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Children's Museum Project: Maps and Stories

Research Partners:

- Kamloops Museum and Archives
- Thompson Rivers University
- Kamloops Art Gallery

Research Funding:

Community-University Research Alliances (CURA) grant through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

A Case Study: Maps and Stories

This community arts project will result in several exhibits:

- Kamloops Museum and Archives
- Kamloops Art Gallery
- TRU Fine Arts Gallery



A Case Study: Maps and Stories

- The stories are shared verbally and tape recorded.
- These visual and verbal representations are helping researchers understand the development of a sense of place



A Case Study: Maps and Stories

Activity:

- Participants draw a personal map or a picture of a place that is important or significant to them.
- “The Visual Representations, or maps, form the ‘pretext’ for the oral narratives or stories.”



[A Case Study: Maps and Stories]

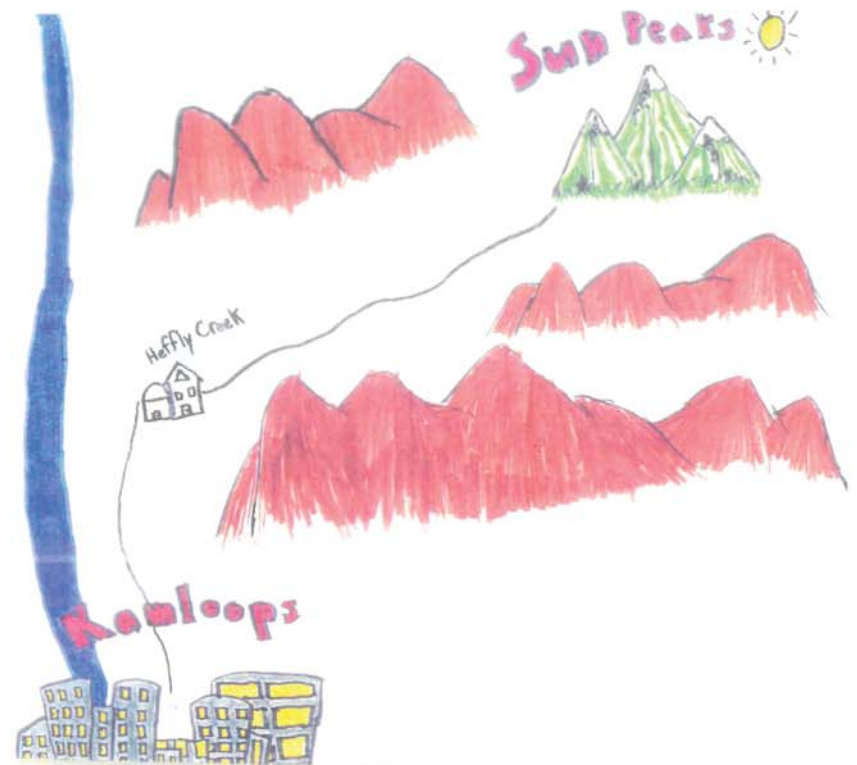
- “Moving from image to verbal allows the participant to think about their particular place differently.”
- “The mapping activity provides the opportunity to tell stories of belonging and/or alienation.”

A Case Study: Maps and Stories

“There’s the trees at Sun Peaks...I know that I’m going to have a fun day no matter what the conditions are.”

Personal Relevance:

- Affirms/deepens identity-connections to place



A Case Study: Maps and Stories

A ten year old describes her drawing of the Strawberry Hill Fire (2003) and the smoke as it moved across the valley to her house.

Personal Relevance:

- Encourages personal reflection
- Helps deal with complexity and uncertainty



A Case Study: Maps and Stories

Community Relevance:

- Exhibits: a product with an impact
- Links existing community groups
- Engages a diverse public



A Case Study: Maps and Stories

Museum Relevance:

- Creates a community of learning
- Includes multiple perspectives
- Empowers, transforms and affects all who are involved



A Case Study: Maps and Stories

Museum Relevance:

- Guided by clearly articulated goals, objectives and outcomes
- Integrates scientific, local and traditional knowledge
- Reflects the community experience



Children's Museum Research Project

Research Group

Research Focus

Research Methods

Anticipated Results

Year One:

Observations/Interviews

Publications/Presentations

Emergent Research Questions



Children's Museum Research Project

UCC Faculty: Helen MacDonald-Carlson
Chair, Early Childhood Education

**Student
Research
Assistant:**

Jennifer Cotter

**Community
Partner:**

Kamloops Museum and Archives
Elisabeth Duckworth, Curator
Cuyler Page, Museum Technician
Tena Anderson, Museum Educator



Research Focus:

The development of a playful learning environment for children forms part of a new vision for the Kamloops Museum and Archives that will bring history alive with hands-on exhibits, interactive displays and educational programs.

Research Methods:

- Background Research: Children's museums and educational programs, the project approach, documentation strategies used in preschools in Reggio-Emilia, Italy
- Observations/Interviews: Children, Parents, Teachers during participation at the museum
- Development: Educational/Philosophical Principles and exhibit ideas representative of the Kamloops Region
- Documentation: Visual and verbal narrative of the process over the three- year period

Anticipated Results:

- Exhibits for children
- Educational programs
- Conference/workshop presentations
- Exhibit – Kamloops Art Gallery 2004

Observations/Interviews: Year One

- Water Exhibit: St. Ann's Academy
Grade 3 – two classes
Grade 4 – two classes
Southshore Day Care
- Catherine Schubert: St. Ann's Academy
Grade 4 – two classes
Dallas Elementary
Grade 3 – one class
- Jewellery for Buildings: Boys & Girls Club
South Sahali School Age Child
Care

Total Participation:

Children: 155

Adults: 40

Publications/Presentations: Year One

- Helen MacDonald-Carlson, Elisabeth Duckworth, Jennifer Cotter, "Children in the Museum?" UCC School of Education Mini-Lecture Series, Kamloops, March, 2002.
- Helen MacDonald-Carlson, Elisabeth Duckworth, Jennifer Cotter, "Children in the Museum?" The Annual Canadian Museum Association Conference, Calgary, May, 2002.
- W.F. Garrett-Petts, Helen MacDonald-Carlson, Erin Moen, "Documentation: A Workshop in Visual and Verbal Literacies." Inkshed 19: Literacies, Technologies, Pedagogies. Stanhope, Prince Edward Island, May 2002.

Emergent research questions:

- Philosophy: How can children be included in a traditional museum?
- Exhibits: What types of exhibits will allow children to construct their own knowledge, and relate to Kamloops and region?
- Educational program: What role do adults (parents, teachers) play in the children's learning experience? How can the educational program work with the exhibits and provide a wide variety of learning experiences?
- Interpretation: How can exhibit didactics challenge children, and allow for different levels in literacy and learning styles?

