

**Perceptions of autism, culture, and personhood from
parents of children with autism and from colleagues
delivering services to children with autism**

**by
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Abstract

Through exploration of the critical frameworks of practitioner inquiry along with the tools of self-study, reflective inquiry, and dialogic journaling, this paper investigates new possibilities and models for practitioners who work with Korean-Canadian immigrants who have a child with autism as they deal with acculturation and attempting to gain support while juggling two cultures. This study gathers and analyzes qualitative data on the perceptions of autism, culture, and personhood from parents of children with autism and from colleagues delivering services to children with autism. Specifically it looks at the pressing need for continuing to expand autism research and how this research specifically intersects Korean-Canadian families. Increasingly over time, researchers have argued that it is preconceived notions of “personhood” which lead to the declaration that autistic behaviour is “abnormal”. This research asks what presuppositions exist about “typical” versus “atypical” identities, then asks how educational practices can better support children with autism in realizing and expressing their personhood? And, how do cultural and other discourses- affecting educational practices and affecting children and their families- impact these efforts? This research seeks to answer these questions by exploring notions of how personhood and identity for students with autism is conceptualized within the education system, as intersecting with specific cultural discourses of families and practitioners. The study concludes that it is critical to enhance practitioners’ ability to take multiple perspectives, recognize the significance of student, family and colleague epistemology, and acknowledge the importance of culturally relevant methodology to meet the needs of diverse students.

Keywords: Autism; special-education; Korean-Canadian; neurodiversity; practitioner-inquiry; dialogic journal

Dedication

To my mentor and teacher, Dr. Shannon Kelly, a mother of beautiful son L- Thank you for all your support and being there with me on this journey. I couldn't have done without you.

Acknowledgements

The ancient Greeks had two words for time. The first was chronos, which we still use in words like chronological. It refers to clock time- time that can be measured- seconds, minutes, hours, years. Where chronos is quantitative, kairos is qualitative. It measures moments, not seconds. Further, it refers to the right moment, the opportune moment. The perfect moment. Are you in chronos or kairos time?

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Chapter 1.

The Journey begins with self-location

Gregory Cajete (2005) refers to “discovering one’s true face (character, potential, identity), one’s heart (soul, creative self, true passion), and one’s foundation (true work, vocation), all of which lead to the expression of a complete life” (p.77).

Although I have identified myself as an educator for many years, it only occurred to me recently that, to have a holistic approach to education, I need to do more than recognize my **vocation**; I also need to recognize my **identity** and my **true passion**. In my more recent scholarly journey, I have been honoured to learn about Indigenous research methodologies and ways of knowing. Cajete’s assertion resonates with other Indigenous scholars, including Margaret Kovach and Manulani Aluli-Meyer:

Table 1.1. Indigenous research methodologies

Cajete	Kovach	Aluli-Meyer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• true face/ identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• self-location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• subjectivity/ metaconsciousness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• heart/ true passion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identity/culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• body-mind/ spiritual knowledge acquisition
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• foundation/ work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• purpose/commuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sacred object/ work

As I continue to encounter and move through the many scholarly perspectives on education, I have found that constantly returning to the advice of scholars like Cajete, Kovach, and Aluli-Meyer helps to ground me in the midst of the array of competing and sometimes contradictory perspectives on education - how we should conceive of our relationships with students, with knowledge, with society, with peers, with families, and with authorities. Scholars like Cajete, Kovach, and Aluli-Meyer remind us: begin self, self-awareness, relationship to self and personal history. They advise that starting with self-location and reflexivity is not a slippery slope of relativism; on the contrary, starting with self sets the compass by which one can steer through these many conceptions and perspectives of education.

Certainly, scholars like Cajete, Kovach, and Aluli-Meyer join a long scholarly tradition discussing and advocating self-analysis and reflexivity. Kovach (2009) herself states “self-location in research is common among many qualitative approaches” (p.110), and she mentions feminist and anti-oppressive approaches, post-modernist (including autobiographical and auto-ethnographical) methodologies, social constructivist (including phenomenological) traditions and holistic epistemologies, as well as Indigenous inquiry methodologies. Thus to begin this work, I start first with self-location.

Chapter One launches this journey with self location; self, self-awareness, relationship to self and my personal history. The purpose of this chapter is to do more than recognize my vocation; I also need to recognize my identity and my true passion. The chapter introduces my own story when I was 17 and my experiences being a 1.5 generation immigrant. The story describes how I am influenced by Korea’s tradition and history, yet also inevitably influenced by the cultural values and perspectives in Canada. Travelling back to where I came from, this chapter provides information on South Korea, and its traditions, history, language and geographical separation. Understanding how national history, mother tongue, tradition, and stories are part of Korean and Korean Canadian cultural identity provokes interrogation of my own presuppositions. But it also provokes my sensitivity in trying to engage with families and peers to get them to express their deepest feelings and perspectives on identity and identity’s intersection with living with autism. This chapter launches the effort to discover the sources of my own being.

Chapter Two will describe the next step after finding the soil in which I rooted my intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual being. This chapter will explore what could be suitable and fruitful frameworks to support sharing autobiographical stories, frameworks which can allow families and professionals, including myself, to find experiential overlaps, insights, and empathy through moments of similarity as well as moments of uniqueness in our experiences. Chapter Two will focus on Practitioner Inquiry along four axes adapted from Brookfield. Brookfield’s framework of investigating practice through four lenses- autobiography, theory, students, and colleagues- provides a strong and supportive framework. Specifically, given the focus of this paper on sharing autobiographical experiences within the context of practitioners and families engaging in the shared practice of autism therapies, this chapter will explain the concept of “critical

incidents” and seek to organize my study in a manner meant to encourage reflexive awareness and dialogic engagement.

Chapter Three will primarily focus on features of the Korean education context and how the Korean education system influences presuppositions about education and inclusion. This chapter will provide a history of Korean education and how the Confucian view of education affects the everyday practice of teaching. Blending the views of scholars with my personal experiences with a system focused on test results, quantitative measures, and perceived prestige based on these measures, this chapter will describe a particular style of pedagogy that I was exposed to in Korea and how my views on education changed immediately after emigrating to Canada. Exploring the problematic of outcome-based evaluation, the constant competition of the shadow education system, and the tendency to focus on conformity, Chapter Three will discuss how features of the Korean education system can create a significant challenge for Koreans in terms of allowing and encouraging more collaborative and inclusive learning approaches.

Chapter Four will begin by introducing perceptions of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) within the system of special education in Canada. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how educators can balance qualitative and quantitative approaches to inclusion, considering the increasing amount of students with ASD being included in regular education classes. The chapter will provide three illustrative examples of individual education plan (IEP) goals, towards understanding how qualitative and quantitative approaches intersect in the classroom. Appreciating this intersection will help build a bridge to empathizing with the situation of families, students, and teachers experiencing special education in Korea. This chapter will deepen the understanding of the Korean education system by looking specifically at special education in Korea. Following from the previous chapter, Korean special education will be discussed in the broader context of general education in Korea. Specifically, the chapter will discuss how the focus on quantitative test scores above all else in the Korean system and in the minds of students and families, can leave little room for the neurodiverse student to be recognized and supported. The chapter will explore how the top-down approach which is most consistent with Confucian values may continue to influence Korean Canadians even after they move to Canada.

Chapter Five will provide additional insights on questions of personhood, education, and autism, with a fuller discussion of the context of the neurodiversity movement, including how my specific research has emerged from my own experiences and positioning, and how my research is located with respect to fields of relevant scholarship. This chapter will explore Vygotsky's (1978) theory of play and Egan's (2005) theory of storytelling as useful precursors to the upcoming chapters' examination of the qualitative results gathered in this study. Theories like these provide insights on how social identity is oriented in human emotions and how the imagination is stimulated by creating emotional attachment to subject matter. The chapter will include my personal response to these questions of identity and personhood for children with autism and how my own practices as an educator can support my students with autism in realizing and expressing their personhood. Chapter Five will conclude by reinforcing the value of using the Practitioner Inquiry methodology of self-study towards achieving self-reflexive inquiry, and supporting the specific value of employing the dialogic journaling method as a tool to empower and engage students, families, and practitioners.

Chapter Six will begin by outlining the methodology and design of the main research question for this study: A study of qualitative data on the perceptions of autism, culture, and personhood from Korean Canadian parents of children with autism and from colleagues delivering services to children with autism. Specifically the study seeks qualitative research to provide insights on the pressing need for continuing to expand autism research and how this research intersects with the experiences and views of Korean Canadian families. The chapter will be divided into the following sections: qualitative methodology, participants, procedures, data analysis, results and story. The core of the chapter will be dedicated to the qualitative data generated by the six participants in the study who were asked to produce "dialogic journals" which may be written narrative and/or drawing, art, visuals, collage, or recorded performance. The chapter will reveal how all of the participants shared remarkable stories and reflections regarding their experiences. The chapter will conclude with a thematic analysis conducted along five main themes that encapsulated the issues raised by the participants: culture, autism, school/daycare, family and future. Chapter Six will represent the pivotal realization of how my particular perspectives, viewpoints, and ideological lenses influence my decisions as a practitioner, and how these decisions impact students, families and colleagues.

Chapter Seven will conclude the presentation of the study participants' qualitative data, sharing the dialogic responses of participants, including the researcher, reacting to and reflecting on the journal expressions of other participants. The chapter will introduce the concept of double-voiced discourse as the interrelated language of two different speakers- the essence of dialogic journaling. The chapter will showcase the results when participants who completed step 1 "Dialogue Part A" were asked to respond to step 2 "Dialogue Part B". The chapter will explain how, for Part B, participants were given a sample and a set of instructions to respond the work of another participant. This chapter will explore how interactions with one another help both participants navigate and refine their understandings of one another and the interrelated life stories that they are telling. This chapter will suggest it is an effective approach for having all members reflect on their narratives and engage in dialogic reflection with the material presented, constructing and recording their impressions, thus creating new knowledge interrelated with the perspectives of others. Considering the cultural features of Korean Canadian families as previously discussed, this chapter will emphasize how implementing dialogic journaling can play a critical role to create a mutually trusting relationship and communication channels that can increase the quality and depth of supports for children with autism.

Chapter Eight will recapitulate the main research questions for this study. The chapter will elaborate on how dialogic journaling allowed me to reflect and how these reflections have led to growth both as a practitioner and as a researcher. Considering the Practitioner Inquiry framework and the use of the tools of self-study, reflective inquiry, and dialogic journaling, this chapter will explain how I will go forward from this point, with ongoing journaling and self-study of my practice using a personal practitioner checklist, and how I will go forward with families, students, and colleagues by implementing in my practice both dialogic journaling and "mini" dialogic journaling. The chapter will also address future ideas for outreach for teams, community and educational organizations. Chapter Eight will conclude that in order to better understand Korean Canadian immigrants who have a child with autism as they deal with acculturation and attempting to gain support while juggling two cultures, it is critical for practitioners to enhance their ability to take multiple perspectives, recognize the significance of student, family and colleague epistemology, and acknowledge the importance of culturally relevant methodology to meet the needs of diverse students.

Encountering cultural and linguistic diversity in my own education and in my own practices was a powerful catalyst in my realization that the neurodiverse identity/personhood of my students and clients with ASD might not be being fully recognized, celebrated, and addressed by educational and therapeutic systems if they are separated from the context of family and culture. How can cultural, linguistic, and family practices and identities be fully recognized and incorporated into practitioner perceptions and frameworks? In examining changing notions of autistic personhood and neurodiverse identity, we cannot miss the complex interactions of the intersection of cultural values and beliefs, family values and beliefs, and the perceptions and presuppositions of the professionals and practitioners involved. The main research goal of the present work therefore is to gather qualitative data through dialogic journaling on the perceptions of autism, culture, and personhood from Korean-Canadian parents of children with autism and from colleagues/ practitioners delivering services to these children with autism. Specifically this study tests a method for expanding autism research through qualitative channels by the gathering of dialogic journals from Korean-Canadian families living with autism and from those practitioners providing education delivery to them.

According to Kovach (2009), “through the prologue the writing can shape-shift from an ‘objective accounting’ to holistic narrative, revealing how the self influences research choices and interpretation” (p.112). Describing the relationship between memory and research, Eber Hampton (1995) states,

Researchers to go back in time to unfold the sacred medicine bundle that holds memories and consider how memory shapes personal truth. This matters because researchers need to know their personal motives for undertaking their research, and they are usually found in story. (as cited in Kovach, 2009, p.114)



Figure 1.1. YK Journal Excerpt #1: Celebrating New Year with family in Seoul, Korea. January 1st, 1985

1.1. Being a 1.5 generation immigrant

See your work as a taonga (sacred object) for your family, your community, your people - because it is (Aluli-Meyer, 2008, p.219).

I realized that I might need a new name when I emigrated to Canada in 2001 at the age of seventeen. My sister wondered, what if Canadians would have a hard time pronouncing our names? So, we discussed the topic of making an English name. How about 'Erin', the name that has the most similar pronunciation to my Korean name? It does sound like my Korean name, but at that time, whenever I wrote 'Erin', I felt awkward, and so I decided to keep my Korean name, as it is my 'real' name. However, my sister made a different choice - she chose her English name as 'Jessie', which hardly overlapped her Korean name. Thus, she started to live with the two names. I was not comfortable having two names and two identities; I felt more comfortable asserting my awkwardly pronounced Korean name, "Yearin". Language is a key piece of identity. Through our language of origin, we learn our culture's very specific ways of expression, ways of expression which highlight our cultural perspectives. When you learn a second language, you realize that another culture may have very different perspectives on life than yours. This is not to say that one is superior to the other; rather, this should be the beginning of a celebration of diversity.

According to Kovach (2009), “situating self implies clarifying one’s perspective on the world. This is about being congruent with a knowledge system that tells us that we can only interpret the world from the place of our experience” (p.110). My family’s life as an immigrant family had a somewhat predictable trajectory laid out by examples of fellow Korean immigrants before us. My sister and I learned English and managed to assimilate quicker than our parents, and my dad stayed in Korea half of the year and the rest in Canada because he did not want to quit his work in Korea. In that sense, only the three of us, my mom, sister, and I, started to wholly embrace a new life in Vancouver, and it was a completely new path for me personally

The term “1.5 Generation” was coined in the 1960’s by Ruben Rumbaut, a sociology professor at the UC Irvine and a Cuban American who immigrated to the United States as a child. Rumbaut defined 1.5 Generation immigrants as “stuck in-between” cultures as they are not quite first generation but not quite second generation citizens (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). Interestingly, “1.5 generations” have been away from their native country for too long to be considered first generation. Depending on how old 1.5 generation immigrants are upon arrival, they could play various roles like cultural interpreter or builder, and helping parents. Or they can feel like outcasts, neither here nor there. My personal feeling is that I am too old to call myself a 1.5 generation because I was seventeen when I moved to Canada. But definitely I have memories and cultural connections to Korea that are too strong to be considered second generation like my friends born and raised in Canada.

The first year of my high school was all about finding and experiencing camaraderie. There were not many but a few Korean immigrants, who had abandoned their Korean names and took on names like ‘Stephanie,’ ‘Rachel,’ and ‘David’ in my school. Even though they dropped their Korean names, they were still identifying strongly with their Korean identity, so I was able to feel a sense of belonging with peers who had similar experience in terms of juggling the “two sides of my life” of the 1.5 generation. What happens to people’s identities, especially children of immigrants, when they go through transnational cultural relocation? Struggling between pre- and post-migration identities and relocating myself left many perplexing questions and emotions. I began to listen to others’ stories and realized that the differences between “1.5” and those of second generations could be subtle but we were still able to share experiences and thoughts of disorientation. Kovach (2009) indicates that “sharing stories and finding

commonalities assists in making sense of a particular phenomenon, though it is never possible (nor wise) to generalize to another's experiences" (p.111). One key realization I had was that I felt very fortunate to be part of two different worlds. I had the benefit of understanding the dynamics of both first generation and second generation cultural norms and practices. The advantage of knowing both worlds prepares one to navigate cultural fluidity.

Land is more than a physical place. It is an idea that engages knowledge and contextualizes knowing. It is the key that turns the doors inward to reflect on how space shapes us (Aluli-Meyer, 2008, p.219).

When people move to new countries, how do they make sense of their new locations? I traveled far from my birthplace in Korea, which led to moments of cultural disorientation, but in my family I had strong role models, rooted in family and cultural traditions, and I credit my family with giving me the vision and courage to make the journey to Canada and start a new life here. Immigrating involves transformation and immigrants hold on to and let go of traditions from their places of origin. They also adopt and create new traditions that give new shape and meaning to their adopted surroundings. My journey has been to recognize where I am from and where I am going, and also to recognize that my fellow travellers have their own particular backgrounds and aspirations, and to celebrate our collective diversity. Over 80,000 Koreans live in British Columbia, with a sizeable Korean Canadian population in Vancouver. Is there a distinctive "Korean-Canadian" community identity here in Vancouver? While the community may have some shared traits and values, it is safer to say that their motives for coming here, and how they each become part of the local social fabric while remaining connected to their Korean roots are unique. Each will have an individual story of what they leave behind, carry with them and acquire when they settle in a new place, but individual stories will overlap and share some elements with the collective.

1.2. Treasuring and Adapting Traditions

I have remained strengthened by my bond with my family, with regular visits to Korea and regular communications with family or peers in Korea. It is fortunate to hear from my family members and extended family about their perspectives on life, society and morality which could be different from what Korean Canadians think. Heterogeneous cultural background is never something that I have to "overcome" as "too complex";

complexity and hybridity of cultural perspectives and values manifests in different ways in my relatives and has helped me avoid generalizing in my work with Korean Canadian families.

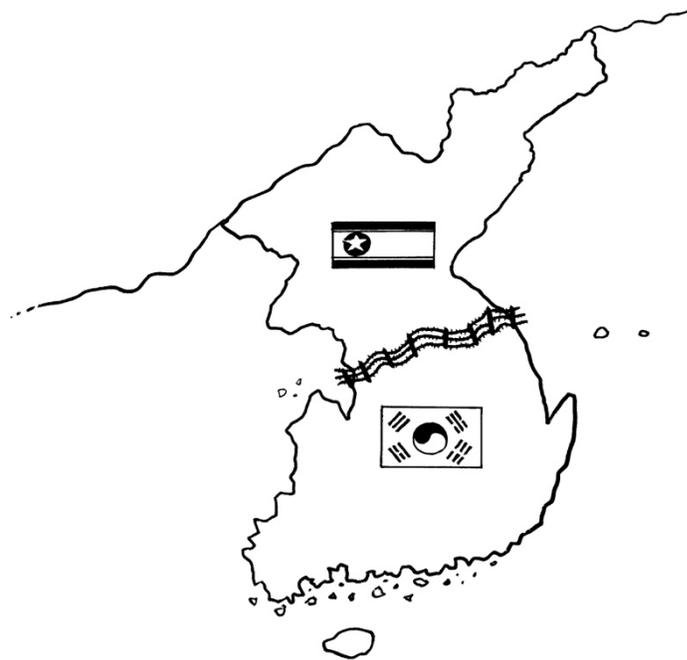


Figure 1.2. A map of the Korean peninsula including North and South Korea

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2019

I would argue that the seemingly contradictory tendencies to both hold onto traditions and adapt cultural traditions may be connected to the dramatic nature of Korea's recent history. Weede (2002) talks about how Korea "...lost its independence and became a Japanese colony. The future of Korea seemed to be persistent poverty and foreign rule. In the middle of the 20th century the world looked very different from the way it was at its beginning" (p.67). The rapid development of this small country started roughly 50 years ago. It is interesting that back then South Korea was poorer than countries like Bolivia and today is more powerful than Spain. So what happened in the last 50 years? After the end of World War II, in 1945, and with the split of Korea, South Korea's economy rose sharply, mainly due to the educated population and land reform that boosted productivity. However, this rise was abruptly interrupted by the Korean War. In 1960, after the rebuilding started, the country was back on track for growth. By then, South Korea had become one of the "Asian Tigers" and a "miracle economy" (2002, p.68). According to Kwon and Field (2018), since South Korea had to

quickly get back on its feet after the Korean War, a structure was created that forces each worker to do a great amount and that structure has become a culture, a custom. And unfortunately among Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, South Koreans work more hours per week on average than all but one other country, and almost 50% more than famously industrious Germany (Kwon & Field).

Korean Canadian immigrant families are influenced by Korea's tradition and history, yet also inevitably influenced by the cultural values and perspectives they encounter arriving in Canada. Moreover, first generation, "1.5 generation", second generation Korean Canadians will all have differing traits and perspectives. While elements of traditional Korean culture remain strong, the ubiquitous convention of changing one's Korean name to an "English" name is just one of many examples of how Korean Canadians are open to integration with and connection to their new social home. I have found that Korean Canadians value diversity and multiculturalism while still having strong ties to their Korean culture, values and traditions. When Korean Canadians interact in various social settings, whether parents talking after dropping kids off at school or attending a Vancouver church with Korean language service, it is through these informal social interactions that the various dimensions of "traditional" versus "new" cultural values are explored and experimented with. Goffman (1983) finds that "conversational interaction was linked to a highly complex interaction order, which opened up investigation of face-to-face interaction by linking rights and obligations to face, identity, and macro social institutions" (p.3). A climate of negotiation and interrogation exists alongside the affirmation of traditional Korean values. I would further argue that the informal sharing of "culture questions" through social interactions may have heightened value to Korean Canadians due to our very recent and traumatic national encounter with forced separation.

1.3. Experiencing forced cultural and physical separation

Many people have asked me about my background. Their first guess is that I am Chinese or Japanese. When I respond, 'I am Korean' they then ask immediately whether I am from North or South Korea. On June 25th, 1950, the Korean War began. My grandmother used to tell me about her survival stories, her relatives from North Korea, and how she took care of five children during the Korean War. North and South Korea

have the longest defended border in the world and now we are the only divided country in the world. The Korean War, lasting from 1950 to 1953, left the two Koreas separated by a border called the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ for short). During the Korean War about two million people died including at least 1 million civilians, and cities, landmarks and heritage sites were destroyed. Following the end of the war, the two countries agreed to work towards a peaceful reunification in the future. However, we've been separated over six decades. The sad thing is, with nuclear threats from North Korea, it makes sense that South Koreans see the reunification is unrealistic and fearful. The younger generations believe that it would be a heavy economic burden on South Korea. All South Korean males between ages 18-35 do civil defense training monthly and a mandatory military service. South and North Korea remain technically at war. The conflict left millions of families divided, with travel across the border all but impossible and nearly all forms of communication barred. In 2010, North and South Korea had temporary family reunions at Mount Kumgang resort. Four hundred and thirty-six South Koreans visited the North for only three days, to meet their 97 North Korean relatives, whom they have been separated from since the 1950-53 war. Participants went through a variety of emotions, from happiness to confusion.

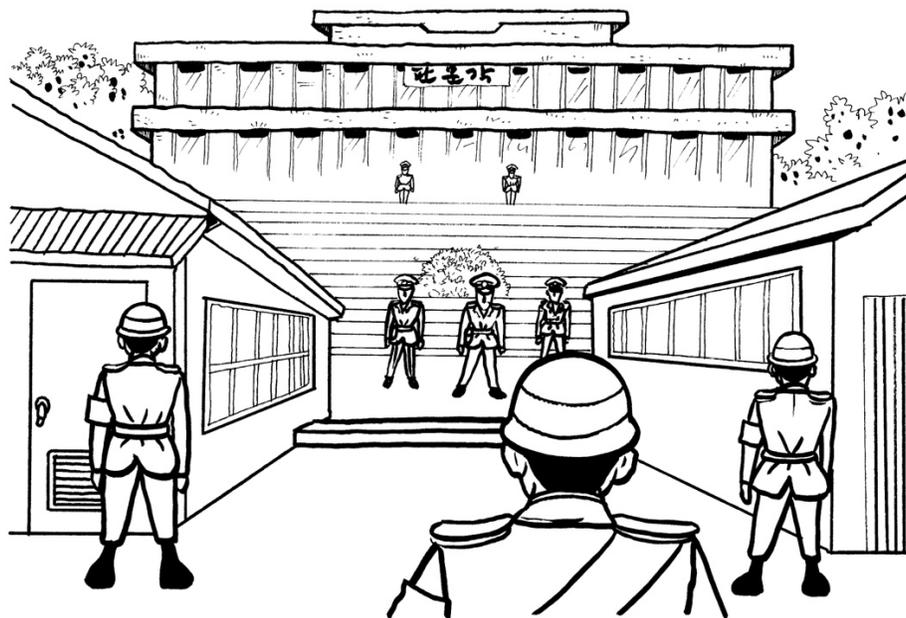


Figure 1.3. YK Journal Excerpt #2: The Demilitarized zone- somewhere on the 38th parallel. A tragic story of a people still divided

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2018

According to Harlan (2011), in the 1990s, more than 80 percent of South Korea thought unification was essential, according to government polls. But that number has since dropped to 56 percent. Only about 41 percent of those in their 20s feel that way. Among teens, that figure continues to drop closer to 20 percent. With nuclear threats from North Korea, it makes sense that South Koreans see this reunification as increasingly unrealistic and fearful. The younger generations believe that it would be a heavy economic burden on South Korea, with further conflicts and political fights between the two countries. They don't see the people in the North as the same because they have lived apart for so long. Is it too late to be unified? Have Koreans come too far? Is there still hope for unification? What could be the challenges that the two countries face? It would be safe to say that questions, uncertainty, and anxiety about reunification characterize Koreans' and Korean Canadians' thinking on this topic.

On April 26th 2018, Korea started writing a new chapter of Korea's history and the news from all over the world focused on Korea. Berlinger and Seo (2018) reported that leaders of the two Koreas have agreed to end the Korean war and they crossed the military demarcation line separating North and South Korea for the very first time. It was one of the most dramatic moments in Korean history- two leaders left behind a feeling of promise and positivity that hasn't been felt on the Korean Peninsula for years. Despite many fears about potential reunification, the fact that the two sides share a common language and history creates a strong cultural and practical bond.

1.4. Shared language, Shared Stories

It is worth noting that the history of the Korean language contains an interesting chapter about cultural clash and hybridity. Cock (2016) explains that "Like trying to fit a square handle into a round hole" is how Sejong the Great, a Korean king, viewed the practice of using Hanja, classical Chinese characters, to transcribe Korean. Therefore, Sejong made the royal edict of 1446 by which King Sejong promulgated the *hunmin chongum*- the twenty-eight letter phonetic alphabet uniformly referred to today as *hangul*. Prior to this important cultural moment, as historian Kim (2015) explains, there was such a great difference between the Korean language and Chinese, that there was incompatibility between the Chinese lettering system and the needs of the Korean people in writing their language and expressing their thoughts. Due to involvement of too many Chinese characters and being of foreign origin, it was too complicated and

inconvenient a system for the Koreans to use freely in expressing their words and own thinking (p. 3-4). Koreans needed their own letters and it was King Sejong who felt great sympathy for the Korean people's frustration. He immediately searched for solution and created hangul which is easily learnable, accessible and usable for the common people. According to Lee (2015), surprisingly little is known about the evolution of the Korean language even though the Korean language is the 13th largest among 7100 languages spoken on Earth (p.2). The scholar Arthurson (2012) describes the language as central to cultural identity:

Language is the means through which we communicate our culture. If, as First Nations people, we want to retain our identities and transmit our values and our cultural practices to future generations then we must do whatever we can to keep our language alive. (p.3)

During the terrible years from 1910 to 1945 when Japan occupied Korea, Koreans felt a strong need to recover, reassert, keep their own cultural roots and language as a way of resisting the Japanese effort to destroy everything culturally Korean (Kim, 2015, p.7). Language is powerful and it endures- it is like glue that maintains cultural identity. It is powerful. I still remember my grandparents were very fluent in speaking Japanese and I heard they were severely punished for speaking Korean. But they chose to continue to speak Korean even when it was forbidden - it was a representation of freedom, independence and free will. Bird and Harjo (1997) discuss the culture clash between "enemy languages" and the mother tongues which often become forbidden by occupiers or colonizers:

But to speak, at whatever the cost, is to become empowered rather than victimized by destruction. In our tribal cultures the power of language to heal, to regenerate, and to create is understood. These colonizers' language which often usurped our own tribal languages or diminished them, now hands back emblems of our cultures, our own designs: beadwork, quills if you will. We've transformed these enemy languages. (p. 21-21)

Indigenous scholars have emphatically underscored the intertwined importance of mother tongue and a culture's story telling. Not unlike the incompatibility of the Korean mother tongue being expressed in a Chinese alphabet, a culture's traditional stories will be intertwined with the mother tongue. To take away the mother tongue or translate the story, something will be altered. The mother tongue is central to cultural story telling, but for immigrants there will be increasing opportunities to translate traditional stories into

English. And for 1.5 and second generation immigrants, reading translations of one's traditional cultural stories may indeed become easier for some. But Indigenous scholars fruitfully draw attention to the need to persist in trying to read or hear one's traditional stories in the mother tongue.

Reading Korean literature has been part of an effort to discover the sources of my own being. Not knowing Korean literature, I felt excluded from the soil in which I ought to have rooted my intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual being. Deborah Smith, a London-based translator of Korean literature (as cited in Marcus, 2015), once distinguished Korean literature in this way: "Western audiences love strong, memorable, active main characters, whereas Korean literature has tended to find an aesthetic value, and a social truthfulness, in quietness, ordinariness, and passivity". Korea is a country with a rich literary tradition, and literature plays a critical role in Korean society. Despite numerous wars and natural disasters, Korea leads the world in the per capita publication of books of poetry. Kim (1997) emphasized there are two main reasons for the great body of literary works and the enthusiasm for literature on the part of the Korean people (p.3). The first is the original Siberian culture, reflected in geometric pattern and people from northeast Siberia brought into the Korean Peninsula in ancient times. The ethnic groups, who became the Korean people, had a culture distinct from the Chinese culture of the time and showed their love of song and dance. Koreans gathered together to dance and sing for days to celebrate good harvest and dedicate to the gods. The second reason is the strong Confucian tradition that prevailed in Korea from the tenth century. Unlike other countries, Korea was ruled by scholars and writers, who used literature to establish and maintain their dominance in society. Kim (1997) stated that "this tradition continues to exist today, because most Korean writers and poets feel a special sense of duty to uphold social justice, rather than viewing themselves as autonomous artists" (p.4). This sense of duty reflected during resisting Japanese imperialism and in opposing military dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s. Two main characteristics from Korean literature are emotional exuberance which comes from the shamanistic energy rooted in Siberia, whereas intellectual self-control comes from the tradition of Confucian rationalism. These two contrasting characteristics heavily influence and remain central to Korean literature today (Kim, 1997, p.4).

Understanding how national history, mother tongue, tradition, and stories are part of Korean and Korean Canadian cultural identity has provoked interrogation of my own

presuppositions but has also provoked my sensitivity in trying to engage with families and peers to get them to express their deepest feelings and perspectives on identity and identity's intersection with living with autism. While families and practitioners are often asked to confine their expression to concise questionnaires and objective assessments and education plans, I wish to provide at least some avenue to encourage families and peers a more freer expression which can involve tradition, story telling, and mother tongue.

Language acquisition is complex but it is a key piece of identity; exploring Korean literatures or even reading my favourite book from my childhood provides me with what feels like a more authentic cultural experience. Not only that, it also supports me to understand and empathize with expressions of others. Through our language of origin, we learn our culture's very specific ways of expression, ways of expression which highlight our cultural perspectives. On the other hand, when you learn a second language, you realize that another culture may have very different perspectives on life than yours. This is not to say that one is superior to the other; rather, this should be the beginning of a celebration of diversity. As a "1.5 generation", I can bring these perspectives to my work.

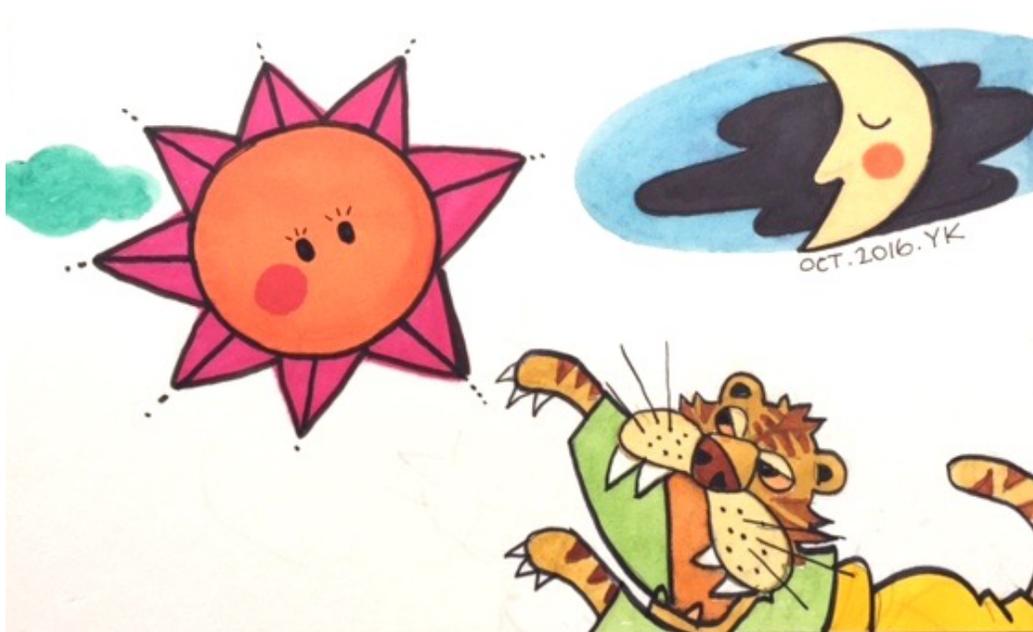


Figure 1.4. YK Journal Excerpt #3: A Korean Folktale: The Sun and Moon
Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2016

Egan (2005) asserts that stories are one of the most powerful cognitive tools students have available for imaginatively engaging with knowledge. Also, he argues, stories are instruments for orienting human emotions to their contents; they do not just convey information but engage our emotions – stories orient, or shape, our emotions to the events and characters in a particular way. Storytelling stimulates the imagination by creating an emotional attachment to the subject matter, drawing on the imagination that is a creative experience for the students. This emotional engagement invites children to reflect, which further fixes information in the long-term memory, giving a sense of belonging, identity and an emotional bonding to the language. I've been using English more than 20 years, but the sense of connection gets exponentially increased if I come across someone speaking Korean. That's the value of the mother tongue which affirms my identity; yet, being a "1.5-er" also opens my mind to the possibilities inherent in translations and fruitful "clashing" of cultures, the possibilities opened up in connecting with other cultures and blending cultural experiences.

