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What is the Pedagogical Role of the Doll? :

Sensitive and Effective Uses of the Doll

Preschool through Adolescence

by

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ABSTRACT

“What is the Pedagogical Role of the Doll?: Effective and Sensitive uses
Preschool through Adolescence” is a survey of studies and professional perspectives.
This paper examines the history of dolls across world cultures and their more recent
pedagogical applications in the United States. The critical review section provides
information on current research on play and dolls, as well as examples of how
educators have made use of dolls in their classrooms. This paper explores the
potential merit, limitations and considerations involving the use of the doll in service
of constructivist, interdisciplinary and multi-cultural curriculum. This discussion of
the use of dolls in the elementary and middle school classroom addresses issues of
relevance, gender, race, socio-economics, culture and globalism.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION 5

Considering dolls in the classroom

CHAPTER II: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 15

Ancient, traditional and modern pedagogical uses of the doll

CHAPTER III: INTEGRATIVE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 33

An exploration of studies and professional perspectives on the sensitive

and effective use of dolls in the classroom

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION 75

Implications of research and teacher experiences for the use of the doll in the classroom.

WORKS CITED 86

APPENDICES 93

A. "Friendship Doll" goals and accompanying letters

B. Resources

Introduction



Photo courtesy of Natural Childhood,
Thomson, (Ed.), 1994

“As birds make a nest of anything,
children make a doll of no matter what”

(Hugo, cited in Michael, 2001, p.9)

My fascination with dolls began in childhood. As an only child, I spent much time with dolls as my only companions. During adolescence, making my first doll provided solace during my mother’s extended illness and hospitalization. However, it was the experience of making them for my own children that impressed me with the potency of these “playthings.” Not only did my children enjoy them, but also several other neighborhood children, who played with these homemade creations every day for many years. Eventually in college I studied the symbolism of dolls and the continuum of human representation in francophone art, literature and culture.

Ultimately, it is my formal and informal learning experiences with dolls that have led me to investigate the work and research of educators who use dolls in service of their pedagogy, or art of teaching.

This examination of the pedagogical role of the doll arises out of my childhood love of dolls, experience as a doll maker and background in Waldorf education. The philosophy informing Waldorf education acknowledges the role of the doll and puppetry in the physical, social and cognitive development of the child. As an educator I seek to identify both effective strategies and issues of concern when using dolls in the classroom. Further I will investigate how the use of dolls has had a demonstrated impact on the learning of children in mainstream/ public education. As I explore this question, there are several fundamental assumptions underlying my approach to this topic:

- Constructivist, interdisciplinary, multiple intelligence, student-centered learning is deemed both valuable and desirable
- Multicultural and anti-bias curriculum is considered a valid and integral component of education.
- Social and collaborative learning is emphasized as conducive to students' academic success and achievement
- Active and imaginative play is accepted as the vital developmental foundation for healthy social, emotional and cognitive growth.

The work of Paulo Friere and Ira Shor (1987) is based on empowering students through the application of critical thinking to everyday life. In the words of Paulo

Friere, transformational pedagogy involves, "... a posture of directing a serious study of some object in which the students reflect on how an object exists." (p. 171) The study of the doll as an everyday object is an opportunity to reflect upon the intentions and consequences with which these dolls are made, distributed, and used within our culture and personal lives. Raising our consciousness and understanding of the doll's role in our culture will aid in determining the possibilities and limitations for their use in the classroom. The continuum of dolls ranging from stereotypical, commercial, sentimental, artistic, traditional, historic and sacred make it necessary for the educator to carefully consider their classroom use: What kind of dolls will enhance or hinder the learning environment? What are pertinent uses of the doll in support of curriculum? The pedagogical significance of the doll is examined in the following survey of professional literature.

Dolls as everyday items used in play convey both the knowledge and values of a culture. This paper will explore perspectives on the doll's relevance as a pedagogical tool and sensitive uses in a formal educational setting. Do physical representations of human beings have valid pedagogical applications? I am drawn to study the pedagogical possibilities of dolls out of my belief that nurturing free thinking through imaginative, artistic and creative curriculum is an educator's highest calling. I will identify constructivist strategies that aid students to better understand and appreciate themselves, as well as other individuals, groups and cultures, times and places. In light of this aim, this paper considers both the study of traditional dolls and making dolls as a medium of creative expression.

A meaningful inquiry of dolls, whether traditional, modern, homemade or mass-produced, must be located in the context of the everyday reality of western culture, with all of its contradictions and complexity. We live in a time of great technological facility, access to global information and knowledge. Despite our increased consciousness of the importance of childhood, we also live in an era of mass media, sub-nuclear family living arrangements and at a hectic pace that hinders healthy childhood through alienation from nature, fellow human beings and ourselves. For the purposes of this paper, the general definition of sensitive and effective uses of the doll will be based on the extent to which practitioners use dolls to support students in connecting to both the immediate subject content, as well as the natural world, the social realm and themselves.

I view the elements of imaginative play and artistic creativity in education as an antidote for the disconnection and meaninglessness that pervades our lives and culture. The polarities have come together for me in the sacred nature of children's play and the crucial role of objects, which support the individual in understanding and expressing themselves (Piaget, 1967). This paper will focus on toys and objects, which represent the human figure and their implementation in the kindergarten through high school curriculum.

Historically, in cultures around the world, dolls have been powerful vehicles of expression as well as transmitters of culture and religion (King 1977). Interestingly, distinctions of age in terms of recreational activities and dolls as part of gendered play are modern constructs. Adults and children engaged in the same games through the Western European Renaissance and dolls as a part of gendered play was ushered in

with the industrial age and the subsequent marketing (Aries, 1966). How does the cultural role of the doll in our culture and others make it a suitable or unsuitable pedagogical medium? Does the ancient urge to make representations of the human figure suggest doll making as a meaningful activity for children? Do the sacred origins of these objects have any implications for appropriate utilization of the doll in the classroom? The scope of this question includes an exploration of the variety of ceremonial, religious and instructive uses of dolls throughout history, in relation to the potential value of strategies utilizing dolls and puppets to deepen and enhance the preschool through secondary curriculum.

The following review of literature crosses the disciplines of developmental psychology, play therapy, sociology, pedagogy, art and economics, as well as gender and multicultural studies to explore the answers to these questions. This research is undertaken to examine how the, doll can be used in a way that supports anti-bias, culturally responsive and academically successful teaching methods. Sample lesson plans and teacher anecdotes demonstrate a variety of approaches wherein interdisciplinary, artistic, constructivist and experiential learning is effected through the use of dolls and puppetry. Because representations of the human figure have great potency for children, particularly in relation to forming a positive or negative self-concept, (Clark, 1939, 1947) survey will collect information on appropriate practices for using dolls or puppetry in the classroom.

This paper brings together current and historical professional perspectives on child development such as those of Montessori (1969), Vygotsky (1967) and Piaget (1967), as well as contemporary research on children's emotional, social and cognitive

development by Dimidjan, Singer, Rogoff (1990), and Tatum (1997). A psychological and pedagogical understanding of the child will be combined with the insights of research based on play in other cultures. The research of Kenneth and Mamie Clark and subsequent related studies, Gregor and Mac-Pherson (1966), Johnson (1966), Chin (1999) and Gopaul-McNicol (1992), provide information that is applicable to today's increasingly diverse student populations. Further, studies on intrinsic motivation and learning make it desirable to incorporate opportunities for constructive play into our lesson plans. Essentially the issues surrounding the doll's pedagogical applications include age appropriateness, ethnicity, gender, socio-economics and globalism. Given these diverse areas of controversy this paper asks how using the doll can expand/limit the possibilities for artistic, interdisciplinary, experiential, constructivist, multi-cultural, diversity, anti-bias, gender neutral and democratic education?

Within American culture there are many general associations with the doll that hinder its use in the classroom. In modern times Western society has alternated between the trivialization and regimentation of play and the extremes of insipidly junky and determinedly educational toys (Foramenek-Brunell, 1993). We live in a society where our institutions are based on segregation by age, (Friedan, 1993) and our Puritan heritage emphasizes a clear distinction among work and play (Spring, 1997). Further, our capitalistic nation has bred the commodification of children's play (Steinberg & Kilchoe, 1998). Given this societal backdrop, here are multiple questions to be considered:

- As a culture we tend to associate dolls with early childhood. Are dolls only for preschool use?
- Gender is another and perhaps even greater issue in children's use of dolls in imaginative play. A teacher must evaluate whether their use of dolls or puppets can be accessible to all children.
- Recently child psychologists and educators have come to recognize the value of play in therapeutic setting. Is the curative aspect of play limited to the counseling session?
- Does the utilization of dolls in the classroom invite an intersection of imaginative play, art and academics?

This paper examines multiple aspects of dolls and how their relationship to the curriculum transform as children progress through the elementary grades. Whatever materials educators use in service of their curriculum, there is always the influence of the media and of corporate America. Often educators must struggle to reclaim subject matter from fixed perceptions or misconceptions that have been shaped by the media. A teacher seeking to use or make representations of the human figure will have to offer students a new schema for these objects and many alternative examples to overcome ethnocentric, garish, homogeneous, frivolous and stereotypical notions of dolls and puppets.

The toy industry has given a negative, materialistic connotation to many objects associated with children's play. Consider commercial or mass-produced dolls. What kind of play and interactions do these toys of popular culture facilitate? Dolls can be wonderful examples of the artistic and play culture of a group of people. However,

some dolls caricaturize members of groups. A major controversy is the manner in which some dolls trivialize or perpetuate stereotypes of other cultures. When do children need to be protected from negative and stereotypical images? When can students learn from them? Educators need to develop criteria to objectively evaluate dolls and puppets brought into the classroom. (Rettig, 1995) How can dolls from other cultures be used with sensitivity?

Perhaps, even more significant than the physical characteristics of a doll, is the act and status of ownership. The work of both ethnographer Elizabeth Chin (1999) and historian Fred Nielsen (2002), discussed in chapter three makes an important point; just because ethnically diverse dolls are being manufactured does not mean that they are accessible to the children they claim to represent. . Dolls are very personal. They are often special and sometimes exquisite, frequently inspiring acquisitiveness in adults and children. Consider the dolls that children bring to the classroom from home? Issues of economics and class force teachers to determine how they can invite sharing through dolls, without encouraging acquisitiveness and materialism. By acquisitiveness and materialism, I mean situations where children identify with either their status or lack of ownership. The use of "American Girl" dolls and books in teaching history provides an example of this potential situation and will be given further treatment in chapter three (Acostu-Alzura, Kreshel, 2002). The examination of the aspect of ownership and possession is yet another dimension of this pedagogical inquiry into criteria for sensitive and effective uses of the doll.

In order to understand the modern, Western challenges to supporting healthy play in the young child and the developing creativity and imagination in the student, this

paper will provide a brief history of play and dolls and puppets from ancient to modern times. A comparison of traditional and world cultures with modern American culture offers a perspective on our society's values and their expression through childhood, creativity and play with dolls. The author has endeavored to discover if the use of dolls as a pedagogical tool has the potential to facilitate anti-bias, culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate and democratic curriculum for today's child.

The premise of this paper is based on specific definitions of the doll and criteria for healthy play. The author has proceeded from the common assertion of the leading educational philosophers and specialists in child development that play is the foundation of cognitive development (Poplawski, 2000). Most importantly the doll is defined in terms of the child, rather than as a commodity. There is a sort of continuum of dolls, including sacred representations of the human form, playthings, a collector's item etc. Doll making and puppetry are examined as possible tools for providing continuity from the exploratory play of early childhood, to intellectual inquiry of the adolescent by allowing an opportunity for creativity and imagination in connection with academic goals and learning. Examples from case studies, and those engaged in the pedagogical puppetry and doll making have been included to illustrate their role in social renewal through education.

The literary references to dolls illustrate the representation of the human figure in our culture and the potency of these images in the childhood for individuals and our cultural psyche. Where there is meaning, there is energy. How can this meaning be

positively realized as a learning resource? What is the capacity of the doll and puppetry to deliver or augment elementary and middle school curriculum?

In short, how can this unique media satisfy children's need to receive guidance and make their own meaning throughout their individual development? Can dolls allow children to deepen their own self-knowledge while exposing them to other cultures? In researching the realm of dolls there has been an effort to identify specific examples of how the artistic and dramatic use of dolls can best support the learning process across the curriculum. Several psychological studies have been included to offer perspectives on the correlation between imaginative play and intellectual autonomy. This paper looks at specific examples of how dolls and puppetry have been incorporated into preschool through high school curriculum and the impact of their use in the elementary and middle school classroom.

