

EPCC Newsletter



OUR NEW REALITY

Leer en español, NUESTRA NUEVA REALIDAD, página 5

BY MARIA ISABEL MICHEA

Today I woke up with a feeling that we are almost done. We can start to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Personally, I don't know and I never knew what it would be like to go back to work with my children again. We never closed; we worked all the time and if I can talk about the stress that it caused us, the tears we shed when we learned when one of our parents from the program warned that his environment was infected with the covid-19 virus. We tried to follow a thousand regulations but at the end of the day I don't know to what extent it was fulfilled.

I could never deny a hug to a one-year-old or to a three-year-old when he was sad. Every day we said, "I hope we don't have to wait much longer for the vaccine" and if we succeed in getting the vaccine we feel safer when approaching our children.

This wonderful work of education at all levels such as early education, elementary education and higher education whether it is high school, college or university, is so unique. It is so hard and we give everything we can to ensure that our children can have a good future.

What are all these educators feeling when they return to the classroom to educate? Will they feel supported and safe with the new return? These questions are very broad and perhaps not with very precise answers.

A teacher told us, "We are off for the

summer but in the Fall we will begin with children. I'm excited but nervous. I will have new children, who I will not be able to comfort if they are sad and it makes me uneasy. At least we met them before we were off for the summer" (Elementary 1st grade teacher).

A high school teacher explained, "My school district first went back in October 2020 to hybrid instruction, which meant we had only 90 minutes of live instruction a week with each class period. The rest was independent. We had been assured that students would be masked and that they had taken steps to use air filters in the HVAC as well as hepa air purifiers in the classroom that refreshed the air every 30 minutes. Everyone was skeptical at first that this would work. We altered instructional strategies and content to limit peer interaction. To say it wasn't ideal is an understatement. In December, as the case rate climbed, so did our anxiety. I personally transferred to the online only academy being offered in our district, which had different challenges but gave peace of mind as far as COVID risks. Once the vaccination became available to teachers, and then slowly to our students as well, everyone started to relax. We are now looking forward to fall with hope that it will be mostly back to normal with everyone vaccinated and safe" (Mariana Alburger Pendergrast, High school teacher).

Teresa's concern, as a Kindergarten Teacher,

(continued, page 5)



Read about the EPCC and P.E.A.C.E. annual retreat on pages 7-8.

How can I get involved?

We are honored that you have opened and perused our quarterly newsletter.

We value your input and support for our peace education work that is so close to our hearts and minds. There are many ways that you can support our work with educators, families and communities across the country.

Here are a few ways you can get involved:

- Share your training or workshop experiences with others.
- Think about what you see on our website (educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org) that you might be interested in organizing for your community or sponsoring/funding or participating in yourself
- Tell others about the training opportunities we offer
- Refer others to our website
- Grant writing support, or leads
- Offer leads for training or speaking opportunities
- Offer leads for funding sources
- Offer leads for marketing our project

Please share this newsletter and refer others to our website, educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org. If you have any questions email us at pambonzvo@gmail.com.

Main image courtesy of Freepik.com.

BOOK REVIEW

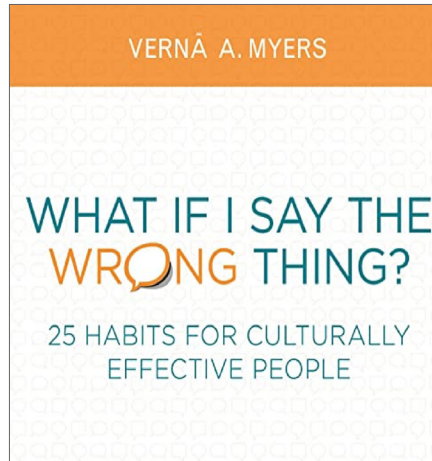
"What If I Say the Wrong Thing?: 25 Habits for Culturally Effective People"