Thus, in doing this work, my goal is not to declare that "Korean Canadian families with a child with autism" have some kind of predictable common response and needs, nor that I as a "Korean Canadian practitioner supporting Korean Canadian families with a child with autism" have some special unrepeatable insight no other practitioners could have; my goal is to understand how sharing stories allows families, professionals, including myself, to find the overlaps, to find insights and joys and empathy in moments of similarity as well as moments of uniqueness. But is it the autobiographical experience, through autobiographical storytelling, that will allow these overlaps and contrasts and connections to occur.

Chapter 2.

Brookfield's "Critical Incidents" and the interaction with Practitioner Inquiry

Articulate and relationally position my methodology, research design, as well as my intended approach to the representation of my work in my dissertation. Show how these choices are congruent and align with the focus and situating of my research, the relevant traditions of scholarship, and my values and purposes as a researcher.

If, as stated in Chapter 1, my goal is to understand how sharing stories - sharing autobiographical stories in particular - allows families and professionals, including myself, to find experiential overlaps, insights, and empathy through moments of similarity as well as moments of uniqueness in our experiences, then my next step was to explore what could be suitable and fruitful frameworks for supporting this work. Specifically, given the focus on sharing autobiographical experiences within the context of practitioners and families engaging in the shared practice of autism therapies, I decided to ground the work in Practitioner Inquiry.

The Practitioner Inquiry conceptions of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) build upon their foundational consideration, "Relationships of Knowledge and Practice: Teaching learning in communities". In this foundational work, the authors made key distinctions between the notions knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice, and knowledge-of-practice. Furthermore, they proposed a durable framework for approaching one's own Practitioner Inquiry, which they term "inquiry-as-stance". Inquiry-as-stance stems from the notion of knowledge-of-practice. They describe inquiry-as-stance as "intended to offer a closer understanding of the knowledge generated in inquiry communities, how inquiry relates to practice, and what teachers learn from inquiry" (p.288). Specifically, they assert, inquiry-as-stance engages us in the following contextually charged ways:

About forming and re-forming frameworks for understanding practice: how students and their teachers construct the curriculum, co-mingling their experiences, their cultural and linguistic resources, and their interpretive frameworks; how teachers' actions are infused with complex and multilayered understandings of learners, culture, class, gender, literacies, social issues, institutions, histories, communities, materials, texts, and

curricula; and how teachers work together to develop and alter their questions and interpretive frameworks informed not only by thoughtful consideration of the immediate situation and the particular students they teach and have taught but also by the multiple contexts within which they work. (p.291)

The above passage underscores the richness of this approach for someone like me who is straddling or co-inhabiting cultures of practice - Korean and Canadian education systems, Korean and Canadian cultures and therapeutic contexts, and multi-cultural teams which include additional cultures, languages, and influences as well.

2.1. Brookfield’s “Critical Incidents”: “Axis 1 is Theory”

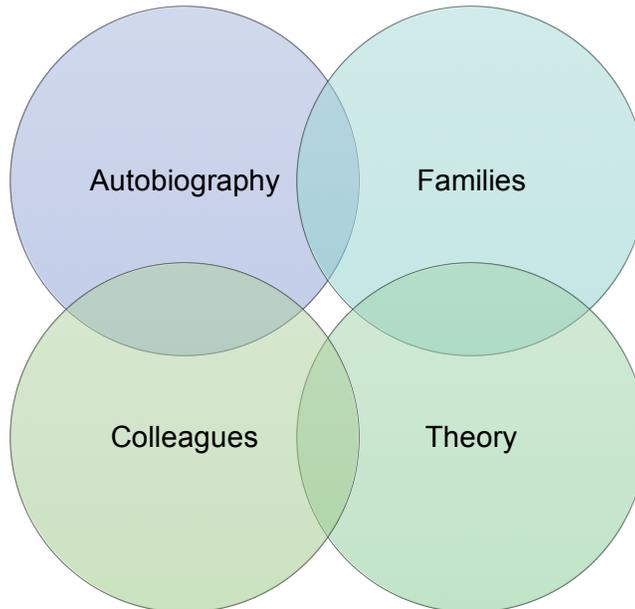


Figure 2.1. The four lenses adapted from Brookfield (1995)

I find it useful to organize my Practitioner Inquiry along four axes adapted from Brookfield. Brookfield’s framework of investigating practice through four lenses – autobiography, theory, students, and colleagues, provides a strong and supportive framework for me. As noted in Figure 2.1 above, for my study I have re-labelled the “students” axis to include parents - hence, I have re-labelled it “families”. Thus, I will examine “families”, including both the students on the autism spectrum along with their

parents (in this study it should be understood that “parent” can be either the biological parent or also the “parent figure” or immediate caregiver taking on the parental roles, to be inclusive of families with various familial structures).

I have several reasons for re-labelling “students” to “families”. First, autism therapies are family-centred, so that in the practice of engaging in autism therapies, the student and parent(s) should not be viewed as separated from each other (Coogler & Hanline, 2014); second, due to the nature of autism, which commonly involves speech delays, communication differences, and may involve non-verbal students, parents often play a critical role in “speaking up” for students who may have various challenges in communicating for themselves; finally, related to the second point, since students on the autism spectrum often have social values and social expressions which can be described as neurodiverse in nature (as opposed to neurotypical), they may face challenges in advocating for themselves in mainstream neurotypical social systems so, again, parents often play a key role in helping advocate for students. Hart (2014), for example, argues that

...parents of autistic children have used autism therapies to create a technical infrastructure to support autistic personhood.... [and] used the techniques and technologies of behavioral therapies (sometimes said to be incommensurable with neurodiversity’s philosophy) in ways that have actually helped establish this autism-as-difference view. They have done so by translating their child’s behaviors and utterances and engaging in forms of ‘joint embodiment’ with [their children] to create enabling ‘prosthetic environments’ where her unique personhood can be recognized. (p.284)

With that said, a closer look at Brookfield reveals that Brookfield (2015) describes these four lenses in the following way:

- The lens of autobiographical experiences: Exploring our experiences to view our practice from the other side of the table. Reviewing our individual and collective narratives as learners with a view to discovering themes we might have overlooked as we internalized the espoused theories of our fields.
- The lens of students’ eyes: Trying to see our practice through the multiple lenses represented by diverse students’ eyes in the same class-room. How do they see what we do? What meanings do they ascribe to our decisions? How do they hear our words? What do they feel are the most significant incidents that happen in class? How do they experience our exercise of power and authority?

- The lens of theory: Illuminating what we do by immersing ourselves in a different way of reading the world. Reading someone with a different theoretical take on the world opens us up to alternative explanations and interpretations of what we're doing.
- The lens of colleagues' perception: Talking with colleagues about problems we're grappling with, dynamics we find it hard to untangle, things that keep tripping us up in class. And asking for feedback on what we do well and where we fall short, "What am I missing?" or "What do you think is going on here?"

Brookfield (1995) argues that we need a specific focus – "a critical incident" – if we are to understand what is involved and what the benefits are of becoming a critically reflective teacher. Uncovering the many assumptions in what we do during this particular incident is a key place to start, he suggests. We should do this by seeking as many unfamiliar angles as possible, but he notes that this is often very difficult to do unassisted: "we are all prisoners trapped within the perceptual frameworks that determine how we view our experiences" (p 28). Organizing my inquiry along Brookfield's four axes has helped create numerous rich encounters with these critical incidents, providing many opportunities to become more self-aware of the hidden assumptions influencing both my own individual practices and the wider accepted practices of the professional field in which I work.

2.2. Axis 2 is Autobiography: Encounters with cultural assumptions, childhood and young adult cultures



Figure 2.2. Where I am from and Where I am going

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2016

In March 1990, it was my first day of 1st grade at school. We all lined up excitedly and a teacher said she would like to choose a partner for us. At that moment, a girl right next to me whispered in my ear and said “Look at him, a boy with a red shirt. I don’t want him to be my partner. He is different.” Strangely, I never had a chance to talk to the boy with the red shirt because he almost always stayed in the other room at the end of the hallway.

The illusion of inclusion. I was born in Korea and during my 11 years of public education in Korea, it was very rare to see students with special needs in my classes. What does it mean to be ‘normal’? An ideology of sameness underlies numerous areas of Korean society, from attitudes, education, careers, and marriage. But as of 2018, Korea’s economy, politics, and culture are changing rapidly. In April 2018, the North Korean leader crossed to the southern side of the DMZ for a summit with the South Korean President, the first time a North Korean leader has stepped into the territory since 1953. And today, South Korea is the world’s 12th largest economy and now people can listen to K-pop music anywhere in the world.

Barrier. It's been 17 years since I emigrated to Canada from Korea. There is a Korean proverb that says, 'when it's ten years, even the rivers and mountains change.' This references a place becoming unrecognizable over the course of years- but ironically there is something that is not so easily changed. Last year in Korea, a video clip featuring parents of children with special needs kneeling in front of their neighbors and begging for their consent to build a school for students with special needs went viral. I was speechless. I had to stop for a moment when I heard one of parents' interview, discussing their worries and fears because their son has to survive in "nondisabled" society.

U.S. Army. There are two Koreas- North and South Korea. The war officially split the nation into two countries, communist and democratic nations against each other. Ever since the split, the U.S. has supported South Korea in military training and fully committed to South Korea's defence. I met my English teacher Helen when I was 13 years old and she gave me a wake up call. Helen was a wife of a U.S. Army member and had three children. They lived in the Yongsan district of Seoul, an area which serves as the headquarters for U.S. military forces stationed in South Korea. I had to take a bus to see Helen and it took about one hour from my house. In order to get in the U.S. Army base, I had to show my ID to Korean soldiers, and then a small replica of America was waiting for me over the gate. Everything was so new to me- people, language, culture, and their lifestyle. One day, Helen took me to the big grocery store in the base and I could not blink my eyes. It feels like I am in the wonderland, a place to dream. When I was young I saw a picture of small Korean children running after U.S. soldiers because they often came with candy and chocolate they handed out to kids. Maybe I was chasing the American Dream because it seemed like they have everything that we did not have. Helen gave me lots of magazines and books to read and I had to dig out my translation dictionary every night. Learning a new language opened my eyes to the world. I was able to immerse myself in learning, and I discovered how language reveals so much about a culture and its values. It was truly a pleasure to see how another culture thinks and acts. Until then, I did not know what would happen to my life in the next few years, but after these experiences I became motivated and excited to explore a North American adventure.

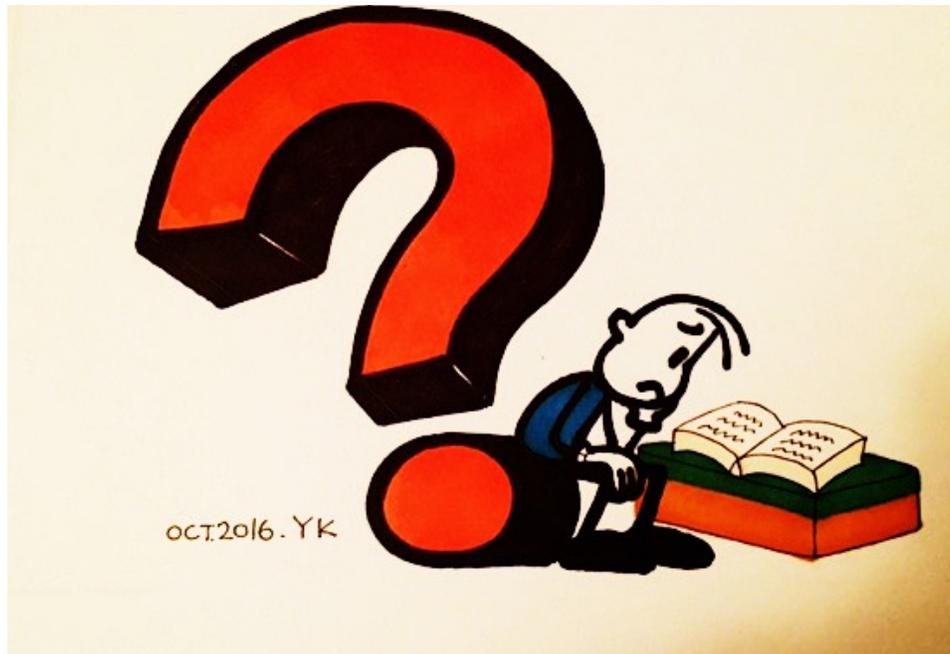


Figure 2.3. Unsolved questions

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2016

Unspoken. March 25th 2001, I arrived in rainy Vancouver, Canada. I was so thrilled to see many houses on streets because the majority of Koreans live in high rise apartment buildings. For a few days, my family had to live without a car, furniture, and internet. I felt isolated and it was so strange not going anywhere, seeing anyone and doing anything for few days. I asked my parents if I could go to school and they took me to a public school near our place. I was enrolled in Grade 11, but since it was March, I had only three months to complete the semester. The first few weeks of my life in secondary school were not smooth. Since I was raised and educated in a culture which emphasizes listening rather than talking, I was not confident in sharing my opinions in front of the class. I felt awkward; everyday I had to struggle to take part in the discussion and I ended up losing my voice. I was only 17, but I was able to realize that Canadian education and culture value sharing thoughts in discussions and it seemed to be a way of proving my presence and knowledge. Not fitting into this 'dialogue culture' constantly left me in the shadows and I started missing the Korean cultural that valued silence. I felt overwhelmed surrounded by seemingly endless conversations I was expected to participate in, and I missed the space of silence. However, I was determined to engage with this new culture and I gradually adopted some of the tools of dialogue.

Hello and Bye. I got accepted to York University with a full scholarship after 2 years of high school in Vancouver. It was official - I finally summoned up the courage to pack my bags and broke the news to my parents that I would be moving to Toronto. In my third year of university, I went to Tokyo, Japan as an exchange student to take on a new adventure. I brought curiosity for my new life, while on the other hand, much fear. A month later, one of my classmates asked me if I was interested in a part-time job. This was the beginning of my career with children with autism. The place where I worked was an "autism center" which opened as a Tokyo branch of an American health services company. I had to take three-weeks intensive theory training and in something new to me, called Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). I had about 3 to 5 sessions per day, had to run programs in Japanese and English, and had piles of datasheets that I needed to implement. Datasheets were straightforward and provided clear instructions, so I had to take data and draw graphs carefully. There was always a clipboard with datasheets between the student and myself.

Curiosity to Discovery. I started travelling for three years from 2008. I worked as a flight attendant for a major airline. I was packing up almost everyday and started experiencing unknown things- encountering countless people, unfamiliar customs, the list goes on. Mostly I did international flights but one day my flight to Frankfurt got cancelled and I got reassigned to work on flights to Fort McMurray and then Deer Lake, Newfoundland. This reassignment allowed me to realize that Canada itself has countless layers of culture and micro cultures. I could immerse myself into new places and experiences, even in small communities. I discovered many new perspectives by interacting with locals from these small centers. For some reason, this experience changed my viewpoint and I realized I was ready for a change. I quit my flight attendant job, moved back to Vancouver, and applied for graduate studies.

2.2.1. Professional cultures

8154 kilometers. I fly over the Pacific Ocean and go to Korea for a visit at least once a year. When I go through the customs at the Korean airport I have to line up in the "foreigners" line. I am a Korean who is holding a Canadian passport. Interestingly, not many customs officials ask me, "Why are you coming to this country?" In Korea I feel a sense of "belonging" and acceptance. I lived in Korea for 18 years and so far for 17

years in Canada. I find myself in between distance and spaces of familiarity and unfamiliarity. Fortunately, I had an opportunity to learn about both cultures deeply and I do not want to judge these cultural differences in a dichotomous way. I experience daily how to create a bridge between people of different cultures in a respectful way. My cross cultural experiences provide me with many opportunities to continue to move and grow. I am still reaching out to new horizons.

Educational environments. Kovach (2009) describes the value of the reflexivity method of research in this way: “situating the self authorizes expression of the relevant narrative from personal experiences, those reminiscences of life rooted in our earliest experience that shape our understanding of the world” (p.112). Undeniably one of the strongest cultural contrasts I experienced between Korea and Canada is the nature of education. I grew up with a systematic educational background: teachers used to repeat information by rote, and there was no real dialogue. Prior to experiencing the Canadian education system, I had never previously thought about dialogue as a necessary tool for learning. All my classmates and I were silenced; teachers just wanted to lead the class, and we students came to believe that being obediently silent was a legitimate form of “participating”. In most contemporary North American style systems now, educators pursue more dialogue within education because it enables them to see if the students are capable of analyzing, understanding, and putting into action what they have learned.

How important is dialogue in the classroom in terms of students’ learning? According to Leistyna (2004)’s interview with Freire, “a dialogue is not simply another word for a mere conversation among people about everyday matters. Dialogue, from an epistemological perspective, requires approaching and examining a certain knowable object” (p.18). Children are full of curiosity and such curiosity encourages them to engage in a search for the meaning of an object and to clarify the full meaning. In order to make the classroom full of wonder and curiosity, it is important that the teacher encourage the constant reflecting dialogue based on students’ curiosity and their views of the world. What emerges from the dialogue? Dialogue gives an opportunity for students to revisit the knowledge that they already have in order to expand understanding and to apply it in practice. Also, dialogue can be a bridge to build a strong emotional engagement with teachers.

Culture within culture. Canada has always been referred to as a multicultural mosaic, and as a person who was born and raised with a different background, most experiences in Canada became valuable lessons for me. Due to Canada's multicultural society, I was fully immersed in learning within multicultural environments. And sometimes, it was a challenge to learn in different languages and backgrounds for myself and my peers. I remember when I was visiting an elementary classroom as a student volunteer in Canada, the teacher tried to explain what is a tiger to two boys from a culture and background where tigers were not known. Next class, the teacher had prepared all different kinds of pictures to explain and support the subjects for the two students. Interestingly, the teacher did not change any curriculum to the measure of specific cultural groups of students but offered an equitable educational opportunity which was more robust for all students. I saw that the teacher believed that teaching students from different cultures is no different than teaching students within a single culture, except for preparing and giving extra attention to how language and culture differences might require more and different opportunities for interaction. With his openness, other students had an opportunity to experience multiple perspectives and strengthen their cultural consciousness and intercultural awareness. I learned that it is critical to approach the diverse education environment with openness and variety, with a view to inclusion.

When I was in my secondary school years in Korea, all my teachers were highly educated, intelligent, and subject matter experts. However, ironically there was no strong connection between students and teachers. Knowledge alone is not sufficient in teaching. The hardest thing about being a teacher is determining how to transfer what you have learned about teaching theoretically into the meaningful practical settings. Focusing on valuing and building upon the way children understand and the way they experience things, connecting with students emotionally, feeling a sense of the classroom, and coming into the classroom with passion can be key elements to support 'knowledge into practice' more effectively. I know these things now, having come through SFU's Masters and EdD programs, but when I was in secondary school I had no conscious idea of why school was dissatisfying and stressful to me.

Most if not all people have all experienced the stress of exam periods at some point. In Korea, I was living daily with the continuous stress of rote testing and drills as a student subjected to an unenlightened educational model. The worrying, piles of

worksheets to be completed and handed in, drill-style questions, memorization of cue cards, and the lack of engagement with teachers was how I spent my formative educational years in Korea, pushed to always succeed in performing on tests. I never accepted that this was the best way to learn but, as I said, I never really gained the awareness to fully interrogate the system until later in life. According to Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007), the downfall of many educational systems is due to teachers' and educators' lack of considering that all they are trying to convey to children cognitively, psychologically, linguistically and in many other ways, is actually strongly connected to their students' bodies and emotions and cannot exist without this primordial connection. Speaking from my most visceral early experiences, I can say that rote learning and memorization, where you rely on rote repetition and practice, without being critically or emotionally or imaginatively engaged, is a form of education which stifles the student. My recent research on the history and current state of the Korean education system has finally allowed me to recognize how public systems and cultural perceptions have created this intense focus on outcome-based assessments. But, I feel I still have a lot of self-reflective work ahead to understand how my educational origins have influenced my practice overall.

2.3. Axis 3 is Families: Meeting the parents

"I feel I become a passive at the meetings. Professionals and teachers talk about many things, but I don't get all of them" (Park & Turnbull, 2001, p.137)

Barriers. According to Kim (1998), traditionally in Asian culture, a disability was interpreted as a "punishment from God" or genetic problem in pedigree or due to parents' neglect for the child. In the traditional perception, parents were easily blamed or pitied by relatives and neighbors, and this placed considerable additional stress on parents of children with disabilities. These negative perceptions are rapidly being replaced, and are not held by current generations of parents for the most part, but the legacy often remains with extended families, grandparents, older relatives, or the uninformed general public who have no direct contact with or education about autism.

The parents' involvement in educational planning for children with autism is vital because encouraging parent involvement will have a positive influence on their children and will become a key part of an effective therapeutic program (Simpson, de Boer-Ott, &

Smith-Myles, 2003). However, in spite of increasing awareness in perceiving themselves as team members, Kim (1996) indicated that many Korean parents admitted they were still influenced by traditional values which placed emphasis on respect for authority ahead of parent outspokenness. As noted earlier, Park and Turnbull (2001) emphasized that this reverence for authority creates a barrier between parents and professionals because parents agree to professionals' opinions and suggestions in the belief that professionals know better than themselves. This agreement occurs even when their ideas are very different from those of professionals.

Partnerships. Thus, these cultural factors potentially can create a barrier to authentic partnerships, even if the practitioner has a sincere desire to achieve genuine collaboration with the family. According to Dunst and Paget (1991), the definition of partnership can be "an association between a family and one or more professionals who function collaboratively using agreed-upon roles in pursuit of a joint interest or common goal" (p.29). Another definition of partnership by Heron and Reason (1997) further underscores the need for true collaboration:

A collaborative form of inquiry, in which all involved engage together in democratic dialogue as co-researchers and as co-subjects. In our articulation of this, which we call co-operative inquiry, people collaborate to define the questions they wish to explore and the methodology for that exploration (propositional knowing); together or separately they apply this methodology in the world of their practice (practical knowing); which leads to new forms of encounter with their world (experiential knowing); and the find ways to represent this experience in significant patterns (presentational knowing) which feeds into a revised propositional understanding of the originating questions. (p.281)

The critical distinction to be made is that even well intentioned practitioners can fail to establish effective collaboration with parents; without an understanding of Korean culture, the implementation of effective educational and therapeutic supports for Korean families may be hindered. Another Park, Turnbull, and Park (2001) study articulates four types of barriers based on their qualitative data analysis. The study describes the cultural and linguistic factors and other interpersonal and structural factors that

influenced Korean-American parents' perspectives toward partnerships with professionals.

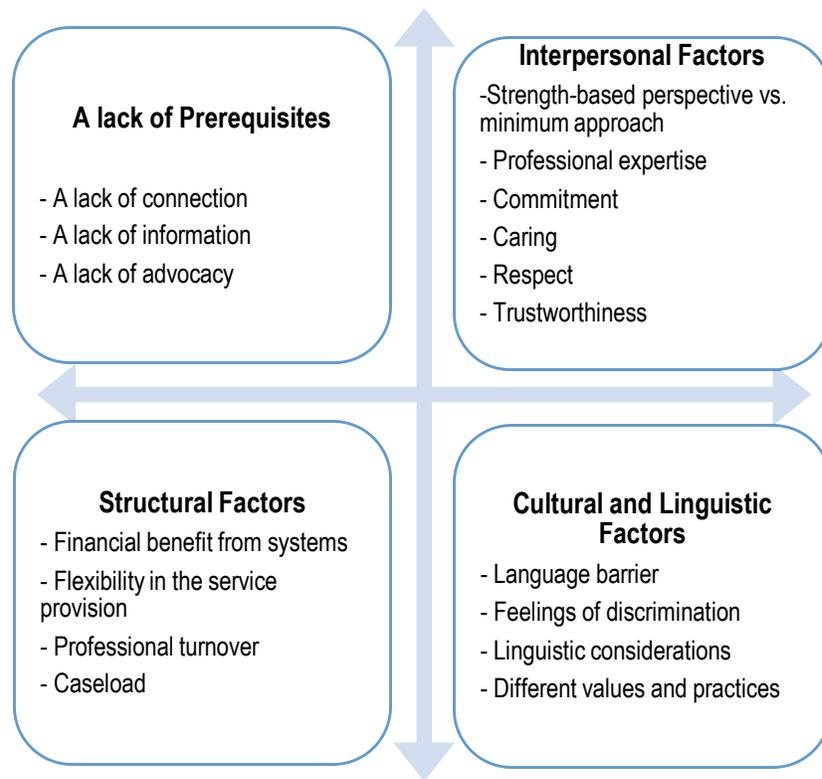


Figure 2.4. Four types of barriers from Park, Turnbull, and Park (2001)

Webber, Simpson, & Bentley (2000) stated that it is important to engage families in order to better engage with cultural and demographic diversity. And professionals' willingness to share and inform not only provides parents with valuable information, but more importantly communicates the willingness of education personnel or other professionals to accommodate and share decision making with parents (Webber et al., 2000).

In later chapters of this study, I discuss in detail my choice of self-reflexive study, dialogic engagement, and the specific tool of dialogic journaling for providing an effective pathway to "meeting" students, parents, and families in a place where true collaboration will be fostered. According to Kovach (2009),

Critically reflective self-location gives opportunity to examine our research purpose and motive. It creates a mutuality with those who share their stories with us. Critically reflective self-location is a strategy to keep us aware of the power dynamic flowing back and forth between researcher and participant. It prompts awareness of the extractive tendency of

research. And it endorses tending to the personal and cultural in research.
(p.112)

By sharing my own autobiographical experiences empathically and interactively with parents and families as they share theirs, I believe that we will move closer to this notion of “mutuality” Kovach describes. Almost 20 years ago, when I immigrated to Canada, it was a stressful process and not an easy journey. From my current interactions with Korean-Canadian parents, I know the experiences of these parents who have a child with autism are not smooth. Every day they deal with acculturation, searching for resources and services while juggling two cultures. The self-study and dialogic journaling methods I utilize in this study helps us connect in a way which mitigates the power dynamics and extractive tendencies of research, as Kovach mentions.

2.4. Axis 4 is Colleagues: Teams & My practice

“Central to critical reflection is the deliberate analysis of one’s practice through the widest possible range of lenses and perspectives. This may sometimes happen spontaneously or naturally. But mostly it is the responsibility of teachers to create this opportunity” (Brookfield, 2015, p.18).

Polite acceptance vs. true engagement. I have found that the teams I have worked with demonstrate sensitivity and awareness towards families of diverse cultures, but do not very often formally address cultural dimensions of the family. Since I’ve been working with several Korean-Canadian families, I learned that it is important to share information with team members about Korean-Canadian values and cultural traditions in regard to parenting and communication styles to help support culturally acceptable education strategies and to bridge cultural differences between the educators and the family. Matson et al. (2012), discuss the impact that culture can have on perceptions and reporting, especially by family members. The researchers find that culture affects what may be judged as severe impairments in social skills, for example, since social norms may differ between cultures. As practitioners, my colleagues and I need to take these differences into account. Similarly, Chung et al. (2012), point out that different cultures may view challenging behaviours differently, and therefore have different perceptions about types and severities of challenging behaviours. If we do not consider these differences, we could miss opportunities to prioritize the family’s goals for what they feel

are the most important challenging behaviours to address. During team meetings when addressing family goals, for example, we cannot make assumptions that the family will share our perceptions about which challenging behaviours to address first. With families from different cultural backgrounds we need to use targeted and sensitive communication with parents to ensure we understand their viewpoints.

As a practitioner leading teams and collaborating with peers, teammates, and fellow educators, I need to be more reflexive in how I view and design team interactions with culture in mind. But in addition, as a practitioner interacting with education systems on an ongoing basis, I will need to continue to engage with other professionals using both “formal” channels such as Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) and “informal” channels such as those brief but critical discussions held around the meeting table and in the hallways of schools. In these interactions and in my guidance of families interacting with education systems, I need to be aware of how the views of teachers and other educational staff impact their inclusion and engagement of children with autism.

Presuppositions about inclusion. According to Egan (1978), we analyze issues through the lens of our presuppositions (p.122). The presuppositions that most readily inform educator attitudes around inclusion of students on the autism spectrum in the “mainstream” classroom are, firstly, presuppositions about “social abilities” of students and secondly, the attitudes teachers adopt towards integration of students with autism.

Different social behaviours of students with autism may have negative effects on their relationships and the daily interactions with others (Cassady, 2011). Research has shown that just placing children with autism in close proximity to “typical” peers does not automatically lead to increases in social interaction. Children with autism along with their “typical” peers actually need to be taught to interact successfully through adult facilitation; this requires more teacher time and could be perceived by some staff as too much extra work. As mentioned at the outset of this paper, outdated “theory of mind” beliefs may mean that some educators question students’ ability to attribute mental states such as beliefs, feelings and desires to oneself and others. Such misperceptions could result in a lack of sharing moments in teacher-student relationships. According to researchers, differences with engagement, attention, and “appropriate” behavior in the classroom are common and interfere with ASD students’ opportunities to participate fully

in the educational setting (Schilling & Schwartz, 2004). Again, misperceptions about children with autism can create a gap between children and teachers and this can subsequently contribute to creating distance with peers.

In contrast, there is a differing set of presuppositions about students with ASD in mainstream classrooms, a set of beliefs which are positive. For example, that inclusion gives students with autism the opportunity to interact with their “typically developing” peers as role models, which in turn, provides for developing social skills, communication skills, academic skills, positive behaviors, and coping skills that simply cannot be replicated in a special education setting (Chandler-Olcott & Kluth, 2009; Diehl, Ford & Federico, 2005). The pivotal argument here is that general education settings offer the best opportunities for contact with “typical” peers (Simpson, et al., 2003). These researchers point to the body of evidence that says increasing the chances for children with autism to become skilled in play with “typical” peers is important for social competence later in life (Stone & La Greca, 1986). According to McGreggor and Campbell (2001),

There are two clear goals for the integration of children with autism. The first is to honor the right of all members of a community to take full part in its day-to-day life. The second goal is to improve the quality of children’s social interaction and academic development through daily contact with typically developing peers. (p.190)

Moreover, there is a growing body of evidence that classmates without autism benefit significantly from their experiences with students with ASD, by developing empathy for and an understanding of children with cognitive differences. Many experts emphasize that inclusion is a civil right and is necessary for encouraging appropriate social development in all children.

Reactions to inclusion policies. A second presupposition that I have identified which impacts inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorders is the teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion policy. Cassady (2011) states that some teachers experience increased tension when trying to include students with autism in their classrooms because of the educators’ beliefs that they are unable to address or support the students with special needs and simultaneously teach the remaining students. Also Horn and Timmons (2009) report that

Teachers have feelings of frustration and guilt due to the time that is taken away from the majority of the students in order to accommodate the needs of one student with special needs. The inordinate amount of time needed to attend additional meetings, complete paperwork, and collaborate with specialists is seen as unfair in comparison to the time devoted to the other students in the class. (p. 280)

It is important to be aware of teachers' opinions towards students with autism because their attitudes greatly affect their relationship with the students as well as the overall quality of instruction. Simpson et al. (2003) insist that if school personnel are not supportive of inclusion, it is likely that the inclusive experience will have limited success for the student with ASD. Classroom teachers with negative attitudes about students with ASD and inclusion can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, with the students not benefitting from the inclusionary environment.

On the other hand, there are educators who tend to perceive inclusion as a positive educational practice, contingent on appropriate teacher training and support (Simpson et al., 2003). Myles and Simpson (1989) report that 86% of the general educators they surveyed were willing to accept a student with a disability in their classrooms on a full-time basis if appropriate support and training were provided. Roberts (2004) has supported this by identifying that the classroom teachers who make the time and effort to develop strategies for the students with autism in their class frequently find that the provision of structure, routine, visual supports and the teaching of social skills, often benefit other students with learning differences in the class and potentially all students in the school. Many teachers have also reported that they believe that successfully rising to the challenge of having a child with autism in their class has made them better teachers.

Teaching teachers. Teacher education is becoming more important for training student teachers to be positive and receptive toward inclusive practices of students with autism (Wilkerson, 2012). Student teachers research suggests that many teachers are still not prepared to teach students with autism in general education classes and they lack sufficient knowledge about students with autism (Snyder, 1999). According to Hong, Ryoo, Lee, Noh, & Shin (2018) student teachers' attitude toward inclusion for students with autism also plays a critical role in including students with autism in general education classes, as well as affecting teachers' expectations for their students. However unfortunately, there are not many studies that specifically focused on student

teachers' attitudes toward students with autism. Some researches have investigated potential factors that may influence on their positive attitudes or beliefs on inclusive education such as taking a special education course (Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey, & Simon. 2005), teaching and working experience with students with autism (Park & Chitiyo, 2011), frequency of contact with students with autism, and formal autism training (Wilkerson, 2012).

