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Exploring Children's Emerging Conceptions of their Participation Rights and Responsibilities

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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ABSTRACT

The case study documented in this dissertation emerged in response to the *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education*, and it promoted the participation rights accorded all children in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.* A unifying theme of this research was listening to the children's voices during their participation in a Primary-level curriculum for children's rights education entitled *The World Around Us.* This research was conducted within one Grade 3 classroom of nineteen students over a three-month period, when qualitative data were systematically collected via interviews, narratives, and observations.

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore how curricular experiences influenced the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, with a view to benefiting future curriculum materials for children's rights education. This research led to identifying learning and teaching strategies, which promoted the children's emerging conceptions, in light of the research goal of informing educational practice. In addition, this research led to devising a framework of participatory indicators, which reflected the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, in light of the research goal of building educational theory.

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I wish to thank the nineteen Grade 3 students, and their classroom teacher, whose active and cooperative participation during this case study surpassed my greatest expectations. I wish to thank my family and friends, whose encouragement sustained me during the completion of this academic journey. I am hopeful that this research on exploring children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities will contribute to a better world for children and youth in the new millennium. EJAM

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of

Bill and Anne Murray,

whose parental love and perpetual guidance

were deeply felt along this academic journey.

QUOTE

By looking honestly at the condition of our children,
by understanding the wealth of new information
research offers us about them,
by listening to the children themselves,
we can begin a more fruitful discussion about their needs.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Source: It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us
1996; New York, NY: Simon and Schuster

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE CLASSROOM-BASED CASE STUDY

Exploring Children's Emerging Conceptions

Chapter Abstract

This chapter is devoted to introducing the case study on exploring children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, which was conducted within one Primary-level classroom where qualitative data were collected between April and June 1998. Fundamental to conducting this research were the human rights and principles recognized in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC). When this international covenant was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1989, it provided society with a comprehensive set of universally accepted children's rights of provision, protection, and participation.

This research addressed the participation rights stated in Articles 12 to 17 of the CRC, in particular, while it aimed to demonstrate the significance of listening to the children's voices. The participation of the students was encouraged during this classroom-based case study, which centred on providing appropriate direction and guidance for them to experience their participation rights, in accordance with their developmental capacities. It also focused on devising indicators for recognizing the child participant's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities.

In the spirit of the current *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education,* the researcher listened to the child participants while asking what lessons may be gained from their responses about educational practice and theory on children's emerging conceptions. Listening to the children's voices was a theme that unified the research purpose, rationale, question, objectives, and goals stated in this chapter, as well as the literature review, case study design and methods, and findings documented in this dissertation.

This chapter is divided into seven sections as outlined here. In the first section, the notion of listening to the children's voices is introduced, with a description of children's participation during this classroom-based case study. In the second section, the case study and the key participants selected for this research are outlined. In the third section, notions of preparing children for responsible citizenship and promoting student participation in association with the *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education* are introduced. In the fourth section, both the research purpose and rationale are explained. In the fifth section, the primary research question, objectives, and goals related to informing educational practice and building educational theory are stated. In the sixth section, theoretical assumptions on which this research proceeded are delineated. In the seventh section, the oganization of the four remaining chapters in the dissertation are summarized. Key points of this chapter are briefly summarized in the Chapter Summary.

i. Listening to the Children's Voices

The voices of children were particularly relevant to the case study documented in this dissertation, which placed students' participation in curriculum development processes at the centre of attention. A cornerstone of this research was listening to the children's voices during their participation in delivery of the curriculum entitled *The World Around Us: A Thematic Primary-Level Curriculum for Children's Rights Education* (Murray, 1995). Listening to the children involved the aural modality, and so it included hearing students' voices during informal conversations and semi-structured interviews; and, listening included reading students' words and pictures, and observing their actions and interactions.

Within the context of this case study, the term *listening to the children's voices* generally refers to searching for children's points of view and respectfully paying attention to what they say and do by hearing, reading, and observing, while asking what lessons may be gained from the students' voices about their views of the world (Cox, 1991; Cullinan, 1993; Davie, 1993; Erickson & Shultz, 1992; Garbarino & Stott, 1989; Gersch, 1996; Paley, 1986; Rodham Clinton, 1995). Listening to the children's voices during the implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum was fundamental to gaining insights into what they thought and cared about, and what they did during their curricular experiences in the classroom.

Within the context of this case study, the term *curricular*

experiences generally refers to delivery of the curriculum subject matter, as well as learning and teaching strategies and routines experienced within the context of a school day (Cornbleth, 1988). The students' curricular experiences involved their participation in delivery of *The World Around Us* curriculum and their direct involvement in its curriculum development processes. In particular, the students' involvement in the curriculum development processes was mainly centred around implementing this curriculum, although it also included designing or redesigning as well as evaluating aspects of it, in order to benefit future curriculum materials for children's rights education (Garner & Acklen, 1979; Miller & Seller, 1990).

With reference to children's participation in the curriculum development processes during the case study, the term *participation* generally refers to a "process of sharing decisions which affects one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. . . . Participation is the fundamental right of citizenship" (Hart, 1992, p. 5). The children's participation in this classroom-based case study was especially focused on their rights to participate enshrined in Articles 12 and 13 of the CRC, which involved participatory skills such as listening, decision-making, and freely expressing views (UNGA, 1989). These two children's rights were central to this case study since the students were afforded ongoing opportunities to participate actively in curricular experiences, which involved the individual and collective exercise of these rights.

Thus, the students' curricular experiences involved providing input by expressing opinions, voicing ideas, considering choices, making decisions, and sharing decisions about matters affecting their lives -- the curriculum and its implementation, as well as design or redesign and evaluation, with guidance from their teacher (Miller & Seller, 1990). It should be noted that throughout the case study, the child participants were encouraged but not obligated to take part in making decisions and to express views about the designing or redesigning, implementing, and evaluating aspects of *The World Around Us* curriculum. This approach to case study research is based on the understanding that Article 12 identifies the right of children to have opinions heard and take part in making decisions to their developmental capacity, although it does not imply an obligation for children's participation in decision-making.

Similarly, Article 13 identifies the right of children to express views freely and to obtain sufficient information to make informed decisions, although it does not imply an obligation for children to express their views. Throughout this classroom-based case study, therefore, the child participants were encouraged but not obligated to take part in the individual and collaborative curriculum activities offered them to experience their participation rights and responsibilities.

ii. Introducing this Case Study and Key Participants

At the outset, sampling for this research involved the selection of a unit or a case to be studied, as well as the selection of the key participants involved in the case study, a research site, and a time period in which the research could be undertaken. In particular, purposive sampling was employed, which meant that certain attributes were necessary in order for the case to be considered for study (Berg, 1995; Popham, 1988). For example, since *The World Around Us* curriculum materials were written in English for Primary-level students, the researcher accordingly searched for a suitable Primary-level classroom to conduct the research where English was the main language spoken and written.

To be more specific, the *case* selected for study was one classroom of nineteen Grade 3 children, composed of nine girls and ten boys who were between eight and nine years of age. The multicultural group of students included Canadians of Asian, European, and First Nations heritages, for whom three of those children English was a second language. One female student with special needs received the assistance of a Child Support Worker.

The key *participants* in this case study included the students, their teacher, and the researcher. Within the context of this dissertation, unless otherwise stated, the terms *child participants*, *students*, or *children* refer to the nineteen Primary-level individuals who participated in this classroom-based research. Within the context

of this dissertation, unless otherwise stated, the term *classroom teacher* refers to the teacher who participated in this classroom-based research. While the teacher had not implemented *The World Around Us* curriculum with the group of Grade 3 children prior to the start this case study, she had previously used the curriculum with two other classes of Primary-level students during its pilot run within the same school district between April 1996 and June 1997.

Within the context of this dissertation, unless otherwise stated, the term *researcher* refers to the individual who conducted interviews and observations during this case study as well as collected, analyzed, and interpreted the qualitative data on the same, and who wrote this dissertation. She also developed and wrote *The World Around Us* curriculum for children's rights education in 1995, which was implemented in the Grade 3 classroom throughout this case study.

The case study *site* was a Grade 3 classroom at the Auscultare School (pseudonym) within the public school system of British Columbia (BC). The case study was conducted for a period of three months between April and June 1998, when the researcher collected qualitative data over approximately 40 hours during pre-arranged visits to the classroom.

iii. United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education

The impetus for conducting this case study, which focused on children's education involving their participation rights and responsibilities, was the proclamation of the *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education.* At the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly in 1995, the United Nations proclaimed the decade of 1995 to 2004 as a period when education should focus on contributing to the implementation of the CRC. The objectives of this decade include the development of effective strategies for the advancement of human rights education in schools at all grade levels (UNGA, 1995).

In recognition of this current decade for human rights education and in order to advance the implementation of the CRC within Primary-level classrooms, there was a need to identify effective strategies for educating students about human rights, in general, and children's rights, in particular (Flekkøy, 1996). In order to support and facilitate the advancement of children's rights education, therefore, schools need to provide suitable curriculum materials which can help students understand and exercise their rights, and prepare them for responsible citizenship (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Alston, 1992; Anderson, 1980; Hart & Prasse, 1991; Reardon, 1995).

Within the context of this case study, the term *responsible citizenship* refers to understanding and exercising participation rights and responsibilities, while acquiring and applying participatory skills, and attaining moral values necessary to contribute to the well-being of

the community (Anderson, 1980; Flekkøy, 1996; Hart, 1992, 1997; Hart & Prasse, 1991; Reardon, 1995; Riley, 1984). This need to prepare children for responsible citizenship is recognized at the international, federal, provincial, and school district levels.

At the international level, the CRC recognizes the need to prepare children for responsible citizenry and to promote development of their capacities in Article 29; it states that education shall be directed to:

> the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential,
> [and] the development of respect for the national values of the country in which the child is living,
> [and] the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin. (UNGA, 1989)

At the national level, the Government of Canada in the document entitled *Brighter Futures: Canada's action plan for children* (Health and Welfare Canada, 1992) challenges educators, caregivers, parents, national and community organizations, and governments to fulfill an obligation to help children begin to realize the full range of their rights in accordance with Article 42 of the CRC. This article stipulates that the text and content of the CRC be made known to children since they can play an important role in promoting and advocating for their rights, but first they need to know about them (Canadian Heritage, Human Rights Directorate, 1994).

Furthermore, under the terms of Article 44 of the CRC,

countries such as Canada who have ratified the CRC have obligations to monitor and report periodically to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. The progress made in implementing the CRC was reported by national, provincial, and territorial governments in Canada's first report prepared by Canadian Heritage, Human Rights Directorate; it was made public in May 1994 with a second report due in 1999. The initial report made the recommendation that educational programs be further developed and implemented in Canada for persons of all ages, which disseminate information on the CRC (Canadian Heritage, Human Rights Directorate, 1994).

At the provincial level, preparation for citizenry is a fundamental component of education in BC in accordance with its mission statement published for public schools in the *School Act*:

> The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy. (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1989, Ch. 61, p. 6)

At the school district level, the mission statement of the district where this case study was conducted states:

> The (name deleted) School District is committed to each student's success in learning within a responsive and safe environment. (School District, 1998)

An implication of these statements for educating children is that schools, in partnership with families and communities, are obligated to help students achieve personal fulfillment as they move towards responsible citizenship (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Anderson, 1980;

Reardon, 1995). However, the CRC avoids setting arbitrary age limits on the exercise of participation rights because capacities to exercise them, and growth towards responsible citizenship, do not develop automatically at a certain age, such as adulthood (Alston, 1992; Garbarino, 1990).

Rather, Article 5 of the CRC notes that state parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents, or other responsible caregivers such as educators, when providing "appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention" (UNGA, 1989). Since Article 5 specifically addresses direction and guidance for children in the exercising of their rights, the application of this article would appear particularly relevant to children's participation rights (Alston, 1992; Garbarino, 1990).

Article 5 also includes the notion of *evolving capacities* of children, which implies that the need for children's special rights stems from the fact that they are typically least capable of assuring their own welfare, and can be negatively affected by mistreatment because of their evolving physical, moral, spiritual, and intellectual capacities and vulnerabilities (Alston, 1992; Franklin, 1995; Garbarino, 1990; Melton, 1991). Due to children's vulnerabilities, it could be asserted that there is a need to balance rights of participation with the rights of protection and provision, by providing children with appropriate direction and guidance that helps them to understand and

exercise their participation rights (Alston, 1992). This balance is especially significant throughout children's developmental years as they increasingly implement their rights of participation (Alston, 1992; Franklin, 1995; Hart, 1992, 1997; Hart & Prasse, 1991).

When writing about implementation of children's rights of participation, the former Children's Ombudsman of Norway, Flekkøy (1996) stated:

> The framework for children's participation should be based on the evolving capacities of children, tempered by what is in the bests interests of the child and aimed at developing participatory skills in the best possible way. The practical means and the conditions necessary will depend on culture and traditions. Since the future of a democratic world may well depend on how these rights are implemented, every effort must be made to increase awareness, spread information and share experiences and practical examples of participation on different developmental levels in various contexts and areas. (p. 236)

An implication of this statement for public school systems in Canada, as well as educators, researchers, curriculum developers, and students, is that a need exists to develop curriculum materials for children's rights education which encourage student participation. The intent of encouraging participation is to help students realize their participation rights and responsibilities as they move towards responsible citizenship (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Anderson, 1980; Reardon, 1995). Within an educational context, instead of just asking *when* to educate students about participation rights, research needs to explore *how* to provide appropriate direction and guidance that helps students of all ages to understand and exercise their participation rights, in accordance with their developmental capacities.

iv. Explaining the Research Purpose and Rationale

In search for answers regarding the provision of such appropriate direction and guidance for Primary-level children in particular, the researcher invited the input of Grade 3 students and she encouraged their participation throughout this case study. In so doing, the child participants' responses were elicited in order to benefit future curriculum materials for children's rights education, which can help students to understand and exercise their participation rights, in keeping with their developmental capacities.

In order to benefit curriculum materials for children's rights education, the central *purpose* of this research was to explore how curricular experiences influenced the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. The term *children's emerging conceptions* refers to categories which are being formed through observations and experiences, and usually expressed in words or phrases (Kaltsounis, 1987; Martorella, 1985; Melton & Limber, 1992; Welton & Mallan, 1988).

This research purpose stems from an understanding that in order for children to exercise their participation rights and responsibilities meaningfully, they need to have an awareness of those conceptions (Lickona, 1991; Melton & Limber, 1992; Noddings, 1988; Reardon, 1995). Thus, a basic aim of Primary-level curricula should be to create conditions which are conducive to helping promote students' conceptual development. This notion is reinforced

by McGuire (1991), an educational researcher and writer, who stated:

> [t]he curriculum of the primary school must develop children's social relationships with parents, peers, and others; engage children in activities which promote exploratory experiences; and foster skills and conceptual learning in an organized and planned way. Additionally, the curriculum must encourage children to discover the world and their place in it and provide opportunities for them to develop self-confidence and imagination in a world of change and challenge. Conceptual development is implicitly embedded in such experiences. (p. 6)

Thus, it could be said that Primary-level children need equitable opportunities which promote conceptual development, or the conceptualization process (Kaltsounis, 1987; Martorella, 1985; Welton & Mallan, 1988), whereby they can form conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities under appropriate direction and guidance of a teacher. Within the context of this case study, the term *equitable opportunities* refers to circumstances which recognize and promote the right of all female and male students to have just and reasonable equal access to quality educational learning experiences (Noddings, 1988; Reardon, 1995).

With a view to providing appropriate direction and guidance for Primary-level students to understand and exercise their participation rights, educators need to recognize the developmental nature of how children come to experience -- conceptualize and exercise -- rights to participate and commensurate responsibilities, and influences of curricular experiences on that development (Martorella, 1985; Melton & Limber, 1992; Noddings, 1988; Reardon, 1995). In order to benefit future curriculum materials for children's rights education, there was

a need to identify learning and teaching strategies which were appropriate to the ways in which children actually view their world. Furthermore, it was necessary to identify what curricular experiences were effective in promoting children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, while exercising the same.

Thus, the *rationale*, or grounds for undertaking this research, was straightforward: there was a need for classroom-based research that explored how curricular experiences, which include learning and teaching strategies, influenced children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Within the context of this case study, the term *learning and teaching strategies* generally refers to educational practices which advance students' learning, and make active participation possible (Child Participants, April - June, 1998; Martorella, 1985; Noddings, 1988; Reardon, 1995).

In view of this research rationale, it was logical to explore how curricular experiences influenced those who used the curriculum in order to determine what parts were effective in promoting their emerging conceptions in particular. Through this exploration, the researcher also was able to devise a framework of indicators for recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities; that is, the ways in which the child participants' actually viewed their rights and responsibilities. This exploratory research is further explained through the primary research question, objectives, and goals stated in the following section.

v. Stating the Primary Research Question, Objectives, and Goals

(a) Research Question

Operationalizing this classroom-based research required a case study design and methods which facilitated an exploration of how curricular experiences influenced the child participants' emerging conceptions during implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum. A research design that concentrated on the study of a single case, or one group of nineteen Grade 3 children, was guided by this primary *research question:*

> **How does participation in delivery of a curriculum for children's rights education, and direct involvement in classroom-based curriculum development processes, influence the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities?**

(b) Research Objectives and Goals

In line with this research question, qualitative data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted on how curricular experiences influenced the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. The data collection, analysis, and interpretation procedures were undertaken by the researcher during the formative stages of the curriculum development processes, when the Context-Input-Process-Product Evaluation Model (Stufflebeam, 1983) was employed.

In light of the Process Evaluation procedure, the *research objective* of this case study was to explore the implementation of *The World Around Us* with students' direct involvement, which was mainly focused on implementing the curriculum, while it also included designing or redesigning as well as evaluating aspects of the curriculum. Related to this research objective, the *research goal* was informing educational practice on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, in order to benefit future curriculum materials for children's rights education, to be discussed in Chapter 4.

In light of the Product Evaluation procedure, the *research objective* of this case study was to explore the impact of this Primary-level curriculum for children's rights education on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Related to this research objective, the *research goal* was building educational theory on children's emerging conceptions, to be discussed in Chapter 5.

vi. Delineating Theoretical Assumptions of this Case Study

Underlying theoretical assumptions, and related understandings, on which this case study proceeded were delineated in order to become aware of beliefs and to limit biases. The process of identifying these assumptions involved keeping notes on personal thoughts and reflections throughout this case study, which helped the researcher to become aware of the following assumptions.

(1) In keeping with the spirit of the *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education* proclaimed by the UNGA (1995), it was assumed that the school curriculum can be a powerful resource through which human rights can be understood and exercised by students at all levels (Eisenberg, 1992; Erickson & Shultz, 1992; Gersch, 1996; Hart, 1992, 1997; Noddings, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1995; Scott, 1996). Consequently, in order to benefit future curriculum materials for children's rights education, the researcher searched for effective means for providing appropriate guidance and direction to help students understand and exercise their participation rights and responsibilities, as well as for recognizing children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities.

(2) It was assumed that fundamental to exploring children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities was a study of children's evolving capacities from a moral developmental perspective. A review of theory and research literature revealed that children's experiences of rights and responsibilities can

be understood in terms of three interactive evolving capacities of moral development: reasoning, responding, prosocial acting.

The significance of viewing children's emerging conceptions from a moral developmental perspective was that each of the components of moral development come into play as children experience -- conceptualize and exercise -- their moral rights and responsibilities (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Damon, 1988; Garrod, 1993; Hersh, Miller, & Fielding, 1980; Lickona, 1991; Scott, 1987). Thus, as a basis for this exploratory research, the child participants' emerging conceptions were viewed from a framework involving the interactive capacities of moral development.

In a related manner, the researcher proceeded on the understanding that while the conceptualization process is predominantly a cognitive activity, it can be seen as an interactive process that spans cognitive, affective, and behavioural capacities (Kaltsounis, 1987; Martorella, 1985; Welton & Mallan, 1988). In keeping with this understanding of the conceptualization process, influences on the three capacities were taken into consideration when identifying strategies which promote the child participants' evolving capacities for conceptualizing their participation rights and responsibilities, while exercising the same.

(3) It was assumed that curricular experiences influence children's conceptualization process in general (Gersch, 1996; Lickona, 1991; Martorella, 1985; Noddings, 1988; Reardon, 1995; Scott, 1996), and

could influence their emerging conceptions of participation rights and responsibilities. Consequently, the researcher endeavoured to make connections between curricular experiences, with the students' direct involvement in the curriculum development processes, and children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities throughout this case study.

In a related manner, the researcher proceeded on the understanding that Primary-level children can begin to realize that the exercise of participation rights can also carry some responsibility, such as a social responsibility to ensure that the rights of others are respected. While the CRC as an international covenant addresses adult and state responsibilities to children, this research proceeded on the assumption that children should have an awareness of responsibilities (Anderson, 1980; Hart & Prasse, 1991; Lickona, 1991; Nelms, 1987; Reardon, 1995). In consequence, themes and issues surrounding both children's participation rights and responsibilities were addressed within *The World Around Us* curriculum, and explored during this case study. This approach to education and research should not imply that one's inherent rights are contingent upon one's responsibilities; rather, children have inherent rights by virtue of being members of the human family, and these human rights are not something earned through fulfillment of responsibility (Kohler, 1979; UNGA, 1989).

(4) It was assumed that fundamental to developing an awareness of how curricular experiences influenced children's emerging

conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities was listening to the case study students' voices by hearing, reading, and observing, while asking what lessons may be gained from their responses (Cox, 1991; Cullinan, 1993; Davie, 1993; Erickson & Shultz, 1992; Garbarino & Stott, 1989; Gersch, 1996; Paley, 1986; Rodham Clinton, 1995). The three data collection methods of interviews, narratives, and observations assisted the researcher in hearing, reading, and observing the child participants, and in answering the research question, which explored how curricular experiences influenced children's emerging conceptions.

In a related manner, it was assumed that these methods for collecting the qualitative data respected the variances in the child participants' abilities to express their thoughts and feelings in spoken and written words, as well as through their actions. Furthermore, it was assumed that the children were sincere in their responses to the interview questions and curriculum activities. It was recognized that the interview data could be shaped by the child participants' abilities to understand questions and to articulate responses (Cox, 1991; Cullinan, 1993; Garbarino & Stott, 1989; Gersch, 1996; Rodham Clinton, 1996; Strother, 1987). Within the context of this case study, the researcher-child interviews allowed an access to the personal world of the child participants through open-ended questions, in conjunction with observational measures and children's writings, to be further discussed in Chapter 3.

(5) It was assumed that the basic unit of analysis for this case study consisted of descriptive phrases excerpted from transcriptions and notes gathered through the three data collection methods of interviews, narratives, and observations. Descriptive data were collected and collated into a phrase database constructed through a multi-step process of inductive content analysis. This process enabled the researcher to move through the collection of qualitative data in order to find patterns and meaning in the information; subsequently, the researcher proceeded from clustering the excerpts around emergent themes, through developing "conceptual categories" (Merriam, 1988, p. 133), and then to devising a wholistic framework of Participatory Indicators for recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions, to be further discussed in Chapter 5.

vii. Organization of the Dissertation

In this section, the organization of the four remaining chapters of this dissertation is summarized:

Chapter 2: Literature Review, is devoted to providing a theoretical framework for exploring children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, within the context of this case study; it is divided into three parts:

Part I, CRC and Children's Participation Rights, is devoted to reviewing a body of theory and research literature that addresses children's rights stated in the CRC in general, and children's participation rights and responsibilities in particular, with implications for this case study.

Part II, Children's Participation Rights and Moral Development, is devoted to reviewing a body of theory and research literature that addresses the three interactive capacities of children's moral development, with implications for this case study.

Part III, Children's Participation Rights and Research, is devoted to reviewing a body of theory and research literature that addresses children's experiences of participation rights during research conducted both in and out of school, with implications for this case study.

Chapter 3: Methodology, is devoted to discussing the research design and methods employed for operationalizing this classroom-based case study; it is divided into two parts:

Part I, Research Design, is devoted to addressing the case study design employed in this research on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities.

Part II, Methods for Collecting the Qualitative Data, is devoted to addressing the data collection methods -- interviews, narratives, and observations -- employed in this study for triangulation of methods.

Chapter 4: Informing Educational Practice, is devoted to analyzing and interpreting the findings, which were collected during the curriculum implementation via the Process Evaluation procedure; it is divided into two parts:

Part I, Discussing the Process Evaluation Findings, is devoted to detailed analyses of the findings, in which five guiding questions are inductively analyzed, with implications for informing educational practice.

In Part II, Informing Educational Practice, interpretations of the Process Evaluation findings are reported on identifying the learning and teaching strategies, which effectively promoted the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities within the context of this case study.

Chapter 5: Building Educational Theory, is devoted to analyzing and interpreting the findings, which were collected on curriculum impact via the Product Evaluation procedure; it is divided into two parts:

Part I, Discussing the Product Evaluation Findings, is devoted to

detailed analyses of the findings, in which the participatory rights expressed in the CRC guide the discussions on recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions, with implications for building educational theory.

In Part II, Building Educational Theory, interpretations of the Product Evaluation findings are reported on devising the framework of indicators for recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. The final chapter closes with a summary of key contributions of this case study, as well as its limitations, which serve as a springboard for recommendations of further research within the field of Children's Rights Studies.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an introduction to the classroom-based case study, which recognized the present *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education* of 1995 to 2004. In support of this decade and in view of the rights and principles of the CRC, educators need to provide appropriate direction and guidance for children to understand and exercise their participation rights and responsibilities, consistent with their developmental capacities.

Through this exploratory case study, the researcher searched for effective means for providing appropriate direction and guidance to students, as well as for recognizing the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. A cornerstone of this research was listening to the children's voices during the implementation of the curriculum for children's rights education entitled *The World Around Us* (Murray, 1995). The researcher listened to the child participants while asking what lessons may be gained from their voices about educational practice and theory on children's emerging conceptions, as documented in the remainder of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Providing a Theoretical Framework

Chapter Abstract

This chapter is devoted to a review of theory and research literature that provides a theoretical framework for exploring children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, within the context of this case study. In what follows, three areas of literature relating to participation rights are reviewed. Accordingly, this review of literature is divided into three parts.

In Part I, CRC and Children's Participation Rights, a body of theory and research literature is reviewed that addresses children's rights recognized in the CRC, in general, and discusses participation rights and responsibilities in particular, with implications for this case study. This part of the chapter is divided into four sections as outlined here. In the first section, background information is reviewed that provides an overview of the CRC. In the second section, Articles 1 to 5 of the CRC are reviewed, with implications for this case study. In the third section, the set of six articles on children's participation rights in the CRC is reviewed, with implications for this case study. In the fourth section, another seven articles which generally support children's participation in the CRC are reviewed, with implications for this case study.

In Part II, Children's Participation Rights and Moral Development, a body of theory and research literature is reviewed, which addressed the moral development of children, with implications for this case study. This part of the chapter is divided into two sections as outlined here. In the first section, theory and research literature on children's moral development is reviewed, which revealed that children's experiences of participation rights and responsibilities can be understood in terms of three interactive evolving capacities of moral development. In the second section, theory and research literature is reviewed, which delineated the theoretical differences in the three capacities, with implications for this case study.

In Part III, Children's Participation Rights and Research, a body of theory and research literature is reviewed, which concerned children's experiences of participation rights during research, with implications for this case study. This part of the chapter is divided into two sections as outlined here. In the first section, literature on research studies is reviewed, which concerned children's participation rights in legal and psychological contexts, with implications for this case study. In the second section, literature on children's involvement in curricular research is reviewed, with implications for this case study. Key points of this chapter are briefly summarized in the Chapter Summary.

Part I

Children's Participation Rights and the CRC

i. Reviewing Background Information on the CRC

With the adoption of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) on November 20, 1989, the global community took a significant step forwards in the way it values and respects children and their rights (Garbarino, 1990; Hart & Prasse, 1991; Melton, 1991). The CRC is an international covenant that identifies the minimum internationally acceptable standards to which each of the world's children is entitled. Within its 54 articles written in legal terms, the CRC recognizes the human rights and freedoms of every child through rights of protection, provision, and participation.

It can be said that human rights are inherent since they are inseparable from a person, and inalienable since they cannot be given or taken away (Lickona, 1991; Melton, 1991; Rodham, 1978; UNGA, 1989). In addition, human rights are moral rights, which become legal rights when established within domestic laws of signatory countries (Lickona, 1991; Melton, 1991; Rodham, 1978). As recognized in the preamble of the CRC, *children's human rights* are claims to those things which are essential to children's freedom, justice, and peace in the world (UNGA, 1989).

As an international treaty, the CRC reinforces responsibilities of state parties and adult members of society to respect and ensure

special rights for each of the world's children (Article 1), free of discrimination based on statuses such as age, race, class, and gender or their family's status, activities, or beliefs (Article 2) (UNGA, 1989). By recognizing children as individuals with special rights and freedoms, all children as human beings must be ensured equitable access to moral rights of protection, provision, and participation.

The human rights of children stated in the CRC concern *protection* from harm such as sexual abuse, abduction, violence, and exploitation as well as *provision* of adequate resources for survival and proper development such as food, shelter, clean water, health care, and formal primary education. The CRC also recognizes *participation* rights which state that children should know of their rights and be able to voice them (UNGA, 1989; UNICEF, 1990).

The inclusion of participation rights makes the CRC the most comprehensive statement of children's rights ever proclaimed and internationally adopted (Melton, 1991). Since the CRC reaffirms children's rights of provision and protection rights, and with the inclusion of participation rights for children, it recognizes children as developing persons who are capable of eventually participating in civic life. As a result, what were once seen as the needs of children to protection, provision, and participation have been elevated to something far harder to ignore -- their rights.