The History of the Pedagogical Use of the Doll



Picture courtesy of *Made to Play House*, (1993),
Miriam Formanek-Brunell (Ed.) p. 29

"Here are my last words, Beloved," said mother, "should you lose your way or be in need of help, ask this doll what to do. You will be assisted. Keep the doll with you always. Do not tell anyone

about her. Feed her when she is hungry. This is my mother's

promise to you, my blessing on you, my dear daughter." (Estes,

1993, p.75-76)

The word "doll" has only been in usage since the 17th century. Prior to that time a doll was known as a *poupée* or a puppet. (Orme, 2001) The etymology of the word "puppe" is connected to both the words for doll and chrysalis (Picht, in Britz-Crecelius, 1972). This suggests a profound and essential connection between dolls and human beings and their unfolding and transformation.

In some cultures, as in the case of some African societies, it is acceptable for the same doll to move between play and ritual uses. However, in other cultures,

including Eskimo traditions, the distinction between human figures used in ceremonies or by shamans for healing, and dolls is culturally significant and should be observed through sensitivity in language and handling of these sacred objects (Lotz, 2002).

The history of the pedagogical use of the doll goes back to the earliest cultures and ancient civilizations. Findings of ancient dolls suggest they were cherished objects used in sacred rituals (King, 1977). Dolls were vehicles for conveying religious beliefs and traditions to members of a culture and for communication with the divine (Estes, 1992). For example, African dolls were not only playthings, but also objects traditionally associated with the personal fertility and protection (Cameron, 1997). Until recently doll making was an important artistic communal activity, with “cultural, personal and educational” significance among black indigenous South Africans (Mpako, 1999). Japan’s artistic, religious and supernatural relationships with dolls have contributed to forming Western perceptions of the country and its people as well as Japan’s representations of itself (Gerbert, 2001).

Native American cultures use play with dolls as part of their preparation for life, introducing skills required for the adult world (Chabolla, 2002). The style of human representations and their uses varied among Native American tribes. In many of these cultures dolls were created by female elders and used in ceremonies marking the right of passage in a girl’s life (McQuiston, 1995). The oral tradition, moral philosophy and teachings of the Seneca Indians feature legends about the Cornhusk Doll (Parker, 1972). Later, Caucasian-featured dolls were used in the notorious Indian Schools run by the U.S. government. These “white” dolls and other European/ non-

native toys “reinforced lessons of how to behave in a civilized society” (Lindauer, 1997). Comparing a traditional Native American doll with a European one can open a discussion on Native American history and emphasize the pressure placed upon Native Americans to assimilate in all aspects of mainstream American life.

Representations of human beings are found all over the world and in every culture, both east and west. This is true, even in Islamic cultures, where children’s toys are typically exempt from prohibitions against portrayal of human likeness (Fainges, 1994). Children’s dolls are seen as distinct from graven images, a human representation intended as an idol or fetish. Exploring this seeming contradiction of dolls and Islam offers a timely and relevant way to introduce the variety and complexity of practices among Islamic people.

Certainly dolls are not limited in their use as playthings or tools for domestic instruction. Historically they have been used in teaching medicine and anatomy. In certain geographic areas of Western Europe, doll manufacturing dates back to the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. During the 19th century Industrial Revolution wide scale production and marketing of dolls evolved, particularly in Germany and France. It was in the 19th century that doll makers became concerned with making their creations more naturalistic. These are often referred to as “character dolls.”

In the words of doll historian, King (1977) in *The Collectors History of Dolls*,

“It is no accident that the more realistic type of doll was developed in a country that was sympathetic to the educational aims of Friedrich Froebel and Maria Montessori. The climate of the early twentieth century favored a much

greater understanding of the child's basic needs. There was a great upsurge of interest in psychology and teaching methods, and it became almost sinful to claim that a doll was manufactured simply as a pretty toy." (p. 386)

Ironically these more "realistic" dolls were also more generic in feature. By the early twentieth century dolls were no longer custom made. A child's delight and deep satisfaction in the homemade doll created just for them, is lovingly recounted by Laura Ingalls Wilder, in *Little House in the Big Woods*, (1932):

"They were all so happy they could hardly speak at first. They just looked with shining eyes at those lovely Christmas presents. But Laura was happiest of all. Laura had a rag doll. She was a beautiful doll. She had a face of white cloth with black button eyes. A black pencil had made her eyebrows, and her cheeks and her mouth were red with the ink made from pokeberries. Her hair was black yarn that had been knit and raveled, so that it was curly. She had little red flannel stocking and little black cloth gaiters for shoes, and her dress was pretty pink and blue calico. She was so beautiful that Laura could not say a word. She just held her tight and forgot everything else."

(p.74-76)

In the forward of *Kinderdolls*, by Maricristin Sealy (2001), owner of Magic Cabin Dolls, the impersonal and homogeneous impact of factory made dolls is discussed:

“Before dolls were mass-produced it would have been rare to find any two exactly alike. Dolls like people were individuals and were often created with a particular individual in mind.” (p.7)

In the United States the industrialization of doll making began in earnest following the Civil War. However, it was the anti-German politics arising from World War I that shifted the bulk of doll production from German imports to domestic factories. Domestic production opened the door for a uniquely American brand of vigorous manufacture and marketing. This shift in manufacturing ushered in the American extremes of capitalism and idealism in the still fledgling American doll industry. The way in which commercialism shapes and dictates children’s lives is an on-going issue and is covered in relation to classroom curriculum within the critical review section of this paper.

In both the United States and Europe dolls were initially thought of as either a rehearsal for motherhood and household responsibilities or a diversion for young children. However, it is important to note that until the late 19th century most dolls were miniature children or adults. The baby doll was a relative latecomer on the scene. I have yet to find sources that comment on the implications of the introduction of baby dolls. Perhaps it was a result of increasingly smaller families with fewer “real babies.” It may have been part of a larger social agenda to reinforce traditional roles in a rapidly changing world. Maybe it was an indication of the fact that manufactured dolls had previously been less accessible, and therefore taken more seriously. Did this shift make dolls more or less suitable or available for use in the classroom? Another possibility is that this change corresponded with a more modern

understanding of childhood as an important and distinct period of life. The popularity of the Barbie doll has once again adultified doll play. It would be worthwhile to consider the parallels and contrasts in these major shifts in the culture of childhood.

It is also necessary to distinguish between dolls that were companions and those, which were mere possessions. In the words of toy historians Jac Remise and Jean Fondin, in *The Golden Age of Toys*, (1967), "It has been said that only the failures in the doll world survive, 'those which the original owner found too well made or too well dressed to be loved.'" Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, calls up images of dolls which are in vivid contrast to these "failures":

"Long quiet days she spent, not lonely or idle for her little world was peopled with imaginary friends and she was by nature a busy bee. There were six dolls to be taken up and dressed every morning, for Beth was a child still and loved her pets as well as ever. Not one whole or handsome one among them; all were outcasts till Beth took them in, for when her sister outgrew these idols, they passed to her, because Amy would have nothing old or ugly. Beth cherished them all the more tenderly for that very reason, and set up a hospital for infirm dolls. No pins were ever stuck into their cotton vitals; no harsh words or blows were ever given them; no regret ever saddened the heart of the most repulsive: but all were fed and clothed,

nursed and caressed with an affection that never failed.”

(p.38)

This passage shows that the psychological value to the individual child and the general history of dolls can be misleading if we limit ourselves to those, which have been preserved.

Making and dressing dolls was a means of practicing domestic industry, through sewing, dressmaking, etc. They helped to educate girls in their future roles as housewives. In upper class families this was traditionally more of a supervisory role. It included overseeing domestic servants and ensuring that the large household ran smoothly. However, the latter half of the 19th century saw extreme changes in economic circumstances for Americans. Upper and middle class families became smaller and the members more isolated. The children of these families found themselves with fewer household responsibilities and a greater amount of solitary playtime. Simultaneously scores of poor immigrant child laborers were engaged in producing playthings. Ironically these children could neither afford to buy the toys they labored to produce nor the luxury of time to enjoy them (Formanek-Brunell, 1993).

Many of the European immigrants who flowed into the United States in the late 19th century found themselves in deplorable and unsanitary living conditions. Social reformers of the Progressive Era, 1890 –1913, believed that the circumstances of immigrants could be addressed through parent education on child rearing and care. They paid particular emphasis to hygiene. Progressive Era issues included women's suffrage, birth control, child labor and worker rights in general. Unfortunately, the

efforts of the proponents of “scientific motherhood” dealt more with the symptoms than the root cause of the immigrant’s living situation. (Formanek-Brunell, 1993). Presently we have an ever-increasing immigrant population. Students are required to change, based both on where they come from and the greater, culture, as well as the specific curriculum in their schools. This instance provides an example of a pedagogical intention, which addresses the symptom, rather than the cause of a social condition.

Access to amenities such as clean hot water and adequate space were not available to the population targeted for scientific motherhood. The durable, plastic doll had its origins in the Progressive Era. At first, these dolls were used for training nurses and demonstrating proper care of newborns. Later they were used to reinforce hygiene among poor immigrant children. The doll had to be able to withstand immersion in hot water, in order to be instructive for washing and bathing. This was the origin of the familiar plastic doll, which pervades the modern culture of childhood. (Formanek-Brunell, 1993). It signaled an end to the careful handling required to keep the more fragile traditional doll intact. The combination of durability and disposability in modern plastic dolls has contributed to the situation where children have many more dolls than they play with and which typically outlive their usefulness.

According to the author of *Made to Play House*, Miriam Formanek- Brunell (1993), these dolls were hailed, “As an alternative to the European bisque doll as well as those produced by American businessmen, female doll makers like Martha Chase created, soft and safe dolls that not only felt but also *looked* like children.” “ ‘ There

is a difference,' wrote one contemporary observer, 'between a real doll baby to be loved and petted [and] an overdressed puppet to be used as an object of vanity.'

(p.72)

This transition from bisque, or cloth to plastic dolls raises many interesting questions: What are the advantages/disadvantages of objects such as dolls, which are both indestructible and highly disposable? What lessons or values might our choice of a doll, made out of certain materials, teach our students? Beyond early childhood is this still important? Do children and students need to form an attachment or sympathy with the doll to learn from it? Chapter three includes examples of dolls, both homemade and mass-produced, from a variety of different materials.

Nurse and social reformer, Martha Chase, made the first washable dolls. She began doll making out of a desire to improve mannequins used by nursing students. This is an example of women's entry into the doll making industry, and their ability to transform practical experience into superior designs that were not just economic in goals but also intentionally instructive. In addition Chase created her dolls with an eye to gender. Her dolls were designed with the intention that they would appeal to and serve the needs of both boys and girls (Formanek-Brunell, 1993). In a 1920 editorial, Professor Patty Smith called upon the toy industry to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of the toys they produced due to their educational importance. (Petrick and West, 1992).

The new emphasis on educational purpose was part of the move to combine play value with social utility. In the 1920's the first educational toys appeared. They were inspired by Friedrich Froebel's toy designs and his belief that learning should arise

out of a child's own interest (Fraser, 1966). Maria Montessori had little use for fancy dolls, noting that children preferred constructive tasks to frivolous play (Poplawski, 2000). In England, Susan Isaacs was a proponent of toys that enhanced a child's development through encouraging children in discovery and experimentation (Fraser, 1966). Playthings (including dolls) long taken for granted as a typical part of childhood came under scrutiny by the emerging field of child development. As educators we should question where the notion "educational" has deliberately been used to target a market or as means of manipulating parent and teacher consumers.

The educational value of toys endures as a point of marketing. It is something to be aware of in making decisions about classroom materials. As teachers we will be marketed to as consumers of educational toys, games and curriculum resources. The doll is a magnified instance that calls for discernment about the source and affiliated interests of these products. Older social studies students might explore institutions and professional organizations that are contemporary advocates for the interests of children in relation to play and education.

Paul and Marjorie Abbot were teachers who opened a shop based on Isaac's work. They introduced among other practical toys, dollhouse dolls that were simple, durable and meant to withstand the rigors of play. Their philosophy and commitment is described by Fraser (1966), in *A History of Toys*: Paul and Marjorie Abbot believed passionately that "toys were not merely expensive, breakable extras for children of the rich, but an essential part of every child's development" (Fraser, 1966). On one hand, this new consciousness may be construed as a positive development in awareness of children. On the other, furnishing children with toys

more deliberately may be viewed as an impediment to children directly creating their own toys and games. In 1928, with the production of the first Playskool tool bench, one of the biggest and oldest companies purporting to produce educational toys was founded.

Meanwhile, the social climate of the United States during the 1920's was charged with racial and ethnic tension. This was due, in part, to the wave of immigration during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The harsh experience of Japanese immigrants and subsequent barring of their immigration to the United States both saddened and inspired Sydney L. Gulick, former American missionary in Japan. He imagined a novel pedagogical application of dolls. According to Gulick (1997), "The Friendship Dolls" exchanged between America and Japan in 1927 had the primary objective of increasing friendship between the children of the two nations." (p.2)The goals of the project, (see Appendix A), as put forth by Gulick, were idealistic and lofty in their optimism and corresponded to the aims of contemporary educators, such as Trisha Whitney, creator of *Kids Like Us* (1999), who use dolls in anti-bias and diversity teaching.



