Fostering global citizens in the infant and toddler classroom for the cultivation of a culture of humanism

Stefanie Horton
Bank Street College of Education

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Fostering Global Citizens in the
Infant and Toddler Classroom for the
Cultivation of a Culture of Humanism

By
Stefanie Horton

Mentor:
Virginia Casper

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ABSTRACT

Fostering Global Citizens in the Infant and Toddler Classroom for the Cultivation of a Culture of Humanism

By Stefanie Horton

The following thesis is a theoretical study of the infant and toddler classroom as a means for social reform. The purpose of this study is to examine meaningful philosophies and practices of education and care that may contribute to the fostering of youth who respect and value the dignity of all life. I will demonstrate through the review of literature the definition of a global citizen, as it will be addressed in this paper. Humanistic pedagogy, theories of human development, and themes and principles of infant-toddler development will be offered as foundational elements from which guidelines for educational policies and practices may be generated for the classrooms serving the birth to three years population. The research will be the infrastructure for the practical application section, an idealized account of an environment and curricula that will demonstrate how the infant-toddler classroom may foster future global citizens for the cultivation of a culture of humanism. Significant findings include the importance of value-creative experiences; the roles of the school and the teacher; and the merit of the home-school connection as the basis of learning for children in the earliest years of life.
This Integrative Master’s Project is dedicated to the three most influential people in my life: my mother, Jean Horton; my father Charles Horton, Sr.; and my mentor, Daisaku Ikeda. They are the reason I am who I am, and why I do what I do.
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Introduction

A passage from a Buddhist teaching states:

“If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present.” (Daishonin, 2003, p. 279)

News broadcasts from all over world report cases of teasing, bullying and hate crimes to suicide, mass shootings and the existence of nuclear weapons, demonstrating that what is experienced and witnessed daily in today’s society is a rampant disrespect of human life. If the above quoted passage from the teachings of Buddhism is true, then it would behoove the present generation to reflect on the current conditions as a product of the past, and take responsibility for creating more humanistic practices, policies, customs, and values for the future.

This Integrative Masters Project (IMP) argues that education, beginning in the earliest years of life, is one practical means by which a fundamental shift towards a culture of humanism may be cultivated. This IMP is proposing that it is imperative for today’s youth to be educated, beginning in the infant and toddler years, to perceive, appreciate and adopt the skills and abilities needed to interact within the ever growing global community; while at the same time, maintain a secure perception, appreciation and acceptance of themselves and where they have come from. In other words, there needs to be a groundswell of global citizenship.
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Since the dawn of the twentieth century, rapid modernization has taken place throughout the world. Within the last one hundred and fifty years, many societies have changed from small isolated agricultural communities to interconnected and interdependent technological communities. In addition, there has been a groundswell of civil and human rights movements that continue to emerge throughout the world. These movements have challenged the human and governmental tendency to divide, rank and oppress, whether it be by ethnicity, race, socioeconomic class, gender, sexual preference, religion, politics, or ability. The egalitarian ideas of democracy have been promoted and exported as the ultimate political system that guarantees the free and equal right of every member in the society. In response, many nations have adopted democracy, by choice and/or by force. However, there are still ingrained customs and values that reflect how far we have to go in order to actualize a society based on respecting the dignity of all human life.

Overall, the changes in society have been so rapid that the education of the masses has not kept up with, nor has it stayed ahead of, the times. Throughout the twentieth century, great thinkers throughout the world attempted to put forth theories of education and development to assist the progress of educational policies and practices that focused on the child and their development. However, the results of their wisdom produced only a minority group of theorists, policy makers, and practitioners who promote education for social change. Some reformations, such as desegregation, inclusion, peace studies and culturally responsive education, have been notable advancements; however they have not solved the more deeply rooted tendencies that contradict true humanism. Without the adoption of more proactive approaches that address the need for a culture of humanism,
the much-needed fundamental shift in the way people are educated to regard human life and engage in human relations will not occur. Instead we will continue on the path of having institutions that permit economic and political motivations, as well as personal and national prejudices and preferences, to promote the outdated traditional educational policies and practices that have contributed to the behaviors and attitudes toward human life that we see today. The foundational argument of this IMP is that a proactive approach may begin with addressing the educational practices in early childhood education and care settings that serve children in the first three years of life.

Historically there have been children of certain demographics who, in the primary years, have spent significant hours of the day in the care of adults outside of their home. The philosophers of fifty- and one-hundred years ago, whose audience focused on the population where infants and toddlers were cared for by those situated in the home, generally omitted this population from their discourse on the reformation of education. However, due to a number of reasons, among which include the growing desire and necessity for dual-income families and the minimization of extended parental-leave after the birth of a child, the outsourcing of care of infants and toddlers is increasing. To respond to the growing need, in addition to a plethora of informal settings, early childhood education and care settings are creating or extending their services for this population. Therefore, no longer can the infant-toddler population be forgotten or left out of reform discourse. It is of even greater significance that the current discussions of humanistic educational movements and the creation of global citizens start with and bear keenly in mind the kind of policies and practices that are occurring and being established
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in the classrooms serving children birth to three, because this is the population from which fundamental change can occur.

I firmly believe that who we are and how we carry ourselves in the world, is ultimately a product of both our own inherent nature, and the many influences that nurture us. Based on personal experience, and the research I offer in this IMP, I have an optimistic perspective on the trajectory of progress that can be made from this moment forward in the kind of schooling and instruction we offer the future generations, especially those in early childhood classrooms.

In this IMP I will offer a personal account of the reasons why the topic of fostering global citizens for the creation of a culture of humanism is of interest for me. To introduce the literature section, I argue my position on the terminology *global citizen* and *global citizenship*, as they will be utilized in this paper. I will then examine education as a means of social reform through the lens of humanistic pedagogy. To support the theoretical findings and offer further understanding of the specific needs of the target population, I will explicate theories of human development, as well as themes and principles of infant-toddler development as the basis for educational policies and practices. The final section will consist of a fictional representation of an infant-toddler setting as an attempt to synthesize the ideas proposed in the literature review.
Rationale

I have a strong faith in humanity. I believe that at some point and in some way we as a human race will be able to cultivate a culture of respect for the dignity of all life. This belief has emerged from the experiences I had as a member of exemplary diverse populations, encompassing people of varied backgrounds, languages, belief systems, socioeconomic status, and cultures. In addition, the adult influences I had in my life were people with global perspectives, who made the effort to see beyond the surface of the individuals with whom they came in contact.

My parents, who struggled a great deal to make ends meet as minorities in America, never allowed prejudices to limit their dreams; and they effectively communicated that message to their children by never sparing any price or effort when it came to creating the most valuable life. One effort my parents made was to ensure my brothers and I had an education that would give us the best opportunities to grow as students of learning and life. They did this by enrolling us in programs with the progressive ideologies of education they appreciated. In the autobiography I wrote when I applied for graduate school I said the schools I attended “gave me a chance to see beyond the scope of my neighborhood and make friends with people of many different backgrounds.” These schools attracted and welcomed students, faculty and staff from various communities from all over the city, and the curricula and community activities were a potpourri of varied cultural influences.
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Outside of school, I spent much of my time in my religious community. Prior to my birth my parents became members of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a lay Buddhist organization originally founded in Japan. As a growing movement the organization was, and continues to be, an egalitarian society, open to people from all walks of life. This meant that from birth I was associating with people of myriad backgrounds. Although the SGI is a religious movement, it has its roots and continued associations in education reform for the betterment of society (see Literature Review in this paper). As I participated in gatherings and read about the history of the organization, I learned about, and was greatly influenced by the idea that education can be a means for social change.

My involvement in the SGI was also my first exposure to a language outside of my native tongue, as many of the concepts and terms of Buddhism were still in the process of finding appropriate translation from Japanese to English. This early exposure to the Japanese language was a contributing factor to my later studying Japanese and Japanese culture. My interest in Japanese would lead me to live in Japan on two separate occasions: first, as a study-abroad student, and second, as an instructor at an international play and music learning center for infants, toddlers and their caregivers. Collectively, my experiences made my perspective on life quite global long before I had the opportunity to leave the United States. However, it was living, studying and working in a culture different from my own that offered me a concrete opportunity to put into practice the skills and abilities that I had been cultivating since birth. Teaching in Tokyo was also where I realized I wanted to make a career of advocating for social change through the development of children in the earliest years of life.
Since attending graduate school at Bank Street College of Education, I have ascertained theoretical and practical knowledge to support my desire to contribute to a better society through the means of early childhood education. The course work and interactions with peers and professors have shed new light on the ideas and ideals I hold towards educating children. I have deepened my belief in the benefits of child-centered education, such as those featured in progressive education. As a teacher in both an infant-toddler classroom and classrooms for preschool aged children with developmental delays, I have been able to put theory into practice and bear witness to the kind of care and educational needs that are persistent themes in early childhood education.

My faith in humanity is tested by the divisiveness that I see accepted as cultural norms and standards; and is challenged by the unenlightened attitudes and behavior exhibited by the masses. My resolve is shaken a little when I experience the pervasive reliance on the classifications and categorizations that lead to preconceived notions of others. My determination falters as I witness the cycle of greed and anger that permeates society because of the promotion of personal fulfillment through prosperity by the culture of powers in my land and abroad. I become discouraged as I observe routine disempowerment of the marginalized who are asked to meet biased standards, be it on a test or a cultural assumption.

