

# ISSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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# SUPPORTING DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD IMMERSION PROGRAMS

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**Original Mission:  
To blend the “best  
of Eastern and  
Western pedagogy”**

# Misunderstanding by Founders

- ❖ Eastern pedagogy = skill building and directed teaching
- ❖ Western pedagogy = play and child-centered activity
- ❖ An agenda that ignored child development principles and best practice

# Children rebelled!!!



Enter developmentally  
appropriate early  
childhood education



Implementing democratic  
pedagogy within a non-  
democratic context: An  
overview of issues we  
encountered

# Significant differences in classroom management and discipline



# Parental attitudes toward independence in children (ex. feeding, toileting)



# Imbalance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activity

- ❖ Children sitting in large group in the Chinese classroom for long periods of time, listening to or watching the teacher
- ❖ Exploratory activity in the Western classrooms without planned follow-up for in-depth understanding
- ❖ Teacher-created products in the Chinese classrooms with little input from children
- ❖ Child-created products in the Western classrooms with little attention to skill-building in the use of tools or

# Lack of viable and comprehensive curriculum and teacher planning



# No plan for parent interaction and education



Lack of coordinated  
planning between Eastern  
and Western instructional  
staff



Lack of planned  
assessment and  
evaluation program

# Negative diversity attitudes in children



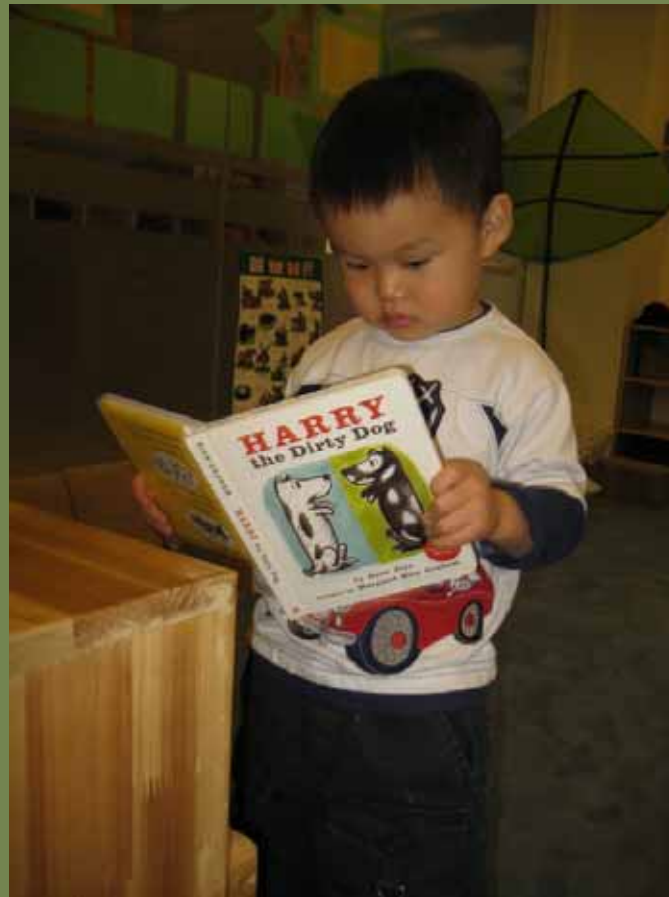
Children sometimes develop sub-cultures based on language, gender, ethnicity.

有时孩子们会基于语言、性别、种族的因素发展出自己的小圈子。

Lack of training in teachers about working with children who were acquiring language or who had special needs

