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### Leap and Play: Encouraging Creative Thinking in Little Ones

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Leap and Play: Encouraging Creative  
Thinking in Little Ones  
by

Melanie M. Baehre

An Abstract of a Project  
in  
Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Science

December 2008

Buffalo State College  
State University of New York  
Department of Creative Studies

## ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

This project outlines the process of developing activities that foster the creativity leap skills in young children. The end product is a book of ten activities, which utilized the creativity leap skills from *Making the Creative Leap Beyond* by Torrance and Safter (1999). The contents of the guidebook also incorporates parts of *Growing Up Creative: Nurturing a Lifetime of Creativity* by Teresa Amabile (1989).

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Melanie M. Baehre

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Date

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Department of Creative Studies

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Dates of Approval:

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Cyndi Burnett  
Lecturer

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Melanie M. Baehre  
Student

## Dedication



“enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.”

-Robert Brault

To my two little guys – Mommy did it! No more homework!  
I love you  
m.b.

## Acknowledgments

This project would not have been possible without the unwavering support of my husband, Jim. Without his help, understanding and encouragement, I would have thrown the towel in long ago. Words cannot describe what his support has meant to me.

Lucas and Finnian, without you this project would not have happened, you are my inspiration, my muse. I know it has not been an ideal situation, and the time I have spent away from you has not been easy, but it has been worth it. I have taken this path for you two little guys, to learn how to nurture your creativity and intellect.

My family has been helpful and supportive since the beginning. My younger brother Matt has played a key part in this project. His talent and work ethic astounds me. The book we created is what it is because of him. He is an individual who is bursting with creativity and I truly appreciate him.

A major thank you goes to Patti. Without her words of encouragement and willingness to take care of the little guys when needed, I would not have made it through. Even in my darkest of days, I knew I could count on her for kind words and advice. Thank you for being a sounding board for me through this and many other journeys.

My Nannie, Mary Ellen Sergi, has taught me to tell it like it is, not "take any crap" from anyone and play by my rules. She helped me to realize that I must never lose sight of what is important to me, my kids. In the end, they are what it is all for.

The faculty at the ICSC is an amazing bunch of people. One of them has had a major hand in the path that I have traveled and the quality of learning I have experienced. Cyndi Burnett has taught me so many things, they are too numerous to list here. I have learned from her enthusiasm, supportiveness and love of teaching. She is an educator I aspire to emulate and a genuine, sincere, good person. My experience in the program would have not been the same without her.

There are many people I have not mentioned here and to them, I say thank you. Thank you for proof reading my papers, working in groups with me, encouraging me in my hour of need, making me laugh, and above all, making me believe I could do this. I have met so many amazing people during this journey and am thankful for them all.

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## **Section 1: Background to the Project**

### **Introduction**

There has been a common theme throughout my studies in creativity - children. When I began my journey I was a new mom and first year teacher. I have come a long way since then in my thinking and creative process. The term “creativity” means so much more to me now than it did four years ago when I began my journey. My original thoughts on creativity were in the realm of art and music. I had no idea that it is an all-encompassing force. Yes, I was creative in other aspects of my life, but I thought it was because I am an artist. Before the creative studies program, I did not realize that all people could be creative in some way. That is why the focus in my studies has been on the learner and children.

I am now a mom of two boys under the age of five and a middle school art teacher. In my experience as a teacher, I feel that creative thinking is lacking in today's youth. I believe that teaching children to use creative thinking skills in early childhood will have a

significant impact on their lives. “If creative thinking skills are introduced early in life, they can be practiced for the duration of life. I believe this will lead to a society of happy, contributing, innovative and creative adults” (Baehre, 2008).

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to develop a guide to help parents foster creative thinking skills in their children. I chose this project because the two most important things in my life are my children. Creating activities that will encourage play, engagement and creative thinking skills is something that will have a direct benefit for my family. I wanted to explore ways to use Torrance's creativity skills with young children on a daily basis. The purpose of creating a book containing activities for young children is two fold. This book will allow me to spend time with my children while exploring creative thinking skills with them. Also, it will give me new insights into their personalities and learning styles.

## **Description**

This project used the creativity leap skills contained in *Making the Creative Leap Beyond (1999)*, by Torrance and Saffer, to develop art, play, and baking activities for children who are toddler through preschool age. My goal was to create a book that parents could use

to foster creative thinking skills in their kids. Each two-page spread of the book contains a creativity leap skill, the name of the activity, materials needed, detailed steps, and a quote from *Making the Creative Leap Beyond* (1999).

### **Rationale for Selection**

I chose this facet of creativity because it is relevant to my life as a mother and an educator. It combined my art and creativity skills to potentially have an impact on the lives of my children. Creating this book has afforded me the opportunity to learn more about my children, their learning styles, creativity, and intelligence.

Throughout my studies in creativity, the strand that has been most interesting to me is about teaching and learning. Being a teacher has made me keenly aware of the negative effect schools and educational structure can have on children and their creativity. Cheng Soh (2004) stated that when children attend school "they are advised, guided, persuaded, even coerced to restrain their natural spontaneity - they are trained to do so and they learn to do so" (p. 269). This is a disturbing and true observation. My hope is that through the use of engaging activities, I can teach my children the creative survival skills they will need when they begin to attend school.