Johnson (2019) reported on statistics from the B.C. Ministry of Education, that almost a quarter of special education teachers were lost between 2000-2017 due to policy changes. As a result, by 2016-17, there were, on average, 2.6 more students with special needs per special education teacher than in 2000-01. The article also mentions that there are still voices that deny that inclusion is beneficial for all concerned; however, louder voices on behalf not only of children with special needs, but all the others who, once they become adult, will have learned not to fear differences and will form our cultural attitudes to people with special needs.

Egan (1999) states, "the fact that our basic values and presuppositions are greatly resistant to change, does not mean that they do not change or that they cannot change, or that we cannot change other people's" (p.12). Because educators' beliefs and attitudes towards students with autism can dramatically affect the success and effectiveness of their inclusion, it is critical to engage with colleagues, peers, and teams to gauge our collective presuppositions and enter into fruitful dialogue about them. The framework of Practitioner Inquiry and the specific lenses of Brookfield's "critical incidents" organized along the axes of Theory, Autobiography, Families, and Colleagues, are used to organize my study in manner meant to encourage reflexive awareness and dialogic engagement while allowing the autobiographical narratives of all participants to be expressed in authentic and respectful ways.

Chapter 3.

How the Korean Education system influences presuppositions about education and inclusion

3.1. Where we are from, where we are going

My immigrant experience had an immediate effect on my views on education, from the moment I attended my first university class in Canada. Growing up in Korea, I was exposed to a particular style of pedagogy – authoritative, rote learning style, with a lot of tests based on memorization, and very little dialogue (if any) between students and teachers. In Canadian universities I learned of an entirely different pedagogical style – one where dialogue, exploration, and self expression are valued. This experience of moving from one education system to another set me on a path to constantly question the assumptions of any system. But it takes many years to uncover the deeper, more subtle impacts of one's early years of education. To begin at the beginning, where did this concept of authoritative, “top-down”, rote learning, and standardized testing come from?

3.2. School as factories: The problematic of outcome-based evaluation

Authority stands for stability of social organization by means of which direction and support are given to individuals; while individual freedom stands for the forces by which change is intentionally brought about. The issue that requires constant attention is the intimate and organic union of two things: of authority and freedom, of stability and change. (Dewey, 1987/1936, p.131).

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the notion of schools as factories emerged, which emphasizes the outcomes of production and the goal-oriented approach, the oldest and perhaps most widely used model of program evaluation in education (Madaus & Kellaghan, 2000). According to Eisner (2001), “The formulation of standards and the measurement of performance were intended to tidy up a messy system and to make teachers and school administrators truly accountable” (p.367). The specification of intended outcomes and test scores became the criteria for students’

performance. Spady and Marshall (1991) pointed out this outcome-based evaluation still remains the prevailing approach for most public education systems, yet provokes the question: What is problematic about relying purely on outcome-based evaluation?

We can say that outcome-based evaluation follows from and relies on for its validation the philosophical frameworks of rationalization and reductionism. The rationalist approach prefers non-human data collection instruments, because these appear to be cost-effective and produce information that can be systematically accumulated (Guba, E. G & Lincoln, Y. S., 2000). Eisner (2001) supports this, stating that rationalization depends on clear specification of intended outcomes. Educators define the desired outcomes and create rubrics to quantitatively measure those outcomes. Eisner (2001) asserts, “the specification of intended outcomes has become one of the primary practices in the process of rationalizing school reform efforts” (p.368). Similarly, reductionism informs a system based on evaluating disparate parts which purportedly add up to a whole, but does not acknowledge the dynamic forces which influence the interaction of the various parts – in other words, as contrasted to a holistic or systems approach.

While we could go a step further to say that outcome-based evaluation may also be linked to materialism and even determinism, I would argue that it is more fruitful to take a more sociological approach since education is a social phenomenon (Vorontsova & Kotova, 2013). I would argue that the core paradigm at work here is conformism. Conformism, arguably an opposite of humanism, is consistent with the whole intent behind the industrial revolution and the mass production of the factory system – the ability to create an infinite number of identical products through this reductionist approach. Measuring the quality of educational programs or schools based on test scores and other measurable outcomes creates a conformist mentality, where students are viewed as merely output-producing entities which, if taught “correctly” will produce “correct”, desirable, and nearly identical output en masse – what we would call in the 21st-Century “cloning”. But two critical dimensions of learning are lost in the conformist paradigm: the element of process – the dialogic nature of learning – and the element of human engagement – the social, interactive nature of learning – which cannot be captured if the evaluation focuses merely on conformist outcomes.

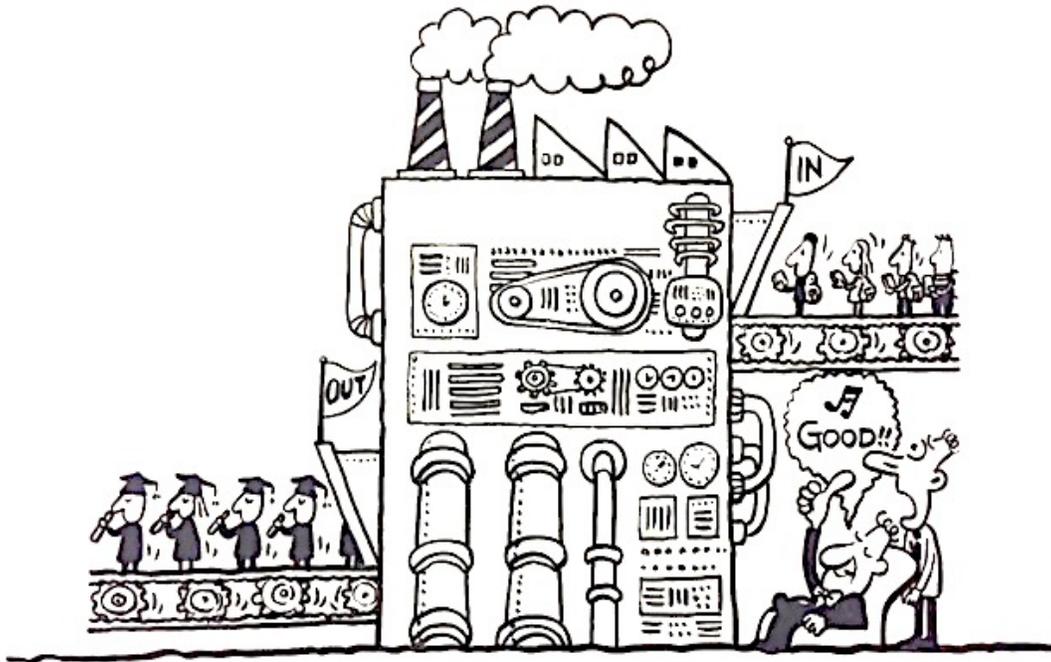


Figure 3.1. YK Journal Excerpt #4: The Dream is Tested: “You don’t want to be a child left behind, do you?”

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2018

This is what I heard the most from my teachers when I was a teenager. My friends and I thought going to the prestigious university is the single most important factor in determining our life’s journey. It requires intense energy, dedication, and self-sacrifice. Looking back to past years of my experiences in Korea, there are advantages and disadvantages in the Korean education system. Yes, I admitted that we were dominated by highly authoritarian teachers and “cramming” sessions and we were enslaved by rankings, report cards, and grades. But at the same time, even though it feels like a contradiction, these negative factors were what motivated us. We kept moving forward and didn’t look back. But in the end, I now believe the conviction that academic success is paramount in life needs to be challenged, to protect the well being of students, families, and teachers. South Korea may have become an enviable economic superpower, but it has neglected the happiness of its people.

3.3. The History and Context of Korean education

Despite various barriers, Korea has achieved great accomplishments in education and development in the quality of its education, as well as the significant expansion of public education since the conclusion of the Korean War. Korea has become one of the top countries in international achievement test scores (So & Kang,

2014), and the Korean government has also invested a lot in research and educational development through university-based research funding projects, which have supported the rapid growth in Korean education. Although Korean education accomplished unprecedented achievements within such a short time, Korean education currently faces tough obstacles. In spite of high academic achievement internationally, Korean students tend to have serious problems in affective achievements (e.g., intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, reflection). Demanding school curricula and high standards in Korea might influence the negative self-perceptions of students despite high academic achievements. Not only students' satisfaction with education, but also teachers' job satisfaction is relatively low (Kim & Cho, 2014). Korean teachers' perception of their social status is somewhat different from how others see them. According to research, while the general public identifies teaching as a position of respect and reasonable status, more than 60% of teachers perceived themselves as having a low social status (Kim & Cho, 2014). Yet, despite these issues, according to Jo (2011), education has a significant role in Korean society and the value of education itself is widely accepted and pursued: over 70% of Korean high school students attended college level educational institutions after they graduate which is higher than any other developed country.

Although Korea has broad access to public schools, it is necessary to consider the emergence of the "shadow" education system (e.g., private tutoring) when it comes to evaluating Korean education. The increase in elementary education enrolment in the 1950s increased the demand for secondary education, making entrance into post-secondary highly competitive. University rankings and student employment based on their education background are constantly emphasized in the media. Under these circumstances, parents for decades have felt forced to rely on private tutoring to prepare their children for the entrance examination to prestigious schools. The shadow education system, which includes establishing private schools, or, in many cases, attending public education while enrolling in extensive private tutoring, has a considerable influence on the nature of the academic achievements of Korean students, and also significantly contributes to the dramatic growth of private sector education which is not only profit generating but has little or no public educational governance (Kim & Cho, 2014). In Korea, test scores have been considered to be a good measure of achievement, in terms of both ability and effort, and thus a test-based meritocracy has become the foundation for evaluating education (Lee, Kim, & Byun, 2012).

3.3.1. Challenges with contemporary Korean education

Researchers on this topic argue that a shift in the public perception of education needs to occur; schools and students ranked primarily on standardized test scores, whereby many Koreans think that seeking excellence means looking for higher positions or rankings, is bound to cause educational inequity (Lee et al., 2012). According to Lee et al., (2012), “The basis for these thoughts on excellence needs to be shifted, from the vertical to the horizontal. In other words, seeking excellence in education means the same as seeking educational equity” (p.13).

However, researchers emphasize this shift will be a difficult one. Yet it must be achieved to break the cycle of learner and teacher dissatisfaction: Korean students get high scores on tests of academic achievement but, unfortunately, they do not always experience the pleasure of learning. From a governance perspective, educators, policy makers, parents, and communities need to recognize that human competencies include not only intellectual ‘doing’, but also relationships and autonomy, which are dimensions of ‘being’ (Rychen & Salganik, 2001). This perspective highlights the importance of the holistic approach to education, which makes it possible to develop creativity, other virtue, students’ character, and harmonious relationships with others (Lee et al., 2012). This shift may also be more difficult given the rise of the private sector “shadow” education system, which would be motivated to maintain the status quo focus on quantitative versus qualitative results.

Table 3.1. The contemporary Korean education

Parents	Students
	
-Korean Public Education -Public Funding	-Korean Shadow Education -For profit
	
National University Entrance Exams	

Thus, the traditional emphasis on test performance and the historical evolution of Korean education has led to three significant challenges in contemporary Korean education:

- "Shadow" education system - where those who can afford it pay large sums of money for formal private tutoring outside of the school system throughout the student's school life
- Related to this, lack of community involvement, parent involvement in the school system and school governance leads to lack of capacity for the public school system to evolve and improve
- So, while Korean students excel in standardized testing (quantitative measures) it is now widely realized that they are behind in qualitative educational aspects including "affective" aspects (enjoyment, personal motivation for learning), self-reflective aspects, and interpersonal aspects (listening skills, teamwork, etc).

An exclusive reliance on and valuing of quantitative performance measures contributes to the lack of engagement by students, families, and teachers in the Korean education system.

In North American and European contexts, many scholars have pointed to Neoliberalism as a dubious trend influencing higher education (Oleksenko, Molodychenko & Shcherbakova, 2018; Saunders, 2010). In this commodification of education, where education is just a commodity consumed by students, the intrinsic value of education is rejected in favour of economic values and administrative convenience. In this context genuine critical inquiry is rejected in the creation of an educational "product" which students can readily consume without suffering too much controversy or doubt. Its proponents often argue for noble origins in the political/economic form of Neoliberalism which argues that individuals should be allowed to do what they want without government influence. But in higher education this means

for example that universities are de-funded and now function more and more like private companies or corporations; higher education also tends to be bland and politically correct, because that's what students and corporations want to "buy" and "sell". With reduced government funding for universities and reduced faculty governance, universities become privatized, managed like companies.

However, the specific context of Korean public education has added a new perspective to my understanding of Neoliberalism's influence on higher education, one which underscores the importance of addressing the influence of culture on educational systems and philosophies. Somewhat paradoxically, while Neoliberalism in North America can be viewed as engineered by university administration and policy makers as a rationale for budget cuts and the commodification of education, ironically in Korea, it seems the commodification of education is not tied to a particular administrative agenda; it could be said rather to have been originally spurred by parents wanting to get their children into public post-secondary seats. The desire for these relatively scarce seats in post-secondary opened the door for private "education" companies to exploit parents' intentions. These private "education" companies have proliferated and have a vested interest in maintaining the current focus on outcome-based education and the current climate of parental and community commitment to this view of educational quality. As discussed, there is a lack of community involvement, lack of parental engagement in public education, and thus, no capacity building within school governance or school strategic planning to provide a counterbalance to the rise of private tutoring and educational "consulting" services.

For me this is eye opening. While in North America it is easy to blame the rise of the "administrative" university, in Korea we see a different type of commodification of education by private companies, but seemingly brought about by parents (and reinforced by private enterprise), not brought about by school administration or policy makers. With that in mind, we need to acknowledge the critical influence of culture on how education is defined and valued. Furthermore, the influence of Korean parents in driving the development of Korea's shadow system and focus on standardized, quantitative testing, points to the critical need to engage with parents and recognize their far reaching impact on the educational process.

3.4. The problem with conformity



Figure 3.2. The Korean alphabet, known as Hangu

Language is a key piece of identity. Through our language of origin, we learn our culture’s very specific ways of expression, ways of expression which highlight our cultural perspectives. When you learn a second language, you realize that another culture may have very different perspectives on life than yours. This is not to say that one is superior to the other; rather, this should be the beginning of a celebration of diversity.

In a conformist view of education, people tend to focus on outcomes that are standard for all students because we want them to arrive at the same place at about the same time (Eisner, 2001). But, according to Newfield, Andrew, Stein, and Maungedzo (2003), the assessment should not be the end product of education, reductive and oversimplistic, but instead should inform the teaching and learning process. We need to stop viewing our students as clones, and stop measuring their success by how well their results conform to the “norm”. I believe we are entering an educational era where diversity is the key element – many types of diversity – cultural diversity, ethnic diversity, gender diversity, linguistic diversity, biodiversity, neurodiversity, etc. In this era of diversity, we need new and better models to inform the teaching and learning process.

3.4.1. The race is on- Students, Parents and Teachers

The students. South Korea's education is often described as stressful, authoritarian, brutally competitive and meritocratic. The Korean public education structure is divided into three parts: six years of primary school (age 6-12), followed by three years of middle school (age 12-15), and then three years of high school (age 15-18). I still remember my typical high school days- school begins at about 8:00 A.M., classes run for 50 minutes each, with a morning break and a 50-minute lunch period. The afternoon session resumes at about 1:00 P.M., and classes continue until about 4:00 P.M., followed by the cleaning of the classroom. Students may then take a short dinner break at home, or they may eat at school. Teachers typically move from room to room, while students stay in one place. Students return to the school library to study or attend private schools or tutoring sessions until between 10:00 P.M. and midnight. Not surprisingly my elementary and middle school life has similar but somewhat less rigorous days with shorter hours and more extra curricular activities.



Figure 3.3. YK Journal Excerpt #5: Only honorable way- Life Defining Exam
Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2019

When I was young, I found this picture in the textbook. "Wait a minute, are they taking an exam?" Maybe it's a natural sight for us now. It was called 'Gwageo' which was the national civil service examination under

the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties of Korea (1392-1910). It became the official gateway to 'honor' for noblemen to live, it was an opportunity to achieve personal fame and prestige. The fever of examination and education have been a driving force in Korea, a small country with little natural resources. Koreans have been living under the pressure of the hell- like examination for a long time.

My friends and I were told that prestigious universities are vehicles for class mobility and stability. Korean schools are rapidly moving towards only serving utilitarian or economic purposes and, according to scholars like Koo, this creates more intense competition among Koreans, while the competition in contemporary Korean society has been especially severe in the context of education (Koo, 2007). I took countless exams and went to various private tutoring institutions. I believe my peers and I thought that "off-school" education/activities were there to increase our chances to enter one of the elite universities. Even when I was in elementary school, my friends and I were very involved in private education. It was common to talk about the best cram schools, types of private tutors, 'how to' methods to go to top universities, and the importance of studying abroad in an English-speaking country. Even at that age, we wanted to win the competitive education race and we knew that we would need to overcome obstacles along the way to pursue our dreams of going to a top university and getting a degree in the "right", respectable, affluent field. When I was in elementary school, a teacher asked us to write down our dream- what do you want to be in the future?. A lot of kids wrote either doctor or lawyer. I remember I once read an article in the national newspaper showing how many lawyers, judges and chief executives from the biggest companies graduated from top universities. This reinforces the belief of parents and students that it's essential to go to one of these universities to succeed. We already knew that everyone would judge us based on our degree and where we got it.

Lee (2011) discusses that Korean parents set extremely high expectations for their children, and their children attempt to meet those expectations not only for personal achievement, but also for the family. As a result, there has been an explosion in the private market for educational advancement and advantage. Seth (2008) mentions that in comparative studies, in the Korean environment of the so-called "exam hell," children in contemporary Korea spend more time studying than compared to any other country's counterparts (p.216-217). Since young Korean students spend the majority of their time preparing for the fact-oriented and rote-learning centered college examinations, postponing all other pursuits until after the exam, it is not at all surprising that their levels

of stress and unhappiness with school life are considerably high (OECD, 2004; Kim, 2006). It's been more than 20 years since I graduated from middle school, but Korean education has not changed much. For many Korean students, getting through school is something that comes with concentration, memorization, immense pressure and even depression. According to studies, they spend the majority of their time racing to memorize factual information only associated with the college entrance exams, whereas they have incredibly little time to freely explore their intellectual creativity and interests or enhance their physical and social development (Seth, 2008).

The parents. The University Entrance Exam takes place once every year, and defines the future of Korean students. Korea falls silent each November as more than half a million students take an eight hour long exam for which they have been preparing their entire lives. Heavy trucks are banned from the streets, the stock market opens late, businesses open late in order to free the roads, and even flights are delayed so that students can focus without distractions. Any student who is running late to the exam site can ask for a free police motorbike to rush them straight to the destination. Many nervous parents usually pray in various religious site like Buddhist temples or churches where special sessions are held for the families (Bonanomi, 2017). This exam day is critical in the life of South Korean families. Korean parents and students view education as the main driver of social mobility, for themselves and their family. Graduating from a top university is the ultimate marker of high status and the pressure is on from an early age. Calonge (2015) articulates that the entire environment surrounding the child including parents, family, and teachers is actively involved and geared towards the one singular goal: to be test-ready and succeed. Students have a clear path and a clear purpose in mind at the start of their educational journey. Interestingly my parents were not that involved in my school life but most of my friends' parents had 'education fever'. They plan every step of their child's educational journey and all the extracurricular activities, attend all the best schools' open houses, organize strategic planning, have meetings with teachers. Although several studies have shown overheated educational aspiration among Korean parents, little research has given parents a voice regarding their beliefs and perspectives on education fever regarding their children's schooling and future career (Kim & Bang, 2017, p.207). Under the burden of the overheated examination race and private after-school activities, Korean parents have also experienced greater psychological distress. According to Kim and Bang (2017), parental

education aspiration became more intensified and popularized in the period of Korea's rapid economic development since the demand of highly educated workers increased. Thus, parental educational aspiration has increased dramatically to take advantage of such economic growth for social mobility.

Regardless of their social class, all Korean parents have excessively high educational aspirations for their children. Koo (2007) describes that in order not to be left behind in the race to earn prestigious degrees, which will lead to better jobs and income prospects as well as elite social status, Korean parents increasingly "watch over others" shoulders and wonder whether others are doing something better in preparing their kids for college entrance exams. According to Yon (2017), compared to 2008, more parents say financial assistance is the most important part of being a good parent and they spend roughly 25% of their household income on raising their children. The higher the parents' education and income level, the stronger the tendency to expect children to go to prestigious universities (Kim & Bang, 2017, p.219). Korean parents value education, have a higher degree of enthusiasm and are willing to make significant personal sacrifices to ensure that their children are afforded the best available learning opportunities along with their strong belief in the family and cultural traditions (Diem, Levy & VanSickle, 1996). However the sad news is recently Sharif (2018) reported that South Korea's birth rate is the lowest in the world and the high cost of preparing kids to go to college is one of the main reasons. Parents would rather invest more in a small number of children.

The teachers. The highly competitive examination-oriented educational culture in Korea is not entirely a modern phenomenon and its origin dates back to the Confucian tradition of learning centered on the national civil service examination in Joseon dynasty Korea (1392-1897) (Bhang & Kwak, 2018, p.4). Not surprisingly, in order to become a certified teacher in Korea, teachers must pass through many steps and must take national and district tests. My school life in Korea consisted of teachers' lectures and instruction, with only rare interruptions for questions. If we had questions, we might speak to the teacher after class. Unlike Canada where asking questions is highly encouraged, as one of the Korean students, we often complained when other students asked many questions in class because we thought that asking and answering questions could slow the class down. So we skipped the bothersome process of asking questions and instead simply memorized the given class or test materials. And teachers were too

busy for interruptions anyway, since they needed to cover the amount of content on time. Therefore, asking many questions in class which will put teachers behind schedule is considered rude. I still remember that one of my friends asked a question because of her curiosity and the teacher's first reaction was "It will not be on your test" and he did not explain any further.

The Korean teachers in my memory did not fulfill the intellectual curiosity of students, rather they were there to help us get higher scores on the tests by covering all the required content. As a result, we tended to ask questions of our tutors, not teachers. The relationship with the teacher was not comfortable and it is still unfortunate to see the distrust of school teachers, which creates a high demand for private tutors. The Korean shadow system of private education has unfortunately deeply eroded the teacher-student connection. Bhang and Kwak (2018) found "most Korean teenagers think that private tutors are better prepared for classes, are more eager to teach, and listen to students' needs better than public school teachers. For the tutors, students are customers who decide on the price of their skills" (p.2). When I was a student in Korea, it was common to talk among friends about whether our teachers or tutors were 'teaching well' which means if they were helping and teaching us a set of skills to achieve higher scores on every test. As stated by Bhang & Kwak (2018), "if teaching is defined this way, it is no wonder that private tutors are considered professionally superior to public school teachers in Korea" (p.3). According to Sorensen (1994), in traditional Korean society, teachers were not only granted the same authority as parents, but more significantly, were attributed with even greater responsibility for children's moral and intellectual development. Bhang & Kwak (2018) explain that "the idea that the aim of education is to be more than merely personal success is also part of the long tradition in the Confucian ethics of learning" (p.4). However, Kim (2013) insisted that Koreans have increasingly accepted modern Western liberal values, resulting in a dramatic decline in obedience to, and respect for, authority, including teachers in the classroom. This phenomenon has increased stress levels of teachers and their job satisfaction and morale have significantly declined during recent years (p.65).

Bong (2003) notes that because of Korean schools' "obsession with performance" (p.324), Korean teachers may experience greater stress since they focus on quantitative student outcomes and the need to maintain the reputation of their schools as perceived as high performing (Klassen, Usher & Bong, 2010, p.481). I once

read an interview from a professor in the Education Department at a Korean university. He said “teachers in Korea have low self-esteem. The power and freedom of teacher is decreasing and they are being disregarded by parents, so rather than feeling the pride of teaching, they are questioning themselves, asking ‘What am I doing?’” (Chen, 2015). As I grew up, I could see teachers changing their roles. Compared to high school teachers, elementary school teachers tried to spend a lot more time with us. But as I went up in the grades, the teachers spent less time with us and focused on preparing us for our exams. During my high school examination period, teachers were even told to wear outfits of fabrics and accessories that did not make any noise that could distract the students. They were solely focused on taking a responsibility for the results and tried to meet parents’ expectations.

3.5. What is sacrificed?

Dewey (1978, 1963), known as a constructivist and progressive educator, believed that learners should be active in seeking purpose, that learner participation is crucial in the learning process, that democratic education is needed and that personal meaning and affect are important contributors to a successful learning experience (as cited in Naude, Bergh, & Kruger, 2013, p.213). Kim (2013) argues the following:

From a Deweyan’s perspective, it is obvious that Korean education deprives its students of the opportunity to assist the practice and growth of their own intelligence. Dewey’s view of intelligence allows Korean schools to reconsider the meaning of “intelligent being” at the practical level. More specifically, Dewey’s concept of intelligence as a quality of process, rather than a fixed quantity, would suggest that the test scores cannot accurately represent the academic or intellectual abilities of Korean students (p.77).

Kim (2013) suggests Korean education should have a balance between individual initiative and communal cooperation which urges students to explore their interests and strengths, and to share them with others through the intelligent leadership of the teacher (p.78). A true relationship can be an important facilitator to develop psychological and emotional perception since it has been found to function as a motivational resource when students are faced with difficulties in school (Lee, 2007, p.210). What would it have been like if my friends and I grew up having a lot of conversations with our teachers and building true relationships, without our only aims being achieving high test scores as the purpose of Korean education? I think it would

have helped us to get out of our own comfort zones and habitual perspectives, encouraged us both to think for ourselves and also to learn to think from other people's perspectives (Kim, 2013, p.79). I am sure most public school teachers in Korea are aware of this reality but it is surely a big challenge for them to allow and encourage collaborative learning in their classrooms because in the context of the modern Korean education system, they have long been immersed not only in the Confucian view of education in their everyday practice of teaching, but also heavily impacted by the pressures of parents, administrators, and the constant competition of the shadow education system in Korea.

Chapter 4.

Presuppositions about Special Education in Canada and Korea

4.1. Perceptions of Autism and Special Education in the Canadian Education System

In March 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that “1 in 59 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).” This shows a 30% increase in the prevalence rate previously reported by the CDC. And 4 years later in March 2018, Ubelacker from the Canadian Press reported that an estimated one in every 66 Canadian children and youth aged five to 17 is affected by ASD, an estimated 60,000 British Columbians live with autism, and there is a huge increase in the number of children waiting to get assessed for autism (Urquahart, 2018). The reasons for this increase are unclear, though it is speculated that it was due to changes in ASD classification, rather than an increase in frequency (Matson, Kozlowski, Hattier, Horovitz, & Sipes, 2012). Also Mammoser (2018) explains that according to experts, the increasing prevalence of ASD in the CDC’s latest report has more to do with better monitoring and diagnosis of the disorder. But in any case, the incidence is significant.

Children with autism may be educated in classrooms partially or fully integrated with typical peers or in specialized classrooms within the regular school or private settings, but in all these settings they need to deal with what can be an extremely challenging environment for them physically, socially, and cognitively.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are developmental disabilities that cause significant deficits in basic areas of functioning, including social interaction, communication, and learning (Simpson et al., 2003). At an early age and typically continuing throughout their lives, students with ASD have difficulty relating appropriately with others. According to Simpson et al. (2003), these students with ASD frequently encounter difficulty in successfully following and mastering basic school curriculum.

Because the etiology of ASD is still unclear, various medical and educational strategies have been demonstrated to be effective in helping individuals manage some of their symptoms and improve their quality of life (Myles & Adreon, 2001; Tsai, 2005). According to Parent's Handbook in BC: Your guide to Autism programs by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (2013) and Autism Information Services British Columbia (AIS BC), Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is one of the best practices for Autism Intervention. ABA is a set of principles that form the basis for many behavioral treatments. It is also based on the science of learning and behavior and this science includes general "laws" about how behavior works and how learning takes place (Harris & Delmolino, 2002; Simpson, 2001; Jensen & Sinclair, 2002). Considering B. F. Skinner's a style and content of a science of behavior and its philosophy, ABA therapy applies these laws to behavior treatments in a way that helps to increase useful or desired behaviors and reduce behaviors that may interfere with learning or behaviors that may be harmful (Morris, Smith, & Altus, 2005).

Therefore, ABA is widely considered an evidence-based best practice treatment. But, in British Columbia for example, government funding for Autism puts the main emphasis for ABA on Early Intervention, prior to when a child enters the mainstream education system (prior to age 6). Once a child enters the school system, approaches need to be adapted to the social setting of the classroom as well as the training levels and attitudes of staff. Arguably it is necessary to find complementary approaches for curriculum development, which can help adapt and apply behavioural principles within the evolving needs of the classroom social environment as well as ideally in conjunction with the home environment.

Schreibman (2005) explains how the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states that every child is entitled to a free and appropriate public school education. This means that every child is entitled to an Individual Education Plan (IEP) based on their specific needs and is entitled to be educated in the least restrictive environment possible. This document also states that a child's rights may be protected through due process, and that parents have the right to participate in educational decisions for their children. The BC Ministry of Education (2013) takes this further by explicitly explaining how IEPs are intended to assist students with disabilities to achieve success in regular classroom instruction. The Ministry outlines that IEP's will include individualized goals with measurable objectives, adaptations and modifications where

appropriate. Unfortunately, what is not included is a clear outline or tools for developing specific curriculum for children with ASD arising from the IEP. For the teachers and special education staff supporting these children, an effective IEP is what will ideally provide the structure and guidance needed for a successful educational experience. But what are the best strategies for developing specific curriculum for children with ASD based on the IEP?

In Chapter Three I argue that an education system which focuses purely on rote learning and outcome-based evaluation such as standardized testing omits two critical dimensions of learning: the element of process – the dialogic nature of learning – and the element of human engagement – the social, interactive nature of learning. Exclusively using behaviour based, measurable, “quantitative” IEP goals within the school system may, for example, be too inflexible given dynamic social classroom contexts and variable staff training and attitudes.

4.2. Balancing Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

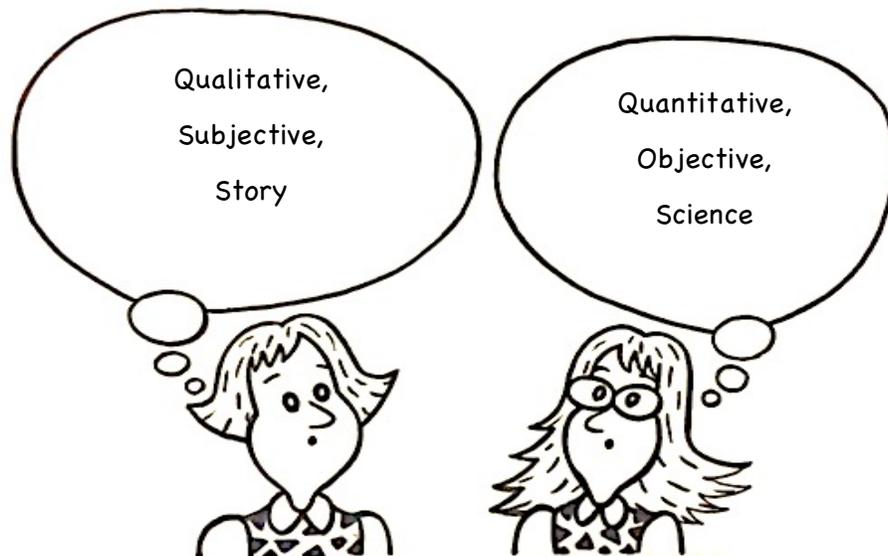


Figure 4.1. Finding myself “between” the worlds of quantitative and qualitative data

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2019

I have worked as an Education Assistant (EA) in the school system, I have worked with families designing home programs with the goal of supporting the student’s

success at school, and I have trained staff to participate effectively in both capacities. For the reasons described above, trying to stick strictly with quantitative data for designing and assessing academic and social supports as described in the IEP is problematic. In my experience parents and home support staff often felt there was not enough regular communication with parents and the home team regarding students' progress on IEP goals. Are parents satisfied with the degree of participation in decisions affecting the IEP and the decision-making process? In my experience parents sometimes feel their child's skills had not made a great deal of progress toward IEP goals and objectives, yet the parents feel uncomfortable raising this with the school team. They also complain there is not enough communication between home and school by adding follow-up meetings or providing updates on their child. In addition, the home team staff did not feel empowered to work with teachers collaboratively to develop and implement programs for students. And EA colleagues felt they need more training on successfully implementing the goals of IEP's and designing appropriate activities to meet IEP goals (Bradley & West, 1994).

How can qualitative methods support teachers and EA's to assist in the ongoing planning, organizing, adapting and implementing of IEP's? In many cases the addition of qualitative approaches will be more adaptable to the home situation because qualitative inquiry was designed to discover, recognize, and depict the experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) so that parents and the home team will also feel more involved and empowered with implementing the IEP goals. It is helpful to compare quantitatively expressed IEP goals with how they might also be achieved through complementary qualitative approaches. We do not need to choose one over the other. But understanding the difference in approaches helps to contextualize how presuppositions about the superiority of one approach over the other may influence Special Education environments in Canada versus Korea. In this section I examine IEP goals which are quantitatively expressed and compare to complementary qualitative approaches.