Children are inherently least capable of assuring their own welfare due to their evolving intellectual, social, moral, and emotional

capacities (Articles 5 and 14.2); and, it is because of children's inherent needs, vulnerabilities, and social restrictions that some rights cannot be enacted until adulthood has been reached, such as political rights like voting (Alston, 1992; Melton, 1991; Price Cohen, 1995; Rodham, 1978). Thus, adults, society, and states are increasingly obligated to ensure children's human rights of protection, provision, and participation as recognized in the CRC (Alston, 1992).

The CRC was unanimously adopted by the UNGA on November 20, 1989 and it went into force on September 20, 1990, in less time than any other human rights treaty (Health and Welfare Canada, 1992). At the time of writing this dissertation in 1999, the CRC has been ratified by all but two nations -- Somalia and the United States of America according to the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 1999).

In September 1990, world leaders met at the United Nation's World Summit on Children in New York City where plans were debated and described to implement the articles of the CRC (UNICEF, 1990). Two documents were adopted at that summit in September 1990, which outlined an agenda to improve the lives of the world's children by the 21st century: the *World Declaration on the Survival, Protection* and the *Development of Children and Plan of Action.* Both documents were published within the booklet entitled *First Call For Children* in which it was declared "that the growing minds and bodies of children should have a first call on our societies and that children

should be able to depend upon that commitment in good times and in bad" (UNICEF, 1990, p. 5). Under international law, the first call principle on the world's resources for food, health care, and education implies that nations which have ratified the CRC are obligated to meet the basic needs of all children before any other priorities are established (UNICEF, 1990).

With the international adoption of the CRC, those states who have signed and ratified the covenant are obligated to abide by its standards and to fulfill related responsibilities (Health and Welfare Canada, 1992). Canada ratified the CRC on December 11, 1991, which coincided with the 45th anniversary of UNICEF (Health and Welfare Canada, 1992). Thus, Canada' ratification of the covenant in 1991 meant that the universal standards established in the CRC are to be interpreted and applied into this nation's domestic law, child-related policies and services, and everyday behaviours (Health and Welfare Canada, 1992). While Canada's ratification of the covenant was initially without the support of the Alberta government, it should be noted that the province of Alberta finally endorsed the CRC in 1999 (The Province, March 1999). However, Canada's ratification of the CRC came with two reservations; the first one addresses treatment of youth in detention, and the second one addresses custom adoptions within Aboriginal communities (Health and Welfare Canada, 1992).

To be more specific, with regards to young offenders, Article 37 (c) of the CRC requires separate detention of children from adults.

While Canada generally agreed with this principle, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments voiced concern that the article might not allow them to protect the well-being of young offenders or the safety of the public. Consequently, when Canada ratified the CRC, it reserved the right not to detain children separately from adults in circumstances where such action is neither appropriate nor feasible (Health and Welfare Canada, 1992).

In addition, Article 21 of the CRC states that adoptions must be "authorized only by competent authorities . . . in accordance with applicable law and procedures" (UNGA, 1989). Canada's governments consulted with national Aboriginal organizations and agreed that ratification of the CRC should not mean an end to customary forms of care, such as adoptions amongst Aboriginal people (Health and Welfare Canada, 1992). This stipulation is in accordance with Article 30 of the CRC in which indigenous children are ensured the right to enjoy their own culture, religion, and language with members of their community.

Thus, it could be concluded that while the CRC provides a benchmark by which progress in safeguarding the dignity and worth of children can be measured, it lends support to individual and collective actions to protect and promote the rights of the child (Melton, 1991; Price Cohen 1995). Moreover, it can be said that the CRC is most powerful when used by those who are moved to act on behalf of the rights and guiding principles espoused within it, to be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

ii. Reviewing the General Framework of the CRC

This section is devoted to reviewing the first five articles of the CRC, which provide a general framework for interpretation of its subsequent articles. If the CRC is to be an effective instrument used by those who work with or on behalf of children, then its general framework needs to be examined so that legal interpretations of children's rights can be better understood (Alston, 1992). In what follows, any legal interpretations of articles have been cited from published sources, which have been accordingly acknowledged herein.

Canada's ratification of the CRC implies that the guiding principles outlined in the first five articles of the document and the children's rights contained in its subsequent articles are to be recognized and enshrined into domestic legislation, policy, and services (Franklin, 1995; Price Cohen, 1995). In the following discussion, the five articles are considered within the context of Canadian federal law in general, and BC provincial law in particular since this case study was conducted in BC, and the education systems in Canada are under provincial jurisdiction (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1989). All articles contained within the CRC must be interpreted within the context of Article 41; this article notes that the standards established in the CRC are not to supersede any higher standards legislated through a state's national law or other international treaties (Franklin, 1995; Price Cohen, 1995).

Since the articles of the CRC should be interpreted in the

context of the entire document, the discussions which follow make references to other relevant articles contained in the covenant: recognizing the child as an individual (Article 1), ensuring non-discrimination of children (Article 2), acting in their best interests (Article 3), embedding rights into child-related laws, policies, services, or practices (Article 4), and providing appropriate direction and guidance, consistent with evolving their capacities (Article 5).

(a) Article 1: Defining the Child

> For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. (UNGA, 1989)

Through this article, it is made clear that a child is an individual with human rights of protection, provision, and participation. At the international level, according to the CRC, a child is a person under the age of 18 years, unless a country's law states an earlier age (UNGA, 1989). At the federal level in Canada, with regards to matters relating to federal law "there is no general age of majority which applies in all contexts. Rather, each law sets age limits which are appropriate for its purposes" (Canadian Heritage, Human Rights Directorate, 1994, p. 7). At the provincial level in BC where this case study was conducted, a *child* is an individual who is under 16 years of age, whereas a *youth* is an individual who is 16 years of age or over and under 19 years, with regards to matters relating to provincial law (Province of BC, Ministry of Social Services, 1994).

(b) Article 2: Freedom from Discrimination

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members. (UNGA, 1989)

Through this article, children are recognized as individuals with special rights and freedoms, and their need for protective care from discrimination is acknowledged (Alston, 1992; Franklin, 1995). When the notion of person status as stated in Article 1 is viewed in context with the non-discrimination clause as stated in Article 2, an implication for this classroom-based case study was that all the child participants needed to be ensured equitable access to rights of protection, provision, and participation.

To explain further, the rights stated in the CRC must be applied to all children without exception and, therefore, the state in general, and the public school system of BC in particular where this case study was conducted, is charged with the responsibility of protecting children from discrimination based on status, such as age, race, class, and gender, or their family's status, activities, or beliefs (UNGA, 1989).

(c) **Article 3: Best Interests of the Child**
(Partial Excerpt) In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. (UNGA, 1989)

Through this article, it is recognized that children's parents and caregivers as well as society must at all times protect the best interests of children and youth. This principle is reiterated in Articles 9 and 18, and it guides interpretations and applications of the other rights contained in the CRC, whereby children must be treated as humans worthy of protective care, respect, dignity, and the opportunity to participate in society (Alston, 1992; Franklin, 1995; Hart & Prasse, 1991; Price Cohen, 1995).

Interpretations of this principle were varied in publications and definitions can be ambiguous; however, within the context of this case study, the term *best interests of the child* generally refers to circumstances which protect and promote children's development of their social, spiritual, moral, physical, and mental health capacities to the fullest potential, and not detract from their development (Alston, 1992; Franklin, 1995).

(d) Article 4: Measures to Implement

States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation. (UNGA, 1989)

Through this article, states are required to take appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures needed to implement the rights described in the CRC. Accordingly, ratification of the covenant means that countries declare their intent to be accountable for its rights and principles; thus, Canada's ratification of the covenant in 1991 means that governments in this nation have an obligation to take steps to implement the rights of the child into its federal, provincial, and territorial child-related laws, policies, and services (Canadian Heritage, Human Rights Directorate, 1994; Health and Welfare Canada, 1992).

An implication for this case study was that the rights and principles of the CRC should be enshrined into laws, policies, services, and everyday behaviours relating to the public school system in BC, which is under provincial government jurisdiction (Canadian Heritage, Human Rights Directorate, 1994).

(e) Article 5: Appropriate Direction and Guidance Consistent with Evolving Capacities of the Child

States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention. (UNGA, 1989)

(1) Appropriate Direction and Guidance: Through this article, children are seen as developing persons who are entitled to realize their rights under the appropriate direction and guidance of parents or other responsible adults such as educators (Alston, 1992; Reardon, 1995; UNGA, 1989), an aspect that is reiterated in Article 14.2. Furthermore, the point that families are primarily responsible for the upbringing and appropriate socialization of their children is recognized in Article 18. When Articles 5 and 18 are viewed together, an implication is that governments are obligated to respect the rights and responsibilities of parents, extended family members, and legal guardians, when providing direction and guidance to their children to exercise rights (Alston, 1992; Garbarino, 1990; Price Cohen, 1995).

Most laws assume parents will provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children, and they will provide the first natural defence of the rights of the child; as a consequence, society takes on the role of parent substitute for the care and responsibility of children within the school system (Alston, 1992; Melton, 1991; Nicholls, 1990; Price Cohen, 1995). Since the laws that govern the school systems in Canada are within the jurisdiction of provincial and territorial

governments, there is separate legislation for each province and territory which provides guidelines, standards, and exceptions of care for those who act on behalf of children's parents (Nicholls, 1990).

For example, educators in BC are obligated to abide by the Ministry of Education laws expressed in the *School Act* (1989). This piece of provincial legislation states that educators in BC are required to fulfill certain duties and responsibilities like that of a parent, excluding administering corporal punishment, according to common law (Nicholls, 1990). Another implication of Articles 5 and 18 for this case study was that school personnel who took care of the students during school activities were ethically and legally obligated to act *in loco parentis* (in place of parents) with the child's best interests in mind (Nicholls, 1990), which included the teacher as well as the researcher, who were both members of the BC College of Teachers.

(2) **Evolving Capacities of the Child:** In both Articles 5 and 14.2, the *evolving capacities* clause is stated, which sets children's rights apart from adult rights since children are dependent upon the actions of states and responsible adults, in general, to provide necessary protection, security, and minimum standard of living as established in the CRC (Garbarino, 1990; Price Cohen, 1995). To explain further, the need for special rights stems from the fact that children are typically least capable of assuring their own welfare, and they can be negatively affected by mistreatment because of their evolving physical,

moral, spiritual, and intellectual capacities and vulnerabilities (Alston, 1992; Franklin, 1995; Garbarino, 1990; Melton, 1991).

The inclusion of the evolving capacities clause also gives recognition to the developmental nature of how children come to experience rights to participate and responsibilities within the world around us (Alston, 1992; Franklin, 1995; Garbarino, 1995; Hart, 1992, 1997). That is, it has been stated that "children must be understood as emerging citizens, not as deficient or incomplete citizens, and their development must be understood in relation to ways in which their experiences influence their further development" (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991, p. 121). Thus, an implication of Article 5 for this case study was that while the notion of evolving capacities recognizes children's need for protection, it also connotes growth and sets the expectation that a child will be increasingly empowered to direct his or her own development (Alston, 1992), by experiencing -- conceptualizing and exercising -- their participation rights.

iii. Examining Children's Participation Rights in the CRC

This discussion is devoted to examining children's participation rights contained in the cluster of Articles 12 through 17, which most exclusively refer to civic participation, with implications for this case study: right to have voices heard and considered (Article 12), right to freedom of expression (Article 13), right to beliefs (Article 14), right to association (Article 15), right to protection of privacy (Article 16), and the right to access appropriate information (Article 17).

With reference to the exercising participation rights by children, it has been said there are different levels of participation. A ladder metaphor has been developed by children's rights advocate, Hart (1992, 1997), to represent eight levels of child participation in projects. On this participation ladder, non-participation or manipulation is represented by the lowest rung and child-initiated decisions shared with adults is represented by the highest rung. Hart (1992) has noted that "through genuine participation in projects, which involve solutions to real problems, young people develop the skills of critical reflection and comparison of perspectives which are critical to the self-determination of political beliefs" (p. 43). Children's participation in this case study could be placed on the sixth rung of Hart's ladder since decision-making about curriculum development processes was shared by the students and their teacher, while the study was initiated by the researcher.

(a) **Article 12: Right to have Voices Heard and Considered**
The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child. (UNGA, 1989)

Through this article, adults and others should give greater consideration to the voices of children. An implication of Article 12 for this case study was that the right to be heard and considered may be most meaningfully exercised when adults assume responsibility for respectfully listening to the children's voices (Cullinan, 1993).

When Article 12 is viewed with Article 5 regarding evolving capacities of the chid, it could be said that children have a right to participate in making decisions which concern them in accordance with their developmental capacity (Garbarino, 1990). Perhaps by participating in decision-making activities, children can be helped to develop their skills to consider choices and consequences, make informed decisions, and follow through with responsible actions concerning the rights and responsibilities to oneself and others.

To assist children in developing their participatory skills such as listening, decision-making, as well as expressing views, schools could benefit from modelling democracy through collaborative teacher-student decision-making processes in order to help prepare students for responsible citizenship (Anderson, 1980; Flekkøy, 1996; Hart & Prasse, 1991; Reardon, 1995; Riley, 1984). This process was undertaken throughout the students' curricular experiences particularly when they took part in decision-making, whereby the voices of children were respectfully heard and considered.

Listening to the children's voices during curricular experiences is congruent with the ideas of educators Erickson and Shultz (1992) who wrote:

> perspectives and voices of students themselves need to appear more prominently in research on teaching, learning, and curriculum if student's experience of curriculum is to become an object of serious attention by researchers. . . . The absence of student experience from current educational discourse seems to be a consequence of systematic silencing of the student voice. (p. 481)

This silencing of the student voice is most apparent in the area of individual and shared decision-making (Garner & Acklen, 1979; Kohn, 1993; Scott, 1996). Thus, in an age when children should be seen and heard (Province of BC, Ombudsman, 1994), an implication of Article 12 for this case study was that students need equitable opportunities to voice opinions, concerns, and plans as learners; moreover, children need appropriate direction and guidance that helps them to make informed individual and shared decisions, in light of their participation rights expressed in the CRC.

In addition, an implication of Article 12 for this case study was that each child participant's right to decide on participation in research was restricted since the children could not give informed consent on their own in accordance with the *Ethics Guidelines - Research with Human Subjects* published by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)(1998). Informed consent is the procedure whereby persons choose whether to participate in a study after being apprised of its details (Bersoff &

Hofer, 1990; Keith-Spiegel, 1983). Accordingly, informed consent has three main components as explained by Bersoff and Hofer (1990): *knowledge* concerns presenting adequate information in understandable terms; *voluntariness* concerns participation which must not be coerced; and *capacity*, by their definition, concerns an ability to give consent.

An implication of the first point concerning *knowledge* for this case study was that the researcher needed to explain to the child participants the purpose of the research, the procedures to be used such as interviews, a description of the potential benefits, as well as the child's rights to refuse to participate in terms that the children could understand (Bersoff & Hofer, 1990; Keith-Spiegel, 1983). At the outset of this case study, the children were given introductory information on the purpose of the research; for example, the researcher explained that she needed to learn about children's rights and responsibilities by asking them questions and listening to their answers, by reading their writing, looking at their pictures, and by periodically visiting their class.

Similarly, the parents or guardians who provided consent for the children's participation in this case study were provided with an introductory session prior to the researcher starting the case study. Fifteen parents of the nineteen students, as well as the school principal and the classroom teacher, attended the one-hour meeting convened on March 15, 1998 after school when the group was

presented with an overview of the curriculum, its objectives, as well as the goals of the research. It was explained to the families that the researcher wanted to learn what classroom experiences would promote the children's emerging ideas about their participation rights and responsibilities.

The researcher further explained at the introductory meeting that she would review samples of work written by the students related to the curriculum activities; however, this review was not meant as an assessment or test of the students' literacy skills. This information was additionally stated in the letter that went home with the consent form to each parent or legal guardian for signatures, before any classroom-based research started. It was further explained by the researcher that in order to preserve confidentiality and to respect the children's privacy, the parents could be provided with a general statement of findings but not specific details about any child.

An implication of the second point concerning *voluntariness* for this case study was that the researcher made every effort to make it clear to the class of Grade 3 students, as well as their parents, that there was no punishment for choosing not to participate or to withdraw (SSHRC, 1998, Guideline 42); in so doing, the child's right to refuse participation, or dissent, was ensured. To address the third point concerning *capacity* to give consent, minors may not legally give consent to serve as participants in research projects in Canada (SSHRC, 1998). Instead, permission from an authorized person or

agreement by an adult fully capable of being informed must be obtained on behalf of the child (SSHRC, 1998). An implication of this point for this case study was that the researcher was required to obtain written parental or legal guardian consent for each research participant under the age of majority in accordance with the *Ethics Guidelines - Research with Human Subjects* published by SSHRC (1998).

In response to this requirement, the researcher obtained written consent from all parents (SSHRC, 1998, Guideline 13) who signed consent forms on behalf of their children to participate in this case study (SSHRC, 1998, Guideline 41), prior to starting the research in the classroom. This requirement of gaining consent from parents or legal guardians for children's participation in research is intended to safeguard those persons whose capacity for self-direction is not legally considered to be fully developed or is temporarily or permanently impaired as may the case with some special needs persons (Gersch, 1996; Melton & Limber, 1992; Price Cohen, 1995). Since no children in care of the state were involved in the research, informed consent did not have to be obtained from a legal guardian (SSHRC, 1998, Guideline 41).

In addition, the researcher also obtained the written consent of school district superintendent, and the verbal consent of the school principal, the classroom teacher, and all nineteen of the child participants, prior to conducting this case study. **(Refer to Appendix A - Sample Letter and Consent Form to Parents/Legal Guardians.)**

(b) Articles 13 and 17: Right to Expression and Access Information

Article 13

(Partial Excerpt) The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice. (UNGA, 1989)

Article 17

(Partial Excerpt) States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. (UNGA, 1989)

Through Article 13, children's freedom to express views and to impart or receive information through "media of the child's choice" is addressed (UNGA, 1989). Also stated in the same article is the point that the "exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions" as necessary for "respect of the rights or reputations of others" and "for the protection of national security of public order *(ordre public)*, or public health or morals" (UNGA, 1989). Thus, an implication of Article 13 is that children, like their caregivers, have a responsibility to express themselves in ways which respect the rights and reputations of others (Franklin, 1995); for example, not making fun when another classmate expresses ideas or opinions during a class discussion.

Related to Article 13 concerning the right to obtain information is Article 17, which states children should be offered access to information from various sources, including mass media. Also noted in Article 17 is the point that the State must protect children from

harmful materials (UNGA, 1989). Taken together, an implication of Articles 13 and 17 for this case study was that both the teacher and the researcher shared a responsibility to ensure students had access to sufficient and appropriate information to contribute to achieving their learning tasks. For example, the students needed access to learning materials such as children's books, access to effective learning strategies such as the three-step decision-making model to be described in Chapter 4, and access to human resources such as teachers or peers in order to gain suitable information.

In view of the children's rights to participate enshrined in Articles 12 and 13 of the CRC, which concern the participatory skills of decision-making and expressing views freely, and Article 17 concerning access to information, the researcher endeavoured to conduct this research in a manner that not only respected but enhanced the child participants' developing capacities for making informed decisions. Thus, prior to undertaking this case study, the classroom teacher at the researcher's request invited the student's individual views on voluntary participation or to refuse participation in this school-based study in accordance with Guideline 42 of the ethics guidelines published by SSHRC (1998). The children were informed of their options in that each child could agree to participate or choose to withdraw from the study at any time, without any negative consequences to them. The children's responses indicated that there was unanimous agreement for participation in this case study.

It could be said that the child participants gave assent or affirmative agreement (SSHRC, 1998, Guideline 13) to participation in this research. This notion of assent is supported by evidence gathered during research conducted by Abramovitch (1991) and colleagues at the University of Toronto on children's capacity to give meaningful assent to participation in psychological research. The findings showed the children as young as 5 to 12 years of age generally understood what was expected of them during psychological studies, and presumably they "therefore have the capacity to give their assent or dissent to the research" (Abramovitch, Freedman, Thoden, & Nikolich, 1991, p. 1107).

In view of these findings, and in accordance with Article 17 of the CRC concerning access to appropriate information, the researcher involved in this case study informed the potential child participants by clearly explaining what the right to assent or dissent meant in practice. The children were informed of the options, and their voices were heard and considered before legal consent or dissent was given on their behalf; thus, the active participation of the children in decisions about them and their school life was encouraged and facilitated by the researcher.

(c) **Article 14: Right to Freedom of Beliefs**
(Partial Excerpt) 1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child. (UNGA, 1989)

Through this article, the right of freedom of beliefs -- thought, religion, and conscience -- is addressed; this freedom is subject to appropriate direction and guidance by parents, legal guardians, or those acting in place of the parent such as teachers, congruent with Article 5 of the CRC. Within BC, however, where the classroom-based case study was undertaken, public schools must be conducted as a secular system with no religious dogma or creed taught as stated in the provincial *School Act*, section 95 (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1989). An implication of Article 14 for this case study was that issues about religion can be addressed in school such as showing its role in our culture and history, although a particular religion cannot be promoted as good or true (Nicholls, 1990).

Public school systems in Canada are expected to promote responsible citizenship through civic, moral and social values education -- often collectively referred to as citizenship education -- to varying degrees in accordance with policies of the provincial Ministries of Education (Health and Welfare Canada, 1992). In BC, citizenship education is advocated in the curriculum resource entitled *Personal Planning Integrated Resource Package: K to 7* (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1995), which is part of the provincially

prescribed elementary-level curriculum focusing on students' personal development. While this publication "emphasizes the family's role in teaching moral and behavioral standards" (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1995, p. 4), it does not preclude public secular schools from providing education in which moral issues are addressed.

Since this research was conducted within a classroom in BC's religiously diverse and multicultural public school system, an implication of Article 14 for this case study was that consideration had to be given to what moral values could be legitimately promoted during the curricular experiences offered to the child participants through *The World Around Us* curriculum.

First, a fundamental question had to be asked: What are moral values? According to Lickona (1991), two types of values can be determined: nonmoral and moral. Nonmoral values express what we want or like; for example, one might personally value reading a certain book, but he or she is not obliged to do so. Moral values tell us what ought to be done and they carry responsibility; for example, to care for our children, to act fairly in dealing with others.

Moral values can be further defined as either universal or nonuniversal human values (Lickona, 1991); that is, our fundamental human worth and dignity are seemingly affirmed by universal human values such as treating all people justly, respecting their rights and lives, and equality. By contrast, nonuniversal human values are not connected to universal moral responsibility but perhaps can be linked

to a strong personal obligation; for example, certain obligations specific to one's own religion such as acts of worship or observations of holy days could be considered nonuniversal moral values (Lickona, 1991). Thus, these personal obligations may not be imposed on others since an important fact must be remembered: people of different religious beliefs as well as people with no religious affiliations are included in our multicultural society in and out of school.

Based on this line of thought, the researcher referred to human rights documents in which both the moral values of *respect* and *responsibility* are enshrined; for example, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UNGA, 1948), the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Government of Canada, 1982), and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNGA, 1989). In consequence, the curricular experiences throughout this case study offered students ongoing opportunities for attaining moral values of *respect* and *responsibility*, to be further discussed below.

(d) Article 15: Right to Association

States Parties recognize the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of these rights other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. (UNGA, 1989).

Through this article, the right of children to meet with others and to join or form associations is addressed. However, in view of this right, children also have a responsibility to exercise this right in ways which respect the safety, health, and rights of others (Nelms, 1987; Reardon, 1995). This responsibility reflects the meaning of Article 15, which further states that in conformity with the law and in protection of others' rights and freedoms, the child's right to freedom of association may be restricted when exercised (UNGA, 1989).

An implication of Article 15 for this case study was that when children chose to read, play, or work with others in a group activity, then they had a responsibility to do so in ways which respected the safety, health, and rights of their peers as well as the teacher; for example, no put-downs or intentionally hurting another's feelings (Day & Drake, 1983; Nelms, 1987; Noddings, 1992; Reardon, 1995). During this case study if it were believed that some students were not ready to handle group discussions and shared revelations with respect and sensitivity, or they preferred to work alone, then such situations were addressed during teacher-student discussions, as well as through the structuring of the curricular experiences.

For example, in order to address each child's emotional and social abilities and to respect a child's decision to participate alone, as well as recognize the merits of individual work and play, most curricular experiences were consequently set up so that they could be accomplished by either small group or individual efforts, as appropriate for the given situation and individual. To illustrate this point, the directions to complete a Learning Centre activity state:

> *Listen to and talk about questions with one or two partners. You can also decide to work by yourself. Sometimes you will need to work and play with partners.*

(e) **Articles 16 and 19: Protection of Privacy and from Abuse**

Article 16

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.

2. The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks. (UNGA, 1989)

Article 19

The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programmes for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims. (UNGA, 1989)

Through Article 16, children have the right to protection from interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence, and from libel and slander. The understanding that some issues are not open to public scrutiny is enshrined in the *School Act* (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1989). In this BC education legislation, the children's right to privacy is recognized, especially in matters relating to their personal information and school records (Hansen, 1992; Nicholls, 1990; Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1989).

An implication for this case study was that the researcher spoke with the child participants about possible disclosures before the study started in that she explained to the students their work would be included in this dissertation; consequently, it may be seen by other people in addition to the researcher, although all names would be removed from the work before others viewed it to preserve anonymity.

This practice was congruent with the *Ethical Guidelines - Research with Human Subjects* (1995), which states "if confidentiality

or anonymity cannot be guaranteed, participants should be made aware of possible consequences" (SSHRC, 1998, Guideline 31) and, therefore, children must be given the option of not participating. Consequently, in keeping with Article 16 concerning privacy and Article 17 concerning access to appropriate information, the child participants were informed of their right not participate in any activity which required disclosure of personal information or thoughts, while still encouraged to participate in learning and research processes.

Since children could not give legal consent for participation in this case study, there were no easy solutions to balancing the children's right to privacy with the parent's right to know information when it was the parents who provided consent for their children to participate.

In order to respect the students' right to privacy, when parents of three child participants made inquiries during this research, the researcher shared with those parents information on how their own children generally responded or acted. For example, in one situation when the child had written a creative poem, the researcher explained that the child appeared to be actively engaged throughout the entire activity. In practice, the researcher provided no specific findings yielded through this case study on any of the child participants to parents; similarly, no information about any child's academic progress was provided by the researcher, who referred inquiring parents to the classroom teacher for such progress reports.

In accordance with Article 19 of the CRC concerning protection from abuse, exceptions to this rule must be made if the child should disclose that he or she is at risk of self-harm, at risk of harming others, or is being abused or neglected (Province of BC, Ministry for Children and Families, 1998). Although no such disclosures by students were made to the researcher during this case study, if one had been made, then the researcher had a legal duty to break confidentiality and to report any suspicion or disclosure of child abuse or neglect, pursuant to the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (Province of BC, Ministry of Social Studies, 1994).

That is, the researcher would have reported the matter to the appropriate school authorities, and to the Ministry for Children and Families, in order to protect and care for the child (Province of BC, Ministry for Children and Families, 1998). According to the *Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect*, such a report would be made to a child protection social worker at the Ministry for Children and Families office that provides child protection services (Province of BC, Ministry for Children and Families, 1998).

iv. CRC Articles which Support Children's Participation

This section is devoted to discussions on seven articles stated in the CRC, which generally support children's participation, with implications for this case study: the right to special care and education for children with special needs (Article 23), the right to education (Article 28), and the right to education for personal growth and development, as children move towards responsible citizenship (Article 29). Other rights which support children's participation include: the right of minority or indigenous children to enjoy their own culture and to practise their own religion and language (Article 30), right to participation in play, cultural and artistic activities (Article 31), protection from exploitation (Article 36), and the right to be informed of CRC content (Article 42) (UNGA, 1989).

(a) Article 23: Rights of Children with Special Needs

> (Partial Excerpt) States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance, and facilitate the child's active participation in the community. States Parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child. (UNGA, 1989)

Through this article, the right of children with mental or physical disabilities to have both special care and education is recognized, which can help them achieve self-reliance and an active life in society. Parents and caregivers such as teachers need to be

sensitive to this notion and need to help children develop a sense of respect and acceptance for varying abilities within themselves and of others (Lickona, 1991; Noddings, 1988, 1995; Reardon, 1995). According to the *School Act* of BC, special education programs and facilities must be provided for handicapped or other children with specialized at-risk needs within the public education system (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1989). This inclusion policy employed within BC public schools means that when possible, children with special needs are included in regular classrooms in schools within their communities.

An implication for the case study of Article 23 when viewed in conjunction Article 29, which concerns children's development to reach their fullest potential, was that curricular experiences offered through the curriculum for children's rights education needed to be structured to meet the abilities and needs of all participating students (Day & Drake, 1983; Scott, 1996). For example, one child who had cerebral palsy was enabled to participate actively in the curricular experiences throughout this case study with the assistance of a Child Support Worker. In addition, some children opted to respond to the learning activities with both words and pictures, since they were developing their literacy skills to express themselves more fully through words.

(b) Articles 28 and 29: Rights to Education

Article 28

(Partial Excerpt) States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:
(a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all.
States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention. (UNGA, 1989)

Article 29

States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:
(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
(e) The development of respect for the natural environment. (UNGA, 1989)

Through these two articles, the right to education is addressed: Article 28 is devoted to the provision of an education for every child, whereas Article 29 is devoted to the general goals of children's education. Thus, it could be said that the CRC offers educators and school-based researchers a theoretical and practical framework for providing equitable opportunities for students to experience -- conceptualize and exercise -- their rights and responsibilities with guidance from responsible caregivers. In accordance with Articles 28

and 29, the CRC encourages education that fosters the development of the children's capacities to achieve their fullest potential.