## **Project Contribution**

This project has presented an opportunity for me to become more in tune with my own creativity and the creativity of my children. It has allowed me to dig deeper into the creativity skills presented by Torrance. Through this process, I have gained new and exciting insights in regards to Torrance's work. The contribution that this project has made to the lives of my children may not be measurable at the present time, but what I have seen is the joy and interest on their faces while participating in the activities.

In the future, I hope to publish *Play*, the guidebook, to get the information to the public. I would like other parents to use the book as a way to interact with their children in a meaningful way. I want to make a contribution to the "big picture" and act as a catalyst for teaching children to think creatively. My product is not limited to being used by parents, it is also a great resource for educators.

## **Section Two: Pertinent Literature**

### **Introduction**

This section contains a review of literature that relates to the concept of creativity and young children. Literature was selected that would guide the development of meaningful and engaging activities to be included in the guidebook.

**Torrance, E.P., & Safter, H. T. (1999). *Making the creative leap beyond.***

**Hadley, MA: Creative Education Foundation Press.**

*Making the Creative Leap Beyond* (1999) by E. Paul Torrance

and H. Tammy Saffer was the basis for this project. Each activity in the guidebook is centered on a creativity “leap skill”. Torrance and Saffer (1999) explained each creativity skill in detail and tested the reader using problems to solve. These problem-solving tests help the reader practice the leap skills. I appreciated this approach to the material. Being an educator, I understand the importance of learning by doing. I have taken this same philosophy of “making meaning” and “learning by doing” into account when creating the activities contained in my guidebook.

**Amabile, T. (1989). *Growing up creative: Nurturing a lifetime of creativity.***

**Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation.**

A book that had great influence on this project is *Growing Up Creative: Nurturing a Lifetime of Creativity* (1989) by Teresa M. Amabile. Amabile believed that creativity could be developed just like riding a bike could be learned and practiced until eventually you don't have to even think about it when you do it. The nurturing of the child and development of a creative environment filled with affection, praise and intellectual stimulation will produce a creative and innovative human being. A large part of the book is devoted to examining what factors motivate children and adults to be creative. The most powerful

form of motivation is intrinsic. I believe, as Amabile (1989) did, that

...children will seek out activities, persist longer, and enjoy them more if they can get a feeling of mastering something on their own. And when children are told or shown that they have performed well on a challenging task, their intrinsic motivation increases. (p. 55)

Being a parent can sometimes mean you are stuck in the negative.

You tell your children all of the things they cannot do. A better approach, and one that Amabile believes, is to use positive reinforcement. Focusing on the positive aspects of a task or situation will help to increase a child's intrinsic motivation.

**Torrance, E.P., & Safter, H. T. (1990). *The incubation model of teaching: getting beyond the aha!*. Buffalo, NY: Bearly Limited.**

I have also made use of Torrance and Safter's book *The Incubation Model of Teaching: Getting Beyond the Aha* (1990). This book outlined Torrance's Incubation Model (TIM) for teaching. I use the TIM model in my professional life as a middle school teacher and during this project I applied some of the same structure to the activities I designed for my children and guidebook. Torrance and Safter (1990) explained "under the instruction of genuinely concerned, imaginative, creative teachers - students generally will grow creatively and will solve many learning problems that otherwise defy solution" (p. 3). I feel that replacing the words "teachers" and "students" with "parents" and "children" speaks to the goal of the book I created. The activities in

the guidebook are meant to help children “grow creatively” (Torrance and Safter, 1990, p. 3). In this day and age, I feel that parents are so busy, they lose sight of what is really important- their kids. My hope is that the activities contained in the guidebook will be easy ways to foster creative thinking and promote the idea of spending quality time with your children.

### **Other Sources**

*The Manifesto: A Guide to Developing a Creative Career* (2002)

by E. Paul Torrance contains the Manifesto for Children. Torrance (2002) wrote:

1. Don't be afraid to fall in love with something and pursue it with intensity.
2. Know, understand, take pride in, practice, develop, exploit, and enjoy your greatest strengths.
3. Learn to free yourself from the expectations of others and to walk away from the games they impose on you. Free yourself to play your own games.
4. Find a great teacher or mentor who will help you.
5. Don't waste time being well-rounded.
6. Do what you love and can do well.
7. Learn the skills of interdependence. (p. 10-11)

This has been a basis for my personal as well as professional life. I have tremendous power to influence not only my children, but also thousands of other people's children. This project has given me a deeper understanding of the manifesto and how I interact with my children. It speaks to some of my core values as a person and parent.

A book by Michelle Cassou titled *Kids Play: Igniting Children's Creativity* (2004) is a resource I discovered early in my study of

creativity. One key point Cassou (2004) made is that “becoming aware of your attitude will bring insights that will help you guide and support creativity” (p.31). My wish is that this project will help other parents get tuned into their attitudes towards creative thinking. Children are like sponges, waiting to absorb water. Hopefully a positive attitude and awareness of creativity will serve as the faucet for the water of creativity.

