

**The SECA**  
**The SECA**

# Reporter

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**IN THIS ISSUE:**

**ONLINE  
PROFESSIONALISM:  
BE CAREFUL WHAT  
YOU SHARE**

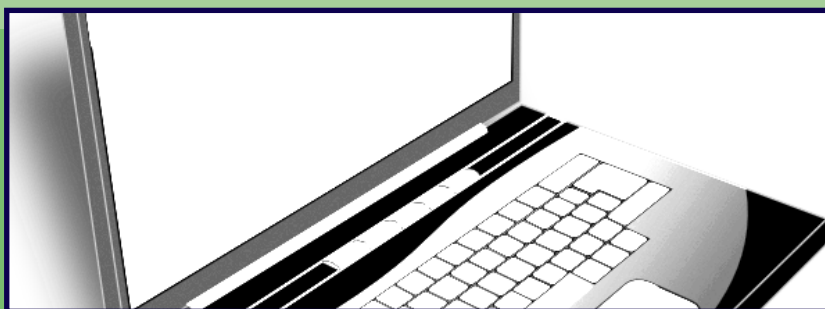
**ONLINE LEARNING  
DEVELOPMENT:  
WHAT I LEARNED**

**OUR 2011  
FRIEND OF CHILDREN**

**THE VERY HUNGRY  
CATERPILLAR**

**BABY EDUCATIONAL  
MEDIA: DOES IT  
REALLY WORK?**

**SECA AWARDS DO  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**



# Online Professionalism: Be Careful What You Share

By Dr. Helene Harte, University of Northern Kentucky

Interacting and connecting with others online has opened up a new world for early care and education providers. We can access resources, participate in interest forums or online communities, search for employment and connect with other educators across the world. Discussion forums through the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) Student facebook page allow students to connect regarding issues unique to them. According to Kathryn Castle (2009), early childhood professionals enhance their knowledge base through participation in professional organizations, collaboration with others and serving as advocates. Online communities provide opportunities to do many of these things tied to professionalism.

The benefits of interacting in the online world however, come with responsibilities. As early childhood professionals, we have ethical responsibilities to children, families, colleagues and employers. The same ideals and principles that guide our behaviors in person, should guide our behaviors online. The National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) code of ethics (2005) communicates the importance of trust, respect and confidentiality in our relationships. Maintenance of confidentiality to families includes updates, postings and photographs on social networking sites. Another key principle is to avoid practices that harm the reputations of our co-workers or the programs in which we work. Even on social networking sites used for personal use, our ethical responsibilities apply. In spite of using high privacy settings, which is recommended, people you may not want to see your page may be able to. Just as online networking allows educators to connect across the world, when posting comments, photographs or links, imagine that anyone in the world can see it. Refer to the NAEYC code of ethics and ask yourself if you have adhered to them. If there is a concern about whether or not something is appropriate, it probably is not appropriate. Take advantage of the many opportunities to benefit from interacting online with early care and education providers with similar concerns and interests, this is part of being a professional. While interacting online however, keep in mind your commitment to the ethical principles of our field.

## References

Castle, K. (2009). What Do Early Childhood Professionals Do? DIMENSIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD, 37(3) 4-10.

NAEYC. (2005). Code of ethical conduct & statement of commitment. A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Rev. ed. Brochure. Washington, DC: Author.  
[www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSETH05.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSETH05.pdf)

**For SECA Members:** *The article, What Do Early Childhood Professionals Do? , is posted on the "Dimensions for Members" page of the "Members-Only" section of the SECA website. In order to access the article, you will need your member ID number to login on the home page of the website.*

# Online Learning Development: What I Learned

Susan Carrigan, Co-Chair, SECA Leadership Commission

Many of us in the field of early care and education are involved in developing on-line classes and training modules. Here are some lessons I learned that I would like to share with others who are currently looking at webinars, online classes and the development of online learning modules.

- There is wisdom in groups. The group as a whole knows more than you do.
- Webinars can and should include activities.
- There is a big difference between online training sessions for groups of less than twenty and groups of more than twenty.
- Most participants have varying degrees of expertise, experience and technological savvy when it comes to on-line learning
- Most participants are capable of taking a basic idea and working out the details of transfer and application. By explaining too much, trainers deny opportunities for participants to share what they know and how they plan to use it.

Based on these principles, we must incorporate the concept of Self-Directed Learning Teams (SDLT). Following is an example of how this process might work.

**Brief the participants:** Explain you are going to help the participants explore thirty different techniques for teaching children how to recognize the letters of the alphabet for example. Some participants will know more than others about a specific pedagogy. Encourage students to share what they know and what they want to know.

**Encourage different types of comments:** Explain that you will describe one technique at a time. Invite participants to type their comments related to the technique. Suggest comments based on responses to the following questions:

- What excites you about this technique?
- Have you ever used or experienced this technique?

- What additional details do you know about this technique?
- How would you use this technique?
- What aspects of this technique make you uncomfortable?
- Why will it not work for you?
- How would you modify this technique to better suit your needs?