By Verna A. Myers

REVIEWED BY JOYCE DANIELS

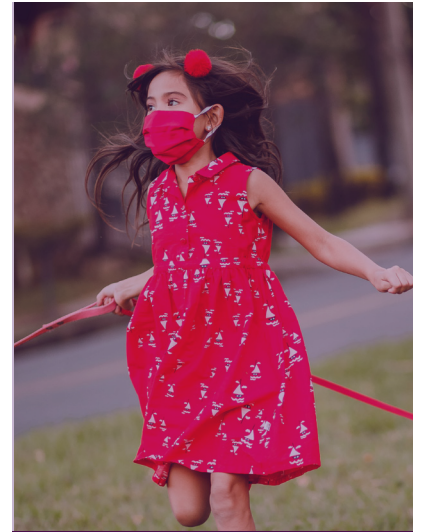
Verna Myers articulates many questions we have in navigating our diverse and multicultural world. From the first chapter - "But I'm not a Racist" to "Take People out of the Boxes You Put them In" to "Girl, I Mean, Boy, I Mean, You Know..." to "Ahas Make the Difference," she looks at the challenges we face in trying to be inclusive in our language and behavior when we don't know how to do it.

For each of the 25 chapters (she calls them habits), she tells stories as examples of the problem and then provides tips for how to change our thinking and act upon our new knowledge. One of my favorite examples is when she talks about structural isms, specifically structural exclusion. She talks about how planners and builders of public buildings for many years had no physical disabilities. So they erected buildings that met their needs but in doing so they "created unintentional barriers that disadvantaged people who had disabilities." So for years the voices of the physically disabled were not heard, and streets and buildings were built that excluded those who could not climb stairs or take one step up to a sidewalk. One of the tips she provides when talking about structural exclusion is to "support the types of programs, policies and interventions that organizations are implementing to make up for the disparities and structural impediments to one-down groups."



So what happens when you make a mistake? Habit #17 emphasizes "Don't be Afraid to Ask." The author writes about a situation where she was trying to help a blind man find the correct train in a train station. She kept making mistakes because she forgot to ask the blind person what he needed. "You have to learn what you don't know."

This is one of those little books that can be helpful in so many situations, situations where we don't even realize we have a bias due to our own experience in the world. The habits in this book help us become culturally effective people when we are faced with the questions, "What should I do?," "What should I say?" - for situations both new and old.



In this issue Reentry

- 1** OUR NEW REALITY
Bilingual reflections on the end of the pandemic.
- 2** BOOK REVIEW
What If I Say the Wrong Thing?
by Verna A. Myers.
- 3** DEAR OLIVE BRANCH
Advice on adapting to change.
- 4** 2021 SUMMER BOOK LIST
Seasonal titles for ages 2 to 17.
- 5** FACEBOOK POST 5/21/21
A teacher's reflections on returning to the classroom.
- 6** 2021 EPCC AND P.E.A.C.E. RETREAT
A recap of our events and trainings.
- 7** THE TWO PLAYFUL FOXES
A charming retreat activity.
- 8** ALUMNI CORNER
Send us your reflections!
- 9** A TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATORS
Our resilience toolkit has been updated for 2021!
- 10** EPCC ANNUAL REPORT
What we accomplished in 2020.

2020 EPCC Annual Report

See everything we accomplished last year!

- About EPCC
- 2020 Initiatives
- Pivoting for Community Impact Through Opportunity
- Finance Report
- Appreciation for our Volunteers and Donors
- Planning Committee Members - Photos & Bios



READ THE REPORT

<https://bit.ly/373Tjfn>

OUR ORGANIZATION

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andcommunities.org](http://educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org)



THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: ADAPTING TO CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

As the pandemic "lock down" starts to be lifted, people are coming out and gathering "in person" again. Grown-ups are going to meetings, families to church, and children to school. On the one hand, it's very exciting and happy... on the other hand, it can also be a time of anxiety.

My first sortie out into the new "in person" world was a meeting of my hand quilting group. We had not met at all for months, and now we were all gathering together. I came into the home where we meet, and stood at the top of the stairs leading down to the quilt room where I heard laughter and felt delightful energy. My stomach clenched and I realized that in addition to my excitement at coming together, I also was feeling unsure about how to join the group! Oh, I realized... this is how many children feel when they are at school and want to be a part of things, yet are uncertain how to join.