However, my personal experiences have led me to believe me that there is an alternative. My life’s journey has taken me on a path of discovering how my passion for justice, conviction in the potential of humankind, and unique talents and capabilities may
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contribute to creating the humanistic, harmonious society I dream of. It may be ideal, but it is my aspiration for educators, philosophers and developmental psychologists who are focused on serving the birth to three population, to unite to create a dynamic humanistic movement that will result in the emergence of future generations that coexist peacefully and with the goal of creating value.
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**Literature Review**

In the Literature Review section I will begin with an explanation of the terms *global citizen* and *global citizenship*, as they will be interpreted in this study. Following this, to establish the theoretical perspective of educating *global citizens*, the history, theory and practical application of two influential proponents of education for social change, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and John Dewey, will be examined. I will then connect broad educational theory to more specific theories of child development by concentrating on the ecological systems theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner and the work of Lev Vygotsky. I will then explore major themes of development that are relevant to the age group birth to three years, that will inform how early childhood education and care facilities can attempt to address some domains of development (namely communication, social, emotional, and cognition) with the aim of fostering *global citizens* who can communicate effectively and respect fully as the need for cross-cultural communication becomes increasingly important.

**Global Citizens**

Although the idea of being a citizen of the world may date back to the earliest philosophers, finding a complete and proper definition for the term *global citizen* is a complicated and almost impossible task. The increasingly popular term has been argued for, adopted by, and adapted to serve the aims of a multitude of hot topics in governance, including poverty, sustainability, and diversity. It has also been defined through the lens of several vantage points, including social, cultural, political, economic and environmental perspectives (Noddings, 2005). In this paper, I will interpret *global*
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citizenship as it pertains to social and cultural diversity, and the role education and educators play in the fostering of global citizens.

It is a fact that we are increasingly becoming a global community in which people of varied cultures, languages and beliefs are expected to coexist, communicate and work cooperatively with each other. It is also a fact that today many more children are beginning their interactions with the global community within the first three years of life. For example, these children are: the newborn whose parents converted to a religious belief system from a foreign country, the infant whose parents are first generation immigrants who travel frequently back to their homeland, the toddler who lives in a bi- or multi-cultural home, or the three-year-old who is attending class at an Early Childhood Education and Care institution with a diverse population. In a recent article in Esquire Magazine Online (Richardson, 2010) United States President Barack Obama was characterized as, what social scientists call, a “Third Culture Kid.” These are children who have lived in other countries and cultures for an extended, but unquestionably temporary, amount of time.

This continuum of youth, as well as the many children whose circumstances lie in between or at even greater extremes, compose an important part of the generation now being educated. No longer are our issues simply black and white, they are every color of the rainbow, and all of the shades in between. They are the product of centuries of generations who created this diverse group of youth through colonization, slavery, democratization, immigration, industrialization, advancements in transportation, the
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digital revolution, wars and the hopes for a better tomorrow.

Globalization is a reality. However, identifying oneself as a global citizen requires more than being a member of the global community. Daisaku Ikeda (1996/2010a), the founder of the Soka school system, which is present in a number of countries throughout the world, dismisses the idea that circumstance alone is a suitable criterion for global citizenship, saying it is “not determined merely by the number of languages one speaks or the number of countries to which one has traveled” (p. 112). He says instead that global citizens are “individuals fully able to transcend self-seeking egotism and elevate their way of life to one linked to all of humanity” (Ikeda, 2001/2010b, p. 20). In other words, global citizenship is not a circumstantial effect of globalization; other elements are required. Global citizenship is not inherent; it must be fostered. The question is, how?

One’s citizenship is most commonly determined by nativity or naturalization to a particular nation state. Rights, responsibilities and expectations of citizens are outlined by government and assumed by the public. This way of life is what unifies people as a citizenship. However, it is also an example of what can draw lines of difference, and implant the idea of an “other.” In the name of unification some mistakenly propose establishing a unified culture, language, or religious belief system. However, even within homogeneous nation states lines are drawn based on other differences, such as socioeconomic status, race, tribe, ethnic background, gender, and the list goes on and on. In conditions where diversity is devalued and a prescribed way of being is exalted how can we create a way of life for all humanity?
What is needed is a balance that is created not by homogenization but instead through harmonization. This balance is described in Buddhist terminology as *itai-doshin*, or many in body, one in mind (Soka Gakkai, 2002). The phrase “many in body” brings to mind the idea of uniqueness and individualism. In her introduction to *Educating Citizens for Global Awareness*, Nel Noddings (2005) speaks of the idea of “many in body” in terms of *global citizenship* when she advocates for cultural diversity and calls for *global citizens* to speak of “ways of life” (p.3). Promoting the idea that the world is enriched by the existence and celebration of diversity, Noddings additionally expects *global citizens* to ask how “a valued diversity can be maintained” (Noddings, 2005, p.3).

On the other hand, “one in mind” can be described as the unified action taken towards a shared goal or commitment. It is evident that Noddings (2005) also agrees with the “one in mind” half of the equation as she also goes on to say, “… we have to think about the merits of diversity and those of unity of universality and how to achieve an optimal balance between the two” (p.3). In essence she is saying, in addition to embracing diversity, we need to also acknowledge the unifying aspect of our humanity.

Ikeda’s call for a way of life that is for all humanity heralds an uprising of *global citizens* who live with the many in body, one in mind spirit. These *global citizens* understand that the attitudes and behaviors of individuals and groups of people affect and are affected by others and their environment. In turn, they live in such a way that their actions reflect a shared determination to respect and uphold the dignity of all life.
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Although nation states are no longer homogeneous and cultural diasporas are more varied and widespread than ever, humanity is far from living this idea of many in body, one in mind. However, a fundamental shift can be made if education and educators respond to globalization by producing, from their ranks, *global citizens*. The only way to educate the young students of this new age is with a clear understanding of their current situation as it exits today and use this information to best imagine how it will exist in the future. Ultimately humanistic curricula and environments based on sound pedagogy and an understanding of child development is what will help to foster a groundswell of successful beings in a world where relating with someone "different" is no longer the exception, it is the norm.

**Pedagogy**

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries marked a dramatic shift in society as the impact of industrialization was felt throughout the world. This was reflected in the multitude of pedagogies that emerged at that time from notable figures whose work have birthed schools and educational movements related to their philosophies throughout the world. Two such pedagogues, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and John Dewey, accurately predicted the kind of education and educators needed for the fostering of global citizens.

At the dawn of industrialization, Japan, having only recently opened its doors to the influences of the West, was in the process of modernization and becoming a competitive nation. The Meiji government recognized that to succeed in the modern era, there was a need to improve the Japanese system of educating the people. This resulted in a centrally
controlled school system and the egalitarian Education Law of 1872 (Gebert & Joffee, 2007; Kumagai, 2000). The idea behind this piece of legislation was, “Education and learning were the means to personal advancement, prosperity and fulfillment” (Kumagai, 2000, p. 33). However, by 1890 the growing influence of nationalism in government policies would produce the Imperial Rescript on Education which instead saw the fundamental goal of education to be “to inculcate young people with the idea of the emperor as center of the universe and the nation before all else and a spirit of loyalty to the emperor and of patriotism” (Kumagai, 2003, p. 34).

It was amidst this socio-political climate that the Japanese educator, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871 - 1944) cultivated his pedagogy of value creating education with the hopes of reforming society through the reformation of the educational system. A product of his time and culture, and based on his experience as an educator and scholarly research of contemporary theorists, Makiguchi determined that the aim of education must be to serve as a way for “children to become responsible, healthy cells in the social organism, to contribute to the happiness of the society, and, by doing so, to find meaning, purpose, and happiness in their own individual lives” (Makiguchi, 1989, p. 21 – 22).

Makiguchi’s experience in the field of education varied over the several decades of his career. He taught at the elementary school level in both the rural countryside of Hokkaido and the urban environment of Tokyo, Japan. He also held positions of leadership as the principal of several schools, many of which served some economically disadvantaged communities. Other experiences of interest include his positions at teacher
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training institutes, a school for foreign exchange students, and as a manager of a correspondence learning publication for girls. Makiguchi was very involved in teacher associations, and actively pursued research in his interests in geography, community studies and folk culture. He also supported himself and his family through writing and editing numerous educational publications (Tsunesaburo Makiguchi Website Committee; Ikeda, 2001/2010b).

It was in the works titled *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei* (in English: *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*), published in successive volumes starting in 1930, that Makiguchi began to transcribe his ideas regarding education. The Japanese neologism *soka*, which is a combination of the words *sozo* (creation) and *kachi* (value) (Ikeda, 2001/2010b) encapsulated Makiguchi’s belief in the creation of value for the self and the society as the basis from which true happiness emerges. He believed that the “dynamic, growthful nature of happiness” (Makiguchi, 1989, p. 23) is the purpose of education and that one's happiness is based on the experiences one has.

Makiguchi asserted that: “Human life is a process of creating value” (Makiguchi, 1989, p. 54). In his efforts to define happiness, Makiguchi called upon his understanding of the neo-Kantian value system of truth, good, and beauty. Makiguchi agreed with the latter two components which he defined as: “social value bearing on collective group existence” and “sensory values bearing on isolated parts of individual existence,” (Makiguchi, 1989, p. 75) respectively. However, he found that truth, the first element, was not suitable because it could not be created, and it did not adjust to the person or the
times. Instead he replaced it with the element of benefit (or gain) because he believed that, “values cannot be separated from people” (Makiguchi, 1989, p. 56) and benefit, as he defined it, is “personal values bearing on self-oriented individual existence” (Makiguchi, 1989, p. 75).