Eiichi Shibusawa holding two dolls

Photo courtesy of "1927 Doll Exchange" website @

<http://wgordon.web.wesleyan.edu/dolls/exch1927/shibusawa/>

Gulick coordinated American school children in sending "blue-eyed dolls"

to Japanese students who had lost their homes in an earthquake.

"When the American Blue-eyed Dolls were received in Japan in 1927, the 88-year-old Shibusawa, as a representative of the Japanese people, gave a speech thanking the Americans for their kind gift. He discussed the inseparable relation between children and dolls, and emphasized the thought that the goodwill and friendship thus cultivated in the hearts of children is lasting. He pointed out that the development of mutual understanding and friendship among the children of both nations in the future will be not only a tie between Japan and America, but good news to the whole world."

(1927 Doll Exchange, p.1)

In 1927, Japanese children responded in kind, with over two million Japanese citizens donating money to commission fifty-eight dolls as gifts and cultural emissaries to elementary schools across the United States. This gesture arose out of Gulick's belief that a beautiful and treasured doll would awaken interest in Japanese culture. He hoped that the dolls would generate a positive disposition for the Japanese culture, create understanding among Japanese immigrants and American citizens, as well as decrease conflict between Japan and the United States. Unfortunately, during World War II many dolls were lost and destroyed. Although this project lay dormant for years, due to hostility between Japan and the United States, seeds were planted for a more amicable future. The recent revival of this project is detailed in chapter three.

The "Friendship Dolls" depicting five year-old Japanese girls were exquisite pieces of work by national artisans. In contrast, dolls produced in the United States and portraying non-European ethnicities were frequently grotesque caricatures or at best simply dolls from the same mold and painted brown. One positive outcome of the perception of play as increasingly educational was the resulting decrease of derogatory portrayals of ethnic minorities" (Nelson, 1990). "By 1930 the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection declared that every child had a right to play and that play was serious business." (p.7)

Doll making was also part of the WPA during the 1930's. It was one of the few opportunities for unskilled women to gain employment. These dolls were made for public schools and children's institutions across the United States. The dolls were carefully designed for utility as they were intended to help teach children, particularly

those in state institutions, to learn to dress and care for themselves. Some of the dolls made for schools depicted specific periods of American history. Many of the workers there had been turned away from the main sewing unit due to their lack of handwork expertise. (O' Connor, 1973). In this way dolls were used to impart self-sufficiency to the producer and the recipient, an added pedagogical benefit, discussed further in chapter three.

In the early 1940's several mental health movements began to incorporate the use of dolls into their therapeutic approach. Among them were the Child Guidance Movement of the 1940's and 1950's, the Community Mental Health Movement of the 1960's and 1970's, the Youth Bureau Service Movement and the Family System Movement. Throughout the 20th century hospitals used dolls both as formal and informal therapy. In the 1980's schools became a focus as sites of prevention and assessment of children's mental and emotional issues.

Today we are in an era where mental health care is driven by corporate interests and psychiatry and managed care are big business. Children's therapy began with Freud's work on phobia with Little Hans. In the 1940's Virginia Axline introduced play therapy. In the 1960's Bernard G. Guerney developed filial therapy. Clark Moustakes', relationship-based play therapy evolved from these beginnings. In 1977 D.W Winnicot published, "The Piggie: Psychoanalytic treatment of a little girl" and A.M. Janberg created a model of play therapy entitled Theraplay.

At the same time dolls began being used therapeutically, Kenneth and Mamie Clark were engaged in studies that used dolls to uncover the connection between segregation on the identity development of African-American children. In the 1950's

the Clarks findings were used in the landmark case, *Brown vs. the Board of Education* case. Social psychologists and researchers Kenneth and Mamie Clark conducted studies with white and black dolls. These studies revealed black children's consistent and predominant preference for white dolls and their corresponding negative associations with black dolls. This research effectively demonstrated the detrimental impact of segregation on the identity and self-concept of African-American children. In this case, dolls were used to instruct the Supreme Court on the urgency of desegregation of public education (Clark, 1963). This is significant considering, particularly early childhood educators' widespread use of dolls in the classroom. Many parents, teachers and social critics look to the classroom as the site for questioning, countering and remediating the toxicity of the mainstream media and culture and its impact on the healthy development of today's children (Wagner-Ott, 2002).

As the 50th anniversary of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* approaches, it is worthwhile to consider the potency of dolls not only in representing social-cultural values and perceptions but also as tools for the challenge, deconstruction and transformation of biased attitudes, knowledge and practice. It is in this light that "Barbie" is considered, although her pedagogical value is questionable, the proliferation of "Barbie" has impacted the culture of childhood and play. Any history of dolls would be incomplete without addressing the shift in children's play, the adultifying of children's culture and the advent of consumerism that is associated with Barbie. Originally, known as "Lillith", a German adult sex toy, Barbie was adapted by Ruth Handler who observed her daughter's play group's absorption with

adult paper dolls. Barbie was the only adult doll on the market in the 1950's and was conceived as a way of helping girls adjust to the physical changes of puberty. Initially Mattel rejected the idea of selling a doll with breasts. However, by 1997 one billion Barbies had been sold (Thomas, 2001). In order to avert accusations of parents, teachers, feminists and those concerned about issues of race, Mattel adamantly maintains that their product is *not* an educational toy. The company insists that Barbie is only a consumer good, reflecting the wants and needs of the market (Lord, 1994).

With challenges to traditional social norms in the 1960's and 1970's many parents began giving dolls to both boys and girls. Many families attempted to move away from rigid gender stereotypes and roles. However, in preschool and kindergarten studies, adult interactions around dolls were still shown to discourage or ignore doll play among boys (Greever, Austin & Welhousen, 2000). According to research in the 1970's and 1980's another impact of distinct gender play was demonstrated through studies, which pointed out how gender specific toys and activities created physical separation between sexes in the sphere of play.

In a 2000 article entitled, "Underachievement in Boys", by Rupert Kirby, the author noted that traditional boy play does not lend itself to building a vocabulary or support articulating feelings. Whereas doll play is often accompanied by a narrative, trucks typically elicit only movement and sound (Kirby, 2000). A popular story and song of the 1970's was *William's Doll*, by Charlotte Zolotlow (1972), which told of a little boy who wanted a doll, and endures the anger and ridicule of adults and peers. A veteran teacher's twenty-year old, student papers provided the initial data for a

study (Geever, Austin, and Welhousen, 2000) of the reaction to this story by two generations of readers. This research on generational gender perceptions among fourth graders is included in chapter three's discussion of dolls and gender.

Dolls have been used not only to help children communicate and process traumatic experiences; they have also used to prevent them. Many preschool and elementary classrooms use dolls as tools to discuss personal safety and to establish the physical boundaries of appropriate touch. A related modern, but controversial use of dolls detailed by Simkins (1996) is in the determination of sexual abuse, based on therapist's interviews with young children. Therapists use the anatomically correct dolls to both observe the children and their interaction with the doll, as well as cues in questioning (Simkins, 1996). The differences in therapists interviewing style, the type of anatomical doll used and the ages of the children and varying methods of evaluation are factors in professionals' support or objection to the anatomically correct doll as a valid instrument in confirming the existence of sexual abuse (Simkins, 1996). The most recent pedagogical application of dolls is computerized infant simulators have which have become a feature of many sex education programs. An analysis of the results of this new research will be given in chapter three.

Clearly there are numerous societies worldwide, in which dolls are a window to the understanding of cultures, both past and present. Diminutive representations of the human figure are part of ancient cultural traditions and have been applied to multiple modern, practical, clinical and educational needs. As an educator I wonder about the implications of the doll's movement from the sacred to the secular, and even profane,

as well as the shift from the inert to the mechanized (Brake, 1973). Considering the agency of figures representing the human being, can their potency as objects and symbols be transferred to the classroom. The following section will outline a variety of considerations and strategies for sensitively and effectively employing the doll in the classroom. The author carries the question as to whether the historic purposes and present uses of the doll make them more or less suitable for the elementary and middle school classroom.

Critical Review



“The doll ate and her eyes grew bright as stars. ‘Have no fear,’ said she. While I am with you nothing can do you harm. But remember-no one else knows of our secret.’ Now let us start.” (from “Vasilisa the Beautiful,” cited in Poltarnees, 2000, p.16)

Dolls are accepted as a natural part of the imaginative play life of the young child, yet there are many points of controversy that require consideration before introducing them into the classroom. These issues include: the relevance of dolls to the classroom, as well as the age, gender, race, class and culture of both the child and (those expressed in) the doll. In this age of globalism, we must also consider the kind of doll and how it is produced and distributed. This paper looks at examples of how educators use dolls in the classroom with students, kindergarten through adolescence. And in using dolls, how they have either addressed or ignored the issues raised by these often loaded or trivialized objects. The essence of this question is whether or not the pedagogical use of dolls can

transform in correspondence with each stage of students' development to be effective and valuable in delivering and supporting the work of the curriculum.

There are many studies, which assert the validity of imaginative, artistic and multicultural curriculum. These include studies, which examine children's perceptions of race and identity based on their interaction with dolls. These studies have provided indications regarding children's individual and social self-esteem among children of color, particularly African-Americans. However, there are few that showcase the doll and demonstrate a direct and measurable impact upon children's learning in the classroom. Similarly there are many studies, which confirm the value of free play, yet do not specifically examine the role of the doll within the child's social and imaginative life. This collection of studies is more of an interconnected web than a direct target. This said the following teachers' observations and classroom anecdotes demonstrate a connection, between student interest, motivation, if not direct cause and effect on success in learning due to the use of dolls.

There is a large body of diverse and compelling research, considering the role of play in healthy emotional and intellectual development of children. Although this research is not limited to the sphere of doll play, dramatic and pretend play often involve dolls and are contained within the general scope of imaginative play. The conclusions of Jerome and Dorothy Singer, researchers of fantasy play, are founded on twenty years of conducting their own studies as well as reviewing the entire literature on imaginative play. These are summarized by Poplawski as: "...the capacity for imaginative play is directly related to verbal fluency, creative divergent thinking, and the ability to think in general."

Based on the association of dolls with play, it is worthwhile to take a moment to consider the connection between play and cognitive development. Poplawski cites a University of Michigan study that demonstrates a dramatic decline in the time children spend in free play. Since 1981 the figure has gone from 40% to 25%. Most disturbing however is the connection identified by physician Stuart Brown (Poplawski, 1999) between lack of significant time spent in play and violent crime. Brown's findings provide a dramatic illustration of the value of healthy play versus the consequences of an absence of healthy play: The recipients of the prestigious MacArthur Foundation, "genius award" were shown as having "without exception a rich background in play, from childhood to adulthood." This suggests a positive correlation between play and excellence in one's field. One notable, historical example of genius connecting play and dolls is children's author and puppeteer Hans Christian Anderson. As a child Anderson's "greatest delight," was creating costumes for his dolls and puppets (Brust, 1994). It is important for teachers to consider how they can unite the quality of creative exploration in healthy play with intellectual discovery.

Although Brown's study suggests a powerful correlation between play and the implications in adulthood, there may be other factors, such as socio-economic, geographic or cultural, which accounted for the discrepancy in both the time in play and/or their adult life situations. This raises the question of equity in childhood. Is play more accessible for some groups of children than others?

According to Dimidjan (1992), current research suggests that the value of play in terms of cognitive, social and academic development cannot be overstated. Many psychologists and educators emphasize the extension of play into elementary grades

rather than limiting the role of creative play to the realm of early childhood. The notion of play-centered learning is validated as a medium for facilitating math, literacy and multiculturalism. Dimidjan views securing play in the policy and daily practice of public education as a vital component of child development and education rather than an enhancement. While these particular authors may mention dolls as part of the schema of play, they do not distinguish dolls as having a particular significance in the realm of classroom play. At this point the unique role of dolls in the development of children is mainly framed in studies on children's identity and self-concept or referenced in teacher anecdotes and articles.

Aside from healthy cognitive development, the realm of play where dolls occupy a significant designation, serves the child in their emotional development and the processing and expressing experiences. In Estes (1992) retelling of the Russian fairy tale, "Vasilisa the Beautiful", a dying mother gives her daughter a last gift. Estes offers the following interpretation: "The relationship between the doll and Vasalisa symbolizes a form of empathic magic between woman and her intuition,"(1992). The function is similar for the child allowing them a repository for their thoughts and feeling, as well as a vehicle for their demonstrative expression.

The following scene illustrates the emotional power of the doll and the depth of children's attachment. In the autobiographical story, *On the Banks of Plum Creek* (1932), of *The Little House on the Prairie* series, Laura Ingalls Wilder recounts her grief at having been forced to give Charlotte, her little rag doll, to a neighbor child. "Charlotte was gone. Pa was not there and Charlotte's box was empty. The wind went howling by the eaves. Everything was empty and cold." (p.232) Deprived of the comfort of her doll,

her father's absence is all the more painful. Not long after, Laura is horrified to discover her beloved doll discarded in a frozen, barnyard mud puddle. "Sleety rain was beating down on Charlotte. Anna had scalped her. Charlotte's wavy hair was ripped loose, and her smiling yarn mouth was torn and bleeding red on her cheek. One shoe-button eye was gone. But she was Charlotte." (p.235) Wilder describes the persistent identity of the ensouled doll and her emotional attachment to her, despite grave injury and neglect. Given young children's attachment to their special playthings, early childhood educators should give careful consideration as to their classroom use and whether to allow or exclude personal playthings in the classroom.