Our stories for this issue of Olive Branch suggest ways that we can support children, families and colleagues in group settings. We can make entering easier.

- How best to include those who want to join us?
- How can we support children as they learn to join in the group?
- How can we bring new members of a group into the group culture?

And finally, a very happy ending to my anxiety... as I came down the stairs, the group welcomed me with out-stretched arms and big hugs. All was well!

HONORING THE CHILD'S GOAL

As a four year old, my parents sent me to a parent participation class established by the adult education program in the city where I

lived. We had moved to that city during the previous summer, so my family did not know the other families in the neighborhood. I went to the program three days a week from 9:00 to 12:00. I remember sitting on the rug one day, because the teachers had a hard time getting all of the children in a lopsided circle, there were so many of us, and I didn't know why they called it circle time when it really wasn't a circle. I had a hard time waiting for whatever it was that they wanted to talk about to be over so I could go to the gear board, which was in the back right of the room on a little table. It was my challenge to get all of the gears connected and moving at the same time, and I wished there were more gears and a bigger board. There was also a stacking toy with about 11 wooden circles on a single pole, where they would be in rainbow order if they were stacked from biggest to smallest, with the red one on the bottom and the violet one on top. It was possible to stack the wooden circles with the biggest one on the bottom, then the smallest one, then the next biggest one, then the next smallest one, so that when they were all stacked, the top two wooden circles were almost the same size and color.

Another day, we were handed real clay, so we were able to make things with the clay. I had made a nice round lump of clay, and the teacher handed me spaghetti and told me to use the spaghetti to decorate my lump of clay. I was horrified that I would get in trouble for getting the spaghetti in the muddy clay, as then we could not eat the clay, and I knew better than to waste food. I had to solve the problem, so I hoped that my mother would not be too angry. Therefore, I followed the teacher's directions so I would not be in trouble right then, and carefully stuck just

the ends of the spaghetti into the clay, so I could break them off later and cook them since the rest of the spaghetti piece would not be dirty. I was expecting my mother to say something when we got home with the artwork, and was amazed when she did not say anything about wasting the spaghetti pieces, and she put the dried clay, with the spaghetti sticking out of it on a shelf, which is where it stayed for many years.

I do not remember being interested in what the other children were doing when I was there. I really was not interested in playing with them, as they wanted to do things that I had already mastered a long time ago, like when I was two. I had problems to solve. I wanted to know how things were constructed, and what I could do with the materials that were there.

My nightmares as an adult include being coerced to go to a social event and talk about nothing more than the useless trivia of the latest soap opera, or a sporting event. I would much rather ponder the effects of mycorrhizal fungus since my squirrels plant trees in my garden, and if I need to do something to solve the problem for my perennial collection of food bearing trees?

As an adult, who now likes to build wooden gizmos, gardening, rebuilding houses and adding closets, and not particularly interested in small talk, I wonder if it would have been helpful for the adults to teach me how to solve the problem of interacting with the other children.

How would you solve the problem of a small child who seemed to be interested in tackling complex problems, and not interested in the problem of talking to age mates? (DS)

(continued, page 6)



Olive's Next Topic: Moving Forward

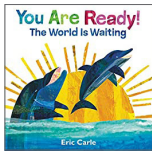
We are looking for your questions and/or short stories regarding "moving forward" after experiences of Isolation, Loneliness, Discrimination or Loss. Please submit your ideas by September 10th to marilynshelton@gmail.com. Please put OLIVE BRANCH in the subject line.

[CLICK TO SEND US YOUR QUESTION](#)

Word range: 150- 200 words | Submit by: September 10, 2021

2021 Summer EPCC Children's Book List

COMPILED BY VERONICA HERNANDEZ



YOU ARE READY! THE WORLD IS WAITING

by Eric Carle. Ages 2-4 years.