Makiguchi suggested numerous ideas for educational reform for school-aged settings, curricula, and policy. As a matter of course, he also described what he thought should be the role of the educator. Unimpressed with the traditional practice of force-feeding or transferring knowledge, Makiguchi stressed putting the responsibility of study into the student’s hands so they could find their interests as they traveled along their own path towards developing human character and self-enlightenment. In light of this, Makiguchi viewed the role of the educator to be “primarily that of guiding the learning process…[that tackles] the technical problems of what constitutes interest and how to arouse it” (Makiguchi, 1989, p. 167). He was also adamant that as a guide the educator is in a position of service, and the quality of that position depends on the effort to always work on bettering themselves.

Makiguchi also proposed a tangential relationship of in-school education and home life in order to achieve his goal of educating for a society based on cooperative socialized living. He further recommended a half-day school system that allowed for children to spend time gaining direct experience contributing to the community. These ideas were developed in order to promote a connection between school and daily life, where learning
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was ever-present and not dependent on one environment (Kumagai, 2000; Makiguchi, 1989).

Makiguchi attempted to share his pedagogy with others, but his social status, as a consequence of having graduated from a Normal School (a teacher’s college, not highly regarded) and his radicalist ideology, such as valuing teacher’s practical experience, seemed to place him constantly at odds with the educational elite that preferred traditionalist thinking (Bethel, 1989; Gebert & Joffee, 2007; Goulah & Gebert, 2007; Ikeda, 2001/2010b; Kumagai, 2000). However, Makiguchi was not alone in his progressive ideas. This became evident as he formed the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai or Value-Creation Society, an organization established as a group of educators who conversed about best practices amongst teachers.

Makiguchi, who had converted to Buddhism late in life, saw that the principles of Nichiren Buddhism were closely aligned with his philosophy of value education. His dedicated efforts to promote the practice of Nichiren Buddhism with the goal of enhancing the ability of people to create value led to the steady growth of the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai, as well as his eventual imprisonment in 1943 for opposing the military government which sought obedience and nationalism based on the practice of the state religion of Shinto. Makiguchi died in prison of malnutrition a little over a year later (Gebert & Joffee, 2007; Goulah & Gebert, 2007; Ikeda, 2001/2010b).
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While Makiguchi was formulating and being persecuted for his profound ideas of value creation based education in Japan, a contemporary of his in America was also expressing similar ideas. John Dewey (1859-1952) is known for expounding the pedagogy that helped birth the progressive education movement in America. In the nine decades he lived, America underwent extreme transformation due to rapid industrialization and urbanization. Responding to this Dewey “sought to articulate and justify the education he believed people needed to comprehend and shape creatively these unstoppable changes” (Hansen, 2006, p.1). Just as Makiguchi’s value-creation pedagogy was a product of his experiences and the time, so was Dewey’s philosophy.

The cornerstone of Dewey’s philosophical argument regarding educational reform is his firm faith in democracy and the need for experience to balance theoretical ideas. His convictions emerged from his boyhood surroundings and his early experiences outside of the classroom, in which he spent a considerable amount of time engaged in household activities and responsibilities exposing him to simple industrial and agricultural occupations. Dewey was also highly influenced by the contacts he made throughout adulthood in the personal, educational and professional arenas. Notable experiences for Dewey included his professorship under the coeducational state education system created by James B. Angell at the University of Michigan, and his leadership and creation of a ‘laboratory school’ at the University of Chicago. Ella Flagg Young and Jane Addams are examples of notable figures who impressed upon Dewey the importance of morality and egalitarianism in education (Dewey, 1951). Dewey’s family, his relationship with his
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wife Alice, and watching the growth and development of his own children, also highly affected him (Westbrook, 1999; Dewey, 1951).

Dewey spoke about his views on pedagogy in a number of major writings. In *The School and Society* (1899), he called upon the school to be a the social unit within which there is a “growing interchange of thought and growing unity of sympathetic feeling” upon which common needs and aims can attempt to be fulfilled (Dewey, p. 300). In *My Pedagogic Creed* (1897), which is an extensive account of Dewey’s beliefs, it is made clear that Dewey views the child as a social individual whose education, which starts “unconsciously almost at birth,” should be an interaction between the individual and their society. Within such interaction a sense of an intellectual and moral self is established that is reflective of the “powers, interests and habits,” of that individual. This will influence the quality of contribution that is delivered to the group (Dewey, 1897).

In *Experience and Education* (1938), written in the latter years of his life, Dewey attempted to clarify his beliefs regarding the “need for a sound philosophy of experience” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 91) in education. Dewey addressed his perspective of an educative experience, saying that it is important to qualify the degree to which a learner has been affected in order to determine whether or not an experience is an educative one. Furthermore, additional experiences must be selected where the subsequent one is modified in such a way that it creates a continuous flow of educative experiences, creating an *experiential continuum*. 
For Dewey, the educator is held responsible for recognizing and promoting the attitudes and tendencies of the student that will lead to continued growth. The educator must “have that sympathetic understanding of individuals as individuals which gives [them] an idea of what is actually going on in the minds of those who are learning” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 39). In order for there to be continuity, Dewey asserts that the educator must always be making preparations with the future in mind. In other words, they must be helping to cultivate experiences that are “deeper and more expansive” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 47).

From Theory to Practice

It is difficult to transform theory into practice. Both Makiguchi and Dewey put forth lofty goals for education as a force for social change in their pedagogy but did not leave behind prescribed curricula. Their ideas regarding the responsibility of institutions of education and the role of the educator are the foundations from which others have attempted practical application.

The Soka Kyoiku Gakkai and Makiguchi’s ideas might have vanished into obscurity had it not been for the contributions of one of his closest fellow educators and disciple, Josei Toda (1900 - 1958). During Makiguchi’s lifetime, Toda established a private school where, for several years, Makiguchi’s theories were put into practice. He also worked to compile and edit Makiguchi’s notes resulting in the publication of the Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei (The System of Value Creating Pedagogy). After Makiguchi’s death, Toda reestablished the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai as a lay Buddhist organization that would go on to become the Soka Gakkai, a worldwide movement for peace, culture and education.
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However, it could be argued that Toda’s most notable contribution to soka education was in his tutelage of Daisaku Ikeda (1928 - Present). Ikeda, who met Toda through his introduction to Nichiren Buddhism, advanced Makiguchi’s pedagogy from theory into the educational movement as it stands today. For more than half a century Ikeda has continuously promoted Makiguchi’s theory of value and education for the happiness of children through scholarly work and the formation of institutions. He has established the Soka school system that encompasses secular, non-sectarian schools from kindergarten through graduate studies in Japan, as well as in several countries outside of Japan, including the United States. He has also inspired a large number of people who, considering themselves Soka educators, have continued to research and put into practice Makiguchi’s work as they interpret it (Bliss, 1994; Gebert & Joffee, 2007; Goulah & Gebert, 2009; Ikeda, 2001/2010b).

Ikeda has brought worldwide recognition to the philosophy behind soka education through his efforts to initiate discourse regarding Makiguchi’s perspective of education for moral purposes and promoting global citizenship. Ikeda, like Makiguchi, has a strong belief in the potential of human beings to create virtuous morals and principles from their experiences. He has played the leading role in reviving Makiguchi’s proposals for humanitarian competition (Gebert & Joffee, 2007; Ikeda, 2001/2010b) and a three-layered scheme of identity or citizenship (Ikeda, 2001/2010b). The former reflecting Makiguchi’s idyllic vision of “a time when countries would compete…to make the greatest contribution to human happiness and wellbeing” (Ikeda, 2001/2010b, p. 7). The latter calls for a commitment of each individual to the community, to the nation, and to
the world (Ikeda, 2001/2010b). It is because the ideas of soka are grounded in the individuals personal fulfillment and contribution to others and society, that Ikeda has aptly categorized Makiguchi’s vision of pedagogy for social change as *ningen kyoiku* (human education) (Goulah & Gebert, 2009).

In an effort to concretize specific goals for education for global citizenship, Ikeda has advocated that educators focus on fostering:

- The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.
- The courage not to fear or deny different cultures and to grow from encounters with them.
- The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond ones immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places. (Ikeda, 1996/2010b, p. 20; Ikeda 2001/2010b, p. 112).

Today, the mission and values of the Soka schools founded by Ikeda represent the spirit with which Makiguchi set forth his ideas. However, because Makiguchi intended for his proposals to be open-ended and experienced empirically they do not dictate practice and are deliberately flexible in application in order to best suit the specific environment (Goulah & Gebert, 2009). For example, the mottos and founding principles of Soka University of America reflect Makiguchi’s belief in education as a tool for fostering citizens to advance humanism, contribute to the community, and transform their lives for the betterment of the self and others (Ikeda, 2001/2005).
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As soka pedagogy continues to spread globally through Ikeda’s efforts, and the efforts of many supporters of soka education, common themes are emerging as general practice. The most prominent theme, that has become the hallmark of soka education, is the role of the teacher and the humanistic interactions they conduct in the relationship with the student (Gebert & Joffee, 2007; Goulah & Gebert, 2009). As previously discussed, Makiguchi viewed the teacher to be a guide and a model of personal development. Bliss (1994), an educator who put forth the ideas of soka in a nursery school that serviced children from age 2 through 7 years, spoke to this idea of the teacher as a model of values and promoter of child-centered learning saying that the gestures and attitudes of the educator are deeply imbedded in the curriculum.

