they’re try to explain why things would happen and the ideas they’re throwing out, you know, that’s learning and that is thinking, that’s, again, important and we’ve got to take that type of inquiry learning when the kids are talking, and discussing, and moving forward into further grades. So, that’s the next step, I think, an education and evolution is that focus, and inquiry, and moving in through the grades. Because it’s that communication, it’s that out of the box thinking, kids communicating with one another where learning really happens. (Principal)
The community’s role is to support the creative person, because he or she can solve the problems the community cannot. The support is justified for own gain and benefit and for the good of the society, where the creative person has a messianic role of problem solver of society’s issues “as we move forward.” The forward movement indicates the idea of linear progress, which is a trademark of neoliberalism.

The principal’s roles in children’s creativity are presented in the order of importance: safe environment, staff support, and an inquiry-approach to education. These three major roles have as a purpose individual student success defined in terms of self-confidence, success, and a desire to learn and applied thinking:

I think that is our major focus because as the administrator in the building you got to make sure that every child has the best opportunity to leave this building coming out feeling that they can do well, that they can be successful and that they have this ongoing desire to keep learning and to keep thinking and using that in a creative sense. (Principal)

6.3.6 Result.

The result of the educational process, according to the principal, should be creative thinkers who are able to solve problems of the present and future society. The curriculum should reflect this need as it is supposed to be in synchronization with the needs of the macro social dimension of the world:

It should be a reflection of what society and global aspects need, and we need this society of creative thinkers, of people who can work together, to discuss and moderate and and… come up with creative solutions to new problems cause we’re getting… there are new problems that we never seen before; there’s new language we’re using all the time, so these are gonna need new solutions, so we kind of stop thinking the old way; so the curriculum has to promote that type of thinking and again that type of assessment to see because we do have to report to parents, we do have to be accountable for what we’re doing. (Principal)

The current curriculum should be overhauled in order to synchronize the progress of the society and education as the overreliance on retrieving the knowledge is no longer necessary. Hence the
discourse of education is marked by the concerns about the future of the society and not the children’s present, who they are and what are their interests. It is a top down approach that disregards and denies children’s participation in the curriculum.

6.4 Parent’s Interview Analysis

The parent who was interviewed was a mother of two young children, who had some university education. She came from a family with a strong artistic background, as her father was a musician and other family members were in the film industry and music. At the time of the interview, her children were five and three and a half years old. She was a stay at home mom.

In her opinion creativity was a matter of self-expression of feelings or emotions that took on an art form. Hence creativity was somewhat specific to the arts. It was a matter of both nature and nurture, as people were born with a natural inclination toward it; even when it was not native one could become “really good and creative” (Parent) with practice. It as subject-specific, and it could change in time and be developed as she exemplified in the case of her brother:

I think a lot of time they’re born with it, but it can be either be nurtured or…like depending if you pick up on those and nurture it they can definitely get better and flourish in that area. Anything, like I’ve seen it, see my brother for example, when he was a little kid, he hated music. He didn’t like to listen to it, it was too loud, and now we come from a family of musicians, now he is the most musical of all of us. You know, so I think it can change and can be developed over the time. And even if you aren’t born with it, I think with enough practice, I think you can be really good and creative; I think you can. (Parent)

The role of the teacher and ECEs when it came to creativity was to expose children to creativity and “make the opportunities available” (Parent). These opportunities materialized in different forms of art as suggested by the infinitive adjectives to paint, or to act, or to sing, or whatever, which modify the noun opportunities:

I think their role is to just make the opportunities available. You know, giving them the opportunities to paint, or to act, or to sing, or whatever, but the kids that are exposed to it
they might not even know that that is there. I think their role is to expose them to it.

(Parent)

A secondary theme that appears is the communication with parents, which in this case appears in the context of the relationship between a teacher and a student. What is implied is that having regular communication with the parent results in better learning, hence a better relationship by extending school work at home (e.g., yoga).

The creative student was defined in terms consistent with the definition of creativity as children who are interested in the arts or language arts and science. Creativity was defined in terms of subject and interest. The role of the parent was to identify possible inclinations, to offer opportunities to flourish, to “follow what they enjoy” as well as extending what is going on in the classroom. With regards to offering opportunities of development, the mother referred to enrolling the child in extracurricular activities, such as swimming, arts, and sports, as well as interacting with the children in other activities such as storytelling and singing.

Extending the school work is the second theme I identified from the interview. Engaging in daily conversations with the teachers opens the door to communication regarding the curriculum and informs the parent with regards to the possibility of extending the activities at home. The communication with the teacher and extending the school activities at home were mentioned in the context of yoga as something that she is not familiar with, but she as willing to learn and practice with her son. What she did not mention was that these after school activities were not free, and not all parents can afford them.

The parent expressed that the child relationship consisted in merging the skills and knowledge to be learnt with the child’s interests as exemplified through a colouring superheroes example, where colouring represented the skill and the superhero illustrated the interest of the child. Ignoring the child in the parents’ efforts of teaching might result in a shutting down of the child. She clearly exemplified this in the case of her kindergarten child who would shut down when she attempted to teach them letters:

I find that if he’s not interested in something he just kind of shut down. I’ve had the hardest time with him with letters and the alphabet even colours from the youngest age,
he was just...I would try to get him to learn he was just not interested in it at all and his automatic response was: “Oh, I don't know.” He's just not interested whereas (his brother), you know, I think he knows his letters and his colours and his numbers better than [he] does, and he is a year and a half younger. (Parent)

The mother highlighted the efforts to teach her child the letters and the alphabet through the use of the superlative hardest and the child’s negative reaction to learning the letters is revelatory with regards to the strain on the parent–child relationship when it came to imposing adult-desired, de-contextualized knowledge on kindergarten-aged children. The above quote also speaks about the individualized teaching and learning approach that the mother had used with her children. While the youngest child did not resist when learning the letters and colours, the kindergarten child required anchoring the teaching learning in his interests:

So, I think with [the kindergarten child] the key is to try to kind of to connect what I want him to learn into something that he's interested in. And I guess same with creative outlets, you know, if there was something that I wanted him to do, just trying to make it relatable to something he is interested in would work better. (Parent)

The role of the environment at school, according to the mother, was to expose the children “to a broad variety of things,” including things that were not offered at home, challenging them, and allowing the children to develop their innate interests. She also spoke about the home environment where the children should have the opportunities to explore his or her interests (e.g., building with Lego) and to be involved in helping around the house (e.g., gardening and baking).

With regards to the relationship between the community and creativity, the mother spoke again about offering opportunities to learn through available programs in the neighborhood and by providing motivation by socializing with friends enrolled in the same programs. The idea of learning from peers echoes a Vygotsky-type approach to creativity, learning, and motivation where learning occurs through social interaction with other children and adults.

When it comes to the society, the parent viewed creativity in art as a hobby. Creativity in arts was not rewarding in terms of giving the person pursuing it a comfortable life in the long run, because it has the status of a hobby. Nevertheless, she personally believed that creativity
brought joy and self-expression to people whether as a product or as a process of self-expression. This vision of creativity in the arts combined with the idea of the artist enduring low socio-economic conditions is reminiscent of the genius romantic vision of creativity, as extraordinary individuals are called to create outstanding products, especially in the arts, no matter what the conditions.

6.5 Children’s Interviews Analysis

The children’s interviews occurred in the kindergarten classroom during participant observation. To interview the children, I used a hand puppet or a puppet as a conversation friend (based on Pelletier, 1999), or depending on the situation and child, I engaged with him or her in various activities, such as painting. At the beginning of each interview I posed the question: “What do you do at school?” Depending on the child’s willingness to participate, the interview continued by asking details about daily activities or his or her artefacts. I interviewed six students: two five-year-old boys, two five-year-old girls, one four-year-old girl, and one four-year-old boy. While the five-year olds were cooperative and somewhat willing to talk to me, the four-year olds were either scared to talk to me or wanted to play with the hand puppet. In this section I analyzed the transcripts of their interviews using Dillon’s (2009) modified questions of curriculum to add their perspective of the program as taught and learnt in 2012. Their point of view represents another reference point of triangulation of findings.

6.5.1 Nature of creativity.

My reading of the children’s view of the nature of creativity was observational, as in two situations I spoke with the children while they were painting. At the time of the interview the children were exploring colour mixing and were taught how to obtain purple by mixing blue and red. The four-year-old internalised the procedure already and was taking risks. He was further experimenting with additive mixing by first mixing red and white to obtain pink, and then adding blue and finally observing how the pink turned into a light purple: “I made some pink, then blue, then it’s purple!” (Child #6). The five-year-old was able to articulate, not only intentions, but also procedures, results, what he considered errors, and corrections of errors all in less than five minutes:
Beatrix: How did you make the purple line over there? What is it that purple thing, or the blue thing? What is it? Is it blue or purple?

Child #1: It’s going to be purple.

Beatrix: Is going to be purple? How do you make it purple?

Child #1 (as he is mixing colours on the paper): Red and blue! I’m using red now; you see it’s turning into purple. With the red, mix the purple (pause) here!

Beatrix: Awesome! You have some dots over there, what are those dots?

Child #1 (as he’s working on his painting): Now, you…so…I’ll make this little line over here purple; it was red before, but now I’m turning it purple for the school.

Beatrix: You have some dots over there, what are those dots?

Child #1: They’re waves.

Beatrix: Mm-hm!

Child #1: Look this is blue still (inaudible) I can’t make it. I do the dots right now, before the blue wears off and turns into purple, again.

Beatrix: It turns into a purple rain?

Child #1: No, I made it purple…then it weared off [sic] the purple, but now the blue came back into purple.

Beatrix: Uh-huh!

Child #1: Miss (ECE’s name), I’m doing my painting! I’m using my other straw with my new green dots; (surprised) white dots? (pause)

Beatrix: Awesome, so, which one stays at school and which one do you want to take home?
Child #1: This is from (child’s name) to dad, daddy.

Beatrix: Uh-uh, so you’re going to take that home?

Child #1: Yeah, one with the red.

Beatrix: OK, thanks for talking to me!

As children are experimenting, they are thinking and figuring out how to solve their own created problem as “it is going to be purple” suggests. The process is complex and does not resume to only one operation such as analysis, it is analysis, evaluation, synthesis of knowledge, applying the skills, observation of results, looking for ways to correct all happening almost simultaneously. The thinking emerges as they are doing the mixing.

The second connection with creativity is play, as all the children responded to “what do you do at school?” with the inclusion of play. Their comprehension of play without adult interference was very apparent, as the five-year olds were able to enumerate the usual activities in a day in sequence, and play appears distinct from other activities:

Beatrix: When you come in what is the first thing that you do? Do you remember you have something to do on the schedule, right? It’s like you sign in…

Child #1: Then play! Done play time today, then lunch, then outside, yoga, play time, tidy-up, home time.

Beatrix: That says “our day.” So, it says “sign-in,” what is that, “sign-in”? What do you do when you sign in?

Child #3: Sign in with a pencil. And play and you go the other centre. And uh, reading, we read a story, and our teacher read the story, and lunch, we eat, and outside, we go out. Any…Anytime. Um (thinking). And that is yoga…

Beatrix: What do you do at yoga?

Child #3: You pose it, (inaudible). This one (demonstrates the child’s pose).
Beatrix: Awesome!

Child #3: And this is play time again. And, and, on the bus, and then home.

6.5.2 The teacher.

The teacher and the early childhood educator have a direct and an indirect presence in the interview. The teacher was mentioned in the context of the description of the day and in the context of shared reading when the teacher was reading to children. The children were very aware of who is doing what, as in both situations they were very clear in stating the subject of the sentence or utterance:

Beatrix: You play at the program? What, when you come here, what do you do?

Child #4: I sit on the carpet.

Beatrix: You sit on the carpet? And what do you do on the carpet? You remember?

Child #4: Listen to what the teacher is saying.

Beatrix: No? But I heard you’ve just read *Bear Has a New Friend* or…what was the other one?

Child #1: Yeah, *Bear Feels Sick*.

Beatrix: And *Bear Feels Sick*, yeah! So, do you do any readings at school?

Child #1: No!

Beatrix: No? That’s not reading?

Child #1: No, the teacher’s reading.