During times of constant change and unbalance, it is wonderful to read reminders that, “you have everything you need inside you. You are stronger than you know.” *You are Ready! The World is Waiting* is a beautifully written book with inspirational words to support young children during rough patches of their young lives. A recommended read for the young children in your lives.



GOODBYE, FRIEND! HELLO, FRIEND!

by Cori Doerrfeld. Ages 2-6 years.

This book follows Stella, and her best friend during their time together. They do everything together. They go to school together, have sleepovers and play exciting games together. One day her best friend must move, leaving Stella to feel incredibly sad. Then just as she is about to mail a letter to her best friend, something new happens. And she remembers what her mom told her, “Every goodbye leads to a hello.”



THE BOY WITH BIG, BIG FEELINGS

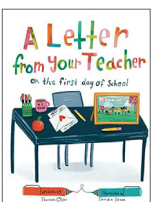
by Britney Winn Lee. Ages 4-8 years.

The Boy with Big, Big Feelings is a story about a little boy who has such big feelings that you can see them on his face and body. He loves himself the way he is but a thought races through this head. What if others do not understand his big, big feelings? Pondering this question, he begins to hide his emotions and he suddenly feels less like himself, until one day, he meets someone that reminds him that he is not the only person in the world with big, big feelings. An inspirational book for all children.



DREAMERS by Yuyi Morales. Ages 5-8 years.

Dreamers follows Yuyi and her son as they travel on foot from Mexico to the United States. As they try to navigate through this new world and are unsure about where they will live, she finds strength in the dreams she carries for herself and her son, in hopes for a better tomorrow. A beautifully poetic book that will leave you inspired.



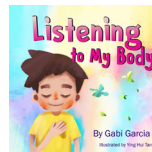
A LETTER FROM YOUR TEACHER ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL by Shannon Olson. Ages 5-9 years.

The first day of school can make anybody nervous, but what if you received a special letter from your teacher, to you, on your first day of school? This book is written as a letter from the teacher to the children in their classroom. It is filled with inspirational words and helps set a strong foundation of community in the classroom. A perfect way to begin the first day of school.



A NEW BEGINNING: CELEBRATING THE SPRING EQUINOX by Wendy Pfeffer. Ages 7-9 years.

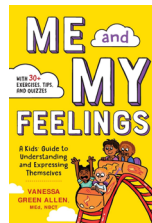
Every year, we see the time and seasons change, but there is that special time of the year when Winter is just about over, and Spring is ready to begin. This book celebrates Spring Equinox and the new possibilities the earth has for us.



LISTENING TO MY BODY by Gabi Garcia.

Ages 7-10 years.

As children begin to re-enter schools, they may experience moments full of emotions. Gabi Garcia, author of *Listening with My Heart*, brings us this beautifully written book about listening to your body when things begin to feel a little too much. She provides exercises and tools to support children during a big change or transition. A book that will not only support children but older family members as well.



ME AND MY FEELINGS: A KID'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING AND EXPRESSING THEMSELVES by Vanessa Green Allen. Ages 8-12 years.

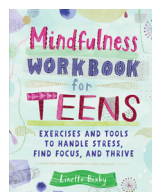
Some emotions are easy to understand, and you find ways to cope with them or embrace them. But there are times when you cannot understand them, and you begin to feel overwhelmed. *Me and My Feelings: A Kid's Guide to Understanding and Expressing Themselves*, is a great workbook that offers tools, mindful exercises and even quizzes to help you understand what you are feeling. A great guide for the young readers.



WAYS TO MAKE SUNSHINE by Renee Watson.

Ages 9-12 years.

Ryan Hart is an inspirational little girl with a lot on her mind. She thinks a lot about her family and how they do not understand her. She also thinks about the worries her dad carries, especially after losing his job. But she refuses to let anything get her down. It is through funny stories and “plenty of sunshine” that she continues to move forward and find resilience.



MINDFULNESS WORKBOOK FOR TEENS: EXERCISES AND TOOLS TO HANDLE STRESS, FIND FOCUS AND THRIVE by Linette Bixby.

Ages 13-17 years.