Bettelheim, (1975) explains how dolls are crucial for acting out feelings and experiences, for which young children do not have adequate words or the capacity for direct self-reflection. "In normal play, objects such as dolls and toy animals are used to embody various aspects of the child's personality which are too complex, unacceptable and contradictory for him to handle." Bettelheim goes on to connect the fairy tale and play. The fairy tale offers open-ended scripts for acting out scenario's or feelings that are too sophisticated, overwhelming or dark to the point that they are both inaccessible and perhaps inaddressable through normal pretend play. In addressing the child's psyche the doll offers a quality of play, unique to representations of living beings, that other toys cannot approximate.

Current research emphasizes play as a basic need, in the words of trained psychotherapist and movement educator, Thomas Poplawski (2000),

...through play the child is able to take his passive experiences and work them over until they can be

assimilated or digested. This is a function of play that is utilized by the child psychotherapist in play therapy or the Jungian sand tray work, in which the child is helped to process traumatic experiences through play. ...imaginative play is the tool that every child uses to learn to cope with stress in life. Thus to interfere with the child's learning how to play in a healthy manner imperils the later development of emotional regulatory and coping skills."

(p. 6-7).

Some people might question whether the child was actually gaining coping skills or was merely diverted or escaping from their life stress. Therefore as a teacher it is important not only to consider the impact of play during play, but on other areas of classroom interaction, engagement and performance in determining the value of play activities.

In the field of child development, there is general agreement on the crucial role of play, but for one notable exception, Maria Montessori (Thomson, 1994). Currently, this has resulted in the formation of two major factions of Montessori in the United States. This schism is, in part, due to traditionalists who are unwilling to acknowledge the need for children to engage in free imaginative play, as well as practical learning activities for their healthy growth and development (Poplawski, 2000). On this point, Montessori traditionalists are clearly in the minority, as researchers are in consensus regarding the role of play in fostering social capacities, as well as intellectual and emotional growth (Thomson, 1994).

The emphasis on play, of education professor Michael Rettig (1995) proceeds from the rationale that there are an increasing number of children from culturally diverse backgrounds. Rettig states, "One of the most common elements of childhood across culture is play. Early childhood educators must recognize the importance of play in the lives of young children and make use of play as a means of promoting cultural awareness." This sentiment is shared by a number of other sources who have contributed to this discussion of dolls, among them diversity educator Beverly Tatum (1997), childhood ethnographer Elizabeth Chin (1999), as well as, ethnic toys and games expert and historian Patricia Nelson (1990). From all of their various perspectives, they point out that race or skin color is not a broad enough context for considering ethnicity, let alone diversity. ." In conclusion, Rettig exhorts teachers to recognize cultural diversity beyond racial differences, but to cultivate an awareness of other variables, including gender, disability, religion and regional differences.

Play Therapy

The therapeutic aspect of dolls and puppetry is generally acknowledged. Although the discipline of play therapy is outside of this conversation on dolls their informal therapeutic power is not. Carolyn Gage (2000) a feminist playwright and incest survivor expression the sacred and healing dimensions of doll play as she reflects on her traumatic childhood:

"When I say that 'I played with the dolls,' 'I don't mean the dress parade that passed for 'playing with dolls' among my peers, and which has caused generations of feminists to privilege the dump trucks and toolkits of male

children over the dolls given to little girls. "No when I 'played with dolls' I was involved in sacred ritual; I was recreating the world. I was in my laboratory testing out systems of ethics. I was making detailed observations about the intricacies of human personality I was healing myself and conjuring."(P.2)

Teachers' professional training does not prepare them to formally engage in play therapy, yet children's play in the classroom is an opportunity for thoughtful observation of their students. Furthermore the classroom lacks the privacy and specialized environment of a therapeutic setting; nonetheless teachers can still create an environment that supports healthy expression in fantasy and play. Teachers should be both alert to the messages communicated through children's play and yet cautious of hasty conclusions and possible interpretations of what they have witnessed (Bettelheim, 1975). For example, paying attention to doll play is also a way of getting in touch with children's attitudes toward other racial groups (Kendall, in Rettig, 1995). Although children's doll play provides a venue for expression and gives clues as to needs or problems, it is not to say that play in itself will resolve the issue. There are of course situations which require seeking intervention, however the following two sections contain intermediate strategies that work, not only for thematic teaching but have been effective in the social realm as well. The teachers build schema and model, directly addressing individual and classroom situations through the use of dolls and stories.

Storytelling

Now that the relevance of the doll and imaginative play have been discussed, what about the factor of age? The following strategies will show

multiple pedagogical applications of the doll, as well as how the role of dolls can transform as children move from preschool through adolescence. The pocket apron is a method of storytelling using puppets and dolls, which appeals to people of all ages. Each pocket hides a finger puppet or special treasure which if chosen will be the touchstone to a different tale. Some suggested themes are the Four Seasons, Animals, Birds, Forest Scenes and Multi-Cultural aprons. She describes it as, "...a colorful theater for shorter stories, songs and poems." Suzanne Down's uses the story apron in every possible community center, institution and event. Not only is it suitable for schools, but also is excellent for transition times during field trips. Although many people are comfortable and supportive of play and dolls in particular for the preschool child, many would question their merit beyond kindergarten (Downs, 2000). An example of puppetry with older students appears later in this chapter.

Persona Dolls

The following is an example of how dolls are employed to build the social fabric of children through the early elementary grades. Persona dolls may be custom made or purchased, it is not so much the doll, but how it is used that characterizes the persona doll (Whitney, 1999). Persona dolls are dolls that are part of a classroom set of dolls, each one with a unique identity and biography that remains consistent throughout the stories they are used to help tell. Persona dolls are not baby dolls, as in the housekeeping corner, but are intended to be the same age as the children. These dolls are observers in the classroom, and not available for general free play. They are to be gently and respectfully interacted with either

during storytelling or when a particular child needs support.

In *Kids Like Us* (Whitney, 1999), issues of play are addressed and modeled, but the children do not engage in actual imaginative play with dolls. Author Trisha Whitney outlines a detailed, yet open-ended approach for working with persona dolls. Whitney's storytelling method is focused on children ages two through eight and includes collecting student histories, record keeping of individual dolls and their stories, lesson plan outline for developing stories, ideas for research, as well as an assessment tool). In her work with students she has articulated ten goals:

1. To bring up a subject; To begin a Theme Study; To Give Information
2. To Undo Incorrect Information
3. To introduce a New Emotional Vocabulary Word; To Teach Skills for Handling Emotions
4. To Teach a Pro-Social Skill; To Teach a Classroom Skill
5. To Practice Problem Solving Skills
6. To Support a Child or All the Children by Mirroring a Situation
7. To Help Children Become Comfortable With Diversity
8. To Undo Learned Stereotypes and Biased Beliefs
9. To Help Children Develop Anti- Bias Attitudes
10. To Help Children Learn to Stand up Against Bias

These dolls and the goals of Whitney in using them, recall the goals of Gulick's Japanese Friendship dolls. In reviewing Whitney's "Kid's Like Us." Students engage with the doll in stories, which are tailored to the interests, and needs living

in the classroom, through these vignettes students and teachers are able to address social dynamics and situations in a fun and non-threatening manner. It is the thorough process of getting to know students and their families and the development of stories based on the students identity and individual needs that makes this persona doll method both sensitive and effective in creating a positive classroom culture.

Puppetry

For older children, creating a puppet performance is a way for teachers to illicit more independent creativity or problem solving among their students. "Kids and Puppets for World Change," is a project developed by class teacher and puppeteer, Susan Downs, which involves fifth through eighth graders performing stories relevant to current times. These stories of empowerment are from traditional multi-cultural folk-tales or original stories with themes of social purpose. The troupe performs these tales as a class or group project, as a gift for a particular audience or as a benefit for a good cause or local need.

Performing their puppet shows builds camaraderie and teamwork. The success of this project is evidenced by the continued existence of the expanded troupe, six years later and their enduring commitment to donating 25% of their profits to their local anti-poverty group (Downs, 2001). Puppet performance fosters interaction with the community and is a medium for young people to collaborate in service to others.

Math and Science

While it may be natural to associate dolls with emotional, social and artistic

development and the doll making with art, they are also being used to teach mathematics, geography, social studies, history and sex education. Teachers Jo Lean Ruggles and Barbara Sweeney (1998) developed the "Measure Me" doll lesson to convey concepts of numeracy and measurement in a constructivist manner. Students apply their personal birth statistics to create a doll. They then compare their heights and weight with other children's dolls. This lesson is a sensitive use of the doll because it is personal and uses information that is accessible for all students. In this case birth certificates are used which are a required part of school records. It is effective because it is student-centered, moving children from self-knowledge to applying that knowledge to broader skills and concepts.

This article is aimed at fellow teachers and documents curriculum arising out of their current practice as teachers. They concluded that student apprehension of number concepts and statistics is enhanced by using the doll as both a personal and concrete representation of their mathematical activities (Ruggles&Slengeri, 1998). These qualities are also a component in the following successful applications of dolls in elementary and middle school curriculum in other disciplines.

An interesting approach to integrating mathematics, history and children's literature involves geography or "geo dolls." Dolls are selected to represent characters in children's books and sent with escorts (colleagues and friends) on vacation where their travels are documented in post-cards, journals and photographs. Math stations are designed around the dolls trips and include measurement, estimation, proportion, calculation distance and travel time, rate of

speed and angles. The data from these novel mathematical situations, such as distance traveled, travel time, city populations, mileage calculations and mountain elevations were collected in the forms of graphs, charts and maps and compared throughout the year.

“ ‘ There is no other decision that teachers make that has a greater impact on student’s opportunity to learn and on their perceptions about what mathematics is than the selection or creation of the tasks with which the teacher engages student in studying mathematics,’ essays Lappan and Briars (1995). We emphatically concur and have shared our traveling doll activities to illustrate how any classroom can benefit from this kind of approach to teaching mathematics.” (Karp, Brown 2001)

The teachers involved in this curriculum perceived its strength to be the opportunity to explore authentic applications of mathematics in real-life situations in a way that fostered positive perceptions of the subject. They were engaged at a higher level of complexity than they would have been with standard methods and teachers credit their performance on state exams with the preparation this project provides (Karp& Brown, 2001). These math journeys share a concept similar to that of Robert Moses’ actual math journeys. Moses’ Algebra Project is detailed in his book, *Radical Equations* (2001), which makes the connection between math literacy and civic and economic equality. Aside from their enhanced comprehension of math, as they sent their geo- dolls out into the world, students



A local example of an interactive curriculum involving dolls, in a thematic unit on geography, social studies and history. Photo courtesy of educator Signe Feeney.

Social Studies and Language Arts

A more familiar use of dolls is to bring them *into* the classroom. Traditional dolls from world cultures lend themselves to both social studies and language arts. *Around the World: Windows on Social Studies: Multi-cultural Adventures through Literature*, by Joan Westley and Holly Melton (1994) contains a unit on Charlotte Pomerantz's book, "The *Chalk Doll*. A mother tells the story of her homemade brown rag doll and how she always wanted a white store bought or "chalk doll." The story comes full circle with her daughter's request to make a traditional black doll. There are a variety of dramatic, artistic and reflective questions, which help students, process the story and relate the character's experience to their own lives. The lesson plan sensitively integrates the theme of children's literature with social studies through thoughtful discussion and activities, which relate to the concepts of

family interactions, history, economic choices, the cost of goods and cultural understanding. These “windows” to understanding and experience include, making a rag doll, interviewing family about their childhood and setting up a classroom store. This format is easily adapted to other books with social studies themes.

The children’s book *Daisy doll*, by Michael and Angela Medearis, (2000), brings to light a point of caution: when choosing dolls from other cultures, never assume a child from that particular culture or heritage will identify with a certain doll. If it does not appeal to them it may be embarrassing or provocative. In the story, Daisy, the only black child in the class is given a black rag doll and poem about Africa to recite.

“As I walked up the hill to the house, something became clear to me. I had never really noticed the color of my skin. It was as if Miss Clark’s poem had opened up my eyes for the first time. My father, my brothers and my sisters are a variety of colors, from a pale, butter-colored yellow to a rich, dark mahogany. My mother is almost as white as Miss Clark. Skin color had never been important to me---until that day.” (p.10)

Daisy doll is a true story told from the perspective of a child who is proud and defiant in her humiliation and anger at her teacher’s assumption. Multiple and varied examples of dolls and cultural artifacts in general would be preferable.

