

Curriculum Review for Headstart Programs

***Educating Young Children: The Highscope Approach to
Preschool Education***

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Table of Contents

Preamble.....p.1

Format of Critique.....p.4

Chapter Reviews.....p.5

Chapter 1 Active Learning: The Way Children Construct Knowledge

Chapter 2 Establishing a Supportive Climate: The Basics of Positive Adult-Child Interactions

Chapter 3 Involving Families in Active Learning Settings

Chapter 4 Working in Teams: Adult Collaboration to Promote Active Learning

Chapter 5 Arranging and Equipping Spaces for Active Learners

Chapter 6 The High/Scope Daily Routine: A Framework for Active Learning

Chapter 7 The High/Scope Plan-Do-Review Process

Chapter 8 Groups Times, Outside Times, Transition Times

Chapter 9 Introduction to the High/Scope Key Experiences

Chapter 10 Creative Representation

Chapter 11 Language and Literacy

Chapter 12 Initiative and Social Relations

Chapter 13 Movement

Chapter 14 Music

Table of Contents con't

Chapter 15 Classification: Recognizing Similarities and Differences

Chapter 16 Seriation: Creating Series and Patterns

Chapter 17 Number

Chapter 18 Space

Chapter 19 Time

Conclusion.....p.50

Appendix Ap.58

Appendix B.....p.59

Appendix C.....p.60

Appendix Dp.61

Appendix Ep.62

PREAMBLE

PRINCIPLES

The Curriculum Manual, *Educating Young Children*, written by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation of Ypsilanti, Michigan outlines a comprehensive preschool programme for children. The curriculum embodies such concepts as: learning occurs most effectively when it is initiated by the child and supported by the encouragement of informed adults; learning is best facilitated if it occurs in a stimulating, well-designed, dynamic environment which is rich in resources and provides many opportunities for student choice; learning requires a purposeful daily routine which causes children to plan, do and review their own exploratory and creative play; evidence of learning must be monitored through systematic, ongoing observation and recording of relevant data which corresponds to clearly delineated benchmarks or standards; all preschool activities must be endorsed and reinforced by the parents and community from which the children come.

Headstart programmers should be aware that these concepts are the fundamental basis of the entire highscope curriculum approach. It is very important that headstart programmers critically analyze these concepts to identify if they are compatible with their local, cultural and community views of early childhood development philosophies.

RESPONSE TO A DEMONSTRATED NEED

In the Introduction to this Curriculum Guide, the authors provide the historical overview which lead the Director of the program, David Weikart, to determine that

many children's educational needs were not being met by the existing system over 30 years ago where he was first a Director of Special Services for the Ypsilanti Public School system. Weikart was distressed by the persistent high failure rate, and lack of retention of high school students from Ypsilanti's poorest neighbourhoods. This attrition rate and consequent social impoverishment was not seen as a cause for great concern by the then Administrators and Officials of the system because, as they argued "most students are doing well so why change the system?".

REJECTION OF THE STATUS QUO

Weikart rejected the hypothesis that low IQ scores and performances on standardized tests meant that students from poorer families lacked the potential to succeed in anything but a rudimentary educational program. Instead he looked for alternative causes and solutions. Together with other concerned, progressive educators, he obtained permission to initiate a pilot program which later attained National recognition. This was the Perry Pre-School Project. In addition to providing experiences likely to enhance the children's *social* and *emotional growth*, Weikart insisted on emphasizing activities which also contributed to children's *intellectual development*. Some experts demurred claiming that 3 and 4 year olds lacked the mental and emotional maturity to engage in such a program. Weikart responded by placing a control group of students who were drawn from the same socioeconomic background as the Perry Pre-School children and monitoring both groups' performances over a period of 25 years to discover whether any significant benefits could be shown. The results of these findings provided compelling evidence of the efficacy of Weikart's approach. Measured when they were in their 27th year, students from the Pre-School program were demonstrably superior in

many vital ways. They exhibited the following characteristics: higher monthly earnings; more likely to own their homes; more graduated from High School; fewer were dependent on welfare and for far shorter time frames; and substantially fewer were arrested for criminal behaviour.

ENDORSEMENT OF HIGH SCOPE'S SUCCESS

Such statistics convinced many state governments in the U.S. that an investment in early childhood education programs paid dividends and was highly preferable to the expenditure of far larger sums to support through welfare payments, or incarceration in penal institutions, persons who did not have the opportunity to participate in a Head Start program of this calibre.

CANADIAN PARALLELS: DISMAYING STATISTICS

In Canada today, a parallel situation exists to that found in the U.S. by Weikart over 30 years ago. Aboriginal people lead in the statistics related to below-average performance rates in standardized tests. High drop out rates from High School, high incarceration rate in correctional facilities, low socioeconomic achievement and many other indicators signal a lack of personal well-being. The Canadian Government through its Head Start initiative has signalled its intention to use prevention rather than cure to alter these unacceptable statistics reflecting as they do so much wasted human potential. The question being asked now is whether the Curriculum designed by the High/Scope program is based on principles compatible with those of communities under whose control and direction the new preschool programs will be implemented.

FORMAT OF THIS CRITIQUE

In reviewing the High/Scope curriculum *Educating Young Children*, the following structure will be used. Each independent element of the curriculum will be summarized and reduced to its barest essence. The major themes and concepts of each chapter will be identified and critically analyzed by the reviewers.

Concurrently, attention will be given to Aboriginal attitudes, values, beliefs and child-rearing practices to determine whether there are contradictions or conflicts. If these occur, no opinion will be offered as to whether they are slight or profound because such a judgement must be the prerogative of individual communities.

CHAPTER ONE

ACTIVE LEARNING: THE WAY CHILDREN CONSTRUCT KNOWLEDGE

High-Scope's basic assumptions about how children construct knowledge are based on the work of such eminent psychologists as Jean Piaget who delineated four major stages in intellectual development. This seminal theory provides the underpinning for all teacher education programs and for University Psychology courses on child and adolescent psychology. It describes how human beings, from all cultures, develop capacities in predictable sequences throughout their lives. The first of these stages, the sensory motor allows children to explore their world through their senses. As active learners they explore with taste, touch, smell, sight and hearing and gradually form constructs which allow them to acquire language, gain mastery over their physical body movements and through exploration and experimentation, gain knowledge, "Knowledge which arises neither from objects nor the child, but from interactions between the child and those objects." as Jean Piaget observed.

DEFINING ACTIVE LEARNING

Building on this basic premise, High/Scope proposes that preschool children be educated in settings which provide "developmentally appropriate learning opportunities." Active learning involves four critical elements: (1) direct action on objects, (2) reflection on actions, (3) intrinsic motivation, invention and generativity, and (4) problem-solving. Such an action plan exercises and challenges children at an appropriate level and enables them to evolve a unique pattern of interests, talents and goals. This development is also acknowledged to be as much a *social*

as a *cognitive* experience. It recognizes that where children plan, do and reflect on activities this enhances their scope for choice, leadership and creative expression.

Concrete examples of all these stages are given and amplified by photographs which show children engaging in them. Similarly, the role of trained adults in supporting their purposeful play is illustrated and endorsed. The purpose of adults is not to *tell* children what to learn or how to learn it but to *observe, interact with* and *encourage* children to reflect on what they are learning. This non-didactic approach is subtly different from that of the misguided school marm who drills preschool children in recognizing the alphabet with little success. Instead of this counterproductive approach, High/Scope trained teachers; organize environments and routines; establish a climate rich in positive social interactions; encourage children's self-initiated play; stimulate problem-solving and verbal summaries; assess children's development in terms of High/Scope's *key experiences*; and plan new motivational activities based on children's interests and actions.

KEY EXPERIENCES (See Appendix A)

These clearly delineated experiences provide a framework for describing each child's social, cognitive and physical development during the second stage of their development, at the preoperational level, which occurs between the ages of 2 - 5 years. These are not a set of sequenced or specific topics, but rather they are the familiar manifestations of children engaging in playful interaction with the objects, people and ideas around them.

CHILD INITIATED EXPERIENCES

Children are encouraged to initiate activities which spring from their own personal interests and agendas. They are not pressed to do something prescribed by the teacher. Instead they are presented with a diverse range of objects and materials and given the *choice* as to what to do with them. Using their senses, they actively explore objects by holding, squeezing, climbing on, crawling under, dropping, poking, smelling, tasting, viewing from different angles and listening to the sound it makes. As they play, they become like scientists as they develop an understanding of how things function or fit together, sink or float, feel rough or smooth and so on. Their discoveries are based on their own actions, observations and experiments.

