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**Report on Visiting Research Scholar Award, CEIEC, The  
University of Melbourne - Feb/May 2002**

During the 3 month period of my Visiting Research Scholar Award I participated in a variety of activities at the University of Melbourne including the successful completion the first stage of a collaborative research project -- Today's Child and Tomorrow's Curriculum: Social Responsibilities and the New Standards - with Associate Professor, Glenda MacNaughton, CEIEC. I also delivered papers and consulted with scholars at other institutions of higher learning.

University of Melbourne Activities

1) Today Child and Tomorrow's Curriculum

Professor MacNaughton and I have successfully completed the first stage of our collaborative research project into how the changed conditions of childhood are effecting teachers, parents, and the curriculum. The research is taking place at 5 sites including 2 primary schools, 2 long day care centers, and 1 kindergarten. To date we have:

- Conducted separate focus groups with both parents and teachers at each site
- Interviewed administrators at each site
- Interviewed target teachers at each site
- Observed the target teachers on 3 separate occasions.

We are in the process of analyzing our focus group and interview data as well as our field notes in preparation for the second phase of the study. The second phase will involve re-presenting the initial findings to all those who have participated in the first phase of the study for their consideration. The initial findings suggest among other things that:

- Adults remember their own childhoods -- no matter the circumstances or hardships - as having taken place in a simpler, "safer" time.
- Adults see today's child as physically threatened by the increased potential for various forms of community and global violence as well as psychologically threatened by

dangers from too much and/or the wrong kind of information.

- Teachers who want to address social issues in the classroom often lack institutional supports for such curriculum.
- Teachers do not want to address social issues because they fear parental disapproval and/or recognize the complexity of working in contexts where families come from many cultures with differing values and practices.
- Parents believe that teachers have special knowledge of how to address complicated social issues with children.
- Parents struggle with how to talk with their children by perplexing often-unsettling social realities. Like teachers, they too often lack support for such discussions.

## 2) University of Melbourne Talks

While at the University I spoke to the following groups:

- The BECS Fourth Year Undergraduate Students - Inclusive Curriculum (Co-ord Professor MacNaughton)
- The Third Year BECS Undergraduate Students - Curriculum 3-5 Years (Co-ord. Jane Page)
- A Twilight Talk titled Outrageous Understandings at The Center for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood and DARE's Early Childhood Research Seminar Series - Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2002.
- Attendance at and contribution to the RANGE (Resources and Networking for Gender Equity) CEIEC Special Interest Group's Planning Meeting for the project - Extra Ordinary Women - Stories of Inspiration for Young Children.
- A CEIEC research seminar composed of Masters and Doctoral Candidates within the CEIEC.

3) Consultations with CEIEC Graduate Students. While at the University I reviewed the research work of six graduate students and consulted with them on the future direction of their work. I also participated in a research seminar for graduate students.

## Seminars at Other Universities

While at University of Melbourne I gave talks at:

- Australian Early Childhood Association, South Australia

- Deakin University, Faculty Seminar
- deLissa Institute, University of New South Australia, Faculty Seminar and Public Lecture
- RMIT, all first, second, and third year students of education

In addition to the above activities I also:

Completed revisions of Crossing the River: An Urban Success Story (New York: Teachers College Press, in press).

Completed revisions of "Reading, Writing, and the Wrath of my Father" (under review).

Completed the introduction for eighth Occasional Paper to be published by Bank Street College of Education.