This notion is echoed in the Mission Statement of the BC public school system, which notes that the purpose of the public school system is to help students develop to their potential and to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for responsible life in our democratic society (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1989). An important implication of Articles 28 and 29 for this case study was that the public school system should protect students, in view of heir protective rights; and, it should provide opportunities for the development of children's intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and moral capacities, and foster their progress towards responsible citizenship (Anderson, 1980; Flekkøy, 1996; Hart & Prasse, 1991; Reardon, 1995; Riley, 1984).

(c) **Articles 30 and 31: Right to Participate in Culture, Art, and Play**

Article 30

1. In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language. (UNGA, 1989)

Article 31

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity. (UNGA, 1989)

Through Article 30, the children of minority populations have a right to participate in their own cultural, linguistic, and religious heritages. In Canada, where society is culturally diverse, many schools are multicultural in their student populations. Multiculturalism as an educational conception has recognized that children enrich the cultural context of the classroom through the diversity of their beliefs, values, and languages.

For example, within the BC public school system, the *School Act* states "students whose parents have the right under section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to have their children receive instruction in a language other than English are entitled to receive that instruction" (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1989, p. 9). Thus, students enrolled in the BC public school system are

entitled to instruction in either English or French languages in accordance with the *School Act* (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1989). In addition, this legislation states that public school boards may permit the provision of educational programs in a language other than English or French, as warranted within the school districts throughout BC. This provision respects the right of children of minority populations to participate in their own linguistic heritages.

In a related manner, through Article 31, the right of all children to participate in cultural and artistic activities as well as play and leisure is recognized. In support of this universal right, it has been said that education with sound philosophies and quality instruction should respect the children's right to play (Benninga & Crum, 1982; Krogh, 1985). Pursuant to Article 30, in general, the curricular experiences offered during this case study endeavoured to capitalize on cultural diversity, while incorporating role playing, puppetry, and artwork. In particular, curricular experiences implemented through *The World Around Us* offered the child participants equitable opportunities to explore cultural similarities and differences; for example, children's literature that focused on various Canadian heritages, and by reading and writing their own poems and stories about cultural diversity. The diverse cultural backgrounds which came to school with the children, as well as commonalities amongst them, were acknowledged within the multicultural classroom where this case study was conducted, to be further discussed in Chapter 4.

(d) Article 36: Protection from Exploitation

States parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare [not covered in articles 32 on child labour, 33 on drug abuse, 34 on sexual exploitation, and 35 on sale, trafficking, and abduction]. (UNGA, 1989)

Through this article, children have the right to protection from exploitation. Since avoidance of exploitation is a primary concern in any discussion on the rights of children as research participants, every effort must be made to protect them from potential consequences of research such as physical, mental, and social discomfort, harm, and deception (Franklin, 1995; Gersch, 1996; Price Cohen, 1995). An important implication for this case study was that the rights, safety, and welfare of all participants had to be adequately protected as articulated in the SSHRC (1998) Guideline 26, which concern minimization of risk to research participants.

In light of the children's need for protection from potential harm, the SSHRC (1998) Guidelines 18 through 21 on the use of deception were considered in particular. Researcher Keith-Spiegel (1983) explored the special vulnerability that children have to deception in research and how debriefing may not undo the damage done by the deception.

To illustrate this point, one area that can be especially compromised by deception of children is trust of authority figures. According to Keith-Spiegel (1983), debriefing may actually inflict additional harm, especially in younger children if they become further confused as a result of the follow-up discussion. It could be said that

such studies are unethical since the possible negative social and emotional consequences outweigh the benefit to be derived from their findings. Thus, an implication of this point for this case study was that the utmost vigilance was needed to assure that the children were not exploited for the sake of educational research.

While deception is not justified in research with children, it can be said that incomplete disclosure may be warranted in some situations such as when prior knowledge on the child's part on the specific purpose or hypothesis of the study would clearly bias the responses (Keith-Spiegel, 1983). Under such circumstances it may be legitimate to give child subjects a general statement of the research content and processes and inform them as to what participation is expected to involve for them (Keith-Spiegel, 1983), as previously discussed in Chapter 2 section iii, (b) on Article 13 and 17, Right to Expression and Access Information.

(e) **Article 42: Right to be Informed of Rights (and Responsibilities)** States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike. (UNGA, 1989)

Through this article, all children, and not just adults, have the right to be informed of the content of the CRC; consequently, the CRC has challenged educators and others to fulfill an obligation to help children and youth understand and exercise their rights, and responsibilities (Lickona, 1991; Reardon, 1995; Selby & Pike, 1988). Canada's progress in effectively disseminating information about the CRC was reported by national, provincial, and territorial governments in Canada's first report prepared by Canadian Heritage, Human Rights Directorate. It is important to note that this report recommended that educational programs about the CRC be further developed and implemented in Canada for persons of all ages (Canadian Heritage, Human Rights Directorate, 1994).

An implication of Article 42 for the case study was that the CRC needs to be introduced to children in order for them to learn about rights and to move towards asserting their rights as developing responsible citizens. In keeping with Article 42 concerning dissemination of information about the CRC, the child participants in this case study were afforded equitable opportunities to gain knowledge about rights and responsibilities, as well as skills and values necessary to live in the world both as children and later as adults (Anderson, 1980; Flekkøy, 1996; Hart, 1992, 1997; Hart & Prasse, 1991; Reardon, 1995; Riley, 1984).

Part II

Children's Participation Rights and Moral Development

i. Children's Capacities of Moral Development

Theory and research literature reviewed in preparation for this case study has revealed that children's experiences of participation rights and responsibilities can be understood in terms of three interactive evolving capacities of moral development: *reasoning* (cognitive), *responding* (affective), and *prosocial acting* (behavioural) (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Damon, 1988; Garrod, 1993; Hersh, Miller, & Fielding, 1980; Kaltsounis, 1987; Lickona, 1991; Martorella, 1985; Scott, 1987; Welton & Mallan, 1988). Therefore, fundamental to exploring children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities was a study of children's evolving capacities from a moral developmental perspective.

The significance of viewing children's emerging conceptions from a moral developmental perspective was that each of the capacities of moral development come into play as children experience -- conceptualize and exercise -- their moral rights and responsibilities (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Damon, 1988; Garrod, 1993; Hersh, Miller, & Fielding, 1980; Kaltsounis, 1987; Lickona, 1991; Martorella, 1985; Scott, 1987; Welton & Mallan, 1988).

Within the context of this case study, the term *moral*

development refers to moral knowing, feeling, and acting since all three capacities can be involved in children's developing morality -- or their sense of what is right or good (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Damon, 1988; Garrod, 1993; Hersh, Miller, & Fielding, 1980; Lickona, 1991; Scott, 1987). When writing of morality, researcher Damon (1988) stated that it is a multifaceted entity that includes a "sense of responsibility for acting on one's concern for others. Such responsibility may be expressed through acts of caring, benevolence, kindness, and mercy (p. 5). He further stated that "[m]orality includes a concern for the rights of others. This concern implies a sense of justice and a commitment to the fair resolution of conflicts" (Damon, 1988, p. 5). In subsequent writing, Damon (1993) used the terms of "head, heart, and habit" (p. ix) to organize his discussions surrounding morality of children and youth.

This description of morality suggests that the capacities of moral development can be seen as interactive since each one is influenced by the others: decisions and actions are affected by reasoning, and feeling and how one thinks and feels is influenced by behaviours (Hersh, Miller, & Fielding, 1980; Lickona, 1991). However intertwined the capacities of moral development are in practice, it is useful to delineate here the theoretical differences amongst them in order to identify implications for this case study.

The reviews which follow on the three capacities were cited from studies conducted in North America on children's moral

experiences by research teams led by researchers such as Kohlberg, Selman, Gilligan, Noddings, as well as Eisenberg. In consequence, the theories and research reviewed here should not be construed as universally applicable; rather, these theories and research findings may have most relevance to societies which espouse an individualistic orientation to decision-making and action such as Canada, rather than to cultures which espouse a more collectivist orientation to decision-making and action (Garrod, 1993).

Furthermore, the published literature reviewed here addresses the evolving capacities of six- to twelve-year-old children since the developing moral, social, emotional, and intellectual capacities of the Grade 3 students who participated in this case study ranged beyond their chronological ages of eight and nine years (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Garrod, 1993; Kohler, 1979; Selman, 1980).

ii. Delineating the Theoretical Differences

(a) Capacity for Reasoning (Cognitive)

(1) **Kohlberg:** According to the theory of moral development put forth by Kohlberg (1984), children's morality is based on intellectual or cognitive development; moreover, it is guided by reasoning based on what is fair and just. This theory of moral development is seemingly premised on the assumption that acting in a moral way requires a high stage of moral reasoning; however, even though some children and adults can reason morally and decide what is a fair or just action, does not necessarily mean that they will take fair or just action.

In his moral development research with children, Kohlberg (1984) found that as children grew older, they tended to progress through a series of stages in their reasoning about what was the best action in various hypothetical situations which involved competing rights. During interviews, Kohlberg (1984) noted reasons which children gave for resolving moral dilemmas; and, as a result of this research, he claimed that children grow through predictable and progressive levels of reasoning, or preconventional, conventional, and postconventional, which reflect their understanding of justice.

Briefly summarized, Kohlberg's research findings indicate that at the lowest or preconventional level, children apparently see morality as imposed by others and behave morally out of fear of punishment. At this lowest stage, decisions and actions are dependent on conformity to rules, and children are typically unable to take another's

perspective distinct from their own (Kohlberg, 1984). This inability is mentioned because taking another's point of view is considered a precursor to moral decisions and actions (Selman, 1980).

At the middle or conventional level, children can take another's point of view but not concurrent with taking their own. At this level, children apparently see decision-making and behaving morally as either doing what others want in anticipation of praise or abiding by rules; and, they are typically able to conform to expectations of a group (Kohlberg, 1984). At the highest or postconventional level, decisions and actions are guided by the universal moral principle of justice; however, according to Kohlberg (1984), this level of moral reasoning can be achieved when persons are nearing adulthood, and not apparently in childhood.

While Kohlberg's work on children's moral development is noteworthy for this case study in that it explores children's morality in terms of focusing on moral reasoning and decision-making, some weaknesses have been identified within his selected research samples and methods (Garrod, 1993). The apparent inadequacies included: (1) the subjects were American boys who were ten years of age and over; (2) the dilemmas posed to the children were often removed from the lives of most boys and girls, for example, dilemma of whether to steal drugs to help a sick person; and (3) most children generally functioned at the preconventional level of moral reasoning that included obedience to authority and self-interest (Kohlberg, 1984).

(2) Implication for this Case Study: An implication of Kohlberg's theory and research for this case study on children's conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities was that moral development of children younger than ten years is not adequately represented by his theory, and it does not sufficiently describe the moral reasoning and decision-making of all children. In consequence, the theory and research of Selman (1980) is reviewed here since his work expanded Kohlberg's model.

(3) Selman: A model of perspective taking was developed by Selman (1980), based on interview data collected from a population of American children, which included girls and boys who were younger than the participants in Kohlberg's research. Briefly summarized, Selman theorized that children progressed through five levels (0 - 4) of perspective taking, or taking points of view of others, which provide a framework for interpersonal understanding (1980). Selman's (1980) five-level model reflected a progression from an egocentric perspective when children apparently do not recognize that other's views or perspectives may be different from their own, to the development of the capacity to take the perspective of others' and coordinate them with their own.

The two levels of this model most relevant to this case study with students ages 8 and 9, are Levels 1 and 2 which focus on children 5 to 12 years, since the developing moral, social, emotional, and

intellectual capacities of children can range beyond their chronological ages (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Garrod, 1993; Kohler, 1979; Selman, 1980). At Level 1 or approximately 5 - 9 years, children's understanding of another's perspective is limited to the physical where "individuals are seen to respond to action with like action" (Selman, 1980, p. 38); for example, a child that received a hug is likely to hug back. At this stage, children tend to focus on one perspective at a time rather than coordinating points of view (Selman, 1980). According to Selman (1980), at Level 2 or approximately 7 - 12 years, there is evidence of "a reciprocity of thoughts and feeling, and not merely actions" (p. 38); for example, a boy student asks a girl classmate in a friendly voice if she enjoyed playing the soccer game and if she wants to play the game again. In so doing, the boy student is showing an awareness of the girl's perspective by inquiring into her thoughts and desires about soccer. At this level, children tend to have an awareness of another's perspective and that this awareness influences self and other's view of each other (Selman, 1980).

(4) **Implication for this Case Study:** An implication of Selman's theory and research on perspective taking for this case study on children's conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities was that Primary-level children can take perspectives of others; and, children need opportunities which foster their developing perspective taking skills and their sensitivity to needs,

rights, and responsibilities of others.

Related to Selman's theory of perspective taking, educators are provided with learning and teaching strategies researched and effectively used by Krogh (1985) as well as Benninga and Crum (1982). Krogh's findings, based on research with Primary children, indicated that literature-based approaches to learning that involved children's literature, reasoning, role playing, and guided discussion facilitated the young children's development of social understanding and perspective taking capacities.

Moreover, researchers Benninga and Crum (1982) coordinated children's levels of perspectives, as put forth in Selman's theory (1980), with selected children's literature in order to encourage children to consider different perspectives. These researchers combined the reading of children's literature with story dramatization and role playing as an imaginative means to develop effectively the perspectives of young learners. They concluded that perspective taking is a gradually developed reasoning ability that can be facilitated by the exposure of young children to literature supported by vicarious role-taking activities. If this interactive approach to learning were applied to children's rights education, then real or imaginary dilemmas in which rights conflicted may be resolved through vicarious role play and related discussions.

(b) Capacity for Responding (Affective)

(1) Gilligan and Noddings: The theory and research literature on moral development reviewed here addresses work by Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984, 1988, 1992, 1995) on children's capacities for moral caring and responding -- an ability to respond. In response to the notion that moral development is based on justice and rights, an alternative theory based on care and responsibility was posited by Gilligan (1982). When Gilligan (1982) spoke with women about their own life stories, conflicts, and difficult personal decisions, such as abortions, she heard a concern that was centred on care and competing responsibilities rather than on competing rights.

Through interviews with males and females aged six to sixty, Gilligan with Attanucci (1988) identified an affective orientation to moral development that was inapparent in Kohlberg's work; that is, moral decisions were judged on how well they maintained or restored relationships and how effective they were in helping others. Gilligan theorized that there were two moral orientations: one based on justice and focused on rights, and one based on care and focused on responsibilities and relationships with others (1982). Gilligan's theory was not intended to replace Kohlberg's (1984) moral developmental theory but rather it reflects the moral thinking and feeling of females and males. According to Gilligan, some males may have a less fully developed morality of care than females due to differing socialization (Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988).

Noddings (1984) elaborated Gilligan's theory and described this moral perspective as "an ethic of caring" (p. 27), which she later labelled "relational ethics" (Noddings, 1988, p. 218). This theory assumes that one does not become ethically mature by achieving independence but, rather, by participating in relations in which responding, interdependence, and cooperation are involved (Noddings, 1988). According to Noddings (1984, 1995), in order to move towards meeting this goal of responding, interdependence, and cooperation, curricular changes need to be implemented so that responsive interactions between teacher and children are experienced. To this end, interactive approaches to teaching such as "dialogue, modeling, the provision of practice, and the . . . teacher [who] nurtures the ethical ideal of caring" should be generally incorporated into the learning environment (Noddings, 1984, p. 179).

(2) **Implication for this Case Study:** An implication of Gilligan's and Noddings' theory and research on caring and responsibility for this case study on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities was that children's growth toward responsible citizenship may best be fostered by promoting both values of care and justice in each girl and boy. Cooperative relationships in the classroom may best be fostered by educators through facilitating collaborative discussions and decision-making, and showing and reinforcing respectful actions toward children and others.

(c) Capacity for Prosocial Acting (Behavioural)

(1) Eisenberg: The theory and research literature on prosocial acting reviewed here addresses work by Eisenberg (1992) s well as Eisenberg, Reykowski, and Staub (1989). Findings from studies in both naturalistic and laboratory settings by Eisenberg and her associates suggest that increased prosocial acting can be linked to a number of contributing factors: modelling of behaviours by adults, peer interaction, adult use of reasoning to settle conflicts, responsibility for self and others, and reinforcement (Eisenberg, 1992; Eisenberg, Reykowski, & Staub, 1989). The effectiveness of such interventions which enhanced prosocial acting were correlated with age; that is, the studies showed the greatest efficacy of modelling and other direct techniques was with children twelve years and under (Eisenberg, Reykowski, & Staub 1989).

First, modelling of prosocial behaviours by adults increased prosocial acting of children especially when adults were consistent, nurturing, verbalized their feelings of concern, and labeled their behaviours as helping others. Second, adult use of reasoning to settle conflicts and disputes with children enhanced prosocial behaviours. For example, children whose parents or teachers explained the reasons for their actions and the potentially harmful effects of other actions were more likely to behave in prosocial ways when away from adult supervision than those who were threatened with punishment (Eisenberg, 1992; Eisenberg, Reykowski, & Staub 1989).

Third, it was found that when adults consistently reinforced prosocial acting, especially when that reinforcement was accompanied by an explanation of who did what for whom and why, children's prosocial responses continued beyond the period of reinforcement. Fourth, when adults had high but realistic expectations of children's responsibilities, their prosocial responses increased. Fifth, it was found that others who modelled behaviours with whom the child strongly identified or who had high prestige, for example, peers, also influenced prosocial actions but to a lesser extent than adults. Sixth, both the cognitive aspect of empathy, such as recognition of the feelings of others, as well as the affective component, such as emotional response to another's situation, contributed to prosocial actions (Eisenberg, 1992; Eisenberg, Reykowski, & Staub 1989).

(2) **Implication for this Case Study:** An implication of Eisenberg's research for this case study was that several conditions which promote prosocial acting could be translated into educational practices and applied in classrooms; for example, encouraging cooperative interactions, and assigning students reasonable responsibilities. In keeping with Article 29 of the CRC, children may best learn about taking responsible action if role models, such as teachers and researchers, provide appropriate direction and guidance that promotes student participation, consistent with evolving their capacities.

Part III

Children's Participation Rights and Research

i. Children's Experiences of Participation Rights in Research

(a) Rogers and Wrightsman (1978)

(1) **Summary:** A review of published research literature on issues surrounding children's participation rights reveals a number of studies conducted in psychological research contexts. The material particularly investigates the views and attitudes of adults and youth about children's rights, with apparently few studies investigating the perspectives of children.

For example, attitudes toward children's rights from two orientations were studied by Rogers and Wrightsman (1978), who considered nurturance rights as those which stress "the provision by society of supposedly beneficial objects, environments, services, experiences . . . for the child (p. 61); and, self-determination rights, or participation rights, were considered those "potential rights which would allow children to exercise control over their environments, to make decisions about what they want, to have autonomous control over various aspects of their lives" (p. 61). The purpose of the study was to test the hypothesis that four groups, namely high school students, undergraduate education students, other undergraduate students, and adults whose ages ranged from 24 to 41 years, would differ in their measured attitudes toward the extension of rights to children.

The Children's Rights Attitude Scale was constructed to assess five basic content areas: "health, education-information, economic, safety-care, and legal-judicial-political" (Rogers & Wrightsman, 1978, p. 63) from both nurturance and self-determination orientations. For each of the five content areas sixty items were generated to produce a scale with 300 items. This attitude scale was administered to 381 participants, with statistical analysis on the data. According to Rogers and Wrightsman (1978), the findings indicate that the high school students responded with significantly more positive attitudes toward the extension of self-determination rights than the other three groups.

(2) **Implication for this Case Study:** An implication of the research by Rogers and Wrightsman (1978) for this case study on children's participation rights and responsibilities was that while children have the right to experience their participation rights for self-determination, they might face persons such as parents or educators who are willing to extend nurturance rights but reluctant to encourage the exercise of participation rights.

It could be said that adults in general and educators in particular need to realize that children have the inalienable right to exercise their participation rights, within the limits of their evolving capacities and with appropriate direction and guidance, in accordance with Article 5 of the CRC.

(b) Melton Study (1980)

(1) Summary: A study by Melton (1980), lawyer and psychologist, focused on children's views of their participation rights; its purpose was to test the hypothesis that "children in higher school grades and of high-SES backgrounds would be more likely to give high-level responses and to advocate rights for children than would younger and lower-status children" (p. 186). Eighty first to seventh grade students of various Boston suburbs were interviewed for responses to twelve vignettes which involved conflicts with school personnel and parents such as access to school records, privacy of a diary, and medical treatment without parental consent.

Melton (1980) concluded that it "appears that children often have the cognitive capacity to exercise rights and perhaps function as 'mature minors' at least in a limited way earlier than they are frequently thought to be able. It is clear, though, that children under third grade should not be permitted to *waive* rights because they do not know what the word means" (p. 189).

(2) Implication for this Case Study: An implication of the research by Melton (1980) for this case study was that children under Grade 3 can understand having rights, but not giving up rights; thus, the legal waiver of children's rights must be assumed by parents, legal guardians, or the state, and the exercise of children's rights should be under adult direction and guidance to be congruent with Article 5.

(c) Margolin Study (1982)

(1) Summary: A study by Margolin (1982) considered children's views on rights for self-determination within an elementary school setting with 365 children in Grades 2 through 6. The purpose of the study was to survey the students' "preferences for adult or child control in seven situations which are currently denied self-determination, either by conventional parent control or by legal statute" (Margolin, 1982, p. 97). The survey involved cartoons of situations including television, food, bedtime, residence, and voting.

Statistical analysis of the collected data indicated that the Grade 2 children preferred restrictions on their self-determination except for voting. While 66% of the children in the American study thought that they should be able to vote for their country's president, there was a sharp increase in support for self-determination by the children in Grade 3 and up, especially in the girl population. This finding, consistent with Melton's (1980) study, may reflect a transition in children's conceptions about their own power to exercise their rights.

(2) Implication for this Case Study: An implication of the research by Margolin (1982) for this case study was that there may be a transition in children's conceptions about their own power during third grade, the same grade in which this case study was conducted. The strong support of self-determination rights by girls may have been a reflection of their increased experiences of exercising their rights.

(d) Ruck Study (1994)

(1) Summary: This doctoral research assessed children's reasoning about nurturance and self-determination rights involving vignettes of moral dilemmas in varying contexts. The study included 169 girls and boys aged 8 to 17, from five schools in Toronto. Statistical analysis of the data revealed that children's reasoning about self-determination situations appeared to correspond with the Kohlberg's multi-stage model of moral reasoning, to be discussed in Part III of this chapter. For example, responses congruent with the first stage of reasoning, where one apparently behaves morally out of fear of punishment, were given by the youngest subjects. Responses congruent with the final stage of reasoning, where rights were seen in terms of abstract principles, were given by the two oldest groups of subjects. Reasoning about nurturance rights revealed that older participants referred to aspects of parental obligation, whereas younger children mentioned consequences to them if nurturance rights were not ensured.

(2) Implication for this Case Study: An implication of the research by Ruck (1994) for this case study on children's participation rights and responsibilities was that reasoning about rights appeared to depend on the specific context in which the rights were vicariously experienced by the children in the vignettes. Thus, it could be said that consideration needs to be given to how contextual factors influence children's experiences of their rights as in this case study.

ii. Children's Participation in Curricular Research

(a) Curricular Research

(1) **Summary:** A review of reports and documents on curricular research revealed decades of studies focused on changes of cognitive functioning or attitudes as a result of curriculum implementation. However, curricular research that was focused on first-person accounts of children's direct participation in curriculum development were seemingly rare (Garner & Acklen, 1979); rather, the researcher's or teacher's thoughts were represented in descriptive narrative accounts of classrooms (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988).

There seems to be a paucity of students' voices in curricular research, possibly because children have not been asked to speak about their curricular experiences (Erickson & Shultz, 1992). Even if young children were asked to reflect upon and represent their experiences through written or spoken narratives, however, they might not be able to answer immediately; they would need to be educated in ways that build in strategies which help them to question, assess, and describe their experiences.

(2) **Implication for this Case Study:** An implication of these findings for this case study was that there was a need to conduct research focusing on students' active participation in delivery of a curriculum, and to ensure that strategies of questioning, reasoning, and narrative writing were incorporated into *The World Around Us* curriculum.

(b) Curricular Case Studies

(1) Summary: A further review of literature on curricular research shows that qualitative case studies have been especially useful to help educators develop insight into processes of curriculum development and evaluation. For example, a report by Werner, Frankcombe, Grieve, and Watson (1983) documented case studies on program implementation experiences in BC, such as programs on teacher effectiveness, writing, students with special needs, and computers.

All the case studies in this report by Werner and colleagues (1983) focussed on program implementation procedures and their outcomes, both anticipated and unplanned, in order to benefit future curricular designs. This review showed "a growing recognition of the role that students play in program implementation. Although implementation plans and activities are different in elementary and secondary schools, contributors at both levels acknowledge the momentum students can give to a program change" (Werner, Frankcombe, Grieve, & Watson, 1983, p. 3).

(2) Implication for this Case Study: An implication of these findings for this case study was that the case study design can be useful for exploring curriculum impact and implementation. This case study was undertaken in order to explore how curricular experiences influenced children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, in order to benefit future curriculum materials.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a review of theory and research literature that concerns children's rights stated in the CRC in general, and their participation rights and responsibilities in particular. With the inclusion of participation rights contained within a cluster of Articles 12 through 17, the CRC recognizes children as developing persons who are capable of eventually participating in civic life. As a result, what were once seen as the needs of children have been elevated to something far harder to ignore -- their rights.

This chapter also provided a review of theory and research literature that addresses children's moral development. The review of literature revealed that children's experiences of participation rights and responsibilities can be understood in terms of three interactive evolving capacities of moral development. This chapter provided a further review of theory and research literature that concerns children's experiences of participation rights in research conducted both in and out of school. An implication for this case study was that a better understanding was needed of children's evolving capacities to experience their participation rights and responsibilities, with appropriate direction and guidance. In light of the literature reviewed in this chapter, it could be concluded that the voices of children and youth are particularly important within an educational context given children's participation rights to express opinions and to make decisions about matters that directly affect them.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Methods

Chapter Abstract

This chapter is devoted to discussing the research design and methods employed for operationalizing this classroom-based case study. In order to develop a logical argument that supports a case study design with the collection of qualitative data, consideration is given to how the theory and research surveyed in the Literature Review drives the research design as well as the methods for conducting this exploratory study. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two parts.

In Part I, Research Design, the case study design employed in this classroom-based research on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities is introduced. This part of the chapter is divided into five sections as outlined here. In the first section, an interpretive approach to qualitative research is addressed. In the second section, characteristics of the case study design to collect qualitative data within the classroom are outlined. In the third section, the evaluative, descriptive, and interpretive case study components employed for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data are outlined. In the fourth section, a model for operationalizing this case study involving the systematic collection,

analysis, and interpretation of the qualitative data is presented. In particular, the Context-Input-Process-Product Evaluation Model (Stufflebeam, 1983) is introduced in this section, and the three phases involved in the curriculum development processes including design or redesign, implementation, and evaluation are described. In the fifth section, a multifaceted conceptual framework that links the design of this case study with three qualitative data collections methods is outlined.

In Part II, Methods for Collecting the Qualitative Data, the multiple methods selected in order to collect qualitative data qualitative data on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities are addressed. This part of the chapter is divided into two sections as outlined here. In the first section, the three qualitative data collection methods employed during this case study are described: interviews, narratives, and observations. In the second section, issues surrounding reliability and validity of data collection methods are discussed, which permitted the researcher to explore how curricular experiences influence the case study children's conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Key points of this chapter are briefly summarized in the Chapter Summary.

Part I

Research Design

i. Describing an Interpretive Approach to Qualitative Research

In order to show that an interpretive approach is well suited to the search for answers to the research question that guided this exploratory study, it is especially significant to delineate the difference between a positivist approach and an interpretive approach to research in the social sciences. A positivist approach assumes that objects and events exist independent of people's perceptions of them, whereas an interpretive approach assumes the world is a highly subjective phenomenon that involves personal interactions and perceptions (Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1993, 1994).

To explain further, taking a positivist approach to research might involve the construction and administration of a survey with specific questions in order to gather quantifiable data during a pre-test and post-test experiment (Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1993, 1994). Those questions would be based on the researcher's definition of key terms, and premised on the assumption that each question means the same thing to each respondent -- an assumption that can often be incorrect. With certain conceptions such as age or reading vocabulary that could be measured with statistical precision, it makes sense from a positivist perspective to impose such standard definitions and to reduce information to numerical measures.

If, however, a researcher were to focus on an exploratory study as in the case of this present research, then quantitative procedures become more problematic. When speaking of the study of children involving an interpretive approach to research, Gaskins (1994) noted that the researcher "does not study behavior lifted out of the context in which it occurs and one takes the context to be as much a part of the focus of the study as the actors" (p. 316). Congruent with this contextualistic approach to research, the present research explored the phenomenon of children's conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities in light of curricular and "contextual influences" (Cornbleth, 1988, p. 89), which shaped their experiences within the classroom, to be discussed in Chapter 4.

To be more specific, from an interpretive approach, this research was undertaken in order to explore how curricular experiences influenced the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, with a view to benefiting future curriculum materials for children's rights education. The researcher listened to the children's responses by hearing, reading, and observing, while asking what lessons may be gained from the students' voices for informing educational practice and building educational theory. Therefore, it could be said that not everything that is important can be measured with statistical treatment, and that doing so would have been an inappropriate approach to operationalizing this exploratory study.

This study involved qualitative research that used qualitative data collection methods. Qualitative research is characterized by Bogdan and Bilken (1992), as well as Guba and Lincoln (1989), as research with qualitative or nominal data, and with the context being accorded as much importance as the phenomena under study, in contrast to its quantitative counterpart that typically relies on statistical treatment of numbers as the basis of making claims.