Dewey’s pedagogy was prominent throughout the progressive education movement. However, his influence did not translate into set curricula that could be replicated en mass. Instead, his ideas were adopted and utilized, and often times altered or combined with other theories, by those who were attempting to put theory into practice. One such person was the founder of Bank Street College, Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1878 - 1967). Mitchell had considerable contact with Dewey around the time she founded what was then known as the Bureau of Educational Experiments (1916) and the cooperative nursery school that served children from fifteen months through 3 years of age (1918) (Nager & Shapiro, 2000). Mitchell was inspired by Dewey’s focus on experiences as the root of educating children, and the role of education as a means for social justice (Casper & Theilheimer, 2010; Nager & Shapiro, 2000). The approach that evolved at Bank Street College of Education over time is known today as developmental-interaction.
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As the name suggests, the developmental-interaction approach focuses on both the individual development, or changes within a child, and the interactions the child has with the people, environments and materials within their proximity (Casper & Theilheimer, 2010; Nager & Shapiro, 2000; Shapiro & Biber, 1972). This is illuminated in the expectations of the school, the teacher, and the curriculum.

In the developmental-interaction approach, the responsibility of the school is to create an environment where there is room for the cultivation of the interdependent developmental process between the cognitive and social-emotional functions. This process enables the child to produce unique and thoughtful contributions to their surroundings, as well as strengthen their sense of self (Nager & Shapiro, 2000; Shapiro & Biber, 1972). The teacher is the means by which this process can take shape in the classroom. Since the main goal for the teacher is to “respond and relate to the children as individuals” (Shapiro & Biber, 1972, p. 69), the environment and curricula are constructed so it reflects the interests, strengths and challenges of each student. The application of the developmental-interaction approach in the early childhood classroom calls upon the idea that the child’s work is play. As the constructor of the curricula, the teacher plans for experiences and organizes materials in such a way that the child can explore and experiment in developmentally meaningful and reasonably challenging ways (Nager & Shapiro, 2000; Shapiro & Biber, 1972).

Notable figures in progressive education have sought various means to implement Deweyan philosophy with varying degrees of success. For example, Elisabeth Irwin was
a contemporary and collaborator of Dewey and Mitchell’s, who shared their ideas of the experiential and socialization aspects of learning. A true practitioner, Irwin established her schools, the Little Red Schoolhouse and Elisabeth Irwin High School, originally to serve in the public arena. However, in the efforts to keep them as hubs of progressive practices they eventually became private institutions (O’Han, 2009).

Another contemporary of Dewey’s was Leonard Covello, who sought to prepare the students for a democratic society in the public high school for which he was principal. His progressive ideas were similar to Dewey in that they were child-centered and focused on the school as a setting in which valuable experiences were had. However, Covello’s ideas were also more aggressive than Dewey’s in terms of social activism and community building, as well as targeted for a mature student body. He saw the school as the means by which a community could change for the better and attempted to put into practice his ideas (Krakowsky, 2010).

Decades after Dewey, Mitchell, Irwin and Covello, a group of educators led by Deborah Meier, established a small network of public schools in the East Harlem community of New York City. These educators were attempting to reform the progressive ideas that had, in their opinion, resulted in too much “openness.” The mains goals of the schools were on establishing a “democratic community, on education for full citizenship and for egalitarian ideals” (Meier, 1987). The schools, still in existence today, have struggled to balance remaining true to the ideas they were founded on and implementing the expected standards the Department of Education requires of them as a school in the public system.
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Dewey himself sought to realize a concrete manifestation of his ideas in practice by establishing the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago. According to Hansen (2007) it was at the Laboratory School that Dewey “gained enormous insight into the dynamics of teaching and learning” (p. 30). His vision led to Dewey’s insistence on an open communicative environment and a focus on the school as a community that embraced all its members. A true laboratory, various elements of the school, including the curriculum and administration, were in a constant state of flux.

The practical application of both Makiguchi and Dewey’s pedagogies demonstrate that these ideas are not implemented through standardized or traditional practices of transferring knowledge. Instead, general guidelines are established for approach; and values and responsibilities are required of the school. The teacher is a key player in the execution of flexible, yet developmentally meaningful curricula that stimulate the interests and strengths of the child, while helping them to develop those areas that are most challenging.

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

Makiguchi’s focus on creating value and Dewey’s suggestions for social change share one essential and fundamental theme: quality experiences matter when it comes to educating moral, contributive citizens for social change. In order to consider how their theories may be implemented in a classroom setting it is important to consider characteristics of human development. Human development is universal and occurs throughout the lifespan. It is the wondrous interchange between nature and nurture that elucidates how we are all
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uniformly the same, as well as uniquely different. The quality experiences that form the basis for fostering global citizens must be framed through an understanding how humans integrate the information they give and receive as they interact with their immediate and surrounding environments.

There are many valid and highly relied upon theories of human development that inform educators attempting to implement pedagogy. Historically there existed a blame-game between those in support of biology and those in support of the environment regarding the primary cause of who and/or what is responsible for the detriments of children, and subsequently, society. In recent times, the either/or debate, with neuroscience’s blessing (see Infant and Toddler Development subsection in this paper), has given away to the more holistic approach of looking for a unified theory of development (Sameroff, 2010) in hopes of uncovering the truth behind the complex relationship between the effects of nature and nurture. Exploring multiple theories of development to determine how “without the one, the other would not exist” (Sameroff, 2010, p. 9) illuminate the impactful elements of both nature and nurture, and the ways in which they mutually constitute each other.

Sameroff (2010) combined four models for understanding human development in order to offer “a comprehensive view of the multiple parts, wholes, and they’re connecting processes that comprise human development” (p. 12). These four models are: the personal change model, the contextual model, the regulation model, and the representational model (Sameroff, 2010). The personal change model views personal
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change as a stage process in which “there is a period of stability of functioning followed by a transition to a structurally different period of stability presumed to reflect more encompassing cognitive and social functioning” (Sameroff, 2010, p. 13). This is evident in the work of Jean Piaget who believed development occurred in such a way that “[e]xperience was necessary for the child to construct the world but it did not play a role in individual differences” (Sameroff, 2010, p. 8). The representational model suggests that representations, or encodings of experience, have “an adaptive function of bringing order to a variable world, producing a set of expectations of how things should fit together” (Sameroff, 2010, p. 16).

Fogel (2009) categorized the theories that encompass the contextual and regulation models as systems theories of development because of their shared nature to explore human development through transactions, or “the process by which systems components affect each other in a bidirectional and reciprocal way” (p. 63). The most notable theories derived from this perspective manifest in the work of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) and Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005). Their work will serve as the bridge from humanistic pedagogy to informative application for fostering global citizens in the infant-toddler classroom. They will help us to think globally, and act locally.

Bronfenbrenner (1979), an early systems thinker, defined development as “the person’s evolving conception of the ecological environment, and his relation to it, as well as the person’s growing capacity to discover, sustain, or alter its properties” (p. 9). In other words, Bronfenbrenner believed that human nature is the culmination of direct and
mediated transactions (Fogel, 2009), or experiences, as an individual is affected by or makes impressions on their immediate surrounding and the larger social context. These transactions, or ecological transitions, are “shifts in role or setting, which occur throughout the life span” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 6). According to Bronfenbrenner, a person’s active or passive engagement with another person, place or event, as well as proximity, will have an effect on the immediacy or potency in effect. However, as Bronfenbrenner shows in the following nested concentric circles of ecological systems, there is an interconnectedness that exists between the various systems as they interact on each other.

At the center of Bronfenbrenner’s theory is the individual; and the immediate environment surrounding it is the microsystem in which constitutes “a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). The surrounding systems, refer to the interconnectedness in settings “in which the developing person actually participates and those that [they] may never enter but in which events occur that affect what happens to their immediate environment” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 7), or the mesosystem and exosystem, respectively. The macrosystem encompasses the “overarching patterns of ideology and organization of the social institutions common to a particular culture or subculture” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 8). The final system, the chronosystem, as the name suggests, refers to all of the interconnected systems as they are engaged within a distinctive sociopolitical period of time (Casper & Theilheimer, 2010).
While Bronfenbrenner’s various ecological systems help to frame human development in the aggregate, a key concept of his theoretical predecessor, Vygotsky, explicitly informs the relationship between individuals and their immediate transactions with other external sources. The essence of Vygotsky’s theory rests on the idea that “all uniquely human, higher forms of mental activity are jointly constructed and transferred to children through dialogues with other people” (Berk, 1994, p. 30). In other words, humans are inherently social beings that require social and cultural experiences, as shared by members of those contexts, to create meaning and interpret the world.

Central to Vygotsky’s theory is his idea that learning occurs when a child’s current and subsequent development are matched and challenged by a more developmentally mature partner. The child’s current developmental stage is characterized by independent problem solving, whereas the subsequent or potential development is “determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 33). Vygotsky calls the distance between the two stages the zone of proximal development.