4.3. Three examples of IEP goals

Table 4.1. An example of IEP goal #1

Goal#	Domain	Person Responsible
1	Communication/Academic	Classroom Teacher, Education Assistant teacher
Goal		
The student will be able to participate and follow along well with reading at circle time independently (for up to 15mins in 4 out of 5 opportunities with minimal support)		
Current Ability		
The student is more likely to participate in circle time for a short period of time and easily gets distracted by toys.		
Method of Measuring Progress		
Daily observation, monitoring and tracking		

Every morning, children sit, cross-legged, about one inch from one another, singing songs, listening to stories and participating in the morning “meeting”. Egan (2005) asserts that stories are one of the most powerful cognitive tools students have available for imaginatively engaging with knowledge. Also, he argues, stories are instruments for orienting human emotions to their contents; they do not just convey information but engage our emotions – stories orient, or shape, our emotions to the events and characters in a particular way. Unfortunately, language comprehension of children with ASD is severely impaired and speech may serve non-communicative purposes, such as self-stimulation, where it serves primarily as a function for receiving sensory feedback. The language of children with autism may be restricted to the very literal; analogies, metaphors, and humor may be essentially incomprehensible (Schreibman, 2005). Then, how can teachers convey stories to children with ASD? In what ways would children with ASD be able to experience the stories and engage emotionally?

According to Egan (1997), “images allow us in a limited but very real sense to extend our grasp on the world. Affective images do not need to reduce the content being taught; rather, they provide a means for the child to “incorporate” it” (p.62). Temple Grandin, a doctor of animal science and someone who was diagnosed with ASD as a

child, claims that children with ASD have problems learning things that cannot be taught about in pictures. The easiest words for children with ASD to learn are nouns, because they directly relate to pictures. Egan (1997) supports this by stating that “image performed in traditional oral cultures the crucial social role of aiding memorization and guided imagery can be a powerfully effective technique in many circumstances. The teacher should be consistently conscious of the vivid images that are a part of every topic and to draw on them consistently in vivifying knowledge and concepts” (p.61). Using images and stories, teachers are also able to introduce binary opposites that are the most basic and powerful tools for organizing and categorizing knowledge.

Egan (2005) indicates that binary opposites easily divide the world into good/bad, high/low, and hot/cold, and so on endlessly. They also serve to organize some topics and then allow people to make further discriminations. By focusing on such oppositions in a topic, we have one additional tool for making the subject imaginatively engaging to students, and by shaping a story around abstract binary opposites, we evoke curiosity and interest in the topic and story. Furthermore, mythic understanding is significantly more imagistic than is common for forms of understanding built on literacy. Because of the affective charge associated with images, they are in some ways more vivid and more closely tied in with emotions (Egan, 1997). According to Enki Education (1998), “we are conscious of the images but do not analyze or conceptually understand them: we live them, relating directly from the heart” (p.57). Egan (2005) mentions that storytelling stimulates the imagination by creating an emotional attachment to the subject matter, drawing on the imagination that is a creative experience for the students. This emotional engagement invites children to reflect, which further fixes information in the long-term memory. Thus, despite significant deficits in language comprehension, children with ASD can still benefit from curriculum designed to use powerful and carefully chosen images to bring the benefits of emotional engagement, categorization by binary opposites, and mythic understanding.

Table 4.2. An example of IEP goal #2

Goal#	Domain	Person Responsible
2	Academic/Intellect	Classroom Teacher, Education Assistant teacher
Goal		

The student will be able to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of 50 curriculum-based words for grade 3.
Current Ability
Presently, the student can complete classroom worksheets, but this is more due to his ability to do rote work than actual comprehension of any tasks.
Method of Measuring Progress
Pull out times with EA (Educational Assistant) to work on building true comprehension skills is needed. Daily observation, monitoring and tracking

Rote learning is learning based on repetition, and the memorization of chunks of information about something without full understanding. This leads to the lack of creativity and tendency to forget the items memorized. According to Boucher and Bowler (2008), the memories of people with autism have strengths in rote learning, perceptual memory, mnemonic abilities, priming, cued recall, and recognition memory. However, interestingly enough, their weaknesses are in free recall of episodic memories, encoding of contextual or relational information and social memory. How can teachers support the weaknesses of children with ASD while maximizing on their strengths, and still offer more creative learning opportunities? Nielson (2006) proposes that, “the imaginative teaching method of exploration is exemplified by teachers constructing learning activities intended to allow children to explore feelings and ideas using their imagination and direct experience” (p.253). Imaginative Education Research Group (2008) states that somatic understanding is the first kind of understanding and it refers to the physical and pre-linguistic way to know the world around the child. It is also the fundamental grasp of the world throughout our lives by the information provided by senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, and significantly also our emotions that are tied up with these. A child also experiences the world and sensations of balance, movement, tension, pain, pleasure, and so forth, through the way his or her body physically relates to the objects and persons they encounter.

Fettes (2013) explains that there are two sides of experience, the active (making) and the passive (observation). These are brought together under the one quality of mind. He supports Dewey’s conception of imagination’s role in learning. That is, direct experience engenders meaningful experience by conjuring up a wished-for state of affairs that motivates subsequent action. Further, it also must be intimately connected with our knowledge of reality, through which we must call for and carry out a plan of

activity. This viewpoint perceives education as a kind of personal knowledge that enables the learner to discover more possibilities for purposeful action, or, conversely, a process of purposeful action leading to imaginative growth. Dewey (1987) directly asserts that “[He] believes that the active side precedes the passive in the development of the child’s nature; that expression comes before conscious impression; that the muscular development precedes the sensory; that movements come before conscious sensations; [he] believes that consciousness is essentially motor or impulsive; that conscious states tend to project themselves in action” (p.79).

Following from this, the teaching and learning in natural settings approach focuses on increasing motivation to learn amongst children with autism by incorporating choices, reinforcing attempts, using suitable modeling, and providing natural consequences. In order to make naturalistic teaching practices successful, teachers need to follow IEP objectives in the context of naturally occurring activities, applying children’s ongoing actions and interests as the motivation for delivering instruction and providing antecedents and consequences that are natural and logically suited to the child’s actions (Bricker & Woods-Cripe, 1992). In addition, according to the research by Pierce and Schreibman (1995), when utilizing typical peers to implement naturalistic teaching tactics in the absence of direct supervision in a general education classroom environment, children with autism engage in sustained interactions, initiate play and conversations, increase engagement in language and joint attention behaviors, and display positive changes in social behaviors as reported by their teachers. Unlike therapeutic settings in which artificial interactions are set up based on external goals, in naturalistic settings children with autism are able to interact over genuine mutual interest, and share these interests with people who really, honestly care.

Where there are real shared interests, there are real engagement, real interaction, and real learning. Dewey (1934) states “there is always some measure of adventure in the meeting of the minds and universe”. Dewey then adds, “... this adventure is, in its measure, imagination” (p.267). According to Enki Education (1998), “we think that if we talk about it, understand it, then it just “is.” But, in fact, this commentary could not be further from the truth because it actually separates us from direct experience. When we keep up a running commentary we pull the children out of their own experience and into trying to “understand,” or to participate in our experience. By definition this is dis-integrating” (p.58). Teaching and learning are not only about the

teacher revealing that which is hidden to the student but also about constructing experiences for students that enable them to discover the 'hidden' for themselves. Thus, children with autism will benefit from curriculum which specifically utilizes naturalistic, exploratory, and experiential approaches to help them encounter understanding beyond rote learning.

Table 4.3. An example of IEP goal #3

Goal#	Domain	Person Responsible
3	Communication/Social Skills	Classroom Teacher, Education Assistant teacher
Goal		
The student will demonstrate taking turns and maintain participation in an interactive class activity (e.g., centres) with 1 or more peers for periods of at least 10 minutes 80% of the time by June 2014.		
Current Ability		
The student prefers to play alone and resists taking turns with peers in group activities.		
Method of Measuring Progress		
EA (Educational Assistant) to track progress in the classroom.		

Historically speaking, students with disabilities have been segregated from their peers, and even from society as a whole (Karagiannis, Stainback, & Stainback, 1996). More recently, however, there has been an increasing amount of students with autism and other disabilities included into the general education classrooms along with their typically developing peers (McDonnell, 1998). Full inclusion is the process of putting children with autism and special needs into classrooms alongside typical children with the idea that this will enhance the social development of these children. The pivotal argument is that general education settings offer the best opportunities for contact with typical peers (Simpson, et al., 2003). It becomes clear that increasing the chances for children with autism to become skilled in play with peers with no disabilities is important for their social competence later in life (Stone & La Greca, 1986). However, research has shown that just placing children with autism in proximity to typical peers does not automatically lead to increases in social interaction. Children with autism usually need to be taught to interact, which includes teaching how to initiate social interactions and how to maintain them.

How can teachers help children with ASD engage in meaningful activities with peers at school? Egan (2005) insists that, “rhymes, rhythms, and patterns are potent tools for giving meaningful, memorable, and attractive shape to any content. This means that their roles in learning are numerous, and their power to engage the imagination in learning the rhythms, and patterns of language, and the underlying emotions that they reflect is enormous. They are important to learning all symbol systems, like mathematics and music, and all forms of knowledge and experience” (p.3). Enki Education (1998) takes this further by clearly explaining that song is the first cousin to speech. With song we have the added aspect of music and we all know that, even without words, different tunes are able to create different moods. In addition to this, integrating the content, rhythm and tone of our speech has a powerful influence on the listener and can challenge or support his or her confidence in the ability to understand.

Research by Kim, Wigram & Gold (2009) provides significant evidence supporting the value of music therapy in promoting social, emotional and motivational development in children with ASD. It also shows that improvisational music therapy produced significantly more and longer events of ‘joy’, ‘emotional synchronicity’ and ‘initiation of engagement’ behaviours in the children than playing with toys. Enki Education (1998) endorses that “if we are able to choose language and rhythms that bring to life that which we are describing, the listener sinks right in and lives the words. Inviting rhythm, tone and imagination to work together to create an experience” (p.57). Rhyme also plays a critical role for children with ASD. Rhyme can increase the understanding of children with ASD about what they are actually doing and help their language by using the same repetitive, familiar and rhythmic verses for them to anticipate and imitate. It also helps to draw their attention to their movement and encourage participating in the activity (Moor, 2008).

When we look at the language production of children with ASD, it is clear that they can respond with a creative attitude towards how language is used. It is very important to encourage this and give them an opportunity to be expressive in participating in rhyme, pattern, and music making activities along with classmates in order to help build meaningful activities with peers at school. Thus, curriculum incorporating these activities can significantly assist in creating successful peer interaction opportunities for children with ASD and their typical peers.

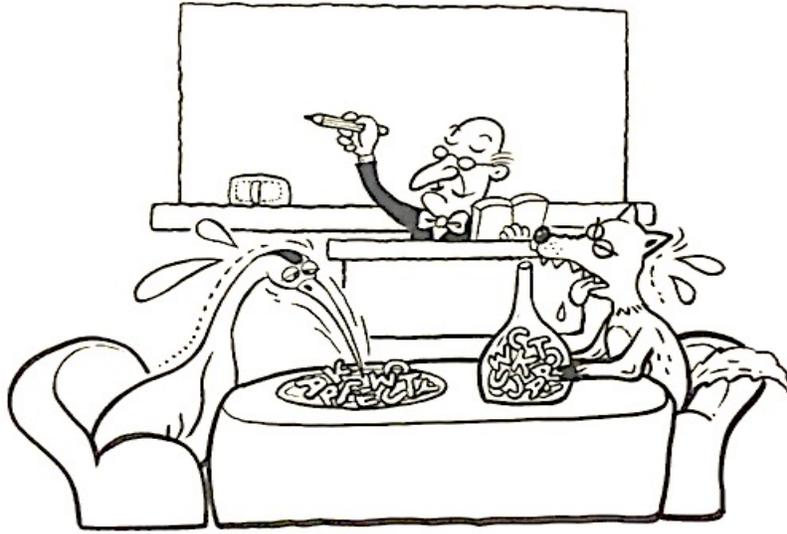


Figure 4.2. YK Journal Excerpt #6: “I’ve prepared a fair task which is very individualized for you guys!”

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2019

One of my favorite Aesop’s fables- *The Fox and the Stork*. The stork invites the fox to a meal, which is served in a narrow-necked vessel. It is easy for the stork to access but impossible for the fox. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as a product is child centered, however, the IEP as a process is teacher, parents, and professionals centered, contradictory. Students with disabilities have a right to receive the maximum benefit from an appropriate and individualized education program. Yes, the IEP is important but it also should not be the only thing that is used to make decisions. It does not define a child- it outlines the way in which the school environment, teaching and curriculum are to be adapted or modified to meet the student’s needs.

4.3.1. Complementary Approaches

With an increasing amount of students with ASD being included in regular education classes, it is often difficult for general educators to effectively teach these children with ASD, because the teachers themselves do not have the necessary training and effective teaching strategies to adequately provide the best learning environment. Based on the numerous behavioral difficulties and learning disabilities observed in children with autism, effective strategies are critical in order for these children to adapt to and benefit from full inclusion educational settings. Also, it is widely known that teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward children with special needs dramatically affect the success and effectiveness of their instruction. The IEP should ideally provide the needed

structure, support, and guidance for the teachers to thrive in this relationship and create an effective educational environment without undue strain. However, teachers need more specific strategies to build curriculum based on the IEP goals and objectives. Qualitative approaches offer teachers the opportunity and the specific strategies to create curriculum to support educational goals while valuing and building upon the way children understand and the way they experience things.

The one caveat is, as previously stated, that the tools and concepts of more “quantitative” behavioural approaches such as behaviour-based techniques like ABA need to co-exist with the more “qualitative” approaches described above; both are needed.

4.4. Systemic Presuppositions about Qualitative versus Quantitative Approaches to Special Education

“Grown-ups really are very, very odd”, he said to himself as he continued his journey” (Saint –Exupery, 1943).

Finding myself “between” the worlds of quantitative and qualitative data as a practitioner has motivated me to delve more deeply into their contrast. As a practicing behaviour interventionist and trainer for many years who is also preparing for my ABA board certification, the primacy of quantitative data in these contexts cannot be denied. Yet as a practitioner working closely with clients and families, time and time again I have found myself reaching “the limit” of the usefulness of quantitative data, and needing to gather and reflect on complementary qualitative data in finding solutions to the complex needs faced by clients, students and families living with learning challenges. Within education, we need to recognize that parents need a voice in their children’s education and that children and parents are actually the “experts” on their own education - and there is no denying that qualitative approaches are generally more comprehensible and accessible to non-practitioners (like parents and families) compared to the dominant quantitative approaches like ABA which require extensive training to comprehend and use.

Yet, as noted in the section above, the IEP document generally framed and conceived as a more quantitative and seemingly “objective” record of student progress. Pratt and Dubie (2003) for example describe a well-written IEP as follows:

- (a) IEP should be objective and measurable since there are multiple professionals and family members involved
- (b) It has to be quantified- then it will be much easier to maintain consistency in expectations and reach the goals of IEP
- (c) Write criteria in a manner that is possible to measure so that teachers can collect 'data'.
- (d) Data collection on student's progress is necessary for evaluating the effectiveness of programs and for making adjustments where necessary.
- (e) Focuses on outcomes and not on processes to achieve those goals.

Others note that in order to make these educational decisions, teachers will need specific training on how to collect, interpret, and link data to educational practices, and how to alter educational strategies based on a child's progress (Yell, Drasgow, & Lowrey, 2005).

But, why are IEP's framed as a primarily data-driven, "scientific" approach? What results from such framing? Sugarman (2014) states that the space is created for certain aspects and kinds of persons to become objects of concern and targets of intervention:

By interpreting persons as isolated individuals, evoking various performances from them, measuring these performances, subjecting them to quantitative comparisons and evaluations, and ordering them in systems of classification, educational psychologists have rendered stable and transparent features and kinds of persons....The consequence is that schools have become environments, infused with psychological language, psychological entities, and psychological authority. (p.64)

Certainly we need to be aware of the consequences of how the particular framing of a student's educational progress by quantitative or qualitative measures impacts the perceptions of that child and the goals of that educational environment, especially given the discussion in Chapter 3 of the limits of "schools as factories" approaches. In addition, this framing impacts not only the student and the student's family, but also the teachers involved in the IEP process. Where are their own stories? Stating "objective" criteria does not ensure that we are getting a true picture of the child's performance or of the teacher's involvement. Gregory (2015) embarks on an interesting qualitative approach in order to explore this issue:

a narrative inquiry approach was used as a means to access and examine the stories accounts of teachers' thinking and involvement in the IEP development process within specific school contexts. In this way, the study amplifies the voices and experiences of teachers, capturing the narratives that tell about their thinking and actions in actual practice. (p.17)

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) tells a particular story about the student. The stories told are spoken by professional voices (Smith, 1999; Skrtic, 1995) that narrate the kind of educational outcomes students are to achieve and the ways in which they are mapped on the social and educational landscape (Smith, 1999). When I was working as an Education Assistant, I often felt the tensions that existed and witnessed the silencing of voices in the process- sometimes those of parents, classroom teachers, and even EAs like myself whose participation in IEP meetings was governed by the practices of the school. Balancing qualitative and quantitative ways of developing an IEP is necessary because it will better describe the meaningfulness of diverse experiences of teachers, child, staff, and parents. Scholars argue that a qualitative approach/process provides an opportunity to understand teachers and parents' stories and allows us to enter and engage in the real-life context of teachers and parents' work. The thinking and practices that surfaced within the individual narrative accounts of teachers became the meaningful cases or units of analysis to be studied (Patton, 2002) to provide a holistic, in-depth description of how the IEP process, individualized educational programs, and special educational needs are understood and mediated in the context of teachers' work.

4.5. Another side of the story- Special Education in Korea

Although Korea was greatly influenced by Western countries in special education during the 1880s, special education in South Korea has a relatively short history compared with other developed countries (Kwon, 2005). At that time, Koreans who traveled to Europe generated the first Korean scholarship and published books about the introduction of education for children with physical disabilities, mental retardation, visual impairment, and hearing impairment in Europe and North America. American missionaries also provided special education services to people with disabilities in Korea (Kim, 2014).

According to the Education Law Publishing Committee (2004), "the Korean Constitutional Law, which was enacted and announced in 1948, states, 'All citizens have equal rights to receive education according to their capabilities and all people have rights

to receive equal education. At least elementary education is compulsory and free.” (p.5) Due to the enactment of related laws and regulations, special education in South Korea has expanded, and there are three major placement options for students with disabilities: special schools, special classes in general schools, and regular classes in general schools (Kwon, 2005). And students with mild disabilities were progressively assigned to special classrooms in inclusive settings as opposed to special schools. However, the students who were assigned to special classrooms in general schools were segregated from their typical peers and were not included in general classroom programmes. And ‘special classes’ were mostly established at the elementary level, so it was not easy for students with disabilities to progress further to a higher level, and only a small percentage of special education students continued their education after elementary school (Kim, p.983, 2014).

Park (2003) argues that the terms integration, inclusion and mainstreaming are used interchangeably in Korea without distinguishing. It is a surprising reality considering decades have passed. Even when I was in elementary school, I rarely stayed with children with disabilities in the same classroom. I remember that we worked together in extra curricular activities like music and PE but most of the time they went to the ‘special’ classroom and spent the majority of their time there.

I always wondered what the children were doing in the classroom. But as I grew up, the number of students with disabilities in my class gradually decreased. Where did all the children go? Are they no longer in the same school? I was curious but I did not have the courage to ask the teacher. According to (Park, 2003), since there are large discrepancies between the number of primary and secondary-level special needs, students with disabilities drop out of school after regular primary schools or go to special schools if it is possible. But these days, even though there is an increasing number of children placed in integrated settings, still the demonstrated inclusionary practices remain largely without ‘true’ integration or participation alongside typically developing peers (Kang, Kang, & Plunkett, p. 296, 2015). Kwon (2005) describes that although South Korea accepted most special educational trends and movements from Western countries, ‘inclusion’ has developed differently because of cultural differences and national traits of Korea (p.60). Kwon has found (2005) that due to negative attitudes toward people with disabilities, many families and students with disabilities prefer not to

be identified as having a disability and sadly they believe that to get educational benefits, they should be educated in special schools with students with similar disabilities (p.62).

You (2017) reported that children with disabilities struggle at mainstream schools because they often find themselves unsupervised, unnoticed or ignored. However, even if parents try to find other options, these rarely exist. Although many parents state they prefer to send their children to special education schools, there is a great shortage of special schools in Seoul, the capital of Korea, so often children have to travel to other parts of the city, more than an hour commute. Parents began to protest - advocating for building new special needs schools since the last one opened in 2002, and demanded three more schools by 2019. Desperate parents had to bow and knelt down on the ground, begging for understanding because residents who lived in the proposed areas of new schools were opposed to their plan. A video clip of the scene went viral, prompting public outrage. But residents were fearful such 'special' schools would damage their neighborhood and affect real estate prices. One of the parents said in an interview, "A special school is still an educational facility. Is this something you need to beg on your knees?" With this incident, I could see the reality of Korea's special education system. It took one year- the government accepted parents' proposal and announced a plan to build 18 new schools across Korea over the next five years.

4.5.1. A Top-down approach to Special Education in Korea

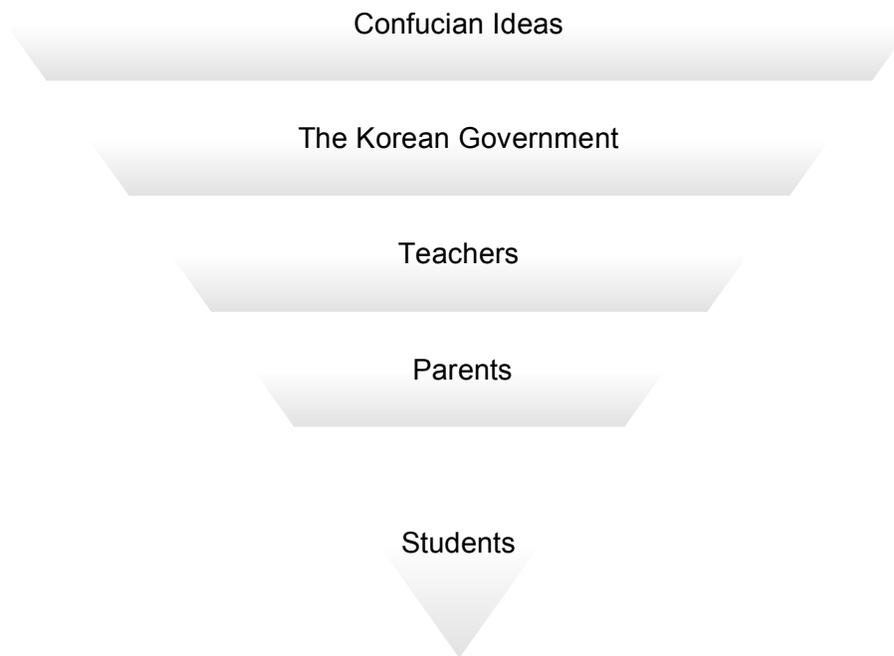


Figure 4.3. A Top-down approach to Special Education in Korea

Confucian Ideas & The Korean Government. Korean Confucianism emerged and developed in Korea historically and it still remains a fundamental part of Korean society, shaping the moral system, the way of life, and social relationships. Korean society strongly values family, respect for age, community and authority because Confucianism is steeped in the nation historically and culturally. Since Confucianism still requires a lot from people in power or authority, traditional Confucian ideas give authority to the Korean government. So, according to advocates, it is possible for government to successfully develop not only the administrative aspects, but also the motivational aspects of change; if the government is actively involved and would support inclusion, then citizens would follow (Kwon, 2005). According to Kim (2014), it is a formidable task to implement inclusive education within a highly competitive society and education system. Therefore, the government should urgently research examples that could be successful in the Korean context if supported by the government and how it can actively improve the educational rights of students with disabilities.

Teachers. The Korean Special Education Law of 1994 stated 'inclusive education' as following:

School principals in general education should comply with the demands of inclusive education from students with disabilities, their parents, or their special education consultants if there are no specific reasons to reject; (b) school principals in general education should provide accessible facilities for the convenience of students with disabilities (Article 15)

It is clearly outlined that principals in general education have to implement inclusive education as their responsibility. Therefore, it's important to develop strategies in leadership preparation to encourage and guide principals in inclusion efforts (Kim, 2014, p.986). While many parents prefer to send their children with disabilities to special schools to keep their children safe and at ease, many of them also hope that an inclusive education, if done properly, could be more beneficial. But, as discussed in Chapter 3, the current education system in Korea is overly focused on exams and going to college, so in order to incorporate children with special needs, the entire education system would need an overhaul (You, 2017). Although parents think that sending their children to special schools is the safest placement option for their children with disabilities, scholars agree it is critical to reform special schools as supportive facilities in inclusion and to have the goal of including children in regular classrooms, which should be the centres for inclusion (Kwon, 2004).

The teacher is the most important person in the inclusive classroom because they are the one who is planning, delivering and evaluating educational programmes and services for children and families; however, Kim (2002) and Kwon (2004) found the following:

Many regular education teachers do not feel they have the knowledge or skills to appropriately instruct students with disabilities, and they have more negative attitudes toward inclusion compared with special education teachers. As a result of those beliefs, special education services in South Korea are still provided mainly in special schools and full-time, self-contained special classes, even though many inclusion advocates have tried to reform the school system and include students with disabilities in regular classrooms. (p.62)

According to Bae and Cho (2009), most general kindergarten teachers in Korea do not feel comfortable including children with specific disabilities, so it is critical to provide professional development focusing on awareness about students with disabilities

and strategies for teachers to promote successful inclusion. And Kim (2014) suggested that teacher education plays an important role to bring more positive attitudes for both teachers and students, which can promote the state of inclusive education in South Korea.

Parents. According to Solish, Perry, and Shine (2015), it is commonly recognized that parents of children with special needs are often highly stressed, more so than parents of typically developing children. Besides this, Korean people believe that a student's academic failure is mainly the parents' responsibility. When I was young, it was common to watch TV programs with this subject- in obsolete terms, a husband gets upset at his wife when their child gets poor grades, and the wife tries everything to improve the child's grade. Yang and Shin (2008) found that the desire of the Korean parents for the educational success of their children is profound and it has a great impact on their actual behaviour towards their children. Solish et al. (2015) suggests that it is critical to emphasize that there are other ways to be "involved" in order to expand understanding of the term "involvement" for parents, including activities such as attending workshops or education planning meetings.

Although Korean government and educators have developed special education policies to guarantee the rights of students with special needs to learning within an inclusive education framework, there are few opportunities for parents to participate in this education and there are no legal guidelines about advocacy for parents of students with disabilities (Kang, 1994). Kwon (2005) argues that providing knowledge and educating parents about inclusion is important because the impact of parent education would be very strong (p.65). Appropriate parent education can help parents become more effective participants in special education. The inclusive education in South Korea is influenced by social, cultural, economic, and political conditions and there is still much to do to improve the quality of inclusive practices. If a top-down approach seems most consistent with Confucian values and therefore most likely to be culturally appropriate and successful, there needs to be a motivated and collaborative government, strong leadership on the part of principals and teachers in supporting inclusive practices, and parents infused with more positive attitudes regarding the potential for their children with disabilities to be able to fully participate in inclusive education. Given the nature of the Korean education system overall, so focused on test results, quantitative measures, and perceived prestige based on these measures, it would be no overstatement to suggest

that implementing qualitative approaches to special education presents more challenges in Korean education as compared to Canadian education systems, and that the strong influence of these outcome-based educational values will impact Korean Canadians even after they move to Canada.

Chapter 5.

How Autistic Personhood and Neurodiversity intersect Culture and Identity

“We are all prisoners trapped within the perceptual frameworks that determine how we view our experiences” (Brookfield, 1995, p.28).

A major school of thought influencing the earliest behavioural approaches to “treating” ASD could be said to have relied on “theory of mind” - according to the theorists, the ability to apply an understanding of beliefs to the realm of emotion, a mechanism that underlines a crucial aspect of social skills (Baron-Cohen, 1985). Another researcher provides a useful definition of “theory of mind” as it relates to the understanding of autism: “The phrase ‘theory of mind’ refers to the capacity normal subjects have to interpret their own and others’ behavior in terms of beliefs and desires. The specific cognitive and interpersonal deficits which autistic individuals display—especially in the areas of imagination and communication—are supposed to lie in the failure of autistic subjects to have this sort of capacity (Sass, Whiting & Parnas, 2000). In this traditional line of thinking, theorists pointed to social “abnormalities” in autism – lack of normal eye contact, lack of normal social awareness or appropriate social behavior, “aloneness,” one-sidedness in interaction, and inability to join a social group (Baron-Cohen, 1996).

But over time, researchers have increasingly argued that it is our preconceived notions of “personhood” which lead to the declaration that autistic behaviour is “abnormal”. According to Young (2000), “sensory and movement differences inhibit adequate and accurate expression-of-self. When self-expression is thwarted, there can be an incongruity between the individual’s inner experience and outer behavior” (p.3). The individual can appear to be lacking of emotion or interest in social interaction and this can lead to being perceived as subhuman or somehow ‘other’ (Young, 2000).

As another researcher argues, these notions of autism [as abnormality] have been shaped largely by the biomedical community that views disability as a deficit and people with disabilities as individuals who need to be ‘fixed’ (Rioux, 1994). Alternative notions of disability, however, suggest that disability does not reside in the individual but, rather, disability is socially constructed (McDermott & Varenne, 1995; Oliver, 1996). It is

in the sociocultural environment that fails to support difference and generates intolerance for diversity that disability is constructed (Bagatell, 2010).

As educators we need to understand these emerging changes in the way ASD is viewed from both pedagogical and ideological contexts, contexts which certainly impact the education field: “It has become increasingly common to view and discuss autism as a form of difference, rather than a disorder. Moreover, the autism spectrum has generated new possibilities for personhood and social inclusion” (Hart, 2014, p.284). In recent years, many researchers have noted that the opportunity and means for persons with autism to “tell their own stories” and engage others through sharing their narratives, has been essential in the realization of their unique personhood. In the words of one author, “Although most interpretations of autism remain firmly grounded in the biomedical [abnormality] paradigm, individuals with autism, through narrative self-representations and organized activities, are themselves attempting to transform how autism is considered” (Bagatell, 2010, p.33). Similarly, discussing the emergence of wider recognition of expressions of identity and personhood in those with ASD, another author argues, “these developments have typically been ascribed to the recent work of autistic autobiographers and autistic self-advocates associated with the neurodiversity movement, who are providing a sort of linguistic infrastructure to support autistic personhood” (Hart, 2014, p.284).

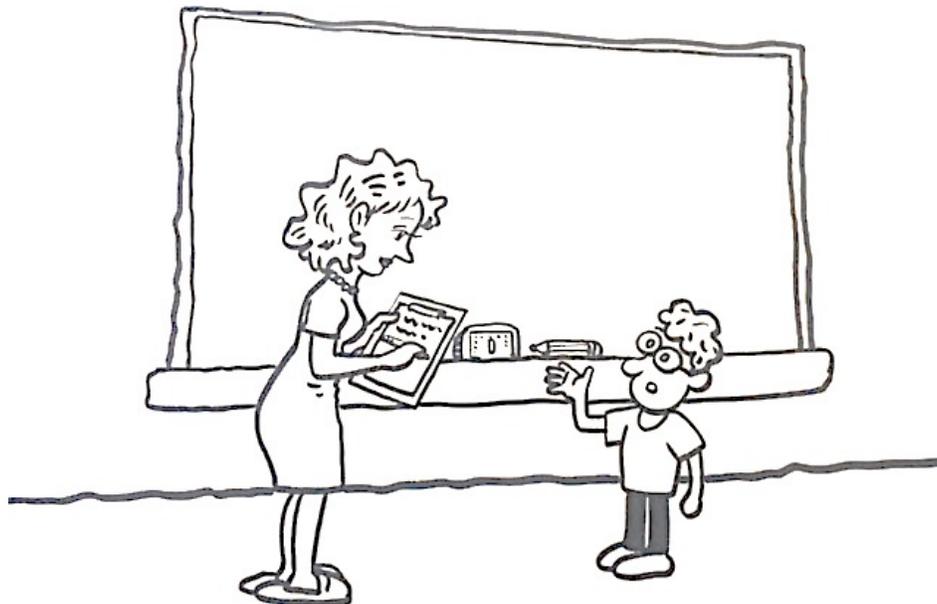


Figure 5.1. YK Journal Excerpt #7: Critical Incidents
Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2019

“Excuse me, before I write my name on the board, I will need to know how you’re planning to use that data.”- “Meeting” my students in the context of my practitioner inquiry will, I believe, provide the type of “critical incidents” I need to become more self-aware of the hidden assumptions that may influence my practice.

According to Sirota (2010), for children with ASD “everyday narratives of personal experience offer a vehicle for expression of the children's subjective life worlds and a venue for self-presentation and intersubjective attunement” (p.93). Therefore, the ability for children to tell their own stories and share in the stories of others, what Sirota calls “deeply interactive self-fashioning processes” and “dynamic intersubjective practices that contribute to human subjectivity” (p.93) are of the utmost importance to the children’s development. As educators we have an important task in supporting these children by teaching the skills and concepts that enable such narratives and stories to be realized. One could argue that our responsibility goes beyond “effective teaching methods” and in fact enters the realm “in which social and moral distinctions of normativity and difference are at stake” (p.93).