Bogdan and Bilken (1992), as well as Gaskins (1994), emphasized that the natural context -- circumstances or environments that surround and influence particular events or experience -- should be the direct source of the qualitative data. The collected data can be analysed inductively and interpreted with a view to building theory (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992; Gaskins, 1994).

In qualitative research the primary objective is to understand the meaning of an experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Gaskins, 1994). Accordingly, qualitative research attempts to explore and to understand how parts work together in order to create a whole experience (Merriam, 1988); moreover, it proceeds on three key methodological assumptions outlined here.

(1) Qualitative research assumes the world is a highly subjective phenomenon that involves personal interactions and perceptions, whereas quantitative research is based on an assumption that a single objective reality exists (Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1993, 1994). The former is primarily concerned with process as in this case

study in which the researcher was interested in children's direct involvement in the curriculum development processes.

(2) Qualitative research assumes that meaning is embedded in people's experiences (Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1993, 1994); and within the context of this case study, the researcher looked for meaning in the children's curricular experiences. In particular, the researcher was interested in how curricular experiences during implementation of a curriculum for children's rights education influence children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities.

(3) Qualitative research assumes the researcher is involved in field work when the data is being collected; and within the context of this case study, the researcher went out to the 'field,' or the classroom site, in order to collect qualitative data within the educational setting (Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1993, 1994).

ii. Outlining Characteristics of this Qualitative Case Study

While a case study can involve qualitative or quantitative data or integrate a combination of the two (Gaskins, 1994; Stake, 1994), the research reported in this dissertation is focused on a case study with qualitative data, or a qualitative case study. Merriam (1988) describes a qualitative case study as an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or social unit" (p. xiv). Merriam (1988) and Yin (1993, 1994) have suggested that a qualitative case study is an ideal design for the presentation of data gathered during naturalistic research conducted in a natural setting such as a classroom.

Furthermore, Merriam (1988) stated that the "decision to focus on qualitative case studies stems from the fact that the design is chosen precisely because researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather that hypothesis testing" (p. 10). Accordingly, the case study design was well-suited to this classroom-based research on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities for the seven reasons discussed below:

(1) The researcher chose to conduct a case study because this design has been viewed as a useful means to investigate both a phenomenon and the context in which it takes place, when either "the context is hypothesized to contain important explanatory variables about the phenomenon, or . . . the boundaries between the

phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1993, p. 134).

In line with Merriam's (1988) description of a qualitative case study, the researcher explored the "bounded phenomenon" (p. xiv) of the participating children's conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities which emerged during their experiences with the curriculum for children's rights education. In this case study, the participating children's conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities were considered the phenomenon, and the classroom where the curriculum was implemented was considered the context.

(2) The researcher chose to conduct a case study because it permitted the research to focus on a "single phenomenon or entity" (Merriam, 1988, p. 10) or the case under study. The researcher selected a single case for study that was one classroom of nineteen Grade 3 students, and their classroom teacher, at the Auscultare School (pseudonym) within the public school system of BC.

(3) The researcher chose to conduct a case study because it looked at a particular situation, instance, or phenomenon, which meant the case study and its data and findings were *particularistic* (Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988). Since the data and findings were considered particular to the site-specific context where collected (Yin, 1993, 1994), an implication for this case study was that the research data and findings documented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 were particular to the context of the specific classroom of Grade 3 children where the research was conducted.

(4) The researcher chose to conduct a case study because it allowed for the extension of the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study, which meant the case study was *heuristic* (Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1994). The participating children's conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities were considered the phenomenon in this research; thus, this case study was heuristic in that its purpose was to explore how curricular experiences influenced children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, with a view to benefiting future curriculum materials for children's rights education.

(5) The researcher chose to conduct a case study because it relied on *inductive reasoning*, which meant that understanding of the phenomenon under study emerged "from an examination of data -- data grounded in the context itself ... rather than verification or predetermined hypothesis" (Merriam, 1988, p. 13). This classroom-based case study involved collection, inductive content analysis, and interpretation of its qualitative data, each to be discussed in Chapter 5.

Briefly stated, the goals of inductive content analysis within the context of this study included organizing the data into interpretable and meaningful categories as well as identifying reasonable conclusions and insights based on the data (Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1993, 1994). Inductive content analysis of the data involved the systematic organization of the word and phrase tables which emerged from the collected data and its perceived themes.

(6) The researcher chose to conduct a case study because it was the preferred design for research that asks *how* or *why* questions, and when it focuses on contemporary phenomenon within a naturalistic context, according to Gaskins (1994), Merriam (1988), and Yin (1993, 1994). This case study explored *how* curricular experiences influenced the child participants' emerging conceptions of participation rights and responsibilities, which can be considered a contemporary phenomenon, and it took place in a naturalistic context of the classroom.

(7) The researcher chose to conduct a case study because it permitted the inclusion of varied components: evaluative, descriptive, and interpretive. While case studies can be essentially descriptive or interpretive or evaluative, some research is best served through a combination of those components (Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1994; Yin, 1993), as in this case study, to be introduced in the next section of this chapter, and further discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

iii. Outlining Evaluative, Descriptive, and Interpretive Components

As previously stated, through this case study the researcher was searching for effective means for both providing appropriate direction and guidance to help students understand and exercise their participation rights and responsibilities, as well as recognizing children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Qualitative research was undertaken in order to explore how curricular experiences influenced the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, with a view to benefiting future curriculum materials for children's rights education

As previously stated in Chapter 1, this classroom-based case study on exploring children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities was guided by this research question: How does participation in delivery of a curriculum for children's rights education, and direct involvement in classroom-based curriculum development processes, influence the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities? Responding to this question required a case study design and methods which employed the systematic processes of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the qualitative data. These processes were effectively operationalized through case study design that combined evaluative, descriptive, and interpretive case study components, as briefly outlined next.

(1) The Evaluative Component: This component primarily focused on the systematic data collection process (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1994; Yin, 1993). With a view to benefiting future curriculum materials for children's rights education, qualitative data were collected on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. The data collection process was facilitated through both Process Evaluation and Product Evaluation procedures (Stufflebeam, 1983), in order to explore the implementation and impact of curricular experiences on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities.

(2) Descriptive Component: This component of the case study primarily focused on analyzing the descriptive data (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1994; Yin, 1993), which were systematically collected during both Process Evaluation and Product Evaluation procedures (Stufflebeam, 1983). During this case study, analysis of the descriptive data served "the function of allowing a researcher and an audience to make sense of what transpired in a setting, yielding a patterned, synthesized understanding of it" (McCutcheon, 1981, p. 6). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), data analysis in qualitative research involves the following:

> systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them, and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves the working of data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others. (p. 153)

(3) Interpretive Component: This component of the case study primarily focused on interpreting the descriptive data (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1994; Yin, 1993). The interpretive component addresses conclusions drawn from this case study and implications for the research goals of both informing educational practice and building educational theory.

With reference to informing educational practice, the researcher searched for effective means for providing appropriate direction and guidance to help students understand and exercise their participation rights and responsibilities, in accordance with their developmental capacities. With reference to building educational theory, the researcher searched for descriptive signs for recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities.

iv. Model for Collecting, Analyzing, and Interpreting the Data

(a) Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model

In order to collect, analyze, and interpret the qualitative data concurrently and systematically through the evaluative, descriptive, and interpretive components previously outlined, the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model developed by Stufflebeam (1983) was modified and adapted to meet the needs of this particular case study. It should be noted that when the curriculum for children's rights education, *The World Around Us*, was originally developed and written by the researcher (Murray, 1995), the Context Evaluation procedure (needs assessment) and Input Evaluation procedure (curriculum content and strategies) were conducted, and so these two procedures were not repeated at the outset of this case study.

The CIPP Model (Stufflebeam, 1983) was modified whereby only the Process and Product Evaluation procedures were employed in order to facilitate the concurrent and systematic collecting, analyzing, and interpreting of qualitative data. The Process Evaluation procedure concerned *implementation* of the curriculum, since it was important to consider how and where the curriculum was actually implemented when analyzing how the curriculum influences those who use it. In addition, the Product Evaluation procedure concerned *impact* of the curriculum (Stufflebeam, 1983).

Taken together, the Process and Product Evaluation procedures enabled the researcher to collect and analyze qualitative data

concurrently and systematically in the form of excerpts selected from interviews, narratives, and observation notes while focusing on the children's capacities for reasoning, responding, and prosocial acting. To explain further, the researcher proceeded through the Evaluative Component of case study on the understanding that curricular experiences influence conceptual development in general (Gersch, 1996; Lickona, 1991; Martorella, 1985; Noddings, 1988; Reardon, 1995; Scott, 1996), and can influence children's emerging conceptions of participation rights and responsibilities.

In so doing, the researcher endeavoured to make connections between the child participants' curricular experiences and their emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, to be discussed in the analysis and interpretations of the findings in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

(b) Curriculum Development Processes

Within the context of the case study, the students' curricular experiences involved their participation in delivery of *The World Around Us* curriculum and their direct involvement in its classroom-based curriculum development processes. While the child participants' direct involvement in the curriculum development processes was mainly centred on implementing the curriculum, and it also included designing or redesigning as well as evaluating aspects of the curriculum, as outlined here.

The term *curriculum development processes*, according to Miller and Seller (1990), generally refers to three key processes included in an evolving cycle of curriculum development: design, implementation, and evaluation. During the *curriculum design* process, the curriculum specialist or classroom teacher typically develops materials which include content and strategies to best suit the needs, abilities, and interests of the children (Miller & Seller, 1990). However, for the purposes of this case study in which an existing set of curriculum materials was previously designed by the researcher, the students were offered opportunities to participate actively in the *redesigning* of existing materials as well as the *design* of additional activities. For example, the students voiced their opinions on the existing curriculum content and processes, and suggested new ideas and made decisions on curricular design matters, with a view to benefiting future curriculum materials for children's rights education.

The students were key figures in *curriculum implementation* processes which can be seen as an *event* experienced at school, not as a product (Miller & Seller, 1990). The implementation phase was considered an evolving process that involved interaction of teacher and students, which was meant to "lead to mutual adaption of the program . . . [that] can range from superficial dialogue about the program to complete examination and revision of it" (Miller & Seller, 1990, p. 14). Students' direct involvement in the implementation phase of the curriculum is emphasized in the detailed analysis which follows in Chapter 4.

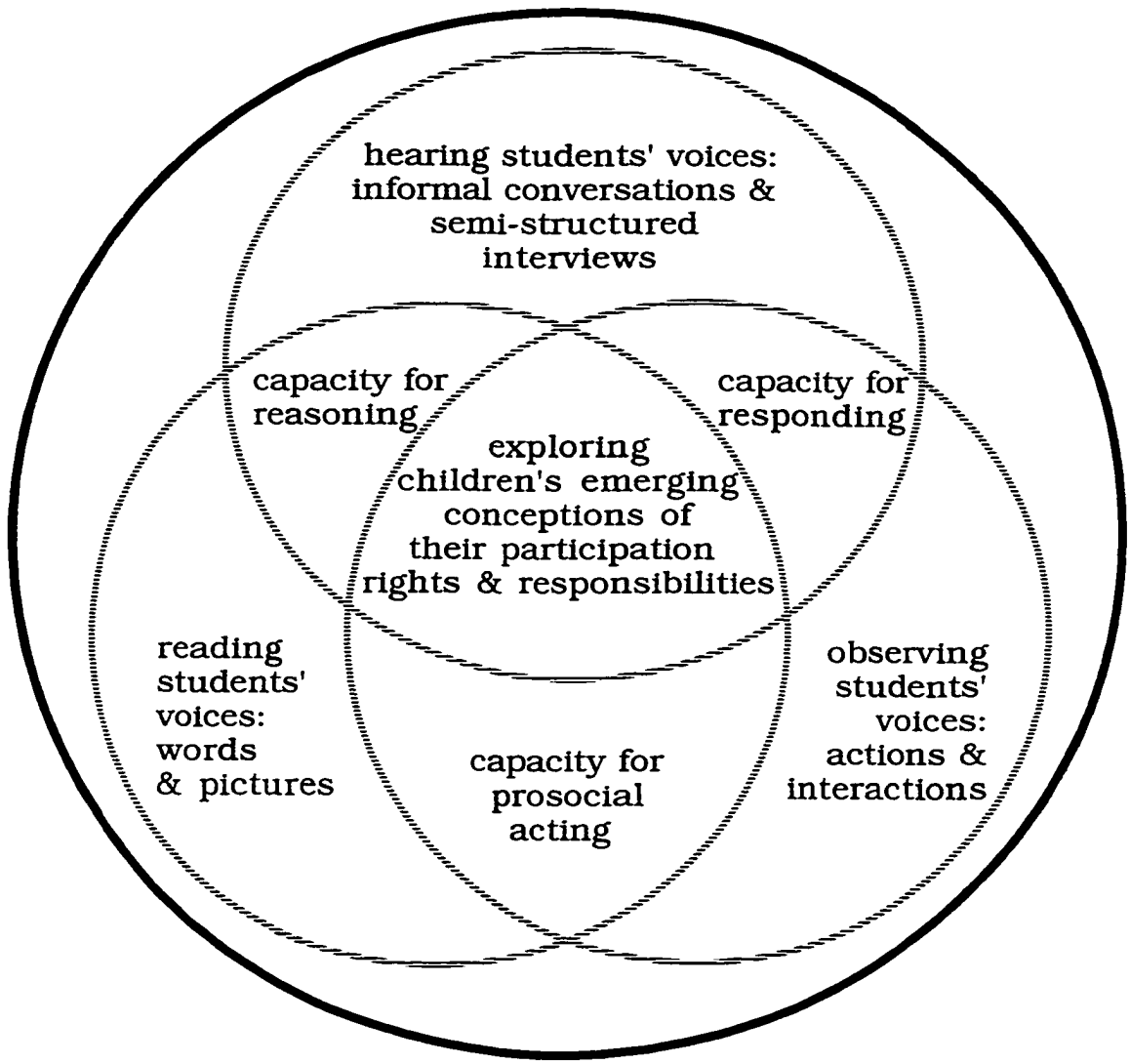
The *curriculum evaluation* processes involved formative evaluations of the curriculum during its implementation. For example, the children decided that more artistic activities were needed in order to express their ideas in a visual manner, and so they suggested creating a mural. The evaluation process also involved impact of the curriculum on children's emerging conceptions during their participation in its delivery, as noted above in the CIPP Evaluation Model description (Stufflebeam, 1983).

v. Framework Linking Case Study Design with Methods

Fundamental to exploring the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities was the construction of a conceptual framework that linked the design of this case study with its data collection methods. A case study design and methods were employed for the systematic processes of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the qualitative data. These processes were effectively operationalized through a case study design that combined evaluative, descriptive, and interpretive components. This design supported the collection of qualitative evidence that reflected the child participants' thoughts, feelings, and actions.

For the purposes of this research, a multifaceted conceptual framework was developed for exploring the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Based on the theory and research literature reviewed in Chapter 2, Part II, on children's moral development, construction of this framework was premised on the understanding that interactive capacities which children experience during moral development similarly come into play during the conceptualization process (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Damon, 1988; Garrod, 1993; Hersh, Miller, & Fielding, 1980; Kaltsounis, 1987; Lickona, 1991; Martorella, 1985; Scott, 1987; Welton & Mallan, 1988). A framework that involved three lenses served as the frame of reference: capacities for reasoning (cognitive), responding (affective), and prosocial acting (behavioural).

The usefulness of this kaleidoscopic framework was that it linked together three interactive capacities of children's development with three data collection methods of interviews, narratives, observations. These methods were selected for this research because they enabled the researcher to collect qualitative data on the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. In so doing, data were gathered by listening to the child participants' voices, which involved hearing students' voices during informal conversations and semi-structured interviews; and, listening involved reading students' words and pictures, and observing their actions and interactions during implementation of *The World Around Us*, to be further discussed in Part II of this chapter. (**Refer to next page Figure 1 - Multifaceted Conceptual Framework.**)



Design Components: Evaluative, Descriptive, & Interpretive

Data Collection Methods: Interviews, Narratives, & Observations

Children's Capacities: Reasoning, Responding, & Prosocial Acting

Figure 1. Multifaceted Conceptual Framework

Part II

Methods for Collecting the Qualitative Data

i. Describing the Three Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Within the context of this case study, multiple data collection methods were selected in order to explore how curricular experiences influenced the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, with a view to benefiting future curriculum materials focused on children's rights education. In particular, three data collection methods -- interviews, narratives, observations -- were employed in this case study for triangulation of methods. According to Berg (1995), Mathison (1988), and Popham (1988), *triangulation* refers to the use of different methods to collect data as a strategy for enhancing the validity and reliability of the research findings.

The rationale behind "methodological triangulation" (Mathison, 1988, p. 14) is that use of multiple methods can help the researcher to cross-reference the responses of the participants (Mathison, 1988). According to Yin (1993), the researcher needs "to ask the same question of different sources of evidence; if all sources point to the same answer, you have successfully triangulated your data" (p. 69); as a consequence, the researcher should have increased confidence that an event occurred if information from at least three sources all converge and suggest similar findings.

The methods of interviews, narratives, and observations were assessed for suitability by the researcher during the pilot program of the Primary-level curriculum for children's rights education within a major urban school district in BC during April 1996 through June 1997. When using the three data collection methods, it was kept in mind by the researcher that the words expressed by the child participants inevitably varied in descriptiveness depending on their abilities to articulate their answers in written or spoken forms (Garbarino & Stott, 1989). When less description was involved, some of the children's responses could not be readily clustered around an emergent theme; consequently, those excerpts were listed alone instead of clustered with a related theme.

The raw data were recorded and transcribed if necessary, while the students' names were coded in order to preserve confidentiality and anonymity. To be more specific, the excerpts of the nine girl students were coded as GS 1 through GS 9 and the ten boy students were coded as BS 1 through BS 10 so that GS 1 indicated Girl Student 1 whereas BS 10 indicated Boy Student 10. For example, the following excerpts illustrate how the raw data were coded:

Girl Student #3:

GS 3 *You take time to listen and that feels right to me.*

Boy Student #3:

BS 3 *I understand what you need me to do now.*

Specifically, the researcher selected three methods to collect qualitative data on the participating students' written and spoken words and their actions during their curricular experiences: (a) semi-structured interviews primarily with child participants, plus interviews with the classroom teacher and interested parents/legal guardians, (b) children's narratives, and (c) participant observations, to be discussed next.

(a) Semi-Structured Interviews

In keeping with the exploratory nature of the case study that highlighted the significance of listening to the children's voices, qualitative data on children's verbal expressions were collected via semi-structured interviews, which involved the researcher using a list of questions to guide the interviews. The term *semi-structured interview* refers to a process "guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time" (Merriam, 1988, p. 74). This qualitative data collection strategy has been supported by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Garbarino and Stott (1989), Merriam (1988), and Yin (1993, 1994) who suggested that interviews are effective means of data collection, especially when used in conjunction with other methods, such as narratives and observations, as employed during this case study.

According to Merriam (1988), the semi-structured interview

format "allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas of the topic" (p. 74). The semi-structured interview was chosen over a highly structured interview, which is "an oral form of the written survey" (Merriam, 1988, p. 73) such as a questionnaire, or the unstructured interview in which "there is no predetermined set of questions" (Merriam, 1988, p. 74), but more conversational in tone. In addition, the researcher had informal conversations with the child participants in their classroom, which allowed for spontaneity and flexibility of questions and responses.

In particular, the semi-structured *evaluation* interview (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) was conducted in order to develop an understanding on which characteristics of the curriculum processes were perceived to be effective or ineffective for the children and the teacher. Briefly stated, an evaluation interview is one where the researcher attempts "to learn whether new programs, projects, or other types of intentional changes are living up to expectations" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 27). **(Refer to Appendix B - Sample Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Child Participants.)**

While conducting interviews and collecting related qualitative data, the benefits and risks of such interviews became apparent. First, a benefit of using this means of data collection was that the interview did not require the child respondent to read or write. However, the risk was that the interview data could be influenced by children's

maturity and their abilities to understand questions and to articulate responses (Cox, 1991; Garbarino & Stott, 1989).

Second, another benefit was that the interview allowed a more direct access to the personal world of the child through open-ended questions over observational or written measures. A risk of gathering data through interviews was that the children's responses could be influenced by the interviewer's tone of voice or by her nonverbal behaviours. Similarly, the types of questions, could have influenced how the child participants verbally expressed their ideas, or perhaps even chose to withhold their responses (Garbarino & Stott, 1989; Hills, 1993). Keeping in mind these possible influences on children's responses, the follow points were used as guidelines when the researcher designed the interview questions. Each point was considered and practised by the researcher when conducting interviews with eighteen of the nineteen the students:

(1) The interviewer asked each case study student to bring to the interview something that he or she had drawn or written (Hills, 1993). For example, some students brought their Charter of Rights that they had individually printed on scroll paper. The interview then began with the child talking about the content of the Charter with which he or she had some expertise and familiarity.

(2) The interviewer remained non-judgemental by accepting everything that the child participants expressed (Hills, 1993). For example, BS 2 stated: *I got the best ideas in class so I should get*

more time than other kids. In response, the interviewer reminded him that all interviews with students were a maximum of 10 minutes.

(3) To help reduce the child participants' self-consciousness (if existent), the interviewer let them represent a peer group (Garbarino & Stott, 1989). For example, the interviewer asked the children: *I would like to learn what children in your group (or classroom think are some responsibilities of children* instead of, *What do you think are some children's responsibilities?*

This excerpt was transcribed from the response of GS 2:

> *We think all children can take some responsibility to listen to parents. We can share a responsibility to look after a computers at a computer room. All children can share a responsibility to give some respect to each other. Children can take some responsibility to save electricity and turn lights off. We can share a responsibility to help my friend (name deleted) in a wheelchair and give her a push when she gets tired. We can share a responsibility to not budge in front of a line.*

(4) For the evaluation interviews, the interviewer used probing questions so that clarity of the child participants' opinions and responses about the curriculum topics and activities were enhanced. For example, the interviewer asked the child participants questions such as: *How should this activity be changed to make it better? Why? or How come? What did you learn by doing this activity?*

These guidelines were based on the assumption that a primary contribution of researchers to education is to practise types of research that reveal significant characteristics about how and why children learn and develop (Garbarino & Stott, 1989). To this end, open-ended questions were included in the interview processes with

the child participants and adults.

The use of such questions was defended by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), who have maintained that such qualitative data collection is suitable when the researcher is "concerned with understanding behavior from the subject's own frame of reference" (p. 2). The questions referred to aspects of curricular experiences; for example, the students were asked their opinions on the curriculum materials.

Additional semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teacher and with six parents who had indicated their interest in being interviewed when they signed their children's consent forms. The interviews conducted with the teacher were valuable in that the information provided by her often corroborated findings of the researcher or expanded the meaning of those findings, as discussed in the data analyses and interpretations in Chapters 4 and 5.

The parent interviews were conducted at a time and place away from the classroom site that was mutually agreed upon by the respondent and the researcher, so that confidentiality and privacy could be preserved. These interviews ranged in length from thirty minutes to about one hour. The parents' schedules were accommodated by conducting four interviews in person and two by telephone. Informed consents to be interviewed were signed by the parents prior to the interviews sessions taking place. **(Refer to Appendix C - Sample Consent Form for Adult Interview.)**

Unlike the insights and information provided during the teacher interviews, it was found that the parent interviews were generally less valuable as far as corroborating the researcher's findings. The parents seemed eager to talk about their children and themselves, as they responded to the researcher's semi-structured interview questions, although the interviews were not limited to those questions. The questions focused on the parents' notions of what they thought terms such as responsibility and *rights* meant to their children.

Other questions focused on what responsibilities their children assumed at home; and, what rights their children exercised at home. Responses to this line of questioning provided the researcher with insights into the children's actions beyond the scope of the classroom; for example, if the children were provided with opportunities to experience their participation rights and responsibilities at home as they were in the classroom.

Perhaps the most enlightening information that the six parents provided during the interviews was their unsolicited comments on how often the children apparently spoke at home with enthusiasm about *The World Around Us* activities in which they took part at school. All the parents stated their support of the implementation of this curriculum for children's rights education, and five of the six parents mentioned that they would like to see the use of similar curriculum materials within all grades. **(Refer to Appendix D - Sample Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Adult Participants.)**

It should be noted that at the beginning of every interview with either the parents, teacher, or child participants, the researcher explained the purpose of the case study, what was expected of the interviewee, and that the respondent may ask questions for clarification at any time. The interviewees were asked if their responses might be taped, and if in agreement, then the interview was taped; however, all cassette recordings were destroyed after analyses. During the interviews, notes were taken by the researcher for later transcription, which were destroyed upon completion of analyses to ensure confidentiality.

It was kept in mind, however, that the use of an interview assumes that respondents possess the necessary knowledge or language skills to answer the questions (Garbarino & Stott, 1989; Gersch, 1996; Kohn, 1993). And so, the child may not only be unwilling to communicate their attitudes, values, and feelings about such issues as curricular activities, but he or she might simply be unable to do so for developmental reasons. In order to elicit data from the unable or unwilling child respondent, the researcher additionally gathered qualitative data through written techniques and observational methods within this case study, to be discussed next.

(b) Children's Narratives

Data collection through the children's narratives involved the use of two key instruments, which offered the child participants opportunities to write their reflections on the curricular experiences: (1) journals, or Thinking Logs as called in *The World Around Us* curriculum, in which the children wrote responses to each of the literature-based curricular activities and (2) *I am learning . . .* formative self- evaluation activity.

First, narrative writing in Thinking Logs was facilitated by providing students with curricular experiences in which learning and teaching strategies were used to broaden their reading-listening-viewing-writing interests, such as concept mapping, role playing, to be further discussed in Chapter 4. Second, children's reflections on their curricular experiences were facilitated through the *I am learning . . .* sheet, which provided a means of formative evaluation at the end of each activity within the ten thematic modules contained in *The World Around Us* curriculum, to be further discussed in Chapter 4. **(Refer to Chapter 4, Figure 5 - Sample I am learning . . . Sheet.)**

(c) Participant Observations

The method of participant observations involved the use low inference checklists and high inference field notes written during the observations. According to McCutcheon (1981) there are two main types of observations: *participant observation* in which the observers engage in the activities they set out to observe and *non-participant* observation, in which the observers stand aloof from the activities under observation such as behind a two-way mirror.

Participant observation was well-suited to this case study since qualitative data were collected on children's written and spoken words as well as their actions. According to McCutcheon (1981), the method of participant observation has two inherent benefits for case study research; that is, observation studies are superior to experiments and surveys when data are collected on non-verbal behaviours, and the process enables the observer to discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs and to record field notes.

For example, the researcher used higher inference field notes during observations, which asked questions such as: *What evidence shows that children are (or are not) actively participating in shared decision-making?* At other times a lower inference checklist was used, which focused on specific skills such as: *Does the child ask for help when needs it,* or *plays well with others,* or *initiates interactions with adults* **(Refer to Appendix E - Sample Classroom Observation Checklist.)**

ii. Discussing Reliability and Validity of Selected Methods

It was noted by the researcher at the preliminary stages of preparing for this case study that MacDonald and Walker (1975) made the point that a case study with qualitative data can have potential limitations. For example, this case study could only reflect a partial account of the phenomenon under study because it involved selection at every stage by the researcher. The researcher was cautious about potential inherent problems which, according to MacDonald and Walker (1975), could have surfaced throughout this case study such as becoming too involved in events

> or situations under study; problems over confidentiality of data; problems stemming from competition from different interest groups for access to and control over the data; problems concerning publication, such as the need to preserve anonymity of subjects; problems arising from the audience being unable to distinguish data from the researcher's interpretation of the data. (p. 4)

To avoid such potential problems, the researcher endeavoured to structure carefully both the study design and its implementation, and she took steps to assure the trustworthiness and dependability of the research in light of reliability and validity of the qualitative data collection methods, as discussed here.

(a) Reliability: When any type of research activity is designed, whether it be qualitative, or quantitative, or a combination of both, the researcher must give consideration to the reliability and validity of data collection methods. According to Yin (1993, 1994), reliability is

concerned with the stability, consistency, and predictability of methods during multiple tests, or the extent to which the study can be replicated using the selected methods. Both Berg (1995) and Popham (1988) maintained that without reliability methods may not reflect the actual state of a situation under study.

The systematic collection of data helps to ensure reliability in that similar procedures could be followed in multiple case studies or in a study conducted by multiple researchers. As previously outlined, systematic processes of collection, analysis, and interpretation of qualitative data were employed through a combination of evaluative, descriptive, and interpretive case study components.

(b) Validity

The validity of the methods used for data collection and analysis is concerned with the accuracy of the methods, or the extent to which the instruments measure what the researcher thinks she or he is measuring (Berg, 1995; Merriam, 1988; Popham, 1988). In this case study, the question of validity arose with respect to internal validity and external validity of the research methods.

The term *internal validity*, according to Berg (1995), Merriam (1988), and Popham (1988) refers to the extent to which the instrument represents the content of interest. For example, in order to corroborate observation findings, both higher inference field notes and lower inference observation checklists were used by the researcher for added consistency to observations.

The researcher further endeavoured to ensure internal validity and to corroborate findings by asking students related, probing interview questions about curricular activities. For example, responses about a Learning Centre activity were elicited from the children during their interviews though probing questions such as: *What part of the activity did you like doing the best? Why? What part do you think other children would like to do? Why?* The responses to such questions were analyzed for patterns and themes in order to clarify answers and determine how and why the children assessed certain strengths or weaknesses of the given learning activity (Cox, 1991; McCutcheon, 1981).

The term *external validity*, according to Berg (1995), Merriam (1998), and Popham (1988) refers to the generalizability of the research findings. The case study data were particular to curricular experiences of the students within the site-specific context where they were collected (Yin, 1993, 1994). Consequently, the findings documented in this dissertation were unlike experimental design findings which can lead to a statistical generalization from a representative sample to a larger population; rather, the data yielded through this case study could lead to generalization of theory to other situations, also called "theoretical generalization" (Erickson & Shultz, 1992, p. 479).