These dialogues reveal that the children remembered the teacher as being in charge of reading and behaviour. Listening carefully was part of the norms or taught behaviours during whole class activities.
The early childhood educator was mentioned only once in the transcript during the interview when the child called her to let her know that he is working on his painting as quoted above. The interview took place right after the ECE taught students about colour mixing. The child’s utterance signals the fact that he knew who was in charge of the arts activity, and that he had to inform her of the progress of the artwork. These instances speak about the roles of the teacher and ECE in the classroom as the teacher is clearly in charge of reading and the educator in charge of arts.

The indirect presence of the teacher and educator is revealed in the way the children talk about the schedule, and the environment as both are responsibilities of the EL–K team. For example, most of the children had a favourite centre among the existent ones: Child #1 liked the Lego centre, child #2 liked the vet centre, and child #3 liked playing at the block and science centre.

6.5.3 The student.

The students I interviewed had their own interests, problem, and aims and were communicating multimodally with me. For example, when I interviewed a four-year-old child (Child #5), the child immersed in dramatic play pretending to be a lion just like my hand puppet; another child demonstrated yoga poses to show me how it is supposed to look like (Child #3). When verbally communicat ing with me, the children also clarified meaning when I was on the wrong path of understanding, as in the transcript above between child #1 and me concerning what constituted reading.

These acts of expression are part of the children’s creativity in communication and they emerged as the children were drawing on their resources to communicate with me. The students referred to themselves as I followed by a predicate as in I play. There were only two instances when the children referred to the class with we and that denotes individualization.

6.5.4 Subjects.

The children’s interviews suggest that they were aware of the routine of the classroom, their expected behaviour, and areas of learning. For example, child #3 in the nature of creativity centre
was able to tell the sequence of events, something the other children were also able to express, such as in the following examples from child #1 and child #3:

Child #1: Sometimes we play at all, but today we play at painting.

Beatrix: When you come in what is the first thing that you do? Do you remember you have something to do on the schedule, right? It’s like you sign-in…

Child #1: Then play! Done play time today, then lunch, then outside, yoga, play time, tidy-up, home time.

Beatrix: Mm-hm, so that is how you do it, right?

Child #1: So it’s play time, then tidy-up, and then is home time.

Another example is:

Beatrix: The block centre? Yeah? Why is it your favourite?

Child #4: Cause we get to play at…with the blocks.

Beatrix: And what are you doing with the blocks?

Child #4: Building!

Beatrix: You’re building stuff? Like what?

Child #4: Towers!

Beatrix: Like towers? Awesome! This is the timer! And, then, after the centre what do you do?

Child #4: I clean up and I go to another centre.

The routine that they communicated refers to some, but not all, the areas of learning in the programmatic curriculum. Computers, gym, music, science, and drama were not mentioned in the texts of the interviews. Signing in, reading, playing outdoors, yoga, and tidying up were
present when talking about the schedule. Most of the children, when communicating their interests, referred to the various centres they played in (e.g., Lego, block centre, vet centre, and so on) during the indoor morning and afternoon play time at the centres. This fact highlights their desire and interest to play independently without adult interference. Their choices were based on what was available in the classroom hence the teacher’s and educator’s classroom design and resources were subtly conducing their interests.

When asked about reading, two children mentioned their favourite books, another child referred to the shared reading, and still another presented to me the take home reading program:

Child #3: I read books.

Beatrix: Those books? Aha. I can see they have some colours on them. Why?

Child #3: Yeah. I’m in…yellow.

Beatrix: You go to yellow? Is that your level?

Child #3: ‘Cause I read them all alone and then I’m starting again!

Beatrix: You’re starting what?

Child #3: Coloured books!

Beatrix: The coloured books?

Child #3 (pointing at bins with colour coded books): Yes. And then I go to here, here, here, and here.

Beatrix: Aha, so you go from orange to the yellow ones. OK! Awesome!

Child #3 (pointing to the bins): I can read black, and then red.

With regards to other areas of learning, a girl mentioned sorting as a mathematics activity, and child #1 described the arts activity they were doing. There was an understated order of importance of subjects as preferred and perceived by children with play time indoors at the
centres as most preferred and yoga, reading, mathematics, arts, signing, and outdoor play when inquired about the schedule.

6.5.5 Activity.

When asked: “What do you do at school?” all children with the exception of child #4 answered “play:”

Child #1: I usually play at Lego!

Child #2: I play at school!

Beatrix: What do you play?

Child #2: I play doctor and the pet shops.

Beatrix: You play doctor and the pet shops? And what else do you do when you come at school?

Child #2: Mhm… I play!

Child #3: I play with Lego, and I play with blocks, and I play with these blocks.

Beatrix: Could you tell him what you do at school? Do you remember? Could you tell him, or could you tell me what you do at school?

Child #5: Play!

Beatrix: I am sorry?

Child #5: Play!

Beatrix: You play?

Child #5: Yeah!

Beatrix: Awesome! So, do you want to tell us what you do at school? Do you want to tell us what you do at school? (another child’s name) said he’s playing; do you play too?
Child #6: (nods yes)

Play is the constant in their life at school and represents their most favourite activity. It is the way they get to know themselves and the world around them.

6.5.6 Aim.

The children rarely declared a known aim to their activities. Their interviews expressed play for the sake of playing, not for learning reading or mathematics or the rest of the expectations dictated by the programmatic curriculum. When children had an aim, it was very pragmatic, as in solving a problem created by them as in obtaining a perfect (in their eyes) purple (child #1) or playing with the pet shops or my hand puppet (child #4) or building Lego ships.

6.5.7 Environment.

The children’s interviews reveal that the design of the classroom was structured on centres as children referred to them as they are talking about their schedule and activities. They were already aware of the fact that knowledge is divided into areas of learning or disciplines as they spoke about block centres when constructing towers, Lego when talking about building ships, or vet centre when playing with pet shops (animal figurines), the carpet for listening to the teacher reading, or arts when doing colour mixing. The rotation of the centre was suggested by only one child who said, “sometimes we play at all [centers], but today we play at painting [centre].”

6.5.8 Parents.

The parents were present directly in the children’s interviews in three contexts: reading a bedtime story, playing with the iPad, and teaching children how to read. These interactions with children reveal reading happens at home and moreover children are taught how to read by parents. The parents were also indirectly present in the interviews when child #3 spoke about the take home reading program and described his path of progression through colour-coded levels of difficulty. The take home reading program consisted of reading at-home reading levelled books with parents and moving up through the levels, as the children demonstrated proficiency at the assessed level. Hence, the parents become in charge of the homework, which is in fact programmatic curriculum taking over family time and transforming them by consent in curriculum teachers.
The community is represented by the program, which represents the before and after school care program as a paid for service for parents who start work early. The principal is absent in the interview, and this speaks about the lack of direct participation in children’s school life.

This chapter looked at the discourses of creativity of the teacher, the early childhood educator, the principal, the parent or guardians and the children and how they function in the operational curriculum.

The following chapter discusses findings across the data with regards to representations of creativity in the Ontario programmatic and operational curricula, their implications for children and teachers, and recommendations based on the findings. Within the chapter I also examine research opportunities revealed by this study.
Chapter 7

7 Discussion of Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusions

This chapter is a discussion of findings across the data with regards to representations of creativity in the Ontario programmatic and operational curricula, their implications for children and teachers, and recommendations based on the findings. Within the chapter I also look at the future research possibilities born out of this research. To ground the discussion and link the study to the literature, I open the chapter by recapitulating pertinent elements of the study, then relate and comment on the relationship between the themes of the literature review and my research questions. Finally, I look at creativity findings through Heydon and Wang’s (2006) lens to ethically appraise the Ontario ECE curriculum. The last pages of the chapter envision other possibilities for the Ontario early childhood curriculum and present lines of research opened by my research endeavour.

7.1 Data Sets and Analysis Summary

In the Ontario ECE case study I examined two curricular texts, the Ontario draft version and the final version of the kindergarten curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education 2010, 2016), I observed a learning cycle for six weeks in the fall of 2012, and I interviewed one teacher, one educator, one principal, one parent, and six children during participant observation. The data from each source were coded using an adapted version of Dillon’s (2009) questions of curriculum, which focused on creativity. I used critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989) as a method to analyse and interpret data from written texts including interviews, field notes, audio and video recordings, artefacts, and documents provided by the teacher. These data provide a thick description of the operational curriculum of a kindergarten classroom in Ontario on the cutting edge of Full-Day Kindergarten. I interpreted the data through the lens of critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework, which I envisioned creativity discourses as social practices that can form and condition social identities and relations (Fairclough, 1989) and may result in the (re)production of unequal power relations. These data sets and analyses address the issues of validity and trustworthiness of this study and provide responses to my research questions: How do the Ontario curricula represent creativity (social determinants and ideologies of creativity)? What are the implications of these representations for children (effects of
discourse)? And what are the implications of these representations for educators charged with promoting creativity?

To offer a counterpoint to the early childhood education (ECE) Ontario case study and to imagine other pedagogical possibilities, I also examined two programmatic curricular texts belonging to the Reggio Emilia paradigm of early childhood education as indicated by practitioners. The first text was a professional development text (Drummond, 2000), which provided guidelines regarding teacher–student interactions, while the second one was Malaguzzi’s (1998) History, ideas, and basic philosophy: An interview with Leila Gandini (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998). I analyzed and interpreted the texts using the same categories given by Dillon’s (2009) questions of curriculum. In the case of the Reggio Emilia curricular texts, I modified the research questions according to the topic of investigation: How does Reggio Emilia programmatic curriculum represent creativity? What are the implications of these representations for children? And what are the implications of these representations for educators charged with promoting creativity?

In the following chapter, I compare the findings with the main themes of the literature review presented at the outset of this dissertation.

7.2 Summary of the Literature Review

When looking at creativity in general, the literature review revealed that creativity is an elusive concept and has been defined differently at different moments in history. The conceptualizations coexist and can be grouped in three paradigms of creativity when looking at systems of thought aggregated around the concept. First is the The He-paradigm of creativity, which is rooted in Kant’s definition of the genius where creativity is divine inspiration, genetic inheritance, or talent, and is characterized by exclusivity and disconnection: Creativity is rare, the product of the genius, often a male figure, who creates ex nihilo, “landmarks in the history of a domain, sometimes the humanity” (Glăveanu, 2010, p. 81). This paradigm highlights the achievements and lives of people whose products have changed the world. The second paradigm, The I-paradigm has origins in psychology and proposed a democratic view of creativity as an individual quality and process, ignoring the social. Among the theories that are categorized under this paradigm are: Sternberg’s (2003) propulsion theory of creative contributions, Kirton’s
Adaptation–Innovation theory (2003), Kneller’s (1965) creative phased process (cycle), and White’s (1968) conceptual analysis of creativity. The most relevant in education are Guilford’s (1950) and Torrance’s (1974) conceptualizations of creativity as a personality trait, and part of human intelligence studied in controlled settings, which are widely used in education to evaluate students’ giftedness through the Torrance tests of creative thinking (TTCT) (Kim, 2006).

Theories and studies within the I-paradigm are characterized by methodological reductionism and partial models of creativity (Glăveanu, 2010). Moreover, the association of creativity with individualism is problematic (McArdle & Grieshaber, 2012) as it rests on liberal premises such as freedom, choice, and child-centered pedagogies, which envision the child as naturally creative, but paradoxically imposes constraints to promote freedom and choice. The third paradigm of creativity, the We-paradigm added the social dimension in conceptualizations of creativity. Illustrative examples of this paradigm are Amabile’s (Amabile, 1996) social psychology of creativity, Csikszentmihalyi’s systems theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), Vygotsky’s (1990) and Glăveanu (2010). Vygotsky’s (1990) theory is relevant in education as his constructivist approach to childhood and learning are widely used in education. He stated that creativity is rooted in children’s symbolic play with caregivers, exists in everyday life, and occurs in collaboration. The creative mental function development is furthered by the emergence of inner speech and collaboration of imagination and conceptual thought, and it fully matured in adulthood.