History

There are several children’s books with dolls as a repository of history, for

example *Patty Reed's doll: the story of the Donner party*, by Rachel Laugaard (1956) and *Rachel Field's Hitty: her first hundred years*, by Rosemary Wells and Susan Jeffers (1999). I found several lesson plans using these books as well as the Clark's Brown vs. the Board of Education doll studies as means of teaching history. Dolls provide a concrete object to engage student's interest to contextualize history and journeys around, as well as the opportunity for a perspective that may be less limited than that of a child or adult. For instance the rag doll of a child on the Underground Railroad in the book, *Almost to Freedom*, by Vaunda Nelson (2003) speaks from a perspective that crosses human boundaries of time, the doll as a silent witness accompanies and comforts to different but similar girls on their journey from slavery to freedom. Students journey with the doll through past events and are invited to reflect on the past and how things have changed or stayed the same. In this case a suitable story is used as a starting point for the exploration of a historical event or period. This is a good way to integrate language arts and history.

However in the case of *Patty Reed's doll*, and *The Little House series*, by Laura Ingalls Wilder educators need to be aware of the depiction and characterization of Native and African Americans. While not all characterizations are negative, racial difference is sometimes unnecessarily noted or emphasized, according to the attitudes and customs of whites at the time. People of color, particularly Native Americans are characterized as the other and as sources of fear and danger. On the other hand, 1930 Newberry award winner, *Hitty*, was lovingly revised for contemporary readers. In the process of updating this classic for a new

generation, the authors took the opportunity to expand Hitty's journey in a way that better reflects the richness and diversity of American history. Teachers need to review their books carefully, for stereotypes, loaded language or dated information in order for this to be a sensitive and effective approach. There may be books you still choose to use, how will you remediate biased and negative images and messages?

Commercialism

In contrast to the approach of using books featuring dolls, from a variety of authors, is the American Girl Doll collection. The dolls and accompanying books were developed and marketed as an alternative to Barbie on one hand and an introduction to American history on the other. Most schools and public libraries have the American girl series in their collection. Therefore many children who do not have the means to buy an American girl doll read these books. The Pleasant Company, creator of American Girl Dolls has been both praised and criticized for their foray into history. Some appreciate the exposure of children to history and others complain of their sanitized version of historical events and realities of everyday life (Nielsen 2002). The happy endings focus on are not necessarily consonant with the reality of the experience and marginalization of people of color, in this case former slaves and the Nez Perce tribe. American Girl books emphasize simple pleasures, and old-fashioned values while the catalog urges consumption in order to cultivate an American girl identity.

There is a definite schism between the values of the book and the target market of the catalog (Acosta-Alzuru, Kreshel, 2002). The books emphasize

values of frugality, resourcefulness and being grateful for what you have, while the catalogs and their myriad of expensive dolls; accessories and clothes orient children to acquisitiveness and consumerism. Ironically, although the Pleasant Company was conceived as an alternative to “Barbie,” it was sold to Mattel in 1998 (Nielsen, 2002). As for the dolls, creator Pleasant Rowland envisioned these for older girls, who were not quite ready to leave childhood behind, yet needed a special, older doll to engage them through their connection to American history. Perhaps, these books would be best used in the classroom to transition from fiction to primary sources. Students could make comparisons with first-person accounts of slavery, child labor, Nez Perce history and for older children a way to study media literacy.

Gender

The American Girl dolls, like Barbie has coupled female identity with consumption. Where American girls’ dolls have been used with the intention of introducing history, a critical examination of Barbie has been used by teachers to confront history, culture and stereotypes. The pervasiveness of Barbie in children’s play and as a cultural icon can provide older students a common starting point for investigating social and individual gender issues. One high school teacher (Perrin, 1999) confronts gender stereotypes in his classroom through a two-day lesson based on, Barbie Doll, “ by Marge Piercy (1982). On the first day students read, and analyze the poem,

"Barbie Doll," by Marge Piercy

This girlchild was born as usual
 and presented dolls that did pee-pee
 and miniature GE stoves and irons
 and wee lipsticks the color of cherry candy.
 Then in the magic of puberty, a classmate said:
 You have a great big nose and fat legs.

She was healthy, tested intelligent,
 possessed strong arms and back,
 abundant sexual drive and manual dexterity.
 She went to and fro apologizing.
 Everyone saw a fat nose on thick legs.
 She was advised to play coy,
 exhorted to come on hearty,
 exercise, diet, smile and wheedle,
 Her good nature wore out
 like a fan belt.

So she cut off her nose and her legs
 and offered them up.
 In the casket displayed on satin she lay
 with the undertaker's cosmetics painted on,
 a turned-up putty nose,
 dressed in a pink and white nightie.

Doesn't she look pretty? Everyone said.
 Consummation at last.
 To every woman a happy ending.
 (from *Circles on the Water*)

The following day students compose a complementary poem, "G.I. Joe" dealing with male stereotypes. This opportunity to look at the language in the poem about a familiar object, to ponder the tension between the girl's authentic self and social expectations, and then apply these concepts to male stereotypes is consonant both the constructivist

dialogical method of Paulo Friere and Ira Shor. This assignment starts with the students' schema of Barbie, gender roles and stereotypes and moves out into the world.

When discussing dolls it is worthwhile to distinguish between ethnic and individual identity and self-esteem. Whereas Anglo girls are affirmed by the prevalence of white dolls, few of them possess the extreme attributes that characterize Barbie: white blond hair, huge blue eyes, diminutive limbs and extremities, and huge breasts. Further Barbie does not exist in a cultural vacuum, the inextricable link between the doll and the adolescent girl in the Western imagination is expressed in *The Voyeur*, by Robbes Grillet, (1958) wherein the description of the adolescent girl and the mannequin are blended and blurred throughout the novel:

“In one corner stood a mannequin...one hip projecting slightly beyond the other in a “natural” pose. The mannequin was well proportioned but smaller than normal, as far as the mutilations of her size permitted.”

When we consider the doll as either a site of alienation or self-knowledge the doll becomes a key to a culture, its values health and social structure. The following passage paints a picture of lively and autonomous play, free from the restraints of gendered use. Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868) uses this description to illustrate the contrast in Jo's tomboy nature and boisterous character to the melancholic Beth. Like many boys and girls perceived as unfeminine, she did not necessarily reject dolls, simply used them to her own purpose. Because she was allowed to engage with her doll in untraditional ways, she could express herself through her doll play.

“One forlorn fragment of dollanity had belonged to Jo; and having led a tempestuous life, was left a wreck in the rag bag, from which dreary poor-house it was rescued by Beth, and taken to her refuge. Having no top to its head, she tied on a neat little cap, and as both arms and legs were gone, she hid these deficiencies by folding it in a blanket, and devoting her best be to this chronic invalid.” (p.166)

The dolls multiple injuries provide a picture of the unintended use and high adventures suffered my many dolls as their owners resisted prescribed female roles through subversive play (Formanek–Brunell, 1993). Whereas many dolls lend themselves to active play, few “active” toys, such as trucks, balls and blocks have the flexibility to transform into a companion or someone with feelings to be nurtured and tended. This unique quality is what William longs for in Charlotte Zolotlow’s (1972) book, *William’s Doll*:

“When my friend William
 was nine years old,
 He wanted a doll,
 To hug and hold,
 ‘A doll,’ said William
 is what I need
 wash and clean,
 and dress and feed”

(A song adapted from Zolotlow's book, by artists Mary Rodgers and Sheldon Harnick)

A recent study of student's dispositions toward gender and play emerged from a retiring fourth grade teacher's discovery of student responses to *William's doll*, from 1975. Researchers Greever, Austin and Welthousen (2000) compared students' attitudes and responses to *William's Doll*, in the 1970's to those from an identical questionnaire administered in the 1997 to gauge dispositions on gender and play. The results show that while the last twenty years have seen huge shifts in perceptions of acceptable behavior and activities for girls, for the most part, boys still have less latitude in their play compared to girls. Boys are more subject to rigid gender roles and ideas about appropriate play for males remain fixed in the 19th century. The researches concluded that teachers need to engage in consciousness raising activities with their students around gender and reflect on their own childhood and attitudes. *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* (Kindlon and Thomson, 1999), mentioned in the previous chapter, is one of the resources they recommend for teachers to become aware of their own beliefs in regard to gender and to educate themselves on gender elated issues.

Race Dissonance

In many students, issues of gender are compounded with those of ethnicity. Since the historical studies of Kenneth and Mamie Clark in the 1930's and 1940's, the doll has been linked with racial identity and cultivating self-concept. The phenomenon of positive associations with white dolls, as opposed to negative associations with black

dolls is so consistent and enduring it has its own term: "The White-based or Euro centric preferences by minority children have been referred to as *race dissonance*" (Spencer in Rettig, 1995, p. 2).

The studies of the Clarks have recently been both challenged and confirmed by subsequent repeated and related studies. Two studies one, in the United States (Durrett and Davy , in Rettig 1995) and one in the West Indies (Gopaul-McNicol, 1995) showed a similar and even greater degree, of racial dissonance ranging from between 68 and 80% of students choosing the Anglo doll over one of their own race. Another study looked at race dissonance among Mexican American and African American girls (Buddington, 2001). The racial identity of black girls was studied via a project wherein students could design their own Barbies. The designs of the girls and their accompanying discussion and questionnaire revealed that while preference for more fairer skin and long hair persisted, the girls demonstrated both acceptance and pride in their appearance (Buddington, 2001).

These mixed results indicate an improvement in self-acceptance alongside continued perceptions of white dolls as the superior, ideal compared to black dolls. Parents were also participants and were shown the girl's designs, and possibly exerted an influence on the girls' choices. Also, since these studies were separated from the Clark's studies by almost forty years perhaps this reflects a change in attitudes and society rather than the invalidity of the Clark's earlier findings. Ethnographer and researcher Elizabeth Chin (1999) criticizes the prevailing body of studies of children and dolls, in that they are not child-centered or based on how children actually use their own dolls. Chin found that

the African-American girls she interviewed had virtually no access to ethnically accurate dolls. Yet, the girls showed considerable creativity and ingenuity, in adapting white dolls to themselves through styling their hair. She goes on to suggest that "ethnic" dolls serve to solidify the idea of an absolute correspondence between physical markers, particularly skin color and ethnicity. This again raises the question of equity in play. (Chin, 1999) Although, the girls' ability to modify their dolls is significant, so is their lack of choice in playthings.

In Tony Morrison's (1970), The Bluest Eye, Claudia reflects on the obsession with white beauty as manifested in dolls:

"Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs - all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. 'Here,' they said, 'this is beautiful, and if you are on this day "worthy" you may have it'" (p.21)

She recalls her bewilderment at the "beautiful" white, blonde baby doll she receives as a gift. She is not drawn to play with it. Rather it is so foreign to her that she finally breaks it apart to discover the mystery of its pull-string. Meanwhile, the adults are horrified and bitter that she would destroy what for them is a talisman for the inaccessible material treasure and beauty of the white world and all the unmet longings of their own childhood.

Dolls, which negate or invalidate the child, are a form of alienation and violence against the self. In the opinion of Nelson (1990), curator of an ethnic dolls museum,"

The negative stereotypes represented in toys and games are especially insidious because of their impact on children's developing conceptions of themselves and others." Later she notes, "There is a market for ethnic accuracy." (p.29) In other words, the doll's features do not need to have exact correspondence to the child's but they do need distinction beyond color from white dolls (Chin, 1999; Nelson, 1990). The words of the creator of "Sun Man" a black action figure express the affirmative potential of doll, " ' there is no more ethnic toy product as a doll, since it reflects the beauty and characteristic of the race it portrays.'" (p.28) She began making toys, inspired by her dismay when her son told her he could never be a super hero because 'He Man" was white (Nelson, 1990).

In "A Barbie doll story," by law university law professor Peter Honisberg (1995), he recounts the disappointing experience of a Latina student. He was teaching a high school class organized around the theme of Brown vs. the Board of Education. After reviewing the Clarks' doll studies, students had a conversation about the lack of diversity in Barbies. He encouraged a student who expressed her frustration at the lack of a Mexican Barbie, to write to Mattel challenging them to create a Hispanic Barbie. At first she wanted the teacher to write the letter, believing that because the teacher was white his letter would be listened to by Mattel. The student and two friends wrote a simple but eloquent letter:

"To whom it may concern:

In order for integration to succeed in our community and in the nation, there should be dolls in other races, Hispanic, Black and Asian who are the majority of the minority cultures. Small girls play with Barbie dolls. Barbie is blond

and blue-eyed, and when children are small they are vulnerable, and their lives reflect upon playing. We feel that in order for the community to accept integration, there should be dolls in other races. If children watch commercial with Barbie having friends who are "other than white" then millions of viewers will know that if Barbie can play with other people, so can they. Your company seems to portray a picture in which whites are superior because all of Barbie's friends are white. Do the world a favor, have Barbie's friends be integrated, not segregated.

Sincerely, Carmina Sanchez, Lupe Padilla, Maria Elena Garcia.