Hugh Mearns (1930) talked about the environment and the effect it has on children in *Creative Power*. In that particular book, which was written over 70 years ago, Mearns (1930) explained:

...only through constant exercise in a favoring environment will the artist nature survive. The rare rebel, of course, is of a different mould; he fights and suffers but remains an artist, mainly, I often think, because he refuses to give up his gift of seeing and thinking and feeling as a child. (p. 78)

I strive to create what I believe is a favoring environment at home. I want my children to feel safe and comfortable in an environment in which they are free to express themselves and think creatively. This project has afforded me the opportunity to create deliberate scenarios in which I could create a favorable and creative environment with my children.

Other resources that I found useful in the development of this project are *Creativity: When East Meets West* (2004) edited by Sing Lau, Anna Hui and Grace Y.C. Ng, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal*



*Experience* (1990) by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Great Insights on Human Creativity: Transforming the Way We Live, Work, Educate, Lead and Relate* (2002) by Efiang Etuk, *Creativity in the Classroom* (1977) by E. Paul Torrance and *Classroom Ideas for Encouraging Thinking and Feeling* (1970) by Frank E. Williams.

Cassou, M. (2004). *Kids play: Igniting children's creativity*. New York: Tracher/Penguin.

Cheng Soh, K. (2004). *Creativity: When east meets west*. Singapore; World Scientific Publishing.

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### **Section Three: Process Plan**

The main outcome of this project is the guidebook based on the creativity leap skills. The process plan did change from the original plan in the concept paper. I began by reading what I felt would be literature that would be integral in the development of the guidebook. From there I drafted my concept paper and designed a layout for the pages of the book. The layout changed and took on many different forms. I struggled with this, until I finally employed the help of my younger brother to aid in the design of the layout and color. It occurred to me that a character would be a necessity in the guidebook. Therefore, I developed some illustrations. I then began the application of activities with my children. I took pictures and reflected on the reactions and learning of my children. I have to admit, I just had fun. I developed a total of fifteen activities and ultimately edited them down to ten activities that I feel are the strongest and easiest to implement to my target age group. In the original plan from my concept paper, I had intended to facilitate an activity with my son's preschool class and/or a "moms group". Unfortunately, this aspect of the project did not come to fruition. I hope that in the future, I will

have the opportunity to get reactions from children other than my own.

When I began drafting the project, I became discouraged at the guidelines for using fonts and sizing. I am a very visual person, making the project “look good” is important to me. Yes, the project has to be meaningful and interesting, but for me it also has to be aesthetically pleasing.

In addition to drafting the first three sections of the project, I also worked on the cover design and illustrations. From here it was a matter of finishing the required sections of the project and pulling all the appendices together.

### **Project Final Timeline**

#### **August 2008:**

- Diverging and converging on possible topics.
- Meeting with instructor as needed.
- Began drafting concept paper.

Total August hours: 8 hours

#### **September 2008:**

- Final draft and revisions to concept paper.
- Research and review of pertinent literature.
- Developing activities.
- Application of activities with children.

- Development of page layout, illustrations and cover for the book.
- Collaboration with graphic designer.
- Phone conferences with sounding board partner.

Total September hours: 50 hours

**October 2008:**

- Application of activities with children.
- Journal writing.
- Drafting of sections 1,2, and 3.
- Creation of book cover.
- Collaboration with graphic designer.
- Phone conferences with sounding board partner.
- Research binding companies/costs for book.

Total October hours: 30 hours

**November 2008:**

- Final layout of book copy, cover and illustrations.
- Printing and binding of guidebook
- Send final copy out to printer
- Revision of sections 1, 2, and 3.
- Drafting of sections 4, 5, and 6.
- Creating appendices.
- Revision of sections 4, 5, 6.
- Printing, binding and preparation for project presentation.

- Conferences with sounding board partner.

Total November hours: 45 hours

### **December 2008:**

- Finish presentation of project.
- Project presentation.

Total December hours: 5 hours

## **Section four: Outcomes**

### **Introduction**

The main outcome of this project is a book titled *Play: Activities to Foster Creative Thinking in Toddlers and Preschoolers*. The book is a twenty-two page document that contains play, baking, and, art activities for young children. Each activity is based on a creativity skill from *Making the Creative Leap Beyond* (Torrance and Safter, 1999). Another outcome is new insight into my own creativity and process, the personalities and creativity of my children, and what nurturing creativity means.