Therefore, it is important to recognize that disability is not simply or indisputably an objective condition, but also a social characteristic of a person, influenced by culture, religion and other factors (Lee & Burszty, p.15, 2011). From a theoretical perspective it is critical to look at how the context of changing notions of “autistic personhood” needs to be recognized by the education system, from there leading to a focus on educators’ supporting children in realizing and expressing their unique personhood. First and foremost, as educators we need to recognize that changing notions of autistic personhood may well be at odds with the traditional and entrenched “special education” methodology and the “disability” or “abnormality” labels that go along with that traditional paradigm. But recognizing this is not enough. We need to challenge ourselves to provide better support and techniques within the classroom to support the development of the unique personhood of our students with ASD. But how can we do this? What approaches could we use?

Also, as discussed in previous chapters, the interlinked roles of family/ family identity and culture/ cultural identity need to be taken into account as critical influencers on the success of any educational approach to supporting children with autism. As previously mentioned, family language, traditions, and cultural identity need to be considered a critical part of the education landscape, as do the family’s perceptions of

the education system and of special education. Through my years of practice, I have continued working with children with autism and their families, including with several Korean-Canadian families (as well as several Korean scholars and researchers in the field). Korean-Canadian families require not only support services but also professionals who can exercise cultural awareness and responsiveness in working with families from different backgrounds. My work with Korean-Canadian families helped inspire my interest in cultural perspectives on discourses of education and therapy. As a native Korean speaker, I am often called upon to “translate” information from school or other practitioners - but I have found this “translation” is not just about language itself, but also about cultural assumptions.

How we view identity and personhood of those with ASD most certainly intersects with cultural discourses. As Lee and Bursztyn (2011) state, “these culturally informed perspectives mediate how people make sense of disability and respond to people with disabilities. Values and stigma are often associated with people with disabilities, but these are far from uniform across impairments, cultures, and traditions” (p.16). Furthermore, according to Lee and Park (2016), “different cultural beliefs, values, practices and languages add to the set of existing challenges when addressing the complex dynamics of partnerships between professionals and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds” (p.594). Values, attitudes, and beliefs regarding disabilities vary across cultures and within cultures and these factors impact on the perspective of the child’s parents and prioritizing their needs (Lee & Bursztyn, p.16, 2011). Due to a contrast between Korean “traditional” attitudes about disabilities versus Korean-Canadian attitudes, I’ve been noticing that there are tensions between the Korean-Canadian families I work with and their extended families and community members who hold “traditionalist” (negative) views about children’s disabilities.

All these observations have further fuelled my desire to understand how practices can better include family and cultural perspectives. Core examples of how this could work include consideration of family, as well as practitioner, involvement in developing the imagination, play, and story telling literacy of children with autism, as discussed below.

5.1. Vygotsky: Culture, Imagination, and Play

Based on the preceding discussion of personhood, we should not assume that children with ASD “lack” the desire and abilities for social communication and belonging, but rather that these may need to be fostered and encouraged and developed in more innovative ways. Lev Vygotsky (1978) views play as a social means of development and asserts that the influence of play on a child’s development is enormous. Through play children are able to better understand the customs and norms relevant to their culture. Further, Vygotsky (1978) asserts that in play a child creates an imaginary situation that is very close to the real one, and thus emerge rules in the development of play. Gajdamaschko (2006) takes this further by explaining that capacity of the imagination is developed in play and it enables a child to create and sustain imaginary situations that can be a tool for developing abstract thought. Therefore, well developed imaginative activity is critical.

However, on the important topic of play, and, specifically, on how children learn to play and how they engage in socially interactive and imaginative play, more work can be done to support the development of interactive and imaginative play among children with ASD. Again, previous conceptions of autism may have given educators the impression that children with autism don’t want to play or are not able to engage in interactive imaginative play, or that these children lack the capacity of imagination. But if as educators we are ready to recognize in our students with ASD “new possibilities for personhood and social inclusion”, then we need to find the tools that can be helpful.

For example, the research has shown that just placing children with autism in proximity to typical peers does not automatically lead to increases in social interaction. Wolfberg & Schuler (1999) report that when given the opportunity to play freely, children with autism tend to engage in repetitive activities ranging from manipulating objects and enacting elaborate routines to pursuing obsessive and narrowly focused interests. According to this research, they are less likely to engage in functionally appropriate play and rarely produce pretend play. The research suggests that children with autism usually need to be taught to play and interact, which includes teaching about social interactions and the world of the imagination. What are the key factors needed to increase the opportunity for children with autism to become skilled in play – play, which is a leading factor in development and social competence later in life?

The critical point here is that children with autism are likely to lead impoverished play lives without some form of intervention (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1999), and without rich play lives these children stand to be deprived of essential intellectual tools. Lev Vygotsky (1978) views play as a social means of development and states that the influence of play on a child's development is enormous. Through play children are able to better understand the customs and norms relevant to their culture. Therefore, well developed imaginative activity leads the child to more successful ways of dealing with not only intellectual but also educational tasks.

Looking at the specific challenges faced by children with autism in terms of play, socialization, and communication, the role of mediation becomes paramount. Mediation, one of Vygotsky's central concepts, is summed up by Kozulin (2003) in these terms, "the role of the human mediator is defined in the notion that each psychological function appears twice in development, once in the form of actual interaction between people, and the second time as an inner internalized form of this function" (p.19). When looking at how a family centred approach to educating students with autism might address the need for "the human mediator", we should recognize that there are two types of mediators for children with autism: adults (who include parents and educators/practitioners) and peers (who include school peers and possibly siblings or other family). We could argue that although both types of mediators play important roles for both typical and children with ASD, arguably what needs to be underlined is the critical interdependence of the interplay between both types of mediators, adults and peers, for children with ASD. Based on the research, it seems that, unlike typical children, children with autism will need to start with adult/teacher/parent as mediator in order to learn foundational play skills. Once foundational play skills are established, these children can move to peers as mediators in developing richer play lives.

At the same time, it is important to underscore that evidence indicates children with autism certainly also need peers as mediators in order to develop critical play skills; these cannot flourish with only the adult functioning as mediator. According to Wolfberg & Schuler (1993), children with disabilities who do not have playmates to share, diversify, adapt, and discuss play routines, will have their play stay rigid and unimaginative. The research by Pierce and Schreibman (1995) supports that when utilizing typical peers to implement naturalistic teaching tactics in the absence of direct supervision in a general education classroom environment, children with autism engage

in sustained interactions, initiate play and conversations, increase engagement in language and joint attention behaviors, and display positive changes in social behaviors as reported by their teachers. Similarly, Kohler et al. (1997) remark that the involvement of typical peers likely provides a much richer and more elaborate context for addressing skills. Tellingly, though, the research of Kohler et al. (1997) also asserts that the success of peer play hinges on the role of the teacher.

This is because the adult mediator can also observe and build on the responses of not only a child with autism but also the talk and actions of typically developing peer(s) at the same time, when the peers and child are interacting. In order to implement any of these intervention strategies, the adult mediator's systematic instruction and participation are critical. The focus in the Kohler et al. (1997) study was using a teacher's participation and direction for social interaction with peers, and the teacher implementing three different types of directions. Instructions consisted of telling the child to imitate a skill demonstrated by a typically developing peer, directing a child and/or peer to engage in nonverbal cooperation or related interaction, and, lastly, telling a child and/or peer to direct a verbal comment to each other. Thus the crucial interdependence of the two mediator types is again brought to light.

Arguably typical children also benefit from or even require to a certain extent both types of mediator – peer and adult/teacher – to develop robust play skills. But it seems evident that in children with autism the interdependence of the two mediator types requires awareness and regular adjustment to consciously and systematically ensure the two mediator types are working in concert. This brings us back to the need for acknowledgement that a family centred approach to education will require breaking down the separation between school or formal therapeutic environments versus the home and family environments. As discussed by several researchers above, the teacher's (as mediator) deliberate planning to support peer learning is essential in helping children with autism participate more fully, communicate more effectively, and interact more successfully (Garfinkle & Schwartz, 2002). However, by the same token the parents' involvement and support as mediators must also be considered critical, yet can be overlooked by a focus on only the formal educational environment.

To sum up, the key differentiators with children with autism are the degree to which they need the adult mediator, not only to teach the foundational play skills but also

to mediate successful peer play on an ongoing basis, and the interdependence of peer and adult mediators in helping children with autism develop rich play lives. Typical children seem to demonstrate more flexibility in developing play and imagination skills primarily through peers' interaction, for example, or with more limited adult mediation. A final point is that, given the amount of planning and systematic support needed for the successful interplay of the two mediator types across various environments, the role of family and cultural identity, and related attitudes towards topics such as play, integration, and education, will dramatically affect the success of "mediation" as critical to the development of play and life skills as formulated by Vygotsky.

Play has a critical role because it is a primary social and cultural activity for acquiring social knowledge, symbolic capacities, and interpersonal skills (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1999). Learning involves the interplay of imagination, knowledge accumulation and psychological development. It is critical that children with special needs should be provided with mediated learning experiences for creating a new perspective for acculturation, socialization, and inclusive special education (Gindis, 2003). It is clear that both adults and peers have essential and interdependent roles as Vygotsky's "mediators" for children with autism, and developmental play opportunities will be very limited without acknowledgement of how this intersects with family and culture.

5.2. Culture, Personhood, and Story

"How do we, as teacher educators, illuminate the bringing forth of new possible curricular worlds of engagement; a challenge when so many of us are caught in the conventional paradigm of teacher education praxis, language, and expectation?" (Lynn Fels, 2004)

At the outset of this chapter, I noted that changing perceptions of autistic personhood and neurodiversity have received a strong positive boost from autistic autobiographers and the growing body of personal narratives and story telling by those with ASD. With this in mind, we cannot ignore the fact that the foundation of story telling and narrative abilities lies in literacy, yet many children with autism struggle with reading and have literacy levels well below their typical peers. Reading comprehension is an important skill for all children to acquire. Understanding language, whether in written or oral discourse, is essential for communicative interactions (Randi, Newman & Grigorenko, 2010). Unfortunately, due to their particular communication challenges,

children and youth with autism need specific strategies to become successful, lifelong readers – an absolutely critical skill. Teaching children to read for meaning is no easy task as reading comprehension involves a complex set of skills and processes and is sensitive to individual differences, often requiring different kinds of instruction for different learners (Duke & Pearson, 2002).

With regards to reading in particular, due in large part to global communication challenges, children with autism often face specific challenges to reading abilities. Some researchers have commented that the language of children with autism may be restricted to the very literal; analogies, metaphors, and humor can be essentially incomprehensible (Schreibman, 2005). However, based on the preceding discussion of research relating to difference and personhood, it could be argued rather that children with autism need specific supports and innovative approaches to build the cognitive skills needed to appreciate analogy, metaphor, and humour. Although there are numerous studies of interventions for children with ASD, surprisingly few interventions for teaching reading comprehension have been described in the literature, and most of these focus on instructional approaches, rather than interventions that target particular reading comprehension difficulties (Randi et al., 2010).

In fact, for children with autism, the story is most likely the strongest place to begin the path to improving literacy. According to Egan (2005), the stories are one of the most powerful cognitive tools, stories are instruments for orienting human emotions to their contents, and the storytelling stimulates the imagination by creating an emotional attachment to the subject matter. Given the importance of story and narrative in helping people with ASD realize and express their personhood, if we can engage students with ASD by leveraging their passions and shared interests in our story selection, thereby creating more interest in and motivation for reading, then from that point we can begin to explore some of the other cognitive tools of literacy, and bring our students, step by step, towards steadily improving their literacy. In this effort we are not only teaching children how to read, we are providing the tools needed to support the individual's own realization and expression of their unique personhood:

The capacity to increasingly think of the world and experience in narrative terms represents a further cognitive tool that comes along with literacy. Narrative provides us with one of the main tools for orienting our emotions to the contents of our narrative, and consequently gives us the power to

make increasingly complex meaning of our lives and of the world around us (Egan & Gajdamaschko, 2003).

It is vital to provide opportunities for children with autism to improve their literacy, not only to nurture their creativity and emotional engagement, but ultimately to help empower them with the abilities to realize and express their own personhood. The complementarity between improving literacy and the current realization within the neurodiversity movement that persons with autism can use storytelling and the sharing of narratives to expand previously limiting ideas about autistic personhood, once again returns us to the need to consider how the family and cultural context of students intersects with what we are hoping to teach. If imagination, story, and narrative are critical to development, then surely understanding of the cultural and family stories, the cultural and family contexts, the cultural and family preferences must be viewed by practitioners as critical. The discussions above demonstrate that the child with autism needs access to imaginative resources such as play and story, just as the typical child does, even though the path to achieving these may take a different pace or different route for each child. These resources are essential to development and learning, perhaps even more so for children who face the challenges of ASD. For these children, so many aspects of knowledge can seem completely enigmatic and unobtainable. Therefore, an approach to story telling which seeks to de-obfuscate and personalize knowledge is a giant step in the right direction:

The point is not to get the symbolic codes as they exist in books into the students' minds. We can of course do that—training students to be rather ineffective 'copies' of books. Rather, the teaching task is to reconstitute the inert symbolic code into living human knowledge... The educational task, then, involves the resuscitation of knowledge from its suspended animation in symbolic codes. The task is to convert, re-animate, transmute the symbolic codes into living human knowledge in students' minds...The codes do not carry guarantees of meaning. The instrument best able to ensure the transformation from codes to living knowledge is the imagination (Egan & Gajdamaschko, 2003).

But how do we access the family stories and cultural narratives, and how do we engage the family as “mediators” in Vygotsky’s sense? Only by accessing and engaging these can we as practitioners claim to be advancing family centred approaches to educating these students. Our efforts need to be embedded in the context of family and culture to be effective. These efforts may be more or less robust, more or less realized

successfully, depending on many factors, but the need to make these efforts cannot be disputed. What mechanisms can help us?



Figure 5.2. YK Journal Excerpt #8: No single way works for all children

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2018

No single way works for all children. Few years ago, one parent asked me which type of therapy would match to his child with autism. There are many different types of approaches, therapies and interventions for children with autism and some of them can have risks- it's overwhelming. No two people are the same, so choosing the right ones for their child can be a challenge and parents may feel at a loss.

5.3. No longer lost in translation: Supporting students and families in expressing their narratives through self-reflective inquiry and dialogic journaling

Teacher learning is based on the idea that knowledge comes from reflection and inquiry in and on practice, or what Schon, following Dewey, calls reflection 'in the crucible of action' (Grimmetti, 1988, p.13).

Encountering cultural and linguistic diversity in my own education and in my own practices was a powerful catalyst in my realization that the neurodiverse identity/personhood of my students and clients with ASD might not be being fully recognized,

celebrated, and addressed by educational and therapeutic systems if they are separated from the context of family and culture. Thus, the crux of my own inquiry culminates in these questions of identity and personhood for children with autism: what presuppositions exist about “typical” versus “atypical” identities? how can my own practices as an educator support my students with autism in realizing and expressing their personhood? how can cultural, linguistic, and family practices and identities be fully recognized and incorporated into practitioner perceptions and frameworks?

As noted in previous chapters, I am using the Practitioner Inquiry methodology of self-study towards achieving self-reflective inquiry. But in terms of specifically answering the question, how can cultural, linguistic, and family practices and identities be fully recognized and incorporated into practitioner perceptions and frameworks, within the framework of Practitioner Inquiry I have employed the specific tool of dialogic journaling to do so.

In “Doing As I Do: The Role of Teacher Educator Self Study in Educating for Reflective Inquiry” (LeBoskey & Hamilton, 2009, as cited in Lyons, N, 2009), the authors comment that the notion of reflective inquiry is widely used but not necessarily used in the same way, and so the concept of “reflective inquiry” needs to be defined. The authors point out that the foundational definition of reflective inquiry comes from Dewey’s (1938) conception that reflection is meaning making, reflection is systematic, reflection needs to happen in community, must be tied to personal and intellectual growth (p.334) and also that the aim of reflection is to create meaningful and effective solutions (echoing Schon ,1983) and to make progress in equity and social justice (p.334):

Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. It is the thread that makes continuity of learning possible and ensures the progress of the individual and, ultimately, society. It is a means to essentially moral ends. (p.333)

The main method used to reflect on my practice is dialogic journaling. What is dialogic journaling? Although the concept of dialogism (and dialogic) means at its simplest level “in dialogue”, for the purposes of discussing dialogic journal writing I refer specifically to, following from Mikhail Bakhtin,

...the principle that all...communications acquire meaning only in the context of a dialogue to which they contribute and in which the presence

and contributions of other voices (or other discourses, languages, etc.) are inescapably implied, with the result that meaning and expression cannot be reduced to a single system or subjected to a single authority. (Oxford English Dictionary)

Previously in my practice working with children and families living with ASD, I have been exploring dialogic journal writing as a tool to empower and engage students and families. According to Cohen (1988), “knowledge is human creating rather than a human reception” (p.12). Families may fill their heads with facts, data, or some expert’s ideas, but true learning and understanding will not have taken place until families create meaning for themselves from those facts, data, and ideas. This is consistent with a constructivist paradigm of education, where “constructivists believe that learning is the meaning-making process of discovering complex information and transforming this information into internal constructions of reality” (Naude, Van Den Bergh, & Kruger, 2014, p.213). Families must construct knowledge rather than passively absorb it. To learn, to make knowledge their own, families must reflect on, interact with, and react to the materials presented to them. And so must I as a practitioner. One method I have used to encourage reflection and interaction between myself, students, families, the gathered stories, and other materials, is through dialogic journal writing.

The core concept behind dialogic journaling is more than just to reflect on something, but rather it creates an interactive conversation where you respond to something (such as a text or incident), then I respond to you, then you respond to me, etc. Previously I have used this in my practice to share session notes with students and parents, and then to receive and respond to their responses. The figure below demonstrates the basic concept I have used with families.

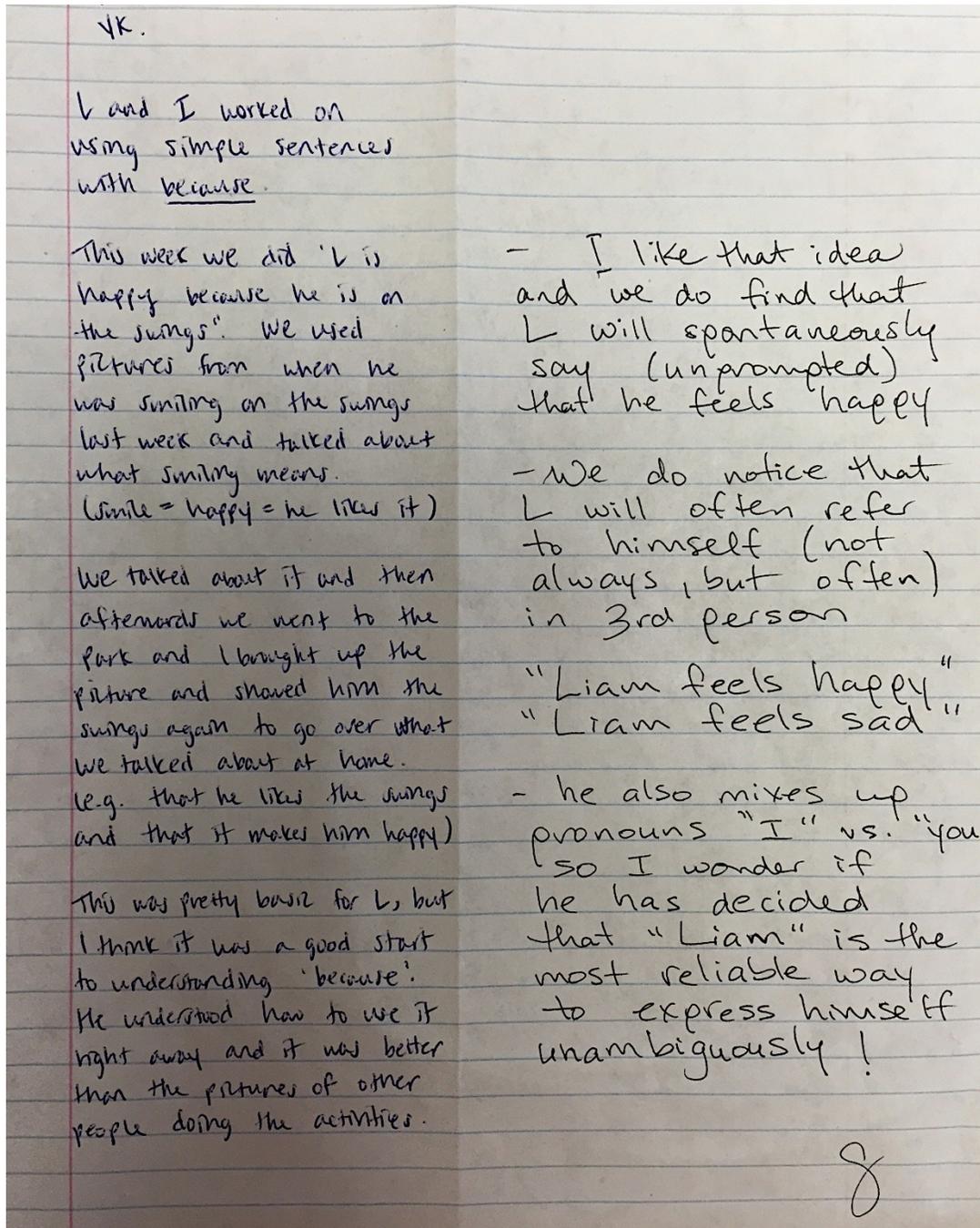


Figure 5.3. An example of traditional form of dialogic journaling

However, for this current study, following from Brookfield and the other scholars, I place greater emphasis on engaging in cycles of action and reflection, and documenting my own experiences and insights, as well as the experiences and insights of peers and families, in shared cycles of interaction through dialogic journaling. While the methodology is discussed in detail in the next chapter, it is worth noting that while journaling is most often associated with writings, as Chase (2011) points out in her

discussion of narrative analysis, the use of drawing, art, visuals, collage, etc, can also be used to express narrative, and I do use this expanded and more flexible sense of journaling in my current project. Thus, dialogic journaling can consist of writing, art, photographs, and other expressions. For myself, with examples interspersed throughout this dissertation, I have kept a visual journal consisting of my own graphical “postcards” of “where I am” in this journey. I realized that using artwork for journaling allowed me to better delve into the subjective and personal, perhaps not least because drawing represents an important link back to my family of origin, where art has been highly valued, and where drawing and professional cartooning has also been my father’s lifelong profession.

In examining changing notions of autistic personhood and neurodiverse identity, we cannot miss the complex interactions of the intersection of cultural values and beliefs, family values and beliefs, and the perceptions and presuppositions of the professionals and practitioners involved. In understanding that better supporting autistic personhood and neurodiverse identity may well involve helping children realize growth and expression through play and storytelling among other things, which requires the critical “mediation” of family members as well as of practitioners, surely it follows that authentic communication exchanges are needed between and amongst all parties. My study, as described in the next two chapters, seeks to achieve those authentic exchanges and critical encounters through a series of dialogic journaling interactions.

Chapter 6.

Dialogic Journals and Reflections on Culture, Autism, Education, Family, Future

This chapter discusses the methodology and design of the qualitative dialogic journaling study. The main research goal is to gather qualitative data through dialogic journaling on the perceptions of autism, culture, and personhood from Korean-Canadian parents of children with autism and from colleagues/ practitioners delivering services to these children with autism. Specifically this study tests a method for expanding autism research through qualitative channels by the gathering of dialogic journals from Korean-Canadian families living with autism and from those practitioners providing education delivery to them. The chapter is divided into the following sections: qualitative methodology, participants, procedures, data analysis, results and story.

6.1. Qualitative Methodology

6.1.1. What next?: Facing Outward and Turning Inward

One of the most interesting “eureka” moments I had in reflecting on my positionality as a practitioner was in reading Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) comparison between practitioner inquiry and professional learning communities. They demonstrate that practitioner inquiry and professional learning communities share common features including inquiry, data of practice, communities working together, influence of the culture of schools, and an equity agenda (p.53). But in their articulation of the differences between the two approaches I was particularly struck by their cautionary statements or caveats on the limits of data-focused approaches. In comparing professional learning communities with their “emphasis on assessment data, particularly tests” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p.56) versus practitioner inquiry which has “a very broad and some would say rather loose definition of data” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p.56), they ultimately make the cautionary statement about professional learning communities that “the emphasis is on test outcomes rather than on learning more expansively defined. To a certain extent, then - and depending on the communities themselves, of course - some professional learning communities and teacher learning

communities retain many of the existing structures of power and privilege and may reify rather than challenge dominant epistemologies and values about the purposes of schooling, the relationships of researchers and the objects of research, and the educational questions that are most worth asking” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p.59).

I suddenly realized that my prior focus as a professional, where I understood my practice as learning and accessing a fixed repository of objective knowledge, separate from my subjective self, fit into this definition of learning communities with an emphasis on outcomes and quantitative data. I suddenly realized that, with this viewpoint as a practitioner, I could be inadvertently reinforcing “existing structures of power and privilege... [which] may reify rather than challenge dominant epistemologies and values”.

But I also wondered, where did this presupposition on my part come from? While the preceding chapters on Korean-Canadian families and their cultural context suggests I need to be sensitive to how my decisions as practitioner provide an outward-facing support to these families, with that outward-facing gesture I have so far neatly dodged my own need to turn inwards, to seek out the origins of my presuppositions about outcome-focused educational approaches. Practitioner Inquiry takes me beyond an outward facing activity where one “gathers knowledge” and analyzes it. Rather, it is fundamentally an inward facing activity where I need above all to see the different lenses through which I am viewing, assessing, and realizing my own practice. To borrow a passage from Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999):

Who am I as a teacher? What am I assuming about this child, this group, this community? What sense are my students making of what is going on in the classroom? How do the frameworks and research of others inform my own understandings? What are the underlying assumptions of these materials, texts, tests, curriculum frameworks and school reporting documents? What am I trying to make happen here and why? How do my efforts as an individual teacher connect to the efforts of the community and to larger agendas for school and social change? (p.292)

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) provide a comprehensive description of Practitioner Inquiry as “an overarching category of research with five major genres” (action research, teacher research, self-study, scholarship of teaching, and using practice as site for research). They also articulate eight common features which link these genres:

- practitioner as researcher;
- linkage of knowledge, knowers, and knowing;
- professional context as site for study;
- community and collaboration;
- blurred boundaries between inquiry and practice;
- new conceptions of validity and generalizability;
- systematicity, including data collection and analysis; and
- publicity, public knowledge, and critique (p.39).

Practitioner Inquiry framework has helped me realize and accept my own subjectivity as an educator, and excited in me a desire to more fully explore that subjectivity. In order to serve my communities and my students, I need to also understand myself, my personal history, my cultural context, and the origins of my own specific perspectives on my practice. The methodological approach of Practitioner Inquiry/ self-study combined with the dialogic educational perspective (and dialogic journaling specifically) will allow me to do this while also creating new channels for connecting with families and colleagues.

In Brookfield's book *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (1995), the author asks the question, "why is critical reflection important?" and answers with the following points:

- it helps us take informed actions;
- it helps us develop a rationale for practice;
- it helps us avoid self-laceration;
- it grounds us emotionally;
- it enlivens our classrooms; and
- it increases democratic trust (p.79-95).

By following through with the four axes inspired by Brookfield - as noted in chapter 2 of this paper, autobiography, families, colleagues, theory - I am openly acknowledging that "critical reflection" must go beyond just the self, to include the self in contact with others. In this vein it is worth expanding upon my choice of "dialogic

journaling” as the main form for gathering the qualitative data to inform my Practitioner Inquiry/ self-study. The notion of “dialogism” mentioned earlier in chapter 5 of this paper is one which has been picked up at key moments by educational scholars and theorists. While I am not aware of scholars who have specifically combined the framework of Practitioner Inquiry with an examination of Dialogic/Learning Communities, my analysis suggests the approaches are compatible and can productively inform one another.

6.1.2. Dialogic “Journaling” Methodology

What might this look like, a form of dialogic journaling which includes a much more inward facing, autobiographical focus? The work of Chase (2011) describes what she calls “the researcher and the story”, the autobiographical or “autoethnographical” approach- “to explore a topic or research question more fully by including the researcher’s experience of it” (p.423). Chase’s work falls into the category of narrative inquiry, which is not the same as self-study; yet, researchers looking closely at autobiographical or “autoethnographical” approaches to narrative inquiry can shed valuable light on the self-study project. As further described by scholars such as Daiute and Lightfoot (2007), Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative inquiry provides methods for the gathering and analyzing of narratives which reveal connections among past, present and future. Narrative inquiry begins in experience as expressed in lived and told stories and the researcher approaches narrative inquiry based on their own experiences as well as their participants’ narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Chase (2011) provides a particularly useful notion of storytelling as lived experience, a situation where “narration is the practice of constructing meaningful selves, identities, and realities” (p.422) but more particularly “that people create a range of narrative strategies in relation to cultural discourses, and that individuals’ stories are constrained but not determined by those discourses” (p.422). Narrative inquiry emphasizes a dialogical process between subject and researcher.

While more “traditional” dialogic journaling such as I have previously used with my session notes with families and students looks like Figure 6.1 (following from Hughes et al) in chapter 5 of this paper, my own revised version is described in Figure 6.2:

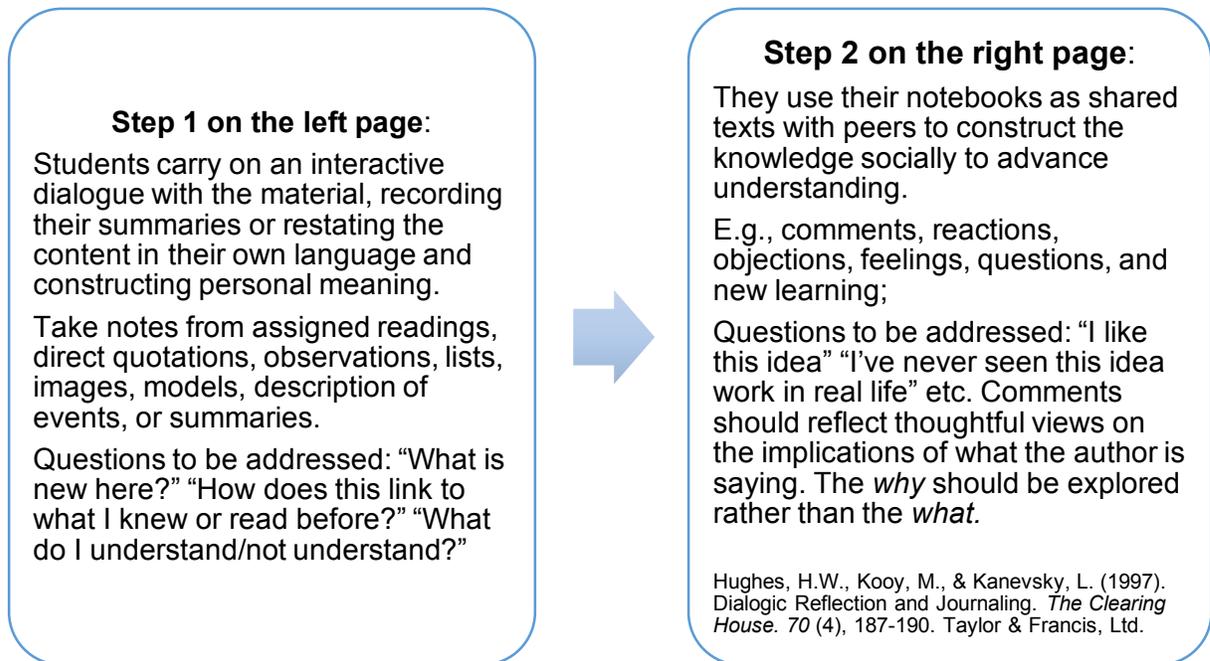


Figure 6.1. An example of traditional dialogic journaling following from Hughes et al. (1997)

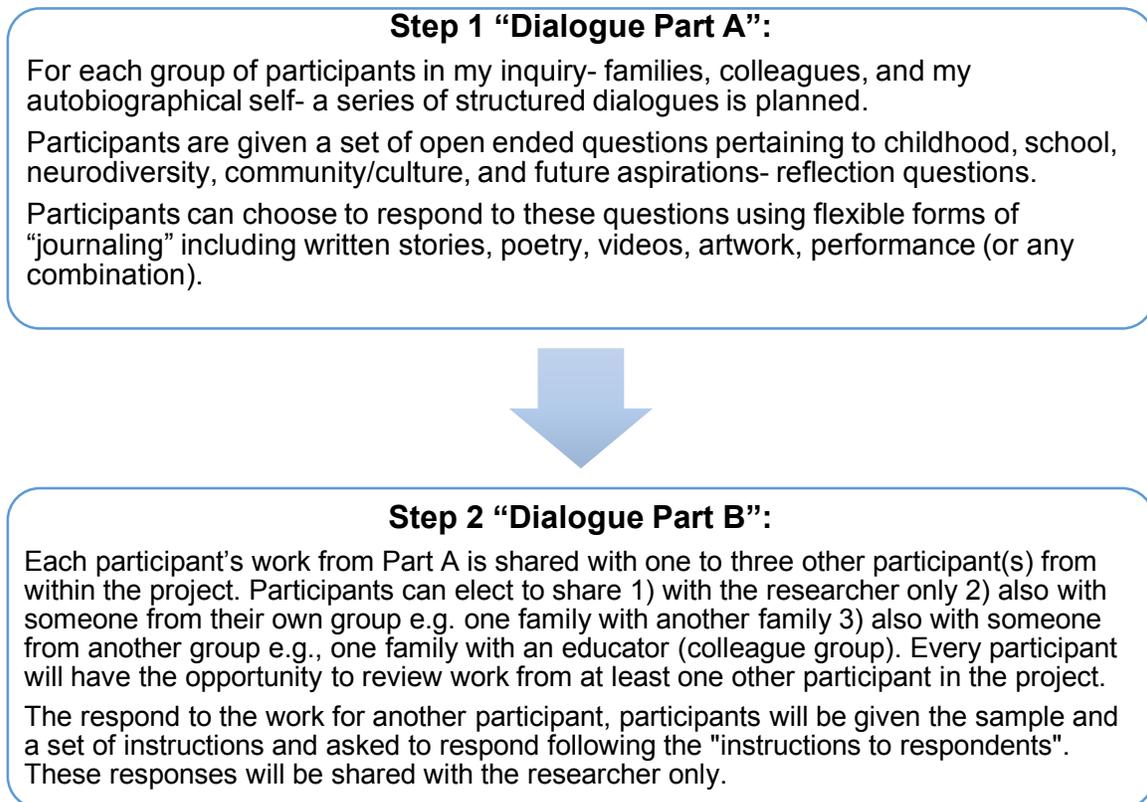


Figure 6.2. Revised version of dialogic journaling

Cornelius-White (2007) argues, “when students feel safe, they are more apt to demonstrate creativity, intellectual curiosity, and higher-level thinking” (as cited in Naude et al., 2014, p.212). I would argue that this statement applies equally to all participants in my study - students, families, colleagues. Sharing one’s own self reflections can be a sensitive matter. In this sense, even though I have described journaling as both a self reflexive and a social, dialogic process, it is the role of the researcher to mediate the process – to keep it provocative yet “safe”, dialogic yet respectful, creative yet also reasonably within the bounds of the specific topics at hand.