In order to achieve the cooperative learning experience of the zone of proximal development, the more mature or advanced partner creates a support system, or a scaffold, in which to engage the child in interesting and culturally meaningful problem solving towards a mutual goal. Scaffolding requires the child’s partner to provide an inviting environment and a pleasant relationship in which a fruitful experience of joint activity, facilitation, as well as independent processing can occur. It is important to note
that the amount of intervention given should vary with the child’s demonstration of greater competency and mastery. The goal is to remain within an appropriately challenging level of the zone of proximal development until the responsibility of the task can be transferred completely to the child (Berk, 1994; Berk and Winsler, 1995; Fogel, 2009; Nager & Shapiro, 2000).

Bronfenbrenner and Vygotsky offer theories that are relevant throughout the lifespan. However, in order to implement them for value-creating and experience-rich environments and curricula for the infant and toddler, the unique intricacies of this period must be explored.

**Infant and Toddler Development**

The development of a child from the moment of birth throughout the first three years of life is simply remarkable. The growth that typically occurs in the cognitive, social, emotional, physical, language, and sensory domains are the building blocks for all future development. These transformations transpire in the midst of a succession of primary experiences that are, to varying degrees, elaborated and deepened in other manifestations throughout the lifespan. To create valuable experiences that foster the keys to global citizenship in the earliest years of life, it is first important to understand the specific biological and environmental factors of development that are prevalent for children in this period of development.
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Futterweit and Ruff (1993) derived five general principles of development that demonstrate the variability that exists in human development. These principles were initially conceived in an effort to determine best practices for the planning and implementation of early intervention. However, they address universal concepts that are also applicable for delayed and typically developing children.

The first principle suggests that components of development are inherent as latent potential in the developing child. This potential is activated in ways that are not always easily discernible, but, nevertheless, make an impact on development (Futterweit and Ruff, 1993). The second point is adopted from the Constructivist Theory of disequilibrium (see Developmental Theories subsection in this paper) that focuses on the minor and major moments of transition, caused by internal and/or external sources that stimulate the need for adaptation. Important to note is that “a change in one subsystem [of development] has a ripple effect in the whole system” (Futterweit and Ruff, 1993, p. 159). In other words, if one domain is in a state of change, this will generate responses from other domains.

The third principle from Futterweit and Ruff (1993) stresses the need to recognize that the developmental process is unique for every individual because components for development do not interact in rigid prescribed ways. The standard practice of using milestones as a reference for understanding development is not adequate for judging development from a more global perspective because they do not take into account the internal and environmental constraints that will determine the particular pattern of
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development for each child. Instead, it is more appropriate to focus on goals and function for a behavior or activity that are placed within the context of the child.

In the same vain, the fourth principle (Futterweit and Ruff, 1993) recognizes that to successfully introduce a behavior or activity or expand a child’s development approaches will need to be adjusted from moment to moment. This is because any single or combination of environmental or external factors, as well as causes for self-motivation may change and be interpreted and responded to by the individual differently. The fifth principle is a reminder that development occurs in a social context. In other words, skills emerge not only from the characteristics, motivations, and intentions of the child, but the social context in which this is all set as well. Favorable patterns of interaction, such as can be seen in turn-taking, result in long-term positive effects on language and social development.

As was discussed in the Theories of Development section, there is a constant interplay of nature and nurture in human development. This relationship is no more highlighted than in the infant and toddler years. For example, a study by Thomas, Chess and Birch (1970), hypothesizes that an individual’s personality is based on the natural temperament of a person as it interacts with the environmental conditions surrounding. It is important to take into account a child’s temperament in any given environment and interaction with another person. Children in the earliest years of life are generally at the mercy of their style of temperament (Lieberman, 1993). Understanding a child’s unique temperament will help adult partners influence psychological growth in such ways as: fostering
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culturally meaningful socialization, helping a child to develop a moral self; as well as
support individual productive approaches to learning (Thomas, et al., 1970).

Temperament has been best described as “a set of relatively stable tendencies a person
has to react in particular ways” (Lieberman, 1993, p. 56). The Thomas, et al. (1970) study
suggests that people are born with a certain temperament, or behavior profile, that is
“discernable even as early as the age of two or three months” (p. 2). Based on nine
characteristics Thomas, et al. (1970) determined that the majority of children in the
earliest years of life could be classified as one of three temperaments: easy, slow to
warm, or difficult. An additional classification has emerged since their original study, the
active child (Lieberman, 1993). These classifications help to describe the individual
differences in behavior that children exhibit.

While temperament may be one of the building blocks of a child’s personality, it is the
complex happenings that occur in the human brain that explains the biological processes
of the nature-nurture interaction. The mind is capable, from the very beginning, of
creating generalizations from experience (Siegel, 1999, p.30). Understanding the way
experiences shape the structure of the brain is a vital element to understanding the way
human development occurs. Hebb’s Law, which is summed up in the phrase “Neurons
that fire together wire together” (Siegel, 1999, p. 26), encompasses the way in which the
brain functions as a connection of neurons in an intricate network in order for learning to
occur. Repeated experiences and emotionally arousing experiences have the greatest
impact on the connections within the brain. Mental models (or schemata) are the
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generalization from past experiences that make up the essence of learning. “Experience dependent” brain development refers to the general processes by which neuronal connections are maintained, strengthened, or created during experience. Experience and genetic information will determine to a large extent how connections in the brain are established as development continues across the lifespan.

As experiences are organized on the neuronal level, children develop an internal working model of expectations and beliefs about the self, others, and relationships based on what they learn to expect from and of people as they engage in early interactions. The degree to which one is able to express affective regulation and behavioral reciprocity in future relationships and interpersonal issues can be traced back to the relationships developed in the early years of life (Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 1999).

Children in the first three years of life engage in most of their experiences in an interdependent relationship with adult figures whose caregiving role is central to their development. As a child undergoes a great deal of change in all domains, they rely on their caregivers to provide the experiences they need to grow into healthy, functioning, social beings. Although babies begin life with an unavoidable dependence on more mature partners, they rapidly start developing the means to act independently. However, this journey to becoming independent also entails a complex process of the child and the adult partner separating, to a certain degree, and allowing the child to find security in being a capable and emotionally balanced individual both in the presence and absence of their caregiver (Bergman & Fahey, 1999). This is a “seminal experience upon which
further development rests” (Bergman & Fahey, 1999, p. 25) that has been given the term separation-individuation.

During the separation-individuation experience the child is also establishing expectant behaviors in the cooperative relationship. As the child is becoming independent there are moments of disequilibrium as strides are made in their physical, social, emotional, cognitive, language and sensory domains. Such development is accompanied by extreme emotions, ranging from excitement to anxiety (Bergman & Fahey, 1999). For example, a child who learns how to move themselves away from their adult partner may experience both joy at being able to do something new on their own, as well as fear as they realize the security they once relied on is being challenged by such a change. The child, who is still reliant on the caregiver, is doing their best to organize their behavior as they both explore and seek protection and comfort in accordance with the caregiver’s availability. To do this, children rely on patterns of interactions that are recognizable and can be anticipated in their dyad (Weinfield, et al., 1999). For example, a pattern often seen is a child venturing off to explore an object or activity but when they tire come back to their secure base (the adult) for emotional refueling (Bergman & Fahey, 1999; Weinfield, et al., 1999). The degree to which the child feels their caregiver is available for them during this process determines the quality of attachment, which can be classified as either secure or insecure. Insecure attachments can also be further broken down into more specific classifications: avoidant, resistant or disorganized/disoriented. A child’s attachment can have a definitive impact on subsequent development (Weinfield, et al., 1999), including how they interpret their sense of self and others.
In addition to healthy attachments and being able to separate from an adult partner, there is another significant step in the development of prosocial skills and behaviors in the earliest years of life: establishing relationships with peers. Interacting with others of the same or similar age or stage offers children opportunity to continue developing social competence, and experience a wide range of socially constructed emotions, such as shared joy and grief. Peer models act as motivation for infants and toddlers as they try out new abilities and seek to accomplish developmental goals. Conflicts with peers allow for learning problem-solving strategies and coping strategies when faced with big feelings. On a larger scope, through peer interactions children learn about differences and similarities in culture and the “broader cultural ways of others” (Wittner, 2008, p. 14).

The interactions children have with adults and their peers illustrate the arguments of Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1979), Vygotsky (1978), and Futterweit and Ruff (1993) that children learn in the social context. Play is the social medium through which children interact and make sense of the world. Play “contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development” (Vygotsky, 1978). It is also the means by which children communicate shared social meaning (Howes, Unger, & Matheson, 1992). In the earliest years a progression occurs as children become accustomed to playing first along side and then with each other. The play ideas are simple and concrete, although variations on themes are used to extend the play and make it a truly dyadic activity. Verbal communication is also used to provide meaning in the form of scripts which are based, again, on familiar every day events (Howes, et al.,1992).
All beings belong to multiple socio-linguistic environments (SLE) in which purposeful interactions and indirect experiences shape the development of a young child, including language (Stechuk, 2006). It is important for a child’s SLE’s to be rich in opportunities to hear and use language in ways that are meaningful, in order to support communication, mental organization, memory and self-regulation. As stated clearly by Bronson (2000), “To the extent that the environment fails to provide linguistic tools that are available in the culture, it fails to support development” (p. 187).