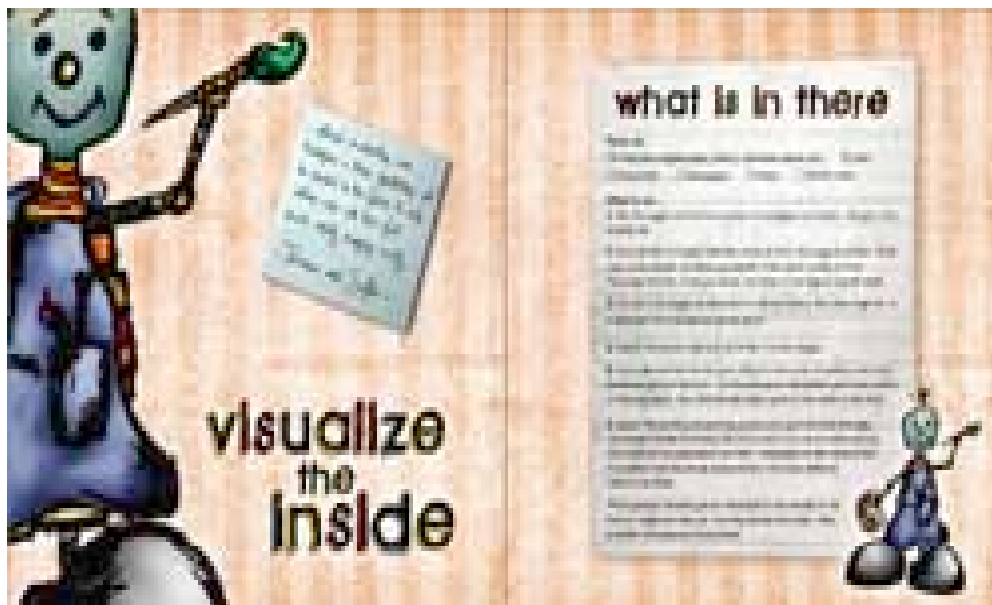
### **Description of Products**

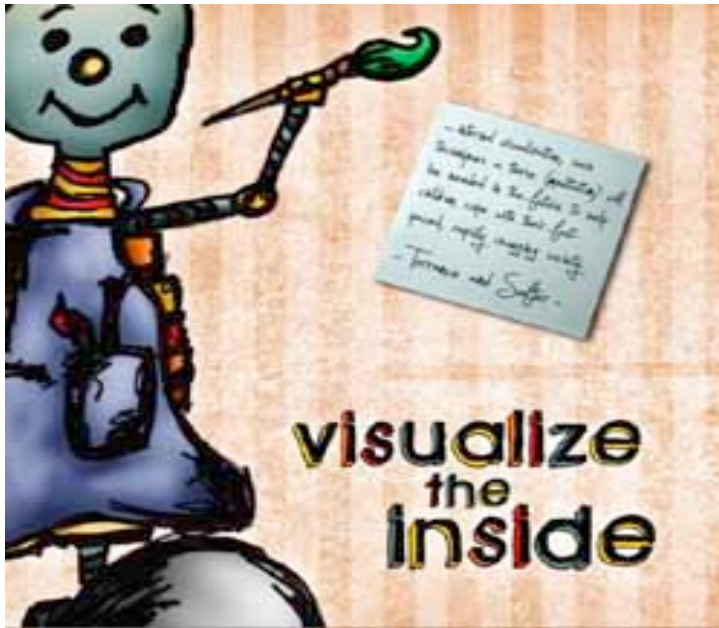
*Play* is a book that contains activities based on ten of Torrance's (1999) seventeen creativity leap skills. The following is an outline of the book as well as a sample page. All of the pages, as well as photographs of the implementation of activities with my children, are contained in Appendix B. The book outline is as follows:

- Title page
- About Play (the book)
- Dedication
- Be Aware of Emotion
- Mirror Me
- Be Flexible
- Kitchen Scramble
- Produce and Consider Many Alternatives
- Let's Pretend
- Enjoy and Use Fantasy
- Just Suppose
- Make It Swing - Make It Ring
- Dance Party
- Let Humor Flow and Use It
- Crazy Talk
- Visualize It - Richly and Colorfully
- Picture It
- Look at It Another Way
- Wow - That's Different
- Keep Open
- To Bake a Cake
- Visualize the Inside

- What's In There?
- References

The book is set up to open with a two page spread for each activity. Below is a sample of this layout as well as the individual pages (used with permission, Baehre, 2008).





## Section Five: Key Learnings

### Introduction

When I began, I thought this project would give me the



opportunity to gain new insights into nurturing creativity. What actually happened was quite surprising. I learned more about my children and their personalities. I gained an in-depth knowledge of the creativity leap skills as well as an understanding of how to motivate and nurture creativity in children. Most surprising of all, is the realization that creating a book is a lengthy and time consuming process but it is one that I thoroughly enjoyed. After the activities were developed and then applied to my children, I began the task of creating a layout as well as a character for the book. This part of the project was both eye opening and rewarding. It afforded me the opportunity to reach out to the talents of my younger brother, who is a graphic designer. We collaborated on the color and design of each page.

### **Content**

This project came to fruition through the combination of creativity/art skills already in my possession and creativity thinking skills that I researched. I believe the reason I wrote the guide book is best summed up by this quote by Amabile (1989):

Why should you care about your child's creativity? Because all of human progress requires adult creativity, and people are more likely to do creative work as adults if they develop the skill and the motivation for creativity as children. (p. 4)

The content of this book is based on the idea that activities, which are interesting, age appropriate, and varied in process, will

foster learning of creativity skills. Once they are learned, the skills can be practiced throughout life. The activities contained in the book are meant to serve as a vehicle to spark children's curiosity about learning.

Amabile (1989) stated:

No matter what you give your child in terms of education, skill development, materials, instruments, or interesting experiences, you are missing out on the most important element if you do not help your child develop a deep interest and excitement about learning. (p. 14)

This excitement about learning is paramount to the development of children. I consider myself to be a life long learner. It is extremely important to me that I keep discovering new things in life. Learning keeps me feeling young and energetic. I wish to pass this passion for learning on to my children. An important start to this process is teaching my children the leap skills.