ROLE OF TEACHERS

Experimentation frequently leads to the transformation and combination of materials through using them in ways not generally expected. Such play is dynamic, spontaneous and fluid, yet it leads to the formation of concepts which would be difficult if not impossible to learn in other ways. High/Scope teachers resist the temptation to help children to find "right" answers or the quickest way to do something because they know this would deprive them of valuable opportunities to make these discoveries for themselves with all the satisfaction and self-esteem that such success creates.

ENCOURAGING REFLECTION AND VERBALIZATION

A major component of the High/Scope approach, which is significantly different from say the English Nursery School environment - which would, on the surface, look very similar - is the deliberate debriefing of the children. They are encouraged to *talk about* their discoveries in their own words. This helps them to become

proficient speakers and develops their descriptive powers. Through conversing with children about what they are doing and thinking High/Scope teachers convey the strong message to each child that "You are in charge of your own learning." This is an empowering concept and very different from the paternalistic dependence on teacher direction and approval which is the norm in general preschool programs. The other significant outcome of this approach is the demonstrably sophisticated verbal elaboration which the preschool students are capable of once they are encouraged in this way.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE CONCEPTS

The High/Scope curriculum is interlaced with conversations, photographs and concrete examples of the kind of responses which indicate stages of cognitive growth. These serve to contextualize the concepts making them understandable to the reader. This is one of the most commendable features of this curriculum. It does not leave the reader mystified about how the theory might work in practice but rather shows unequivocally that children, *like the children they know*, and people, *like the people they are*, can interact in ways which promote positive learning.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES WITH CHILD-REARING PRINCIPLES: A GOOD MATCH

Aboriginal people expect their preschool children to interact with their environment in meaningful ways. Children are given almost unlimited freedom to play with and explore the objects and ideas which are part of their world. Very few rules are given. The long lists of Do's and Don'ts which characterize non-Aboriginal learning environments are absent. Instead, Aboriginal children are free to watch and do,

that is, they are expected to emulate the behaviour and protocols which they see around them. Very few directives are given and few questions are asked, especially where these would be perceived to be redundant. For example, nobody would ask "What colour is this truck?" or "How many fingers am I holding up?" since the information is self-evident to both parties and therefore does not require to be remarked on. It is this absence of interlocutory discourse which sometimes leads non-Aboriginal teachers to make the mistaken assumption that Aboriginal children "don't know their colours" or "can't count when they come to school." These mistaken inferences can have devastating consequences if the kindergarten teacher then embarks on a heavy-handed, very directed program of remediation for these children. This means she is prescribing an inappropriate course of treatment for an illness or deficiency which does not actually exist.

A POTENTIAL DIFFERENCE

The High/Scope program would fit the needs of Aboriginal children by providing them with a range of materials, arranged in logical and predictable ways, to interact with as they choose. Preschool personnel, trained in the High/Scope method would not teach, preach or in any other inappropriate ways interfere with the spontaneous free play of the children. However, there would be one key difference. As the children played, experimented, created and discovered, their High/Scope trained teachers would pose thought provoking questions such as "Have you tried . . ." or "What would happen if . . ." or "I saw Michael put the blue one on top - what do you think . . ." At a later stage, the teachers would ask the children to provide a fairly detailed oral account of their activities and discoveries. This would certainly be *at variance* with the general practices in Aboriginal child-care facilities which in general do not expect children to verbalize at length about their play. It would not, however,

be the destructive, redundant questioning these same children might well encounter later in any of the public school systems they might attend. An argument could be made that the High/Scope approach could be an effective bridge between their community discourse style and that of mainstream educational systems. It could potentially allow children to feel comfortable and confident about voicing what they know rather than keeping it to themselves.

CHAPTER TWO

ESTABLISHING A SUPPORTIVE CLIMATE: THE BASIS OF POSITIVE ADULT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

The main objective of the chapter is to provide child care workers with information and theoretical perspectives on how to establish a supportive climate for Adult-Child interactions. The authors use a variety of resources such as Erik Erikson (1950), Stanley and Nancy Greenspan (1985), John Bowlby (1969), Mary Ainsworth (1978), Margaret Mahler (1975) and Lewis (1986). The chapter provides the reader with important concepts to apply in the classroom to develop emotionally healthy children. According to the authors the main building blocks of human relationships are; Trust, Autonomy, Initiative, Empathy and Self-confidence. The authors state that these values and concepts must be consistently applied in all classroom experiences.

THE SUPPORTIVE MODEL

The authors discuss the importance of classroom environment and provide the child care workers with an understanding of how to identify the social climate in their classroom. Three types of classroom climates were identified, laissez-faire, directive and supportive climates. The curriculum provided useful charts to illustrate how these learning climates differ. The high/scope writers emphasized the supportive model for positive learning because children and adults share control, Adults observe children's strengths, form authentic partnerships with children, support children's intentional play, Curriculum content comes from children's initiatives and key experiences for child development, Adults highly value children's

active learning, Adults take a problem-solving approach to social conflict. However, in a flexible active learning environment the classroom climate will naturally shift between laissez-faire, directive and supportive climates.

CONFLICT IN THE PRESCHOOL

The Highscope curriculum spends valuable time addressing how to deal with conflict in the classroom. The authors believe that conflict situations are opportunities for children to develop skills in social problem-solving. They stress that Adults must stop hurtful behaviour, reminding children of limits factually and non-judgementally. Adults are also supposed to encourage children in conflict to talk with each other and once THEY agree on the situation, THEY figure out what to do about it, and THEY choose what happens next. This type of conflict resolution gives children the autonomy to deal with problem-solving. Thus, the onus is on the adult to give up some control to the child.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

This chapter provides very important information for people working in establishing a positive preschool environment. However, the writers suggestions on how to deal with conflict resolution may differ from various approaches practiced by different Aboriginal cultures in Canada. Nevertheless, it is important that early childhood care workers be trained in how to deal with conflict at the preschool level because not many curriculum guides address the issue of conflict resolution.

CHAPTER THREE

INVOLVING FAMILIES IN ACTIVE LEARNING SETTINGS

This chapter is important for giving helpful hints on how to involve families in classroom activities. The curriculum recognizes the important role families play in child development and they stress incorporating the children's culture and traditions into classroom activities. They spend a great deal of time discussing how to acknowledge culture and cultural differences in the classroom. The writers also stress the importance of avoiding labeling and stereotyping children. This curriculum like many others encourages participation in community life so that the program is not in isolation from the communities and families wants and needs.

IMPORTANCE OF HOME VISITS

The chapter provides excellent structure and suggestions for conducting home visits. This information would be good for child care workers who are just learning how to conduct home visits. The authors also provide great suggestions for establishing a supportive climate with parents such as; learn from parents, share control with parents, focus on family strengths, plan around family strengths and interests, learn about families by watching and listening to parents and children play together. This chapter is also packed with case studies which illustrate scenarios in the classroom and how to deal with these situations based on the high scope theories. The reader can see when and where to apply Highscope skills and abilities.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

One important reoccurring theme in the curriculum is the importance of building on the strengths of students and the families. This section of the curriculum is highly adaptable and could be modified for the needs of Aboriginal families and programs. The curriculum provides a sound basis of things to consider when involving communities and families in the program. It is a could working model of how to involve families in the pre-school program. This section recognizing the importance of culture in promoting meaningful active learning.

CHAPTER FOUR

WORKING IN TEAMS

The High/Scope Curriculum requires that adults work in teams to support children's active learning. Every member of the team is valued as: a collector of accurate information about children's development; an evaluator of existing strategies; a supporter of active learning; a team player committed to a unified approach within a climate of mutual respect; and an innovator with creative ideas to enhance the learning potential of every child.

RATIONALE FOR TEAM APPROACH?

The values of being part of a unified team are identified and examples provided to show how they work. Clearly, being on a team gives child-care workers a strong *support system* of like-minded people who *share* the same *goals*. Each worker is *respected* and in return shows respect for the views and ideas of others.

Collaboration leads to an *adventurous approach to problem-solving*. This is contagious and quickly emulated by the children because they see the satisfaction and pride it gives to the adults in their midst. As Rensis Likert pointed out in his research, when collective learning is an ongoing process, "The important skills are not bottled up in a particular individual but are rapidly shared and cooperatively improved."