Language acquisition in the earliest years of life plays a prominent role in overall development. This is because the ability to understand and express meaning impacts all of the skills previously discussed. Life-to-life communication commences with the infant’s unintentional expression of needs through sounds, cries and gestures. For receptive, expressive, and pragmatic skills to develop, the environment needs to provide valuable experiences of interaction that offers learning and practice opportunities, such as joint attention and basic play with caregivers (Rice, 1989; Stechuk, 2006).

When the child is unable to speak, it is the responsibility of the caregiver to understand and attend to the needs, desires and distress of the child. It is important for the caregiver to give expression to the emotions and anxieties that are centered inside and experience through the body (Lieberman, 1993). As the developing child begins to formulate words, they “become more equal partners in their interpersonal relations” (Lieberman, 1993, p. 47). Lieberman (1993) suggests that language allows for feelings that could only be expressed through action, can now be put into words. However, throughout the language
learning process, there is still a reliance on action to help communicate what may still be difficult to say.

When a child is experiencing extreme emotions that they cannot put into words for themselves, there is a feeling of being imbalanced, and a need to regain a sense of order is triggered. The process by which this order is restored is called self-regulation. As the environment provides the brain with stimulation, in the form of experiences with people and objects, the brain looks for patterns, categories and predictable cause-effect sequences and imposes order and meaning on these experiences. This series of events creates expectancies about the social world and the self in relation to others. As early as infancy, children are able to start to inhibit certain automatic emotional and behavioral responses to internal or external stimulation and engage in voluntary activities. As they become toddlers there is increased self-awareness, ability to hold off prohibited behaviors, and awareness of social rules. As the toddler becomes more aware of others they engage in sharing and develop rudimentary empathic feelings. Toddlers also display growing interest in self-regulation as they show a preference for order, repetition, and routine (Bronson, 2000).

The development of self-regulation is supported by both internal and external stimuli. Universally, the day-night cycle of the natural environment contributes to self-regulation. The biological human needs, such as eating and sleeping dictate a certain level of self-regulation. In addition, when necessary, self-soothing techniques are adopted to help establish regulation (Bronson, 2000). Relationships also help the developing child to
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internalize regulation as experiences shape one’s sense of self and expectation of others. Caregivers support biological needs by establishing routines. The adult partner also provides physical contact and sensitive social stimulation and responsiveness, as well as a model for them to imitate and internalize behaviors and values (Bronson, 2000). Adults are also instrumental in providing a bridge from other regulation to self-regulation when children are engaged in play with peers as they play an active role in providing context. As greater demonstration of self-regulation is employed, adults gradually fade into a more supportive role (Howes, et al., 1992).

One contribution to the development of self-regulation that is often misinterpreted is the way the child becomes adept at utilizing and organizing information taken in by the senses. Sensory integration may be defined simply as the means by which the seven sensory modalities (taste, smell, hearing, vision; as well as tactile, vestibular, and proprioceptive sensations) make meaning out of interactions with the environment (Williamson & Anzalone, 2001). However, sensory processing is complex, and, for some, it poses a great challenge for regulation and being able to explore the world. In this respect, it is an important domain of development to consider, especially when the goal is to educate children who can develop healthy relationships and have valuable experiences in the earliest years of life.

According to Williamson and Anzalone (2001), there are five steps that occur in sensory integration: sensory registration; orientation and attention; interpretation; organization of a response; and execution of the response. Although these steps may be thought of as
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sequential, they are always happening in relation to the environment, and therefore are not linear or easy to perceive. Additionally, each person responds to environmental stimuli in different ways, and therefore may be experiencing and processing the same information in different ways.

Examining a child’s sensory integration functioning can reveal pertinent information about their development. For example, the sensory modulation profile of a child (their arousal, attention, affect, and action) helps to identify how a child manages varying sensory demands. Further inspection of may explain difficult behavior patterns, such as a child who exhibits extreme reactions to particular sensations, or who is unable to use sensory input in a productive way (Williamson & Anzalone, 2001).

The biological and environmentally induced processes elucidated here is only a brief sketch of the phenomenal growth that occurs in the infant and toddler periods of life. However, they demonstrate why there is a need for clarifying the intent with which we set about educating and caring for children in the first three years of life. The experiences that are had in these early years are internalized and establish the way children see themselves and are able to carry themselves as they relate and respond to others.

**Literature Summary**

In conclusion, a global citizen is a person who lives a contributive, value-creating life that benefits the self and others. It is possible to draw from the theories of such pedagogues as Makiguchi and Dewey who proposed ideas for social change through education to foster
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this humanistic view of citizenship. Such ideas expound the need for education to serve as a way for children to have continuous educative experiences in order to become responsible, contributive, moral and happy beings. These pedagogies call on the educator to act as a model and a guide who cultivates valuable learning experiences for the learner by recognizing and promoting ideal attitudes and tendencies. They are also responsible for promoting the development of each student’s unique interests and character, while constantly engaged in bettering themselves as well.

Theories of development, such as those of Bronfenbrenner and Vygotsky, explicate that human development occurs through social transactions. Thereby demonstrating that when educators are creating experiences for children, it is prudent to consider the whole environment of the child, from the immediate and indirect to the global and temporal systems. Furthermore, to meet the goal of creating and implementing enriching experiences that foster global citizens in the infant and toddler classroom, this unique and formative period of life must be understood through the lens of all the domains of development, in other words, the whole child, as they interact directly and indirectly with the various ecological systems.
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Practical Application

The following section is an exploration of recommended practices for a mixed-aged infant-toddler setting with the focus of fostering global citizens as based on the information offered in the Literature Review section of this paper. The contents will include a general description of a school, classroom, and curricula as it might be presented to prospective families in a brochure or website.

The school and classroom are fictional but the ideas that are offered have evolved out of personal experience from working in similar environments. The objective is to demonstrate how the theory of the Literature Review might be put into practice in an actual setting. The situation is considered under ideal circumstances, and considerations, such as current economic and political policy are not taken into account, nor are locality and demographics specified.
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THE VALUE CREATIONS FAMILY CARE AND EDUCATION CENTER

ABOUT US

Welcome to the Value Creations Family Center (VCFC)!

We are a progressive independent school that serves two classrooms of up to twelve children, from birth to age three, and their families. We provide part-time and full-time care for up to nine hours per day, five days a week.

MISSION, VALUES & PHILOSOPHY

MISSION

Our mission at Value Creations Family Center (VCFC) is to establish a *culture of humanism* by fostering citizens who will be the models for and will advance a global community in which people of varied cultures, languages and beliefs coexist, communicate, and work cooperatively with each other.

VALUES

With a belief in the potential for humanity to live harmoniously, we at VCFC value…

- Individual fulfillment based on the three elements of a theory of value - beauty, gain, and good.
- Wisdom to perceive that the life of each person is inherently interconnected with all other life
- Courage to dismiss fear of difference, and instead celebrate and learn from both diversity and uniformity
- Compassion to work to create a better society for all
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PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is founded on pedagogy, theories of development, and general principles of fostering wholesome development in the birth to three years age group. Following are the philosophical principles and theoretical tenets that inform our daily practice.

Our pedagogical foundation is derived from the teachings of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and John Dewey who collectively guide us in our endeavors to cultivate happy and contributive citizens by delivering education and care based on individual betterment and social change. We have studied their pedagogies in theory and in practice and have adopted four major aspects of their teachings that constitute VCFC’s Philosophical Principles.

Philosophical Principle 1: Child-centered education
We ensure that as a school we are always putting the happiness and health of the child at the center of the work we do. We take our lead from the children and structure our work around their interests, strengths, and areas of growth.

Philosophical Principle 2: The educator as a guide
As a facilitator, and not a deliverer of information, the educator plays multiple roles in their humanistic interactions with the child. They model personal development and structure the experiences so that the child feels free to explore and experiment.
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Philosophical Principle 3: *Education as a continuum of experiential learning*

We take great pains to plan and construct experiences that will entice the learner in such a way that will inspire a continuous cycle of learning and galvanize the individual inherent potential of each student.

Philosophical Principle 4: *The school as a model community*

We proudly honor the tradition of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and John Dewey who proposed that the school act as a model environment for *democracy and societal reformation* by devoting time and effort to fostering a community of humanism.

THEORY OF PRACTICE

The first three years of life mark dramatic and exciting growth. The noticeable signs of progress in the physical, cognitive, and communication domains are advancing alongside the less obvious social, emotional, and sensorial development. The theories of developmental psychologists inform the work we do with each individual child and the group as a whole. As we plan and implement curricula we keep in mind the approaches to development derived by Lorelle Futterweit and Holly Ruff. In addition, the theories of Urie Bronfenbrenner and Lev Vygotsky, frame the work we do with the developing child as a functioning being within the local and global context. With a firm understanding of the components of early development we cater our practice to serve both typically developing and the developmentally delayed by basing our interactions with all students on the following five general principles.
Theoretical Tenet 1a & 1b: *Think global, and act local*

The child is a product of their environment. Their environment includes those settings in which they directly and indirectly participate, their culture, and the era in which they live. The child is a social being who will learn best in a social context.

1a. We make extra efforts to include in the environment and curricula the cultural backgrounds of all the members of the community, and introduce ones not represented as well.

1b. We ensure that the experiences we create are interesting and culturally meaningful, imbued with interaction and facilitation until the task is internalized and mastered by the child.