It was amazing to see the eagerness of my children to participate in the activities. The activity that teaches the skill "Visualize the Inside" (Torrance and Saffer, 1999, p. 206) was particularly fun to teach. My son, Lucas (four years old), was very interested in describing the inside of a variety of fruits and vegetables. After looking at the produce and describing what he thought the inside should look like, I cut the fruit/vegetables in half. After that, we used the cut produce to create a painting. Lucas applied paint to the cut side of a piece of fruit and then pressed it onto a piece of paper. Finn, who is one year

old, participated by looking at the produce and then observing me cut it. He also created a painting with my help. The descriptions that Lucas was able to articulate were both entertaining and surprisingly complex. He went so far as to tell me that there was a core inside of an apple, it contained brown seeds, and the “fruit part” was white sometimes yellowish. He also explained that when the apple is cut there is a star design. I know that Lucas has had many apples, but his ability to describe it in such a detailed manner was surprising. Finn was entertaining to watch as he gestured to the apple and shouted, in his one-year-old way, to indicate that he wanted to hold it. I have come to the realization that moments like these are going to be meaningful and memorable to my children as they grow.

My love of art and creation began early in life. Some of my first memories are of my drawings of figures. For this project, I was able to design art activities that help to enforce the creativity leap skills. The activities include drawing, painting and printing lessons. They are easy enough for any parent to follow and complex enough to get children thinking. Also contained in the book are play and baking activities. Developing a number of varied activities allowed me to tap into different learning styles.

The creative process of writing the guidebook was also very rewarding. The only thing that I would wish for, if I were to do this

again, would be more time. I feel like I could have spent twice as many hours over twice as many months implementing activities with other groups of children. I would have loved to get reactions from parents and different groups of children.

### **Process**

When I began to reflect on this project experience, I realized that my process, to this point, had many different facets. There have been many avenues I have traveled and explored which have resulted in the culminating experience of actually documenting what I have done. The first part of this process was researching literature that would be applicable to the guidebook. Another component of this process was the creation of activities that integrated the research. The next element in this venture was implementing the activities with my children and journaling my observations. While I was doing this, I was also creating the character and content for the guidebook. I collaborated with a graphic designer to achieve the color and design for the book. I also researched printing and self-publishing companies. Then, the process of documenting my experience began.

Through this process, I used art based knowledge and skills in many capacities. From the creating of activities to the page layout and character design, my skill set as an artist and art educator was exercised. The training that I have undergone in the field of creativity

has greatly contributed to my artistic skill and level of creativity.

Throughout the development of this project, I used many aspects of the CPS process to overcome any blocks that arose. Also, when developing artwork, I sometimes subconsciously employed different parts of the CPS process. The TIM model, along with the creativity skills, is the internal structure of this project.

One of the most wonderful and surprising aspects of this project was the process of teaching the activities. It was a fascinating experience to watch my children respond positively to the tasks. When Lucas was asked to close his eyes and picture himself on the bottom of the ocean, he was completely open to the experience. The leap skill that inspired this activity is "Visualize It - Richly and Colorfully" (Torrance and Safter, 1999, p. 164). His description of the ocean included green and blue seaweed, big and little sharks, orange fish, rainbow fish, a red, sinking boat, divers, sand, sharks, dolphins, and shells. When I asked him to open his eyes and tell me more, he told me that he was the diver and his boat had a hole in it and was sinking. Then, I gave him some art materials and he started to draw. The scene he drew had almost all of the elements he told me about when his eyes were closed. I was impressed with his ability to recall what he had described as well as how involved he became in his artwork.

The process of creating a book was a bumpy one. The layout of

the pages was particularly challenging. I have never created a book, so being aware of the logistics of it was a huge task. I wanted to create a guide that was easy to follow and understand. It also had to “flow” in a way that made sense. I played with five different layouts and formats before finally reaching out for help to find one that I felt would work. I collaborated with a graphic designer to create the layout. In the end, it was a matter of which layout was the most aesthetically pleasing to me. I struggled with the visual aspect of this project more than the research and development aspect.

## **Section Six: Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

Before I began this project, I only had a surface knowledge of the creativity leap skills. I knew that nurturing creativity is something that is essential to children's development. But I did not fully realize how these two things (the leap skills and nurturing creativity) were so intertwined. The ten leap skills I included in the book are: be aware of emotions, be flexible, produce and consider many alternatives, enjoy and use fantasy, make it swing - make it ring, let humor flow and use it, visualize it richly and colorfully, look at it another way, keep open and visualize the inside. All of the listed leap skills have a connection to nurturing creativity and doing so in children. I chose the above skills because they can be easily translated into activities for young

children. What I now realize is that I could very easily adapt the activities to teach older children and expand them to include all seventeen leap skills.

Through this process, the two people who have kept me going are my children. Implementing the activities was an eye opening experience. I am in awe of these two little boys on a daily basis. My hope is that the work we have done, and will do in the future, will impact their lives and creative thinking in a positive way. I want the experiences they have as children to pave their way into a creative, productive, healthy and happy adulthood.