At the intersection of We- and I- paradigms sits creativity and the new workforce, which links creativity with capitalism and education. Sletzer’s and Bentley’s (1999) The Creative Age: Knowledge and Skills for The New Economy report postulates that the new economy needs a different type of worker who is creative and able to apply knowledge and skills in various work environments; they also state that creativity is learnable, hence the role of education is to create social systems that teach creativity to produce the type of worker for the new economy. The conceptualization of students as the future workforce is an intrinsic part of human capital theory (Fitzsimmons, 2017), which has been addressed in the introduction of this thesis and highlighted the connection between capitalism, creativity, education, and workforce.
The second part of the literature review looked at conceptualizations of creativity in early childhood and revealed that the paradigms of creativity manifest differently here. Under the umbrella of the I-paradigm, Runco and Cayirdag (2012a, 2012b) argue that children’s creativity manifests in intangible ways, such as new understandings and new self-expressions; Baer (2012) focuses on the evidence for domain specificity of creativity; Jalongo and Hirsch (2012) redefine creativity as a system that is shaped by cognitive processes, social and emotional processes, family, education, characteristics of the domain, social cultural aspects, and historical forces; Blake and Giannangelo’s (2012) creativity as a process, “which connects and supports other thinking processes,” (p. 298) is relative to age, experiences, and environment. The We- paradigm of ECE looked at discourses of creativity as situated and interconnected in social nets. For example, Saracho (2012) examines the importance of teachers’ creativity, the relationship between creative teachers and creative children, the importance of positive creativity relationships, how teachers beliefs impact children’s creativity, and how teachers attitudes and verbal interactions in the classroom environment could stifle or develop creativity; Nutbrown and Clough (2014) look at the arts and creativity curriculum situation in the UK and argue for inalienability of creativity and the discovery to young children’s learning; McArdle and Grieshaber (2012) examine the discourses of creativity in ECE and recommend teachers draw on multiple discourses, reflect on the possibilities of supporting children’s creativity, and provide quality learning experience for all children.

In the following paragraphs, I relate the patterns I identified from the data to this creativity literature and look at the social determinants, ideologies, and effects of creativity discourses. This section of the chapter responds to the research questions by looking at the findings and correlating them with the literature review themes.

7.3 Findings: How does the Ontario Curricula Represent Creativity?

7.3.1 Paradigms of creativity in Ontario kindergarten program.

Three creativity discourse patterns emerged when I looked across the Ontario ECE data. The first one was creativity as forms of thinking (divergent, emergent, and problem-solving), which were shared by the documents, early childhood educator, and principal, as creative expression and freedom of expression in the case of the parent, ECE, and principal, and as play in the case of the
programmatic curriculum. These discourses originated in all paradigms of creativity. The He-paradigm was present in the 2016 document where creativity was also constructed through the lens of achievements (e.g., email versus letter, zipper versus buttons). In this example, the children were asked to consider the value of a creative product as in determining its worth in value, in importance or usefulness. Creativity as a valuable product is Big C creativity, and it is grounded in Sternberg’s (2003) creativity as propulsion and determining and assigning value to innovation, as specific to a neoliberal discourse always in search for the “market- and product-driven, characterized by product development, industry expansion and marketability” (Harris, 2014, p. 18). The I-paradigm of creativity presented in the data is represented through the discourses of creativity as thinking, as process, as problem-solving, and as divergent thinking. In both documents, creativity was a form of thinking, as creative thinking, which manifests mainly through the arts in the form of the creative process; creativity was situated at the intersection of the I- and We-paradigm of creativity: It can be developed, encouraged, or stimulated by the teachers and through the environment. Both documents regarded creativity as something desirable, but their emphasis was not on the curricular expectations of areas or frames of learning that, according to the documents, ask students to create. For example, the 2016 document had only six out of 126 (4.76 %) specific expectations that contained the verb create in the sentence of the expectation. The 2010 draft version had 18 out of 124 (14.5%) specific expectations that contained a word rooted in crea. The absence of creativity in the specific expectations, which drives the kindergarten operational curriculum, speaks about the lack of importance of the concept in kindergarten program.

The 2016 document presented creativity mainly as universal thinking skills and process, recognizing its characteristic as emergent, and proposed to carefully create the learning environment to meet the expectations. It subsumed to a cognitive Piagetian view of creativity, which implies development and stages. It was also part of Torrance’s product improvement task from the Torrance tests of creativity, which underlined the idea of adaptation to environmental conditions and survival. Torrance’s theories of creativity (1974) sit under the umbrella of the I-paradigm of creativity because the environment has an essential role in the learning process as adaptation. The concepts of flexibility and adaptation are reflective of neoliberal entrepreneurialism (Relyea, 2013, p. 200).
As divergent thinking, it was implied in the programmatic curriculum through multiple possibilities and ways to accomplish a given task, and in the principal’s interview as multiple possibilities in the case of inquiry-based learning and “thinking out of the box” (Principal’s interview). The problem-solving approach to creativity was clearly apparent in the principal and teacher’s interviews as well as in the 2016 programmatic curriculum in the context of learning expectations, as related to the mathematical concept of patterning and in the context of technology and problem-solving skills in the process of creating and designing (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 255). The bodies of knowledge that addressed creativity in the 2016 kindergarten program were mathematics and technology, as patterning is a mathematical concept, while technological problem-solving skills refer to problem-solving in technology. These conceptualizations shared the same idea of democratization of creativity, as in everyone is capable of creativity. The democratization of creativity is problematic as it creates the illusion of equality and free choice:

Democratized creativity might appear to enact a principle of equality wherein amateur practice is on par with more seasoned artists, but this is only on the plane relegated to novelty and newness. As Jagodzinski (2015) shares, the biopolitics of creativity (‘bio-creativity’) channels its energy into a manageable labor force that amounts to an ‘active passivity’ perpetuating ‘the deception that one is free to make choices within an already structured, complex environment where the only possibilities are pre-given.’ (Kalin, 2016, p. 36)

Furthermore, the democratization of creativity in education and its presence in the overall expectations of the programmatic curricula, only in mathematics and science, comes to support the idea of the market order reflected in subject hierarchy and the marginalization of disciplines, as demonstrated in the analysis of the learning areas in the programmatic curriculum. These areas highlight the idea that creativity comes in the form of the creative process in the arts and as expectations in mathematics and science and technology:

*The incongruity of education in which creativity becomes oppressively conformist,* demonstrates neoliberalism's debilitation of democratic practices and cultures that do not extend the market order. Creativity education as public/political good becomes
nonexistent since it falls outside creativity education for economic good. (Kalin, 2018, p. 93)

The We-paradigm was present in the programmatic curricula as the child was embedded in systems (as seen in the discussion of diagrams present in the curricular texts), which suggests that, as stated in the 2016 kindergarten curriculum document, “creativity does not occur in a vacuum” (p. 51). The outlined expectations of the programmatic curriculum referred to what a child can create and assign the teacher as a gatekeeper (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014) adding a social component to children’s creativity. When looking at expectations as part of the system’s evaluative criteria for gatekeepers, creativity as constructed in the text becomes oxymoronic as the authors of the programmatic curriculum seemed to want to programme children’s creativity through an expectation-driven curriculum, which, according to the same documents, was a spontaneous, unexpected, and emergent process. Creativity in these curricula was not coherently conceptualized and seems to appropriate language to fit the ultimate purpose of curriculum: standardization of creativity and measurable expectations to control it:

Standardizing creativity across schooling implies that creativity can be emptied of its critical modes, domesticated through measurement, and ultimately contained by neomanagement as an orderly, predictable, and apolitical process. (Kalin, 2016, p. 38)

7.3.2 Counterpoint: Reggio Emilia and paradigms of creativity.

In contrast to the above, there is no singular, static theory of creativity in Reggio Emilia. For instance, in the Malaguzzi (1998) text, Reggio forwarded a vision of creativity as emergent, which allowed the coexistence of multiple theoretical dimensions to fit one purpose: to help all children along the way of growing up, where children are seen as human beings, are leading the curriculum, and teachers must follow their rhythm of life and learning. Discourses of creativity that are promoting exclusivity are not accepted as they are in contradiction with the Reggio philosophical grounding. Malaguzzi presented creativity as emergent, supported, and involving risk-taking and interpersonal relationship. Pedagogical creativity depended on the concept of the teacher and the social environment; it was visible in children when teachers and adults paid attention to it. Prescribed ways of teaching creativity or expectations were rejected, which created opportunities for children to organize learning.
The same idea of the child as a full ethical being, guiding the curriculum, appeared in Drummond’s (2000) text, where the way adults interacted with the children was paramount. Creativity appeared as a professed value, creative expression, and emergent as the child was allowed to contribute to the curriculum by initiating learning and choosing *ends*.

### 7.3.3 Creativity as playing Ontario kindergarten program.

The Vygotskyan (1990), Jalongo and Hirsch’s (2012), Runco and Cayirdag’s (2012a, 2012b) Blake and Giannangelo (2012), and Grammatikopoulos, Gregoriadis, and Zachopoulou (2012) perspectives of creativity placed play as the root of creativity and manifestation of early childhood creativity. When looking at the connection between play and creativity, as present in the programmatic curricula, both kindergarten documents (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, 2016) stated that they are a play-based program. As demonstrated in the analysis of the 2016 kindergarten program, the section on play from the draft version was copied and pasted into the new version. For example, the following quote can be found in both documents as follows: in the 2010 draft version (p. 13) and in the final version of the kindergarten curriculum:

> Play is a vehicle for learning and rests at the core of innovation and creativity. It provides opportunities for learning in a context in which children are at their most receptive. Play and academic work are not distinct categories for young children, and learning and doing are also inextricably linked for them. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p.18)

Hence, when it comes to findings regarding creativity as play, the results are identical. The authors trace creativity as rooted in play, but there is internal inconsistency regarding the concept of play; although they used as references solid conceptualizations of play, the authors ignored the fundamental characteristics of their own cited play theories and built the curriculum on the premise that children were not able to discriminate between play and academic work. Consequently, children can acquire academic knowledge and skills when presented as play. These ideas were the basis of imposing expectations in each of the areas of learning regarding what is to be taught, learned, or assessed, how much, and how they were to be taught, learned, or assessed. Therefore, creativity was embedded in these expectations as play-based learning. The learning expectations of both documents were very similar in content.
Another pattern that highlighted the creativity–play connection was the play-based environment. As seen in the analysis of the 2010 programmatic curriculum goals and in the 2016 document analysis, the environment was structured by adults to meet the learning expectations. Children did not play for the sake of playing; they were to play games and activities, structured by adults, to meet the learning expectations, and in a teacher-based set up, a play-mimicking situation where children play, but they were going to play with what the teacher wanted and how the teacher wanted it to be; there was no open-endedness, because there were always expectations to be assessed. The analysis of the operational curriculum also revealed that the time allocated to independent play represented less than half (42%) of an instructional day in an environment constructed by adults. Further, the children were able to distinguish between authentic play and learning, as all children’s invariable answer to “what do you do at school?” was “play,” and they were able to enumerate the usual activities in a day in sequence, and play appeared distinct from other activities.

7.3.4 Counterpoint: Reggio Emilia and play.

While Drummond’s (2000) text did not mentioned creativity as play, a solid relationship between creativity and play was present in Malaguzzi’s (1998) text where creativity as emergent in the daily life of children involved play, it could be surprising, and also disappear. Play was part of the entire experience of learning, which was characterized as a perpetual “game of learning” (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 92). However, there was no conceptual confusion between work and play as Malaguzzi made a clear distinction between work, as engaging in projects involving concepts such as “numbers, quantity, classification, dimensions, forms, measurement, transformation, orientation, conservation and change, or speed and space” (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 53), and play, which manifested as spontaneous activity.

The conceptual confusion between play and play as academic work present in the Ontario curricular texts introduced the next patterns, which need to be addressed when looking at the characteristics of creativity: How is it?

7.3.5 Domain specificity of creativity in Ontario kindergarten program.

The pattern that appeared with regards to the domain specificity of creativity was the transdisciplinarity of creativity. The programmatic curriculum, in both final and draft versions
(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, 2016), mentioned the creative process as the focus in the arts, and as an overall expectation in mathematics in the context of patterning, and all adult interviewees stated that creativity was transdisciplinary. This character of creativity seems to be rooted in the concept of flexibility of the learner (or worker) and innovation and can be traced to Torrance’s divergent thinking (1974). The characterization of creativity as transdisciplinary might be read as other dimensions of neoliberalism in education, which restricts access to other creativity discourses. When creativity is associated with innovation, it cues the interpretation of creativity through the lens of productivity, its economic value, and marketability narrowing its semantic net to fit the logic of the marketplace:

It bears considering that this marriage of innovation with creativity is a form of ideological gentrification, in that while appearing to value the arts and creative endeavour it is really redirecting and narrowing the discourse of creativity into productive innovation and marketplace measures of value. And this more than anything signals the death knell of ‘arts education,’ which remains tainted by its relationship to risk, unproductivity (time-wasting, daydreaming) and ‘failure’—all of which are increasingly impossible in a marketplace economy. (Harris, 2014, p. 19)

Marketable creativity in the guise “of innovation in schools and industry is hostile to the notion of creative exploration in its very definition of seeking to ‘sell’ rather than ‘interpret’ culture to the masses” (Harris, 2014, p. 20). Innovation threatens to subsume and narrow creativity into processes that are “market- and product-driven, characterized by product development, industry expansion and marketability” (Harris, 2014, p. 18). I agree with Harris (2014) that we need to be aware of the colonization of creative practices by the marketplace in order to retain and extend alternate forms of creativity for other purposes.