PLANNING TIME

For effective teamwork to occur and for gaps and overlaps to be avoided, High/Scope recommends a *daily, uninterrupted, adult meeting time*. Schedules have to be drawn up which program in this essential component. It is left to individual centers to determine whether it should be before the children arrive, after they leave, while they nap or at some other convenient time but even if it entails hiring additional staff, it must be done.

The team should be *broadly-based* so that support staff, parents and other professionals vital to the well-being of the children can be *periodically* invited to the sharing time to contribute their ideas and express their opinions.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

The work of psychologist Virginia Satir is an integral part of the High/Scope communication strategy. She calls for an honest, open communication style she defines as "levelling." She warns of the need to eliminate four basic crippling patterns of communication which seriously impede the right message being sent and received in the right way. Placating, Blaming, Computing and Distracting are all defined and condemned as counterproductive. Instead Satir call for the team to: respect individual differences; wrestle with different ideas; defer judgement; have patience with the teamwork process; persist until a workable collaboration process evolves.

FUNCTIONS OF THE TEAM

One of the major purposes of the team is to monitor children's activities and gather accurate information about each individual. The Curriculum provides a list of questions and situations which the team members could use to make his or her anecdotal notes. These can be kept on cards, slips of paper, jotters or whatever the individual prefers so long as they are maintained diligently and in a format which can be shared later with other members of the team.

OBSERVATION NOT INTERPRETATION

The importance of describing children's actions as objectively as possible is stressed. Negative influences or interpretations are not acceptable because these may under value children who make choices or carry out actions which seem less desirable than others. A comprehensive assessment instrument (COR) (Appendix B) or Child Observation Record is part of an ongoing process to provide a perspective and continuum for noting patterns in children's practices and behaviour. Parents would appreciate receiving detailed information in this format because the anecdotal comments clearly demonstrate what their child can do in such vital areas as: showing initiative; getting along with others; being creative; acquiring language skills and becoming numerate.

TEAM DECISIONS

When the whole team has had an opportunity to reflect on the significance of a child's actions they can collaboratively generate a variety of support strategies to

enhance his or her development. When these have been implemented, the team can assess their effectiveness and add to or delete from them as seems appropriate. Again, concrete examples of anecdotal material relating to several different children is provided so that the reader can easily understand what is being observed, how the modifications fit and how applicable such examples are to their own needs.

DISCUSSING RULES

Every detail of who is to do what, when and how, is part of a team planning strategy. The Curriculum provides a checklist of jobs, responsibilities and situations which will arise every day and makes it clear that a name must be attached to each of them for the day to go smoothly. Again, it is left to individual readers to determine how work should be assigned to be equitable and rewarding in their particular situations.

Such things as how to involve a new team member in the group and how to make the best use of volunteers are adequately covered and provide invaluable insights as to how to change a volunteer's unhelpful habits, of say, doing things *for* children instead of *with* them, in a tactful way that doesn't deter the person from continuing to help. Volunteers are always needed and can greatly enrich the children's environment so it is essential to find ways of having them adopt the same principles as the High/Scope trained workers without offending them by reacting negatively when they make a mistake.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

Aboriginal communities are based on teamwork. Extended families take care of the children and the community is only a further extension of the family. Collaboration is a hallmark of life, past and present, so the High/Scope demands for child-care workers to cooperate as a team are entirely congruent with values and practices.

Formal meetings to plan who does what, when and how may seem a little redundant to people who arrange such things intuitively or in response to a given situation. However, in a "workplace," where people are paid, planning meetings would seem to be a reasonable way to coordinate efforts, ensure that gaps and overlaps do not occur and generally set down the duties of every worker so that expectations are totally clear.

CHAPTER FIVE

ARRANGING AND EQUIPPING SPACES FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS

This chapter presents general guidelines for organizing space and materials for active learners. They remind educators that the arrangement of space is a very important part of teaching and learning in an active learning environment. The authors go into great detail with some obvious and not so obvious things to consider when organizing the classroom. They also cited various academic studies that analyzed environment and its impact on learning.

ESTABLISHING INTEREST AREAS

The curriculum recommends that space is divided into well-defined interest areas to encourage distinctive types play. It is mentioned to provide children with opportunity to play with items that nurture all the senses (touch, sound, sight, etc.) Children should be able to move freely between these interest areas. Providing individual storage spaces is also important to giving children a sense of autonomy.

MEANINGFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The authors also recommend that educational and classroom materials reflect images that children see in their family life. They provide an excellent checklist entitled, "Family Experiences Classroom Checklist," which provides a guide that helps child care workers meet the needs of families in the classroom and learning center. This chapter contains several checklists that would be extremely useful for headstart programs. These lists are easily adaptable for Canadian headstart programs.

The authors don't ignore things such as developing names for classroom interest areas and making clear signs with text and symbolic information if necessary to create a better learning environment for children. This chapter is a good reference section and should not be overlooked in its importance in establishing a positive learning environment. Aboriginal symbols and languages could easily be integrated into some of the activities recommended by Highscope writers.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

One reoccurring theme of the high/scope approach to active learning is that adults are encouraged to play and think at the children's level. They must be willing to share in the experience and join in the children's experience at their level. They consistently advocate walking in the child's shoes. This section contains the reoccurring theme of the importance of family and culture as an important component in the classroom.

CHAPTER SIX

DAILY ROUTINE

The importance of a consistent daily routine is stressed because it provides a predictable structure for the *events of the day*, breaks the day into *recognizable blocks* of time; *supports* child-initiative and control; *releases adults* from the chore of finding things for the children to do, thus freeing them for the more important role of supporting and encouraging children to do things on their own.

Such a routine provides a *psychologically safe and purposeful framework*. Children know what to expect and are far less likely to wander aimlessly or become disruptive than if given no pattern. The routine, however, is also *flexible* and can be modified to make use of special opportunities or resource people who can only be accessed at certain times.

MAJOR ELEMENTS

The guidelines for the day's routine include a variety of active learning periods. The most major of these is the PLAN - DO - REVIEW sequence. *Planning* involves each child deciding what she or he will do and telling this to an adult. Then there will be a *working* session of approximately 40-45 minutes in which the child will engage in the selected activities and then take part in the clean up to put everything away tidily. After which, there will be a time for *recall* of the play activity and the child will describe what she or he did to the same adult who heard his or her original plan. This is the longest and most focussed activity of the day and its purpose is to help children to recall, reflect on, understand and learn from their experiences.

Small group experiences are usually designed by the adults to introduce new materials and concepts. Children develop important social skills as they interact with each other by listening, sharing, and cooperating in an intimate group.

During *large group* time everyone has a chance to dance, sing, hear stories or engage in dramas and games, all of which help to develop a sense of community for the children.

OUTSIDE PLAY, MEALS AND REST

A time is also set aside for *outside* play. Beyond the confines of their classroom's four walls, the children feel freer to talk, move vigorously and develop their psychomotor skills by climbing, jumping and so on.

Depending on whether the routine for a half day or a full day, there must be times for snacks, meals and even a rest. All these are planned for and take place in a supportive social setting.

EXAMPLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

The Curriculum provides examples of a typical day which starts with an informal gathering, proceeds through the Plan-Do-Review sequence, breaks into small groups, then gathers into a large one and ends gently with a rest period. Photographs of the children actually engaging in these activities help to demonstrate what each segment might look like. It provides a strong sense that this

routine helps one activity flow smoothly into the next with the result that the children never seem bored, hurried or harassed by pointless repetition.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

A timetable of events, regularly scheduled and consistently adhered to may not be congruent with Aboriginal child rearing practices where a much more free flowing environment is generally evident.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE HIGH/SCOPE PLAN-DO-REVIEW PROCESS

The rationale for engaging in this highly structured approach is clearly stated. It claims that by “making daily plans, following through on them, and then recalling what they have done, young children learn to articulate their intentions and reflect on their actions. They also begin to realize they are competent thinkers, decision makers and problem solvers.”

VIEWS FROM RESEARCHERS

The research work of prominent psychologists and eminent educators provides the evidence on which these beliefs are founded. In addition to these theorists, the High/Scope Curriculum developers also draw on their own experiences with preschool education over a period of 30 years. Colleges of Education use these same theories to assert that there are strong correlations between a child’s ability to plan, think and learn and his or her growing capacity to use language. This acquisition of language in turn allows the child to form a mental picture of actions, people and materials when these are not actually present. That cognitive development and language acquisition are inter-dependent is an undisputed fact. What is less clear is how to enhance the development of each. However, the High/Scope Curriculum has adopted the position proposed by Dewey that education resolves around goal-directed activity and by a child’s participation in “the formation of the purposes which direct his or her activities in the learning process.”