This workbook provides teens with wonderful tools and exercises to help them during these times of transition, such as starting a new school, or re-entering school, post pandemic. It is informative and provides a section for teens to write their thoughts. A great book for any teen.

Our New Reality

continued from page 1

was; "It will be great to see the children, but I'm worried. Although my husband and I are vaccinated, I have a little one that is too young to be vaccinated and I fear they might get sick."

If under normal circumstances teaching already produced high levels of work stress and burnout, the COVID-19 crisis has aggravated the mental health of teachers worldwide. Recent studies have indicated that during the period of confinement, teachers have suffered high levels of stress due to having to adapt in record time to teaching online. Now with the return to the classrooms

to teach, it also leads to feeling stress.

But even so, we educators are the first line in the face of this pandemic so unknown to us. And definitely, we are in the first line of the emotional experience of children and young people. We are not indifferent. We capture emotional needs just like doctors and nurses capture vital signs, we respond urgently with the resources that we know, those that our institutions have or those that we create in the middle of the process.

Not only are our classes an emotional incentive for many teachers to continue giving their best, they are also the door through

which we channel and contain emotions; we help to create ways of coping with the situation. We work to mitigate the possible negative impact of the stress typical of these times of crisis. We listen carefully to what they are not telling us, and we help them to become aware of what we are experiencing. We help them to verbalize and give meaning to what they feel; we inspire and transform ourselves every day with each one of them. We are on the front line facing, from the most human point of view, the confusion that the pandemic brought us.

ARTÍCULO PRINCIPAL EN ESPAÑOL

Nuestra Nueva Realidad

Hoy domingo me desperté con una sensación que ya nos queda menos. Si, nos queda menos para poder a comenzar a vivir de una forma que si no es tan normal como antes pero es una forma que nos hace mirar la luz al final del túnel.

En lo personal no se y nunca supe cómo sería reintegrarse a trabajar con mis niños nuevamente. Nosotros nunca cerramos, trabajamos todo el tiempo y si puedo hablar del estrés que nos produjo, las lágrimas que derramamos al saber cuando uno de nuestros papás del programa avisaba que su entorno estaba con covid-19.

Tratamos de seguir mil reglamentos pero al final del día nose hasta que punto se cumplio?.

Jamás pude negar un abrazo a un niño de un año de edad, un abrazo a un niño de tres años cuando estaba triste. Cada día pedimos "ojalá nos quede poco para la vacuna" y si lo logramos. Con la vacuna nos sentimos más seguros al acercarnos a nuestros niños.

Este maravilloso trabajo de educación en todo los niveles como educación temprana, educación elemental y la educación superior ya sea high school, college o universidad, es tan único, es tan esforzado y donde damos todo lo que podemos para procurar que nuestros niños puedan tener un buen futuro.

¿Qué están sintiendo todos estos educadores que vuelven a las aulas a educar? Ellos se sentirán apoyados y seguros con el nuevo regreso? Estas preguntas son muy amplias y tal vez con respuestas no muy precisas.

Una maestra nos dijo: Nos vamos por el verano, pero en el otoño comenzaremos con los niños. Estoy emocionada pero nerviosa. Tendré nuevos niños, a los que no podré consolar si están tristes y me incomoda. Al

menos nos conocimos antes de partir para el verano". (Maestra de 1er grado de primaria).

Otra experiencia de una maestra de high school fue "Mi distrito escolar regresó por primera vez en octubre de 2020 a la instrucción híbrida, lo que significaba que solo teníamos 90 minutos de instrucción en vivo a la semana con cada período de clase. El resto fue independiente. Nos habían asegurado que los estudiantes estarían enmascarados y que habían tomado medidas para usar filtros de aire en el HVAC, así como purificadores de aire hepa en el aula que refrescaban el aire cada 30 minutos. Todo el mundo se mostró escéptico al principio de que esto funcionará. Modificamos las estrategias de instrucción y el contenido para limitar la interacción con los compañeros. Decir que no fue ideal es quedarse corto. En diciembre, a medida que subía la tasa de casos, también lo hacía nuestra ansiedad. Personalmente, me transferí a la academia solo en línea que se ofrece en nuestro distrito, que tenía diferentes desafíos pero daba tranquilidad en cuanto a los riesgos de COVID. Una vez que la vacuna estuvo disponible para los maestros, y luego, lentamente, también para nuestros estudiantes, todos comenzaron a relajarse. Ahora estamos ansiosos por caer con la esperanza de que la mayoría de las veces vuelva a la normalidad con todos vacunados y seguros." (Marina Alburger Pendergrast, maestra de secundaria)