This colonization of creativity under the pretense of a marketized and capitalized endeavor could be placing our abilities to explore other modes of creativity at risk. (Kalin, 2016, p. 37)

The operational curriculum offered a different discourse of creativity where knowledge, learning, and creativity were interconnected and rhizomatic through a multimodal exposure to various
bodies of knowledge (e.g., drawing the gourds, dissecting the gourds, reading about the gourds and nutrition, mixing oranges for the gourds, tasting the gourds, and so on). Each mode offered a different opportunity for understanding and for self-expression. The spectrum of learning experiences completed each other by allowing the children to contribute to the expansion of learning as it was the case of the vet clinic. The coexistence of multiple discourses and the ethical dimension of the curricula engaged the children and facilitated learning and creativity.

7.3.6 Counterpoint: Reggio Emilia and the domain specificity of creativity.

The first theme I identified from the data relative to the domain specificity of creativity was the multitude of symbolic languages present in children’s communication; communication was not restricted to oral and written language, but rather inclusive of and enriched through drama, music, graphic languages, and extended to the realm of social communication and behaviour. As the children were encouraged to use many ways of expressing themselves, creativity is multimodal and hence transdisciplinary. However, with regards to the marginalization of the arts program or restriction to print literacy, the method of teaching and learning in Reggio revealed an approach different from the Ontario curricula, that is, an integrative approach, where learning occurred in long-term set up situations. These set-ups were projects created by educators and inspired by listening to and observing the children. The children’s desires and interests converged with the expectations of teachers, which provided continuous motivation; projects were nonintrusive and created gentle and lively conditions for learning. Each project was motivated and driven by an expectation known and pursued by children and an adult’s intervention in the children’s action was minimal. Reggio paid extra attention to the atelier, an art-focused space, which was dedicated to multimodal communication. The studio protected both children and teachers from the dangers of different pedagogical and philosophical misunderstandings. It was a safe place of exploration, experimentation, and research.

7.3.7 Creativity and the workforce in Ontario kindergarten program.

In this section I identify the relationship between creativity and the workforce in the kindergarten curricula. This relationship is anchored in human capital theory (Fitzsimons, 2017) and envisions education as a social system, which imposes outcomes related to creativity to produce the creative worker necessary in the new economy. This perspective gave birth to two main
7.3.7.1 The system, its aims, and standardization of creativity.

The reading across the curricular texts data with regards to the aim of the ECE system as presented in both texts was “to establish a strong foundation for learning in the early years” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 8; OME, 2010, p. 5) where learning occurred in the education public system. This idea was clearly expressed in both documents in different sections. In the 2010 version, the system was suggested through the purpose of the program as stated, “to help children make a smoother transition to Grade 1” (p. 1). Hence, the program in this case is a training camp for grade one by teaching children the skills knowledge and attitudes outlined in the curriculum. As the vast majority of the overall expectations from the 2010 version were to be found in the 2016 version, including the ones pertaining to creativity, it may be implied that this purpose was applicable here, too. Furthermore, by establishing aims for the children and teachers who become extensions of the government in the classroom, the government regulates the teachers’ and children’s behaviour. Creativity takes the form of thinking and process, which can be measured and controlled individually through the environment, constructions of identities, and social relationships in the classroom: Creativity becomes part of the standardization of the program and its expectations. Both traits, standardization and individualism, relate education to the neoliberal discourse in education (Kalin, 2016). In the 2016 text, the connection between the system and creativity appeared in two instances: one given by the intertextuality of the texts when referring to creativity in arts as presented in the The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: The Arts (2009), while the other referred to a direct association of the verb create and the governmental initiative “to create a cohesive, coordinated system for early years programs and services across the province” (OME, 2016, p. 4). In the first instance the conceptualization of creativity as part of the art-creating process stressed the continuity of the school system in Ontario and reflected the idea of a coordinated system presented at the beginning of the document. The second instance revealed that the government had the initiative to create an ECE system that was cohesive and coordinated. This system, which is an assemblage of governmental social institutions, positioned kindergarten as the entry of children into the system, which created their educational path and affected their future. It also positioned kindergarten as the foundation
of the formal education and preparatory for grade one. The system was coordinated through standardization of the educational path of children through expectations. It resembled the social engineering, which produced intended, predictable results: “productive citizens” (Ontario ministry of Education, 2016, p. 4) and “to thrive in the world of today and tomorrow” (p. 8). In this sense social engineering completes capitalism, not only at a national, but also at a global level.

The same aim was apparent in the teacher’s interview and in principal’s interview. In the teacher’s opinion, the school was a system most concerned with testing (e.g., EQAO and phonological awareness) and this attitude was “coming from above” (Parent interview) where the preposition above indicates a higher authority in charge of education. According to the teacher, the reason behind this state of things was the measurement and accountability movement in education, which created comparison and competition between children, schools, and boards, but also countries, in the effort to demonstrate, “who is the best at” (Teacher interview) at a global level. In the case of the principal, the aim of teaching creativity was “moving progress forward” (Principal interview) and moving society forward. The idea of progress is a trademark of neoliberalism thought through its direct connection to capitalism (Gill, 1995), and it has an impact on how disciplines are viewed and prioritized in the classroom as the free market and economy make their way into education by portraying what is necessary to survive or be successful in a society. His examples of creative people reveal a clear causal connection between, society, education, and the “business world” (Principal interview) where employees are creative. The global aspect of the business world was suggested through the examples: Microsoft and Apple. Hence, the needs of for profit transnational companies dictate the learners’ (as future employees) profiles, which in turn are distilled in educational outcomes and expectations. Furthermore, in the principal’s opinion, the current curriculum should be overhauled to synchronize the progress of society and education as the overreliance on retrieving knowledge was no longer necessary. These statements point toward a “ruling by consent” strategy at national and global levels.

The early childhood educator’s interview also referred to the system indirectly by marking the difference between the teacher and early childhood educator’s roles and worldviews of children in the classroom. According to her statements, the teachers’ role was about taking the
lead when dealing with the administrative and managerial sides of the program: school policy, testing, and report cards. She used the word *school* to name the institutionalization of learning where kindergarten was no longer kindergarten, but school. The program was situated at the intersection of two different views of the child: kindergarten as a “starting point” (ECE interview) of school and end of daycare closer to infancy, where the ECE saw the children as children and not preschoolers. These discourses collided in the classroom when it came to roles and the way they are set up by the Ministry through the document and by the board through delivery of the program. According to the ECE’s statements, although the teachers and ECEs were equal partners, there was no built-in time in the schedule for collaborative planning. While the teachers had planning time, the ECEs were not a part of it, as they were under a different collective agreement. The lack of collaborative planning was viewed as one of the major impediments to creating an authentic co-teaching partnership. These statements were confirmed by the ethnographic data, where only 30 minutes per week were dedicated to collaborative planning, which was clearly not enough as the team was observed planning when they were supposed to be doing other things, such as while supervising children on the playground. Furthermore, the analysis of the participant observation data points toward the same patterns when it comes to the teacher’s managerial role in the classroom as in administering tests and assessments, which were eating up indoor independent play time and the early childhood educator’s role to provide learning opportunities in the arts (e.g., drawing gourds, collages, pasta skeletons, and mixing colours).

The emphasis on teaching print and math literacy through time allocation in the schedule was another intersection of findings when looking at the programmatic and operational curriculum. These findings converged toward and educational system, which was marked by the concerns about the future of the society and the business world and not the children’s present, who they were, and what were their interests. It was a top down approach that disregarded and denied children’s participation in the curriculum.

**7.3.7.2. Standardization: Colliding discourses and creativity as programmatic and emergent.**

The curricular texts declared creativity as emergent but imposed a standardized view of creativity, which was controlled through expectations in the context of mathematics through
patterning, problem-solving and the arts. In both curricular documents, there was no valuing of the present for the children; everything was aimed toward a future, whether it was about the skills and knowledge, or the imaginary universal Ontarian child, or the successful adult life. The creativity of the Ontarian projected child exists in both texts in the expectations, which tell teachers what to teach and assess when children create (e.g., mathematics: patterning, expectation 4 or 18). In both documents, similar, if not identical learning expectations, portrayed the ideal Ontarian child during and at the end of the program and established the normalization and standardization of early childhood. Teachers have the duty to teach, assess, evaluate, provide evidence, and report on the progress of the four-and-five-year-old children by constantly comparing what a real child knows and is able to do with the imaginary child described in the overall learning expectations during the two-year program. In the case of creativity, the only mention of creativity in the form of the verb create as predicate with children as agents or subjects was in the overall expectation in the mathematics in expectation 18 (OME, 2016) and expectation P4 (OME, 2010). The teachers were asked to assess and evaluate the child’s ability to, “P4. explore, recognize, describe, and create patterns, using a variety of materials in different contexts” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 97) and to, “recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns, and extend, translate, and create them, using the core of a pattern and predicting what comes next” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 313). The expectations constitute a Procrustean bed, which dictated the normalization and standardization of early childhood outside of the reality of flesh and blood four- and five-year-old children. The successful and rewarding life and brighter future promised through the 2010 curriculum, or the “path of lifelong learning and nurture competencies that they [children] will need to thrive in the world of today and tomorrow” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 1), which are to be realized through the kindergarten program and includes standardized creativity, are reminiscent of human capital theory, where future success and reward are intrinsically linked and individual.

The pressure of imposed expectations creates a hierarchy of priorities and urgencies when teachers plan, teach, and assess forcing them to use a Tylerian teaching to the task-based approach. This induced teaching to the task or test approach is detrimental as it stifles the children, creates resistance and aversion towards learning (as seen in teacher and parent interviews), and opens the doors of pathologizing the children, as seen in the phonological awareness testing done by a pathologist from the participant observation data. The teacher, as she
stated in her interview, was very aware and concerned about the presence of an imbalanced subject approach of the programmatic curriculum that was driven by measurement of achieving the expectations through testing (e.g., developmental reading assessment [DRA]) at the expense of other modes of communication. This approach was leading to literacy over teaching. Children resisted learning when it was de-contextualized and out of their areas of interest and motivation. Learning resistance as a consequence of the unbalanced approach was also reflected by the extension of the expectations into home time through the take home reading program as documented in the participant observation data. This was seen in the parent’s interview from her characterization as hardest when speaking about her efforts to teach reading, as well as the child’s negative shutting down reaction is relevant here. Standardization did not happen only at school; it took place at home as homework and strained the parent–child relationship when it came to imposing adult-desired, de-contextualized knowledge on kindergarten-aged children. The principal’s interview was also relevant as he stated that creativity “can go,” due to the misinterpretation of curricular expectations and, implicitly, creativity expectations. He acknowledged that the knowledge retrieving demands put on children’s shoulders were ever increasing as they progressed through the grades through the amount of curricular expectations as well as the EQAO testing, which were both detrimental to creativity. Hence, the programmatic presence or absence of creativity as constructed in the Ontario curricular texts are constraints of creativity.

The standardization of programmatic creativity imposed its legitimacy by drawing from the neurological discourse in education by referring to the child as “the brain” and presenting learning as “making connections” and “finding patterns”:

In order for learning to take place, the brain must be able to make connections and find patterns. As children make connections between the things they already know and new information, their brain creates patterns that help them understand the world around them.

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 40)

The biological determinism and essentialism oversimplifies learning by reducing it to a complex bio-chemical process and this results in the reader’s confusion between the brain and the way information travels to and from the brain through connections (synapses) and the mental
connections between new and previous experiences of children. The confusion might lead to false conceptual premises for the argument of learning programming through expectations. To add to this confusion, when learning does not occur, one can infer that the child’s brain does not make proper connections, or it cannot find patterns; the child is represented clinically by the organ and the organ becomes it. The child is depersonalized and objectified. Using this premise, it can be further inferred that, if the child does not achieve the expectations, the child’s brain is at fault; the child then can be declared not normal, because he or she is not meeting the expectations. The amalgamation of educational psychology and neurology might not be valid as the cognitive models are not the same thing as neural processes (Clement & Lovat, 2012, p. 546).