Theoretical generalization should be seen as a "process that resides in the judgment of the reader of that study rather than in the operations of the author amassing data and analyzing it (sampling and statistical generalization)" (Erickson & Shultz, 1992, p. 479). The process of theoretical generalization could be undertaken by readers of this case study; that is, they would have to decide if circumstances elsewhere were sufficiently similar to this present research documented in this dissertation to warrant the application of its particularistic data and findings (Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1993, 1994), to be further discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the qualitative case study design, which incorporated a combination of evaluative, descriptive, and interpretive components to operationalize this case study that explored how curricular experiences influenced children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. For the purposes of this classroom-based case study, a modified model of the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) Model for curriculum evaluations (Stufflebeam, 1983) was employed, which addressed Process (implementation of curriculum) and Product (impact of curriculum) evaluation procedures during the implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum.

In order to collect qualitative data during this case study, the researcher developed and employed a multifaceted conceptual framework, which was used as a basis for exploring children's conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. The conceptual framework linked together the three case study components with the interactive capacities of moral development, as well as the three data collection methods of interviews, narratives, and observations. The CIPP Model, the multifaceted conceptual framework, and the three data collection methods presented in this chapter permitted the researcher to collect, analyze and interpret the qualitative data on the case study students' thoughts, feelings, and actions by listening to their voices during implementation of *The World Around Us*, to be further discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

INFORMING EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Discussions on the Process Evaluation Findings

Chapter Abstract

This chapter is devoted to discussions on analyzing and interpreting the data, which were systematically collected during the formative stages of the Process Evaluation procedure in the CIPP Evaluation Model (Stufflebeam, 1983). The Process Evaluation procedure facilitated an exploration of the *implementation* of *The World Around Us* curriculum for children's rights education. The exploration of curriculum implementation yielded the Process Evaluation findings, which led to informing educational practice. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two parts.

In Part I, Discussing the Process Evaluation Findings, the detailed analyses of the findings are reported in three sections as outlined here. In the first section, the Process Evaluation procedure conducted during this case study is reviewed. In the next two sections, five guiding questions which expand on the primary research question initially stated in Chapter 1 are inductively analyzed and discussed. Implications are noted throughout these discussions for informing educational practice, which involved identifying the six learning and teaching strategies, to be summarized in Part II of this chapter.

In Part II, Informing Educational Practice, the interpretations of the Process Evaluation findings are reported in two sections as outlined here. In the first section, the six learning and teaching strategies are summarized, which effectively promoted the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities within the context of this case study. In the second section, conclusions are drawn from the Process Evaluation findings for informing educational practice on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Key points of this chapter are briefly summarized in the Chapter Summary.

Part I

Discussing the Process Evaluation Findings

i. Process Evaluation Procedure

The Process Evaluation procedure facilitated the exploration of the *implementation* of the curriculum with students' direct involvement in the curriculum development processes. Their involvement centred on processes of implementing the curriculum, while it also included designing or redesigning and evaluating aspects of the curriculum. According to Stufflebeam (1983), the "process evaluation, in addition to promoting improvement and supporting accountability, also fosters understanding of phenomena under study" (p. 133). It was important to consider both the context and implementation processes when analyzing how the curriculum influenced those who used it because this information explained what was done at the particular case study site; therefore, this information may be useful should there be interest in replicating similar research in the future within a comparable context. In light of the Process Evaluation procedure within this case study, the *research objective* was to explore the implementation of *The World Around Us* with students' involvement.

Related to this research objective was the *research goal* of informing educational practice on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, with a view to benefiting

future curriculum materials for children's rights education. This research goal was met through the exploration of the curriculum implementation processes, since this case study led to identifying six effective learning and teaching strategies, which promoted the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Restated from Chapter 1, the term *learning and teaching strategies* generally refers to educational practices which advance students' learning, and make active participation possible (Child Participants, April - June, 1998; Martorella, 1985; Noddings, 1988; Reardon, 1995).

In keeping with both the research objective and goal cited above, the following discussions are focused on the Process Evaluation findings, which were guided by five questions; these questions are intended to expand on the primary research question initially stated in Chapter 1. The first question addressed contextual factors, and the second question concerned conceptions associated with their rights and responsibilities. The next three questions explored how curricular experiences influenced the participating children's evolving capacities for reasoning, responding, and prosocial acting from a moral developmental perspective.

To explain further, the reviewed literature in Chapter 2, Part II, revealed that children's experiences of participation rights and responsibilities can be understood in terms of three interactive evolving capacities of moral development. Moreover, the interactive

capacities which children experience during moral development similarly come into play during the conceptualization process (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Damon, 1988; Garrod, 1993; Hersh, Miller, & Fielding, 1980; Kaltsounis, 1987; Lickona, 1991; Martorella, 1985; Scott, 1987; Welton & Mallan, 1988). Consequently, how curricular experiences influenced the participating children's evolving capacities were viewed by the researcher through three lenses: capacities for reasoning (cognitive), responding (affective), and prosocial acting (behavioural).

Throughout the discussions which follow, implications are noted for informing educational practice on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Samples of data drawn from the database of information collected from children's interviews, narratives, and observations are included in order to demonstrate and document various patterns and themes, and to substantiate the interpretations of the Process Evaluation findings.

ii. Guiding Questions on Contextual Factors and Conceptions

This section is devoted to responding to two guiding questions; the first question explored how contextual factors influenced implementation of the curriculum with students' direct involvement in its curriculum development processes. The second question explored how key conceptions associated with children's rights and responsibilities were introduced and reinforced through the implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum.

(a) How did contextual factors influence implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum?

This classroom-based case study enabled the researcher to explore how curricular experiences influenced the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Cornbleth (1988) viewed curriculum construction, and its curricular experiences, as "an ongoing activity shaped by various contextual influences within and beyond the classroom and accomplished interactively, primarily by teachers and students" (p. 89). Bogdan and Biklen (1982) explained that observations of contexts are useful methods for investigating influences that can shape experiences during a given case study. They have emphasized that the natural context, or the circumstances and environments which surround and influence particular events or experiences, should be a direct source of the qualitative data (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992).

To extend this line of thought to this case study in which the phenomenon and the context were integrally bound together, the various contextual factors which can influence implementation of the curriculum were considered. The interrelated factors of school, physical, personal, social, and cultural contexts were seen as influences on the implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum as analyzed below.

(1) **School Context:** This case study was conducted at an elementary school within a large school district located in southern British Columbia, Canada. According to demographic statistics provided by the school district's board office to the researcher, the public school where this case study was undertaken had a student population of 369 and twenty teachers in June 1998. It was situated in a community near a post-secondary facility. The case study was conducted over a three-month period between April and June 1998 at the Auscultare School (pseudonym), where the data were collected during the researcher's classroom visits of approximately 40 hours.

From the outset of undertaking this case study, the school district's superintendent, the school administrative officers, the classroom teacher, the child participants, and the children's parents offered their collective support to the researcher. As a consequence, accessibility to the case study site was straightforward and the researcher felt most welcomed.

Before the research started in the classroom, all the parents had signed consent forms which permitted their children to participate in this case study; however, one parent requested that her child not be interviewed on a one-to-one basis, and so he was never interviewed by the researcher. Consequently, the researcher was able to collect qualitative data on all nineteen children through observations and written work, and on eighteen children via interviews. Further evidence of parental support of this case study was the participation of six parents in semi-structured interviews, which were individually conducted by the researcher.

(2) **Physical Context:** The physical context of the classroom included the spatial dimensions, physical objects such as furniture, equipment, and materials, and arrangements of those objects. The classroom site was a portable structure situated amongst four other portables behind the main school building. A set of steps led up to the north door of the portable classroom and a ramp built to accommodate the wheelchair used by a student led up to the south door.

Within the classroom, a series of Learning Centres were available for individual or small group curricular activities. This environment became a most effective physical arrangement when the students learned to work cooperatively and responsibly with one or more partners, and when they could work with little teacher direction. The students' desks were grouped in three rows of five, and one row with

four desks, which accommodated the wheelchair of one student.

It appeared that the children had ownership of their classroom since its walls displayed masses of student work. For example, the walls were covered with students' individual Charters of Rights as well as two large scrolls on which were printed the Classroom Charter of Children's Rights and Children's Responsibilities. According to the children's responses during interviews, those charters seemingly served as visual reminders to the students of their rights and responsibilities.

The upper portions of the walls displayed large sheets of chart paper which listed the students' brainstorming ideas of what they needed, who and what they respected, children's rights, and children's responsibilities. During the latter part of this case study in June 1998, the students' project on Canadian geography was tied in with their study of children's rights and responsibilities, and so papier maché maps of Canada and students' renderings of this country's flag surrounded their charters of rights and responsibilities.

The classroom included a small library of children's fiction and non-fiction books as well as the fifty-five children's books included in *The World Around Us* curriculum resource kit. The children were encouraged to access and share the curriculum books in their spare time and reading period, which they frequently did, as well as when they were actively engaged in planned curricular activities.

(3) **Personal Context:** The personal context of the classroom included nineteen Grade 3 child participants; the ten boys and nine girls were either 8 or 9 years of age, including one set of twin boys. The class composition also included one classroom teacher, and one Child Support Worker who attended a female student with special needs. The child's special needs included "cerebral palsy, visual impairment, and cognitive developmental delay," as stated by the student's parent to the researcher during an interview.

According to the teacher, four boys required literacy assistance, and two girls required both literacy and numeracy assistance, and so they were eligible for special services from the teacher in the school's Learning Resource Room. As the students expressed during individual interviews with the researcher, working with this specialist was perceived by the children as having a "special activity time" rather than an indication of having special learning needs.

(4) **Social Context:** The social context involved the research participants, including the nineteen students, the teacher, and the researcher, who interacted within the classroom to varying degrees. For example, both the researcher and the teacher openly and consistently discussed, modelled, practised, and reinforced participatory skills such as expressing ideas and respectfully listening to others. While helping children to develop their participatory skills in the classroom, other social skills for interdependent Learning

Centre activities were also modelled by the teacher and practised by the students. For example, the child participants took part in sharing materials, dividing a given task into manageable units of work and study, accepting others' ideas and opinions, solving problems and conflicts, recording group efforts, and verbally evaluating group work.

Since the researcher was periodically part of the social context, it should be noted that her mere presence in the classroom could have evoked a Hawthorne effect (Hills, 1993); that is, the child participants might have perceived the researcher as a novelty and in consequence, occasionally reacted to her rather than the curricular experiences. Keeping in mind the possibility of the child participants' reactivity to the researcher, which could have distorted the data, the classroom teacher was asked to pay particular attention to the students' actions as well as their written or spoken words in the researcher's absence. The teacher's comments indicated that the researcher's periodic visits to the classroom seemingly had no particular influence on the children's responses, and so there was no indication of a Hawthorne reaction during this case study.

(5) **Cultural Context:** The school district where the case study was conducted had a policy of open enrollment, which allowed parents and children the choice of what elementary school to attend. The case study classroom represented the school's multicultural diversity in that Asian, European, and First Nations heritages were included in its

composition, and English was a second language for three of the children. The importance of cultural diversity was emphasized during the implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum; that is, access to accurate information about cultural heritages of those represented in the classroom, and other cultures such as Hutterites, was provided to the children through various media, such as books, computers, videos, and people. In an effort to value cultural diversity and to foster acceptance of the uniqueness of people, guests were periodically invited into the classroom to educate the students about aspects of various heritages, such as writing Chinese calligraphy.

In addition, *The World Around Us* curriculum provided learning activities linked to cultural diversity and unity. In Module #3, Activity #2 entitled *Traditional Names*, the right of children to have their own name and identity is addressed. With the support of the story called *Cheryl's Potlatch* (Thompson, 1991), the students had the opportunity to learn about a girl, Cheryl, who attended a potlatch where she received her traditional First Nations name, Deele. In keeping with Article 30 of the CRC, which recognizes the rights for children of minority populations to participate in their own linguistic and cultural heritages, multiculturalism was a reality that was respected and celebrated during this case study, to be further discussed in the next section of this chapter.

(b) How were key conceptions associated with children's rights and responsibilities introduced and reinforced through the implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum?

(1) Curriculum Content and Strategies: The implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum introduced and reinforced the child participants to content and strategies, which focused on children's participation rights and responsibilities, as well as their rights of protection and provision identified in the CRC. Implementation of the set of curriculum materials in the case study classroom were intended to help foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and a respect for the dignity and worth of children and others. In accordance with Article 30 concerning the right of children to participate in their own cultural heritages, a primary purpose of this curriculum was to help all child participants feel included and valued during this case study, and to show respect towards people within their own and from other cultural groups. Throughout the children's curricular experiences during this case study, the practice of honouring cultural and ethnic uniqueness and similarity was combined in order to provide a basis for introducing and reinforcing acceptance of cultural diversity and unity.

Pursuant to Article 29 of the CRC, goals of education include fostering the development of the child's capacities to the fullest potential and assisting in the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society. In support of these developmental processes, the

CRC also recognizes that children must be informed of their rights (Article 42); taken together, this curriculum for children's rights education was intended to help the child participants both understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities, and promote their responsible citizenship, with the support of ten thematic modules.

The ten thematic literature-based modules supported the children's conceptualization process in addition to their literacy and participatory skills. The modules included *content*, or thematic subject matter, on issues and themes relating to children's rights and responsibilities through five or more sample literature-based activities in each module. The modules also included learning and teaching *strategies* such as concept mapping and responsive writing, to be discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter. The content and strategies were incorporated into existing subject areas of the Grade 3 curriculum, such as language arts and social studies. In addition, the rights-related materials provided an extension to BC's provincially prescribed curriculum resource entitled *Personal Planning Integrated Resource Package: K to 7* (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1995).

Within the fifty-five learning activities, the content and strategies were linked to selections of children's literature, such as storybooks or poems. The literature selected for implementation with *The World Around Us* curriculum reflected Kohlberg's (1984) theory of morality in that some literature addressed issues of justice, rights,

or decision-making. In addition, other selections supported Gilligan's (1982) and Noddings' (1984, 1988, 1992, 1995) theories of morality in that some literature addressed issues of caring and responsibility.

In light of Eisenberg's (1989) theory on prosocial behaviours, literature that demonstrated and reinforced prosocial skills such as cooperating, helping, and listening were included in the curricular experiences. The children's literature was selected for its inclusion of role models who display such orientations, but does not stereotypically portray them, within a variety of roles and situations. **(Refer to Appendix F - Selection Criteria for Primary-Level Resources.)**

During the three-month data collection period of this case study, the child participants had equitable opportunities to participate in the curricular experiences offered through *The World Around Us.* Restated from Chapter 1, within the context of this case study, the term *equitable opportunities* refers to circumstances which recognize and promote the right of all female and male students to have just and reasonable equal access to quality educational learning experiences (Noddings, 1988; Reardon, 1995).

All nineteen Grade 3 students had opportunities to participate in the activities of Module #1, which introduced and reinforced conceptions associated with rights, respect, and responsibilities. In addition, all students could take part in the activities provided in Module #3 on Names and Countries, Module #5 on Special Needs and Care, Module #6 on Families and Friends, Module #8 on Safety, and

Module #10 on Peace Education. The remaining four modules, Module #2 on Individuality, Module #4 on Health Care and Shelter, Module #7 on Education and Play, and Module #9 on Protection of Child and Environment, were completed by some of the students either on an individual basis or within small groups at the Learning Centres set up within the classroom. Those students had opportunities to share their completed work with classmates, so that all the children could gain from the small group or individual curricular experiences.

This process allowed the researcher to collect qualitative data on child participants' emerging conceptions during the curricular experiences of all ten modules. Restated from Chapter 1, the term *children's emerging conceptions* refers to categories which are being formed through observations and experiences, and usually expressed in words or phrases (Kaltsounis, 1987; Martorella, 1985; Melton & Limber, 1992; Welton & Mallan, 1988). It should be noted that words or phrases, in themselves, were not conceptions but simply the names or labels used to represent them (Welton & Mallan, 1988).

When writing on the conceptualization process, Cullinan (1993) stated that "[s]tudents (and all learners) formalize elusive concepts as they shape them in words and express them. Putting concepts into language makes them memorable; labels for concepts gives us handles to hold on to. Taking ownership of ideas involves putting them into our own words" (p. 2). As described next, the conceptualization process was facilitated through various learning and teaching

strategies implemented during this case study, which were intended to help expand the students' understanding of key conceptions associated with children's rights, such as *human rights, human needs, responsibilities, family, fairness, respect,* and *privacy.*

(2) **Concept Mapping:** The strategy of concept mapping involved constructing a network or web of key words, events, or objects resulting in a concept map. A concept map is typically composed of a number of related conceptions with one identified as the focal conception on the map (Martorella, 1985; Taba, 1967).

During implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum, the child participants were introduced to the strategy of *concept mapping* (Martorella, 1985; Taba, 1967) together with both sentence frames and venn diagram activities, as discussed below. In Module #1 on Introducing Rights and Responsibilities, Activity #1 entitled *What are Children's Rights?*, the students were initially introduced to key conceptions such as *wants* and *needs* and *rights* through sentence frames. To explain this activity further, the teacher brainstormed with the students in order to become aware of prior knowledge and experiences of the child participants and what conceptions they already held. This process was facilitated by giving the students opportunities to finish groups of sentences frames, which included the initial words of a sentence in order to help the students frame their thoughts around certain ideas, as illustrated by the following examples:

I want to be . . . to have . . . to do . . .

BS 2 *I want to be taller than I am right now.*
I want to have a dog, cat, three horses, and a big yard for them.
I want to do the best I can.

I have a right to think . . . to feel . . . to do . . . to say. . .

BS 1 *I have a right to think with my imagination so I can make things.*
I have a right to feel good inside and outside.
I have a right to live in a safe place.
I have a right to say I like this or I don't.

I want to be . . . I need to do . . . I have a right to . . .

GS 4 *I want to be the Prime Minister of Canada when I grow up.*
I need to do good work at school to be good at University to get a job.
I have a right to become the Prime Minister of Canada.

Following a subsequent class review of some of the students' completed sentence frames, the children were divided into small groups in order to discuss how their *wants* were seen to be the same as their *needs*, and how their *needs* were seen to be the same as their *rights*. The children also discussed differences between wants and needs, and printed their ideas on the Circles Page, which was a venn diagram or configuration composed of two intersecting circles. The Circles Page was a useful tool to help the child participants distinguish between similarities and differences because it provided a visual structure for making such comparisons and contrasts (Murray, 1995).

This Circles Page activity provided a structure for the students to represent their conceptions of *Wants* within one circle, *Needs* within the second circle, and *Rights* were printed within the overlapping portion of the intersecting circles. Some child

participants repeated the same words in both *Needs* and *Rights* sections, such as *fresh air, water,* and *family;* this repetition suggested that they were beginning to see a commonality between what humans need to live and their human rights. During the completion of this task, it was succinctly stated by GS 7 that:

Wants can make me happy, and needs can make me healthy.

The next day, the class reviewed the Circles Page (venn diagram) activity and proceeded to implement the strategy of concept mapping, which was intended to reinforce the key conceptions introduced through both the sentence frames and the Circles Page. In order to construct a concept map, the child participants worked through a four-step procedure with the direction of their teacher. This strategy was most often collaboratively done by the whole class, and recorded on the chalkboard during brainstorming sessions when everyone had opportunities to express their ideas aloud about a given conception, theme, or issue.

As documented here, the teacher guided her students through each of the four main steps involved in concept mapping: list, group, link, and label (Martorella, 1985). The four steps involved in the strategy of concept mapping led to creating a concept map about *rights* in May 1998, as printed on the classroom chalkboard.

First, the teacher posed the question: *What do we really need to live and grow?* The children responded with key words and phrases which they associated with their conceptions related to the question,

such as *food, families, friends, school, clean water.* Second, the words were grouped or clustered around common themes, such as *family, school,* and *world,* which were listed on the board. Third, clusters of related conceptions were linked with lines or arrows; and fourth, the lines were labelled such as *learning* and *belonging.* These labels showed how the groups and subgroups of words were related to each other and to the focal conception. The children eventually came to the conclusion that the conception of *rights* was linked to all those terms and to the question of what we really need to live and grow; as a consequence, they decided to print that term within the oval at the top of the concept map.

An implication for informing educational practice was that the strategy of concept mapping, in combination with sentence frames and the Circles Page, helped to convey to the students as vividly as possible those properties or attributes which made up a conception, such as *rights* (Martorella, 1985). Furthermore, the children were helped by their teacher to explore and reason about common or different attributes of two or more conceptions by asking:

What is the same/different about... ? Why/How come?

The child participants were further offered opportunities to identify examples and non-examples of a conception in order to help them begin to discriminate its attributes; for instance, some examples excerpted from children's journals of *human needs* included *food, water, shelter, clothing, air,* and *love,* whereas non-examples of human

needs included *video games*, *castles*, and *violins*.

In summary, analysis of the Process Evaluation findings revealed that curricular experiences which involved the strategy of *concept mapping* effectively introduced and reinforced conceptions associated with rights, respect, and responsibilities. This strategy offered the child participants' an effective means to explore and expand their knowledge of existing conceptions, and to express in a visual manner their understanding of those conceptions (Martorella, 1985; Taba, 1967). **(Refer to next page Figure 2 - Sample Concept Map.)**

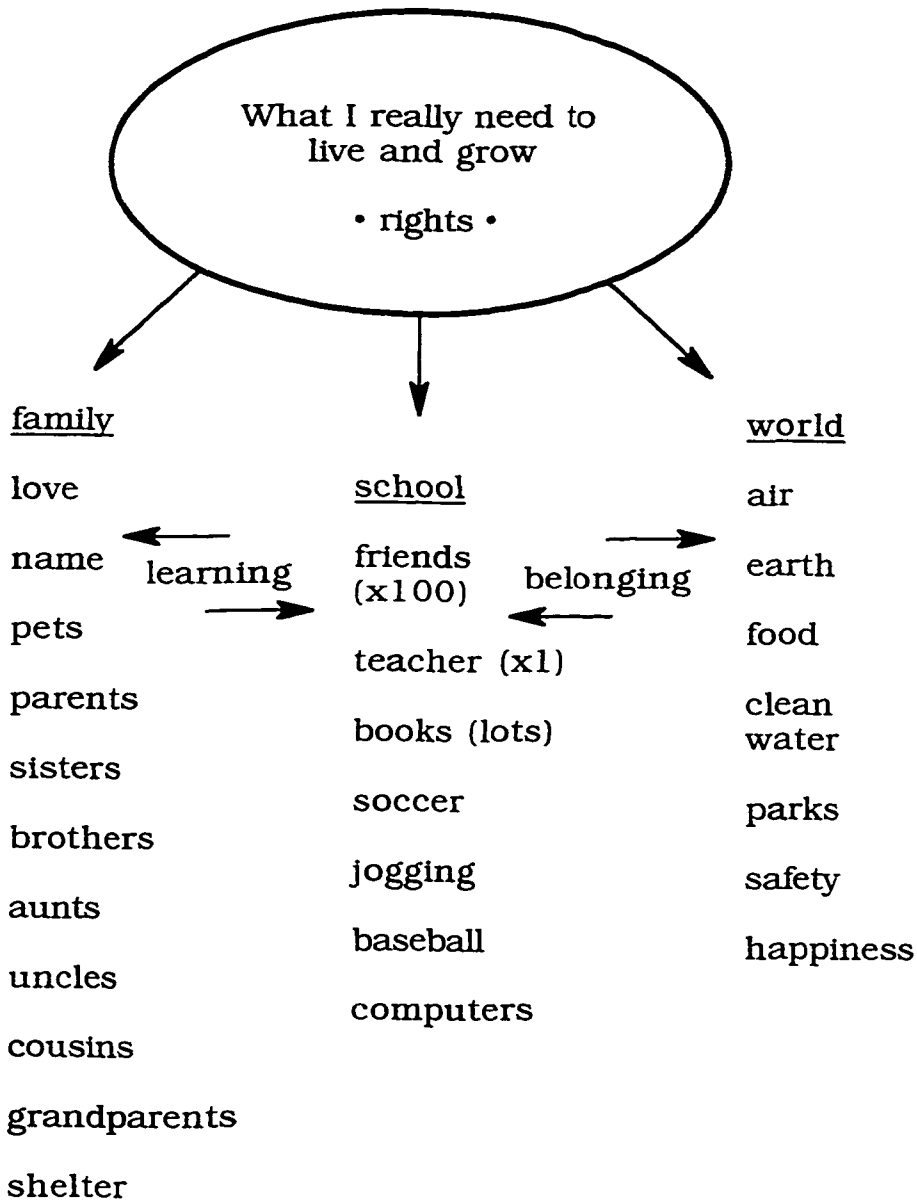


Figure 2. Sample Concept Map

iii. Guiding Questions on Child Participants' Evolving Capacities

This section is devoted to considering another set of three questions, which explored how curricular experiences influenced the child participants' evolving capacities for reasoning, responding, and prosocial acting in moral developmental terms. Fundamental to exploring children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities was a study of children's evolving capacities from a moral developmental perspective. To explain further, the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, Part II, on moral development revealed that children's experiences of participation rights and responsibilities can be understood in terms of three interactive evolving capacities: *reasoning* (cognitive), *responding* (affective), and *prosocial acting* (behavioural).

In what follows, how curricular experiences influenced the child participants' evolving capacities were taken into consideration when identifying strategies which effectively promoted their emerging conceptions. Curricular influences on the capacities of moral development were studied because each comes into play as children experience -- conceptualize and exercise -- their moral rights and responsibilities (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Damon, 1988; Garrod, 1993; Hersh, Miller, & Fielding, 1980; Kaltsounis, 1987; Lickona, 1991; Martorella, 1985; Scott, 1987; Welton & Mallan, 1988).

Similarly, while the conceptualization process is predominantly a cognitive activity, it can be seen as an interactive process that spans

process that spans cognitive, affective, and behavioural capacities (Kaltsounis, 1987; Martorella, 1985; Welton & Mallan, 1988). In keeping with this understanding of the conceptualization process, the three capacities were explored in order to identify the strategies which promoted the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. As a basis for this exploratory research, therefore, the child participants' emerging conceptions are viewed here through their three interactive capacities, while analyzed from a perspective of moral development.

(a) How did curricular experiences influence the child participants' evolving capacities for *reasoning* as voiced through interviews and narratives as well as demonstrated during observations?

(1) Capacities for Reasoning: Within the context of this case study, capacities for *reasoning* in moral developmental terms generally refer to thinking about what it means to be moral and why we should be moral (Lickona, 1991). It has been said that moral reasoning allows children to consider choices and to make decisions about what is a fair or just action (Kohlberg, 1984); for example, reasoning why all the students in the classroom have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, based on what is just and fair. The capacity for reasoning within a human rights framework can involve perspective taking because children need to be able to imagine how someone else

thinks, feels, or sees the world, in order to reason why they should behave morally towards others (Selman, 1980); for example, taking another's view point or feelings so no bullying or hitting others.

(2) **Decision-Making Model:** A three-step decision-making model used throughout the curriculum implementation was introduced to the students in Module #1 on Introducing Rights and Responsibilities, Activity #5 entitled *Making Decisions*. The first step in the decision-making model involved identifying a given problem. The second step involved considering options and alternate plans, as well as possible consequences of those options. The third step involved the class making a shared decision based on consensus when voting took place and each child expressed his or her decision with a raised hand. That is, the option that received the majority of votes was selected as the class decision for solving the problem, as explained by the teacher during the follow-up class discussion.

It could be said that through this decision-making process, the students were beginning to understand and appreciate the merit of others' ideas, choices, and decisions. For example, this process was followed when the class charters were constructed as discussed in conjunction with the final question in this section, in which the children had to consider and make decisions about what rights and responsibilities were included or excluded in their class charters. **(Refer to next page Figure 3 - Sample Making Decisions.)**

Making Decisions

First: Problem

Describe the problem.

I found a puppy.

Second: Choices

Think about the choices. How does each choice help you? How does each choice help others? What might happen to you and to others if these choices are made? List what might happen beside each choice.

Choice:	What might happen:
keep it	*allergic reaction*
leave it	*might get hurt*
advertise	*wrong owner steals*
SPCA	*good care*
radio	*distance*

Third: Decisions

Decide which choice you want to make. List your decision or decisions here.

I would take it to the SPCA because it will get good care.

Figure 3. Sample Making Decisions

This three-step decision-making process was also implemented in order to help the child participants solve problems in peaceful ways, or peaceful conflict resolution. Using this model, the teacher guided the child participants through the three steps to help them see how their own basic rights were bound up in the human rights of others, which meant that the exercise of their rights were restricted in practice (Reardon, 1995), as illustrated through this vignette:

> *During a teacher-led discussion the children examined an incident that occurred the previous day when BS 1 had demanded that BS 9 give up the much coveted window seat at the front of the school bus, immediately behind the bus driver. In this situation, the children discussed the idea that even though BS 1 might want BS 9's bus seat, freedom of choice is restricted and that BS 9 is rightfully entitled to the seat. In this situation, the classroom teacher advantageously used the school bus argument to provide a positive focus to a lesson on conflict between rights of the children, while using the decision-making model as a framework for talking over the problem and finding a resolution to the problem.*
>
> *Together, the children and their teacher identified the problem, considered options such as alternating days, or one boy gets the seat going to school and the other sits in the seat going home, or whoever gets to the seat first sits there. The students decided that the seat should not be limited to just the two boys and that it should be available to all interested students, and so they voted on the decision that since the seat is open to anyone, then whoever gets to the seat first should sit there without argument.*

The teacher subsequently asked the students if the seat should be given up to students with special needs who walk on crutches or use a wheelchair. All the children decided that the seat should be given to a person with special needs because as summed up by BS 2:

> *Some people [with special needs] really need the front seat because it is too hard to get to the back of the bus, and not just because they want to look out the window.*

From a moral development perspective, it could be said that the reasoning of the child participants was at the postconventional level according to Kohlberg's (1984) model of moral development, where decisions and actions are guided by the principle of justice. According to Kohlberg (1984), this level of moral reasoning can be achieved when persons are nearing adulthood, and not apparently in childhood. However, analysis of the Process Evaluation findings revealed that some of the child participants were reasoning about what was a fair or just action, by stating that giving up the seat would be the right thing to do because the disabled person really needed the front seat. In so doing, child participants were showing an awareness of another person's perspective and this awareness seemingly influenced their decision-making and actions.