Examples are given to illustrate the process of planning. This begins by establishing a problem or goal, continues through the stage of imagining and anticipating actions and then requires that these be shaped into purposeful action. Photographs show children playing with cars, imagining something that hasn't yet happened and considering how their actions can make something happen. Similarly, children are shown telling a teacher they intend to play with blocks and then they are shown actually doing this. The claim that planning "leads to involvement and concentration on play" is substantiated by the pictures.

RESEARCH EVIDENCE

The work of Sylva, Roy and Painters in the Oxford Preschool Research Project confirmed that planning indeed supports the development of increasingly complex play. A hierarchy of the stages expected of infants, toddlers, 2, 3, 3-5 year olds is given showing how, with practice, the older children will learn to plan a multi step sequence of actions to reach a goal.

HOW ADULTS SUPPORT CHILDREN'S PLANNING

A clear step-by-step procedure is outlined to show how adults can develop their personal interactional styles, within an intimate setting, to converse with and maintain children's enthusiasm during planning time. Working with individuals or in pairs, where materials are visible, adults can enable children to *make choices* and *take charge*. Games are sometimes a part of this activity. These help to prevent it from becoming too routine or too like a chore. Children can appear on a cardboard TV to announce their intentions, or give another child a "guided tour" of a desirable play area. The Curriculum provides many examples of the kinds of questions or

statements an adult should make to help children formulate their goals. These can then be briefly written down to be a reminder later when the child has completed the playing or “working”.

UNDERSTANDING WORK TIME

This is the time when children carry out their plans. They engage in a purposeful sequence of actions using concentration and thought to resolve any obstacles or problems they encounter. Clearly, they are constantly constructing knowledge through their experiences whether this is in creative “pretending”, language usage, classification or any number of other areas.

While children are engrossed in their activities, adults should show they are interested and comment on what they see happening. They should also unobtrusively jot notes to record the major things of interest a child does and how this fits with his or her original stated plan. Again, the Curriculum supplies a comprehensive list of behaviours the adults should look for. They should act helpfully in encouraging problem-solving and monitoring breakdowns in social relationships to prevent these escalating into conflicts. Always they should find ways to have children work out their own way of settling disputes and overcoming problems. They should also find a way to signal that work time has ended and it is time to clear up. This can be accomplished by a cue, such as a specific piece of music, and by modelling the desired behaviour.

WHY IS RECALL SO IMPORTANT?

Recall causes great linguistic gains to be made by requiring children to find the appropriate vocabulary to recount past events. Children can't tell everything so they have to summarize through a process of selection. In their own words, they reconstruct the significance of what they have just done. This can be amplified through visual representation or gesture and mime.

THE ADULT'S RULE

Adults learn how to be good listeners within a calm, cozy setting. They augment the recall process by commenting on some of what they observed and they engage in thoughtful conversations with the children about not only what they did, but about what they might have done and may want to try next time. Such a process validates a child's experiences and his/her recollection of them and prompts the consideration of further more sophisticated action at a future date.

Another important dimension of *recall* is that it will change over time as children become more proficient language users. They will learn to add details through increased elaboration and their drawings will also exhibit increasing sophistication. This will provide evidence of their intellectual growth.

CONSISTENCES AND INCONSISTENCIES

Directed, purposeful planning would seem to be at variance with the fluid, dynamic ways in which Aboriginal children are permitted to play. However, the adult caregivers consistently take an interest in what the children are doing and give them

appreciative praise when they accomplish something new or difficult. The Plan-Do-Review process would have to be viewed as very beneficial if practices were to be changed to accommodate it.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GROUP TIMES, OUTSIDE TIMES AND TRANSITION TIMES

The authors discuss several teaching methods that should be applied to promote active learning. They also give activities and sample lesson plans that can be conducted during small group times, large group times and transition times. Flexibly is encouraged in all these teaching methods and using a variety of these teaching methods is important to promoting a quality education. Notion of teaching teams is stressed during small group times and large group times. The concept of plan, do and review is central to conducting effective classroom methods.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

One issue that is not addressed by the Highscope curriculum is how to deal with child developmental concerns (fetal alcohol syndrome, attention deficit disorder and general learning disabilities, dyslexia) and emotionally disturbed children in the classroom. It would be useful if the curriculum provided some tips on how the children and child care workers can learn skills to deal with special needs children. Unfortunately, there are no check-lists on how to identify learning disabilities in developing children. From interviews with several teachers who worked in Band-controlled schools and early childhood programs there was a general concern that, "there wasn't enough training on how to cope and deal in the classroom with special needs children." Children also need to be taught tolerance and understanding of these learning disabilities of other students and many teachers feel they have no direction or training on these matters.

CHAPTER NINE

KEY EXPERIENCES

The High/Scope Curriculum describes 58 experiences it rates as *key* to the development and evaluation of preschoolers' thoughts and actions in their early stages. See Appendix C. Organized under the headings: creative representation; language and literacy; initiative and social relations; movement; music; classification; seriation; number; space; and time the experiences provide a focus for adults to observe, interpret and monitor the progress of children's actions. Regardless of their idiosyncratic culture *all children learn about the world by having fun with language, sorting and matching, pretending and role playing*. We recognize these things as "play" and often underestimate their significance. High/Scope identifies over 50 types of "real work" or active learning which are readily apparent in this simple looking but in fact, complex, activity. Consequently, finding opportunities for these key experiences is emphasized in the provision of materials and the daily routine.

In addition to using these key experiences as a basis for assessing materials and making them available to children, High/Scope demonstrates how to incorporate them into a planning log so that several of them can be featured as part of a particular day's choices in one of the play "areas". Similarly, they provide benchmarks and an appropriate focus for observing children's developing capabilities. Examples of what a teacher might write about a given child are provided, as are suggestions for incorporating them into small or large group activities, using them as "on-the-spot guides" when interacting with children and assessing how successful children are at resolving problems. Finally, it is

demonstrated how these experiences are the basis for COR, the Child Observation Record.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

These experiences are key to the development of children regardless of gender, class, culture, or creed. They are therefore of as great a significance in providing for, and evaluating the development of Aboriginal children as they are for any other group.

Child care workers would find the information in this chapter particularly relevant and valuable both for planning their program and the materials needed to support it, and for monitoring children's progress in a way which was objective and developmental.

The key question addressed in this chapter is: How do children construct knowledge as they develop in early childhood and how can adults provide optimal support for children in this period of development? This chapter provides a great deal of time outlining how to observe children's development by observation and use of anecdotal notes taken by the childcare workers.

CHAPTER TEN

CREATIVE REPRESENTATION

This chapter is theoretical based on many researchers findings such as Jean Piaget (1962), John Flavell (1963), Rudolf Arnheim (1974), Golomb (1974) and Howard Gardner (1982).

This chapter provides suggestions of how to implement creative representation in the classroom. The child care workers must firstly, recognize the importance of creative play and activities in the learning process. The curriculum gives useful classroom activities such as; how to recognize objects by sight, sound, touch, taste and smell and imitating actions and sounds, relating models, photographs, and pictures to real places and things, pretending and role playing, making models out of clay, blocks, and other materials, drawing and painting.

This chapter is very practical and useful in the classroom. It is well organized and easy to understand and gives childcare workers sample activities.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Acknowledging the *interconnectedness* of spoken and written language, and based on the psycho-linguistic theories and research of such eminent educators as Marie Clay and Kenneth Goodman, the High/Scope preschool uses *whole language* to augment the development of *emergent literacy*. Again, this congruent with all teacher education programs which now recognize that the *conditions under which children learned to talk* so successfully, prior to coming to school, *must be replicated* in classrooms aspiring to facilitate the learning of written language.

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are bound together in a dynamic, ongoing *communication process* which values *meaning making* as opposed to *word calling*. Consequently, preschools must be noisy and interactive places where contexts and non-verbal cues help children to negotiate meaning. They must also be places where children are doing most of the talking so that they formulate and express their thoughts in their own novel and unique ways. Conversations should be prized, whether between children and adults or children and other children. Talk is the vehicle which allows children to label, classify, compare, puzzle over and engage in every other function of language.