In addition, the relevance of neurosciences to education is debated in the field and characterized as “a bridge too far” or “folk-theory about the brain and learning” (Bruer as cited in Clement & Lovat, 2012, p. 538). Nevertheless, the image of student as a “brain” has implications in education. For actors of the curriculum, the grades for measuring the child against the imposed expectation is a measurement of mind performance, which happens in the brain: although expectations are not derived from neuroscientific findings. They are highly political as the policy production can be contracted out or created by involving all actors of the curriculum except children. For example, the following is an excerpt from Pinto’s (2012) analysis of curriculum production during the Ontario social policy reform under the Progressive-Conservative government in the 1990’s, which clearly illustrated the political nature of the curriculum making:

Under the Common Sense Revolution, the government followed through on its campaign promise to decrease the size of government, opening the door to increased privatization of service delivery as well as policy production. Internally, ministries were directed to identify and concentrate on ‘core business’ and reduce or eliminate peripheral activities, especially if private or volunteer sectors could perform them as ‘alternate service delivery’ (White, 2002), thus paving the way for outsourcing. According to the Provincial Auditor, the rate of privatization increased during that time – outside consultant spending rose from $271 million in 1998, to $662 million in 2002 (Mallan, 2002), while the number of full-time Ontario Public Service (OPS) employees decreased from 81,000 to 61,000 (White, 2002). A fundamental shift in framing educational issues also occurred, with the introduction of neo-liberal metaphors, according to which education was a ‘business’ whose ‘customers’ were parents and students. In the process, privatization was
rhetorically normalized and justified. Together, the neo-liberal underpinnings and framing that defined the educational problems and their solutions set the tone for curriculum policy production. Swift and significant changes to education policy resulted. The reforms included a new approach to funding, and major changes to policies governing school board organization, curriculum, student assessment, and teacher working conditions. The curriculum policy that was formulated included a significant reduction in the number of secondary school courses that were offered (from 1400 to approximately 200), more prescriptive and comprehensive learning expectations for each course and subject, and a standardized structure for assessment. (Pinto, 2012, p. 146)

Similarly, the grades, which measure the fulfilment of the expectations and are the basis of the binary pass or fail system, can be interpreted as signs of normal or abnormal human development and can be perceived as diagnostic tools rather than development guidelines, which might be politically biased. The link between expectations as parameters of learning, which, as seen above, are culturally and politically determined and learning as “patterns and connections,” is not yet very clear:

Although there is general agreement that neuroscience contributes to the knowledge of the biological parameters of learning, there is disagreement on the question of whether this knowledge can be successfully translated into usable knowledge that will assist teachers in their curriculum work. (Clement & Lovat, 2012, p. 540).

On the other hand, there is the view of creativity as emergent. This pattern is reoccurring in the teacher, principal, and ECE’s interviews as well as the curricular texts. In the case of the teacher, creativity had stages: understanding the materials, emergence of problem, planning, executing, using, and reflecting, which was visible in the operational curriculum when she allowed and encouraged the children to redesign the learning environment according to their interest. The early childhood educator suggested the same idea of emergent creativity by shifting the locus of control from the teacher to the children and by allowing the children to be curriculum contributors, by responding to their interests, and giving them a voice, as well as by ensuring an emotionally safe environment where mistakes are not punished but rather integral part of creativity and learning. The principal’s definition, “allowing one to imagine and bring that
imagination into reality” (Principal interview) referred to the same idea of emergent creativity, but it added another layer of understanding by adding the social dimension of “allowing” and its disappearance as children progress through the grades, because of the expectation-driven curriculum and EQAO. I also witnessed the emergence of creativity during the children’s interviews as they were painting, and in the class when they contributed to their learning environment or created new illustrations to re-imagine the text.

7.3.8 Counterpoint: Reggio Emilia creativity and the new workforce.

When looking at the Reggio aim of early childhood education, the system, and their relationship to creativity, I noticed that the ethical grounding of the child as a complete, capable human being was the basis for the aim and the system. The main aim of education for children was to discover and invent, as clearly stated by Malaguzzi (1998), while for the teachers and the rest of the system was to create the optimum environments to create. The main condition of learning was discovery and invention consisting of a positively charged community, where the children felt safe and free, developed a positive sense of identity in relationship with peers, and participated in the community.

The ethical contradictions that plague the conceptualizations of early childhood in the Western world are criticized by Malaguzzi (1998) when he stated that the Western societies were either incapable to understand and educate or immoral, because they disregarded the natural rhythm and time frame of children and childhood. The main cause of this state of the matter resides in valuing time and money (paid by the hour), which trickles down from working age into the childhood. The children become hurried into school and out of childhood before they have a chance to experience it, to play, to learn, and to grow in-sync with their nature. Reggio is a bastion of resistance to this hurriedness, which allows the child to exist in the present by preserving and respecting the time and rhythm of childhood, by creating an environment that nourishes them emotionally, by motivating and forming and reforming the role of early childhood educators as researchers of children, by creating a horizontal net-like system where pedagogisti, staff members, teachers, the community, parents, and children have a say in the curriculum. The teacher–student relationship of the Ontario system in Reggio becomes an indented relocation of power from adult to child, as the ECEs must observe and listen to the children to find their interests and make them “coincide” with their own. Researching the
children has multiple purposes: showing appreciation for children’s work, provoking children’s self-reflection, co-constructing with families’ ways of perceiving the children, and creating a basis for future projects with pertinent expectations, which are resonating with the children. The projects based on children’s interests motivate the children and bring them joy. Mistakes are not punished through grades but viewed as opportunities for learning. Multimodal communication is fostered, and no medium is privileged. As proof, the atelier is an arts sanctuary, a safe place of exploration, experimentation, and research for various forms and media of expression. The physical environment is a children’s place and not a place for children (Strong-Wilson & Ellis, 2007, p. 43): It is the third teacher, designed with the community in mind, where its heart is represented by the piazza, the meeting point for games, friendships, and common activities.

Drummond’s (2000) text is in tune with the philosophical groundings discussed. The text constructed an image of the child as capable of discerning and acting individually and cooperatively toward the individual and collective good. The aim of the paper, and implicitly the early childhood system it envisioned, was to provide guidance in building an authentic ethical educator and child relationship through systematic, purposeful activities with an end chosen by children. Therefore, children’s voices are an intrinsic part of a curriculum where the teacher cares unconditionally and encourages students to become responsible persons who are passionate explorers, communicators, and collaborators.

7.4 What are the Implications of these Representations for Children?

7.4.1 Ontario kindergarten children.

The creativity inquiry of both texts and the operational curriculum revealed that there were discourses of creativity at play in the curriculum, which converged towards the neoliberal discourse in education where:

Neoliberalism encompasses a fundamental belief in business and market-driven solutions aimed at societal problems facilitated through privatization and deregulation. This culture and ethic of entrepreneurialism has become the guiding principle of our time, making neoliberalism a form of governmentality-an all encompassing rationality for society that places every action, process, and behaviour under economic measure in the service of market fundamentalism so that non-economic
forms can be analyzed in regard to potential capital (including human intellectual capital) in the market economy – a sort of economic analysis of non-economic (Foucault, 2004/2008, p. 243). In this way, neoliberalism not only governs nations, states, groups, and individuals, but also works to control culture and education. (Kalin, 2018, p. 2)

As such, the He-paradigm creativity discourse in education promotes an inquiry into exceptional creative products (e.g., email versus letter), which points toward forming evaluative thinking in terms of intellectual or pragmatic value and progress. Assigning value to creative products is a kind of economic analysis, which associates creativity with its worth in an economic sense. The I-creative paradigm sourced creativity dicourses present in the operational and programmatic curriculum proposed creativity as process—divergent thinking, which had as an aim flexibility and adaptability of the child that should be capable of shifting identities, relationships, and use of products. Both concepts are strongly desired neoliberal qualities of the worker and society:

A type of artwork, or any entity for that matter, that is entirely makeshift, that is nothing but fragments and temporary solutions, seems surprisingly well suited to negotiate today’s entrepreneurial and communicational mandates, in which supreme value is placed on flexibility, on the ability to improvise identities and relationships, to relentlessly search and capture, to connect and extend, to point-and-click things in and out of existence—in short, to cast the widest informational net possible and ad lib the most novel conjunctions out of whatever happens to wash up in the mesh. (Relyea, 2013, p. 200)

The presence of the I-paradigm in the early childhood programmatic and operational kindergarten curriculum in Ontario also revealed the democratization of creativity as a finding when reading across data. When intersecting the democratization of creativity with the domains of knowledge where creativity is supposed to be taught (as seen in the analysis of the programmatic curriculum expectations and learning area time allocation), the results were that everyone can be creative, but only in the domains assigned by the programmatic curriculum: arts, science and technology, and mathematics (patterning). The analysis pointed towards literacy as the main emphasis of the curriculum, hence creativity, although considered transdisciplinary, did not play an important role in the education of children when it came to disciplines. Usually, the
verb *create* in the context of children has the meaning of make as in “create a graph,” where a graph is a visual representation of quantities as a closed task. Creativity comes in small doses and only when it is useful or has economic value attached to it, including the areas of learning. The We-paradigm in early revealed creativity as part of the system where the teachers as gatekeepers (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), must use the outlined expectations of the programmatic curriculum to determine the area of learning where children can create and to evaluate children’s creativity. Creativity as constructed in the text was emergent at a declarative level and programmed at a practical level. Creativity in these curricula was not coherently conceptualized and seemed to appropriate language to fit the ultimate purpose of curriculum: standardization of creativity and measurable expectations to control it. Standardization as a method of control is part of the neoliberal educational reform (Ross & Gibson, 2007) and results in construing creativity “as an orderly, predictable, and apolitical process” (Kalin, 2016, p. 38), which can be measured and eliminates or restricts other critical modes.

Play and creativity demonstrated the conceptual confusion between play as an independent activity and play as academic work, where the latter takes precedence over authentic play and takes over the curriculum as “play-based curriculum” with expectations. All these discourses point toward the neoliberal agenda in education as progress, standardization, efficiency, lack of critical thinking and multimodality, and academic work disguised in play. They are all, intentionally or not, constructing an image of the child who is to be educated for the future successful life in economic terms. The child is a human capital financial in a governmental economic project, which has as an aim the formation and uniformization of the new, selectively creative, flexible, adaptable, problem-solving, unable to think critically, or to express themselves in other modes other than print—a worker who is ready to join the new labour market and to be ruled by consent. These qualities are cultivated the moment the child enters the system through the expectations, which are politically and culturally determined, but are presented as backed up by science by drawing on the neurological discourse in education. The neurological discourse, which designates the brain as the locus of learning seems to grant a medical legitimacy to expectations:

In order for learning to take place, the brain must be able to make connections and find patterns. As children make connections between the things they already know and new
information, their brain creates patterns that help them understand the world around them. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 40)

Employing the neurological discourse in the program, as in culturally and politically driven expectation cued to be interpreted as medical or biological truths, can have dramatic consequences in education including the early years. For example, when the learning of skills and knowledge, as outlined in the expectations, does not occur, one can infer that the child’s brain does not make proper synapses or “it” cannot find patterns; the child is represented clinically by the organ and the organ becomes “it.” The child is depersonalized and objectified. The syllogism can be taken further, which cues the following interpretation: if the child does not achieve the expectations, the child’s brain is at fault; the child then can be declared not normal because he or she is not meeting the expectations. Here is where the border between educational psychology and neurology becomes blurred and confusing, especially for actors of the curriculum who do not have enough specialized medical knowledge to separate the two discourses and realize that there is not enough evidence to clearly connect them: “While we might be able to provide a very detailed account of the chemical and electrical elements of synaptic connections and the complex neural pathways, none of this comes close to explaining human learning” (Clark, 2015, p. 40).