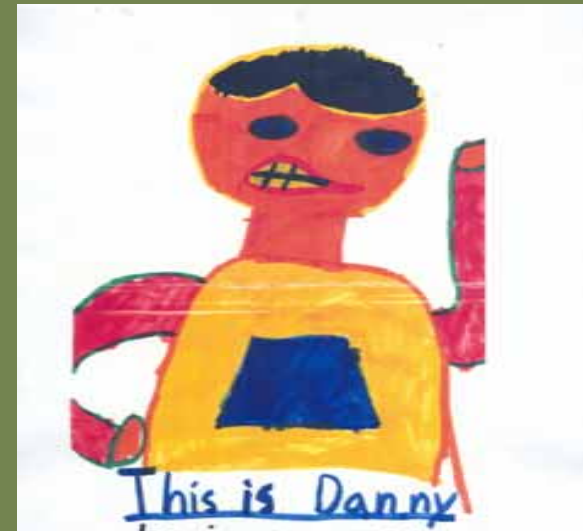


# An inadequate library and media center



❖ Non-inclusion of Chinese teachers in teacher training because of language differences

Higher than normal  
internalized and  
externalized behaviors  
in children as  
documented on the  
SCBE



Reluctance of Chinese  
staff to share concerns or  
suggest change

WorkingtowardP  
ositiveChange

# Documentation of what was really going on!

105 2-3-hour observations by consultant, feedback and  
discussion

Teachers released to observe one another's classrooms  
Administrative 3-minute walk-throughs

# Building a 3e Approach to Early Education

- ❖ Development of philosophy and mission
- ❖ Creation of a comprehensive, personalized curriculum that supported philosophy and mission – nursery through kindergarten, grades 1-3, grades 4-6
  - ❖ Building knowledge of best current practice in early childhood education and rationale for practice
    - ❖ NAEYC Early Childhood Guidelines:
    - ❖ DAP Curriculum (Kostelnik, Soderman, and Whiren)
  - ❖ Full inclusion of Chinese National Standards
  - ❖ Full, ongoing discussion and approval of faculty
  - ❖ Parent representation on curriculum committee and involvement in mission construction
  - ❖ Design and allocation of curricular responsibility and time allocations

# Connecting with Parents

- ❖ Constructing an active parent council
- ❖ Regular parent coffees
- ❖ Curricular meetings (ex. Mandarin language, literacy, math), with parent interaction in sample activities
- ❖ Inclusion of parent representatives on school committees (ex. curricular development)
- ❖ Greater number of open house activities (ex. Reader's Theater, Student-led Conferences)
- ❖ Sharing of research findings with parents
- ❖ Better visibility of administrators and teachers

# Ongoing, weekly intensive teacher training to develop:

- ❖ A common classroom management approach
- ❖ Knowledge of child development and ways to support special needs
- ❖ Knowledge of curriculum and desired outcomes
- ❖ Thematic planning and shared activities between Chinese and Western classrooms
- ❖ Second language and literacy strategies
- ❖ Effective discipline strategies
- ❖ Myths and realities of culture
- ❖ Supportive climate for social/emotional regulation and growth
- ❖ Independent and responsible behavior in children

# Respect for Diversity of Staff

- ❖ Chinese lessons for Western staff
- ❖ Interpreting vital information
- ❖ English lessons for Chinese staff
- ❖ Presentation and leadership by staff

# Building pride in children to become multilingual and multicultural



# Strong research and assessment systems

- ❖ Standardized and informal assessment
  - ❖ Teacher observation and annotation
  - ❖ SCBE
  - ❖ PPVT
  - ❖ Sociograms
  - ❖ Literacy and language phase assessment
  - ❖ Teacher-developed checklists
- ❖ Portfolios and student-led conferencing
- ❖ Weekly website documentation for parents



# Conclusion

- ❖ Woodrow Wilson: “Changing curriculum is more difficult than moving a graveyard.”
- ❖ Implementing democratic pedagogy within a non-democratic context may be even more challenging and complex than moving that graveyard.

As bilingual, multicultural programs grow in popularity,  
it will be important to document

- .evolution of such programs

- .ways in which day-to-day programmatic challenges  
are met

- .pitfalls in implementation

- .strategies that ensure success

At 3e International School in Beijing,  
we are committed to what the 21<sup>st</sup>  
century needs from education:

To develop critical thinkers  
and learners who can  
move confidently and  
fluidly across cultures –  
whatever that takes!