They were disappointed and angry to receive a pat form letter in response. Adding insult to injury the letter was signed, "Concha Gonzales." Rather than feeling a sense of empowerment, this student received a bitter confirmation of her expectation not to be taken seriously and attributed this response foremost, to her ethnicity. (Honisberg, 1995)

As early as 1991 Mattel introduced, three supposedly ethnically correct African American fashion dolls, in response to consumers demand for ethnically diverse dolls, however after over thirty years of exclusively Anglo Barbies, for at least one student, this was too little, too late. Her lack of awareness of the existence of a Hispanic Barbie also highlights the issue of accessibility of ethnic dolls even when they are produced. This exercise was powerful, yet ultimately negative for the student. In this case, perhaps the student could have published both her letter and Mattel's response in the school newspaper or an editorial column. Because this activity had high stakes for this student, a

more reliable and authentic experience could have given her a sense of validation even if she was unsatisfied by the corporate response. As teachers, it is important to anticipate possible unfavorable outcomes and hopefully design our activities in such a way that students are not so vulnerable to external outcomes, or have the opportunity to positively transform their experience.

Multi-Cultural and Diversity Education

"A Barbie Doll Story" details a student's attempt to take on issues of race outside of the classroom. Meanwhile, the following study using a pilot multicultural curriculum, addressed issues of cultural attitudes and literacy within the classroom. In a study titled, "Using a Cooperative Learning Model to Improve Cultural Attitudes and Increase Cultural Literacy" dolls were an artistic component of multicultural curriculum, which focused on Hispanic and African-American history. Fourth graders undertook cooperative research in studying literature, inventions as well as creating biographies, ethnographies and dolls. The Cultural Awareness Assessment, the Racial Tension Scale, and the Cultural Interaction Sociogram all showed a positive impact on the children's cultural literacy and ability to work together. The tests showed a 50-70% increase in cultural literacy, over 25% reduction in racial tension and a 10% reduction in negative interactions (Mingleton, 1993).

Although the results are encouraging as a whole, it is difficult to draw specific conclusions about the role of the doll, because it was only one aspect of multiple activities with the students. The use of the doll was interesting because although the dolls themselves were mere stylized cutouts they were used to represent seven

traditional Egyptian values, or “the Seven Cardinal Virtues of Maat”(Kifano, in Mingleton, 1993): truth, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, order, reciprocity. The dolls were used to help students to develop self- discipline through assuming responsibility in regulating the classroom. They would hold up and or recite the virtue to show acknowledgement of class rules or to indicate the virtue that they desired for classmates to display in the immediate situation. This in an example of a very simple, limited yet effective use of dolls for a specific purpose within a larger successful unit of lessons focused on intercultural literacy.

Second Language Learners and Immigrant Students

The use of the doll in the following project was a much more involved undertaking, requiring considerable preparation, coordination and responsiveness to student interests on the part of the teachers. “The Doll project” undertaken by early childhood educators, Wein, Stacey, Keating, Rowlings and Cameron (2002) with preschool children is included here because of its effectiveness with children who are not yet fully verbal and its potential adaptation for English as a Second Language students. Originally intended to last one week, the doll project based on Reggio Emilia’s philosophy of emergent curriculum, lasted six months. Teachers allowed two and three year olds to choose handmade cloth dolls without distinguishing features. Over the course of many months the children gave their doll eyes and hair, made beds for them and took part in several neighborhood field trips.

According to one of the teachers, “ a doll for each child created a focal point of making each child’s thinking, desires and experiences visible.” The success of this project was hailed as fostering a level of engagement and development that astounded the

participants and created stronger connections between teachers, students and the local community (Wein, 2002). This project is mentioned here because it was designed for pre-verbal students and therefore could possibly be adapted for use in Second Language Learner classrooms where students need increased opportunity for visual and hands-on learning. This project models strategies which bring students' families in closer contact with the school, and would assist immigrant students to becoming oriented to their local community. Another project, in Florida school with a large immigrant population, involved all 700 students and their families in the creating an exhibit of dolls. Each one represented something pertaining to the student's national identity or ethnic heritage (Henshaw, 1994).

Given the powerful research on children's self-concept utilizing dolls to assess children's perceptions of themselves it seems worthwhile to provide activities with dolls which foster cultural pride and self-esteem. West Indian (Go-Paul & McNichol, 1995) and Australian (MacNaughton, 2001) immigrant doll studies had results similar to the Clark's 1940's research, and show that deficits in positive self-concept persist for children of in post-colonial societies and for ethnic minorities. Racial dissonance in Vietnamese children in Australia was compounded by the stress and isolation of adapting to a new country, the greater culture and school (Milner, 1983.)

In the *Inner World of the Immigrant Child*, (Igoa, 1995), "Milner concluded that immigrant minority children tend to devalue their own ethnic group." (p.41). About half of the West Indian and Asian children (45 and 58 percent respectively) thought that the doll that looked like them was "bad" and a majority of both groups (82 and 77 percent

respectively) identified the doll that most resembled them as ugly (Igoa, 1995). Although this evidence is compelling, it is worthwhile to question whether modesty is a cultural value that is being expressed and whether the children's answers were influenced by the ethnicity of those who interviewed them. Whatever the situation the student's responses suggest a lack of confidence and security in their social environment, which will in turn impact their ability to adapt and flourish in their new setting. The surrounding culture can overwhelm and diminish student's sense of self.

A Thai rod-puppet or *hun luang* master reflects on art and identity,

“...I felt in having been born a Thai person...we might seem inferior to other great nations in regard to industrial or technological development, but the splendour of the artistic vein that was innate in the life-blood of our ancestors is as rich as, or even richer than, that of any great nation. For those developing contemporary *hun*, their performance practice is a way of becoming truly Thai.” (Virulak, 2001)

Hun Luang is a form of rod puppetry that celebrates cultural legends and history through elaborate performances, which take many years of preparation and yet may only be performed a few times. Tapping into artistic heritage offers one possibility for students to retain cultural ties, and pride, to resist being subsumed by American culture. Meanwhile other students are enriched by their exposure to international arts.

Dolls and World Cultures

Studying dolls from a variety of world cultures provides a window into their endless style, variety and ingenuity of construction. Each doll has significance within its unique culture. There is a connection between dolls, national customs, religious belief and sacred traditions (Joseph, 1972) The idea of play as conveyor of culture and questions about the commodification of children's play are central to the authors motivation to study the roles of puppets in dolls in pedagogy. The Museum of New Mexico has developed a K-8, artistic enrichment curriculum unit, which uses dolls as a vehicle for encountering world cultures, history and traditions. Another excellent lesson plan, involving dolls is "Women in Africa: Tradition and Change." I like this group of lessons because it is centered on African culture rather than focused on comparing African societies against the United States. This unit is designed for secondary students and it posted on an educations website sponsors by the National Endowment for Humanities. The national Foxfire program network is a rich source of information on traditional American dolls. This collection of photographs, techniques and anecdotes about doll making and play was culled from the oral histories of the Foxfire program. Foxfire is an ongoing program wherein high school students interview older residents about subjects related to Appalachian folkways, life and local history.

Traditional Dolls and Local History

Appalachian Toys and Games was edited by Foxfire, educators, Hilton Smith and Linda Garland who is also a former Foxfire program student. These dolls among other, toys and games represented in this collection harkens back to a culture of childhood, which has largely disappeared in contemporary American society. In the book, *Failure*

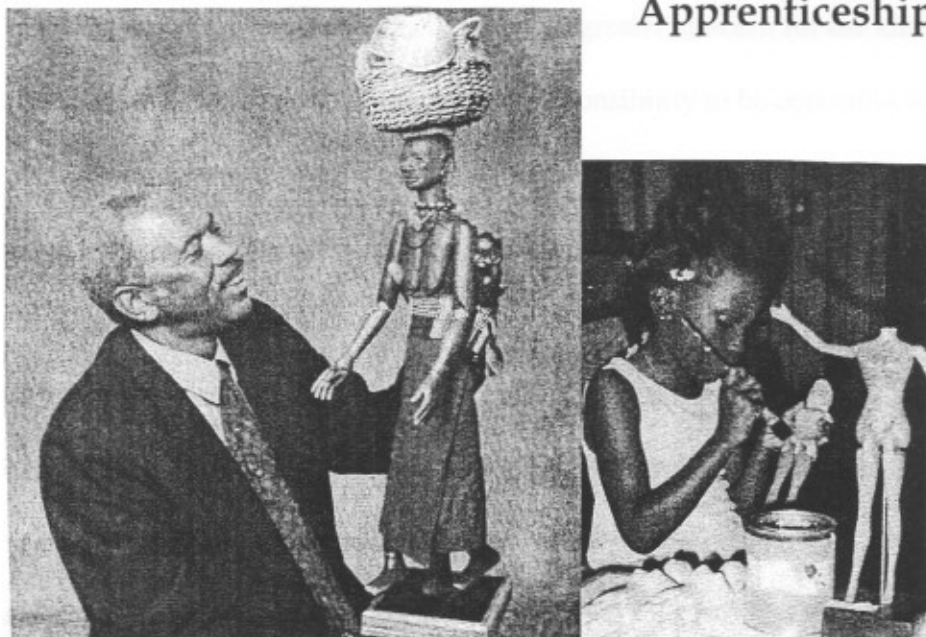
to Connect: How Computers Affect our Children's Minds and What We Can Do About it, Author Jane Healey (1998) outlines the need for children to connect with nature and generate their own play. Healy goes on to note that fewer than ten percent of children now learn about nature directly from the outdoors, the traditional setting and source of children's play materials.

“ A favorite baby doll of ours was nothing by a stick of wood wrapped up in an old coat or something. Now, this is when children actually didn't have toys,” recalls Foxfire elder, Helen Nichols. (p.85)

Although this book focuses on traditions of European Americans, there are now Foxfire programs networked around the country, including Nez Perce native students in Lapwai, Idaho and students from primarily immigrant backgrounds at the Newcomer High School in San Francisco. The appreciation of traditional dolls and toys is a way to both share and connect with cultural heritage for all students.

Traditional dolls and pastimes are characterized by being handmade from materials on hand or transmitted from child to child, out of the healthy impulses of children and unencumbered by media images and commodification. *Appalachian Toys and Games* is a wonderful resource for activities that support active, healthy and spontaneous play, and in doing so foster children's individual imaginations and deepen their experience of community. Play and creativity that once came naturally is reliant upon the support and advocacy of caregivers to create space, due to our contemporary cultures hostility toward and impatience with play for (1993).

Artistic Apprenticeship



Traditional and historical doll artist and high school woodworking teacher Floyd Bell and (above) and his granddaughter Toni (right). Photos courtesy of [Enchanted Companions](#). By Carolyn Michael, (2001).

Construction

Ethnic accuracy and commercialism are not the only issues of authenticity to consider when considering the use of dolls in the classroom. Traditionally dolls are created from whatever is on hand, with materials typically arising from the immediate environment. As unnatural details of physical and ethnic characteristics attack the selves of children, unnatural materials alienate children from the natural world. When we always provide new or unbreakable objects we deny them important understanding and knowledge of the world around them. Plastic dolls which are unresponsive to use and abuse numb a child to the consequences of their actions and do not give the full tactile experience and stimulation of the natural world (Britz-Crecelius, 1972). Further, the more detailed, plastic and formed the doll is, the greater the limit on the doll's potential

for allowing a child to explore all facets of their personality and range of their feelings (Dancy, 1989).

While the aspect of construction may be of greater concern for the kindergarten teacher, teachers of students of all ages, have a responsibility to be conscious and deliberate in the materials they select for children. Children are amazing in their capacity to transform even the least ideal playthings with love and imagination but when toys are fully formed, hyper-realistic in detail and intruded upon by commercialism their play is less open-ended and self-directed (Britz-Crecelius, 1972; Dancy, 1989). When the subject and quality of play are determined by sources outside the child, the child's imagination atrophies and their experience compromised. Mechanization further removes the child from imaginative interaction, "Because these are not dolls, but machines, whose mechanics leave no room for the little bit of the child's soul that seeks to enclose itself there." (Britz-Crecelius, cited in Dancy, 1989).