Theoretical Tenet 2: *The components of development are inherent*

We believe that the components of development are inherent in each individual. Therefore, we focus our efforts on creating a stimulating and safe environment for this potential to be discovered.

Theoretical Tenet 3: *Growth stimulates growth*

We recognize that a ripple effect happens when growth occurs in one area. Therefore, we design learning experiences that will allow for integrative processing of the modalities as the children adapt to the changes in functioning within moments of transition.
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Theoretical Tenet 4: *Development is unique to the individual*

We understand that no child develops in the same way as another. This is why we think deeply about each child, and plan for individual and small group activities, in addition to the ones for the group as a whole. We avoid the use of milestones, and instead assess and measure children primarily on the basis of individual goals and functions of behavior and abilities.

Theoretical Tenet 5: *Be flexible*

We know that as development ensues, changes in the child and in the environment will cause different interpretations and responses to experiences. Therefore we incorporate various approaches and adjust them accordingly as the moment and circumstances dictate.

Overall, the goal of VCFC is to foster global citizens who can confidently, effectively, and respectfully navigate the world as the prospects for cross-cultural interaction and collaboration becomes increasingly vital and prevalent. We do this by creating humanistic curricula and environments that produce valuable experiences for growth in all areas of development (see *Environment, Curricula, and Schedule*). These experiences are designed by the efforts of our teams of forward-thinking educators, specialists and counselors, who care deeply for your child and provide quality service. Our focus is on producing citizens who compete for the good of humanity, and we encourage each member of our community to model such behavior by committing to contribute to the school and to society at large. We are happy to welcome any family who feel the
missions and values of VCFC resonate with their own, and are willing to work together with us to uphold them.

**Environment, Curricula, and Schedule**

In the following section, the ideas behind how we design the environment, implement curricula, and structure the schedule at VCFC will be shared. Our philosophy is deeply imbedded in the various components of our school. As a result the philosophical principles (PP1 – 4) and theoretical tenets (TT1 – 5) are addressed in a holistic, integrated and simultaneous way. However, some are referenced to offer a sense of how they are implemented in our daily practice.

The educational environment at VCFC is geared to the infant and toddler, and therefore differs drastically from ones of other seats of learning. The schedule and curricula reflect the not yet developed cognitive functioning, self-regulation, communication and social skills of children at this age; and the physical environment is outfitted for children sizes and physical abilities. Logistically, the teaching staff is responsible for constructing the curricula and designing the classroom environment and daily schedule so that each element functions together as an interconnected whole. This is done as a teaching team, with the head teacher providing the context and depth of understanding that is required to provide the most value creative experiences for the particular infants and toddlers in the group.
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The individual classroom environments are arranged to encourage exploration by the children (*PP1*), while at the same time provide reasonable safety measures (*TT2*). Exploration of the space, and of the inhabitants of and materials in the space inspires experimentation that will create moments of experiential learning that will trickle into more expansive and deeper experiences, creating a continuum of learning (*PP3*). It will also allow for the teachers, therapists, and home caregivers to observe what is of interest, what is beneficial, and what is challenging for each individual child, so that approaches and goals may be adjusted accordingly (*TT5*).

The classrooms are open spaces with low shelves, tables and other functional furniture that help to define particular sections. There is a loft in each of the rooms that is accessible by a ramp and easy-to-climb stairs, both are lined with a banister. The design of the classroom and materials that are used are safe, children-friendly, and promote physical competency (*PP1, 3; TT2, 3, 4*).

The daily schedule is patterned in such a way that it provides a basic framework for each classroom to incorporate planned times for free exploration, interspersed with relatively short periods of structured experiences, and the activities for daily living.

Free exploration happens in extended periods throughout the day. Based on our objective to create a meaningful flow of experiences for every child, we center our free exploration activities inside the classroom on the idea that play is the means by which learning occurs for infants and toddlers. In order to create the continuum of experiential learning, each of
the mixed-aged infant-toddler classrooms at VCFC are arranged with the following play-based areas:

- Easel/Art Area
- Music and Movement Exploration Area
- Library
- Sensory/Science Tables
- Block Area
- Dress-Up Area
- Manipulatives Tables
- Floortime/Meeting Area
- Cozy Corner

These areas allow for a range of self-expression and artistic expression, sensory exploration and physical exploration (TT3). The areas also provide moments of comfort and security when the play or a transition may be overwhelming.

Our teachers are mindful of the kinds of materials they offer, and at what point in the children’s development to make them available (PP2; TT2). Materials that are both open to suggestion and defined in their form and use are provided in every area to enhance the exploratory experience. Teachers also welcome the families to contribute materials that reflect their cultural backgrounds (TT1a).
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Our teachers are also cognizant that play, as the medium by which shared meaning is construct, is the primary form of human relations for the very young child (TT1a, 1b). Trust, respect, and understanding are some of the feelings created between play partners. Infants especially rely on the teachers for social interaction. They interact in playful ways and enjoy cause and effect activities, such as peek-a-boo.

It is exciting to observe the children as they develop into beings who are aware of their peers, and begin to play alongside and eventually cooperatively with the other children in the classroom. They also begin to use verbal communication to express ideas, desires, and concerns in play scenarios in order to establish shared meaning. For example, playing house is a common theme at this age, and familiar first words (such as mama, dada, and baby in English) are easily employed to convey the story.

The teachers ensure that the free exploration times are rich with rewarding experiences of cooperative activity that is facilitated in such a way that with repeated exposure and practice is desired so the child can internalize meaning and behavior, and use it for similar situations in the future. The facilitation that occurs in our classrooms is predominantly provided by the teachers, but the children act as models and guides for each other as well (PP1 – 3; TT1b, TT4).

Structured experiences are also scheduled throughout the day and are conducted in large or small groups of children. These planned activities are an opportunity for the children to work on specific skill sets in all domains of development.
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The most common group structured activity is Community Time. Community Time is our opening meeting where information is given, curriculum is expanded on, and music with movement are used to create a lively, shared experience. It is designed to be a short period of time, no more than twenty minutes, in order to support the children’s learning of self-regulation, as they are engaging in more controlled and organized circumstances (PP1-4).

Planned small group experiences most often occur during times when children venture outside of the classroom. Our school is fashioned with communal spaces, such as the indoor playground, and the reading, gym, art, and music rooms (TT2). These communal areas may serve as indoor options for teachers to facilitate and enjoy activities for pairs and small group of children. For example, a teacher may introduce a simple board game to a pair of two-year-olds the in the reading room. (TT4)

The school is situated in an area where a variety of shops, restaurants, facilities and outdoor spaces that are a short walk, or stroller-ride away, provide ample opportunities to explore outside the confines of the school walls (TT3). Shops include a local grocer, laundering services, a bookstore, a salon, and a stationery shop and the local restaurants vary in cuisine, convenience and price. There are other schools in the neighborhood that serve students throughout the lifespan making the neighborhood a hub of learning activity with a public library. There are places of worship the children may enter, and others they can view from the outside. The neighborhood is filled with a variety of outdoor spaces. In a nearby public park is a playground with appropriately sized structures and expansive
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fields. There are opportunities for the children to interact with community helpers, at the local firehouse, hospital and the post office (PP4).

At VCFC we are fortunate to have “specialists” on staff to provide rich music, movement and art activities throughout the year. These specialists are trained in their field to evaluate and provide therapeutic care for the children who demonstrate the need (TT4). However, they also conduct weekly scheduled group sessions for each of the classrooms (PP4).

Designed to meet the activities of daily living and establish personal responsibility, healthy eating, and toileting routines, each of the mixed-aged infant-toddler classrooms at VCFC have the following functional areas:

- Kitchen area equipped with a refrigerator, plenty of cabinet space, sink, dishwasher, tables and chairs with removable tray at child-height
- Bathroom with child-proof enclosure equipped with multiple toilets and sinks at child-height, multiple changing tables and a diaper genie for proper disposal
- Cubby area for personal items

In addition, both classrooms are supplied with cribs, mats and cots for naptimes, and the members of the teaching staff help the children establish regular sleep routines at school. The children who are able to are welcomed to take on a job, such as cleaning the tables or putting out the cots, to contribute to the functioning of their community (PP4).
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Mindful of the abilities and limitations of our population, our curricula does not focus on academics, but is instead centered on immediate and concrete topics that affect the members of our community as a whole (PP1 & 4). Children at this stage are focused on the immediate circumstances as they pertain to the self (PP1). Each classroom teaching team is welcomed to introduce studies at their discretion. Materials and books throughout the year are made available and removed from the areas and shelves as the focus and interests change (PP2; TT2). Families are also welcomed to contribute ideas and items that are meaningful and reflective of the home culture (TT1a).

For example, the elemental differences of the seasons, starting with autumn and progressing sequentially throughout the year until summer may be one classroom’s curriculum. Each season may be explored through our various areas of play, learning, and artistic expression, as well as through the books in the library. The children will benefit from being exposed to new and different sensorial experiences, such as touching the cold snow, smelling blooming flowers, and listening to the rain fall on the window panes (TT3). The out-of-the-classroom experiences are especially planned to introduce the children to the changing environment around them. The specialists who work with the children support the seasonal studies through their mediums of art, movement, and music.