USES OF ORAL LANGUAGE

In the preschool, children would talk meaningfully about personal or shared experiences. They would develop new vocabulary rapidly to describe objects, feelings, events and situations. They would develop a deep appreciation of the

rhythm, rhyme and metre of language as they had fun with it reciting rhymes and jingles and giggling over nonsensical verses. They would also generate their own improvised scripts during “make believe games” and dictate their own stories or even poems so the teachers could write them down. Many of them would “read-along” with the teacher from a Big Book or favourite story with accompanying illustrations and they would readily learn to recognize symbols signifying people’s names or directions or products. They would *pay attention to print* because they would expect it to mean something of interest to them personally.

THE ROLE OF THE ADULT

Adults would consistently model the many uses of oral and written language in meaningful ways. They would engage in conversations with individuals or groups about shared experiences. They would establish a climate in which children felt free to talk and confident that an adult would always be interested in what they had to say. Placing themselves down close to the children’s physical level, adults would listen carefully and ensure that the children controlled the conversations. They would accept the language of the child and relish the approximations and overgeneralizations recognizing that there were important signs that the children were not simply mimicking adult utterances but rather generating their own, based on rules they had inferred and internalized.

Similarly, they would support the emergent writing attempts of the children. They would recognize how scribbling; drawing, letter like forms, and invented spelling were precursors to later proficiency with conventional written forms. They would supply a variety of large and colourful writing and drawing materials and include computers, with word processors, in this category. Samples of the children’s

signatures, drawings and writing would be displayed and cherished as part of the print-rich classroom environment. All these language and literacy strategies are defined, illustrated and advocated in this chapter. A helpful summary concludes the information and reinforces it.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

The discourse styles advocated by High/Scope are not those found in most out-of-school settings. Children are not expected to talk a great deal. In some cases it may be thought discourteous for them to try to control the conversation. It would have to be demonstrated that there were observable benefits to encouraging a lot of child-generated talk before this kind of environment could be adopted.

Again this is a situation where the kind of talk which is being advocated does not involve adults directing, controlling or coercing Aboriginal children to talk in formal, unnatural ways, abandoning their own dialects or forms of speech, as many Grade One or Kindergarten classrooms often demand. It might, therefore, seem a reasonable change of approach if the advantages proved to be as significant as the experts claim them to be.

CHAPTER TWELVE

INITIATIVE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

This chapter gives a good overview of a child's emotional development and how children begin to recognize emotions and observe them in others actions and words. The chapter outlines suggestions adults can use to support children's initiatives and social relations and affirm children's emerging awareness of themselves and others. Some of the important recommendations made by the authors are to; establish an option-rich environment and consistent daily routine, express and maintain interest in the choices children make, give children time to make choices, plans, and decisions, encourage children to make choices and decisions throughout the day, encourage children to describe the problems they encounter, give children time to generate their own solutions, assist frustrated children.

SEVEN STEPS TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The curriculum effectively focuses on listening skills and how to deal with social conflict with preschool age children. They provide an excellent seven step process on how to deal with conflict resolution. I feel that it is important for child care workers to have this background training in conflict resolution and anger management in the classroom because these skills are overlooked in many other curriculum packages.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

Headstart workers should be aware that cultures may deal with discipline and conflict resolution in a different way than the curriculum. This section may have to be adapted but it does provide a solid framework and research findings on effective communication.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MOVEMENT

The High/Scope Curriculum recognizes that Movement is central to the development of the psychomotor domain and as such is a vital part of every learning experience. Children need opportunities to gain control over their body motions and to handle objects with ever-increasing dexterity.

Five basic elements provide the focus for the key experiences. These are: moving in nonlocomotor ways (non-anchored running, skipping, jumping, etc.); moving with objects; expressing creativity through movement; and describing movement. In conjunction with these, children are expected to make sense of visual and verbal cues so that they can follow directions and move in synchronization with a steady beat.

ROLE OF ADULTS

Adults need to encourage children to explore a wide variety of positions such as curling up, stretching or balancing, for example. They also need to note what kinds of movement children incorporate in to their play and have them demonstrate some of the actions in a kind of replay when they converse about them. Adults should play games such as *Statues* or *Angels* with the children so that they can compliment them on achieving unusual positions. Stretching, bending, twisting and rocking should also be encouraged to develop children's sense of positioning.

It is also recommended that children should be able to explore direction, size, level, intensity, shape and timing. Clearly, space must be adequate to accommodate the children's moving in these athletic ways and to play vigorous but non-competitive games. Many practical suggestions are described for producing all the prescribed movements. They are well within the ability of any adult to organize and supervise. Expertise in Physical Education is not really required yet all the activities which are included show evidence of a knowledgeable designer. The many and varied Movement strategies are summarized in Appendix D.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

All children need the benefit of organized opportunities to develop their psychomotor skills. Aboriginal children, in a contemporary setting, suffer as much as all other groups in the population, from the sedentary lifestyle which has accompanied mechanization and technology. All children sit for far too long watching TV passively. Movement, as proposed in this Curriculum is a prerequisite for counteracting the obesity and lack of fitness which plagues so many children.

In former times, Aboriginal people took great pride in their lithe, finely coordinated, muscular bodies. A return to this healthy state would be entirely consistent with their goals of achieving self-determination and physical and mental excellence.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MUSIC

This chapter recognizes the importance of music in early childhood development. Music draws children into their culture and communal rituals and conveys emotions, heightens experiences, and marks personal and historic occasions. The authors recommend that music should be a daily occurrence in an active learning setting. They also suggest that moving to music be an integral key experience in the classroom.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CLASSIFICATION

This chapter recognizes the importance of classification, the process of grouping things together based on attributes they have in common, as a fundamental requirement to make sense of information or actions. Young children form constructs very early as soon as they detect relationships and recognize connections. They develop a capacity for what Jean Piaget called *intuitive thought*. This allows them to draw conclusions from their sensory explorations and test these in their future actions.

Seven *key experiences* are listed as being essential to children's ability to learn to classify. They must learn to describe similarities and differences and note the attributes of things. They should be able to distinguish, name and describe shapes. A lot of time should be allowed for them to sort and match a wide variety of objects. They should also be able to describe and use given objects in several ways.

At a later stage of development, they should progress to the level of being able to hold more than one attribute in mind at a time. They should be able to distinguish between *some* and *all* and identify or describe the characteristics something *does not* have or the class it does not belong to.

ROLE OF THE ADULT

Adults should provide a wide variety of interesting materials and change the selection on a regular basis. These should be safe to handle and explore with all

the senses, sight, touch, taste, smell and hearing. Items with moving parts, even when these are simple kitchen tools, are very intriguing as are objects which can be operated, such as flashlights, squeeze bottles, clocks and so on. Talk, about how the objects look, move and change should be encouraged and attended to by the teacher and especial note should be made when they list attributes or remark on similarities or differences. Examples of typical items to use or activities to encourage are given for all the suggested strategies.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

Aboriginal people have elaborate classification systems for everything of importance in their environment. Any preschool would provide a treasure house of locally relevant items to sort and match. Nuts, berries, leaves, types of fur, and other organic materials would be readily available. This activity is entirely congruent with what would be expected of children.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SERIATION: CREATING SERIES AND PATTERNS

Seriation means ordering objects based on differences and gradual variations in their qualities. This chapter's main focus is on how to implement seriation activities in the classroom for example; comparing attributes (longer/shorter, bigger/smaller), arranging several things one after another in a series or pattern and describing their relationships (big/bigger, red/blue/red/blue), fitting one ordered set of objects to another through trial and error (small cup-small saucer/medium saucer/big cup-big saucer). This chapter is mainly focused on classroom activities that teach and promote the cognitive process of seriation.

One positive comment about the high/scope curriculum is that it always encouraged preschool teachers to use computers to help teach concepts such as seriation. It is important to provide children with the teaching advantages that computers can provide and not ignore the benefits of computer assisted instruction.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

This section could be easily adapted to Aboriginal peoples needs. For example, beadworking patterns would be analyzed and other cultural symbols could be used in the activities versus the objects recommended by the Highscope curriculum.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

NUMBER

Preschoolers need multiple opportunities to understand “the essential and fundamental properties of the number system” according to John Flavell and other notable developmental psychologists. They quickly derive satisfaction from manipulating, sorting, ordering and quantifying objects which involve the skills of classification and seriation.

THE ROLE OF THE ADULTS

Adults can support these developments by encouraging their explorations and letting them manipulate real items rather than drilling them in abstract counting practice. They need to listen to the children to hear their observations because this is the surest way to evaluate whether such concepts as “more”, “fewer”, “some” are being internalized. Children will happily sort, count, arrange and compare blocks, cars, dolls, bottle caps, buttons, pine cones - anything this is available and small enough to line up.