In conclusion, if other people wanted to create a project similar to this, I would suggest implementing activities with diverse groups of children. My motivation for this project was highly intrinsic. I wanted to do this to benefit my family. One possibility for expansion would be for an elementary teacher to implement some of the activities with a class of preschool or kindergarten students.

### **Next Steps**

Some very interesting possibilities have arose from the creation of this project. I found that I enjoyed the process of writing, designing, and illustrating the book. The collaboration with my brother, Matt, was an enjoyable learning experience. Through this tag team effort, I have come to the realization that I would like to pursue future possibilities in

creating books for children. I feel as though I have stumbled upon a path that could hold limitless opportunities for me. In the future, I would like to develop a line of stories about the character in the guidebook. The stories would be a mix of my own children's adventures and creativity theory. I am excited about what the future will hold in terms of this venture. Matt and I have made a wonderful team and my hope is that we can continue to do so with future books. In short, I can see a future where I am a children's book author and illustrator.

### **References**

- Amabile, T. (1989). *Growing up creative: Nurturing a lifetime of creativity*. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation.
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- Torrance, E.P., & Saffter, H. T. (1999). *Making the creative leap beyond*. Hadley, MA: Creative Education Foundation Press.
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**Appendix A**  
**Concept Paper**

**Encouraging Creative Thinking in Young Children  
Through Engaging Activities**

Name: Melanie Baehre Submitted: September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Project Type: Talent to Improve the Quality of Life for Others

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### **What Is This Project About?**

This project is about creating a guide for parents to use that will help them teach creative thinking skills to their children. The guide will contain art, play, cooking and baking activities that will be geared toward toddler to preschool age children (ages 1-4). The activities will contain elements of Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences and be designed to teach children the creativity "leap skills" as defined by E. Paul Torrance.

### **Rationale for Choice:**

I chose this topic because it is relevant in my life. I have two children, ages 1 and 4, and I am looking at this project as an opportunity to combine my art and creativity skills to have an impact on their lives. I believe that I can structure activities that will be fun, creative and educational. Creating this book will afford me the opportunity to learn more about my children, their learning styles, creativity and intelligence.

### **What Will be the Tangible Product or Outcomes?**

As a result of my efforts, I will create a guide for parents to use when interacting with their children. The guide will contain art, play and cooking activities, which will be structured around the creativity skills contained in the Torrance Incubation Model. The activities will be varied in type to speak to the theory of multiple intelligence.

### **What Criteria Will You Use to Measure the Effectiveness of Your Achievement?**

I will know that I am successful after I create the guide and use the activities with my own children as well as other children in the same age group. I will stop when I have created a variety of activities that feature each of the creativity skills in the Torrance Incubation Model. The guide will contain a total of 17 activities, one representing each of the creativity leap skills.

### **Who Will Be Involved or Influenced; What Will Your Role Be?**

The group of children and parents that will be involved include my own children and

that of colleagues. I expect to enrich the lives of parents and young children in a way that will help to encourage creative thinking in their lives. My role will be that of a “toolbox”. I will be the person that provides the tools and activities for parents to do with their children. I will act as a facilitator of the activities.

### **When Will This Project Take Place?**

The project will begin the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>. The project will be finished by November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008. It will take approximately two months to complete. The first phase will be to research appropriate literature. The second phase will involve creating the activities and guide. The last phase will involve the application of activities with children ages 1-4 years.

### **Where Will This Project Occur?**

This project will take place in the suburbs of Buffalo, New York USA. The application of the activities will occur in my home and possibly in the homes of other parents. I will also attempt to apply an activity to my son’s preschool class in West Seneca, NY.

### **Why Is It Important to Do This?**

I am a middle school art teacher and I truly believe that creative thinking is lacking in today’s youth. I feel that if parents had an easy guide to follow with worthwhile activities, they could foster creative thinking at an early age. If creative thinking skills are introduced early in life, they can be practiced for the duration of life. I believe this will lead to a society of happy, contributing, innovative and creative adults.

### **Personal Learning Goals:**

- I will learn how I can utilize the theory of multiple intelligence to encourage creativity in young children.
- I will learn more about my children, their creativity and intelligence.
- I will uncover techniques to encourage and teach creativity skills to young children by understanding the theory of multiple intelligence.
- Through the application of activities, I will practice the leap skills and impart the knowledge I gain onto my children.

### **How Do You Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes?**

I plan to achieve my goals through the design of activities that incorporate the theory of multiple intelligence with the creativity leap skills contained in the Torrance Incubation Model. Through careful planning and execution, I will achieve my goal of creating 17 different learning activities. I will seek out the approval and cooperation

of my husband and children, making this a family learning experience. I will first review literature and design activities. I will then create a schedule and plan to execute one activity per day, 5 days a week for three weeks.

For example, to combine the creativity skill of Visualize It Richly and Colorfully with bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, the children would participate in an activity called Dance Party Charades. During this activity, many different types of music are chosen to play. The children are directed to begin dancing to the music. Then, the children would be taught certain moves. One of the dance moves is the swim. The swim would be demonstrated and the children would be directed to “pretend you are swimming” or “what does it look like when you are swimming”. Next, proceed to dance and swim at the same time. This could go on to different styles of music with different moves.

