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Reading Association of Ireland
Cumann Léitheoireachta na hÉireann

(In association with CESC & the School of Education, UCC)



Winter Seminar 2010

*“Questioning the answer: Nurturing a community
of enquiry using picture books and classroom
dialogue”*

A presentation by Dr. Mary Roche

Wednesday January 27th 2010

7.30 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.

**Cork Education Support Centre,
Western Road,
Cork.**



Abstract for Seminar Presentation

E (aged 6): *God, I am going home today with just so many questions in my head! Millions!*

Teacher: *Great! Perhaps that's what learning is all about - asking lots of questions.*

A (aged 6): *'And ... if you go home with a question and you get an answer to it, you could always question the answer.* (Roche 2007 Appendix C5 extract from *Rainbows and Reality* p13)

In this presentation I suggest that children, participating in a community of enquiry with their teacher, can engage in philosophical discussion. The pedagogy that supports such practice is grounded in educational values that are critical, caring and emancipatory, and is located in the idea of the 'other' as real and concrete (Benhabib 1987). Teaching children to think for themselves, and to come to know in ways that are appropriate for them, is supported by a programme of classroom dialogue. Drawing on the work of Fromm (1979) I argue that rather than 'having' - or teaching children to have - 'critical thinking skills', one learns instead 'to be' a critical thinker. Eisner, (1999) says: "knowledge is ... a living process that occurs within the human mind. Books and other codified symbol systems are its prompts". I explain how 'simple' picture books can be prompts for rich dialogue, and I show how, in an ordinary classroom, children and teacher can engage critically and philosophically with picture books - talking and thinking together with 'one big head' (Murriss 2000).

Participants will be provided with a list of resources that encourage critical thinking.

Presenter: Dr. Mary Roche

While working as a primary teacher in Cork, Mary studied philosophising with children for her MA (Roche 2000 UWE Bristol). She completed PhD studies on creating dialogical pedagogies in UL in 2007, and lectured in MIC (2008-2009) on Oral Language Development in children. Mary is currently working as a freelance Education Consultant.

Contact Mary at marytroche@gmail.com (See also www.eari.ie)

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RAI Winter Seminar Booking Form

This seminar is being offered **free of charge to all**, but places are limited.

Please book a place for me on the RAI Winter Seminar (Cork), 'Questioning the Answer' in Cork Education Support Centre on **Wednesday January 27th 2010** from **7.30-9.00**

I am currently a member of RAI: Yes No

Name: _____

School: _____ Roll No: _____

Contact Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please return to: Cork Education Support Centre, The Rectory, Western Road, Cork (021-4255600) or register online at www.cesc.ie