Toys, human and machine

The difference between toy representations of humans and machines was highlighted in a study of children with autism. Researchers in England, Lewis and Boucher (1995) were surprised when children with autism were disproportionately capable of generating original ideas for play with dolls in comparison to toy cars. It is an outcome, which defied study predictions and occurred despite what is cited as children with autism's documented indifference to dolls. The researchers were unable to explain this beyond the fact that the dolls had more moveable parts (Lewis&Boucher, 1995). It would be interesting to study if the children were better able to identify with dolls because they are symbolic of a living human being rather than a machine. Special needs

children, especially children who are autistic, are well represented in mainstream classrooms and therefore the doll should also be considered in supporting the needs of all types of learners. Trisha Whitney's *Kid's Like Us* has ideas and resources for researching physical and developmental disabilities and ideas for respectfully representing disabilities both in classroom playthings and persona dolls. (See Appendix B for companies that carry dolls with various disabilities)

Deconstruction of stereotypes and consumerism

As for the older student reflecting on fixed, negative, limited images in dolls or studying the construction, marketing, and distribution of dolls might be a relevant microcosm for critiquing the larger American culture and globalism. The passive consumption of the modern Western human being is a concern for educators and social critics alike. Jeremy Seabrook offers this eloquent criticism of children being denied authorship of their own play (1998):

“For the principal need which has been withheld for the children of privilege is the power to do, to make, to invent and to improvise, both on their own behalf and for the sake of other people. The effect of the global market upon those who can buy everything they need is a radical undermining of the need to discover; explore and understand the world through ingenuity and imaginative play which are wiped out by Barbie dolls and toys that efface the capacity for children. They then become: new kinds of bondage, slavery even are forged in the

appropriated and captive longings of children.” (p. 5)

A macabre and garish vision of the imprint of Western marketplace detritus on the post-colonial imagination is presented in *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People*, by Paule Marshall (1969). The novel takes place on a remote section of a Caribbean island, among characters who are dealing with poverty and a legacy of enslavement. The scene is a confrontation between Vere and an unnamed woman, who we know only as the light skinned mother of his child, who died, according to the community from neglect, rejected by his mother for its dark skin. She is preparing for Carnival, applying pancake make-up and dressed in a blonde wig and a silver dress. She is surrounded by scores of white dolls, “And they were all dressed, even the ones lounging in an exact copy of her lavish gown; and their spun-gold hair, piled in the same elaborate tower of curls as her wig, was covered with fake jewels also.” (p.273). After she speaks in disdain of Vere, and dead baby, he beats her violently with a cane. When she is unresponsive he seizes a doll to strike her with, at this point we hear her first plea for him to stop and her only expression of grief, “It was a cry expressive of such sorrow and loss it could not have been simply the doll she was mourning, but all the things she had ever wanted and been denied.” (p.276) Jeremy Seabrooks (1998) goes on to chastise the West for setting the palate of the global community, through commercialism to a taste and insatiable appetite for material goods. “...It is one thing to release children from gross forms of poverty and quite another to lead them into gilded serfdom with turns them into creatures and appendages of a global market place, apprentices in consumption....” (p. 5) This is a situation of where needs of today’s youth, nationally and globally, according to educators and child development research are constantly countered by the agenda of corporate interests.

Craftsmanship

In contrast to the trademarked and mass produced commercial dolls are the stylized dolls of cultures around the world, expressions of the aesthetics, values and history of world cultures. This description of the enduring tradition of craftsmanship in Japan is an extreme contrast to the generic and homogenous quality of most modern dolls (Henkin, 1991).

“In a way that mass production can never match, each carefully handcrafted doll is seemingly endowed with its own life. This process, as tedious as it may seem, permits customers to have a personal relationship with artist whereby they can request a doll with specific features, such as a favored kimono pattern or style of sandal. This is one reason for the enduring popularity of Hakata dolls.”

(p.2)

This personal quality associated with a local tradition is the extreme opposite of the corporate doll, which is distinguished by brand, rather than by region and craft. Dolls and activities involving dolls have the potential to be superficial, for instance a lesson on making paper bag pilgrims or constructivist, such as “Cassie Lightfoot’s” math journey from the “Geo-Dolls” unit. Depending on the purpose for using the doll, there may be a perfectly good reason for using a certain doll a particular way. For example, exquisitely costumed and homemade dolls would not be functional or appropriate for computerized infant simulators. For dolls, as with any other aspect of curriculum materials and design,

the more specific, personal and tailored to the specific group of students and the task at hand, the more meaningful and relevant they will be to student's lives and learning.

Infant Simulators

A final and perhaps most recent innovation in the pedagogical use of the doll is the computerized infant simulator. While most dolls are designed and used with an eye to extending the pleasures of childhood, infant simulators were created in an effort to forestall premature adult responsibility, due to teenage pregnancy. Infant simulators are a precise application of the doll and used in cultivating specific attitudes, dispositions regarding the difficulties of teenage pregnancy and an increased awareness of the implications of teen parenthood.

The use of computerized infant simulator dolls has become popular in adolescent sex education and teen pregnancy prevention programs (Somers, Gleason, Johnson & Fahlman, 2001). Two separate studies have published results indicating their effectiveness (Somers, Gleason, Johnson & Fahlman, 2001; Divine & Cobbs, 2001). In both, it is important to note that their evaluation of the use of infant simulators as successful was based on student dispositions rather than an actual reduction in teen pregnancy rates. The students were surveyed after one to two years. I wonder if this is the age when teenagers are most vulnerable to teenage pregnancy. Further, both of these studies were conducted among suburban, middle-class students. One of the studies was conducted at exclusively Catholic schools (Divine & Cobb, 2001). The "Baby think it over" program is one of the most expensive pedagogical use of the doll, the cost was approximately \$250-\$500 per doll (Somers, Gleason, Johnson & Fahlman, 2001). Currently, the

impact on disposition seems promising, however a broader student sample and a follow-up study of student behaviors as older teenagers and young adults will be the true test of this program's effectiveness.

While the goal of the program certainly has merit, it is important to consider whether the use of infant simulators undertaken as part of a comprehensive sex education program or as an isolated preventative measure. It would be important to know if a specific infant simulator project has an affiliation with a conservative agenda which emphasize abstinence as an alternative to a full program addressing knowledge of sexual activity, health and safety. One group of researchers was much more conservative in their appraisal and confidence in the ability to measure success. They also raised concerns about the programs perception of success in the absence of empirical evidence (Somers, Gleason, Johnson & Fahlman, 2001), holding that the experience was not "realistic enough for teens to benefit in ways intended." (p.62) At the very least infant simulators seem to bear further study.

Summary

Applications of the doll vary widely as children age. Young children may make open-ended use of dolls as part of their imaginative play individually. Elementary teachers also use persona dolls to help student's process situations as a class and to support children in exploring the feelings of themselves and others. Dispositional goals for adolescents include discouraging behaviors and fostering critical thinking. Storytelling and puppetry build prereading skills such as story structure and oral conventions of the narrative. Interdisciplinary uses of the doll serve to integrate three dimensional art, and fine motor skills with social studies, math, science and language art

curriculum to both create unique and personal dolls or recreate characters or historical figures in authentic detail.

Students at all levels can use the research and/or creation of traditional dolls to study their history and culture, as well as that of cultures around the world. Middle and high school students can examine all aspects of dolls to deconstruct history and culture and using the past to examine the present. The work of practitioners demonstrates successful strategies for incorporating dolls into subject content as well as prompts for critical thinking and reflection on a variety of complex social issues.

The wealth of lesson plans utilizing dolls is a confirmation of the doll as an appropriate tool for a broad spectrum of academic targets: knowledge, reasoning, skills, performance and products (Stiggins, 1994). As with any other method, accurately evaluating students learning from the doll is possible, as long as the use, matches the learning goal evaluated with the appropriate and corresponding form of assessment (Stiggins, 1994).

This study of the pedagogical use of the doll has shown that dolls are a medium, which can be utilized by ages spanning kindergarten through the eighth grade for diverse purposes, ranging from puppetry to pregnancy prevention. As children move from preschool to adolescence different emphases will be appropriate. Middle school and secondary students can interact with dolls in ways that extend and build on the previous uses. Older students have the schema to further explore culture through art, art history and social studies. Their cognitive capacities have matured to where the doll can be utilized in developing critical thinking and reasoning skills by reflecting on dolls as a conveyor of culture, dispositions and values. Research on identity, self-concept and

gender involving dolls suggests that a lesson could be impacted by students negative perceptions of dolls as either frivolous, gender charged or culturally loaded. The constant in best practice for working with doll and children of all ages is the need to select them carefully and use them with sensitivity.

Effective uses of the doll include scaffolding the lesson in preparation for working with dolls in a specific manner. This holds true in working with all ages and across all disciplines. Some examples which are characterized by in depth context setting and optimal student engagement range from story telling with persona dolls with preschoolers (Whitney, 1999), to integrated social studies, and math through "Geo Dolls" (Karp & Brown, 2000) and "Measure Me Dolls (Ruggles & Slengeri). Activities which successfully use dolls interdisciplinary thematic units include, "American Anthology: Patty Reed's Doll," (Alta Elementary, 1998), "Around the World: Chalk Doll Lesson" (Westley & Melton, 1994) in elementary education, and "Dolls Around the World" (Museum of New Mexico, 2000) for up to middle school students. "Women of Africa: Tradition and Change" (National Endowment for the Humanities), "Foxfire," (Smith & Page, 1993) and "Barbie Doll and G.I. Joe (Perrin, 1999) all use dolls to serve secondary education objectives of personal history, multicultural awareness and the application of critical thinking to social issues.

Many of the above lesson plans also outline the lessons alignments with state and national curriculum goals and standards. Teachers experience success with dolls when their use serves a deliberate purpose and there is a rationale behind the lesson for which the doll is particularly suitable. Curriculum projects where students either create their own dolls or engage in a variety of problem solving activities with dolls are associated with higher level thinking skills, as well as the most favorable and enduring learning outcomes.



Dolls created by third-grade students to as a fundraiser for a local shelter.
Photo courtesy doll maker and elementary educator, Signe Feeney

teacher anecdotes and documented experiences using dolls in the classroom are the form the foundation of my arguments for effective uses.

Conclusion

Dolls can support Piaget's concept of cognitive development through interaction with an object (1967), and this interaction often happens in a group or family context it also relates to Vygotskian theories of intellectual growth as taking place within a social context. Further since, this interaction with the doll and others often involves adults there is an aspect of modeling which brings in Bandura's concept of an apprenticeship in thinking (Logoff, 1990). This research also shows the danger of over generalizing research methods and rigid dogmas. What is best and appropriate for one child or one group of children may not apply to another.



Soon Vasilisa's father returned, was overjoyed at her good fortune,

and came to live in his daughter's house. Vasilisa took the old woman into her home too, and carried her doll in her pocket 'til the end of her life. (Afanas'ev, 1945, p. 447).

One major challenge of researching this topic is that few of the seminal works on child development directly address dolls in their studies, as in research studies they often are used or referred to, yet not necessarily differentiated from toys in general. Therefore in conclusion I am unable to say that I found a body of research, which demonstrated a direct and measurable impact on student's academic performance and learning outcomes. What I did find was a modest body of studies that utilized dolls to assess children's development of identity and self-concept. This research provides the basis for sensitive uses in the classroom, and

teacher anecdotes and documented experiences using dolls in the classroom are the form the foundation of my arguments for effective uses.

Dolls can support Piaget's concept of cognitive development through interaction with an object (1967), and since this interaction often happens in a group or family context it also relates to Vygotskian theories of intellectual growth as taking place within a social-cultural context. Further since, this interaction with the doll and others often involves older children and adults there is an aspect of modeling, which brings in Barbara Rogoff's findings on apprenticeship in thinking. (Rogoff, 1990) This controversy within the Montessori movement shows the danger of over generalizing educational methods and rigid dogmatism. What is best and appropriate for one child or one group of children may not apply to another.

As a teacher, the research on play and its role in fostering cognitive development makes me think more about the importance for students to have space in their lives and their work to be creative and interactive whether it be with themselves, their peers or their work. How can the element of play be brought into the tasks of the classroom?

While, dolls may be formally and informally used for play therapy, educators may rightly question whether the use of dolls is valid or desirable with the general population of children. In our classrooms we will have children who merely have the possibilities of their childhood hindered by misfortune and the human errors of good intentioned and misguided adults, both at home and at

school, and there are those whose childhood's are shattered by the violence and poverty of their lives and many whose experiences are a little of both.

When we are grown adults we are expected to reason their way toward wholeness, but for children at least, art and play therapy are accepted practice. Child psychologists and counselors have long recognized the value of the doll in helping children deal with pain that would overwhelm them if it were addressed directly. The doll can give the child a way of processing a traumatic experience and reveal abuses for which they have no vocabulary or context. Dolls are a medium for the child to communicate with us directly or indirectly through their play, their interactions, their selection or gravitation toward topic, content, materials or medium of play.

Diversity educator Kendall (cited in Rettig, 1983) points out that by observing children at play with dolls, teachers may get some ideas of how children perceive other racial groups. "Kendall notes that dolls may be one of the first abstract symbols to represent a sense of self. She suggests that both boys and girls need to have dolls that look like them," additionally she stresses the importance of making sure the dramatic play area of the early childhood classroom has a good representation of multi-racial dolls.

In our visual society, children of color are flooded with images of white, as normal, beautiful and good, countering the powerful mainstream culture requires consciousness and proactivity on the part of parents and teachers. Parents of children of color cannot take for granted that their child will be affirmed or even

visible in the media, books and toys of the larger culture. One African-American woman recalls the influence of her childhood toys in Delpit, 2002,

I think that it was important that my first dolls and toys that I liked were carved from ebony, things like that, as opposed to white Barbie dolls. As a little child I didn't understand the significance of African carved toys, or drums. But later in life my first image of female beauty wasn't Barbie (p.72)

Tanya's account speaks to the connection between Black self-love, childhood, and the need to fight the common sense of mainstream culture. Cultivating the positive self-image of children of color often requires the vigilance of parents in ensuring their children are surrounded by affirming books and playthings in which children like themselves are visible as well as protected from bombardment with white standards of beauty and success.