The Curriculum provides many examples of the kinds of materials that fit together in one-to-one correspondence; ways to infer whether children are making corresponding sets; and ways to debrief children about their numeracy experiences during *recall* time.

High/Scope also uses snack and meal times as wonderful opportunities to reinforce emerging numeracy, clearly there needs to be a napkin, place, spoon and so on for

every child. During small or large group times or playing games, adults can ensure that children always have significant numerical problems to solve. Numeracy involves a great deal more than counting, as Rachel Gelman's research indicates, so High/Scope trains adults to watch for: the one-to-one principle; the stable-order principle; the cardinal principle; the abstraction principle; and the order-irrelevance principle. Each of these displays a higher order of proficiency and all must be understood before true numeracy occurs.

Many anecdotal conversations are given to provide adults with the knowledge of how to monitor children's talk to infer what they are concluding as they play. It is also noted that children will sometimes recognize numerals in books, signs, computer screens and so on and even attempt to draw, paint, trace in sand or write them. All these attempts should be encouraged though not demanded.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

The High/Scope suggestions for supporting children's number concepts are very consistent with Aboriginal ways of teaching children these things. Both rely on allowing children to manipulate, order and arrange materials in any way they choose rather than drilling them to monotonously count out loud *abstract* numbers unrelated to real things. True numeracy occurs when these highly relevant experiences are cherished.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

SPACE

The key experiences through which preschool children come to understand such spatial concepts as *proximity* and *separation* are: filling and emptying containers filled with liquids or solids; fitting things together, such as blocks, and taking them apart; changing the shape of objects by twisting, folding, stretching them; looking at people and objects from various positions; developing a vocabulary which describes directing, positions, distances in their immediate environment; and interpreting spatial relationships in drawings, pictures and photographs.

THE ROLE OF THE ADULT

Adults should provide a wide variety of materials which can be filled and emptied. Scoops and funnels are particularly useful as can be seen in the photograph of children experimenting in the sand box. Materials that fit together and come apart are commercially available but can be inexpensively augmented by a wide variety of common household items.

High/Scope recommends providing plenty of *time* for children to work with materials on their own and not to be discouraged about repetition because children never outgrow their enjoyment of these activities. Adults can encourage the children to use scissors and tape to rearrange and reshape paper or cloth. Thread, string, yarn and ribbon allow children to twist, loop, tie and thread and all these activities involve problem-solving because they are not easy for small children to accomplish..

Creative playgrounds out-of-doors allow children to move in a variety of unusual ways such as swinging, flipping and crawling. Adults can converse with them about positions, directions and distances and support them as they encounter and solve problems.

ILLUSTRATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Curriculum shows children happily engaging in many of the recommended activities and this makes it easy for a prospective preschool worker to visualize how things should work and how simple it would be to enhance children's spatial concepts in almost any physical environment.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

The Curriculum Guide's recommendations in this chapter are completely congruent with practices. Spatial judgement and outdoor orientation are pre-requisites of people who have lived off the land for millennia. All child care personnel will readily respond to these suggestions.

CHAPTER 19 TIME

I really enjoyed reviewing this chapter because this was one of the most difficult concepts for me to learn as a young Métis child. The authors state that time is an abstract concept (you cannot see, hear, touch, taste, or smell time), thus, time can be a difficult concept for children to learn. It's good for childcare workers to be aware of this issue. The authors claim that, "preschoolers thinking about time is grounded in active, sensory experiences." The authors state that preschoolers "have mastered some of the rudiments of the ordered system of past, present, and future relations. They have a basic understanding of events as preceding or following the present moment in which they are speaking."

The authors focus on four key experiences for the topic of time such as, starting and stopping and action on signal, experiencing and describing rates of movement, experiencing and comparing time intervals and anticipating, remembering, and describing sequences of events. This chapter provides many useful hints in helping preschool workers deal with the concept of time in the classroom.

CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES

One thing Aboriginal headstart programmers may want to consider is how their communities and cultures may have different perceptions of time. The non-linear and holistic approach to understanding time should be integrated into the activities to learn the concept of time.

SUMMARIZED CONCLUSION RE: THE HIGH/SCOPE TRAINING PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM GUIDE

In selecting an appropriate training-model to prepare child care workers to provide the highest possible, quality programs which are culturally appropriate in the new HeadStart programs, the following criteria must be met:

1. Community Values must predominate

Aboriginal people must be confident that any system of training workers does so from a philosophy which is entirely congruent with their own. Although there are clear differences in geography, language and political structure, Aboriginal communities share a common viewpoint with respect to the socialization and education of their children. Some of the chief characteristics of this viewpoint are the beliefs that: children must always be treated with respect, children must be given a high degree of autonomy, children must never be coerced or threatened, children must always be nourished by being in contact with the language, artifacts, customs and practices which are the core of their unique identity.

2. Training-programs must be portable, cost-effective and easily evaluated by community leaders and parents

Early implementation of the HeadStart Program means that personnel will be hired very quickly. These workers will consequently need the support and assistance of knowledgeable professionals to ensure that the new centres are equipped and organized in a way which maximizes the use of the available funds.

Clearly there will not be sufficient resources for all the personnel to take several months of training in locations far from their local community. It is therefore imperative that a *few core people* from each area can receive an intensive training in a proven program, which they can in turn use to train other child care workers in other facilities in their area of province. Such a system would provide a multiplying effect and its influence would persist long into the operation of the program. A good operational system which was supported by written and videotaped resources could be used to initiate any new workers subsequently hired to implement the program. This would then be a very cost-effective system of professional development.

The system would need to have very clear, readily understood objectives, procedures and practices. It would also have to provide a checklist of expectations related to the scope-and-sequence of the type of development which would indicate whether the pre-school children were indeed benefitting from the program.

3. Training-programs must be research-based and congruent with later educational expectations

The effectiveness of the selected training-program would have to be supported by credible and independent research which demonstrated that children educated in that system showed superior intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual growth to those in alternative systems or outside any system.

In addition, the goals and objectives of the program should also harmonize with those of the Tribal, Territorial or Provincial Educational system into which the children would later be absorbed and expected to show proficiency in.

How does the High/Scope Program measure up to these criteria?

1. As a vehicle to deliver a child-care program that meets values and aspirations, it would be difficult to find a better match than the one developed by High/Scope.

Respect - Children are cherished and given *great respect* by the workers in this program. Everyone is addressed by his or her first name and there is no sense of the “talking down” or “controlling” Aboriginal children which is apparent in many other programs. Clearly the workers believe in the inherent goodness and worth of every child. All are treated with dignity, courtesy and understanding.

Autonomy - An amazing degree of autonomy is encouraged by this program. Children are asked to plan, do and then review their own activities. This is unlike most other programs which are adult-dominated and where children are directed to do this or that. The High/Scope philosophy runs counter to this European approach, just as the Aboriginal traditions do. Children are given the freedom and independence to make their own decisions, carry them out, review the consequences and make a judgement about whether they have achieved the desired objective or not.

Adults never do things for the child that the child could do for herself or himself. This leads to spilt milk or roughly cut paper or any number of less than adult performances in carrying out tasks, but all of these mishaps are taken in stride as normal elements of development. Further, the children quickly learn to tidy up after themselves and to assist each other. This is another value highly

characteristic of Aboriginal societies. Life and learning is a collaborative experience and this expectation is in place from a very early age. High/Scope endorses this view.

No threats or coercion - people do not use sarcasm, harassment or intimidation to make children obey rules or behave in socially desirable ways. Instead they model these behaviours and gently nudge their children to do the same. The High/Scope system also reflects this technique. Children are not yelled at or forced to apologize to another child if they have a difference of opinion. Instead they are asked if what they did makes them feel good or if it had the result they wanted. They are also asked about how the other person might feel. Such an approach leads to self-reflection, self-control and a higher degree of social awareness. It is far superior to having a child say "I'm sorry" when clearly she or he is not! Any change in behaviour which is produced simply to satisfy the demands of an adult who happens to be present is generally not sincere and not likely to occur when the adult leaves. High/Scope personnel train child care workers to recognize this and to work with children in a way which produces behavioural changes based on reason not fear.

Cultural appropriateness - The organization of the program is based on having various Centres such as: the house area, the art area, the book area, the block area, etc. and the day's activities are organized around these areas and the children's interaction with the materials in them.