A clear example of confusion is given by the following statement regarding the teachers ECEs present in the 2016 kindergarten curriculum text:

Educators who have an awareness of a child’s development take each component into account as part of the whole, with an understanding of and focus on the following elements:

- cognitive development – brain development, processing and reasoning skills, use of strategies for learning (Ontario Ministry of education, 2016, p. 60)

So, what happens when the child is not meeting the expectations? The system provides the solution of pathologizing the child and provides remedies. At a legal and theoretical level in the name of diversity and equality rights there is the inclusive education that solves the moral and legal dilemma, which translates at a practical level in accommodation or modification of the
expectations through the individual education plan (IEP). The expectations and all the apparatus around them propose a deficit model of the child, including his or her creativity. Students are portrayed in terms of their deficits of fundamental skills, goals, and concepts, and their behaviour is standardized through expectations. They are not normal yet, but with the help of the curriculum, they will become normal and, hopefully, as identical as possible following the standardized nature of the expectations. The dangers of thinking about children through the lens of the deficit model resides in justifying the situation (i.e., students not meeting the expectations) by placing the problem within the individual rather than existing social conditions, and consequently by fixing the child rather than conditions leading to the situation (Gorski, 2011, p. 155). The effects of fixing the individual was visible in the operational curriculum through the phonological awareness screening as identifying the shortcomings of children, in the school improvement plan, which focused on two students who were not meeting the expectations, and through assessments performed by the teacher when every child was evaluated through the reading exam (DRA) and math exam (sorting), and in the struggle of the teacher in teaching reading to children who were not interested or not ready to learn, and in the struggle of the parent to teach the letters to her son. The EQAO standardized test, as mentioned by the principal, was another form of displacement of the “problem,” this time at provincial level where schools were seen in terms of shortcomings and not as a result of the existing social conditions. The social effects at the micro level of constructing an image of the child who is constantly evaluated and seen in the light of his or her deficits in social relationships, strained under the pressure of expectations that extended beyond school into homework time, where concerned parents and teachers who are cued to think that their children are not normal, because they are not able to meet the expectation (e.g., read the letters when they are four or five-year-old). Their concerns and efforts to fix the child and train the social relationship, in some cases stress the children, as seen in the parent and teacher interviews.

The children resist by shutting down. This is the moment when they become abnormal, according to the politically charged expectations and practices. Child’s resistance to learning is portrayed as abnormal and might necessitate conjugated efforts to fix him or her. Why is having a will of your own (e.g., I do not want to learn the letters, because I have more important things to do such playing with my friends) considered abnormal? Why is not learning, because you are not interested in or ready to learn, considered abnormal? The answers to these questions point
towards a power relationship between the government and the child, where the government seeks to impose its will onto a four and five-year-old child and constructs a system to do so through expectations. The expectations portray the human capital necessary to become the new, creative worker who will feed the lines of the new labour market as required by the business world; through teachers and ECEs who are hired to impose the governmental will through managing, evaluating the knowledge and skills, and grading following the model of punishment and reward and business transactions; by hijacking play; through school as an environment that suggest the conditions of a cognitive and behavioural laboratory set up severed from the world and community, and through declaring students who do not meet the expectations abnormal and taking special measures such as an IEP to manufacture and ensure consent. The following excerpt from the 2016 kindergarten curriculum text described the IEP expectation options available to teachers in case of children with special needs:

In any given classroom, children may demonstrate a wide range of strengths and needs. Kindergarten educators plan programs that recognize this diversity and design tasks and challenges that respect the children’s particular abilities so that every child can derive the greatest possible benefit from the learning process. Integrated assessment and instruction that are suited to the characteristics of a diverse group of children but are also precisely tailored to the unique strengths and needs of each child can be achieved using the principles of Universal Design for Learning, differentiated instruction, and a tiered approach. In planning Kindergarten programs for children with special education needs, educators begin by examining both the program expectations and the individual child’s strengths and learning needs to determine which of the following options is appropriate for the child:

- no accommodations or modified expectations;
- accommodations only;
- modified expectations, with the possibility of accommodations;
- alternative expectations, which are not derived from the program expectations.
If the child requires accommodations and/or modified or alternative expectations, the relevant information, as described in the following paragraphs, must be recorded in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP). (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 98)

7.4.2 Counterpoint: Reggio Emilia children.

A counter to the normal or abnormal construct is Drummond’s (2000) text where creativity and its semantic net, as identified through the curriculum, is seen as an ability that anyone can develop and implies doing something new, trying things out, and taking risks. As a value, creative expression is something to strive for. Creativity can manifest in any area or domain, from creating a community to creating work of arts. This is a democratic notion that belongs to the I- and We-paradigms of creativity where the teachers create a social environment that promotes and enhances children’s creativity (enterprise). Although the situations and guides provided by the author ignored the surroundings and power relations outside the teacher–learner relationship, it proposed a model of creativity that put above everything else the well-being of the children when it came to teacher–learner interactions.

When it came to the link between children and creativity I found that students were portrayed as capable to create and should be encouraged to create. From a relational point of view the child–educator relationship was constructed as a personal one with an imbalance of power. Children were curriculum informants and decision-makers. They were both resilient and fragile, and for these reasons teachers must interact with them in a carefully ethical manner.

Enterprise talk leads to the operational curriculum, which emphasizes the attitudes towards and ways of interacting with children that are conducive to an “enterprise” classroom. Children are not tabula rasa to be filled with information or knowledge, or given directions, or given praise without meaning as all of these actions have negative expressive, relational, and experiential messages (e.g., authentic praise or behavioural external rewards). Pedagogy is about constructing an authentic teaching–learning relationship where the teacher acts in loco parentis with unconditional care and regard. Another social dimension addressed in Drummond’s (2000) paper, which seemed to be rooted in Dewey’s (Ross, 1992, p.166) cooperative community as a way of living and learning, in which the individual good was embedded in the common good.
The same patterns of children as capable and members of a community, as well as the ethical teacher–children relationship appears in Malaguzzi’s (1998) text. Creativity was put forward in Reggio and could be traced to a multitude of theories from John Dewey’s art process to Vygotsky’s social learning and creativity. Malaguzzi (1998) created a synthetic vision of Reggio creativity, as what was present in the academic field was not fully compatible with the Reggio ethical and pedagogical values. Most of the psychological theories embraced by the elitist vision of the genius or the individualistic and atomistic I-paradigm. Reggio’s worldview of creativity is a collage of theories that are compatible and complementary with human rights and children’s rights discourse. This is why the entire curriculum was not written and ridden by behavioural expectations, but by project multidimensional and open-ended outcomes. The teachers are co-workers and engage the community in planning and fostering the development of the skills knowledge and attitudes: architects are designing the educational environments in collaboration with teachers, families are contributing with ideas and volunteer, art teachers are creating safe long-term spaces and times for research and experiments. Students are referred to as children: as complete human beings who are growing up; just like any human being, they have rights, and in particular they have having the right to learn what they are interested in. Reggio children are independent meaning makers who learn, fail, take risks, and create out of necessity, desire, and curiosity; they are creators, because they are allowed and encouraged to invent and discover. The process of learning and creating is a continuous osmosis with the social and physical environment. Consequently, their rights entitle them to the best a community can offer from ethical ways of learning and communication and expression that respects their natural rhythm to physical environments that are created for them and favours holistic growing opportunities to relationships with the community, which anchors their time and reality in the surrounding society.

The first effect is enjoyment of learning and creating. Children are not trained on a schedule, which prepares them for their working future; they learn how to be cooperative and negotiate conflicts; how to create and problem solve without, with a minimum, or with on-demand adult interference. Reggio creativity is multifaceted and draws from multiple discourses while keeping its moral compass: children’s human rights. As such, creativity is a process, an educational outcome, a characteristic of the mind, and a set of skills that are not extraordinary; it is elusive; it does not belong to a genius; it has traits from the I- and We-paradigm of creativity.
Although it is a personal trait, its careful fostering and cultivation by the teachers and community, as well as a sharing and negotiating of ideas adds a social dimension, which is characteristic to a social paradigm of creativity. Children are active agents and guide the planning, teaching, learning, and assessment. Their natural inclination towards figuring out how the world works and multimodal communication is fostered by teachers who lend their knowledge and skills. The physical environment, which resembles a home rather than a school, is the catalyst where the children are free and feel safe to take risks, choose, and negotiate their learning. These purposefully created social and physical spaces nurture the emergence of creativity out of necessity, interest, desire, and a motivation to learn. Furthermore, children are in a permanent connection and collaboration with the community, which allows direct interaction with the social environment surrounding the school. Children are not in survival mode and feel temporarily abandoned by the family in a strange place called kindergarten. They must feel be welcomed, cared for, and respected. Time stands still and is patient until they are ready to go further. Their rhythm dictates and is synchronized with the teachers’ teaching.

7.5 What are the Implications of these Representations for Educators Charged with Promoting Creativity?

7.5.1 Ontario kindergarten teachers and educators.

Both Ontario curricular texts (OME, 2010, 2016) present a conceptually confused notion of play as academic work. How free play and academic work manifest in the evaluation of the expectations might need more clarification. The curriculum asked kindergarten teachers to evaluate only one overall expectation clearly connected to children’s creativity (as the child is required to create), and that is in mathematics. This was also confusing as the documents highlighted the role of arts in creativity and brain development. The job descriptions of a kindergarten teacher and ECE involve the planning, teaching, setting up the environment, and constant assessments of 124 (OME, 2010) or 126 (OME, 2016) specific expectations, and evaluations of 38 (OME, 2010) and 31 (OME, 2016) overall expectations. This is for an average of 26 children (four and five-year-olds who sometimes have washroom accidents, do not know what a queue is, cry after mummy, have not had enough sleep, or are hungry at 9:45 well before the scheduled break, and are not interested in graphs or patterning), per class, over two years with six report cards per child. As seen in the analysis of the operational curriculum and the
teacher and principal’s interviews the teachers are transformed into data collectors, in grade one pre-trainers, surveillance agents, behavioural trainers, managers, and accountants, with rubrics and checklists at hand, and the ECEs have to contribute to this process. The surreal madness of measuring the child’s behaviours in the name of a politically and culturally determined normality hijacks play, controls creativity, misses authentic relationships, and the meaning of life. The requirement of meeting the expectations, urging learning with or without context, interest, and motivation is about creating consensus so that students can be ready for grade one social engineering using a Tylerian approach (Pinar et al., 2004a, p. 34) with the portrait of new worker in mind. They disregard teachers and ECEs as professionals for the sake of standardization for the uniformity of students and behaviour control.

Teachers and educators resist. Their resistance is given by their ethical compass when they act in loco parentis. As seen in the analysis of the operational curriculum and interviews, teacher and ECE’s proximity to their children determines how they see children as human beings with rights, whose creativity is emerging as their interests and motivation guide them. The teacher and ECE’s creativity emerges in modes of resistance in allowing children to redesign their environment: changing it from a place for children into a children’s place, by blurring and interconnecting the boundaries of subjects, and by provoking and following children’s interests. Paradoxically, creativity as an emergent cue of interpretation is given by the programmatic curriculum through the appropriation of the Reggio language. As seen in the teacher’s interview, her critical thinking with regards to imposed expectations, unbalanced curriculum with a strong emphasis on literacy, and their consequences in pedagogy (drills, over teaching, and children’s anxiety) created an ethical tension that was conducive to subtly speaking up against the system and proposing solutions, “more to the side of letting them play and create” (Teacher’s interview).

7.5.2. Counterpoint: Reggio Emilia teachers and educators.

Reggio provided guidance for educators that the Ontario discourse of creativity did not. In contrast to the asymmetries between the teacher and ECE in Ontario, Drummond’s (2000) text, for instance, portrayed teachers in a horizontal relationship—a kind of brotherhood or guild where they collaborated, shared ideas, and researched collaboratively. The teacher was an altruistic human being with the best and noble intentions who was capable of giving children unconditional attention and consideration. Although he or she has immense power over children,
the teacher cannot make the children be something they do not choose to be. In moments of dissonance between thought and practice when interacting with children, the teacher is in need of help or a “handrail,” and the Drummond (2000) paper provides ethical ways to interact with children. The image of teachers was carefully crafted showing a transformational possibility by engaging in an ethical relationship with the child.

The teacher as an ethical human being who acts in loco parentis is present in Malaguzzi’s (1998) text, too, where teachers’ activities are related to the concept of perpetual dynamism and have an ethical side. In a school and system that trusts the teachers, their professionalism in the freedom and responsibility to take care and teach the students is without a prescriptive written curriculum. The teachers are part of the community, which is continuously connected and nurtured. The emphasis on group teaching and group learning, strengths of children and constant “re-formation” of teachers suggests a left-wing political ideological stratum, which envisions a highly ethical society based on collaboration, cooperation, respect, and equal opportunity. Teachers are highly sensitive to the needs and interests of children and are driven by their curiosity. The ideas emerged in the dialogue and became the curriculum and a learning path. Children’s interests were validated, and their voices were listened to. There is an inversion of power, a co-production of the pedagogical space where mistakes are part of learning, where time and space are in-sync with children and dedicated to them. Teachers observe the children and respond to them by constructing an environment anchored in their interests, by making visible their learning, by provoking children’s self-reflection, and by changing parents’ way of perceiving their children. Their ethical compass is guiding every activity from interactions with children, to professional development, and to exchange of information with parents and other members of society. The kindergarten is taking part and actively constructing an authentic dialogue with the society.