Teacher's should be careful however in using dolls from other cultures, as in some instances dolls which literally represent some peoples, for instance some African and, were not traditionally made, but introduced by missionaries as a means of economic support. In the United States, this is a particular concern with dolls generically representing Native Americans. If dolls are to be incorporated into social studies, it requires educators to use the same discretion and awareness they would use in evaluating any other classroom resource.

Dolls and puppets provide children and adults the opportunity to work in three dimensional space and multi-media. Dolls can be as simple as a knotted

handkerchief or rendered in painstaking detail. The teacher's time, creativity, budget and student safety are the only limitations on materials.

I am excited to explore the use of persona dolls to more fully invite the individual student identities into the classroom. Trisha Whitney's Kids Like Us: Using Persona Dolls in the Classroom, brings together three powerful pedagogical resources that I was familiar with but never used in a coordinated ways: storytelling and dolls, children's biographical history/profile and the pedagogical story-a tale that is for and about the child with enough changes in details that they can relate to the characters without the self-consciousness of being directly addressed.

Trisha Whitney uses persona dolls to facilitate social skills, understanding and conversation on feelings, conflict resolution, adoption, body size, gender, exclusion, families, race and culture, disabilities and gay and lesbian issues. Today's children need more than silent acceptance, they want to share and celebrate their lives, to be explicitly appreciated and understood. As a teacher I would definitely use her methods with younger children and can envision making the dolls as part of a service project with the older children and adolescents. I would probably choose to work one on one with children with more explicit issues, such as fear of war and bombs that may not be living within the greater class. I encountered numerous resources in my research that utilized first-person stories of people who recounted their native country through their relationship with a traditional doll.

A doll is a common denominator that can be used to compare, contrast and understand the unique aspects of cultures around the world. Even with elementary students you could explore the differences between the depictions of members of a culture through dolls made by members of a culture and those created by people outside of that culture, Native American dolls are a good example of the discrepancies in detail and authenticity. See Appendix for titles. By providing authentic and positive examples of dolls and looking at dolls critically we can provide a model of becoming aware of and dismantling cultural encapsulation. The wonderful thing about studying dolls from a variety of world cultural is the endless style, variety and ingenuity of construction. Each doll has significance within its unique culture. There is a connection between dolls, national customs, religious belief and sacred traditions. (Joseph, 1972) The idea of play as conveyor of culture and my questions about the commodification of children's play was central to my motivation to study the roles of puppets in dolls in pedagogy.

When we always give children new or unbreakable toys we deny them important understanding and knowledge of the world around them (Petrash, 1992). Plastic toys, which are unresponsive to a child's use and abuse, numb a child to the consequences of their actions and do not give the child the full tactile experience and stimulation of the natural world (Baldwin, 1989).

The cuddly baby doll has been almost entirely supplanted in the United States by the mannequin otherwise known as Barbie is put into the hands of nearly every little girl the baby dolls counterparts include real babies or perhaps cherished

pets. But what does Barbie become when she "grows up". We tend to think of Barbie as exclusive to childhood, but she has many sinister counterparts in adult society. Barbie is the frozen mannequin, sexual object.

It is interesting how well Barbie actually expresses the toxicity of our Western culture. Barbie has the death aspect of a mannequin; she is a code for our warped ideals of physical perfection and is defined by her material possessions. Barbie is the void-complete with accessories; she has everything you need to have nothing. One might argue that Barbie is therefore a valid and realistic toy for a Western child. But is the task of the doll to confront the worst in their culture? Or does a child need a doll as a means to explore themselves, a doll that is open enough to express a child and their culture good and bad, true or not?

Perhaps we should also consider the existence of prescribed scripts for play rather than their content. When one insists that a doll impart something specific then the doll is no longer a means of discovery, but a means of propaganda, which intrudes upon and dictates play. Allowing the child a time of goodness and beauty, unburdened by the heaviness of the world, is the best preparation he can receive for facing the truth and meeting life's challenges and struggles (Thomson, 1994). "Imagination in play provided the basis for the child to grow up and eventually live in the outside world." (p.142)

This means being a protective guardian of our students' freedom in play and intellectual inquiry. As Westerners we insist on a result or a product in any activity we do and this has been extended to every aspect of play and education so given our current methods of instruction it can be very hard to simply let the

students learning unfold. If we are determined to impart to teach facts through the doll, rather than introduce concepts through activities which provoke critical reflection and problem solving the student may learn much about, anatomy, slavery, sexism etc. but this will be at the cost of their self-knowledge. The doll does not have to be a fact so much as a possibility for students. I support the idea of dolls in relation to a theme, as in Geo-Dolls, or theme but believe each student should have opportunities to make choices that support them in constructively find their own relationship to it.

The social studies integrated curriculum, for instance, the lessons involving the Donner party and the book *Patty Reed's Doll*, doll activities could be one of several choice activities. The scripted play and selective history of the American girl doll is an example of learning through the use of dolls without an authentic opportunity for personal discovery. Additionally, with American Girl dolls possession of the doll as an object is primary and the experiences of creation, play or learning is secondary. I believe because of socio-economic disparity between children, that social fiber of the classroom would be compromised, rather than strengthened.

Besides, pre-adolescents and adolescents, the target market of American girls, may prefer creating a doll to playing with it. Students who once played with dolls and puppets may find their interest re-enlivened by making dolls for themselves and others (Downs, 2000). Sewing and knitting dolls and doll clothes not only support fine motor skills, they also are practical ways to experience mathematical concepts of sequence, measurement and spatial reasoning.

Intellectual development, according to educator Eugene Schwarz (1995), has a connection to fine motor skills. Sewing and knitting are skills which take time and practice, there is an anticipation of completion, a need for patience with the process and the creators attention and skill are apparent in the finished product, encouraging children to work with care (Schwarz, 1995). Handwork educator, Patricia Livingston (2000) confirms these benefits and adds that making a concrete object provides a built-in motivation to focus and persevere on the task, which in turn extends to problem solving and follow through in other academic endeavors. Making something can give children a sense of competence and build their confidence to attempt increasingly difficult and complex tasks (Livingston, 2000). Although there are no studies that demonstrate the impact of creating hand-made crafts on children's learning, several teachers have attributed student's high level of engagement in learning to their involvement in making and or designing their dolls.

The combination of adolescents' love of fashion, obsession with appearance, need to be engaged in tasks of interest can make the research and construction of a historical doll an engaging project? The excesses of historical fashion and taste are a magnified expression of their own strong opinions on style and can create consciousness around the subjective, fleeting nature of fashion and allow them to reflect on the human vanity and self-consciousness that is manipulated through focus on clothing.

Children of all classes of Western culture can be relegated to passive consumption and fleeting novelty in their play. If the "Medium is the Message",

what message are we sending children through plastic, mass-produced toys connected to a corporate marketing campaign? The threat to democracy through commerce and the media has serious implications for childhood identity and calls for a new concept of childhood to counter corporate influence on society and cultural life (Steinberg, 1998). The more dolls are linked with commercialism the more they detract from students being the author of their own play and learning. Any doll in the classroom should reflect the needs and purposes of students rather than the marketplace.

The influence of the market place has exponentially increased and intensified since the advent of mass media in the early 20th century. Corporate interests relate to child welfare on both extremes of globalism. At one end the American child is a passive consumer. This is juxtaposed to international child laborers whose exploitation produces many of these goods. Teachers can help student's simple, homemade dolls and doll making projects to reclaim imagination, creativity and allow the child to be the originator of their own play and learning (Seabrook, 2000).

Older middle school through college students can use contemporary and historical dolls as a way of engaging in critical thinking about stereotypes, dominant images in mainstream culture and societal values. Students might discuss the merit or disadvantage in preserving artifacts, which represent groups of people in demeaning ways, which are no longer acceptable to our society. This critical thinking about the doll as an every day object is in the spirit of Paulo Friere and Ira Shor and their dialogical method of education and social empowerment.

This is where dolls their production, advertisement and consumption can be examined-this is a powerful example of however benign and neutral our actions and choices may be the local is global and the personal is political. Further the role of traditional arts in preserving culture could be examined alongside the concept of cultural appropriation. There are also numerous opportunities throughout American and international literature to explore the symbolism of dolls across cultures and time.

Dolls have the versatility to be incorporated as a cultural and artistic element to a wide range of disciplines. The use of dolls to support not only basic numeracy and measurement, but higher math concepts as well was one of the delightful surprises in this examination of effective uses. Many teachers feel they have less time for artistic or non-academic activities. Further many educators are required to use a district wide curriculum. Out of respect for these constraints this paper provides examples of projects and theme-based learning, for the inspiration of teacher's individual curriculum design. Integrative strategies, rather than specific themes have been identified. The intention is to consider the doll's potential for enhancing the curriculum, and its use in conjunction with, rather than supplanting a teacher's established lesson plans.

This overview of the considerations in using dolls in the classroom covers the extreme spectrum from traditional and homemade dolls to mass-produced manufactured doll. This brings to mind the words of Carl Jung (1957) who criticized communism and capitalism as marginalizing the individual, "...both lack the very thing that expresses and grips the whole man, namely an idea which

puts the individual human being in the center as the measure of all things.” (p.52)
In closing, the best uses of the doll in the classroom are both social and individual.
The student is "at the center" and is met through the doll, encountering themselves
and the world.



Photo courtesy Renewal: A Journal of Waldorf Education.
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APPENDIX A

Sidney Gulick's "Friendship Dolls" goals and Letters

- To conserve the natural friendliness of children by providing opportunities for its expression.
- To make real to children through experience the fact that the world is a neighborhood of nations.
- To implant in the minds of children the ideals of goodwill, understanding, and peace among nations.
- To select for demonstration a country toward which for some reason special cultivation of friendliness is needed.
- To give to children a knowledge and an appreciation of the people of that country, stressing similarities, rather than differences.
- To stimulate interest in some characteristic phase of life in the country, which not only has educational value but is also of interest to children.
- To provide opportunity through a project for the children to express this interest in a thoughtful and worthy way.
- To dramatize the project so that it will appeal to children.

- To choose for the consummation of the project a day of special significance to the other nation.
- To enlist the interest and the help of older people in the children's friendship gesture.
- To increase the consciousness among nations of the desirability of worldwide cooperation. (Gulick, 1997)

Dear American Friends

I am a traditional Japanese doll donated by a person in Japan to promote friendship between the United States, I have come from the heart of the Japanese people as an ambassador to help you learn more about my country. Please take good care of me at my new home with you in America and display me so all who see me will know there is hope for friendship and peace in the world.

Yours in Friendship,

Kaori and Saburo

(both a boy and a girl doll were donated in this case)

APPENDIX B Helpful Resources

Doll making

- Beard, L. and Beard, A. (1887). The American girls handy book. New Hampshire: David R. Godine Publishers Inc.
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Dolls and Doll Making Supplies

(Adapted from *Kid's Like Us*)

Asian American Curriculum Project, 234 Main Street, San Mateo, CA 94401

(800-472-2242)

Asian American dolls and books for teachers and children.

Chapel Hill Training Outreach Project, 800 Eastowne Drive, Suite 105,
Chapel Hill, NC. 27514 (800-473-1727)

Activities to help young children understand and accept physical differences. Includes a training manual and pattern for cloth dolls. Their New Friends dolls each have a different physical disability.

Environments, Inc. P.O. Box 1348, Beaufort, SC 29901 (843-846-8155)

Early childhood catalog that include the Earthchild family of dolls, which are 20-inch cotton dolls with painted faces and hair.

Lakeshore Learning Material, P.O. Box 6261, 2695 E. Dominguez Street,
Carson, CA 90749 (800-421-5354).

Many high-quality multicultural and disability-aware materials, including posters, food, art materials, puzzles, puppet, and plastic dolls. They also sell the best quality skin-colored paints.

Little Joys 20611-E Bothell-Evt. Hwy. #190
Bothell, Washington, 98012 (425- 771-7099)

Excellent source of doll making supplies, including material, hair yarn and patterns. Complete kits and workshops available.

People of Every Stripe! P.O. Box 12505, Portland, OR 97212 (800-282-0612)

High quality dolls with a huge range of accurate racial and ethnic features, hair and skin colors. Includes dolls with disabilities.

Magic Cabin Dolls, 1950 Waldorf NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49550-7000

(888-623-6557). *Excellent source of doll making supplies, including material, hair yarn and patterns.*

Further Reading for Parents and Early Childhood Educators

- Dancy, R. (1989). You are your child's first teacher: what parents can do with and for their children from birth to age six. Berkeley: Celestial Arts.
- Britz-Crecelius, H. (1972). Children at play. Vermont: Park Street Press.
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