### **Evaluation:**

Informal evaluation would consist of observing the children during activities to see if they are having fun and being engaged. Formal evaluation will include feedback from the parents and children involved with the activities. It will also include my reflection and recording of the changes/discoveries my children make as they are engaged in the activities.

### **Prepare Project Timeline:**

- Week of 9/7 - Project class, review and revise concept paper (10 hours)
- Week of 9/14 - Review of pertinent literature (7-10 hours)
- Week of 9/21 - Writing and creating activities (10-15 hours)
- Week of 9/27 through week of 10/5 – Application of activities with children(25-35 hours)
- 10/11 through 10/27 -Writing of sections 1,2,3 of project (10-20 hours)
- Week of 11/2 - 11/17 Writing of sections 4,5,6 (10-20 hours)
- Revisions - (5 hours)
- Week of 11/26 - Printing, binding, preparation for presentation (5 hours)
- Week of 12/1 - Last class and presentation (3 hours)

### **Identify Pertinent Literature or Resources:**

Resources that may be useful to the success of this project include:

Amabile, T. (1992). *Growing up creative*. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation.

Gardner, H. (1998). A multiplicity of intelligences. *Scientific American Presents*, 6

(9), 18-23.

Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of mind*. New York: Basic Books.

Torrance, E. P. (1979). An instructional model for enhancing incubation. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 13 (1), 23-35.

Torrance, E.P. (2002). *The manifesto: A guide to developing a creative career*. Westport, CT: Ablex.

Torrance, E.P., & Safter, H. T. (1999). *Making the creative leap beyond*. Hadley, MA: Creative Education Foundation Press.

Torrance, E.P., & Safter, H. T. (1990). *The incubation model of teaching: Getting beyond the aha!*. Buffalo, NY: Bearly Limited.

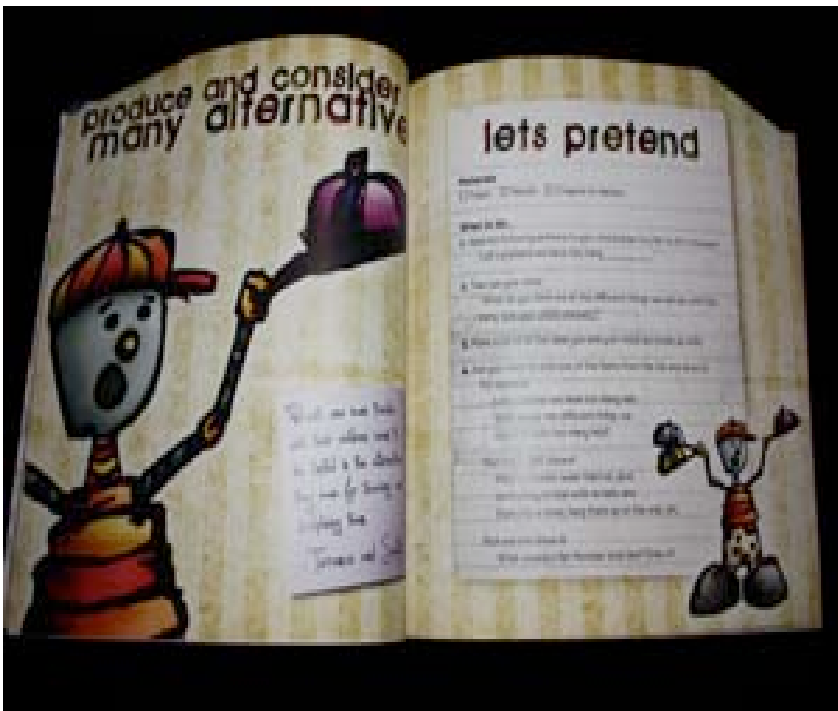
**Appendix B**  
**Photographs of *Play* (the book)**

(used with permission, Baehre, 2008)