La experiencia de Teresa, maestra de jardín de infantes, "Será genial ver a los niños, pero estoy preocupada. Aunque mi esposo y yo estamos vacunados, tengo un pequeño que es demasiado pequeño para ser vacunado y temo que se enferme."

Si en circunstancias normales la docencia ya producía altos niveles de estrés laboral y agotamiento, la crisis del COVID-19 ha agravado la salud mental de los y las docentes a nivel mundial. En [estudios recientes](#) se ha señalado que durante el periodo de encierro, los/las maestros/as han sufrido niveles de estrés altos por tener que adaptarse en tiempo récord a dar clases en línea. Ahora con las vueltas a las aulas a enseñar también lleva a sentir el estrés.

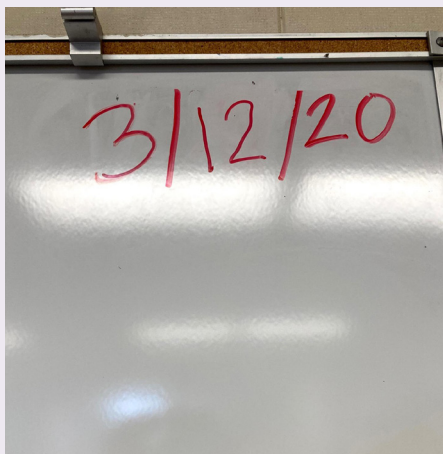
Pero aun asi nosotros los educadores somos la primera línea frente a esta pandemia tan desconocida para nosotros. Y definitivamente, estamos en la primera línea de la experiencia emocional de los niños, niñas y jóvenes. No somos indiferentes. Captamos sus necesidades emocionales al igual que médicos y enfermeras captan signos vitales; respondemos con urgencia con los recursos que conocemos, los que tienen nuestras instituciones o los que creamos en medio del proceso.

No solo nuestras clases son un aliciente emocional para que muchos estudiantes continúen dando lo mejor de sí, son también la puerta a través de la cual canalizamos y contenemos emociones; ayudamos a crear formas de afrontamiento de la situación; trabajamos para mitigar el posible impacto negativo del estrés propio de estos tiempos de crisis. Escuchamos con atención lo que no nos dicen, y les ayudamos a tomar conciencia de lo que estamos viviendo. Los ayudamos a verbalizar y a dar significado a lo que sienten; inspiramos y nos transformamos cada día con cada uno de ellos y ellas. Estamos en la primera línea enfrentando, desde lo más humano, el desconcierto que nos trajo la pandemia.

REFLECTIONS

Facebook Post 5/21/2021

BY LAURA HYATT



I erased this date from my classroom white board yesterday... the last day I taught in my room. Today was our first day back. I cannot describe the emotions nor paste the pictures of the smiles, the laughter, the voices...oh, man, the voices. The faces. Their real faces. I met students today for the first time. I have had them all year on Zoom....but today, I met them. I wanted to squeeze them. I had children I have taught for years...who had their first day back in over a year...and their last day at our school. And I gave them an air fist pump. I wish I could remember the beautiful words kids said to describe their feelings. I was in a daze.

Surreal. They played Dodgeball...I was not sure they would be allowed to play. They were in heaven. Their one and only game of Dodgeball in over a year. If you only knew how much my kiddos love Dodgeball. Oh, my heart ❤️ ... I want them to have a million days like this...back to back. These kiddos...