In the Ypsilanti facility the materials were in English, the "house" was a typical U.S. kitchen (there were even MacDonald's aprons and hats for when the children decided to play "fast food") and the creative materials were leaves and yarn.

Clearly every Canadian HeadStart centre could adapt these “Centres” to reflect the language, geography, resources, cultural activities unique to its location. Also, these areas are not static and the items in them will change according to the season, any special occasions being celebrated or at the request of any of the children. The content and subsequent activities are an adaptive dimension which will be readily made culturally appropriate by the local child care workers who are hired to implement the program. It would be fascinating to see the range of different “house interiors” which might occur from coast-to-coast or the different art, music, legends which would be utilized. In addition, parents and other resource people drawn from the community could easily be incorporated into the day’s routine so that beading, birch-bark-biting or carving could be part of what was offered in a specific facility.

The High/Scope program has been implemented in countries as far apart as Finland and China with equal success. The common thread is the *plan, do* and *review* approach. This seems to help children choose an activity, engage in it and then talk about it later. The “talking” helps to develop the linguistic and therefore intellectual skills of the Aboriginal children, but it can be applied to any topic and carried out in any language. It is therefore a very adaptable, flexible program which has universal applications.

2. Portability

High/Scope trainers have taught all over the United States and in most countries in the world. They use translators when they demonstrate their program in Singapore or Portugal, but they see the evidence of whether their students

understand or not by watching how they interact with the children and by ensuring that it is the children and not the child care workers who do most of the talking. The program is dependent on a watch-then-do style so it must occur at a facility where there are real children, doing real things. All Canada's HeadStart centres will have such a facility so the program could be conducted anywhere.

Cost-effectiveness - Because the program has been developed as a "package", it is evident that it represents an extremely cost-effective way to train successive waves of child care workers.

If each province or territory or region paid for one or two workers to receive the initial training at the costs of say \$5,000 U.S., upon completion of their training and with their subsequent accreditation, they could then go to several centres in their area and provide the same training they had just received to others already hired in the field. This second wave of workers could do the same so that the initial costs would soon seem very small indeed. Without the highly-structured program and well-designed resource materials, such a transference of knowledge and expertise would not be possible, but it would be a realistic goal with the High/Scope package.

Evaluation Procedures - High/Scope provides a readily understandable Report Form which could be given to the parents of all the children attending the program to describe the stages they were at and the progress they were making. Instead of giving meaningless grades and numbers, the form describes incidents, conversations and bench-marks which provide evidence of what children can do. The evaluation encompasses both intellectual and social skills. Again, the form

could be added to and amended if particular communities wanted other areas included.

3. Research-base

The research and scholarship related to High/Scope program is extremely impressive.

Comparing like groups of individuals at age 27, half of whom attended the High/Scope Preschool and half of whom did not, the independent researchers found significant differences. Those who attended the high quality, active learning preschool program at ages 3 and 4 had: half as many criminal arrests; higher earnings and owned their own homes; a greater commitment to marriage and superior educational achievements. If dollar figures were to be put on these differences, then investing in this particular type of preschool program would provide a benefit of \$7.00 for every \$1.00 spent.

In addition to having proven itself as a vehicle for improving the socio-economic status of its students, the High/Scope program has a high degree of correlation with the Common Essential Learnings, CEL's, advocated by the Saskatchewan Department of Education. The CEL's are currently being incorporated into all the Core Curriculum areas. Such things as Communication, Numeracy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Social and Personal Skills, Technological Literacy and Independent Learning are all an integral part of the High/Scope approach. This suggests that children exposed to these concepts, attitudes and beliefs prior to starting the regular school system would indeed have a HeadStart.

4. Missing components in Highscope Curriculum

There was a lack to time spend on how to deal with special needs students in the classroom and a lack of tips on how to identify learning disabilities in pre-school children. Headstart programmers should be aware that there was a lack of information on how to teach in a mulitlingual classroom or how to deal with second language learners in a preschool environment. Headstart programmers should make sure the assumptions and views of Highscope curriculum are compatible with their own philosophy of learning and child development. There was little time spend on health and mental wellness for pre-school children in the classroom. But, overall the curriculum is a strong model for early childhood programs and is easily adaptable to the needs of Aboriginal people.

Conclusion

The High/Scope program offers an open framework of educational practices solidly grounded in the philosophy and research of such luminaries as Dewey, Piaget, Montesor and vygostsky. It has reached this high level through observation, experimentation and experience-based learning. It emphasizes the development of children as active learners and subordinates the adult role to that of facilitator as opposed to instructor.

It is ready-to-use, affordable and has a solid track record of producing autonomous, successful, life-long learners. We believe it meets the criteria outlined as being essential to the creation of an appropriate vehicle to educate or train HeadStart personnel. Child care workers trained in this system should help to develop the leadership skills of children who could, as adults, play a pivotal role in the achievement of self-determination.

High/cope Preschool Key Experiences

Creative Representation

- Recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell
- Imitating actions and sounds
- Relating models, pictures, and photographs to real places and things
- Pretending and role playing
- Making models out of clay, blocks, and other materials
- Drawing and painting

Language and Literacy

- Talking with others about personally meaningful experiences
- Describing objects, events, and relations
- Having fun with language: listening to stories and poems, making up stories and rhymes
- Writing in various ways: drawing, scribbling, letterlike forms, invented spelling, conventional forms
- Reading in various ways: reading storybooks, signs and symbols, one's own writing
- Dictating stories

Initiative and Social Relations

- Making and expressing choices, plans, and decisions
- Solving problems encountered in play
- Taking care of one's own needs
- Expressing feelings in words
- Participating in group routines
- Being sensitive to the feelings, interests, and needs of others
- Building relationships with children and adults
- Creating and experiencing collaborative play
- Dealing with social conflict

Movement

- Moving in nonlocomotor ways (anchored movement: bending, twisting, rocking, swinging, one's arms)
- Moving in locomotor ways (nonanchored movement: running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, climbing)
- Moving with objects
- Expressing creativity in movement
- Describing movement
- Acting upon movement directions
- Feeling and expressing steady beat
- Moving in sequences to a common beat

Music

- Moving to music
- Exploring and identifying sounds
- Exploring the singing voice
- Developing melody
- Singing songs
- Playing simple musical instruments

Classification

- Exploring and describing similarities, differences, and the attributes of things
- Distinguishing and describing shapes
- Sorting and matching
- Using and describing something in several ways
- Holding more than one attribute in mind at a time
- Distinguishing between "some" and "all"
- Describing characteristics something does not possess or what class it does not belong to

Seriation

- Comparing attributes (longer/shorter, bigger/smaller)
- Arranging several thin is one after another in a series or pattern and describing the relationships (big/bigger/biggest, red/blue/red/blue)

Number

- Fitting one ordered set of objects to another through trial and error (small cup—small saucer/medium cup—medium saucer/big cup—big saucer)
- Comparing the number of things in two sets to determine "more," "fewer," "same number"
- Arranging two sets of objects in one-to-one correspondence

Space

- Counting objects
- Filling and emptying
- Fitting things together and taking them apart
- Changing the shape and arrangement of objects (wrapping, twisting, stretching, stacking, enclosing)
- Observing people, places, and things from different spatial view points
- Experiencing and describing positions, directions, and distances in the play space, building, and neighborhood
- Interpreting spatial relations in drawings, pictures, and photographs

Time

- Starting and stopping an action on signal
- Experiencing and describing rates of movement
- Experiencing and comparing time intervals
- Anticipating, remembering, and describing sequences of events

Daily Team Planning Leads to Appropriate Assessment: The High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR)

Staff of many early childhood programs are required to do formal child assessments. Frequently, their agencies ask that they use a test-based assessment instrument that often presents some of the following problems:

- The assessment instrument may require teachers to pull children out of their daily routine and present them with a set of standardized tasks that have no relationship to their ongoing interests and play activities. Children, understandably, are often confused by the demands of the test and do not perform as expected.
 - The assessment process is time-consuming, taking time teachers would prefer to spend working directly with children or planning with other team members.
 - The assessment instrument is often incompatible with the goals of a developmentally appropriate program and overemphasizes formal academic or pre-academic skills.
 - The information gathered through this kind of testing does not present a well-rounded picture of children's emerging abilities and thus is not very useful in guiding teachers and caregivers as they work with children, plan program activities, or report on child progress to parents.
- The High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR) for Ages 2½–6 (1992),* presents a child-observation-based alternative to conventional, test-based assessment systems. The COR is designed to address common assessment concerns such as those listed above by providing a practical and meaningful assessment system for devel-

opmentally appropriate early childhood programs. With COR assessment, early childhood staff observe children and, as they support and interact with children throughout the day, gather the information to complete the COR form. If you follow the daily team observation and planning process described in this chapter, filling out the COR once or twice a year for each child in your program will require little additional effort. The child anecdotes you discuss and record daily will enable you to "score" children on items such as the following from the Initiative section of the COR (p. 4):

B. Solving Problems

1. *Child does not yet identify problems.*
2. *Child identifies problems, but does not try to solve them, turning instead to another activity.*
3. *Child uses one method to try to solve a problem, but if unsuccessful, gives up after one or two tries.*
4. *Child shows some persistence, trying several alternative methods to solve a problem.*
5. *Child tries alternative methods to solve a problem and is highly involved and persistent.*

COR materials, which are available from High/Scope Press, include the COR instrument (available in both software and paper-and-pencil versions), a manual, anecdotal notecards, and key experience forms (either of which may be used for recording daily observations of children's behaviors), parent report forms, and a poster highlighting the major observation categories. COR training, which may be arranged through the High/Scope Foundation, is recommended for effective use of the COR assessment process.