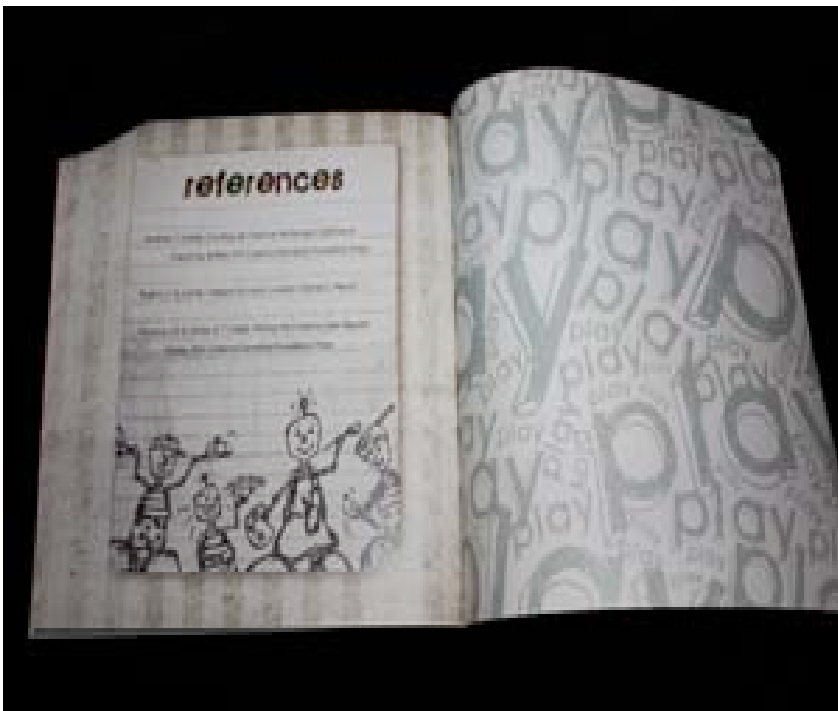


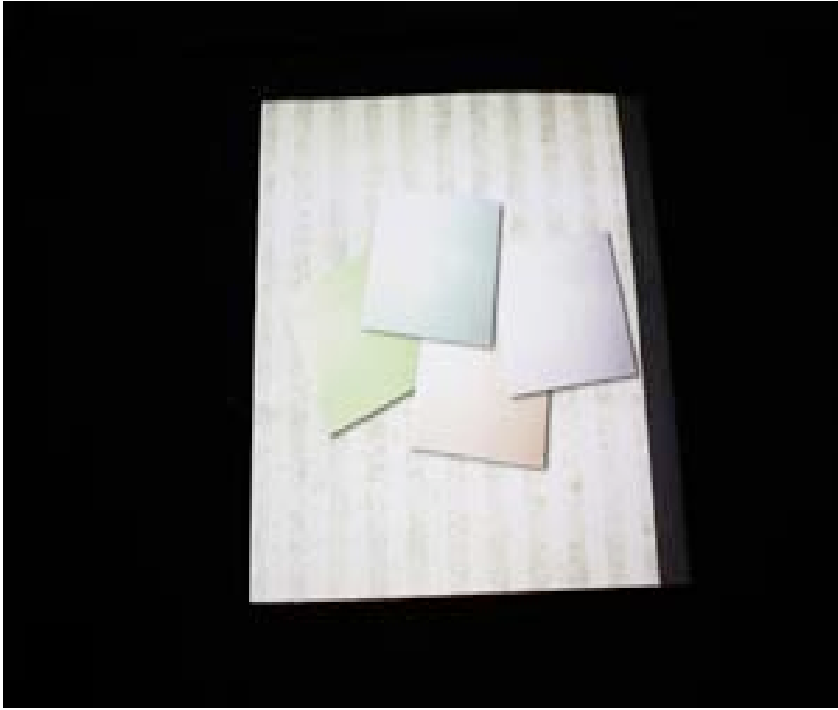














## **Appendix C**

### **Photographs of children participating in activities**

Make It Swing – Make It Ring  
Dance Party



Lucas is “swimming” to the music.



Finn is moving to the music.

Be Flexible  
Kitchen Scramble



Lucas is using a colander for a hat and Finn is happy to play with the utensils.

Visualize It Richly and Colorfully  
Picture It



Lucas is beginning his drawing of the bottom of the ocean.



Lucas finishing his artwork.



Finn is drawing along with Lucas.

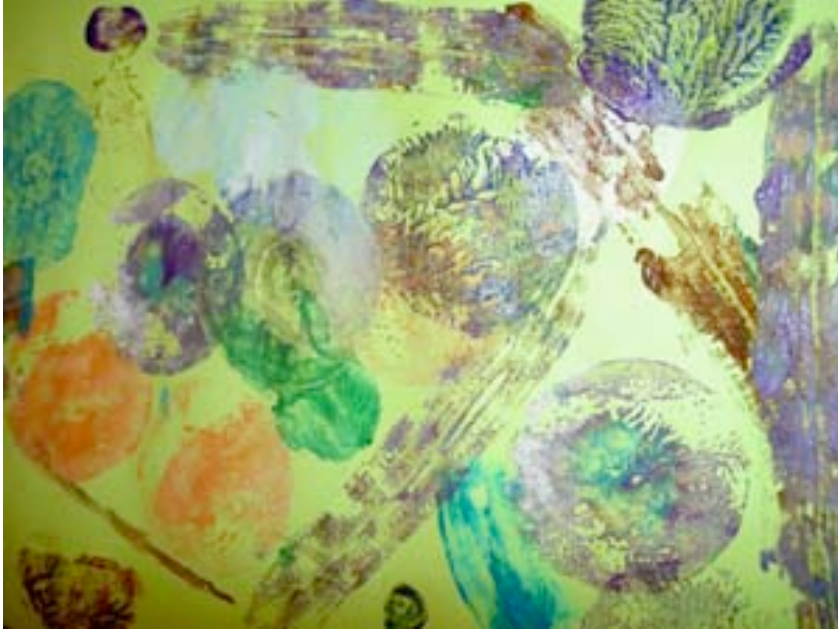
Visualize the Inside  
What Is In There



Lucas getting ready to make a print from a banana peel.



This is Lucas painting a potato.



Finished painting, made by printing with fruits and vegetables.