NOTE: We chose "Dear Olive Branch" as the title for this column for several reasons - foremost as a sign of peace. Also olives come in many colors, sizes, tastes, uses - a sign of diversity just as there are many types of questions and those who send the questions. We hope "Olive's" responses will help you, the reader - if you have a question for Olive send it to our email address. When Olive isn't available to answer questions, members of EPCC and/or P.E.A.C.E. will step up to help.

ADVICE

Dear Olive Branch

continued from page 3



SUPPORTING ENTRY INTO A NEW GROUP

When I first began teaching in the parent participation preschool program in California, there was a boy in my class who was already five years old. His parents were both quiet, and he didn't have brothers or sisters to interact with. This was his first time in a setting with other children. His parents wanted to focus on his social/emotional development for the year. They said he was having trouble using his voice to say what he needed or wanted.

I noticed this not long after school began. He was standing in the room near the block area and suddenly began to cry. I walked over to his side and asked if he wanted to play in the block area. He nodded his head, yes. I asked if he wanted my help. He nodded his head, yes. We walked over to the block area and I asked if he wanted me to say the words. He nodded his head, yes. So I said to the children playing there, "Andrew would like to play here in the block area. Can you make some space for him?" The children did.

This coaching and saying the words for him continued until one day, when I asked Andrew, "Do you want me to say the words or do you want to say the words?", he said, "I can." And he did. Eventually he stopped crying and was able to say what he needed, and you could tell he felt good about using his voice.

The coaching that I was able to provide for this child to help him develop confidence and positive relationships went beyond the classroom. The next year, when Andrew was in kindergarten, I saw his mom and she told me that one of the things she noticed was when they went to the park, he was able now to go up to other children and talk and play with them - she saw more smiles in his relationships with others! (JD)

ADULTS ENTERING AN ESTABLISHED COLLABORATIVE WRITING PROCESS GROUP

Above we have two examples of children being new in settings. An example of what it is like for an adult to join a group is offered by Educators for Peaceful Classrooms and Communities (EPCC). EPCC is administered

by a Planning and Development (P&D) committee, and they are committed to the collaborative writing process.

The EPCC collaborative process developed over a period of years, as we worked out how to collaboratively design our training materials. Our procedures are to have a whole group discussion and agree on the concepts. One or two people then develop a draft document. The documents are printed, and put out on the table for everyone to read and make comments. Once we are finished reading and editing, we put our initials in the upper right hand corner to indicate that we have read and edited this piece. Then the process is repeated with the revisions, until there are no more edits. This takes TIME.

When new people enter our Planning and Development (P&D) group, we have observed a variety of reactions to this writing process. Some people immediately embrace the process and feel relieved that they don't have to have all the answers. But there have been other new people who find the process very traumatic.

One lovely person who joined the P&D group was able to share her feelings of experiencing a lot of discomfort with having her work edited by a group of other adults. We paid attention and worked on how to help people get acculturated to our collaborative culture. Beyond explaining the process before engaging new people in it, we had to discuss why we are committed to collaboration. The synergy that comes from multiple points of view has enriched our work. Some pieces of our writing can be traced back to who introduced the idea to the group, but most of our materials have developed "on their own" out of shared discussions and writing. Often it is helpful for new people to begin in this writing process with a small group so that the editing process is not a reflection on their individual contribution. Moving away from seeing group editing as a criticism to seeing it as a fun, collective, inclusive process takes longer for some than others. Our responsibility as P&D members is to monitor reactions and feelings, and offer support or mentoring when appropriate. (P&D)



RECAP

2021 EPCC and P.E.A.C.E. Retreat

Amazing, inspiring, and fun!

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EPCC & PEACE (Educators for Peaceful Classrooms and Communities & Peace Educators Allied for Children Everywhere) had the best post-COVID gathering we could have imagined! June 24 - 27 was our IN PERSON joint retreat at Mercy Center in Auburn, California (Image 1). Over the course of the 3 days the groups met together sharing their strengths and commitments to building a world that supports safe and healthy spaces for children and their families. Additionally, each group met separately to work on their plans for the future year, from individual peace projects to social media development to share our work with more educators and families and beginning plans to offer additional workshops around California.