These points emphasize for me that all participants need to feel “at home” and “safe” in body and mind. When we are talking about diversity, we need to recognize that we are not merely intellectual beings, we are physical and emotional beings who also embody different cultures, ethnicities, learning styles, learning differences, genders, orientations, languages, ways of moving, manners of speaking, etc. To create a safe and welcoming environment means to recognize our “embodied” selves as well, and to question any assumptions or systems which could make us feel unsafe or unwelcome. Participants were given flexible timelines and choices around what they were comfortable sharing in ways they were comfortable sharing.

6.1.3. Participants and Procedures

There were six participants: three parent(s) and three colleagues. The requirements of parent(s) were the following: (a) do(es) have a child who has a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD); (b) speak(s) Korean and English; (c) immigrated to Canada after the age of 18. The colleagues who participated in the study met the following criteria: (a) do(es) work with Korean-Canadian families who have a child with autism; (b) working as behaviour consultant, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, or educational assistant, special education assistant, or education support worker. All participants in this study were asked to produce “dialogic journals” which may be written narrative and/or drawing, art, visuals, collage, or recorded performance. Due to the research being a phenomenological qualitative study, the researcher chose to keep the participants minimal.

To avoid conflict of interest, no current students/clients/colleagues who are in a formal professional relationship with the researcher were included i.e. current students,

clients currently receiving service, and employees on current teams with the researcher were not included in this project. The researcher passed along the recruitment letter (Appendix A) and asked senior behaviour consultants not formally affiliated on teams currently if there are any of her or his client(s) or colleague(s) interested in participating in this study. After reviewing the recruitment letter, interested participants contacted the researcher by email or phone, the details of the study/dissertation were further explained and any questions were answered during a phone or email conversation. After the overview of the study was given and the individuals agreed to participate, the researcher arranged a date, time, and place to conduct the first meeting. In order to accommodate their needs, the participants were given the choice of the location of the meeting. During the initial meeting, the researcher informed the prospective participants that their participation was voluntary and that they could choose to not answer certain questions or withdraw from the study at any time. They were also informed the procedure of 'Dialogic Journal' including a consent form for participation of the study (Appendix B). The prospective participants were also encouraged to contact the researcher at any time if there were any questions or problems that arose.

Once the participants completed the consent form, the researcher presented a sample of the researcher's journals and explained the reflection questions for 'Dialogic Journal' creation (Appendix C) and instructions for respondents (Appendix D). The participants were informed that they should avoid using and disclosing any identifiers and personal information such as names and/or images showing family members or school names during creating a dialogic journal creation. And they could control how their work would be shared. For example, participants could consent to allowing samples of their work to be included in the researcher's dissertation, or they could consent to allowing only a descriptive summary to be included, with no actual samples. The researcher collected a signed copy of the consent form, and gave a copy of form to the participants for their records. In order to protect the participants' identities, each participant was listed by his or her assigned pseudonym by the researcher.

6.1.4. Dialogic Journal Creation

A procedure (Fig.6.2) of creating dialogic journaling was explained to the prospective participants during the initial meeting. The methodology started with "reflection questions" (Appendix C) to stimulate the participants when beginning their

journaling, thus they can choose to answer some or none but these are meant as stimulating questions to help them with journaling but not in a prescriptive way. In order to hear and address the participants' reflections, the researcher chose the qualitative research method of phenomenology which is focus on how individuals make sense of experiences and it is to understand the essence of the experiences regarding a certain phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). According to Kwon (2015), "phenomenological research generally addresses questions that are common in everyday human experiences which are believed to be important phenomena in the field of social sciences" (p.67). And it also involves understanding the participants' experiences through seeing and hearing rather than analyzing statistical data (Creswell, 1998). This study of the experiences of Korean-Canadian parents of children with autism and colleagues delivering services to children with autism fits with the phenomenological approach as it focuses on the phenomena and each individual's experiences.

To add another layer of confidentiality and protection the consent form contains a reminder note for participants to be aware of not using and disclosing any identifiers for their own protection. The dialogic journaling and reflecting are independent tasks completed individually by participants on their own. Participants can freely answer reflection questions at the time and place of their choice. And they can carry on journaling based on their choice of timeline and methodology but they were asked to complete within three weeks. After completing a dialogical journaling, participants contacted the researcher by email or phone and they chose to deliver their materials in person by requesting that the researcher come to a designated place in person, or by using digital devices (emailing their materials to the researcher). Two participants wanted to keep their original creations so they sent a copy of the materials, not the originals. This chapter contains a selection of journal entries highlighting the thematic analysis points of interest; all of the participant submissions are found in the appendix.

6.2. Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted to identify themes expressed by participants' dialogic journals. Journals were analyzed using thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This was congruent with the philosophical underpinnings of the research, allowed the significance of a shared phenomenon to be revealed, while providing a comprehensive account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke stated

“thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79), and it is widely-used qualitative data analysis. Thematic analysis provides a realistic theoretical framework which is adapted in order to attempt to reflect the meaning of participants’ reality. Therefore, it can be a method that works both to reflect reality to unpick or unravel the surface of ‘reality’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Research by Braun and Clarke (2006) supports that one of the benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility and it’s a method that can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. Therefore, it’s a useful tool which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data.

Table 6.1. Advantages of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Flexibility. Relatively easy and quick method to learn, and do. Accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research. Results are generally accessible to educated general public. Useful method for working within participatory research paradigm, with participants as collaborators. Can usefully summarize key features of a large body of data, and/or offer a ‘thick description’ of the data set. Can highlight similarities and differences across the data set. Can generate unanticipated insights. Allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data. Can be useful for producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development.
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Following six phases of thematic analysis, in phase 1, the transcripts from dialogic journals were read and reread to become familiar with the data.

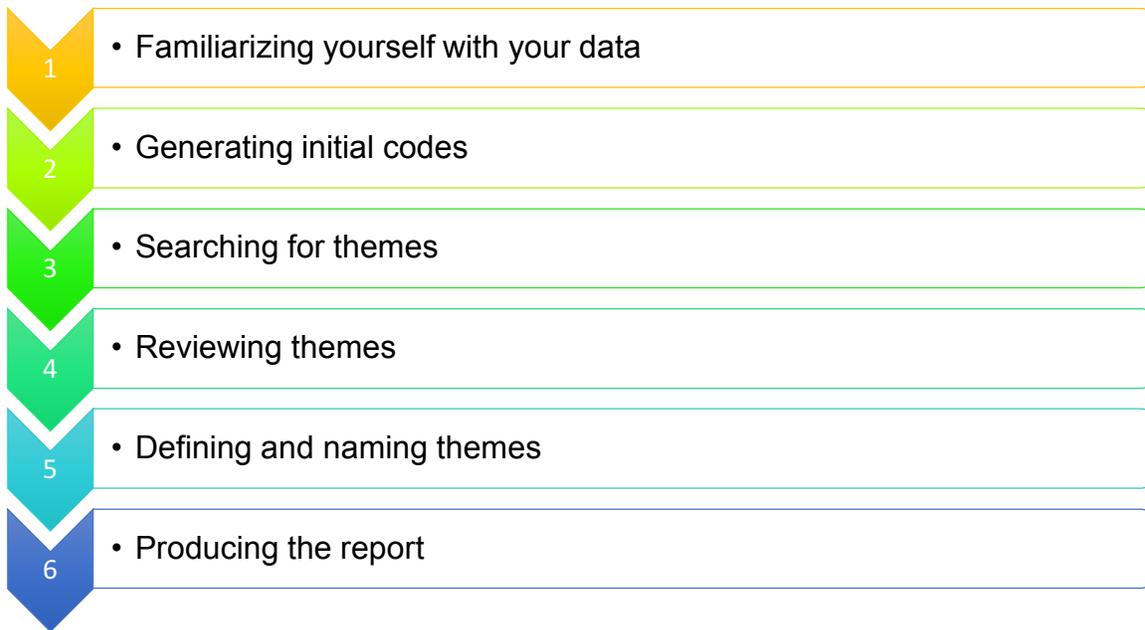


Figure 6.3. Six phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Braun and Clarke (2016) stated that

It is vital that you immerse yourself in the data to the extent that you are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content. Immersion usually involves ‘repeated reading’ of the data, and reading the data in an active way- searching for meanings, patterns and so on. (p.87)

After completing phase 1, initial codes were then made, identifying interesting features of the data, collecting data relevant to each code. Since not many participants were involved in this study, the researcher proceeded to phase 3 after reading each response and coding typically a sentence or more, that conveyed a particular idea. In phase 3, the researcher collected examples of candidate themes. It is important to consider the strength of the proposed themes and their interconnections. According to Braun and Clarke (2016),

For each individual theme, you need to conduct and write a detailed analysis. As well as identifying the ‘story’ that each theme tells, it is important to consider how it fits into the broader overall ‘story’ that you are telling about your data, in relation to the research question or questions, to ensure there is not too much overlap between themes. (p.92)

The researcher then returned to the data and reviewed, defined and named themes.

6.3. Results: Their Story

All of the participants shared notable stories and reflections regarding their experiences. The data generated by the completed dialogic journals and five main themes were identified that encapsulated the issues raised by the participants: culture, autism, school/daycare, family and future. In this section, “they” will be used as a singular, gender-neutral pronoun for protecting participants’ privacy and confidentiality, gender inclusivity and a recognition of gender diversity.

6.3.1. Theme 1: Culture

I made a collage that represents the “Canada” I am living in. I used different colors to avoid any cultural references. Although some ethnic groups or their cultures are more dominant (depending on the intensity or occupation of colors), altogether Canada is made beautiful as the whole collage is made harmonious. (Colleague Participant D)



Figure 6.4. Dialogic journal by colleague participant D

According to Lee and Park (2016), “different cultural beliefs, values, practices and languages add to the set of existing challenges when addressing the complex dynamics of partnerships between professionals and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds” (p.594). Values, attitudes, and beliefs regarding

disabilities vary across cultures and within cultures and these factors impact on the perspective of the child's parents and prioritizing their needs (Lee & Bursztyn, p.16, 2011). Choi and Wynne (2000) reported that even when their family histories or issues are necessary to the development of treatment plans, Korean parents are hesitant to reveal such information to service providers, or to other families in support groups. For these reasons, issues of language and different communication styles may constitute barriers to collaboration between Korean parents and professionals.

The 'culture' questions for *parents* included:

1. What do you love most about your Korean culture and heritage?
2. How do you celebrate your culture and heritage?
3. Do you miss Korea?
4. Do you feel pressured to "fit in" to Canadian culture?

Questions for colleagues included:

1. Do you think specifically about Korean culture and heritage when working with Korean Canadian families?
2. Do you feel that your clients' family identities are connected to their celebration of Korean culture and heritage?
3. Do you feel that Korean culture and heritage can be incorporated into the design of your practices with Korean Canadian families?
4. Do you feel that Korean Canadian families should "fit in" to Canadian culture?

Not all the participants answered the questions; however, a few parents answered the same question. They cited they miss their family in Korea and its familiarity. For example, they stated:

3. Do you miss Korea?

한국이 그립진 않지만 한국에 있는 가족과 한국에서 보낸 어린 시절이 그립다.

I don't miss Korea, but I miss my family and my childhood in Korean.

(Parent Participant A)

3. Do you miss Korea?

익숙한 언어와 생활환경 등의 이유로 가끔 그리기도 하다.

Sometimes I miss Korea because of familiar language and living environment. (Parent Participant B)

Koreans have been one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in Canada in recent decades (Park, 2012). Kim and Noh (2013) stated that there is evidence that Korean female immigrants are more likely than Korean male immigrants to suffer from depression because of significant acculturative obstacles and traditional patriarchal gender roles prescribed by Confucianism. They confront the dual burden of working outside while also feeling pressured inside the home (p.61). Immigration is a difficult transition with psychological and behavioural affects being worse in the first few years before improving. Kim and Noh (2013) study found the following:

Changes in life satisfaction among Korean immigrants were significantly different from those found among Europeans. In Western and Eastern Europeans, the rates of life satisfaction declined gradually during the initial four years of settlement, whereas for Koreans the decline was drastic. (p.60)

One of the colleague participants described how they feel about the question of whether Korean Canadian families should “fit in” to Canadian culture:

“What is Canadian culture? How can one define it?” Where I am living, Vancouver, is a very diverse city. Many different cultures exist. If you consider ‘Western culture’ to be ‘Canadian culture’, how does one define ‘Western culture?’ Decedents from different parts and countries from Europe have distinctive cultures. I think Vancouver culture is a collage of many different cultures, from Europe, Asia, Africa and more. I use the metaphor of collage because I think they are not “blended” perfectly or equally. Each culture still carries its own uniqueness but is side by side with other cultures. Vancouver, where I have been living for 10+ years is the ‘Canada’ I know. So coming back to the question of “fitting in,” I understand and do not understand your question at the same time. I don't think anyone needs to morph its culture to “fit” into another culture unwillingly. (Colleague Participant D)

This participant also mentioned that working with Korean Canadian families feels like working in a small version of Korea and the cultural aspect such as respecting the people who are older than themselves apply here as if they are living in Korea.

As a practitioner I have benefitted from co-inhabiting Canadian and Korean contexts. However, as far as Theme 1, the dialogic journals have pushed me to ask

questions of myself such as, Am I biased in any way by my familiarity with Korean traditions and norms? Am I complacent in my choices of educational models and intervention strategies? Knowing that communication barriers exist, am I doing enough to enable Korean-Canadian parents and students? Where are my “blind spots”? How can I be sure that I am truly supporting these families through effective facilitation and collaboration?

6.3.2. Theme 2: Autism



As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

(John 9:1-3)

내가 임신 7~8 개월 때쯤, 아니 온 임신기간을 통으로, 말로 설명할 수도 없는 심적 고통을 받고 있었고, 매일같이 울면서 우울한 나날을 보내고 있었다. 못한 부모 탓에 아이가 이렇게 된 것이었나 생각에 엄청난 죄책감과 슬픔이 나를 덮치는데, 내가 감당할 수가 없었다. 숨이 쉬어지지 않고, 기절할 것 같이 앞이 핑 도는데, 이러다 사람이 미치거나 싶었다. 그때, 성경을 집어 들고 기도하였다. ‘하나님 나에게 말씀을 주세요! 이것을 어떻게 보시고 계셨어요? 이 사실을 내가 어떻게 받아들여야 합니까?’ 무작정 그날 입을 부분을 찾아서 성경을 펼쳤다.

By the time I was seven or eight months pregnant, or throughout the whole pregnancy, I was suffering from indescribable mental stress, and I was having a depressing day, crying everyday. I couldn’t bear the thought that my child had become like this because of his parents, and I was overwhelmed with guilt and grief. I could not breathe, I could

faint, but I could not help myself. Then, I picked up the Bible and prayed. 'God, tell me! How did you see this? How should I take this truth?' I opened the Bible, looking for the part to read that day. (Parent Participant A)

The feeling of guilt and shame described is feeling responsible for their child's diagnosis, and denial in not wanting to accept the diagnosis. In the theme of Autism, there was a parent who shared and conveyed their thoughts and feelings through the passage of the Bible. This reflection showed that guilt and shame played a large role in the initial experience of having a child diagnosed with ASD. However, at the same time, spirituality was utilized as a coping mechanism and provided them with comfort or hope. A parent believed there was something that their family could contribute in a positive way and believed in God's plan for their child and family. This participant delivered the determination of a parent who takes actions to bring about changes, to stay strong for their child and move forward with a strong sense of agency. There were two more biblical passages that they shared and they stated that they wished everyone would experience that 'disability and poverty, the worries of this world are nothing before God.' According to Kwon (2015), engaging in positive religious coping behaviours includes trying to find a lesson from God in the stressful event, leaving the rest in God's hands, and thinking about how one's life is part of larger spiritual force, and these are helpful coping mechanisms.

평안을 너희에게 끼치노니 곧 나의 평안은 너희에게 주노라. 내가 너희에게 주는것은 세상이 주는것과 같지 아니하니라. 너희는 마음에 근심하지도 말고 두려워 하지도 말라. (요한복음 14:27)

내 아이가 어떠한 장애가 있던 주어진 삶에서 하나님을 가장 사랑하며 이 세상에 주신 그 사명만큼 순종하며 살다가 하나님께 간다면, 그것이 가장 성공한 삶일 것이다. 나와 가족의 목표는 내 아이들과 내가 그 어떤 상황에라도 하나님을 가장 사랑하며, 그분의 말씀대로 살다가 그분께 돌아가는 것이다.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

If my child, in a given life with any disability, loves God the most and lives as obedient as the mission given to this world, then it will be the most successful life. The goal of me and my family is that my children and I love God most in any situation, and live according to His words and go back to Him. (Parent Participant A)

The 'autism' questions for parents included:

1. Before your child's diagnosis, what did you know about Autism?
2. When you heard your child's diagnosis, how did you feel?
3. How do you feel about Autism now?
4. Do you think that persons with disabilities are viewed negatively in Korean society? Is it different in Canada?

Questions for colleagues included:

1. Do you think that Korean Canadian families as a cultural group have a distinct view of Autism?
2. Do you find that your Korean Canadian clients have more questions or are missing information about Autism compared to your non-Korean Canadian clients?
3. Do you think that a family's cultural background affects how they feel about Autism?
4. Do you think that persons with disabilities are viewed negatively in Korean society? Differently than how they are viewed in Canada?

Parents and colleagues chose to respond to the question on how Korean society viewed persons with disabilities negatively. These negative responses might include wide reaching systemic manifestations or on the other hand they may manifest in microaggressions. The Park (2017) study found the following:

Microaggression refers to diverse discriminatory acts that are incessant, often gratuitous, and subtle offenses to certain categories of human beings because of their ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, or disability. Initially, microaggression was primarily a concept encompassing the psychological and emotional aspects of discrimination experienced by racial and ethnic minorities. (p.919)

According to Park microaggressions against persons with disabilities can be caused by a lack of understanding of the characteristics of disability or sensitivity to the damage caused by conflicts of interest.

Very sadly, I believe persons with disabilities are viewed negatively in Korea society compared to Canadian society - both physical and developmental. I feel that Korean people think that autism is some kind of an 'illness' where it can be or has to be "cured," perhaps with good educations or a temporary phase where a child can grow out of it. I think this kind of mentality can cause great stress on the child and could result in a unhealthy relationship with the child with autism. It is important to believe and encourage the best for any child, and education is indeed

important. But the fact that people view autism as 'something to be cured or solved' is not a healthy view. Every child is different, they all deserve to be loved regardless and be accepted as they are. Acknowledging ones weakness and strength by accepting and loving on them has to take in place prior to anything! Really listening to their voice, even if they are non-verbal. I believe everyone has a voice to communicate. Then, the most effective support can be done. (Colleague Participant D)

One of the parents highlighted and expressed concern that there is not enough support for children with autism in Korea. Another participant reported that the nature of Korean culture was designed for limited acceptance of people with special needs. According to Shin (2002), the South Korean culture is a culture where shame may be part of social norms, which is why, rather than declaring that their child may have special needs, issues were often dealt with through long-term solitary coping, family involvement, and use of primary care services, that led to a delay in contact with specialized mental health services and entry into treatment. Kwon (2015) described that deep down inside Korean immigrants have a tendency to hush and be quiet about their child with special needs even though they themselves have come to a place of much acceptance, because they want to avoid judgement or questions from the Korean population (p.136).

4. Do you think that persons with disabilities are viewed negatively in Korean society? Is it different in Canada?

한국은 장애를 가진 사람들을 확실히 부정적으로 보며, 지원도 턱없이 부족하다. 일단 사회 분위기나 사람들의 인식, 모든 시설물들이 장애를 갖춘 사람이 살기 힘들게 되어있다. 캐나다는 좀 더 장애에 대한 배려나 지원 면에서 월등히 잘 돼있고, 사람들의 인식 또한 부정적이지 않다는 것을 자주 느낀다. 특히 장애를 갖고 있는 사람들이 외부 활동을 많이 하는 것이 한국과 큰 차이이다.

South Korea certainly sees people with disabilities negatively, and there is a huge lack of support. First of all, social atmosphere, people's awareness, and all the facilities are hard for people with disabilities to live in. I often feel that Canada is far better in terms of care and support for disabilities, and people's perceptions are not negative. Especially, people with disabilities in Canada engage in a lot of outside activities compare to people in Korea. (Parent Participant A)

A participant also discussed about prejudice. It is unfortunate that the view of children with autism remains unchanged and people in Korea still don't know much about autism. Participants experienced prejudice with their friends and relatives, and the more prejudice the participants felt, the less they were likely to want to share and

interact with others because, according to Kwon, Koreans believe that the group's well being is much more important than that of the individual (Kwon, 2015).

3. How do you feel about Autism now?

사람의 성격이나 기질, 적성이 셀 수 없고 각 사람이 다르듯 자폐를 가진 아이들 또한 참 다양한 모습으로 자아가 형성되어 있는 듯하다. 그들의 생각 속에 어떤 지식이, 감정이 쌓여 있을지 우리의 판단보다 훨씬 깊고 넓고 섬세하다고 본다. 다만 적절히 그것들을 세상에 공유하지 못하고 이용하지 못함이 안타깝다.

Just as the personality, temperament, and aptitude of a person are numerous and each person is different, children with autism also seem to have their own self-identity. I think what knowledge they have in their thoughts is much deeper, wider, and more detailed than our judgement. It is unfortunate that their knowledge is not properly shared and used with the world. (Parent Participant B)

How we view identity and personhood of those with ASD most certainly intersects with cultural discourses. As Lee and Bursztyn (2011) state, “these culturally informed perspectives mediate how people make sense of disability and respond to people with disabilities. Values and stigma are often associated with people with disabilities, but these are far from uniform across impairments, cultures, and traditions” (p.16). As one researchers puts it, in the contest between “typical” and “atypical” conceptions of identity, therapy can become viewed as an urgent rescue mission for parents who have a child with autism, a sort of hostage situation where parents and ‘experts’ are hailed to heroically recover the ‘authentic’ child from the captor, autism. But sadly in such a conception, the identity and personhood of the individual is not recognized for what it is, but instead perceived and constructed as “buried” underneath autism - and, thus, recognition and celebration of the person deferred to some future moment (Hart, 2014).

In terms of Theme 2 journals, they provoked these questions for me as a practitioner. Do I do enough to support my clients and families in challenging limiting or negative views of identity and personhood for those on the autism spectrum? What are common conceptions and misconceptions about personhood and identity for students with autism, and how can my own practices as an educator support my families living with autism in expressing and developing their personhood, especially when there may be differing or even clashing cultural preconceptions about ASD between the blended perspectives of Korea and Canada, for my Korean Canadian clients?

6.3.3. Theme 3: School/Daycare



Figure 6.5. Dialogic journal by colleague participant F

Generally speaking, Korean culture has been largely influenced by Confucianism, with its emphasis on hierarchical human relationships, obedience, harmony, and respect for authority figures (Clarke-Stewart, Lee, Allhusen, Kim & McDowell, 2006). Korean parents believe that they know best for their children and that their exercise of authority reflects their caring for their children; most parents are extensively involved in their children's choices, from daily routines to colleges and spouses (Lehrer, 1988). These Confucian cultural values mean that in their efforts to achieve harmonious interpersonal relationships, Korean parents and children are unlikely to express thoughts that conflict with the views of professionals. In addition to language barriers, different communicative styles cause many Korean-Canadian parents to find building partnerships with professionals difficult. According to studies, these

parents are more likely than others to be silent and unassertive with professionals; similarly, they listen and follow professionals' opinions without disagreeing or asking questions, since asking questions could be seen as a challenge to another person's knowledge and authority that could result in loss of face (Park, Turnbull & Park, 2011). Thus, a smile and nod from Korean parents could be misinterpreted by others as a sign of understanding and agreement when in fact neither existed (Yao, 1993).

The 'School/Day care' questions for parents included:

1. Do you think children with disabilities are viewed negatively in school?
2. Do you think the school or day care provides enough support to your child?
3. Do you feel that the school or day care listens to you at meetings?
4. Do you have enough help? What do you need?

Questions for colleagues included:

1. Do you think that Korean Canadian children with disabilities face more challenges in receiving appropriate help while in school or day care?
2. Do you think the school or day care should be more aware of a family's cultural background in order to provide sufficient support to children with disabilities?
3. Do you feel that the school or day care may treat English-as-a-second-language families differently than English-as-a-first-language speaking families at meetings?
4. Do you feel that the needs of families of various cultural and language backgrounds are adequately addressed as a specific topic during team meetings at school and day care?

According to Welterlin and LaRue (2007), "The concepts of normalization and health differ across cultures and have a significant impact on intervention-based decisions" (p.752). Sue and Sue (2003) warned professionals from viewing 'normal' behavioural and quality of life indicators as a universal phenomenon. For example, compare to upper to middle class European American families, independence and community-based competence tends to be less valued by Asian cultures.

One colleague participant described their experience of supporting Korean Canadian child with autism at preschool setting. They referred specifically to the difficulty assisting a child with the teachers' very limited attention and lack of support.

My personal experience assisting a Korean Canadian child with Autism at the child's preschool was a challenge. I am not sure if the teachers assumed that the child did not speak English but the teachers paid very minimal attention to the child that I was assisting. It was frustrating for me to see that I was playing the teacher role when I am supposed to be assisting the child to be more involved and learn social appropriateness. I tried to keep my distance from the child so the teacher could interact with the child however, when the child was trying to approach the teacher for attention, the teacher would ignore the child or look at me and ask me to come. Therefore, the child had very little interaction with the teacher compared to the other children. Furthermore, another challenge for Korean Canadian child being in a preschool is that unless the child has a Korean helper or an English speaking parent, communication between the helper and the parent is very limited. Communication between the parent of the child and the child's helper such as, Speech Pathologist, Behaviour Interventionist, or Education Assistant is crucial. The child's helper needs to know the level of the child's academic ability as well as his/her favourite food, toy, song, etc. In order for the child to learn and enjoy school, I am confident in saying that communication is the most important factor in a child's school life; preferably, verbal communication. (Colleague Participant E)

Interestingly, some parent participants described schools as unsupportive or lacking in understanding of educating children diagnosed with autism.

1. Do you think children with disabilities are viewed negatively in school?

잘 모르겠다. 느껴보지 않았지만, 확실히 보통의 아이들과 대하는 게 다를 것 같다.

I don't know. I haven't felt it, but I'm sure it would be different from dealing with other typical kids. (Parent Participant C)

2. Do you think the school or day care provides enough support to your child?

부모의 마음에 흡족할 만큼 하기 어렵다는 것을 알지만, 충분한 도움을 받고 있다고 생각하지 않는다.

I know it's hard to please all parents, but I don't think I'm getting enough help. (Parent Participant A)

As with these comments, scholars have noted that parents tended to show that they are not fully trusting and relying on schools and teachers. Welterlin and LaRue (2007) asserts that "It is important not to blame the professional for this deficit" (p.757); it

is because there is possibility that the professional has not been adequately trained to work with families in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. They might simply need direction from the families or if a professional or teacher does not ask questions about family, values, expectation, concerns, and goals it is the responsibility of the family to disclose and discuss this information (Welterlin & LaRue, 2007, p.757). According to Boorkman-Franzee (2004), there are criteria that parents should use to evaluate collaboration, including: (1) mutually agreed upon goals; (2) shared expertise; (3) shared responsibility; (4) ecocultural fit; (5) collaborative problem solving; (6) a strength-based approach.

Scholars make the case that it is critical if these criteria are not met families should have direct conversation/discussion with the professional and teachers. Welterlin and LaRue (2007) stated as “Collaborative relationships should be a norm for parents and individuals with ASD for effective intervention. Therefore, lack of collaboration should be a red flag that signals the need to step back and re-evaluate the progress of the intervention process” (p.757). However, as noted previously, differing cultural values and communication styles of Korean Canadians may make it unlikely that parents will speak up about lack of consultation and collaboration. Unfortunately, according to Kwon (2015), since there is lack of research regarding the Korean immigrant parents, it makes it difficult for professionals and teachers to provide adequate and necessary services to Korean immigrants.

As far as Theme 3 dialogic journals, they have provoked me to understand that my positionality as a practitioner includes encountering cultural discourses, other contextual discourses, and my own autobiographical trajectory, and I have embraced these questions: What do I learn by examining the intersection of my past, present, and future as a practitioner? What can I learn by examining how culture impacts my own “stance” and the “stances” of my peers, my students, and my students’ families? What strategies and educational approaches can I share with my students, families, and peers to support understanding within the education system?

6.3.4. Theme 4: Family

I feel sad as a parent with special needs children. They need to get the support they needed as early as possible. However, that's not the case for our culture. (Parent Participant C)



Figure 6.6. Dialogic journal by colleague participant E

As found at various moments of the dialogic journaling, both parents and colleagues reflected on some of the stresses and worries families face living with autism. Overall, these reflections are consistent with what scholars have noted; specifically, that parents of children with disabilities face a significantly higher level of feeling pressure to support their child and are more likely to feel hopelessness and fear regarding treatment, education, and their child's condition. In addition, according to the research, the stress that parents experience such as financial strain, disruptions in social and family relationships, interruptions at work, and sadness and guilt, affect other family members when they are unable to adequately process and relieve their stress (as cited in Brannon & Heflinger, 2001 Kwon 2015).

The 'Family' questions for parents included:

1. What are the strengths of your family?
2. What are positive contributions that your child makes to your family?
3. What are your favourite family activities?

Questions for colleagues included:

1. When you reflect on your Korean Canadian clients, what are the strengths of these families?
2. What are positive contributions that culture makes to family life?

3. Have you noticed that favourite family activities are tied to cultural background with any of your families?

However, it is worth noting that all parents spoke of how their experiences with their child were not always challenging and there were many moments that were rewarding, touching, and pleasing. They also commonly wrote about the positive contributions the child made to their lives, although they did not typically write about what the child did for them, but instead tended to reflect on characteristics of the child. And it is worth noting they did not express concerns about any possible negative impact on siblings.

1. What are the strengths of your family?

함께 끝까지 뛰어야 할 하나의 운명체라는 결속력이 우리 가족의 힘이다. 또 장애만을 바라보고 주저하고 낙심하기보다는 할 수 있는 것들을 즐기는 것에 만족, 집중하는 것 또한 우리의 장점이다.

The power of our family is we focus on family cohesion and we believe in our family as one destiny. Also, it is our strength to be satisfied and focused on what we can do rather than just looking at obstacles and hesitating and being discouraged. (Parent Participant B)

2. What are positive contributions that your child makes to your family?

남동생에게는 둘도 없는 친구고, 부모에게는 기쁨을 준다. 성격이 온유하고 항상 웃고 있고 재미있는 아이라서 함께 있으면 즐겁다. 그리고 아이로 인해 많은 편드나 도움의 손길을 받고 있다.

He is the best friend to his younger brother and gives joy to his parents. He has a gentle personality, is always smiling and funny, so it's our pleasure to be with him. And I get a lot of funds/support and help because of my child. (Parent Participant A)

Interestingly, none of the colleague participants answered questions under the theme of 'family'. However, through many points in the dialogic journals, the colleagues' care and empathy for the families were evident. Speaking from my own experience working with educator teams, empathy is certainly evident but in general colleagues are hesitant to "pry" into family life or seemingly cross boundaries with clients. What I sense is that we, as educators, prefer to safely stay away from these perceived intrusions into family privacy, and put most of our focus on giving best practices advice to families and then measuring or monitoring the effectiveness of that advice's implementation. Our hesitancy to reach out more fully to families to ask how they are feeling and to possibly hear expressions of stress or worry on their parts, is not due to lack of empathy but

rather due to our focus on objective measures, objective measures which keep our relationships “appropriately” distant.

