Deconstructing and Reconstructing Cinderella: Theoretical Defense of Critical Literacy for Young Children

Debbie Harwood
University of Victoria

Abstract
Early childhood education pedagogy needs to consider the potential role of critical literacy in preparing children to meet the ever changing and unprecedented pace of change in the literate world. Media, technological, interactive, and corporate-constructed texts are fast becoming part of children's everyday experience within industrialized nations. Like many other classic literary fictional characters (e.g., Pippi Longstocking, Paddington Bear, Winnie the Pooh, and Babar), Cinderella is no longer confined to the pages of a book. Cinderella's image and persona appear in a multitude of texts, including, video, posters, clothing, toys, websites, and assorted paraphernalia, that children are repeatedly exposed to. Critical literacy can provide new and varied 'lenses' to understand experiences, explore multiple viewpoints, and uncover the influence of socio-political and power relationships in shaping perceptions and actions (Bainbridge, Malicky, & Payne, 2004).