7.6 Concluding Remarks

The last stage of this study consists of the identification of possible social inequities by using Heydon and Wang’s (2006) Continuum of Curricular Paradigms and Opportunities for Efficiency and Ethics. Heydon and Wang, based on the work of Kumar (Kumar as cited in Heydon & Wang, 2006), relayed three strategies that allowed people to prioritize efficiency over ethics: denial of proximity, where distance is placed between the ones in power and their
subordinates; effacement of face, where asymmetrical relationships of power allowed maintaining the hierarchy, and reduction to traits where people’s positions in an organization were defined in terms of traits. They employed these conditions in education when creating ethical curricula as follows: 1) proximity: people in the proximity of the child should make curricular decisions as it is harder to ignore ethical implications when people are in proximity with each other; 2) reciprocal relationships with children as a way to humanize relationships, and 3) seeing the children as ethical human beings and not as defined by their role as students. Based on these premises Heydon and Wang (2006) created a continuum of curricular paradigms, which were envisioned in terms of efficiency at one end and ethics at the other. They identified the emergent approach of teaching at the ethics end, the prescriptive approach at the efficiency end, and adaptable somewhere in the middle. Their analysis used Reggio Emilia as an example of emergent curriculum. This positioning was used as a point of reference to validate my findings with regards to creativity discourses in Reggio Emilia.

Proposed as a text that guides teaching practice and values including creativity, Drummond’s (2000) text envisioned a democratic vision of creativity, which regarded personal accomplishments. It represented teachers in a community of teachers and proposed ethical and authentic ways to interact with children. Children were both fragile and resistant, participated in the community and could make decisions. The subject was represented by any systematic activity towards an end chosen by children. The classroom was focused only on the child and teacher and how to create an ethical relationship with the child. The aim and result of the curriculum was represented by building a caring authentic relationship between the child and the teacher. All these characteristics place the Drummond’s (2000) text somewhere between the adaptable and emergent curriculum, because the social environment was absent. Nevertheless, when looking at the three corollaries of proximity, children as full ethical beings and reciprocal relationship, Drummond’s (2000) vision tended to be closer to the ethical end of the continuum. Malaguzzi (1998) proposed a vision of creativity as a tool and characteristic of mental processes rather than a discrete mental ability. Teachers as part of creativity appeared in the curriculum in three instances: as collaborators and co-teachers, researchers, and re-formed professionals, which encouraged the community’s input in the co creation of curriculum. Teachers provoked, listened to, observed, and documented children. When planning learning teachers summoned and implicated all the actors of curriculum: children, parents, pedagogista, atelierista, and the
community. Children were seen as human beings who were growing, changing. They were viewed as able to use creativity in complex mental acts out of necessity or possibility; children were autonomous meaning makers and knowledge constructors and were responsible social beings. This made their objectification less likely. Committed to ethical symmetrical relationships, Reggio children were curricular informants and the community and the environment played a fundamental role in learning and creativity. They organized their learning in emergent projects. There were no imposed learning expectations, and the aim of the education was to discover and invent. Communication was done in multiple modes, and the result was a child that was motivated and learned and was considered a full, ethical being. The main characteristics described above clearly placed Reggio under the emergent approach of the curriculum.

When looking at the Ontario kindergarten curriculum, programmatic and operational including the actors’ interviews, I noticed the coexistence of contradictory points of view. As demonstrated in the analysis, the two curriculum documents were very similar by sharing the same confusing conceptualizations of play and creativity, by sharing most of the overall learning expectations, and by placing creativity in a math expectation (patterning). Both defined the students in terms of neurological and behaviourist perspectives with the latter as dictating the learning, teaching, assessing, and evaluation of learning expectations, which reveal an asymmetrical relationship of power. The student was represented both as capable and in need of help and support, as having the right to play, but where play was academic work. The aim was to create future productive citizens, and to create creative thinking habits that were useful for the productive citizens. The cause of these acts might reside in the system, which uses a Tylerian (Pinar et al., 2004a, p. 34) approach to education with expectations as aims. The differences between the 2010 and 2016 Ontario curricular documents were not fundamental as they shared the expectations. The first difference consisted in naming the environment “the third teacher” and attributing the environment with teaching qualities. The second was using documentation as an evaluation tool; both were appropriated from Reggio, yet do not have the same meaning. Creativity in the Ontario curricular documents was emergent at a declarative level and programmatic and standardized at an applied level through expectations. It was confined to arts and patterning in mathematics and marginalized through time allocation: Children’s creativity disappeared under the weight of expectations. Play, as intrinsically linked to creativity, was
hijacked and transformed into a play-based teaching and learning strategy of the knowledge and skills outlined in the expectations. The operational curriculum analysis revealed that, although they tried to resist, teachers, ECEs, and the children were overwhelmed by the assessments from all levels of school management. Children were portrayed in terms of their deficits and their behaviour was standardized through the expectations they had to be measured against. Because of expectations, which translated into over-teaching and drilling, at least one child showed signs of anxiety, while another shut down. The teacher was concerned about the effects and suggested letting the children play and create. Principals were fulfilling the roles of general managers, in charge of overseeing all types of the assessments from EQAO to phonological awareness testing, to the school improvements plans. The community served as an audience and providers of creative opportunities if one had the financial means. Parents served as receivers of messages from school and re-enforcers of curriculum in literacy. These characteristics placed the Ontario kindergarten in an adaptable position by denying proximity through objectification as seen in the expectations, by intentionally construing asymmetrical teacher–ECE–children power relationships, which in turn reflected the lack of full commitment to the vision of the children as full human beings.

When comparing the two paradigms of education, the findings can be categorized in terms of enablers and constrainers of creativity. The emergent paradigm of creativity, which draws on multiple theories while using ethics as gatekeeper, is the most beneficent for children and the system. The constraints of creativity are sourced in the neoliberal discourse in education, in the accountability for efficiency’s sake, in creativity promoted and standardized in areas of learning, which will be of use in the future working age of the child, in transforming teachers and ECEs as managers, accountants, and grade one pre-trainers, and students in objects of political will and desire.

This comparison invited reflection over a particular quote written by Heydon and Wang (2006) twelve years ago. Their questions, call to action, and recommendation to create curricula that have ethical foundations are still valid:

We live in turbulent times. Governments are running scared from changes brought about by globalization, and in the face of unemployment and declining standards of living for
the masses, governments are hiding behind the solution of efficiency in ECE (David, Raban, Ure, Gooch, Jago, & Barriere, 2000). Yet truly democratic governments must explore with their constituencies: What is ECE being efficient towards? What should be the aims of ECE? How can ECE accommodate diverse aims? The macro (i.e., social) responses to these questions may produce approaches to ECE that offer support to educators, children and communities, but then these questions need again to be taken up at a micro (i.e., classroom) level, as in the case of Reggio Emilia and Te Whariki. If these questions are not explored, if the deconstruction of ECE does not happen within the context of ECE production, then its foundations are unethical. As such, an ethical productive/deconstructive process must be recursive and without end. (Heydon & Wang, 2006, pp. 43-44)

I have tried to follow their advice, and this dissertation is my response to their call to action. In my opinion, some possible recommendations that might disrupt the current Ontario ECE state of affairs or practices that are similarly happening across the globe are:

1. Critical democratization of the curriculum making process by including all of the curriculum actors including children and educational researchers in the making of the curriculum; Pinto’s (2012) words are relevant in highlighting the possibility:

   As such, critical democracy differs from other, more widely-discussed conceptions of democracy through its requirement of a certain type of participation in civic life. Beyond traditional democracy’s narrow concern with equality, critical democracy embraces equity as a goal, through genuine and inclusive participation that ‘seriously and honestly acknowledges the importance of equity, diversity and social justice’ (Portelli & Solomon, 2001, p. 15). This requires robust citizen participation that includes several characteristics: inclusion, with equal citizen access for contribution, political equality among citizens that includes dialogue and legitimate voice in public deliberation, and devolution of political agenda control to citizens that can only be achieved through civic participation and dialogue. (Pinto, 2012, p. 145)

2. The realization that not only teachers act in loco parentis. The teachers are the government’s representatives and human instruments acting in loco parentis on behalf of
the government through the policies in place; the government should also behave as a parent in every policy and document it creates; in loco parentis responsibilities do not resume to physical safety and should include full commitment to an ethical frame of curriculum, where teachers are trusted as professionals and children are envisioned as human beings with rights.

3. Allowing the existence of ECE creativity in its multidimensionality by having as an example Reggio’s worldview of creativity as a collage of theories that are compatible and complementary with human rights and children’s rights discourse.

The main findings of this dissertation point towards some other possibilities as research projects and call to action. A first line of research consists in the examination of the operational curriculum of the 2016 programmatic curriculum and comparison with the present findings. A second thread is to research Reggio Emilia beyond Malaguzzi’s (1998) text and observe it in action through participant observation in its cultural context. The third line of inquiry opened by this project is to examine the way the Ontario programmatic kindergarten curriculum was created, as in analyzing the process from macro and micro perspectives from its incipient stage to the final version.
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Appendix A: Letter of Information and Consent Form – Educators Inside the Classroom
Discourses of Creativity in Kindergarten Curricula

Beatrix Bocazar, PhD Candidate, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education
Dr. Rachel Heydon, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education

LETTER OF INFORMATION: EDUCATORS INSIDE THE CLASSROOM

My name is Beatrix Bocazar and I am PhD candidate at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research on theories of creativity in full-day kindergarten programs.

Through a case study of kindergarten curriculum, the purposes of this study are to provide insight into how theories of creativity influence the kindergarten program; to understand what these theories of creativity look like in the classroom; and to understand their implications for children, educators, and society.

If you agree to participate in this study, your classroom/program will be observed by me. I will be making field notes; photographing the classroom, children involved in creativity-related practices, and creativity-related artifacts such as samples of artwork; audio recording and video recording your regular kindergarten program; and observing the program. I will also conduct short interviews with your students. In the interviews each child will be invited to choose from amongst a series of finger puppets (with choices reflecting differing races and genders) and asked, “Please tell me the story of what you do at school.” Children’s responses will be audio and video recorded (depending on what the child says s/he prefers) and notes will be made of non-verbal communication. Interviews will take place in a quiet part of the classroom. The total time commitment for each student in this research will be less than 10 minutes. All classroom-based research will be conducted during the normal part of the kindergarten program with the exception of the interviews with adults. The total time commitment for kindergarten students/educators will be 3 weeks to 1 month.

You will also be asked to join me in one audio recorded interview that will last for approximately one hour or two interviews of 30-40 minutes (whichever suits you). Interviewing will take place in a location that is agreeable to you and me. In the interview, you will be asked to talk about your understanding of creativity; creativity in the curriculum (e.g. Is creativity teachable? How? How is creativity shaping the curriculum? How is the make-up of your classroom, creativity shaping the curriculum?), your role in children’s creativity (creativity related professional development, and creativity related teaching experiences), and the role of physical and social resources in children’s creativity. I may ask questions regarding individual children but only those for whom I have consent. You will also be invited to check the transcripts and offer clarification, elaboration, or any other feedback you deem pertinent. The review of the transcript might take one hour.

The benefits of participating in this project would include the opportunity to analyze your understanding of creativity and its effects in the classroom, and to contribute to a body of knowledge that may assist other similar efforts. If you are interested in a summary of the research, I would be happy to supply this for you at your request.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only. Participants will be given code names as will the school. However, people close to the situation may be able to identify you. All information collected for the study will be stored confidentially. Only my supervisor professors and I will have access to the recordings and the transcripts. If a professional service is employed to transcribe the interviews, the transcriber will be required to
sign a confidentiality agreement. You may be quoted directly in the research report, but you will not be identified as the source of the quotation. Photographs of the environment may be used in the future in any presentation or publication of the researcher (e.g., scholarly conferences, journal articles, art shows). Your image will not be shared without your consent. Please indicate whether or not your image may be used in presentations or publications of the researcher on the consent form.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your status at the school. No observational notes, audio recordings, video recordings, or photographs will be made for those in the classroom who have not agreed to participate in the study. School administrators will not be informed of the withdrawal.