When children were asked by the researcher to evaluate their use of this three-step model, they stated that it helped them when solving a problem because it gave them a way to think about issues before making decisions. Some of the child participants voiced the idea during interviews that even though every situation was somewhat different, they found that the three steps helped them go over things with classmates, or on their own. Thus, an implication for informing educational practice was that by moving through the three steps of this decision-making model, the students were developing their decision-making skills, which helped them in forming conceptions of *choices*, *decisions*, and *consequences*.

Once the child participants understood the process for completing the three-step decision-making model, they were able to use this model individually as they became more independent of their teacher and peers. As demonstrated in written responses on the *Making Decisions* pages, some students were becoming more reflective about choices and were realizing consequences of decisions, or what might happen if certain choices were made and actions were taken.

In summary, analysis of the Process Evaluation findings revealed that curricular experiences which involved a *decision-making model* influenced children's evolving capacities for reasoning; that is, this strategy offered the child participants' an effective means for the students to develop decision-making and problem solving skills, initially with the teacher's guidance and subsequently on their own. The three-step decision-making model helped the students to work collectively, in order to see that group decision-making involves consensus, or to work individually in order to find their own resolutions to problems.

(3) **Role Playing:** During the curriculum implementation, the children were encouraged to respond to stories by recreating and extending them through role playing, or playing a role and trying to take the perspective of another (Benninga & Crum, 1982; Krogh, 1985). Within the context of this case study, role playing helped to

promote the children's perspective taking skills by exposing them to characters who dealt with feelings in a variety of situations. The child participants were offered curricular experiences in which they could explore growing, changing, and adapting to new situations through children's literature. For example, children's literature was presented with the learning and teaching strategy of role playing, which involved students hearing a story and then responding to open-ended questions about the story posed by the teacher and classmates.

The students were encouraged to respond to the questions by playing imaginary roles with or without handpuppets; in so doing, they could act out alternative ways of interpreting a scene, a situation, or a character, as illustrated through this vignette:

> *During the implementation of Module #10 on Peace, Activity #5 entitled Living in a Peaceful and Friendly World, the students read the story entitled Anansi the Spider by Gerald McDermott (1972). This legend of the Ashanti people in Africa tells about a spider who gives his six sons special names with symbols, which represent their personalities. The students are asked to read the book only up to the point where Anansi wonders aloud which son deserves the prize. The students created and role played an ending to the story, and then read and recreated the author's ending, as either a whole class or small group. The students compared and contrasted elements of their story ending with the author's, and then decided by voting which ending was preferred and why. In response to this particular activity, certain students asked classmates which spider son was most deserving, how was it helpful to his father, what does the father want for his sons, which son really wants the prize (a moon).*

From a moral development perspective, it could be said that the students were inquiring into the desires of the storybook characters as well as the classmates. According to Selman's (1980) theory of perspective taking, such reactions could be placed at Level 2 (or

approximately 7 - 12 years), since there was evidence of "a reciprocity of thoughts and feeling, and not merely actions," (p. 38). At this level, children tend to have an awareness of another's perspective and that this awareness influences self and other's view of each other according to Selman (1980).

Thus, an implication for informing educational practice was the students were offered opportunities for further developing their perspective taking skills by role playing, which involved responding to children's stories by recreating and extending them. In so doing, the students were seemingly moved to imagine how others, such as the storybook characters, might think, feel, see, or act and so they were helped in *taking another's point of view*.

In summary, analysis of the Process Evaluation findings revealed that curricular experiences which involved *role playing* influenced child participants' evolving capacities for reasoning and perspective taking; that is, this strategy offered the child participants' an effective means to reflect on another's situation and respond to literature, while it provided opportunities to enhance literacy skills, and expand their perspective taking capacities.

(b) How did curricular experiences influence the child participants' evolving capacities for *responding* as voiced through interviews and narratives as well as demonstrated during observations?

(1) Capacities for Responding: Within the context of this case study, capacities for *responding* in moral developmental terms generally refer to children's abilities to respond by expressing concern and caring for oneself, others, human rights, and the world around us (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Noddings, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1995). Children need to be able to respond to what they learn about their rights, and relate it to their life experiences (Noddings, 1995). The capacity for responding within a human rights framework can serve as a bridge between reasoning and prosocial acting. For example, when children see themselves in relationships with others whereby they care for others as well as the self, they may respect their own and others rights and take some responsible action.

(2) Responsive Writing: During this case study, the strategy of *responsive writing* involved providing written responses to children's literature, such as a story or poem, through questions based on a model developed by Hoskisson (1973). The following three types of questions were used when reading and responding to a selection of literature: fact, interpretation, and evaluation (Hoskisson, 1973).

For example, in response to questions of *fact*, learners were

required to provide an answer from information gained directly from the story; in other words, the facts were the words of the author. Through questions of *interpretation*, children were asked to explore what the author meant by what he or she wrote in the story, and to make inferences about the characters' intentions and motivations. Through questions of *evaluation*, children were asked to determine in what respects they agree or disagree with the author, or to how the story has application to their own lives and why (Hoskisson, 1973).

It could be said that when such questions were incorporated into the responsive writing process, children were helped to make inferences about characters' intentions and motivations. For example, in Module #6 on Families and Friends, Activity #4 entitled *Caring for Friends*, the student was required to read the book called *Best Friends* (Kellogg, 1986), which is a story about two girls whose names were Kathy and Louise. BS 3 had a choice of either reading the book by himself or with one or two partners; he chose to read it with BS 8 and then participated in responsive writing by responding to a series of written questions presented in the activity about friendship. The following two evaluative questions, *How do you know that a friend understands you? Why do we care for and try to understand our friends?* evoked the following written response from BS 3:

> *You can tell friends like each other because they understand each other and share with each other. I can tell that a friend understands me because he doesn't give smart remarks and gives me good advice. I care and understand for my friends so I have friends and I like making people feel good. I can tell that I have a friend by knowing they like me and always welcome me.*

From a moral development perspective, it could be said that by responding to what he had learned about conceptions and relating them to his life experiences, BS 3 was helped to form emerging conceptions such as *caring* and *friendship*. Such samples of responsive writing were commonly found throughout the child participants' journals, which revealed the usefulness of this strategy for helping students to make inferences about the stories, challenge and expand their imaginations through literature, and write responses.

Thus, an implication for informing educational practice was that responsive writing, involving the three types of questions, helped the child participants to differentiate between the subjective personal dimension and the more objective public dimension of conceptions, such as a dictionary definition (McGuire, 1991; Welton & Mallam, 1988). For example, certain child participants had neutral feelings such as when writing about *homes;* however, the same children responded with a stronger reaction, either positively or negatively, towards a conception such as *homeless* during a class discussion.

In summary, analysis of the Process Evaluation findings revealed that curricular experiences which involved *responsive writing* influenced child participants' evolving capacities for responding; that is, this strategy offered the child participants' an effective means to respond to what they were learning about their rights, and relate that information to their life experiences, while developing inferential thinking skills.

(c) How did curricular experiences influence the child participants' evolving capacities for *prosocial acting* as voiced through interviews and narratives as well as demonstrated during observations?

(1) Capacities for Prosocial Acting: Within the context of the case study, capacities for *prosocial acting* in moral developmental terms generally refer to children's prosocial behaviours intended to benefit another, such as helping, listening, and cooperating (Child Participants, June 1998; Eisenberg, 1992). The capacity for prosocial acting within a human rights framework can involve children understanding the moral necessity for treating others as they would wish to be treated, or acting in moral ways; for example, refraining from harming others and taking responsibility for one's own actions (Eisenberg, Reykowski, & Staub, 1989).

(2) Student Self-Evaluation: The *I am learning...* sheet was a formative self-evaluation activity for students, which was included at the end of each of the ten modules of *The World Around Us* curriculum. Through this writing process, children's insights about issues addressed within the curriculum materials on rights and responsibilities were recorded. This process was facilitated by the teacher asking students to consider what they were learning through the curriculum activities, and to evaluate and summarize those ideas.

From a moral development perspective, it could be said that this strategy offered an effective means for the children to begin to take some responsible action for evaluating their own learning experiences, while forming their emerging conceptions (Cox, 1991; Eisenberg, 1989; Reardon, 1995). For example, the conceptions of *respect*, *rights*, and *responsibility* were introduced through activities in Module #1, Introducing Rights and Responsibilities, of *The World Around Us* and they were reinforced in the subsequent nine modules. The following page provides a sample of a transcribed *I am learning ... sheet* completed at the end of Module #1 by GS 9.

An implication for informing educational practice was that this strategy offered the child participants an effective means for assessing, evaluating, expressing, and recording their thoughts, feelings, and actions on their learning progress. This self-evaluation sheet was supposed to be completed by the student after each activity attempted in each module, and so it could provide a formative assessment on the learning activities undertaken by each child participant.

In summary, analysis of the Process Evaluation findings revealed that curricular experiences which involved the *I am learning...* sheet influenced child participants' evolving capacities for prosocial acting; that is, this strategy offered the child participants' an effective means to assess and evaluate their own learning, with the option of completing the task with the assistance of a partner. **(Refer to next page Figure 4 - Sample I am learning . . . Sheet.)**

I am learning . . . Sheet

Name: GS 9 Topic: Rights and Responsibilities

I finished activity #1 - What are Children's Rights?

I am learning *all children have the right to get what they really need to live. All children have rights to think our ideas are important too. All children have rights to feel like a good kid. All children have rights to have a family. All children have rights to say listen to me.*

I finished activity # 2 - Respecting Rights

I am learning *I need respect and so do you. I respect you because I help you. We need to care for the environment. We cannot pollute the air because we need fresh air to be healthy.*

I finished activity #3 - Caring for Each Other

I am learning responsibility *means doing something on your own without somebody else telling you to do it.*

I finished activity #4 - Taking Some Responsibility

I am learning *that I have a responsibility to return my books to the library on time. Our class can share a responsibility to make friends and not enemies.*

I finished activity #5 - Making Decisions

I am learning *I can take some responsibility to decide which choice is a good one.*

Figure 4. Sample I am learning . . . Sheet

(3) **Constructing Charters:** During this case study, the children actively and responsibly participated in constructing charters of rights and responsibilities, which helped to guide their actions as they played, worked, and shared their resources in the classroom. At the outset, the child participants gained a collective voice through their active participation in the construction of the *Classroom Charter*, as labelled by the children. The construction of the charter supported a classroom goal of creating a caring place to work and play in that it provided a visual means to remind the child participants what to do to try making a safe, fair, and caring classroom.

During the construction of the classroom charter of rights, questions were raised by the students and the teacher concerning children's participation rights in particular; for example, the children's responses included this one as stated by GS 1:

> *We have rights to have other people respect us, to give our ideas, to make choices each day, to learn on our own or with others, to ask questions, and to get answers.*

The classroom discussions addressed both participation rights and responsibilities and emphasized how both components can promote responsible citizenship. Consequently, the children decided that a second charter should be created on children's responsibilities. By making this decision to add a charter of responsibilities, the students had evaluated the situation and concluded that it would make sense to have a Charter of Rights and a Charter of Responsibilities, thus, influencing the curriculum design process.

It could be said that this activity helped the students, with their teacher's guidance, explore reasons why limitations were necessary on most individual rights in order to protect the safety of the students and to bring order in the classroom. To explain further, throughout the process of constructing the second charter on children's responsibilities, questions were raised concerning taking responsibility; for example, the children's responses included:

BS 6 *Taking responsibility is respecting others' rights and work.*

GS 8 *Taking responsibility means doing good without someone telling you to do it.*

From a moral development perspective, it could be said that this approach to collaborative student work was congruent with research by Eisenberg and colleagues (1989), as discussed in Chapter 2, Part II; her research findings indicated that adults such as teachers need to encourage responsible actions and cooperative interactions, and assign students reasonable responsibilities in order to promote prosocial actions. An example of student work is illustrated in the following Classroom Charter, which was collaboratively constructed with the guidance of the classroom teacher, and originally printed on poster-size sheets of scroll paper displayed on the bulletin board. **(Refer to next page Figure 5 - Sample Classroom Charter.)**

Children's Rights

Children have a right to:

have friends in and out of school
belong in this classroom and this school
have others listening to us
some play time
make choices on own or with others
get help in school when we need it
clean air and water
be treated with respect and love
be safe in and out of school
no bullying by anyone anywhere
special care if we have special needs
learn and discover and to have an education.

Children's Responsibilities

Children have some responsibility to:

listen to what others have to say
not be a bully
make choices
ask for help in school when we need it
put litter in garbage and recycle bottles
treat self and others with respect
act safely in and out of school
do homework when assigned
ask questions if we don't understand
ask others to join in
treat others as we want to be treated
wash our hands and brush our teeth
remember to return library books on time
learn the best we can.

Figure 5. Sample Classroom Charter

The students decided that they wanted opportunities to create individual charters in which they could independently decide what to include in their unique lists. These charters mirrored each child's conceptions of children's rights and responsibilities, and reinforced the idea that their individual voices were valuable and valued by their teacher and the researcher. Although the child participants were encouraged by their teacher to construct their own 'individual' charter of rights, some chose to print lists of rights which were prefaced with phrases such as "I have rights ..." or "We have rights..." or "All children have rights..." as illustrated in Figures 7 - 9.

Analysis of the children's individual charters gave no clear indication of either a gender or a particular age influence on the choice of writing from either an individual or a collective perspective. However, based on the researcher's discussion with the classroom teacher about the students' overall academic abilities based on her ongoing assessments throughout the school year, a possible explanation emerged.

That is, differing perspectives were perhaps due to the variances in the children's overall academic success as well as their literacy skills to express themselves in the written word. The classroom teacher stated to the researcher that BS 9 who created the charter in Figure 7 written in the first person, received learning assistance on a regular basis for literacy and numeracy skill development. GS 7 who created the charter in Figure 8 written as the collective 'we,' was seen

by the classroom teacher a student who achieved success in most academic tasks presented to her throughout the Grade 3 curriculum. BS 4, who created the charter in Figure 9, and who wrote about "all children," was perceived by the classroom teacher to be academically advanced beyond his Grade 3 peers; for example, he was studying the Grade 4 math text on his own in May 1998.

It was revealed that the differing perspectives may be influenced by the children's academic abilities and literacy skills to put their ideas in writing. When the researcher asked the children during individual interviews why they had chosen to write about "one person's rights" or "all children's rights," they offered a range of responses:

BS 9 *Because I printed it.*

GS 7 *We are all the same so I wrote for my brother too.*

BS 4 *All children have the same rights ... because here and everywhere we all need the same.*

From a moral development perspective, it could be said that analysis of this activity indicated that the written and verbal responses of BS 9 regarding the individual charter could be placed at Level 1 (or approximately 5 - 9 years), according to Selman's (1980) theory of perspective taking. At this level, children tend to focus on one perspective at a time rather than coordinating points of view. The responses of GS 7 and BS 4 could be placed at Level 2 (or approximately 7 - 12 years), since their responses suggested "a reciprocity of thoughts and feeling, and not merely actions" (Selman, 1980, p. 38). At this level, children tend to have an awareness of

another's perspective and that this awareness influences self and other's view of each other.

Thus, an implication for informing educational practice was that by focusing on constructing and putting into practice the charters, the students were offered a strategy that guided their just and caring thoughts, feelings, actions in school. This strategy also helped the students begin forming emerging conceptions of *rights* of children and their *responsibilities*, as well as the conception of *fairness*. For example, when the children experienced interactions which they considered to be fair in the classroom, such as accessing one book at a time from the curriculum resource kit, their emerging conceptions of *fairness* seemingly changed. As stated in their journal writings, some of the child participants moved from believing *whoever wants the most should get the most* to believing that *each person should get what they really need.*

In summary, analysis of the Process Evaluation findings revealed that curricular experiences which involved *constructing charters of rights and responsibilities*, and putting them into practice, influenced child participants' evolving capacities for prosocial acting; that is, this strategy offered the child participants' an effective means to develop their cooperative participatory skills, while helping to foster a safe, fair, and caring environment in the classroom. **(Refer to next three pages Figures 6-8 - Sample Individual Charter of Rights.)**

Rights

I have the right to be free

I have the right to be healthy

I have the right to have shelter

I have the right to have peace

I have the right to eat good food

I have the right to play

I have the right to sleep when I'm tired

Figure 6. Sample Individual Charter of Rights

Children's Rights

We have the right to education.

We have the right to food.

We have a right to play.

We have a right to be free.

We have a right to be safe.

We have a right to breathe clean air.

We have a right to a name.

We should be loved.

We have a right to make choices.

We should be equal.

We have a right to be treated nicely.

I have a right to plan my future.

We have a right to wear clothes.

We have a right to eat healthy.

We have a right to sleep.

Treat each other the way we want to be treated.

Figure 7. Sample Individual Charter of Rights

Rights of All Children

All children have the right to:

(1) have clean water and air

(2) make choices

(3) be different

(4) be free and to live in peace

(5) be safe always

(6) be treated equally

(7) have an education

(8) always be helped first

(9) be called whatever we want

(10) be helped more if we're disabled

(11) have a healthy body and have medicine

(12) have healthy meals and to drink

(13) be loved and cared for

(14) be always put first

(15) believe in ourselves

(16) have a good home

(17) have privacy

(18) to learn whatever we want, whenever we want

(19) make friends

(20) be respected

Figure 8. Sample Individual Charter of Rights

Part II

Informing Educational Practice

i. Identifying Effective Learning and Teaching Strategies

During implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum, learning and teaching strategies were employed with the purpose of providing appropriate direction and guidance for children to experience their participation rights and responsibilities. By exploring the curriculum implementation, this research led to the identification of effective learning and teaching strategies, which promoted the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Those strategies as discussed in Part I of this chapter included: concept mapping, decision-making model, role playing, responsive writing, student self-evaluation, and constructing charters.

With a view to informing educational practice, it was revealed through analysis of the Process Evaluation findings that concept mapping was found to be the most effective strategy of the six strategies for promoting the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. It was especially effective when implemented in combination with the series of sentence frames and the Circles Page (venn diagram). The decision-making model was an effective strategy for promoting the child participants' evolving capacities for reasoning, by offering them opportunities to develop

decision-making and problem solving skills. In addition, role playing was another effective strategy for promoting the child participants' evolving capacities for reasoning, by offering them opportunities to develop their perspective taking skills.

Responsive writing was an effective strategy for promoting the child participants' evolving capacities for responding, by offering them opportunities to respond to what they learn about their rights and to relate it to their life experiences, as well as develop inferential thinking skills. The *I am learning...* sheet was an effective strategy for promoting the child participants' evolving capacities for prosocial acting, by offering them opportunities to assess and evaluate their own learning. Furthermore, constructing charters of rights and responsibilities was an effective strategy for promoting the child participants' evolving capacities for prosocial acting, by offering them opportunities to both create guidelines for fostering a safe, fair, and caring classroom, and to put them into practice.

ii. Concluding Comments on Informing Educational Practice

A conclusion for informing educational practice can be drawn from interpretations of the Process Evaluation findings, which links the child participants' capacities of moral development and their participation rights. The findings revealed that it was the very processes of children experiencing their participation rights which seemingly enabled their moral developmental capacities for reasoning, responding, and prosocial acting to evolve. From a moral developmental perspective, it could be said that as children's capacities continue to evolve, perhaps they may come to reason and decide what is right, care deeply about it, and act responsibly and independently -- as they grow towards responsible citizenship, to be discussed further in the Concluding Comments of Chapter 5.

Another conclusion for informing educational practice can be drawn from further interpretations of the Process Evaluation findings, which links the child participants' evolving capacities with their participation rights. The findings revealed that the child participants' emerging conceptions were tempered through meaningful curricular experiences within the school day, which afforded them opportunities for experiencing -- conceptualizing and exercising -- their participation rights and responsibilities. Here the term *conceptualizing* generally refers to the process of forming conceptions, or the conceptualization process (Kaltsounis, 1987; Martorella, 1985; Welton & Mallan, 1988), whereas the term

exercising generally refers to the process of putting into practice participation rights and responsibilities. Thus, the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities were tempered through the actual exercise of those rights and responsibilities during implementation of the curriculum.

In a related manner, interpretations of the Process Evaluation findings revealed that during curriculum implementation the child participants' evolving capacities were not significantly influenced by their gender. One explanation of this finding was that perhaps gender does not exert an influence on children's conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities until after Primary-level education, if ever. An additional explanation was that the children's emerging conceptions were similar since both girls and boys had equitable opportunities to participate in all curricular experiences with *The World Around Us.*

Interpretations of the Process Evaluation findings revealed that if students are to develop their capacities to achieve their potential in accordance with Article 29 of the CRC (UNGA, 1989), then educators should be encouraged to match learning and teaching strategies to the children's emergent capacities to conceptualize their participation rights and responsibilities. In response, this case study led to identifying learning and teaching strategies which were appropriate to the ways in which children actually view their world. Furthermore, this case study led to identifying what curricular experiences were

effective in promoting children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, while exercising the same.

Within the context of this case study, it was found that six learning and teaching strategies effectively promoted the conceptualization process by helping the children to organize large amounts of information about participation rights and responsibilities, and to make it meaningful to them. Those strategies included: concept mapping, decision-making model, role playing, responsive writing, student self-evaluation, and constructing charters. In addition, those six strategies provided opportunities for the children to practise and further develop their participatory skills; for example, communication skills such as reading, writing, listening, and expressing views, and their social skills such as decision-making, problem solving, independence, interdependence, and cooperation.

In general, therefore, interpretations of the Process Evaluation findings revealed that the six strategies which either individually or collectively addressed the capacities of reasoning, responding, and prosocial acting were both effective in promoting the child participants' emerging conceptions, and appropriate to the ways in which children actually viewed their world. In particular, the findings revealed that *concept mapping* was most the effective of the six learning and teaching strategies for promoting the conceptualization process. Through this strategy, the children's conceptualization process was facilitated by starting with what they already knew about

certain conceptions, such as rights and responsibilities, and then providing opportunities for exploring and expanding their knowledge of existing conceptions.

Thus, in support of informing educational practice on children's emerging conceptions, it could be concluded that students of all ages must be informed of their rights (Article 42) and should be provided with appropriate direction and guidance to experience -- conceptualize and exercise -- their participation rights and responsibilities, in keeping with their emerging capacities to do so (Article 5) (UNGA, 1989). If children are to become free citizens capable of actively and intelligently participating in a democratic society where rights are respected and responsibilities are upheld, then more than literacy and numeracy skills need to be acquired in and out of school. Rather, students need to be encouraged to develop their evolving intellectual, social, moral, emotional, physical, and conceptual capacities to the fullest potential -- a right to which children are entitled, pursuant to Article 29 of the CRC (UNGA, 1989).

Therefore, when developing curriculum materials for children's rights education, it would seem that a task for educators is to have a knowledge of curricular experiences which actually promote, not just assume, conceptual development, or the conceptualization process, in school-age children (Gersch, 1996; Lickona, 1991; Noddings, 1988; Scott, 1996). Thus, educators may consider offering meaningful curricular experiences within the school day which promote students'

processes of conceptualizing and exercising their participation rights and responsibilities, while acquiring and applying participatory skills, and attaining moral values, such as respect and responsibility.

It could be concluded that in order for students to learn about their rights and to move towards asserting their rights as developing responsible citizens, they need to be provided with opportunities to gain knowledge, as well as skills and values necessary to live in the world both as children and later as adults. Through the development and implementation of such curriculum materials for children's rights education, educators may be better prepared to provide appropriate direction and guidance to help students understand and exercise their participation rights and responsibilities, and to help foster the development of more informed, caring, and responsible groups of young citizens.

Chapter Summary

With a view to benefiting future curriculum materials for children's rights education, qualitative data were collected on the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. The Process Evaluation procedure facilitated the exploration of the *implementation* of the curriculum. This exploration of the curriculum implementation was guided by the five questions discussed in this chapter. The processes of responding to those questions enabled the researcher to expand on the primary researcher question stated in Chapter 1; in addition, it permitted the researcher to move through the collections, analyses, and interpretations of the qualitative data in order to find patterns and meaning in the information. Interpretations of the findings revealed that six learning and teaching strategies were particularly effective in promoting the child participants' emerging conceptions, which were appropriate to the ways in which children actually viewed their world.

In light of the above discussions on Process Evaluation findings, it could be said that practice informed theory. That is, those findings on effective learning and teaching strategies for promoting the child participants' emerging conceptions, which led into informing educational practice, provided a springboard for recognizing their emerging conceptions of participation rights and responsibilities. This process led to building educational theory on the child participants' emerging conceptions, to be discussed next in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

BUILDING EDUCATIONAL THEORY

Discussions on the Product Evaluation Findings

Chapter Abstract

This chapter is devoted to discussions on analyzing and interpreting the data, which were systematically collected during the formative stages of the Product Evaluation procedure in the CIPP Evaluation Model (Stufflebeam, 1983). The Product Evaluation procedure facilitated an exploration of the *impact* of *The World Around Us* curriculum on the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. The exploration of curriculum impact yielded the Product Evaluation findings, which led to building educational theory. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two parts.

In Part I, Discussing the Product Evaluation Findings, the detailed analyses of the findings are reported in two sections as outlined here. In the first section, the Product Evaluation procedure conducted during this case study is reviewed. In the second section, the participation rights of children expressed in the CRC are used to guide the discussions. Implications are noted throughout these discussions for building educational theory, which involved devising a framework of indicators for recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions, to be summarized in Part II of this chapter.

In Part II, Building Educational Theory, the interpretations of the Product Evaluation findings are reported in four sections as outlined here. In the first section, inductive content analysis is described, a process that enabled the researcher to devise the wholistic framework of indicators for recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. In the second section, conclusions are drawn from the Product Evaluation findings for building educational theory on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. In the third section, key contributions of this case study are summarized, as well as its limitations, which served as a springboard for recommendations of further research within the field of Children's Rights Studies.

Part I

Discussing the Product Evaluation Findings

i. Product Evaluation Procedure

The Product Evaluation procedure facilitated the exploration of the *impact* of the curriculum on children's conceptions during their participation in the delivery of the curriculum. According to Stufflebeam (1983), the "product evaluation should look broadly at the effects of the program, including intended and unintended effects" (p. 134), in order to improve the existing program or to benefit the development of future curriculum materials. In light of the Product Evaluation procedure within this case study, the *research objective* was to explore the impact of the curriculum for children's rights education on the child participants' emerging conceptions during their participation in its delivery.

Related to this research objective was the *research goal* of building educational theory on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, with a view to benefiting future curriculum materials for children's rights education. This research goal was met through the exploration of the curriculum impact, since this case study led to recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities and to devising the framework of indicators.

In keeping with both the research objective and goal cited

above, the following discussions are focused on the Product Evaluation findings, which were guided by Articles 12 through 17 of the CRC (UNGA, 1989). This cluster of articles was used as a guideline for identifying the indicators which provided a wholistic framework for recognizing the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities; that is, the ways in which the child participants' actually viewed them.

Throughout the discussions which follow, implications are noted for building educational theory on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. Samples of data drawn from the database of information collected from children's interviews, narratives, and observations are included in order to demonstrate and document various patterns and themes, and to substantiate the interpretations of the Product Evaluation findings.

ii. Recognizing the Child Participants' Emerging Conceptions

(a) Article 12 - Right to have Voices Heard and Considered

Throughout the implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum, the participation of the children was especially focused on their rights to participate in Articles 12 and 13 of the CRC, which involved participatory skills of listening, decision-making and expressing views freely (UNGA, 1989). Those two children's rights were central to this case study since the students were afforded ongoing equitable opportunities to participate actively in curricular experiences, which involved the individual and collective exercise of their rights. The child participants, both boys and girls, were afforded opportunities to have just and reasonable equal access to quality educational learning experiences (Noddings, 1988; Reardon, 1995).

Throughout this case study, the child participants were encouraged but not obligated to take part in making decisions and to express views freely about the designing or redesigning, implementing, and evaluating aspects of the curriculum; in other words, the child participants could choose to withdraw from the case study, although none did take that course of action. The students' curricular experiences involved providing input by expressing opinions, voicing ideas, considering choices, making decisions, and sharing decisions about matters affecting their lives -- the curriculum and its implementation, as well as design or redesign and evaluation, with guidance from their teacher (Miller & Seller, 1990).

In keeping with Article 12 of the CRC, it has been said that perhaps the right to be heard and considered may be most meaningfully exercised when adults assume responsibility for respectfully listening to the children's voices (Cullinan, 1993). Although the CRC is a milestone in the children's rights advocacy movement, it does not itself guarantee that voices of children will be heard and taken seriously in decision-making matters and that people will respectfully listen to their voices.

Even if caregivers have the best interests of children at heart in keeping with Article 3 of the CRC, it does not mean that they are really listening to them and to what they have to tell us (Garbarino & Stott, 1989; Gersch, 1996; Kohn, 1993; Melton & Limber, 1992; Scott, 1996). Perhaps the right to be heard is most meaningfully exercised in a reciprocal situation where the adult responsibility for listening to the child is respectfully upheld, such as during the data collection processes within this study. While caregivers, such as parents, educators, or child and youth care practitioners, should recognize the right of children to be heard and considered, they perhaps should also develop their skills for listening to children, such as through work place or community-based workshops.