High/Scope Key Experiences for Preschool Children

The High/Scope preschool key experiences provide a composite picture of early childhood development, are fundamental to young children's construction of knowledge, take place repeatedly over an extended period of time, and describe the concepts and relationships young children are striving to understand. They occur in active learning settings in which children have opportunities to make choices and decisions, manipulate materials, interact with peers and adults, experience special events, reflect on ideas and actions, use language in personally meaningful ways, and receive appropriate adult support.

Creative Representation

- Recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell
- Initiating actions and sounds
- Relating models, pictures, and photographs to real places and things
- Pretending and role playing
- Making models out of clay, blocks, and other materials
- Drawing and painting

Language and Literacy

- Talking with others about personally meaningful experiences
- Describing objects, events, and relations
- Having fun with language: listening to stories and poems, making up stories and rhymes
- Writing in various ways: drawing, scribbling, letterlike forms, invented spelling, conventional forms
- Reading in various ways: reading storybooks, signs and symbols, one's own writing
- Dictating stories

Initiative and Social Relations

- Making and expressing choices, plans, and decisions
- Solving problems encountered in play

- Taking care of one's own needs
- Expressing feelings in words
- Participating in group routines
- Being sensitive to the feelings, interests, and needs of others
- Building relationships with children and adults
- Creating and experiencing collaborative play
- Dealing with social conflict

Movement

- Moving in nonlocomotor ways (anchored movement: bending, twisting, rocking, swinging; one's arms)
- Moving in locomotor ways (nonanchored movement: running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, climbing)
- Moving with objects
- Expressing creativity in movement
- Describing movement
- Acting upon movement directions
- Feeling and expressing steady beat
- Moving in sequences to a common beat

Music

- Moving to music
- Exploring and identifying sounds
- Exploring the singing voice
- Developing melody
- Singing songs
- Playing simple musical instruments

Classification

- Exploring and describing similarities, differences, and the attributes of things
- Distinguishing and describing shapes
- Sorting and matching
- Using and describing something in several ways

- Holding more than one attribute in mind at a time
- Distinguishing between "some" and "all"
- Describing characteristics something does not possess or what class it does not belong to

Seriation

- Comparing attributes (longer/shorter, bigger/smaller)
- Arranging several things one after another in a series or pattern and describing the relationships (big/bigger/biggest, red/blue/red/blue)
- Fitting one ordered set of objects to another through trial and error (small cup—small saucer/medium cup—medium saucer/big cup—big saucer)

Number

- Comparing the number of things in two sets to determine "more," "fewer," "same number"
- Arranging two sets of objects in one-to-one correspondence
- Counting objects

Space

- Filling and emptying
- Fitting things together and taking them apart
- Changing the shape and arrangement of objects (wrapping, twisting, stretching, stacking, enclosing)
- Observing people, places, and things from different spatial viewpoints
- Experiencing and describing positions, directions, and distances in the play space, buildings, and neighborhood
- Interpreting spatial relations in drawings, pictures, and photographs

Time

- Starting and stopping an action on signal
- Experiencing and describing rates of movement
- Experiencing and comparing time intervals
- Anticipating, remembering, and describing sequences of events

Movement Strategies: A Summary

Moving in nonlocomotor ways (anchored movement: bending, twisting, rocking, swinging one's arms)

- ___ Encourage children to explore a wide variety of positions:
 - ___ Watch for and acknowledge positions children assume as they play.
 - ___ Play position-games with children.
- ___ Look for opportunities to stretch, bend, rock, and twist with children.
- ___ Play games that focus on one movement at a time.
- ___ Attend to the direction, size, level, intensity, shape, and timing of children's nonlocomotor movement.

Moving in locomotor ways (nonanchored movement: running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, climbing)

- ___ Provide space and time for children to move.
 - ___ Encourage children to move about in a variety of ways:
 - ___ Look for and acknowledge all the ways children move about.
 - ___ Play games that call for nonanchored movement.
 - ___ Attend to the direction, size, level, pathway, intensity, and timing of children's nonanchored movement.
- ### *Moving with objects*
- ___ Provide children with time and space to move with objects.
 - ___ Provide a wide variety of easy-to-manipulate materials:
 - ___ Add light, floating materials that are easily set in motion by children's movement.

- ___ Add novel objects to hold and move with.
- ___ Add foot-focused materials.
- ___ Add balls and other materials for tossing, throwing, catching, striking, and kicking.
- ___ Add big things for pushing and pulling.

Expressing creativity in movement

- ___ Watch for and acknowledge children's creative use of movement.
- ___ Encourage children to solve movement problems at small-group, large-group, and transition times.
- ___ Talk with children about how they are moving.
- ___ Encourage children to represent their experiences through movement.

Describing movement

- ___ Listen as children describe movement in their own way.
- ___ Find opportunities to comment on how children are moving.
- ___ Encourage children to plan, do, and recall movement.
- ___ Plan large-group experiences in which children use a single word to describe a single movement.

Acting upon movement directions

- ___ Listen for the movement directions children generate as they play.
- ___ During group games, give or demonstrate simple movement directions:
 - ___ Provide verbal directions.
 - ___ Give children visual movement demonstrations.

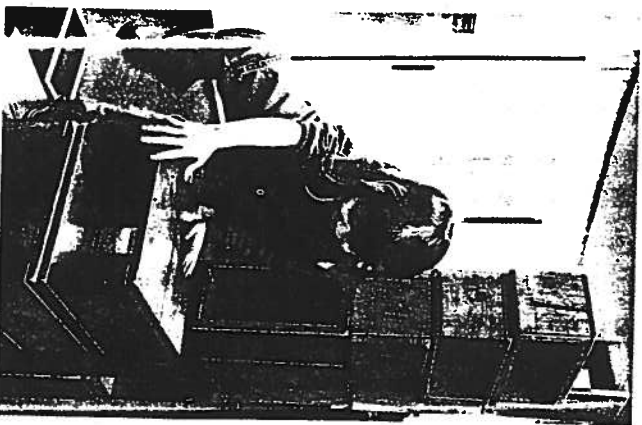
Feeling and expressing steady beat

- ___ Provide equipment on which children can rock, swing, and pedal.
- ___ Build rocking to the beat and patting the beat into music and language experiences:
 - ___ Distinguish beat from rhythm.

- ___ Rock, sway, and pat a steady beat while singing and chanting.
- ___ Pat a steady beat when children are playing musical instruments.
- ___ Provide opportunities for children to walk to a steady beat.
- ___ Look for and acknowledge children's movement to a steady beat as they play.
- ___ Play group games with a steady beat.

Moving in sequences to a common beat

- ___ Name the body part associated with each movement in the sequence.
- ___ Keep movement sequences clear and simple.



Clapping is an important form of locomotor movement for preschoolers.

APPENDIX E

SOME GUIDE QUESTIONS USED BY THE REVIEWERS

- * What are the central principles of the high scope preschool curriculum?
- * What are the objectives of the high scope curriculum and how do they implement these objectives?
- * How effective is the preschool program?
- * What are the expected outcomes of the high scope curriculum?
- * Does the high scope approach work?
- * What research studies show the long-term outcome of the high scope curriculum?
- * How adaptable is the curriculum to First Nations and Métis peoples educational needs?
- * How does the curriculum discuss culture and identity in early childhood development?