On the other hand, Kwon (2015) states that in order to understand the family fully and build more meaningful relationships with both the culturally diverse and special needs populations, it is critical to expose practitioners to training which will increase awareness of multiculturalism and immigrant family experiences. These steps would in turn support forming rapport and trust, and would give the family a sense of understanding to keep them returning for further help. As well, professionals would be better versed in providing guidelines suited to the cultural beliefs of the family.

The dialogic journaling on Theme 4 were very provocative for me, as I could not help feeling a sense of discomfort at first. Truly delving into the family, including the very personal areas of worries, fears, as well as other positive emotions, is something I felt was contrary to my training. Then I realized that, for many years, I have been subconsciously separating my subjective self from my supposedly “objective” work. But through my ongoing encounters with diversity - including cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, and neurodiversity specifically - I have begun to question my own presuppositions in separating subjective identity from “objective” knowledge. Not only do I now question systematized approaches in education based exclusively or mostly upon a presumption of essentialist, purportedly objective measurements and outcomes, but also I have recognized the importance of realizing and articulating the connections of my work to my own identity, culture, family roots, personal history, and self-awareness. With this in mind, I am provoked to ask these questions for myself as a practitioner: In what ways can I improve my practice to further enhance my empathy in order to better support families’ emotional safety and expression? How can I encourage and support my colleagues and teams to safely yet authentically reach out to encounter families on a more emotional plane? How can we as educators open up and support dialogues likely to involve some difficult topics like fear and stress, along with more positive topics including pride in the family, love of culture, and family and cultural identity as sources of family resiliency?

6.3.5. Theme 5: Future

There is a Korean expression, "All history is timeless" meaning that the past is alive today, we need to learn from the past and it needs to inform our present, both the happy and the painful moments. Can you learn from your past rather than run from it?



Figure 6.7. Dialogic journal by parent participant B

나는 어렸을 때 피아노를 7~8 년 가까이 배웠지만 지금은 악보를 읽으면 손이 느려지고 손을 부지런히 움직이다 보면 악보를 놓친다. 결국 연주를 제대로 못한다는 이야기다. 피아노를 배우지 않은 사람과 누구 앞에서 곡하나를 연주 못하는 것은 똑같으나 그렇다고 피아노를 배웠던 그 시간들이 그저 무의미하게 없어지는 건 아니지 않나? 보통의 사람들이 흥미를 가지고 무언가를 배우고 그러다 그것이 자신이 길이 되기도 하고 그냥 그것을 경험해본 것에 만족하고 돌아서기도 하듯 내 아이 또한 그럴 수 있길, 그걸 부모로서 지원하고 응원하는 것이 나의 목표다. 아이의 삶의 질이 향상되도록 하는 것에 목표를 두고 치료나 경험 방향을 두고 있다. 또 부모가 아이를 위해 희생하는 것은 당연하나 그것이 지나치지 않도록 그로 인해 부모가 지치거나 소진되지 않도록 조절하는 것 또한 우리 가정의 목표다. 함께 가는 것, 갈 곳이 있을 때도 있고 헤맬 때도 있고 걸기도 하고 뛰기도 하고 때론 쉬기도 하고 누군가를 기다려주기도 하는.. 그러다 문득 나 혼자 걸어도 지난 날의 시간들이 지혜가 되고 힘이 되어 완주할수 있는것.

When I was young I learned to play piano for nearly seven or eight years. But now I can easily notice that my hands are playing slowly or separately if I focus on looking at the notes. In the end, I can't play any song complete. It's pretty much the same case- one like myself who can't play a tune in front of anyone and another one who can't play piano because he or she hasn't learned how to play the piano. But the time I've learned the piano doesn't just go away for nothing, does it? My goal is to cheer and support my child as a parent. Just like everyone else, I hope my son gets interested in learning something and then it becomes a way for him or he can just quit after being satisfied with

having lots of experiences. The goal is to improve the quality of my child's life and the direction of treatment or experience. It is also natural for parents to sacrifice for their children, but it is also our goal to control ourselves so that we do not get tired or exhausted. Going together, sometimes we've got a place to go, sometimes we've got lost, sometimes we've got to walk, sometimes we've got to run, sometimes we've got to rest, sometimes we've got to wait for someone.. But even if I walk by myself, I can finish the race because the past has been a source of wisdom and strength. (Parent participant B)

The 'Future' questions for parents included:

1. Do you worry about your child's future? What worries you?
2. Do you talk or socialize with other parents from school or day care?
3. Do you talk about your child's Autism with friends and family?
4. What are your goals for your child? What are your goals for yourself as a parent? What are your goals for the family as a whole?

Questions for colleagues included:

1. Do Korean Canadian families have the same worries as other families?
2. Do you encourage your clients to talk or socialize with other parents from school or day care?
3. Do you encourage your clients to talk about their child's Autism with their friends and family?
4. Do Korean Canadian families have the same goals as other families?

All parents expressed deep concern about the dependency of their children and their future. Their responses showed some anxiety as they worried about how their children will be able to cope when the parents are no longer alive or able to look after them.

1. Do you worry about your child's future? What worries you?

나중에 내가 죽어도 직업을 갖고 자립해서 혼자 살아갈 수 있을까?

Will my son be able to get a job and live on his own? (Parent Participant A)

2. Do you talk or socialize with other parents from school or day care?

않한다.

No. (Parent Participant A)

No. (Parent Participant B)

3. Do you talk about your child's Autism with friends and family?

이야기를 한다. 가능한 밝게 이야기하게 된다. 힘들긴 하지만 자폐가 마냥 절망과 불행의 아이콘이 아니라고, 우리 안에도 그 나름의 기쁨과 즐거움이 있다고 나누고 싶다. 방법이 다르긴 하지만 자신의 생각, 감정을 우리에게 표현하고 있으며 그것을 조금 유심히 살펴보면 알 수 있음을 말한다. 또 부모 자식으로서 하루하루의 생활이 보통의 가정들에게서 그렇게 다르지 않다고 이야기한다.

Yes, I try to talk as brightly as possible. Although it is difficult, I would like to say that autism is not an icon of despair and misery- we have our own happiness and joy. Though different in ways, my son expresses his feelings and his own thoughts to us- they can be seen by looking at them carefully. Also, as parents and child, our daily life is not so different from other families. (Parent Participant B)

Interestingly, the parent participants all stated they do not talk or socialize with other parents from school or day care. Negative beliefs and stigmas can affect the self-esteem of individuals and hinder the inclusion process. According to research, some groups of Asian parents experience moderate levels of emotional stress and difficulty accessing social services because of language barriers (as cited in Ryan & Smith, 1989). Specifically, researchers emphasize that Korean family affairs that are not deemed appropriate are kept isolated and hidden in order for people to fulfill their role as a functioning member of society (Kwon, 2015). Emotions are not generally made public when experienced, as willpower is utilized in order to overcome hardships (Kim, 1997). Due to these cultural values as already noted in this and previous chapters and as reflected in the existing literature, people may experience or fear backlash or hesitation from family and society when it comes to sharing too publicly about their child with ASD.

One of the colleague participants expressed their concerns regarding lack of interactions between Korean Canadian parents and other parents from school. According to Chung and Lim (2012), four elements comprise the concept of sense of community: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (p.351).

Membership is a feeling of being part of one's community and that one has a place in it. Influence is an awareness that the community affects one's life, and one also makes a difference in the community through cooperation with other members. Integration and fulfillment of needs refer to a sense that the community fulfills one's needs. Finally, shared emotional

connection is a perception of closeness, bonding, and shared values among members of a community (p.351).

When joining a new community, such as when Korean Canadian parents send their child to day care or school, if there's no bonding with other parents then an important element of resiliency may be lost as a result. In addition, connecting with other parents would enhance the sense of being empowered to speak up to teachers or care givers about their child's education, something which may be challenging for these parents as previously discussed in this chapter and previous chapters.

I definitely encourage my clients to interact with other parents from school, especially if there's a child who has positive interaction with the child that I work with. I believe that having a friend makes a lot of difference in a child's school life and has a positive influence. Many of the children that I worked with are very observant, although I never thought they were. I noticed that autistic children are influenced by those who they follow and the environment around them. Therefore, socializing with other parents from school and building a positive relationship with other parents will open up more opportunities for the child to have positive influence and interaction. Furthermore, parents can gain many sources from other parents such as, extracurricular activities, appropriate social behaviours for the child's age, behaviours that other children noticed about their child. Interaction with other children is very important, especially those with autism, and parents are the ones who have the power to open such opportunities or to close them. (Colleague Participant F)

Kwon (2015) described that immigrants are more likely to rely heavily on the social support of the extended family rather than that of friends, neighbors, or professionals. Research shows that in regard to receiving limited or no support, the lack of social and support networks leads to social isolation and stress, particularly when the immigrant family encounters difficult situations. This is noted to be especially true for parents of a child with ASD or special needs as more support is required in order to keep the family functioning, adjusting and coping (p.144).

The dialogic journals for Theme 5 underscore for me how families may struggle with a paradox which we as educators should be aware of and should try to mitigate. The paradox is that families have high hopes as well as worries about their children's future, yet at the same time they may be inclined due to cultural and family values to withdraw within the family structure rather than reach out and demand help for their children's education to the wider community. I say this is paradoxical because community involvement is ultimately essential for the child's future. Recent articles have

predicted a large surge in the need for living and care solutions for adults with autism, with a gap in the available services and supports. The community needs to prepare for the future of these adults living with autism since parents, of course, will not live forever. Parental involvement and advocacy are essential to push for sufficient community resources for education, living arrangements, ongoing care, employment and other services for their children when they “age out” of school-aged services. Yet as noted above, membership and feeling part of a community may be challenges for some parents (Gerhardt & Lainer, 2011).

As an educator I need to recognize the changing notions of personhood and identity for students with autism. Ultimately recognition of people’s neurodiversity as fully legitimate personhood needs to go beyond the family boundaries and be recognized in the wider community so that individuals living with autism will be entitled to and receive full membership in our communities. Families encounter various community attitudes and various levels of social support towards their children with disabilities. Families need to be equipped and encouraged to manage these encounters and advocate for what is best for their children at a societal level. We need to challenge ourselves to provide better techniques/approaches within the home and school setting to support, foster and celebrate the unique personhood of all our students. Education in this form is about the ability to perceive what might be possible beyond “conventional” methods.

The dialogic journaling in Theme 5 provoked these questions for me as a practitioner: How do my particular perspectives, viewpoints, and ideological lenses influence my decisions as a practitioner, and how do these decisions impact students, families, colleagues? What can be learned from the specific case of how my values, perspectives, and practices intersect with Korean-Canadian students’ and families’, and further intersect with societal discourses about “typical” and “atypical” personhood and identity? What does full community membership mean for neurodiverse persons, now and in the future, and what role do practitioners play in supporting this?

Step 1 “Dialogue Part A”:

For each group of participants in my inquiry- families, colleagues, and my autobiographical self- a series of structured dialogues is planned.

Participants are given a set of open ended questions pertaining to childhood, school, neurodiversity, community/culture, and future aspirations- reflection questions.

Participants can choose to respond to these questions using flexible forms of “journaling” including written stories, poetry, videos, artwork, performance (or any combination).



Step 2 “Dialogue Part B”:

Each participant’s work from Part A is shared with one to three other participant(s) from within the project. Participants can elect to share 1) with the researcher only 2) also with someone from their own group e.g. one family with another family 3) also with someone from another group e.g., one family with an educator (colleague group). Every participant will have the opportunity to review work from at least one other participant in the project.

The respond to the work for another participant, participants will be given the sample and a set of instructions and asked to respond following the "instructions to respondents". These responses will be shared with the researcher only.

Figure 6.8. Dialogical journaling methodology

“Step 1 Dialogue Part A” was highly provocative for me as a practitioner, and laid the groundwork for the stimulating expedition into “Step 2 Dialogue Part B”, discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7. Dialogic Responses to Journals

My act of drawing is an act of gathering my pieces. It is a gathering of pieces of my memory and my internal dialogue through the research process. It can be more memorable than many written texts and therefore more likely to have influence on me and my thinking. According to Eisner (1995), “artistically crafted novels, poems, films and paintings, and photography have the capacity to awaken us from our stock responses” (p.2). The use and placement of my artwork seeks to bring the reader, including myself, into the experience of inquiry, rather than a simple explanatory telling. Artwork is a strengthened experience, one that simultaneously engages our senses and emotions. Creating my own artwork has given me the ability to feel alive to the research experience and to discover what I didn’t know and to see what I never noticed before. This reflexive art is an ongoing expression which continues in my professional and personal practice, outside the formal boundaries of this paper.

This chapter continues the discussion of the methodology, design, and results of the qualitative dialogic journaling study. The chapter shares the results of the second part of the qualitative research, where participants reviewed each other’s journals and reflected on them.

7.1. Qualitative Methodology Part Two

7.1.1. Dialogic Responses: Double Voiced Discourse

All participants who completed Step 1 “Dialogue Part A”, were asked to respond in Step 2 “Dialogue Part B”. Each participant’s work from Part A is shared with one to three other participant(s) from within the project. Participants can elect to share 1) with the researcher only 2) also with someone from their own group e.g. one family with another family 3) also with someone from another group e.g., one family with an educator (colleague group). Every participant had the opportunity to review work from at least one other participant in the project. For Part B, participants were given the sample and a set of instructions (Appendix D) and asked to respond to the work of another participant. These responses were shared with the researcher only. Questions for “Dialogue Part B” included:

1. What emotion does this piece express? e.g., happy, joyful, lonely, thoughtful
2. Any other comments?

Writing is a tool of thought, and thought is internalized dialogue (Vygotsky 1962). According to Hylton and Lemons (1992), writing is both a process of exploration and discovery and a tool for learning content which enables the search for knowledge. Two sorts of dialogue provide a metacognitive dialogue between the participants and themselves, and a dialogue between the parent participant and the colleague participant. The format of exchanging journals is a combination of purposeful, heuristic writing and the dialogic, responsive structure create cognitive demands on the two participants to elaborate upon their thinking and to become involved in examining the situation both as their own knowledge increases and from the perspective of another person (Hylton & Lemons, 1992, p.198).

7.2. Results: The Story becomes a shared creation

Parent Participant A- Colleague Participant D

Shared Journal:

I made a collage that represents the "Canada" I am living in. I used different colors to avoid any cultural references. Although some ethnic groups or their cultures are more dominant (depending on the intensity or occupation of colors), altogether Canada is made beautiful as the whole collage is made harmonious. (Colleague Participant D)



Figure 7.1. Dialogic journal by colleague participant D

Response:

1. This piece presents vulnerability and expresses resentment towards how our human society has developed, specifically the Korean society.
2. The collage is a great representation of a multicultural society. As I look at the art work, when two colours overlap, it creates a new colour. In my perspective, that new colour represents the adaption into the Canadian culture while keeping our own culture. I believe that multiculturalism is all about adapting to other cultures and respecting other cultures. There are pros and cons about every culture and I believe that it is important to lubricate the positive. I also believe that communication and interaction between the two cultures is crucial and can improve the way we, as a multicultural society, approach children with autism or any kind of disability.

Parent Participant B- Colleague Participant F

Shared Journal:



Figure 7.2. Dialogic journal by colleague participant F

Response:

1. I felt loneliness in the illustration. I see paintings of paper Starbucks cups, a pop can, a person measuring by holding a ruler, etc in the illustration. The paintings seem like they are personally related to the person in the middle of the room, kneeling on the ground seemingly drawing another painting. Perhaps the person is trying to fit into these "social norms" or expressing regretful experiences from his or her past.
2. 많은 부모들이 아이의 장애의 원인을 알고 싶어하고 수많은 추측을 통해 억눌리고 죄책감에 시달리곤 한다. 물론 의학자들에게는 그 원인을 추측하는 것이 앞으로 인류를 위한 사명일 수도 있겠지만... 그저 한 장애아의 엄마로서는 "그만둬. 알 수도 없고 생각할수록 더 너와 아이를 지치게 만들 거야. 인간의 영역이 아니야"라고 말하고 싶다. 처음 아이의 장애를 안 이후로 나에게 why?는 없었다. 아니 생각하지 않으려 했다. 원인을 안다고 수술을 하거나 별도의 치료법이 없기에... 나에게 그저 why not 만이

있었다. 할 수 있는 한 모든 것을 try 하고 조금이라도 아이에게 발전이 있고 즐거움이 있으면 그것에서 또 한 번의 성공과 기쁨을 찾으려 했다.

Many parents want to know the cause of their child's disability and are often suppressed and guilt-stricken through countless speculations. Of course, for people in medical field, it may be their mission or task to find out the cause for mankind. But as a mother of child with disability, I would like to say "Stop it. We can't figure it out. The more you think about, the more you and your child get tired. It's not human territory." I haven't thought about 'why' since I found out my child's disability. No, maybe I did not want to think. I did not want to know. Because there are no medications that can cure autism or treat the core symptoms. I just had thought of 'why not.' Try everything I could and I just want to find another success and happiness from my child's little improvement and pure joy.

Shared Journal:

My personal experience assisting a Korean Canadian child with Autism at the child's preschool was a challenge. I am not sure if the teachers assumed that the child did not speak English but the teachers paid very minimal attention to the child that I was assisting. It was frustrating for me to see that I was playing the teacher role when I am supposed to be assisting the child to be more involved and learn social appropriateness. I tried to keep my distance from the child so the teacher could interact with the child however, when the child was trying to approach the teacher for attention, the teacher would ignore the child or look at me and ask me to come. Therefore, the child had very little interaction with the teacher compared to the other children. Furthermore, another challenge for Korean Canadian child being in a preschool is that unless the child has a Korean helper or an English speaking parent, communication between the helper and the parent is very limited. Communication between the parent of the child and the child's helper such as, Speech Pathologist, Behaviour Interventionist, or Education Assistant is crucial. The child's helper needs to know the level of the child's academic ability as well as his/her favourite food, toy, song, etc. In order for the child to learn and enjoy school, I am confident in saying that communication is the most important factor in a child's school life; preferably, verbal communication. (Colleague Participant E)

Parent Participant C- Colleague Participant E

I feel the frustration of the writer as she or he talks about the preschool teacher in the second paragraph. In my opinion, the preschool teacher; a. probably did not receive proper education to interact with students with autism, b. does not have the confidence to interact with one, c. or just ignorant and rude. It is a shame to hear such a case. I agree that communication is one of the key elements in a child's growth, whether it being between parents and supporting professionals or between the child and others around him. However, I believe there is something even more important: love. Some children with autism are non-verbal. I think people can still communicate with one using body language and

affection. By carefully observing the child's expressions, movement etc. one can notice what the child is communicating. It will most likely need patience but it is worth it. Same for people who do not speak the same language. If one cares deeply and dearly about another, and carefully observes and communicate with patience and love, relationship can be built. I believe in the long run, strong relationships are far more valuable than academic achievements. Coming back to the preschool teacher, I hope, although he/she might not have the adequate "skills" to interact with the child, that he/she will interact with affection. A warm smile can brighten up one's day. (Parent Participant C)

Researcher- Colleague Participant E



Figure 7.3. Dialogic journal response by researcher

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2018

I am sitting across the table from my student, passing work to him/her, available to observe and assist. But this "table work", a set and predetermined curriculum, is the focus. I found myself questioning my presuppositions about what constitutes education. Play, interaction, social learning, mediation – these concepts were becoming very important to me. My "expert" paradigm of education was transforming at this point into an "interactive" and "exploratory" mode. I would describe this shift, visually and metaphorically, as an "excursion" view of education – where I and my student go on hands-on and exploratory "excursions" together (whether we are physically leaving the classroom and going out into the world, or perhaps just imaginatively taking journeys). My paradigm was shifting to one of "fellow travelers" on an educational journey". (Researcher)

Shared Journal:



As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

(John 9:1-3)

내가 임신 7~8 개월 때쯤, 아니 온 임신기간을 통으로, 말로 설명할 수도 없는 심적 고통을 받고 있었고, 매일같이 울면서 우울한 나날을 보내고 있었다. 못한 부모 탓에 아이가 이렇게 된 것이었나 생각에 엄청난 죄책감과 슬픔이 나를 덮치는데, 내가 감당할 수가 없었다. 숨이 쉬어지지 않고, 기절할 것 같이 앞이 핑 도는데, 이러다 사람이 미치는구나 싶었다. 그때, 성경을 집어 들고 기도하였다. ‘하나님 나에게 말씀을 주세요! 이것을 어떻게 보시고 계셨어요? 이 사실을 내가 어떻게 받아들여야 합니까?’ 무작정 그날 읽을 부분을 찾아서 성경을 펼쳤다.

By the time I was seven or eight months pregnant, or throughout the whole pregnancy, I was suffering from indescribable mental stress, and I was having a depressing day, crying everyday. I couldn’t bear the thought that my child had become like this because of his parents, and I was overwhelmed with guilt and grief. I could not breathe, I could faint, but I could not help myself. Then, I picked up the Bible and prayed. ‘God, tell me! How did you see this? How should I take this truth?’ I opened the Bible, looking for the part to read that day. (Parent Participant A)

Colleague Participant D- Parent Participant A

1. The piece has portrayed mainly the emotion of initial despair and ultimately hope in me.
2. It reflects the raw reality of this family with pure honesty and detail. But regardless of their individual hardship, it is promising to

see their hope and contentment in trusting the Lord shine through.

Researcher- Parent Participant A



Figure 7.4. Dialogic journal response by researcher

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2019

We must be aware of the environments we create, the interactions we encourage in our students, the avenues of inquiry we choose to investigate, and the tools or strategies of exploration we use". (Fels & Belliveau, 2008)

Shared Journal:

3. How do you feel about Autism now?

사람의 성격이나 기질, 적성이 셀 수 없고 각 사람이 다르듯 자폐를 가진 아이들 또한 참 다양한 모습으로 자아가 형성되어 있는 듯하다. 그들의 생각 속에 어떤 지식이, 감정이 쌓여 있을지 우리의 판단보다 훨씬 깊고 넓고 섬세하다고 본다. 다만 적절히 그것들을 세상에 공유하지 못하고 이용하지 못함이 안타깝다.

Just as the personality, temperament, and aptitude of a person are numerous and each person is different, children with autism also seem to have their own self-identity. I think what knowledge they have in their thoughts is much deeper, wider, and more detailed than our judgement. It is unfortunate that their knowledge is not properly shared and used with the world. (Parent Participant B)

Colleague Participant E- Parent Participant B

Thoughts on Autism is one factor that Koreans should change their perspective on. From my experience, going to a Canadian school and interacting with Canadians loosens the negative perspective towards Autism in many Korean parents. However, they learn it the hard way.

As mentioned in my journal, Koreans have a negative view towards Special Needs. Many Korean parents get embarrassed about the way their child behaves or, they over educate them through a structured ABA program before going to school. On the other hand, Canadians are far more open and supportive towards the special needs. Many Canadian parents believe that autistic children learn from play and often provide more opportunity to interact with other children. In conclusion, it is very important for us to listen to the voice of those who have special needs. (Colleague Participant E)

Researcher- Parent Participant B

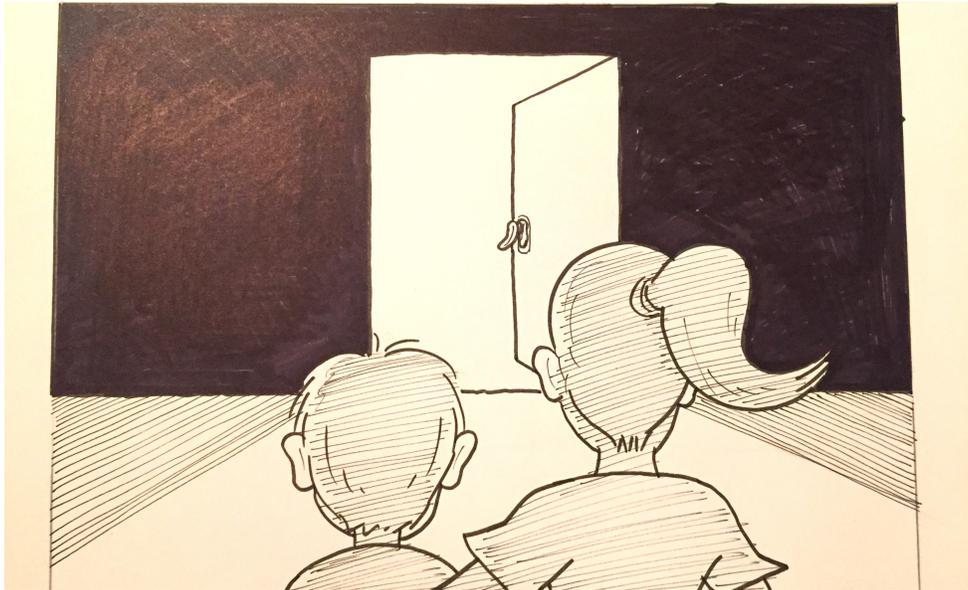


Figure 7.5. Dialogic journal response by researcher

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2019

If an outcomes-based view of education is firmly entrenched in a particular culture, our task is further complicated. With my eyes opened to how my own presuppositions of quantitative over qualitative, of objective over subjective were influenced by my early exposure to the Korean education system, I need to also take a broader view to ask how the culture as a whole is influenced by - and influences - these views on education. (Researcher)

Shared Journal:

1. Do you think children with disabilities are viewed negatively in school?

잘 모르겠다. 느껴보지 않았지만, 확실히 보통의 아이들과 대하는 게 다를 것 같다.

I don't know. I haven't felt it, but I'm sure it would be different from dealing with other typical kids. (Parent Participant C)

2. Do you think the school or day care provides enough support to your child?

부모의 마음에 흡족할 만큼 하기 어렵다는것을 알지만, 충분한 도움을 받고 있다고 생각하지 않는다.

I know it's hard to please all parents, but I don't think I'm getting enough help. (Parent Participant A)

Colleague Participant F- Parent Participant C

This statement presents vulnerability and expresses resentment towards how our human society has developed, specifically the Korean society. I could see parents' deep thoughts and their view of life. (Colleague Participant F)

Researcher- Parent Participant C

Paradox

"Why are you drinking?" the little prince asked.

"In order to forget" replied the drunkard.

"To forget what?" inquired the little prince, who was already feeling sorry for him.

"To forget that I am ashamed" the drunkard confessed, hanging his head.

"Ashamed of what?" asked the little prince who wanted to help him.

"Ashamed of drinking!" concluded the drunkard, withdrawing into total silence.

And the little prince went away, puzzled (Saint –Exupery, 1943).

Paradox: I still don't know the exact way of making a balance between the idea of "teaching with the heart" and "covering the curriculum" at the same time, although I feel I am getting closer to the balance. The field of education holds many theories, strategies and techniques, which purport to provide students more meaningful and memorable instruction. However, not too many of them place the emphasis on the emotional engagement of the student. "Engaged" education is about the ability to perceive what might be possible beyond "conventional" methods, while enhancing opportunities to tap into more complex psychological and creative aspects of learning. I believe we educate and are educated through experiences, exploring, and emotional engagement. (Researcher)

7.3. Interacting Voices: “Story as a result of the story”

Bakhtin (1981) introduced the idea of double-voiced discourse and the interrelated language of two different speakers. In my inquiry, there are two groups of participants- parents and colleagues- asked to produce “dialogic journals” which may be written narrative and/or drawing, art, visuals, collage, or recorded performance. The methodology started with “reflection questions” to stimulate the participants when beginning their journaling, thus they can choose to answer some or none, but these are meant as stimulating questions to help them with journaling but not in a prescriptive way. Each participant’s work from Part A is shared with one to three other participant(s) from within the project and participants are asked to respond to the work of another participant.

As mentioned in chapter 6, Korean culture has been largely influenced by Confucianism which emphasizes hierarchical human relationships and respect for authority figures (Clarke-Stewart, Lee, Allhusen, Kim & McDowell, 2006). Due to Confucian cultural values, Korean parents are unlikely to express their thoughts that conflict with the views of professionals. Furthermore, it is more complicated and difficult for Korean-Canadian parents to build partnerships with professionals because of language barriers and different communication styles. As someone of Korean descent, I generally agree with the Park, Turnbull & Park (2011)’s studies that Korean parents are more likely than others to be silent, prefer listening and following professionals’ opinions without disagreeing or asking questions since asking questions could be seen as a challenge to another person’s knowledge. From the practitioner’s point of view, the process of developing cultural competence is a continuous process yet necessary for interacting with diverse populations like Korean immigrant families (Kim, Kim & Kelly, 2006).

However, I was pleasantly surprised by the openness of the parent participants and their involvement in producing and responding to dialogic journals. When I first met parent participants, it seemed like they were not emotionally prepared to share their thoughts and experiences. But I was wrong. Through “dialogic journals” participants had opportunities to create new forms and interactions that call attention to the importance, meaning, and complexity of relationships between parents of children with autism and colleagues delivering services to children with autism.

Bruner (1971) explained there are three ways in which we learn: (a) enactively, i.e., we learn by doing, the hand predominates; (b) iconically, i.e., we learn by depiction of an image, the eye; (c) symbolically, i.e., we learn by restatement in words, the brain. Hylton and Lemons's (1992) study found the following:

What is striking about writing is that, by the nature of the process, all three ways of dealing with actuality are deployed simultaneously. If the most efficacious learning occurs when learning is reinforced, then the recursive process of writing involving hand, eye, and brain constitutes a powerful multirepresentational mode for learning.... Successful learning is engaged, committed, personal learning. (p.198)

The stories in "Dialogue B" interact with one another in ways which help both participants navigate and refine their understandings of one another and of the interrelated life stories that they are telling. While exploring the work of another participant, both writers must confront their own perspectives and preconceptions, adjusting expectations as the other voice presents new perspectives. Berthoff (1981) emphasized that when reading and writing work interactively, one informs and reflects on the other, fostering, supporting, and elaborating the learning process.

According to Orlando (2017), "story as a result of the story" is "the interaction of the narratives within it, influences the relationship of the writers and the way they understand one another and themselves" (p.220). Orlando (2017) described dialogical collaborative texts as following:

Double-voiced, dialogical collaborative texts have the potential not only to share multiple, intersecting versions of the involved parties' life stories with a reader, they also have the potential to reciprocally affect the tellers of these life stories. Through the interaction of their two voices, the writers can influence one another's understandings of their life stories and identities, and, in the case of narratives including life with disability, can influence others' understanding of the personhood and experience of the person with a disability as well. (p.221)

Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan (2001) found that exchanging insights about epistemologies and cognitive process may also be helpful in understanding differences between East and West. They emphasized that East Asians tend to be more holistic, whereas Westerns are more analytic in terms of their cognitive process. Holistic ways of thinking focuses on changing, a dialectical approach like acceptance of contradiction, the interconnectedness of the parts to the whole, and a Confucian-based preference for

a balance between opposing principles. On the other hand, analytic approaches emphasize the use of formal logic and rules, and avoidance of contradiction. Understanding these types of differences and considering the culture of Korean-Canadian families, implementing dialogic journals plays a critical role to create a mutually trusting relationship that can increase the quality and depth of work for child with autism. Orlando (2017) argues that "Relationality and interdependence are qualities that can help mitigate cultural emphasis on individualism and independence" (p.219). Through text, drawing, art, and visuals, two groups of participants were able to develop a dialogue which helps both participants move toward new ways of understanding their own and one another's stories.

7.4. A critically reflective practice

I entered the education field many years ago specifically to work with children with learning differences like autism. It is no exaggeration to say that my thinking about education has been transformed over the years, and continues to transform. Following from my many years of educational and clinical experience working with children with autism and their families, at this point in my professional life I will continue to urgently seek out the limitations and imperfections of the "educational blueprint" for supporting these children. I have come to challenge the assumptions that our students with autism lack social or imaginative capacity, and I have come recognize that notions of identity and personhood are embedded in social, cultural, medical and other discourses.

Brookfield (2017) described critical reflection is not a 'fix-it' approach and remedial tool; it's a stance of permanent inquiry and it provides opportunities to take informed actions. He also stated "It is easy to understand why reflection is often considered to be primarily a problem-solving process that's invoked only when something's not working" (Brookfield, 2017, p.79-80). Why bother to do this if everything is going along nicely? If things seem to be going well, parents, students and colleagues aren't complaining then critical reflection may seem totally unnecessary. However, according to Brookfield (2017), 'informed actions' are based on assumptions that have been carefully and critically investigated. They can be explained and justified to interested colleagues and students/families and their rationale can be clearly communicated (Brookfield, 2017, p.80). And it is important to communicate to colleagues, students and families the rationale behind the practice. Having a rationale

composed of my beliefs and working assumptions helps me to find a way and make decisions in difficult situations.

The expressiveness, honesty, and emotional depth of the dialogic journals creates a striking contrast to the tendency mentioned above for Korean parents, as a generalization, to tend to be more silent and agreeable when interacting with professionals. As demonstrated in Chapter 6, the parent participants also indicated they did not speak much with other parents in education settings and, in some cases, did not in general share much verbally with anyone else about the impacts of living with autism. Yet the dialogic journals tell a much different story. The overriding message for me as a practitioner, as discussed in the next chapter, is the need to engage families using different channels and opportunities than “the usual” verbal interactions and face-to-face team meetings that are the norm for professional communication with families.

Chapter 8.

Conclusion: Is emotion separate from science?

8.1. Implications from the dialogic journaling project

Beginning with the work of the Indigenous scholars mentioned in Chapter 1, and carrying on through exploration of the critical frameworks of practitioner inquiry along with narrative and phenomenological analysis and other related approaches, this project has caused me to acknowledge that I need to begin by turning inward. I need to recognize how my own identity and subjectivity - including my own presuppositions as a practitioner along with my own subjectivity which incorporates family and cultural identity - influence my work and my perspectives. But I have also learned that subjectivity is not a “bad” thing. Yes, we need to be conscious of our tendencies and preconceptions, but we should also view our subjectivity and identity as sources of strength, insight, resilience, and empathy.