We introduced ourselves to each other by sharing an item that had cultural significance for us (Image 2). It was touching to connect in this way with those we had known and worked with for many years as well as some folks that were new to us.

As a group we honored and remembered Eric Carle by viewing a video of a beautiful interview with him and learning about how he illustrated his books. We then created our own story which we illustrated using Eric Carle's technique (Image 3). It was a fun, collaborative, and sweet experience.

Additionally, we honored one of PEACE's founders, Sunny Wallick with this beautiful pictorial history of her amazing work with PEACE. The display will be given to her daughter, Amber Wallick.

Both organizations honored the first peoples who lived on the land that is now the retreat center, the Miwok. We offered respect to the tribe as we began and ended our gathering. We also shared the book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, written by Robin Kimmerer (Image 4). Members of EPCC created a tribute table with the book, a basket made of sweetgrass by indigenous crafts persons, and a beautiful quilt also made by one of our members. We really felt as though we honored the first peoples and connected with them and the earth over the weekend.

The coming year promises to be full of peace work, trainings, writing, and learning. We all look forward to our gathering together again next summer to continue our collaboration to build a world that honors social justice, inclusion, and equity.



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The Two Playful Foxes, Inspired by Eric Carle

A Collaborative Book Making Process, developed by Gaby Litsky for EPCC



1. A typical Eric Carle storybook was read to the group. More of his books were displayed. We discussed Eric Carle's approach to writing i.e. simple words, repetition, and simple developmentally appropriate concepts (In our case, the joy of sneaking away from mom, scary noises in the forest).
2. The group engaged in cooperative story writing: one person opened the story with one created sentence. Then all the other sentences of the story were created in sequence so that the story flowed with descriptions of the setting, development of the plot, repetition, and a conclusion. As the sentences were said, they were written on a White Board for all to see and follow the storyline. We ended with group discussion and "word-smithing" until we had agreement by all.
3. Finally, that first session, all participants were given large white papers and choices of paint colors. They were to paint the papers, but not any objects... just paint colors and textures. AND, they were not to be "owned" by the painter. They would be used by anyone who wished to create the story illustrations in the next session.
4. The paintings dried overnight.
5. At the next session a DVD of Eric Carle discussing and displaying his process was shown to the group.
6. Then everyone selected a sentence from the ones written on the White Board at the first session and put their initials next to it. The selection was not necessarily the ones they wrote. (It's better if it's not). These sentences were to become basis for the illustrations in the book.
7. Finally... starting with background paper, 8 1/2 by 11 inches, each sentence of the story was illustrated by cutting, tearing and otherwise, to make the illustrations using the painted papers. The sentence was written on the page.


SEE THE FINAL BOOK!
<https://bit.ly/3f62REO>

Alumni Corner

The Alumni Corner of our quarterly newsletter welcomes YOU as a contributor who has a story to tell of successes, learnings, or an "Ah-ha" moment, that reflects in some way how you have used the EPCC trainings in your work or with colleagues.

Michy wrote an article for the winter edition and then also did a translation in Spanish. As you can see in the April edition, she has translated the "Single Fathers Experience" for us. We thank her for helping to share our work to reach other ECE providers in their home language.

**SEND US
YOUR REFLECTIONS!**
Click to email Gaby Litsky
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REVISED FOR 2021! A Toolkit for Educators: Intentional Strategies to Support Resilience

BY GABY LITSKY AND
DIONNE CLABAUGH

Our Toolkit was initially developed as a companion to our 2020 CaAEYC presentation on Resiliency for early educators. With the advent of Covid-19, our presentation became a roadmap for educators and caregivers to follow through the pandemic. This Toolkit gives theory, resources, and examples of several tools to use with children, families, and co-workers.

Now, we have revised it to extend this roadmap as we all learn ways to navigate in this post-pandemic time. Some of these updated tools are Listen and Speak with Your Heart, Talking to Children in a Time of Crisis, Tools for Resiliency in Children, and Making Communication Agreements for Classroom and Family Meetings.


GET THE TOOLKIT
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