Some child participants expressed ideas about their right to have others listen to what they said, and a responsibility to listen respectfully to others. An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *listening*, as reflected

in this participatory indicator:

> *People listening to us, and listening to what others say*
> Table 6 - Prosocial Acting.

Based on analysis of the Product Evaluation findings, an implication for building educational theory was that respectfully listening to the children's voices was a fundamental element in effective child-researcher communications. In the words of educator Paley (1986), '[t]he key is curiosity, and it is curiosity, not answers, that we model. As we seek to learn more about a child, we demonstrate the acts of observing, listening, questioning, and wondering. When we are curious about the child's words and our responses to those words, the child feels respected. The child *is* respected" (p. 127). Keeping in mind the children's expressive right of speaking out on matters of importance in their lives in Article 12, it could be said that the role of the caregiver should encompass a sense of responsibility for listening to the children's voices.

Similarly, the findings revealed that the child participants were beginning to realize their rights to express their ideas and opinions, make choices, and to be heard -- or freedom of expression accorded to all children in Article 12 of the CRC (UNGA, 1989). As BS 2 stated:

> *It is my right to be as important as adults ... to make choices.*

The following excerpts from child participants' narratives and interviews illustrated emerging conceptions of *decision-making:*

BS 5 *Who will help me make the right decision?*

BS 7 *I have a right to decide on my own or with others.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *decision-making*, as reflected in this participatory indicator:

> *We can decide things, and we need info/others to help us*
> Table 2 - Reasoning.

Analysis of the Product Evaluation findings revealed that by taking part in decision-making on important school matters such as their curriculum, the children were provided with meaningful opportunities to listen, to share ideas, and to build confidence in their own judgement. Through the curricular experiences afforded the child participants during this case study, they were enabled to learn from each other through relationships based on cooperation and interdependence with other children, as they began to develop increasing independence in their relationships with the teacher. That is, it could be said that the students were developing a sense of independence as they looked less to their teacher for direction and guidance, to be further discussed in the next section.

(b) Articles 13 and 17: Right to Expression and Access Information

The amount of independence children were given to exercise their freedom for expressing their views and making decisions throughout this case study was directly related to how responsible they were with their freedoms. While the child participants were actively involved in decisions about curricular activities and procedures, the teacher acted as a decision maker in her own classroom, developing and implementing curriculum alongside the students through a democratic process. However, this process was not one of totally equal partnership of all members in all instances, since the children did not have total freedom in their decision-making within the classroom.

To explain further, the children participated in curriculum implementation by having some opportunities for making decisions about their learning activities, but not just any choice for study was acceptable. Rather, the child participants were encouraged to make individual choices about classroom activities in which they wanted to participate during at least some part of every day; for example, working on a Learning Centre activity alone or with a partner, given that they had the necessary information, skills, and materials to complete the task independently. In so doing, the children were guided towards acting independently and making responsible choices in the classroom as stated by one student, GS 9, in June 1998:

The more good choices I make, the more choices I can make.

The students were also encouraged to participate in group decisions about activities in their classroom; for example, the physical arrangement of the classroom, decorating the walls with their work, or choices of what topics to emphasize in their study of *The World Around Us*. In addition, the children shared a responsibility for deciding certain classroom procedures; for example, how to regulate turns as Special Helper when the researcher visited the classroom, or how to regulate clean-up time in a fair way.

Similarly, within the context of this case study, both the teacher and the researcher shared a responsibility to ensure that the child participants had access to sufficient and appropriate information to contribute to achieving their learning tasks. This access to information is in keeping with Article 17 of the CRC, which states that children should be offered access to information from various sources, including mass media, while they must be protect children from harmful materials (UNGA, 1989). Thus, the students were offered access to learning materials such as children's books, and access to effective learning strategies such as concept mapping to help promote their emerging conceptions.

The following excerpts from child participants' narratives and interviews illustrated emerging conceptions of *accessing information:*

GS 8 *We can learn stuff from each other.*

BS 6 *I have a right to make mistakes and then learn more.*

BS 3 *I have a right to ask questions and get some answers.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *accessing information*, as reflected in this participatory indicator:

> *We need to find things out and get answers to our questions*
> Table 2 - Reasoning.

The findings revealed that within the case study classroom site, the series of Learning Centres was an effective environment for offering students access to information and materials from a diversity of sources. In addition, a variety of learning styles and abilities were accommodated while the children could "manipulate objects, engage in conversation and role playing, and learn at their own levels" (Day & Drake, 1983, p. 13) through the centres environment. Learning Centres according to Day and Drake (1983) are specific areas "designed by the teacher, the students and the teachers, or by the students that contain a variety of learning activities and media to enhance the development of concepts, themes, topics, skills, or interests" (p. 13). This approach to learning effectively supports Article 23 of the CRC concerning special care requirements of children with a disability, through different ways of participating in the classroom and accessing appropriate information.

To explain further, in accordance with Article 23 of the CRC, children with special needs or a disability have a right to special care and education to help them achieve self-reliance and an active life in society (UNGA, 1989). The case study classroom included one female child with extra special needs who benefited from a modified

educational program, pursuant to the inclusion policy of the BC public school system as stipulated in the *School Act* (Province of BC, Ministry of Education, 1989). Accordingly, the Child Support Worker provided assistance to help the child gain access to information that supported her learning, such as through computer programs. This access to information with the assistance of the Child Support Worker was aimed at promoting the student's cognitive, emotional, and social capacities, in accordance with Article 29 that concerns helping students develop their capacities to potential (UNGA, 1989).

Furthermore, in keeping with Articles 17 and 29, and in light of Article 42 that concerns dissemination of information on the CRC (UNGA, 1989), the child participants in this case study were offered equitable opportunities to access information about children's rights, as well as the rights of all persons, during implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum.

The findings revealed an impact of the curriculum was that the child participants were beginning to realize that there are individual rights, or *my rights* and collective rights, or *our rights*. For example, the following excerpts from child participants' narratives and interviews illustrated emerging conceptions of *individual rights*:

BS 7 *I have a right to think with my imagination so I can make things.*

GS 3 *I have a right to say I like this or I don't.*

The following excerpts from child participants' narratives and interviews illustrated emerging conceptions of *collective rights*:

BS 1 *We have a right to be safe.*

GS 8 *We have a right to have special care if we got special needs.*

BS 5 *We have a right to have nobody make fun of us or other kids.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *rights*, as reflected in this participatory indicator:

> *Rights are what we really need to be all right*
> Table 1 - Reasoning.

In a related manner, during a class discussion, the teacher asked the children "Why do children have rights?" The children's collective responses, which were written on a class chart, revealed that they were forming emerging conceptions:

> Provision Rights:
> *Children have rights because we need everyone to care for us.*
>
> Protection Rights:
> *Children have rights because we need everyone to keep us safe.*
>
> Participation Rights:
> *Children have rights because we need everyone to listen to us.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *participation rights*, as reflected in this participatory indicator:

> *Children have rights to think, feel, and do*
> Tables 1 - Reasoning, 3 - Responding, 5 - Prosocial Acting.

(c) Article 14 - Right to Beliefs

During the curriculum implementation child participants were seemingly attaining moral values of *responsibility* and *respect*, as discussed in this section on the children's right to beliefs.

(1) **Responsibility:** The notion that students have the responsibility to show respect for one another's thoughts, feelings, and actions, as well as privacy was reinforced by the teacher, as well as the researcher; for example, not mocking a peer's ideas or responses offered during small group activities -- or at any time. Such ongoing direction and guidance was needed in order to ensure that the classroom environment was safe, supportive, and conducive to risk-taking so that the children would feel comfortable enough to express their opinions and ideas freely.

The classroom teacher offered her students information and explanations intended to help them develop an awareness of their rights, which can carry responsibilities. Throughout the curriculum implementation, the child participants were offered opportunities to see how their own basic rights were bound up in the human rights of other people, which means they may be restricted in practise. For example, during a class discussion, the children considered their right to have access to adequate nutrition; with the teacher's guidance, the students concluded that access to food implies a responsibility to ensure that the food supply should remain accessible to all and so one

person should not take all the food.

The following excerpts from child participants' narratives and interviews illustrated emerging conceptions of *responsibility:*

BS 9 *Responsibility is like listening to others with respect*

GS 2 *It can be getting along and learning in and out of school.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *responsibility*, as reflected in these participatory indicators:

> Taking Responsibility:
> *Doing good without someone telling you to do it*
> Tables 4 - Responding, 5 - Prosocial Acting.

> Children's Responsibilities:
> *Help us do right to live and grow right*
> Table 4 - Responding.

As stated by child participants during interview sessions, the notion of responsibility included both personal and social responsibilities of citizenship, although those particular terms were not used by the students. An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *personal responsibility*, as reflected in this participatory indicator:

> *I do what I can to help me and everyone*
> Table 4 - Responding.

Throughout the case study, the students were encouraged by their teacher and the researcher to take personal responsibility for their writing efforts, while they were also periodically encouraged to write with one or two partners. This sort of group writing activity seemingly motivated students to engage with one another and to figure

out how to cooperate and collaborate, and additionally seemed to foster a sense of personal responsibility since they were responsible for their own work and for the quality of work the group produced.

For example, the child participants were free to choose the writing activities in which they participated during grouptime, and their writing partners. When such grouptime activities were organized, students were encouraged to talk and listen with each other; these exchanges resulted in children taking some personal responsibility to resolve problems when differences of opinion arose.

The case study classroom was organized so the children could additionally take on some social responsibility; for example, since the children could access the fifty-five children's books included in *The World Around Us* curriculum, they were able to monitor when these items were not cared for such as when a book was misplaced. When materials were not put where they belonged, then the students could not find or enjoy them. One afternoon when a book was lost that belonged to the whole class and not just one student, the teacher took advantage of the opportunity for group discussion about how to resolve the problem; as a consequence, the entire class shared the responsibility to hunt for the lost book until it was located inside a cluttered student's desk.

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *social responsibility*, as reflected in this participatory indicator:

We do what we can to make it a better place
Table 4 - Responding.

Based on analysis of the Product Evaluation findings, an implication for building educational theory was that the children were developing an awareness that groups worked best when they shared responsibilities. For example, the responsibility of cleaning up the classroom after lunchbreak was shared by the entire class; whether an individual littered the room or not, all persons were responsible for ensuring the classroom was tidy before anyone left.

This procedure was initiated by the students when the problem surfaced that some children were tossing their litter under another's desk or chair just to get rid of it. The children's solution was no one left the portable until the litter was put in either the recycling bin or the garbage as appropriate, as decided by the noonhour supervisor, and in consequence the students shared the group's responsibility to ensure the classroom was tidied up.

(2) **Respect:** The moral value of *respect* seemingly helped tell the children what ought to be done; for example, the students' responses related to notions of respect included:

BS 8 *We need to treat each other with hugs not hits.*

GS 1 *We all need to have respect -- us, friends, and family.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *respect,* as reflected in these participatory indicators:

Looking after each other and the world around us
Table 1 - Reasoning.

Caring for us and our rights
Table 3 - Responding.

Treating others like we want to be treated
Table 5 - Prosocial Acting.

To explain further, during individual interviews which took place the first week of June 1998, a few children expressed the idea that they heard an inner voice -- a notion that most of the students believed, when asked during their individual interview:

GS 9 *Sometimes I hear a kind of voice or something inside -- it reminds me to be good, and not do bad stuff.*

BS 1 *I think about what (teacher's name) tells us what's right and I can hear it in my head after school.*

BS 7 *When I'm doing right I tell myself it's right.*

Some children seemingly believed that acts which were hurtful, dishonest, or disrespectful to other children or adults were *wrong*. For example, during an interview the researcher asked about expressing lies, to which the boy responded:

BS 3 *Lying about anything is wrong. It's hard to trust a liar. Lying is easy but I don't think it's honest.*

The following response further illustrated another student's conception of *respect*, as it unfolded during a class discussion on issues of lying:

BS 2 *Yeah, lying hurts me and you. Now I feel bad 'cause I lied, more than if I told the truth and got in trouble for it. Maybe a lie hurts my respect and you[rs] too. I don't want to be a liar.*

Two other children spoke with the researcher, during a small group discussion at a Learning Centre, on the issue of cheating:

BS 1 *Cheating is like an ugly game. It feels like I got punched in the stomach . . . when somebody cheats me.*

GS 8 *But to me, it's like I got punched in my heart.*

Based on analysis of the Product Evaluation findings, an implication for building educational theory was that if these students respected other people, then perhaps they valued them; and if they valued them, then they may have felt a measure of responsibility for their well-being. This assertion parallels the ideas that "respect is the restraining side of morality; it keeps us from hurting what we ought to value" (Lickona, 1991, p. 67), and, responsibility is the active side of morality in that "it means orienting toward others, paying attention to them, actively responding to their needs" (Lickona, 1991, p. 68). In keeping with this understanding, it could be said that as children's moral capacities grow, then perhaps they may be more likely to choose to help or care for another in spite of the personal costs and to take responsibility for their actions.

In June 1998, the child participants created lists of ideas about what *respect* meant to them, which mirrored each child's conceptions of respect for people, as illustrated in this writing by GS 2:

Respect their singing
Respect how they look
Respect what they do
Be nice to each other
Respect their work
Be patient to others.
Be proud for them
Be careful to each other
Be good to others
Don't be bad to them
Don't be calling them names

(d) Article 15 - Right to Association

In keeping with Article 15 of the CRC concerning the children's right to association (UNGA, 1989), the students seemingly were developing a sense of belonging in the world as illustrated by the following excerpts from child participants' narratives and interviews:

BS 4 *We really like playing on the soccer team.*

BS 6 *I wish the whole school was safe -- like in the classroom.*

GS 1 *I like being in groups when at the Learning Centre.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *belonging* as reflected in this participatory indicator:

> *We should all live and grow in a safe place, where everybody is wanted*
> Tables 3 - Responding, 5 - Prosocial Acting.

Thus, the findings revealed that the child participants' responses reflected an apparent interest in belonging to peer groups and being with friends. This interest of the child participants to belong and to live in a secure, peaceful, cooperative and helpful environment is paralleled in the CRC preamble paragraph, which states children should be brought up in the "spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, and solidarity" (UNGA, 1989). Based on analysis of the Product Evaluation findings, an implication for building educational theory was that the rights and principles of the CRC could be used as a theoretical platform on which to build a civil society that allows children to feel a sense of belonging in the world.

Similarly, the child participants also expressed an interest and an apparent need to act in cooperating and helping ways, which can be viewed as prosocial acting (Eisenberg, 1992). The following excerpts from child participants' narratives and interviews illustrated emerging conceptions of *cooperating:*

GS 7 *All children can share a responsibility to make friends.*

BS 9 *It's good when we do the buddy system so I learn from him and he learns from me -- especially when we read and write stuff.*

GS 9 *We should not allow bullies at school or anywhere.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *cooperating,* as reflected in this participatory indicator:

> *Friendly and helpful work and play with others*
> Table 6 - Prosocial Acting.

In a related manner, the following excerpts from child participants' narratives and interviews illustrated emerging conceptions of *helping:*

GS 3 *Helping means listening to others with respect.*

BS 7 *Helping means working and playing with others.*

GS 4 *Helping means sharing our thoughts and feelings with Ms. M.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *helping,* as reflected in this participatory indicator:

> *Working and playing with others, listening to others with respect, sharing our thoughts and feelings*
> Table 6 - Prosocial Acting.

The following excerpts from child participants' narratives and interviews illustrated emerging conceptions of *conflict resolution:*

BS 8 *Children have a same rights in this world. And the way I see it is all are equal and should be friends.*

BS 2 *Now I know how to fix a problem. I think about what I can do and I choose what to do.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *conflict resolution*, as reflected in this participatory indicator:

We can fix problems in peaceful ways
Table 2 - Reasoning.

In keeping with Article 15 of the CRC concerning the right to association, the child participants were encouraged by their teacher throughout the case study to participate in groups independently of her and interdependently with each other. Taken together with Article 31 of the CRC that concerns the right of children to play and recreation (UNGA, 1989), during the curriculum implementation processes the students were offered opportunities to use of objects such as puppets, and while interacting and playing with others, and participating in role playing through Learning Centres. However, when students chose to read, play, or work alone, or if it were believed that some students were not ready to handle group discussions and shared revelations with respect and sensitivity, then such individual preferences and situations were recognized and respected in keeping with Article 1 of the CRC, which concerns the individuality of each child (UNGA, 1989).

In keeping with the child's decision to participate in activities alone, most activities in *The World Around Us* curriculum could be completed either by small group or on an individual basis. For example, written directions for an individual or small-group Learning Centre activity would read: *Please decide if you want to read the story by yourself or with one or two classmates.* This approach recognized the merits of both individual and group work and play, and it supported the students' preferences and choices for completing the activities alone or with one or two partners.

(e) Article 16 - Right to Privacy

In accordance with Article 16 of the CRC (UNGA, 1989), the child participants' right to privacy was respected in a number of ways throughout the case study, as described here. The following vignette illustrates how one student was learning about respect for a classmate's privacy by not going into her desk:

> *One student, namely BS 9, stated he was upset when not allowed to read a certain book that belonged to the classroom library. When he was asked if anyone had explained to him why he was not allowed to read the book, he said that another classmate, namely GS 7, claimed that it was her right to read it, and to keep the book from him. BS 9 seemed confused since claiming a right was not an adequate reason for him. The book was found inside the desk of GS 7 and because she had a right to privacy, then BS 9 should not go into her desk without permission from the girl. It was explained to the boy by the classroom teacher that he had a responsibility to respect her privacy and not to go into her desk to retrieve the book. When GS 7 finished reading the book and returned it to the classroom library, then BS 9 took the opportunity to read it.*

When listening to discussions amongst the students and the teacher about events which occurred inside of the classroom, it was revealed that the child participants were showing respect for privacy. The following excerpts from child participants' narratives and interviews illustrated emerging conceptions of *privacy:*

GS 2 *Some things I share, and some times I share with just me.*

BS 7 *I don't go into anybody's desk but mine.*

GS 4 *I just want to daydream sometimes by myself.*

An impact of the curriculum on child participants was their emerging conceptions of *privacy*, as reflected in this participatory indicator:

Some thoughts and feelings are shared, and sometimes not
Tables 2 - Reasoning, 4 - Responding, 6- Prosocial Acting.

The child participants were informed, and periodically reminded, by the researcher of their right to withdraw from activities which asked for disclosure of personal thoughts, such as journal writing, in view of the right to privacy stated in Article 16 of the CRC (UNGA, 1989). Such a privacy situation was handled through the implementation of the 'Want To Share' or 'Do Not Want To Share' procedure. To explain further, if on a particular day a child wrote something to be read by the teacher or researcher, then the Thinking Log was opened at that page and placed on the 'Want To Share' chair. On the other hand, thoughts could be kept private when a closed log was put on the 'Do Not Want to Share' chair. So that this procedure was not misused, the students were reminded to write and share some entries with peers, teacher, and researcher. Only twice during the case study did children choose not to share their work according to the classroom teacher, which suggested that for the most part the children willingly shared their written ideas and opinions with the teacher and the researcher.

The child participants' right to privacy was also respected during their semi-structured interviews, which were conducted with eighteen of the nineteen students. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the case study, what was expected of the interviewee, and that the respondent may ask questions for clarification at any time. The child interviewees were

asked if their responses might be taped, and all agreed; and, all cassette recordings were subsequently destroyed after analyses. Throughout the interviews, notes were taken by the researcher for later transcription; again, this data were destroyed upon completion of analyses to ensure confidentiality.

In order to respect the child participants' right to privacy about their work during the course of this case study, it should be noted that the researcher only spoke with others, such as parents, with the children's verbal permission. For example, the researcher explained to an inquiring parent that her child had expressed creative responses in a five-line poem, which the student wrote about herself. The decision to share the poem with the parent was left to the student who was present during this conversation; when given the opportunity, the student chose to share the poem and read it aloud.

In a similar way, the classroom teacher appeared to respect each student's right to learn through trial and error, to try "a variety of educational experiences, and if necessary, to fail without acquiring stigmas or labels that carry the force of a continuing burden" (Kohler, 1979, p. 226-227). To illustrate this point, the teacher stated that she accepted the children's right to feel anger and sadness as well as positive feelings such as joy and caring for oneself and others. Respecting children during this case study required the teacher to accept the meanings children constructed as their conceptions and communicating that acceptance to them. It required the teacher to

provide a learning environment where the children's expressions of their feelings, interests, and values were encouraged and supported.

It could be said that this approach to learning within the case study classroom was congruent with Noddings' (1984, 1995) goal of education that includes promoting interdependence and cooperation in the school setting. Noddings (1984) states that interactive approaches to teaching such as "dialogue, modeling, the provision of practice, and the ... teacher [who] nurtures the ethical ideal of caring" should be generally incorporated into the learning environment (p. 179). Based on analysis of the Product Evaluation findings, an implication for building educational theory was that such an approach to teaching was also a desirable approach for learning about respect of children and their rights, as expressed in the CRC and advocated in this case study. As we respect to children, so they should be encouraged to respect themselves, others, and the world around us and to act in fair and responsible ways at school, as well as at home and within their communities.

Part II

Building Educational Theory

i. Devising a Framework of Participatory Indicators

In Part II of this chapter, the process of inductive content analysis is described, which enabled the researcher to devise a wholistic framework of Participatory Indicators for recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. In light of the research goal of building educational theory, this research led to the identification of the Participatory Indicators, linked to articles of the CRC, which mirrored the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities.

In what follows, the framework of indicators is represented in the set of six tables entitled *Participatory Indicators*, which grew out of inductive content analysis of the collected qualitative data. Inductive content analysis of the data involved the systematic organization of word and phrase tables which emerged from the data by its perceived patterns and themes. When constructing the tables of Participatory Indicators, the researcher proceeded through the processes of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting descriptive data. Each table consists of three columns of information labelled Emergent Themes, Conceptual Categories, and Participatory Indicators, which were constructed through the process described next.

(a) Wholistic Framework

The data interpretation process within the context of this case study involved the creation of a wholistic framework composed of six tables. It was called a *wholistic* framework since the three interactive capacities of moral development previously introduced in Chapter 2, Part II, were used as an organizational mechanism in this framework: Reasoning (cognitive), Responding (affective), and Prosocial Acting (behavioural) capacities. This framework was premised on the understanding that the three interactive capacities which children experience during moral development similarly come into play during the conceptualization process (Alleman & Rosaen, 1991; Damon, 1988; Garrod, 1993; Hersh, Miller, & Fielding, 1980; Kaltsounis, 1987; Lickona, 1991; Martorella, 1985; Scott, 1987; Welton & Mallan, 1988).

The three developmental capacities are seen as interactive since each one is influenced by the others; that is, decisions and actions are affected by reasoning and feeling and how one thinks and feels is also influenced by behaviours. Within this wholistic framework, the child participants' capacities for Reasoning were represented in Tables 1 and 2. The child participants' capacities for Responding were represented in Tables 3 and 4. The child participants' capacities for Prosocial Acting were represented in Tables 5 and 6.

(b) Unit of Analysis

In order to collect data and to analyze the content of the data inductively, a *unit of analysis* was identified. According to Merriam (1988), a unit must meet two criteria in that "it should reveal information relevant to the study and stimulate the reader to think beyond the particular bit of information" (p. 132), and it should be understandable and interpretable by itself, in light of the context of the study. In view of these criteria, the selected unit of analysis for the case study consisted of *descriptive phrases* excerpted from notes, checklists, and transcripts which were collected from interviews, narratives, and observations.

The researcher reviewed narratives in the children's Thinking Logs and *I am learning* activity sheets, as well as the content of observation notes and checklists, interview notes and transcripts of interviews. Following the recorded interviews of eighteen of the nineteen children, the tapes were transcribed with comments incorporated into the notes for reference during analysis; one parent requested that no one-on-one interviews be conducted with her child on the signed consent form, and so no formal, recorded interview was carried out with that child. By listening to the students' voices, the researcher was able to create a database from the descriptive phrases, which reflected aspects the child participants' emerging conceptions of participation rights and responsibilities.

(c) Emergent Themes

The inductive process involved sorting the descriptive excerpts according to recurring patterns and emergent themes in the data and then coding the units by who, what, when, and where (Merriam, 1988). Identifying the emergent themes involved comparing and contrasting each descriptive quote with all the others with different meanings (Berg, 1995; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Once emergent themes were identified, they were condensed into the phrase tables since such qualitative data in the form of descriptive excerpts could not be readily converted to statistical values but could be represented in a word database (Berg, 1995; Yin, 1993).

Although the researcher did not have a fixed set of themes to organize the excerpts, the CRC was used as a guideline for recognizing the child participants' conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. The rights to participate expressed in Articles 12 to 17 of the CRC served as general points of reference (UNGA, 1989). The *Emergent Themes* listed in the following tables reflect common elements which emerged from the case study children's responses, which emerged from narratives, interviews, and observations.

(d) Conceptual Categories

This process further involved analysis of the data by systematically organizing the themes previously recorded in the word and phrase tables into "conceptual categories" (Merriam, 1988, p. 133). Merriam (1988) explained the term *conceptual categories* refers to overriding categories which emerged through inductive content analysis of the data. In the column entitled *Conceptual Categories* within the following tables, categories of the child participants' experiences associated with their participation rights and responsibilities were identified and described.

The conceptual categories were listed under the two headings of *Conceptualizing* or *Exercising*, which reflected the processes involved in the child participants' experiences associated with their participation rights and responsibilities. These two processes were highlighted in the findings presented in Chapter 4 that revealed that the child participants benefited from meaningful curricular experiences within the school day, which afforded them opportunities for experiencing -- conceptualizing *and* exercising -- their participation rights and responsibilities. Restated from Chapter 4, the term *conceptualizing* generally refers to the process of forming conceptions, or the conceptual development process (Kaltsounis, 1987; Martorella, 1985; Welton & Mallan, 1988), whereas the term *exercising* generally refers to the process of putting into practice participation rights and responsibilities.

(e) Participatory Indicators

Within the six tables, the Emergent Themes and Conceptual Categories were embedded into a set of statements or *Participatory Indicators*, which generally refers to evidence that mirrored the child participants' emerging conceptions associated with their *participation* rights and responsibilities. The primary reference points for identifying these Participatory Indicators were children's participation rights expressed in the cluster of Articles 12 through 17 contained in the CRC (UNGA, 1989); under each indicator, the key CRC articles have been noted in brackets.