This was an important shift for me personally. Despite my pride in my heritage, I always viewed it as “separate from” my “empirical” work of studying and then beginning my practice in Canada. As if what I felt was that my studying and practicing, in fact, meant accessing an important, fixed repository of “objective” knowledge I would be able to acquire and implement: objective knowledge un-influenced by subjective characteristics of identity, culture, personal and family history. This “separateness” of my subjective self and my supposedly “objective” work carried on for many years. It was only through sustained encounters with diversity - including cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, and neurodiversity specifically - that I began to question the self-imposed separation. In order to serve my communities and my students, I need to also understand myself, my personal history, my cultural context, and the origins of my own specific perspectives on my practice. The methodological approach of Practitioner Inquiry combined with a dialogical perspective (and dialogic journaling specifically) allowed me to do this while also creating new, unexpectedly rich channels for connecting with families and colleagues.

When I embarked on the project, I formulated the main research question for this study as a “study of qualitative data on the perceptions of autism, culture, and

personhood from parents of children with autism and from colleagues delivering services to children with autism and, specifically, the need for continuing to expand autism research and how this research specifically intersects Korean-Canadian families.” I was overall happy with the qualitative data gathering approach, which safely and ethically allowed me to engage in a highly reflexive, self-analytical, and collaborative dialogue with my practice and my participants. I felt that I successfully connected with and created a small “inquiry community”: “part of the culture of inquiry communities is that rich descriptive talk and writing help make visible and accessible the day-to-day events, norms, and practices of teaching and learning and the ways different teachers, students, administrators, and families understand them” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009 p.295). If, as stated in Chapter 1, my goal was to understand how sharing autobiographical stories could allow families and professionals, including myself, to find experiential overlaps, insights, and empathy through our moments of similarity as well as moments of uniqueness, I found that dialogic journaling allowed these connections to happen and I was on the whole satisfied with the effectiveness of this methodology. In particular, I was at times genuinely astonished at the expressiveness, frankness, and emotional intensity of some of the journals produced, particularly by the families. During the months spent gathering and experiencing dialogic journal writings, I spent considerable time reflecting on my own life and my views of being a South Korean immigrant who works with children with autism. Stories from participants were genuine, unique and valuable and their stories allowed me to reflect on

- how does my own autobiographical experience intersect with the narrated experiences of my students, their families, and my colleagues;
- how does my own cultural and family background intersect with the cultural perspectives of my students, their families, and my colleagues, including Korean-Canadian students and families; and
- what can be learned from the specific case of how my values, perspectives, and practices intersect with Korean-Canadian students’ and families’, and further intersect with cultural discourses and discourses about “typical” and “atypical” personhood and identity.

These reflections have led to growth both as a practitioner and as a researcher. As a practitioner, I have gained further understanding of Korean-Canadian immigrants who have a child with autism as they deal with acculturation and attempting to gain support while juggling two cultures. And I have enhanced my ability to take multiple

perspectives, recognize the significance of student, family and colleague epistemology, and acknowledge the importance of culturally relevant methodology to meet the needs of diverse students. As a researcher, I have become more aware of not only Korean-Canadian immigrants and their journey thorough acculturation, but also become more enlightened in the area of their stories and perspectives to having a child with autism in a new country. While the focus of this study was specifically Korean Canadian families, I believe insights gained can be applied at least in a general sense to inform practitioner approaches to working with other immigrant groups and with culturally diverse populations in general.

Dialogic journal writing, which involves self-reflection as well as empathy, taught me another perspective, that differences in socio-cultural values and individual differences all intertwined and influenced each other. I noticed that while it is difficult for Korean-Canadian families to contribute oral discussion or they may feel uncomfortable talking because of language barriers, I did not feel that their silence indicated a lack of participation. It is important to know it is okay not to talk if someone is not ready or if talking is not their preferred communication channel. It does not mean they do not participate - they can choose other approaches for delivering their thoughts. If “learning is a multifaceted process that involves the whole person and includes different states of thinking, feeling, behaving, and perceiving” (Naude et al., 2014, p.213), then dialogic journal writing is a methodology which can bring all these facets together. More importantly, dialogic journaling is just one example of alternative channels for communication; practitioners should be informed about culture and communication preferences, and adaptable in how they create communication opportunities for clients, families, and colleagues.

In this sense I believe my study promises to make a relevant contribution to my own practice and to the field. In particular, the exploration of emerging notions of how personhood and identity for students with autism is conceptualized within the education system, as intersecting with specific cultural discourses of families and practitioners, investigated within the Practitioner Inquiry framework and using the tools of self-study, reflective inquiry, and dialogic journaling, should generate new possibilities and models for myself and other practitioners.

In more fully recognizing the personhood of my students with ASD and embedding that awareness within the context of diversity with its many facets, including cultural diversity, I would now describe my practitioner paradigm as substantially different from when I began in this field. Now, I would describe my paradigm as one which views diversity – expressed via many facets, but which can be found flowing through stories and shared narratives – as critical to understanding education. This realization enables us not only to learn from one another but also to connect and, through connecting, appreciate our unique and diverse personhoods and relationships.

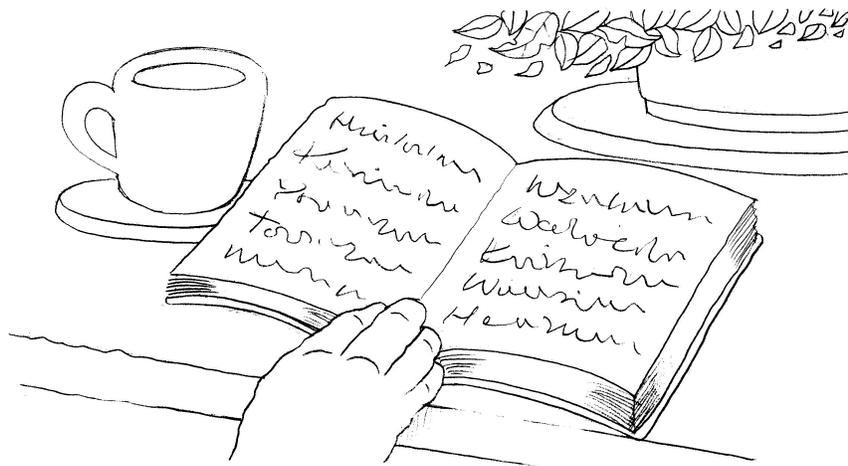


Figure 8.1. YK Journal Excerpt #9

Note. Illustration by Y.Kim, 2019

Teaching and my eyes are on numbers.

Silent and no expression.

A child looks at me but there is no dialogue.

I am from conformism.

Is education a factory to create identical minds?

Exploring and my eyes are on story.

Dialogue and self expression are valued.

A child looks at me and there is emotional engagement.

I am from humanism.

Education is a secret garden of beauty and possibility.

My journey requires me to recognize where I am from and where I am going, and also to recognize that my fellow travellers have their own particular backgrounds and aspirations, and to celebrate our collective diversity. I desire to continue to explore the sharing of perspectives, histories, narratives, traditions, culturally and linguistically specific communication styles, paradigms, places, and embodiments of diversity – ultimately to continue to evolve my practices and share my findings on how recognizing and celebrating this heterogeneity will help us better serve our diverse students and support enlightened educational approaches.

8.1.1. Next steps: accessing complementary/missing skills in the field of special education

Populations of multi-cultural and multi-language (English as additional language) students continue to expand in the Canadian education system, and this is also true of the special education field in particular.

Because the special education field is currently experiencing a tension of thought between the traditional medical model and the social diversity model of autism, this affects how students are taught, both in an educational and in a more broad community-based context. Within the Korean context for example, the ‘medical model’ of disability is mostly present, whereas many autistic members of society in Canada are considered to represent a form of diversity within the Canadian context rather than a member with a disability. Thus the exploration of how these two fundamental and foundational contexts intersect can enlighten both views in unique ways. This work will assist in the understanding within the multi-cultural Canadian special education context of how two fundamentally different views of autism can co-exist for Canadian educators teaching multilingual and multicultural families.

In the future, I am planning to gather qualitative data from Korean families and special education teachers in particular, to analyze parents and practitioners’ narratives and perceptions of autism, culture, and personhood particularly as embedded within the Korean education system. My research will compare family perceptions of the Korean public education system, and how these are similar and dissimilar to Korean-Canadian perceptions of public education, and how these perceptions affect families’ access to and understanding of autism education.

My qualitative data gathering from Korea through this future project may likely bring to Canada useful data to inform more in-depth, targeted programs which can be implemented to support families and create strong collaborations and exchange of ideas through systematic application within the Canadian special education context. This work will directly support the ongoing and expanding work of Canadian special education teachers and teacher training programs delivering services to multilingual and multicultural student populations, providing school resources, educator collaboration opportunities, and advocacy for specific populations. This includes engaging professional discourses through both “formal” channels such as Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) and curriculum design, and through “informal” channels such as department and school organizational culture and values, since the views of teachers and other educational staff fundamentally impact their inclusion and engagement of children with autism, and in the case of multi-cultural and multi-lingual learners, another intersectional layer of complexity continues to emerge which urgently needs to be addressed in our field.

8.1.2. Next steps: for myself (personal practitioner checklist)

Going forward I will use the self-reflexive questions I generated during the dialogic journaling phase of this study as prompts in my ongoing journaling and my self study of my practice.

As discussed in Chapter 6, these questions are as follows:

- 1) Am I biased in any way by my familiarity with Korean traditions and norms? Am I complacent in my choices of educational models and intervention strategies? Knowing that communication barriers exist, am I doing enough to enable Korean-Canadian parents and students? Where are my “blind spots”? How can I be sure that I am truly supporting these families through effective facilitation and collaboration?
- 2) Do I do enough to support my clients and families in challenging limiting or negative views of identity and personhood for those on the autism spectrum? What are common conceptions and misconceptions about personhood and identity for students with autism, and how can my own practices as an educator support my families living with autism in expressing and developing their personhood, especially when there may be differing or even clashing cultural preconceptions

about ASD between the blended perspectives of Korea and Canada, for my Korean Canadian clients?

- 3) My positionality as a practitioner includes encountering cultural discourses, other contextual discourses, and my own autobiographical trajectory. What do I learn by examining the intersection of my past, present, and future as a practitioner? What can I learn by examining how culture impacts my own “stance” and the “stances” of my peers, my students, and my students’ families? What strategies and educational approaches can I share with my students, families, and peers to support understanding within the education system?
- 4) In what ways can I improve my practice to further enhance my empathy in order to better support families’ emotional safety and expression? How can I encourage and support my colleagues and teams to safely yet authentically reach out to encounter families on a more emotional plane? How can we as educators open up and support dialogues likely to involve some difficult topics like fear and stress, along with more positive topics including pride in the family, love of culture, and family and cultural identity as sources of family resiliency?
- 5) How do my particular perspectives, viewpoints, and ideological lenses influence my decisions as a practitioner, and how do these decisions impact students, families, colleagues? What can be learned from the specific case of how my values, perspectives, and practices intersect with Korean-Canadian students’ and families’, and further intersect with societal discourses about “typical” and “atypical” personhood and identity? What does full community membership mean for neurodiverse persons, now and in the future, and what role do practitioners play in supporting this?

8.1.3. Next steps: for practice (dialogic journaling and “mini” dialogic journaling)

Despite what I already knew and had researched about how Korean Canadian parents may be reticent in communicating with practitioners through the most common practices of face-to-face conversations and team meetings, I was nonetheless astonished by the frankness and emotional depth of the participants’ dialogic journals. The effectiveness of dialogic journaling in this study has inspired me to continue to use it in some form in my practice on an ongoing basis. I intend to provide training to the families I serve, training modelled on techniques implemented in this study, which will introduce the concept and methodology of dialogic journaling presented as a purely voluntary activity which can support family resiliency. In addition to the suggested option of dialogic journaling staying within the family as a purely family activity, families would

also be offered a private and confidential means to share journals with their practitioner to provide practitioner feedback without revealing their identities as the journal authors.

However, while dialogic journaling is unmistakably a useful tool for gathering qualitative data, undertaking the dialogic journaling phase of this study has alerted me to the time intensive nature of the process. I would estimate that, were any families to be interested in sharing their journals with me, the sharing cycle would take several months potentially. Thus, sharing through dialogic journaling as implemented in this study might take place twice a year or so. On the other hand, I realized through this project the urgent need to receive regular feedback from families which is able to bypass the usual channels of face-to-face conversations and team meetings or to offer other communication channels in addition to these. For this feedback I will implement what I personally consider a “mini” form of dialogic journaling, the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) as described by Brookfield.

To quote Grimmetti, “Teacher learning is based on the idea that knowledge comes from reflection and inquiry in and on practice, or what Schon, following Dewey, calls reflection ‘in the crucible of action’. (1988, p.13) I’ve come to a deeper appreciation of the importance of communication and realized that it is a powerful tool to draw people into learning. Having had a successful experience with dialogic journaling, it’s worth remembering that reflective practice, as defined by Thomas Farrell (2015), is a process in which teachers not only systematically take notes of their classroom observations, but also “while engaging in dialogue with others, use the data to make informed decisions about their practice” (Farrell, 2015, p.123). So, as well as continuing with my own journaling and offering dialogic journaling as a tool for families, on a monthly basis I will seek out dialogue about my practice by implementing the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) adapted from Brookfield.

Brookfield’s CIQ is designed as a classroom research technique to get a quick snapshot of what students are thinking. For my practice, I took a sample of the CIQ and re-designed the questions considering the culture and sentiment of Korean-Canadian families and the nature of my practice in working with families living with autism. Brookfield (2017) describes CIQ as the instrument that has been most helpful to see our practice through students’ eyes, and with this in mind it is important to provide a tool

which is suitable for Korean-Canadian families to communicate and share their insights with professionals delivering service to their children with autism.

The CIQ (Fig.8.1.) asks questions for parents, colleagues and school-age children who can communicate. This purely voluntary survey asks them five open ended questions to seek details of their responses to aspects of learning, prompting them to think about what is helping or what's less helpful so far. Unlike dialogic journaling which, as discussed, is potentially a very useful tool but can realistically only be implemented every six months or so, the CIQ could ideally be completed every month. Respondents don't need to identify themselves on the questionnaires if they prefer not to, and a suitable mechanism for gathering responses would allow them to maintain privacy and confidentiality. Respondents would be encouraged to keep a copy for themselves for review.

Critical Incident Questionnaire for Parents

Please take about 10 minutes to respond to each of the questions below about this month's class. It's your choice to write your name on the form. When you have finished writing, please give one copy of the questionnaire to one of our team members and keep the other copy for yourself. Thanks for taking the time to do this. What you write will help us make the therapy/programs responsive to your concerns.

한 달 동안 바쁘신 가운데 수고가 많으셨습니다. 양질의 수업과 더 나은 교육 서비스를 제공하기 위해 설문을 실시하고 있습니다. 약 10분 정도 시간을 내어 각 아래의 질문에 응답하여 주시면 감사하겠습니다. 양식에 이름을 쓰는 것은 부모님 선택이며, 작성을 마치시면 설문지 한 부를 팀원 한 명에게 주시고 나머지 한 부는 직접보관 하시길 바랍니다. 많은 참여 부탁드립니다.

1. At what moments this month did you feel most engaged with what is happening with your child's therapy and learning.
이번 달 자녀의 치료/학습에서 가장 좋았거나 인상 깊었던 점을 자유롭게 적어주세요

2. At what moments this month did you feel distanced with what is happening with your child's therapy and learning.
이번 달 자녀의 치료/학습에서 아쉬웠거나 개선해야 할 점을 자유롭게 적어주세요

3. What action that anyone took this month (teacher or your child) did you find most affirming and helpful?
이번 달 누가 (선생님 혹은 자녀) 가장 효과적이고 도움이 되었습니까?

4. At what moments this month did you feel you need more clarity or understanding about your child's therapy and learning.
이번 달 어떤 순간에 자녀의 치료와 학습에 대해 더 명확하게 이해해야 한다고 느꼈습니까?

5. If you have any suggestions for us, please write them down freely.
건의 사항이 있으시면 자유롭게 적어주세요

Figure 8.2. Designed by Yearin Kim, a Critical Incident Questionnaire for Korean-Canadian parents.

Note: Adapted from *Becoming a critically reflective teacher* (p.108), by S.D. Brookfield, 2017, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass A Wiley Brand.

Gathering information about the impacts of our teaching and our practice is probably something that most of us feel we do already. We all know any data or comments on our practice is helpful. As a student myself, I've met many teachers who handed out to parents or students some kind of standardized evaluation form at the end of semester. What I was curious about at the time was why they were waiting to seek data until after a class/semester has finished. The findings could be helpful for the future practice but wouldn't reflect on or impact our daily practice. Brookfield (2017) suggested

that it is critical to constantly research student responses to learning in order to create appropriate bridges and make continuous adjustments based on what you find out. Knowing something of how parents, colleagues, and students experience learning helps us to build links that connect where they are now with where we wish them to go (Brookfield, 2017, p.99). Reading regular personal entries about learning would pose questions to help analyze the practice and even trigger some insights to further impact my choices. And it would be useful since families, colleagues, and students' responses sometimes differ markedly from what I have expected.

8.1.4. Next steps: for the community (outreach for teams, community and education organizations)

With all that has been discussed in my study about the intersection of family identity/values and cultural identity/values with education practice, alongside the scholarly evidence of differing backgrounds, social and historical contexts, and communication preferences of Korean Canadian families, I would be remiss if I did not share these findings in some way with the wider community including teams, the education sector, and the wider community. I have continued to form professional relationships with groups of Korean Canadian families, who may be linked through attending the same schools or programs, or receiving services from the same teams. I have sought out connections with community services and non-profit organizations providing resources for Korean Canadian families specifically. I continue to reach out through scholarly channels including paper presentations as well as formal and informal collaborations with fellow scholars and departments working in these areas. I conceive that “a little could go a long way” in terms of providing information, insight, and opportunities for discussion to peers and teams who are working with Korean Canadians as a starting point. Simply providing translated materials and encouraging families to choose their preferred language of expression and preferred communication channels would be a strong start in many cases. On the other hand, I also conceive that more in-depth, targeted programs could be implemented to support families and create strong collaborations and exchange of ideas through systematic application of some of the ideas discussed in my study. Providing an education environment where families can clearly see that practitioners value and incorporate a family's culture and language takes time, empathy, and systematic effort, but comes with great rewards. I very much look forward to continuing this work and also to continuing to embed this work in the broader

contexts of diversity, neurodiversity, autistic personhood, and recognition of how personal and cultural narratives, autobiography, and subjective expression play key roles in the education field.

On this journey I began with self-location, relationship to self and my personal history. I explored parts of my own story such as when I emigrated at age 17 and my experiences being a 1.5 generation immigrant. I was influenced Korea's tradition and history, yet also inevitably influenced by the cultural values and perspectives in Canada. Understanding how national history, mother tongue, tradition, and stories are part of Korean and Korean Canadian cultural identity provoked interrogation of my own presuppositions. But I realized that my personal story also provoked my sensitivity in trying to engage with families and peers to get them to express their deeper feelings and perspectives on identity and identity's intersection with living with autism. On this journey I sought what could be suitable and fruitful frameworks to support sharing autobiographical stories with families and professionals, and landed upon Practitioner Inquiry and the four axes adapted from Brookfield - autobiography, theory, students, and colleagues. Specifically, given the focus on sharing autobiographical experiences within the context of practitioners and families engaging in the shared practice of autism therapies, I began to seek out the "critical incidents" meant to encourage reflexive awareness and dialogic engagement.

On this journey I sought to realize and articulate the nature of Korean education and how the Korean education system influences presuppositions about education and inclusion, including the history of Korean education and how the Confucian view of education affects the practice of teaching. Based on my personal autobiographical experiences with focusing on test results, quantitative measures, and perceived prestige based on these measures, I researched some of the problematic aspects of outcome-based evaluation, including the constant competition of the shadow education system and the drive towards conformity. This led to a discussion in my study of how perceptions about Korean special education are best understood in the broader context of general education in Korea. Specifically, the focus on quantitative test scores above all else in the Korean system and in the minds of students and families, leaves little room for the neurodiverse student to be recognized and supported, and these cultural realities may impact Korean Canadians even after they move to Canada.

On my journey I sought a deeper appreciation of autistic personhood and the neurodiversity movement, and sought to understand how my specific research has emerged from my own experiences and positioning within fields of relevant scholarship. This led me to ask how my own practices as an educator can better support my students and families living with autism in realizing and expressing their personhood. Within the framework of Practitioner Inquiry, I designed a participant study to employ the specific tool of dialogic journaling as a tool to empower and engage students and families in dialogue with practitioners. The six participants who produced dialogic journals shared remarkable stories and reflections regarding their experiences. Thematic analysis divided into five main themes of culture, autism, school/daycare, family and future helped organize these stories and shine light on them. When the journals were shared with other participants who responded to them, I noticed the “double-voiced discourse” in the interrelated exchanges of two different participants, which made these truly “dialogic” journals. This provided an interaction with one another which helped participants, including me, navigate and refine their understandings of one another and the interrelated life stories that they are telling.

On this journey I discerned many interesting things about myself and my practice. I realized that my own unconscious preference to “separate” objective from subjective work had inadvertently hampered collective of more holistic data about families I work with, and also had inadvertently blocked my own access to personal resources which could enhance my practice through cultural awareness and empathy. In navigating best practices for families living with autism, I have learned to question any false binary of “qualitative versus quantitative” data and research. Both are needed and both exist in interrelationships with one another. Certainly for the Korean Canadian families I had the honour to work with for this study, the fruitful interaction of qualitative data informing some of the more quantitatively oriented ideas for designing education and therapies for those living with autism helped create a mutually trusting relationship and sharing of stories that will help increase the quality and depth of the services they receive. On this journey I came across many unexpected revelations and experiences; perhaps the most significant was that I found a path to be able to reclaim my own connections to my family, history, personal and cultural memories, and empathy based on relationships and experiences, not as separated from my work in some cordoned-off

personal space, but as integral to my work and supporting my practices every day in ways I could not have imagined.

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Appendix A.

A recruitment letter



Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Yearin Kim, a doctoral candidate at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC. I am currently working on my dissertation to complete requirements for a doctorate of Education degree in Educational Practice program.

The purpose of this research is gathering qualitative feedback (personal perspectives and narratives) from Korean-Canadian parent(s) who has a child or children with autism, as well as gathering qualitative feedback from practitioners working with families who have a child or children with autism. The qualitative data will be analyzed and grouped into themes relating to autism, culture, and personhood particularly as embedded within the education system. In order to conduct my study, I am recruiting Korean-Canadian parent(s) who has a child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and practitioner(s) who has been working with families who have a child or children with autism.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you agree to participate in this study, you will receive a consent form for participation, reflection questionnaire, and instruction for respondents. You will be asked to complete and return these forms back to the researcher.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your personal information will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. You may withdraw from participation at any time. Any information relevant to your decision to withdraw you from participation in this study will be provided in a timely manner so that you can make an informed participation decision while the study is on-going. You may also choose to exclude your work from the final analysis if you so choose at any time prior to

publication of the study results.

Should you have any concerns regarding this study or your possible participation now or in the future, please contact Yearin Kim at [...]@sfu.ca. Remember that your consent to participate is completely voluntary and that should you choose to allow your participation. Upon completion of the study I will be happy to discuss findings without individually identifiable data to you upon your request.

Sincerely,

Yearin Kim, MEd., Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B.

A consent form



Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Title of the Study: Study of qualitative data on the perceptions of autism, culture, and personhood from parents of children with autism and from colleagues delivering services to children with autism.

Principal Investigator: Yearin Kim, MEd, Department of Education: [...]@sfu.ca

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Robert L. Williamson, Assistant Professor, Department of Education: [...]@sfu.ca

You will have the opportunity to take part in a research study. Before you decide if you want to participate, you should read the following information carefully so you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. If you would like more information or clarification, you can contact the principal investigator, Yearin Kim, at [...]@sfu.ca.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this research is gathering qualitative feedback (personal perspectives and narratives) from Korean-Canadian parents who have a child or children with autism, as well as gathering qualitative feedback from practitioners working with families who have a child or children with autism. The qualitative data will be analyzed and grouped into themes relating to autism, culture, and personhood particularly as embedded within the education system.

These themes will inform my own understanding as an educator, and the understanding of other educators, regarding presuppositions which exist about “typical” versus “atypical” identities, and then seek to define how educational practices can better support children with autism in realizing and expressing their personhood, as well as assessing how cultural and other discourses impact these presuppositions.

Do I have to take part?

No, you don't have to participate if you don't want to. You may withdraw from participation at any time. Any information relevant to your decision to withdraw you from participation in this study will be provided in a timely manner so that you can make an informed participation decision while the study is on-going. You may also choose to exclude your work from the final analysis if you so choose at any time prior to publication of the study results.

What will I need to do if I take part?

During creating a dialogic journal creation, participants should be aware of not using and disclosing any identifiers such as names and/or images showing family members or school names for example, for your own protection you are reminded to avoid identifying anyone's personal information.

Dialogue Part A:

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in answering a set of open ended questions pertaining to childhood, school, neurodiversity, community/culture, and future aspirations. You can choose to respond to these questions using flexible forms of "journaling" including written stories, poetry, videos, artwork, performance (or any combination).

Dialogue Part B:

After completing a dialogic journal creation, each participant's work from Part A is shared with one to three other participant(s) from within the project. To respond to the work of another participant, participants will be given the sample and asked to respond following the instruction to respondents. These responses will be shared with the researcher only. Every participant will have the opportunity to review work from at least one other participant in the project.

Dialogue Part C:

You control how your work is shared in the published study results. You can consent to allowing actual samples of your work to be included in my dissertation, or you can consent to allowing only a descriptive summary to be included, with no actual samples. In all cases any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your personal information will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

No disadvantages or risks have been identified. As you can see from the description above, if you participate you will be asked to think about and share personal feelings and thoughts, which for some people may bring up an unexpected negative emotional response. Please remember you may stop and withdraw from this research at any time if you feel discomfort and please contact <https://www.autismbc.ca> if you need further support.

What are the benefits of participating?

There are no benefits of participating that will affect participants directly. However, your participation will influence not only my own decisions as a practitioner, but also, through knowledge dissemination, the understanding of the wider audience of practitioners and educators.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. In all cases any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your personal information will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your work will only be identified as being authored by someone belonging to one of the two groups: parents of children with autism or colleagues delivering services to children with autism.

Who can I contact for more information?

Should you have any concerns regarding this study or your possible participation now or in the future, please contact Yearin Kim at [...]@sfu.ca. Remember that your consent to participate is completely voluntary. Upon completion of the study I will be happy to discuss findings without individually identifiable data to you upon your request and you may email me to request an electronic copy of the final thesis.

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics [...]@sfu.ca.

Sincerely,

Yearin Kim, MEd., Doctoral Candidate
Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Consent Form

Your signature indicates that you have read this consent form, had an opportunity to ask questions about your participation in this research and voluntarily consent to participate. You may keep a copy of this letter for your records.

Please select one of the following options (you can choose more than one):

1) I, _____ consent to participate and would like to share my work (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY - a) must be checked)

- with the researcher
- with someone from my group e.g. one family with another family, for their personal reflection
- with someone from another group e.g., one family with an educator (colleague group), for their personal reflection.

**Every participant will have the opportunity to review work from at least one other participant in the project.

2) I, _____ consent to participate and for the publication in the final thesis or any academic article based on the thesis, consent that my work may be included in the following ways:

- a) actual samples (copies or reproductions) of my work, as well as descriptions of my work, may be included, or
- b) NO actual samples (copies or reproductions) of my work may be included, ONLY descriptions of my work may be included.

Name of Participant (Please Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C.

A reflection questions for ‘Dialogic Journal’ creation

Reflection Questions for PARENT Participants: Instructions and Reflection Questions for Dialogic Journaling

Title of the Study: Study of qualitative data on the perceptions of autism, culture, and personhood from parents of children with autism and from colleagues delivering services to children with autism

Principal Investigator: Yearin Kim

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this research.

You can create a “dialogic journal” which is a personal expression, in response to thinking about any of the questions below.

While journaling is often associated writing, you can also choose to draw, paint, etc, create art such as creating a collage or other visuals, etc, include written stories, poetry, videos, songs, performance (or any combination).

This study does not attempt to gather any personal expressions from your child(ren). Some parents may choose to include their child(ren)’s artwork, writing, or other expressions, as part of the parents’ journal creations. Such inclusion of child(ren)’s expressions is welcome but not required and is purely voluntary and at the parents’ discretion.

Step 1:

Read the reflection questions below. These are open ended and you do not need to respond to any question specifically. The purpose of the reflection questions is to stimulate your thinking.

Step 2:

Create a personal “dialogic journal” or journals, which may respond to specific question(s) or which may simply be a general response about the topics below.

Remember you can choose to draw, paint, etc, create art such as creating a collage or other visuals, etc, include written stories, poetry, videos, songs, performance (or any combination).

You may create one or several “journals”.

Step 3:

Please contact me to share your journal creations when you are ready, hopefully within three weeks of receiving these instructions.

Step 4:

Journal exchange: you will be invited to review and respond to another person's journal(s).

Remember that, as detailed in the consent letter you received and signed, you may withdraw from this study at any time. Also remember that your privacy will be respected and your name or personal identifying information will not be shared with anyone or published in the results of this research.

Reflection Questions

Culture

- What do you love most about your Korean culture and heritage?
- How do you celebrate your culture and heritage?
- Do you miss Korea?
- Do you feel pressured to “fit in” to Canadian culture?

Autism

- Before your child's diagnosis, what did you know about Autism?
- When you heard your child's diagnosis, how did you feel?
- How do you feel about Autism now?
- Do you think that persons with disabilities are viewed negatively in Korean society? Is it different in Canada?

School/ Day care

- Do you think children with disabilities are viewed negatively in school?
- Do you think the school or day care provides enough support to your child?
- Do you feel that the school or day care listens to you at meetings?
- Do you have enough help? What do you need?

Family

- What are the strengths of your family?
- What are positive contributions that your child makes to your family?

- What are your favourite family activities?

Future

- Do you worry about your child's future? What worries you?
- Do you talk or socialize with other parents from school or day care?
- Do you talk about your child's Autism with friends and family?
- What are your goals for your child? What are your goals for yourself as a parent? What are your goals for the family as a whole?

Reflection Questions for COLLEAGUE Participants: Instructions and Reflection Questions for Dialogic Journaling

Title of the Study: Study of qualitative data on the perceptions of autism, culture, and personhood from parents of children with autism and from colleagues delivering services to children with autism

Principal Investigator: Yearin Kim

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this research.

You can create a “dialogic journal” which is a personal expression, in response to thinking about any of the questions below.

While journaling is often associated writing, you can also choose to draw, paint, etc, create art such as creating a collage or other visuals, etc, include written stories, poetry, videos, songs, performance (or any combination).

Please note that your journals should be your own personal expressions and should not include any private information (quotations, identifying information, photos, etc) belonging to any other person - only your own thoughts and observations.

Step 1:

Read the reflection questions below. These are open ended and you do not need to respond to any question specifically. The purpose of the reflection questions is to stimulate your thinking.

Step 2:

Create a personal “dialogic journal” or journals, which may respond to specific question(s) or which may simply be a general response about the topics below.

Remember you can choose to draw, paint, etc, create art such as creating a collage or other visuals, etc, include written stories, poetry, videos, songs, performance (or any combination).

You may create one or several “journals”.

Step 3:

Please contact me to share your journal creations when you are ready, hopefully within three weeks of receiving these instructions.

Step 4:

Journal exchange: you will be invited to review and respond to another person’s

journal(s).

Remember that, as detailed in the consent letter you received and signed, you may withdraw from this study at any time. Also remember that your privacy will be respected and your name or personal identifying information will not be shared with anyone or published in the results of this research.

Reflection Questions

Culture

- Do you think specifically about Korean culture and heritage when working with Korean Canadian families?
- Do you feel that your clients' family identities are connected to their celebration of Korean culture and heritage?
- Do you feel that Korean culture and heritage can be incorporated into the design of your practices with Korean Canadian families?
- Do you feel that Korean Canadian families should “fit in” to Canadian culture?

Autism

- Do you think that Korean Canadian families as a cultural group have a distinct view of Autism?
- Do you find that your Korean Canadian clients have more questions or are missing information about Autism compared to your non-Korean Canadian clients?
- Do you think that a family's cultural background affects how they feel about Autism?
- Do you think that persons with disabilities are viewed negatively in Korean society? Differently than how they are viewed in Canada?

School/ Day care

- Do you think that Korean Canadian children with disabilities face more challenges in receiving appropriate help while in school or day care?
- Do you think the school or day care should be more aware of a family's cultural background in order to provide sufficient support to children with disabilities?
- Do you feel that the school or day care may treat English-as-a-second-language families differently than English-as-a-first-language speaking families at meetings?
- Do you feel that the needs of families of various cultural and language backgrounds are adequately addressed as a specific topic during team meetings at school and day care?

Family

- When you reflect on your Korean Canadian clients, what are the strengths of these

families?

- What are positive contributions that culture makes to family life?
- Have you noticed that favourite family activities are tied to cultural background with any of your families?

Future

- Do Korean Canadian families have the same worries as other families?
- Do you encourage your clients to talk or socialize with other parents from school or day care?
- Do you encourage your clients to talk about their child's Autism with their friends and family?
- Do Korean Canadian families have the same goals as other families?