Please keep this letter. If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, University of Western Ontario, at xxxxxxxx or xxxxxxxx @uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at xxxxxxxx@uwo.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Rachel Heydon at xxxxxxxx (ext. xxxxxxxx) or xxxxxxxx @uwo.ca.

Thank you,
Beatrix Bocazar
Discourses of Creativity in Kindergarten Curricula
Beatrix Bocazar, PhD Candidate, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education
Dr. Rachel Heydon, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information and have had the nature of the study explained to me. I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Please initial if you agree that the researcher may use your image for the following:

______ Scholarly conferences
______ Journal articles
______ Presentation of findings art show

Name (please print):

Signature: Date:

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Date:
Appendix B: Letter of Information and Consent Form - Families

Discourses of Creativity in Kindergarten Curricula
Beatrix Bocazar, PhD Candidate, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education
Dr. Rachel Heydon, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education

LETTER OF INFORMATION: FAMILIES

My name is Beatrix Bocazar and I am PhD candidate at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research on theories of creativity in full-day kindergarten programs.

The purposes of this study are to investigate how creativity influences the kindergarten program; to understand what creativity looks like in the classroom; and to understand the implications for children, educators, and society.

Information for this research will be collected by making field notes, photographing, audio and video recording your child’s regular kindergarten program, photographing products made in this program (e.g., writing, drawing), and observing the program. If you agree that your child may participate, your educator will be asked about the part that your child plays in the program. If you consent to your child’s participation in the study I will also conduct a short interview with your child. In this interview your child will be invited to choose from amongst a series of finger puppets (with choices reflecting differing races and genders) and asked, “Please tell me the story of what you do at school.” Children’s responses will be audio and video recorded (depending on what the child says s/he prefers) and notes will be made of non-verbal communication. Interviews will take place in a quiet part of the classroom. The total time commitment for your child in this research will be less than 10 minutes. All research will be conducted during the normal part of your child’s kindergarten programming. If you do not agree to your child’s participation in this study, his/her products (writing, drawing) will not be photographed, no observational notes will be made for him/her, no audio or video recordings will be made of him/her and he/she will not be discussed during the educator interview.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and your child’s full name will not be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. Participants will be given code names as will the school. However, people close to the situation may be able to identify the participants. All information collected for the study will be stored confidentially. Only my supervisor professors and I will have access to the recordings and the transcripts. If a professional service is employed to transcribe the interviews, the transcriber will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Your child may be quoted directly in the research report, and his/her products may be reproduced, but s/he will not be identified as the source of the quotation or products as I will use pseudonyms. Photographs and video of the children in the environment may be used in the future in any presentation or publication of the researcher (e.g. art show, scholarly conferences, journal articles). Individuals will be identifiable to those viewing the photographs or video footage. Please indicate whether or not your child’s image may be used in presentations or publications of the researcher on the consent form.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to have your child participate or withdraw your child from the study; your child may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your child’s status at the
school. No observational notes, audio recordings, video recordings, or photographs will be made for those in the classroom who have not agreed to participate in the study. School administrators will not be informed of the withdrawal.

Please keep this letter. If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, University of Western Ontario, at xxxxxxxx or xxxxxxxx@uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at xxxxxxxx@uwo.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Rachel Heydon at xxxxxxxx (ext. xxxxxxxx) or xxxxxxxx@uwo.ca.

Thank you,
Beatrix Bocazar
Discourses of Creativity in Kindergarten Curricula
Beatrix Bocazar, PhD Candidate, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education
Dr. Rachel Heydon, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information and have had the nature of the study explained to me. I agree to allow my child to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Please initial if you agree that the researcher may use your child’s image for the following:

______ Scholarly conferences
______ Journal articles
______ Presentation of findings art show

Name of child (please print):

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print):

Signature of Parent/Guardian: Date:
Appendix C: Letter of Information and Consent Form - Principals
Discourses of Creativity in Kindergarten Curricula
Beatrix Bocazar, PhD Candidate, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education
Dr. Rachel Heydon, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education

LETTER OF INFORMATION: PRINCIPALS

My name is Beatrix Bocazar and I am PhD candidate at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research on theories of creativity in full-day kindergarten programs.

The purposes of this study is to investigate how creativity influence the kindergarten program; to understand what creativity looks like in the classroom; and to understand the implications for children, educators, and society.

Upon agreement of participation, the kindergarten classroom/program will be observed by me. I will be making field notes; photographing the classroom, children involved in creativity-related practices, and creativity-related artifacts such as samples of artwork; audio recording and video recording the regular kindergarten program; and observing the program. I will also conduct short interviews with the students. In the interviews each child will be invited to choose from amongst a series of finger puppets (with choices reflecting differing races and genders) and asked, “Please tell me the story of what you do at school.” Children’s responses will be audio and video recorded (depending on what the child says s/he prefers) and notes will be made of non-verbal communication. Interviews will take place in a quiet part of the classroom. The total time commitment for each student in this research will be less than 10 minutes.

I will also interview the Kindergarten educators, principal, parents, and other members of the community (e.g. volunteers, artists, head department, superintendent) with regards to the following topics:

- participants’ understanding of creativity
- role of participants in the children’s’ creativity
- role of environment in the children’s creativity
- role of physical and social resources in the children’s creativity.

The total time commitment for kindergarten students/educators will be 3 weeks to 1 month.

If you agree to participate you will be asked to join me in one audio recorded interview that will last for approximately one hour or two interviews of 30-40 minutes (whichever suits you). Interviewing will take place in a location that is agreeable to you and me. In the interview, you will be asked to talk about your understanding of creativity, creativity in the kindergarten program, your role in children’s creativity, and the role of physical and social resources in children’s creativity. You will also be invited to check the transcripts and offer clarification, elaboration, or any other feedback you deem pertinent. The review of the transcript might take one hour.

The benefits of participating in this project would include the opportunity to analyze your understanding of creativity and its effects in the classroom, and to contribute to a body of knowledge that may assist other similar efforts. If you are interested in a summary of the research, I would be happy to supply this for you at your request.
The information collected will be used for research purposes only. Participants will be given code names as will the school. However, people close to the situation may be able to identify you. All information collected for the study will be stored confidentially. Only my supervisor professors and I will have access to the recordings and the transcripts. If a professional service is employed to transcribe the interviews, the transcriber will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. You may be quoted directly in the research report, but you will not be identified as the source of the quotation.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your status at school.

Please keep this letter. If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, University of Western Ontario, at xxxxxxxx or xxxxxxxx@uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at xxxxxxxx@uwo.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Rachel Heydon at xxxxxxxx (ext. xxxxxxxxx) or xxxxxxxx@uwo.ca.

Thank you,
Beatrix Bocazar

Discourses of Creativity in Kindergarten Curricula
CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information and have had the nature of the study explained to me. I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print):

Signature: Date:

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Date:
Discourses of Creativity in Kindergarten Curricula
Beatrix Bocazar, PhD Candidate, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education
Dr. Rachel Heydon, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education

LETTER OF INFORMATION: EMPLOYEES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM/OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

My name is Beatrix Bocazar and I am PhD candidate at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research on theories of creativity in full-day kindergarten programs.

The purposes of this study is to investigate how creativity influence the kindergarten program; to understand what creativity looks like in the classroom; and to understand the implications for children, educators, and society.

If you agree to participate you will be asked to join me in one audio recorded interview that will last for approximately one hour or two interviews of 30-40 minutes (whichever suits you). Interviewing will take place in a location that is agreeable to you and me. In the interview, you will be asked to talk about your understanding of creativity, creativity in the kindergarten program, your role in children’s creativity, and the role of physical and social resources in children’s creativity. You will also be invited to check the transcripts and offer clarification, elaboration, or any other feedback you deem pertinent. The review of the transcript might take one hour.

The benefits of participating in this project would include the opportunity to analyze your understanding of creativity and its effects in the classroom, and to contribute to a body of knowledge that may assist other similar efforts. If you are interested in a summary of the research, I would be happy to supply this for you at your request.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only. Participants will be given code names as will the school. However, people close to the situation may be able to identify you. All information collected for the study will be stored confidentially. Only my supervisor professors and I will have access to the recordings and the transcripts. If a professional service is employed to transcribe the interviews, the transcriber will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. You may be quoted directly in the research report, but you will not be identified as the source of the quotation.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your status at school.

Please keep this letter. If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, University of Western Ontario, at xxxxxxxx or xxxxxxxx @uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at xxxxxxxx @uwo.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Rachel Heydon at xxxxxxxx (ext. xxxxxxxx) or xxxxxxxx @uwo.ca.

Thank you,
Beatrix Bocazar

Discourses of Creativity in Kindergarten Curricula
Beatrix Bocazar, PhD Candidate, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education
Dr. Rachel Heydon, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Education

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information and have had the nature of the study explained to me. I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print):

Signature: Date:

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Date:
Appendix E: Ethical Approval Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number: 1112-3
Principal Investigator: Rachel Heydon
Student Name: Beatrix Bocazar

Title: Discourses of Creativity in Kindergarten Curricula
Expiry Date: May 31, 2013

Type: Ph.D. Thesis

Ethics Approval Date: January 23, 2012
2012 Revision #:

Documents Reviewed &

Approved: UWO Protocol, Letters of Information & Consent

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB’s periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

2011-2012 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board
Dr. Alan Edmunds  Faculty of Education (Chair)
Dr. John Barnett  Faculty of Education
Dr. Farahnaz Faez  Faculty of Education
Dr. Wayne Martino  Faculty of Education
Dr. George Gadaniidis  Faculty of Education
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki  Faculty of Education
Dr. Immaculate Namukasa  Faculty of Education
Dr. Kari Veblen  Faculty of Music
Dr. Ruth Wright  Faculty of Music
Dr. Kevin Watson  Faculty of Music
Dr. Jason Brown  Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Research (ex officio)
Dr. Goli Rezai-Rashti  Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Graduate Programs (ex officio)
Dr. Susan Rodger  Faculty of Education, UWO Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (ex officio)

The Faculty of Education  Karen Kueneman, Research Officer
1137 Western Rd.  Faculty of Education Building
London, ON  N6G 1G7  kueneman@uwo.ca
519-661-2111, ext.88561 FAX 519-661-3029

Copy: Office of Research Ethics
Curriculum Vitae

NAME: Beatrix BOCAZAR

EDUCATION

A. University


2009 Bachelor of Education. The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.


2004 Master of Arts. The National University of Visual Arts, Bucharest, Romania.

2002 Bachelor of Arts; Art Teaching Certification. The National University of Visual Arts, Bucharest, Romania.

B. Secondary School


RECEIVED HONOURS AND SCHOLARSHIPS
2011  Ontario Graduate Scholarship, held at The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada

2011  First place – Social and Biosciences Posters, Western Research Forum, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada

2010  Western Graduate Scholarship, Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario

2009  Western Graduate Scholarship, Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario

2009  Dean’s Honour List, Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario

2007  Honours Award TESL Diploma, Canadian College of Educators, Mississauga, Ontario

2000  Academic Merit Scholarship, Faculty of Fine Arts, The National University of Visual Arts, Bucharest, Romania

CONFERENCES

Refereed


Non-refereed


PUBLICATIONS


PREVIOUS ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT


Teaching Assistant, September 2011 – November 2011, Teaching Art to Diverse Student Populations, Graduate Course 9611, Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.
Teaching Assistant, September 2011 – November 2011, Education through Artistic Themes and Processes, Graduate Course 9612, Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.


Elementary School Teacher, September 1995 – October 1997, Public School No. 82, Bucharest, Romania.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Ontario College of Teachers
The Canadian Society for the Study in Education: The Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies

TESL Ontario

International Professional Artists, UNESCO, Paris, France

Professional Artists' Union, Romania

COMMUNITY SERVICE

UWO - GTA Union Steward, 2011-2012

Publicity Committee Member, 2012 Research in Education Symposium

Publicity Committee Chair, 2011 Research in Education Symposium

TEACHING CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Traditional Arts, Kiev, 2004

Primary Years Program and the Arts, Bucharest, 2003

Primary Years Program Assessment, Morocco, 2003

ART EXHIBITS
Personal Art Exhibits


Group Art Exhibits


STAGE DESIGN

AISB Elementary Art Department (2005). *Camilla or Captive at Kentingern Court*. AISB Theatre, Bucharest, Romania.