Since this wholistic framework of indicators was organized around the interactive capacities of reasoning, responding, and prosocial acting, it was found that recurring indicators emerged through the multi-step inductive content analysis process described above. In particular, the Participatory Indicators of *Participation Rights*, *Respect*, *Privacy*, and *Belonging* were repeated within the six tables. **(Refer to Tables 1 - 6: Participatory Indicators.)**

EMERGENT THEMES	**CONCEPTUAL CATEGORIES**	**PARTICIPATORY INDICATORS**
•Themes which emerged from child participants' responses: narratives, interviews & observations	•Categories of child participants' experiences --conceptualizing & exercising processes-- associated with their participation rights & responsibilities	•Indicators of child participants' emerging conceptions associated with their participation rights & responsibilities (key CRC articles bracketed)
•children's rights •participation •protection •provision •wants (happy) •needs (healthy) •individual rights •group rights •respect •listening •dignity •value of children •value of all people •responsibilities •fairness •justice •choices •consequences •reasoning why •right & good •wrong & bad •role playing •information •media access •decision-making •problem solving •charters of rights & responsibilities •participatory skills	**Conceptualizing:** •reasoning by understanding why we have rights to stand up for what we believe in, without hurting anyone •participation rights to have voices heard & considered, freedom of expression, beliefs, association, privacy, access to appropriate information •perspective taking by imagining how someone else thinks, feels, or sees the world	**•Children's Rights:** •Rights are what we really need to be all right (Art. 1-42-rights) (Art. 3-bests interests) (Art. 5-exercising rights) (Art. 29-responsible citizenship) **•Participation Rights:** •Children have rights to think, feel, & do (Art. 5-exercising rights) (Art. 12-17-participation rights) (Art. 29-responsible citizenship) **•Respect:** •Looking after each other & the world around us (Art. 14-freedom of beliefs) (Art. 29-responsible citizenship)

Table 1. Participatory Indicators: Reasoning Conceptual Categories: Conceptualizing

EMERGENT THEMES	CONCEPTUAL CATEGORIES	PARTICIPATORY INDICATORS
•Themes which emerged from child participants' responses: narratives, interviews & observations	•Categories of child participants' experiences --conceptualizing & exercising processes-- associated with their participation rights & responsibilities	•Indicators of child participants' emerging conceptions associated with their participation rights & responsibilities (key CRC articles bracketed)
•children's rights •participation •protection •provision •wants (happy) •needs (healthy) •individual rights •group rights •respect •listening •dignity •value of children •value of all people •responsibilities •fairness •justice •choices •consequences •reasoning why •right & good •wrong & bad •role playing •information •media access •decision-making •problem solving •charters of rights & responsibilities •participatory skills	**Exercising:** •showing respect by looking after yourself & others at school, home, & community •using 3-step decision-making process: problem, choices/consequences, decision •resolving conflicts by making decisions based on info & reason, & fixing problems in peaceful ways •accessing appropriate information from human resources & various media •participatory skills: communication = reading, writing, listening, & expressing views; social skills = decision-making, problem solving, independence, interdependence, & cooperation	**•Decision-Making:** •We can decide things, & we need info/others to help us (Art. 12-voices heard & considered) (Art. 13-freedom of expression) **•Conflict Resolution:** •We can fix problems in peaceful ways (Art. 15-association) **•Accessing Information:** •We need to find things out & get answers to our questions (Art. 17-access appropriate info) **•Privacy:** •Some thoughts & feelings are shared, & sometimes not (Art. 16-privacy)

Table 2. Participatory Indicators: Reasoning
Conceptual Categories: Exercising

EMERGENT THEMES	CONCEPTUAL CATEGORIES	PARTICIPATORY INDICATORS
•Themes which emerged from child participants' responses: narratives, interviews & observations	•Categories of child participants' experiences --conceptualizing & exercising processes-- associated with their participation rights & responsibilities	•Indicators of child participants' emerging conceptions associated with their participation rights & responsibilities (key CRC articles bracketed)
•children's rights •participation •protection •provision •wants (happy) •needs (healthy) •individual rights •group rights •respect •listening •dignity •value of children •value of all people •responsibilities •fairness •justice •choices •consequences •reasoning why •right & good •wrong & bad •role playing •information •media access •decision-making •problem solving •charters of rights & responsibilities •participatory skills	**Conceptualizing:** •responding by expressing concern & caring for oneself, others, human rights & the world around us; ability to respond to what we learn about rights & relating it to life experiences •participation rights to have voices heard & considered, freedom of expression, beliefs, association, privacy, access to appropriate information •recognizing grown-ups need to protect rights of all children, & provide for needs •showing respect by caring for others in ways we want to be cared for	**•Participation Rights:** •Children have rights to think, feel, & do (Art. 5-exercising rights) (Art. 12-17-participation rights) (Art. 29-responsible citizenship) **•Respect:** •Caring for us & our rights (Art. 14-freedom of beliefs) (Art. 29-responsible citizenship) **•Belonging:** •We should all live & grow in a safe place, where everybody is wanted (Art. 15-association)

Table 3. Participatory Indicators: Responding Conceptual Categories: Conceptualizing

EMERGENT THEMES	CONCEPTUAL CATEGORIES	PARTICIPATORY INDICATORS
•Themes which emerged from child participants' responses: narratives, interviews & observations	•Categories of child participants' experiences --conceptualizing & exercising processes-- associated with their participation rights & responsibilities	•Indicators of child participants' emerging conceptions associated with their participation rights & responsibilities (key CRC articles bracketed)
•children's rights •participation •protection •provision •wants (happy) •needs (healthy) •individual rights •group rights •respect •listening •dignity •value of children •value of all people •responsibilities •fairness •justice •choices •consequences •reasoning why •right & good •wrong & bad •role playing •information •media access •decision-making •problem solving •charters of rights & responsibilities •participatory skills	**Exercising:** •taking personal responsibility by doing & being all we can •taking social responsibility doing what we can to make this world a better place •protecting privacy by deciding when to share thoughts & feelings, & with whom •participatory skills: communication skills-reading, writing, listening, & expressing views; social skills-decision-making, problem solving, independence, interdependence, & cooperation	**•Taking Responsibility:** •Doing good without someone telling you to do it (Art. 14-freedom of beliefs) (Art. 29-responsible citizenship) **•Children's Responsibilities:** •Help us do right to live & grow right (Art. 14-freedom of beliefs) **•Personal Responsibility:** •I do what I can to help me & everyone (Art. 14-freedom of beliefs) **•Social Responsibility:** •We do what we can to make it a better place (Art. 14-freedom of beliefs) **•Privacy:** •Some thoughts & feelings are shared, & sometimes not (Art. 16-privacy)

Table 4. Participatory Indicators: Responding
Conceptual Categories: Exercising

EMERGENT THEMES	CONCEPTUAL CATEGORIES	PARTICIPATORY INDICATORS
•Themes which emerged from child participants' responses: narratives, interviews & observations	•Categories of child participants' experiences --conceptualizing & exercising processes-- associated with their participation rights & responsibilities	•Indicators of child participants' emerging conceptions associated with their participation rights & responsibilities (key CRC articles bracketed)
•children's rights •participation •protection •provision •wants (happy) •needs (healthy) •individual rights •group rights •respect •listening •dignity •value of children •value of all people •responsibilities •fairness •justice •choices •consequences •reasoning why •right & good •wrong & bad •role playing •information •media access •decision-making •problem solving •charters of rights & responsibilities •participatory skills	**Conceptualizing:** •participation rights to have voices heard & considered, freedom of expression, beliefs, association, privacy, access to appropriate information •showing respect by treating others as we would want to be treated •respecting diversity & unity by recognizing our differences & similarities make the world more interesting, & can be helpful, e.g., differing skills •realizing every child needs to feel accepted & to belong	**•Participation Rights:** •Children have rights to think, feel, & do (Art. 5-exercising rights) (Art. 12-17-participation rights) (Art. 29-responsible citizenship) **•Taking Responsibility:** •Doing good without someone telling you to do it (Art. 14-freedom of beliefs) (Art. 29-responsible citizenship) **•Respect:** •Treating others like we want to be treated (Art. 14-freedom of beliefs) (Art. 29-responsible citizenship) **•Belonging:** •We should all live & grow in a safe place, where everybody is wanted (Art. 15-association)

Table 5. Participatory Indicators: Prosocial Acting
Conceptual Categories: Conceptualizing

EMERGENT THEMES	CONCEPTUAL CATEGORIES	PARTICIPATORY INDICATORS
•Themes which emerged from child participants' responses: narratives, interviews & observations	•Categories of child participants' experiences --conceptualizing & exercising processes-- associated with their participation rights & responsibilities	•Indicators of child participants' emerging conceptions associated with their participation rights & responsibilities (key CRC articles bracketed)
•children's rights •participation •protection •provision •wants (happy) •needs (healthy) •individual rights •group rights •respect •listening •dignity •value of children •value of all people •responsibilities •fairness •justice •choices •consequences •reasoning why •right & good •wrong & bad •role playing •information •media access •decision-making •problem solving •charters of rights & responsibilities •participatory skills	**Exercising:** •prosocial acting by benefiting others, e.g., helping, listening, & cooperating •protecting privacy by deciding when to share thoughts & feelings, & with whom •cooperating by getting along with others in work & play, helping ourselves learn in & out of school •respectful listening to hear all sides of story (issues), ask questions to help understand (clarify), give ideas to show we care (suggestions), & evaluate what we hear (evidence) •participatory skills: communication skills-reading, writing, listening, & expressing views; social skills-decision-making, problem solving, independence, interdependence, & cooperation	**•Helping:** •Working & playing with others, listening to others with respect, sharing our thoughts & feelings (Art. 15-association) **•Listening:** •People listening to us, & listening to what others say (Art. 12-voices heard & considered) (Art. 13-freedom of expression) **•Cooperating:** •Friendly & helpful work & play with others (Art. 15-association) (Art. 29-responsible citizenship) **•Privacy:** •Some thoughts & feelings are shared, & sometimes not (Art. 16-privacy)

Table 6. Participatory Indicators: Prosocial Acting
Conceptual Categories: Exercising

ii. Concluding Comments on Building Educational Theory

A conclusion for building educational theory on children's emerging conceptions can be drawn from interpretations of the Product Evaluation findings, which links the framework of Participatory Indicators discussed above with the six learning and teaching strategies discussed in Chapter 4. The Participatory Indicators were excerpts drawn from the child participants' expressions of their thoughts, feelings, or actions associated with their participation rights and responsibilities. The indicators reflected the language of the Grade 3 children, and the ways in which the child participants' actually viewed their participation rights and responsibilities, within the context of their world. It could be said that the six tables of indicators provided a systematic means for recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, from a wholistic framework involving the three interactive capacities of moral development.

Thus, a link between the indicators and strategies was that by using this framework of indicators for recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions, the researcher was able to identify what strategies were appropriate to the ways in which the children viewed their world. The researcher was able to identify learning and teaching strategies which were effective in promoting the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, in accordance with their developmental capacities.

Another conclusion for building educational theory, in light of the Product Evaluation findings, was that while the children were forming emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, and exercising the same, they were also attaining moral values pertaining to human rights. For example, the child participants were demonstrating respect oneself, parents, friends, human rights, and the environment, as well as taking some responsibility to exercise human rights in ways which respected the rights and safety of others.

In keeping with Article 29 of the CRC concerning children's development of respect for "human rights and fundamental freedoms" and development of respect for the "national values of the country" in which they live (UNGA, 1989), the findings revealed that during curriculum implementation the children were seemingly attaining moral values relating to responsible citizenship, such as *respect* and *responsibility*. These moral values may be considered attributes of responsible citizenship, which refers to understanding and exercising participation rights and responsibilities, while acquiring and applying participatory skills, and attaining moral values necessary to contribute to the well-being of the community, as originally stated in Chapter 1.

This finding supports the notion that the moral values of respect and responsibility cannot enforced from external authorities, since people do not necessarily act with respect for rights, or with responsibility to self and others simply because a set of rules is

dictated to them (Riley, 1984). Thus, it could be concluded that children's rights education should not be based on obedience to rules; rather, the promotion of attaining such moral values need to be modelled, experienced, and developed by children at home, at school, and in the community. Stated in moral developmental terms, if children are to engage in prosocial behaviours such as respecting human rights, then they need to come to understand reasons for respecting the rights of others, and for taking responsible actions based on the ethical treatment of others, as shown in this case study.

In the spirit of the *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education*, therefore, the worth of children's rights education may be judged by the extent to which it affords all students equitable opportunities to attain moral values, experience rights and responsibilities, and develop participatory skills. Through such curricular experiences, children may begin to see themselves as both the beneficiaries of their rights and the providers and protectors of human rights for others. As developing young citizens, students may increasingly put into practice their knowledge, skills, and values linked to rights and responsibilities to participate, in accordance with their developmental capacities. Accordingly, a legacy of participating in a curriculum for children's rights education may be that students are moved to protect the rights of others by advocating for the inclusion, respect, responsibility, and safety of all persons at school, and beyond into their communities.

iii. Summarizing Contributions and Limitations of this Case Study and Recommendations for Further Research

This section is devoted to summarizing key contributions of this case study, as well as its limitations; in this discussion, issues are raised which serve as a springboard for recommendations of further research within the developing field of Children's Rights Studies. Listening to the child participants was a cornerstone of this case study, which yielded Process Evaluation and Product Evaluation findings. These findings have contributed to both informing educational practice and building educational theory on children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, to be discussed in this section.

In support of this type of research which highlighted the children's responses during their curricular experiences, it has been stated that "[o]nly when researchers learn to understand the world of the child as the child sees it, will they both be able to contribute to a framework of children's rights, meeting both the needs of children and those of society" (Verhellen, 1994, p. 31). The following discussion on contributions, as well as limitations, of this qualitative research on children's rights is divided into four categories:

(a) methodological contribution;

(b) practical contribution and theoretical contributions;

(c) methodological, practical, and theoretical limitations; and

(d) vocal contribution.

(a) Methodological Contribution

The qualitative case study design was well-suited to this research that explored both a particular phenomenon and the context in which it takes place (Yin, 1993). The child participants' conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities were considered the phenomenon, and the natural setting of the classroom was considered the context. A combination of evaluative, descriptive, and interpretive case study components best supported the operationalization of this research that explored how curricular experiences influenced the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities.

A methodological contribution of this research lies in its adaption of the Context-Input-Process-Product Model (Stufflebeam, 1983) for curriculum evaluation, whereby the Process and Product procedures were employed. The Process Evaluation procedure explored the implementation of *The World Around Us* with students' involvement, which was mainly focused on implementing the curriculum, while it also included designing or redesigning as well as evaluating aspects of the curriculum. The Product Evaluation procedure explored the impact of this Primary-level curriculum for children's rights education on the children's emerging conceptions.

A recommendation for further research is that the Process and Product components of the CIPP Model (Stufflebeam, 1983) may be similarly applied to curriculum research in order allow the researcher

to explore the implementation and impact of other existing curricula for children's rights education suitable for primary, elementary, and secondary students. Examples of such curriculum materials include: *In the child's best interest: A primer on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Castelle, 1990), *Children have rights!* (Save the Children - Canada, 1992), *Global teacher, global learner* (Selby & Pike, 1988), or *The best we have to give: The rights of the child - A resource guide for grades 4 to 8* (UNICEF - Canada, 1989).

Another recommendation for further research is that the CIPP Model (Stufflebeam, 1983) be employed in order to make suitable modifications to *The World Around Us* curriculum from a variety of cultural contexts and perspectives. One of the learning objectives of this curriculum was to help foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and a respect for the dignity and worth of children and others, in accordance with Article 30 concerning the right of children to participate in their cultural heritages. Students, teachers, families, and community members could be invited to participate in such curriculum research and development projects in order to reflect cultural values, needs, interests, and perspectives in a genuine manner. A key purpose of such research may be to infuse locally developed materials into the existing school curriculum, which increasingly demonstrate and reinforce the practice of honouring cultural and ethnic uniqueness and similarity, in order to provide a basis for acceptance of cultural unity and diversity.

If the curriculum development team were at the initial stages of designing a curriculum for children's rights education, however, then the entire CIPP Model involving Context Evaluation (needs assessment) and Input Evaluation (curriculum content and strategies) components, as well as the Process Evaluation (implementation) and Product Evaluation (impact) components may be more useful. A recommendation for further research is that the four components of the CIPP Model (Stufflebeam, 1983) be employed in order to benefit the design, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum materials for children's rights education for the primary, elementary, and secondary levels.

(b) Practical and Theoretical Contributions

As discussed within this dissertation, in order to benefit future curriculum materials for children's rights education, the researcher was searching for effective means for providing appropriate guidance and direction to help students to understand and exercise their participation rights and responsibilities, in accordance with their developmental capacities. A practical contribution was that this research led to the identification of effective learning and teaching strategies which promoted the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities. This contribution met the need of identifying learning and teaching strategies which were appropriate to the ways in which those children actually viewed their world. Those strategies were concept mapping, responsive writing, role playing, decision-making model, student self-evaluation, and constructing charters, as discussed in Chapter 4.

A recommendation for further research is that other learning and teaching strategies be developed with students' direct involvement in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the strategies. The purpose of such strategies may be to promote children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, in addition to promoting their emerging conceptions of protection and provision rights.

A theoretical contribution was that this research led to building educational theory on children's emerging conceptions through the

identification of descriptive Participatory Indicators, which relate to articles of the CRC. The set of indicators provided a systematic means for recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, from a wholistic framework involving the three interactive capacities of moral development.

A recommendation for further research is that other descriptive indicators be similarly devised based on this wholistic framework, which mirror children's conceptions of *protection* and *provision* rights and responsibilities. The purpose of such research may be to develop a comprehensive set of indicators on children's emerging conceptions of their participation, protection, provision rights and responsibilities, guided by relevant articles in the CRC.

(c) Methodological, Practical, and Theoretical Limitations

The point was made in Chapter 3, which addressed the case study design and methods, that case study data and findings are considered particular to the site-specific context where collected (Yin, 1993, 1994). Thus, a methodological limitation of this case study was that it yielded research data and findings that were particular to the context of the specific classroom of Grade 3 children where the research was conducted. Consequently, a practical limitation of this case study was that its findings on providing appropriate guidance and direction for promoting emerging conceptions were particular to the context of the specific classroom. Similarly, a theoretical limitation of this case study was that its findings on recognizing the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities were particular to the context of the study.

Even though the findings documented in this dissertation are particular to the case study site, they could lead to generalization of theory to other similar circumstances. To explain this point further, readers of this qualitative case study report, such as child and youth care practitioners and educators, would have to decide if circumstances elsewhere were sufficiently similar to this present research situation to warrant the application of its site-specific findings (Erickson & Shultz, 1992; Gaskins, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1993, 1994).

For example, the six learning and teaching strategies, which

promoted the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, could be used with other groups of Primary-level children within other educational settings; however, the impact of those strategies on other children may differ from that found this case study. As noted above, the Participatory Indicators, which mirrored the child participants' emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, could be used as a model for developing similar sets of indicators on other child populations.

In view of the limitations of the particularistic findings of this case study, a recommendation for further research is that studies be undertaken on the implementation and impact of *The World Around Us* curriculum within a broader range of grades and over a longer time period. For example, this curriculum could be concurrently implemented within multiple Grade 3 classrooms as well as Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, or multi-level classrooms. A key purpose of such research may be to compare patterns in student development, which emerge at the various grades. In addition, a case under study could be an entire classroom of students over one school year, or a group of children over a four-year period such as Kindergarten through Grade 3. A key purpose of such research may be to explore the influences of the curriculum on other children's understanding and exercising of their human rights during longitudinal case studies.

(d) Vocal Contribution

The voices of the child participants made a particularly significant contribution to this case study on children's participation rights and responsibilities, which was undertaken during the *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education.* In recognition of this decade and in the spirit of the CRC, schools in partnership with families and the community can effectively educate students about human rights and responsibilities and guide them towards responsible citizenship through the school curriculum.

In response, this classroom-based case study was conducted, which explored how curricular experiences influenced the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, in order to benefit future curriculum materials for children's rights education. It was important to consider how curricular experiences, including learning and teaching strategies, influenced those who used the curriculum in order to determine what parts were effective in promoting their emerging conceptions.

The researcher searched for effective means for providing appropriate guidance and direction to the students as well as for recognizing their emerging conceptions of participation rights and responsibilities. During this quest for information, the researcher invited the students' input and encouraged their participation, listened to their voices, and searched for their points of view, while demonstrating the significance of listening to the children's voices.

A significance of listening to the voices of the child participants was reinforced during the researcher's last visit to the case study site, when she provided them each with a lapel sash of three intertwined ribbons. Those ribbons were meant to remind the students of the human rights accorded all children in the CRC. With the distribution of the ribbons, a discussion ensued in which the children linked the ribbons in primary colours of red, yellow, and blue to the three areas of their rights. The children linked their provision rights, or *care for us rights*, with the red ribbon; their protection rights, or *keep us safe rights*, with the yellow ribbon; and their participation rights, or *listen to us rights*, with the blue ribbon. Throughout this qualitative case study, the child participants were learning about the rights expressed in the CRC in general, while they were understanding and exercising their participation rights and responsibilities in particular.

A recommendation for further research is that qualitative case studies be conducted in order to follow the experiences of one child, or a small group of children, during the implementation of *The World Around Us* curriculum for children's rights education over one or more school years. For example, the researcher might investigate what home, school, or community projects were initiated and implemented as a result of increasingly understanding and exercising children's rights and responsibilities. A key purpose of such research may be to explore the extent to which children's learning is transferred to life experiences beyond the classroom and into their

community. Perhaps when children can begin to see how rights affect their own and others' lives within familiar contexts such as their school, then they may increasingly appreciate and respect persons who are similar to or different from themselves both in and beyond their communities.

Within the context of this case study, while the researcher was listening to the children's voices, she was learning from the group of nineteen Grade 3 children, who, with their teacher's direction and guidance, actively and cooperatively participated in this research. By affording the child participants equitable opportunities to make decisions and to express opinions during delivery of *The World Around Us* curriculum, they collectively made a significant vocal contribution regarding children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities to the growing field of Children's Rights Studies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Sample Letter and Consent Form to Parents/Legal Guardians

Appendix B:

Sample Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Child Participants

Appendix C:

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Sample Letter and Consent Form to Parents/Legal Guardians

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian:

Re: Curriculum Study in Your Child's Classroom

Beginning in (Month) 1998, I plan to conduct a curriculum study in (name of city deleted) related to my doctoral research in education and child development through the University of Victoria. The curriculum study is approved and authorized by both the (name of school district deleted) and the University of Victoria. It will focus on the curriculum entitled *The World Around Us* that was developed by myself for Primary-level students. This curriculum explores important themes such as respect of oneself and others, responsibility, human rights, families, and community. The curriculum activities include reading, writing, and talking about these themes; as well, the activities can help children to develop skills of making individual and shared decisions, solving problems, and taking responsible action.

1. When the curriculum is used in your child's classroom, I will need to collect information during periodic visits to the school as part of my study. This information should help me gain insight into how the curriculum activities generally influence children's conceptions of their rights and responsibilities. I will review samples of work written by the students related to the curriculum activities. This review is not meant as an assessment or test of the students' literacy skills.

2. Also, I will observe children informally during my intermittent visits to their classroom over a 3-month period. I plan to make observations of children during their participation in the curriculum under investigation and not any other time. These classroom observations will take place during the curriculum activities which typically last about 30 minutes per lesson. I will attempt to gather information on children's actions and interactions with others throughout the observations; for example, *What shows children are willingly and actively participating in shared decision-making?*

3. In addition, I will periodically interview the child participants; each interview should last about 10 minutes when I will ask questions on student experiences during curriculum activities. To start each interview, I will explain the following in terms appropriate to the child's understanding: (1) purpose of the interview, (2) what is expected of the child, (3) taping of the interview is optional, and (4) the child can stop the interview at any time.

4. If you will permit me to collect information from your child by reviewing samples of the child's written work as well as by observing and interviewing the child, then please complete the attached form to authorize your informed consent. The completed form should be returned to the child's teacher by (date) when it has been signed by both yourself and another adult who witnessed your signature.

5. I will need to interview some parents or legal guardians to gain their input about the children's experiences with the curriculum. If you are interested in also being interviewed, then please note your telephone number(s) on the bottom of the attached consent form so I can contact you to arrange a convenient meeting time and location.

6. To ensure anonymity, the identity of all participants in the study will be protected by using false names in the coding and reporting of all collected information. This coded data will be safely stored in confidential and locked files and it will be only accessible to myself and those individuals who sit on my academic committee at the University of Victoria: Drs. P. Cook, A. Pence, J. Hill, T. Riecken, and Ms. S. Griffin. To ensure confidentiality, I will destroy all interview recordings after I transcribe them, and dispose of notes from all interviews and observations as well as any identifying writing samples collected from child participants. While all identifying information will be destroyed after the study, all data concerning a participant who withdraws from the study will be immediately eliminated and destroyed upon his or her withdrawal. When the study is completed, a report of my findings will be made available to interested persons through the school district.

Should you wish to contact the supervisor of my academic program, Dr. Philip Cook can be reached weekdays at (phone number deleted) at the School of Child and Youth Care, Faculty of Human and Social Development, University of Victoria. Questions on this curriculum study may be addressed to me directly, Ellen Murray, at (phone number deleted) in Kamloops, British Columbia. I appreciate your assistance and as a teacher, curriculum developer, and educational researcher, I look forward to working with and learning from your child.

Best regards,

Ellen Murray

Attachment: Consent Form for Child Participant

CONSENT FORM FOR CHILD PARTICIPANT

By permitting this child to participate in the curriculum study, I understand that the researcher will collect information by reviewing samples of the child's written work as well as by observing and interviewing the child as noted in the attached letter. And, I understand and accept that the researcher will make every effort to ensure the following:

1. each child's right to privacy will be respected;
2. no breach in confidentiality of information disclosed will occur; and,
3. no physical harm, psychological harm, injury to reputation, and/or breach of relevant law will result.

I understand that the child may withdraw from this study at any time. If the child withdraws during the study, then all data concerning his/her participation will be immediately eliminated and destroyed.

I, _____ , parent or legal guardian of _____
Print your name here Print

the child's name here agree to allow the participation of this child in the curriculum study to be conducted by Ellen Murray at (name of) School where she will collect information relevant to her academic research.

NOTE: The signature of parent or legal guardian must be witnessed by another adult.

Signature of Parent
or Legal Guardian: _____ Date/Month/Year: _____

Signature of Witness: _____ Date/Month/Year: _____

If you are willing to be interviewed also by the researcher, then please provide your telephone number(s) below so an interview time and location can be arranged.

Daytime Phone #: _____ Evening Phone #: _____

Researcher: Ellen Murray Phone #: (deleted) (Kamloops, BC)

Supervisor: Dr. Philip Cook Phone #: (deleted) (UVic)

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM
TO THE CHILD'S TEACHER (NAME) BY (DATE)

Appendix B

Sample Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Child Participants

A selection of the following interview questions were used as a guideline by the researcher to collect opinions of the child participants. The questions concern the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities, and their curricular experiences during the curriculum development processes of *The World Around Us* curriculum for children's rights education.

Curricular Experiences: with reference to a particular activity
What part of the activity did you like doing the best? Why/How come?

What part do you think other children would like to do?

How should this activity be changed to make it better?

What did you learn by doing this activity?

What might grown up people learn from completing this activity?

Responsibilities: What does the word *responsibility* mean to you?
How would you finish these sentences?

I can take some responsibility to . . . .
All children can take some responsibility to . . . .
I can share a responsibility to . . . .
All children can share a responsibility to . . . .

What are some responsibilities children might have to themselves?

. . . to their families? . . . to school friends? . . . to their pets?

Why do children have responsibilities?

Rights: What does the word *rights* mean?
How would you finish these sentences?
I want to be . . . to have . . . to do.
I need to be . . . to have . . . to do.
I have a right to think . . . to feel . . . to do . . . to say.
All children have rights to think . . . to feel . . . to do . . . to say.

What is the same/different between rights and needs and wants?

Why do all children have the same rights in the world around us?

Why do children have rights?

Appendix C

Sample Consent Form for Adult Interview

CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT PARTICIPANT (INTERVIEW SESSION)

By participating in the curriculum study, I understand and accept that the researcher will make every effort to ensure the following:

1. no person's privacy will be invaded;
2. no breach in confidentiality of information disclosed will occur; and,
3. no physical harm, psychological harm, injury to reputation, and/or breach of relevant law will result.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time. If I withdraw during the study, then all data concerning my participation will be immediately eliminated and destroyed.

If you are nineteen years of age or over and you are willing to participate in the study by being interviewed by the researcher as noted in the attached letter, then please sign below to authorize your participation and to indicate your written informed consent.

I, _____, agree to be interviewed by Ellen Murray
Print your name here

when she will collect information relevant to her academic research.

NOTE: The signature of the adult participant must be witnessed by the researcher.

Participant Signature: _____ Date/Month/Year: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date/Month/Year: _____

Researcher: Ellen Murray Phone #: (deleted) (Kamloops, BC)

Supervisor: Dr. Philip Cook Phone #: (deleted) (UVic)

Appendix D

Sample Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Adult Participants

A selection of the following questions were used as a guideline to collect opinions of adults. The questions concern the children's curricular experiences during the curriculum development processes of *The World Around Us* curriculum for children's rights education.

Classroom Teacher:
How do you think the curricular experiences influence the children's reasoning capacities? Give examples.

How do you think the curricular experiences influence the children's responding capacities? Give examples.

How do you think the curricular experiences influence the children's prosocial acting capacities? Give examples.

How do you think the curricular experiences influence the children's emerging conceptions of their participation rights and responsibilities? Give examples.

Does my presence in the classroom influence the children's reactions and responses to the curricular experiences? If so, how? Give examples.

Parents/Legal Guardians:
What do you think the word *responsibility* means to your child?

How would your child finish these sentences?
I can take some responsibility to . . . .
All children can take some responsibility to . . . .
I can share a responsibility to . . . .
All children can share a responsibility to . . . .

What are some responsibilities your child assumes at home?

What do you think the word *rights* means to your child?

How would your child finish these sentences?
I want to be . . . to have . . . to do.
I need to be . . . to have . . . to do.
I have a right to think . . . to feel . . . to do . . . to say.
All children have rights to think . . . to feel . . . to do . . . to say.

What are some rights which your child exercises at home?

Appendix E

Sample Classroom Observation Checklist

Student's Code Name: GS 9
Location: Grade 3 classroom - Case study site
Date: April 22, 1998

SKILLS	ACTIONS	WORDS
•asks for help when needed	•raises hand ++	*I'm not sure what this question means*
•initiates interactions		*can you come back tomorrow too?*
•considers choices	•books to read in work group	
•respects own rights		*I need some water --I'm so thirsty*
•respects others' rights	•listens to others' responses	
•assumes responsibility	•moves over so peer can sit	
•participatory skills:		
•communication skills		
reading		*reads board message*
writing	•chooses partner-poem writing	
listening	•circle time, group work	
expressing views		*I'll make changes*
•social skills		
decision making	•descriptors of self/partner-poem	
problem solving	•suggests mixing paint-new colour	
independence	•goes home from school on bike	
interdependence	•joins/works with peers in circle group	
cooperation	•cooperative partner activity-read/write	

Appendix F

Selection Criteria for Primary-Level Resources

The selection criteria for the Primary-level resource materials included in *The World Around Us* curriculum are adapted from a set of guidelines for selecting learning resources published by the Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights in *Selection and Challenge of Learning Resources* (1991). In particular, portions of the "Social Considerations" (Province of British Columbia, 1991, pp. 14-19) evaluative criteria are modified in order to select fiction and information resource materials that are supportive of Primary-level children's awareness and understanding of their rights and related responsibilities.

The following criteria are considered by the curriculum developer for the selection of literature, audio, visual, and computer materials within the Primary-Level Resource Materials section of this manual:

(1) How are principles of children's and others' rights reflected?
(2) How is respect of self, others, and the environment promoted?
(3) How are individual and shared responsibilities addressed?
(4) How is problem solving achieved?
(5) How are independence/interdependence promoted?
(6) How are feelings, growing, and living in other cultures explored?
(7) How are First Nations cultures identified and represented?
(8) How are multicultural diversities and similarities represented?
(9) How do the activities relate to world experiences of children?
(10) How are the characters and roles non-stereotyped?
(11) How are gender equity and non-traditional roles represented?
(12) How are female and male characters shown as caring and just?
(13) Is decision-making based on fair rules and care considered?
(14) How are special needs and elderly persons represented?
(15) How are non-violence and conflict resolution issues addressed?
(16) How are safety awareness and related issues represented?
(17) What is the readability level: vocabulary, style, and format?
(18) How are characters, theme, plot, setting, style represented?
(19) Are the illustrations appropriate to children's understanding?
(20) Is the content accurate and current?
(21) Is local, Canadian, or international content represented?

Source: Murray, E. (1995). The world around us: A thematic primary-level curriculum for children's rights education. Victoria, BC: Author.