To offer the best care for the transition into group care, one required curriculum that occurs in both classrooms is centered on welcoming the children and building a classroom community (PP4). The first days are scheduled as a structured phase-in process that focuses on introducing the child to their classroom, establishing attachments
with teachers, especially the primary caregiver, and learning to separate from the home
caregivers. This extensive process takes about two weeks, but may be adjusted for the
needs of individual children and their families (PP1; TT4; TT5). The separation and
attachment process involves the home caregivers spending the first days in the classroom
with their children to help establish feelings of comfort and trust; and then gradually
working on a separation routine that transfers the responsibility of care within the
classroom to the teaching staff, with the primary for each child as a point person. The
days for phase-in start off as simple introductory hours and tours of the space, and extend
incrementally until all of the children are attending at regularly scheduled days and times.
The numbers of children who are participating in the phase-in days also increase
incrementally until the entire class is together on one of the longer days of the process.

To support the phase-in process, there are a number of toys on the shelves and books in
the library that reinforce the idea that although people and things go away, they also
come back (TT3). Because the process of separating, and finding comfort in the new
grown-ups and space may be emotionally overwhelming, there are also other highly
engaging, yet simple toys and materials that promote expression and construction. The
cozy corner is also introduced individually to each child as a place they may go to feel
safe and secure alone or with their primary caregiver. Special objects from home may
also be brought in to help the child bridge the gap between school and home (PP4).

Once phase-in has been completed, there is greater attention placed on the Community
Building curriculum, which is an exploration of the self and others (PP4; TT1a). During
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this time personal family collages and portraits of the child are introduced in the classroom. Also, the first individual and group art pieces are placed on the wall. Attention is called to these items to demonstrate how we are all the same, and yet, how we are also all different. Community Time is planned to help the members of the classroom to get to know each other and establish basic routines, such as singing hello to everyone and doing things as a group, like singing and dancing. Other routines are also in the process of being established during the Community Building curriculum, such as toileting, mealtimes, and naptimes (PP3; TT2). Each of these routines are established as a group, but individualized for the needs of each child. For example, all of the children may be taken to the bathroom within a set time period, but their toileting stage may be as different as having a diaper change to using the toilet without assistance. During the Community Building curriculum, all out-of-the-classroom experiences are done as an entire class.

The year concludes with a Goodbyes curriculum. As our program allows for children to complete the end of year when it is best for the family, the process of saying goodbye is staggered over a few weeks time. As transitions are difficult and scary at this stage of development when the unknown future is not yet comprehensible, this will be another emotionally challenging experience for many of the children. As such, we make efforts to keep the goodbyes concentrated to as short amount of time as possible and use concrete language the children can easily understand, and parents can adopt, about the process of saying goodbye as an end to one situation, but also the transition to another (PP1). Through books in the library and activities in the classroom the teaching staff supports the children to experience and cope with the multitude of feelings they may be having by
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providing language for them and continuing to reconfirm the things in their life that will remain the same (PP2). Individual books are created for all of the students as a tool for them and their peers to use in their last days in the classroom, as well as at home in the days and weeks after they finish the school year.

Our Community

At VCFC we hold the healthy functioning of our community as the central pillar of our practice. This is because our community is a reflection of the ideal culture of humanism inherent in our mission, values, and philosophy. At VCFC our community is made up of the administration, the teaching staff, the therapeutic staff, the children and their families. It is the hallmark of our school that each individual member is equally valued and respected; and we expect for everyone to contribute their personal interests and strengths, and work to develop those areas that are most challenging.

In order to provide thoughtful and effective care, on staff in every classroom are well-educated individuals who share in our commitment to fostering healthy, happy, and contributive children. The role of the educator is to be both a model citizen and a caregiver. As a model citizen, teachers demonstrate through their attitudes, gestures, and style of communication the values we at VCFC uphold and wish to impart.

During school hours, the teaching staff works together to support the development of all children in the classroom. However, each child is also assigned and attended to by one teacher who acts as a primary caregiver for the entire school year. Each adult is
responsible for up to four children in one classroom. As is documented by the research published regarding attachment, separation and individuation, it is important for infants and toddlers to have a consistent secure base that they can rely on (Balaban, 2006). As development occurs throughout the body in the early years, the child is experiencing extreme emotions that require an adult partner to help them make sense of what is happening and how they are feeling. As a primary caregiver, the teacher works to develop a trusting and caring relationship with each child they are responsible for by responding and relating to the unique temperament, as well as the individual needs and desires as they progress throughout the year. Although these needs and desires may emerge in various systems, because the social and emotional needs impact upon all other areas, these are the main focus domains for the teacher.

At VCFC we never underestimate the power of the home-school connection. We understand that for an experiential continuum to occur for the children, the messages that are being given at school, must match those that are also being shared in the home. We also understand and respect that the child much more than a product of what they experience at school. This is why the home caregivers play an essential role in our community.

In order to create experiences for the individual children, as well as for the group, the teachers rely on information from the home caregivers to understand the children in their whole social and cultural context. To do this the home caregivers meet with the teaching staff several times in-person throughout the year to discuss the children, the experiences
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they are having both in and out of school, and establish, assess and reevaluate the cooperative goals that are being worked on at home and at school. The first meeting is during a visit that the teachers make to each students home at the beginning of the year. Additional meeting times are scheduled on a bi-annual basis at the convenience of the teaching staff and the families.

We recognize that the development of infants and toddlers is multifaceted and constantly occurring at home and at school. In order to communicate what is being observed at school, written forms of communication are also prepared by the teachers informally on a daily basis, and in an official assessment and report on a bi-annual basis. Teachers are also available to discuss matters during drop-off and pick-ups times, as well as over electronic and telephonic communication; and are happy to schedule regular communication for those who request it.

Home caregivers are also welcomed to contribute to the classroom environment in a way that suits their interest and reflect their unique social and cultural being. For example, trained performers may entertain the idea of collaborating with the specialists and come in as a special guest artists for a music, art, or movement session. Or avid bakers may team up with a teacher to do a special cooking activity of a family recipe in the classroom. The possibilities are endless.

In order to promote the humanistic philosophy and values we promote and uphold, at VCFC we also have a counseling staff of social workers trained to provide counseling for
all members of our community, including for the home caregivers and play therapy for the children. They will also provide dyadic counseling for any combination of members in our community. We recognize having the opportunity to self-reflect and explore emotions and ideas will provide the support for consistent moral development and social contribution. In this way, our counselors play an important role to actualize the model humanistic community we strive to be, and meet the expectations of exceptional care for the children we strive to provide.
Conclusion

In conclusion, this Integrative Masters Project is not suggesting a reinvention of infant-toddler classrooms, but a revolution of the intent with which we educate this population. As demonstrated in the literature review section of this paper, the idea of education for social reform is not a novel one; neither is implementing the theories of human development in educational settings. Furthermore, the infant and toddler group care settings are gaining recognition and support as many proponents lobby and create measures for quality institutions.

What I am suggesting is, that in spite of the progress that has been made, what is lacking in the arena of infant-toddler education and care is a dynamic movement based on the many in body, one in mind spirit of global citizenship for a culture of humanism. In other words, if we desire and expect our modern society and the future to be one in which people of myriad backgrounds will live harmoniously with one another, then there will need to be cultivated customs and values that demonstrate a respect for the dignity of all life. The characteristics of courage, wisdom, and compassion will need to be nurtured from the earliest moments of life, by those who are courageous, wise and compassionate. Diversity, as well as our shared human identity, or humanity, will need to be recognized and celebrated. If a culture of humanism, based on democratic principles, is the goal, then what we are teaching and how we are teaching it matters; and matters for students of all ages, especially those that service the members of society that can be the most effectual over time. This is what will bring about a fundamental shift in society at the root and propel humankind into a new era.
In a recent publication, Soka schools founder, Daisaku Ikeda (2012) stated, “Faith in the youth is faith in the future, and fostering the youth is fostering the future” (p. C).

I chose this topic because I have the kind of faith in our youth and in the future that Ikeda is calling for in the above quote. I have been inspired by, and am a product of, the pedagogies of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and John Dewey. I believe in the theories of development that Urie Bronfenbrenner and Lev Vygotsky have expounded. I have experienced the benefits of teaching students through the understanding of early development and the implementation of the five general principles of development. This is why I have attempted to explicate and combine these separate ideas into one that serves the purpose of identifying a possible solution to the argument for fostering global citizens in the infant and toddler classroom.

By bringing together pedagogy for social change, theories of development, and the understanding of the workings of development in the first three years of life, I have suggested a formula, an integrated idea of how these separate theories when combined may foster global citizens from the earliest years of life with a hope of creating a culture of humanism.

This is not the only answer to our current state of morality, which is suffering from a lack of respect for the dignity of human life, but it can be an extremely important part of the solution. However, this will require a full-fledged united revolution by theorists, policy makers, and practitioners. History has proven that theories and ideals have the potential
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for either being forgotten, misconstrued, and misinterpreted; or they can be promoted, supported and actualized. The key is implementation by conscientious, dedicated individuals who are willing to continue developing themselves and sharing their knowledge, experience and resolute spirit with future generations.

I admit that I cannot yet offer any legitimate empirical proof that my formula for social change is, in fact, a viable solution. I also recognize that my envisioned school, as proposed in the Practical Application section of this IMP, is idealistic. However, I believe that it is a start, and it is through ideals that ideas may be realized.
References


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