**Explain the two group system:** Divide the participants into two groups of equal size. During the discussion of the specific technique, one group will serve as commentators and will type their comments. The other group will serve as readers, they will carefully read, process and organize comments made by the first group. They will make mental notes of the interesting comments. During the discussion of the next technique, the groups will change roles: The commentators will become the readers and the readers will become the commentators.

**Explain the time limit:** to prevent the discussions from going on and on, announce a 3 minute time limit. Encourage students to use their time wisely.

**Divide the participants into two groups.** Explain that one group will be the AM group and the other will be called the NZ group. Participants whose last names begin with letters A-M will be the AM group. The rest of the participants whose names begin with the letters N-Z belong to the NZ group.

**Display a brief description of the first technique.** Tell the AM group to begin. Invite the NZ group to sit back, read, and process the comments.

**Invoke the Ziegarnik principle.** Give your rationale for the somewhat arbitrary conclusion. According to Bluma Ziegarnik, people remember unfinished business longer than finished business. Also, the brain needs to incubate the ideas that are already generated, rather than fill up with more ideas.

**Make your comments.** Reinforce useful and accurate

comments made by the group. If any comments are misleading, make gentle corrections.

**Repeat the process.** Move on to the next technique. Ask the group to change roles. Display the next technique.

**Continue the activity.** About an hour will be a suitable time for this activity. Give the participants a list of the 30 techniques and explain they may continue exploring these ideas.

#### Variations

- This approach can be used in a face to face setting.
- Instead of describing different techniques you could use other discussion triggers such as

- Principles
- Theorists
- Sayings
- Subject Topics
- Guidelines/regulations/policies

I have found this activity to be a very valuable teaching tool. For those of you involved in on-line learning, training, and webinars and conferencing, I hope you too will find it valuable.

**Source:** *Thiagarajan, S. (2005) Interactive Lectures. VA: ASTD Press*

## Our 2011 Friend of Children



**A Special Thank-You to Our Artist:** Nancy Basket, a Native American artist from South Carolina, has produced an individualized artwork for each of our Friend of Children recipients for the last few years, starting with Dolly Parton in 2003. She produces a folk art piece that represents the work of the recipient and their contributions to children. It's uniquely Southern in that the paper for the artwork is produced by processing fiber from the Kudzu plant, that "green monster" that we see covering trees and land across the South. You can see more of Nancy's work at [www.nancybasket.com](http://www.nancybasket.com).

Each year, the SECA Board of Directors selects an outstanding national advocate who has contributed significantly to the lives of children and families. In the past, we've recognized such early childhood luminaries as Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, Dr. Sue Bredekamp and Dr. Lynn Kagan. In 2011, the Board selected a newcomer to the world of children's programs, **Blake MyCoskie** of Tom's Shoes.

"In 2006, American traveler Blake Mycoskie befriended children in Argentina and found they had no shoes to protect their feet. Wanting to help, he created TOMS Shoes, a company that would match every pair of shoes purchased with a pair of new shoes given to a child in need. One for One. Blake returned to Argentina with a group of family, friends and staff later that year with 10,000 pairs of shoes made possible by TOMS customers." <http://www.toms.com>

### WHY SHOES?

Many children in developing countries grow up barefoot. Whether at play, doing chores or going to school, these children are at risk.

- A leading cause of disease in developing countries is soil-transmitted diseases, which can penetrate the skin through bare feet. Wearing shoes can help prevent these diseases, and the long-term physical and cognitive harm they cause.
- Wearing shoes also prevents feet from getting cuts and sores. Not only are these injuries painful, they also are dangerous when wounds become infected.
- Many times children can't attend school barefoot because shoes are a required part of their uniform. If they don't have shoes, they don't go to school. If they don't receive an education, they don't have the opportunity to realize their potential.

Source: <http://www.toms.com>

## Ways to Get Involved

The TOMS website lists several ways to become involved with their campaign.

- Share the TOMS Story
- Screen the TOMS Documentary
- Host a Style Your Sole Party
- Upload Your TOMS Pictures
- Register for One Day Without Shoes

For more information on each of these options, go to <http://www.toms.com>

## Eating Healthy. Growing Strong.

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the American Academy of Pediatrics have joined with the best-selling children's book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, to help families learn about healthy eating habits.



Who in the field of early childhood education hasn't pulled out that children's favorite, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and watched the excitement grow among the children as they anticipate the story? It's been a mainstay of early childhood classrooms throughout the country,

and it's now an important part of a new campaign to help fight childhood obesity.

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the American Academy of Pediatrics have joined with the best-selling children's book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, and We Give Books to help families learn about healthy eating habits at home. The *Eating Healthy, Growing Strong* campaign is an important part of the Alliance's mission to combat childhood obesity. (The Alliance was founded by the William J. Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association.)

This spring, more than 17,000 pediatrician offices across the United States will receive free copies of a special edition of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to distribute to their patients. They'll also receive special growth charts and parent handouts to encourage a dialogue about the importance of healthy eating.

"Parents and doctors both play an enormously important role in ensuring children develop healthy eating habits early on in life. By joining with the American Academy of Pediatrics and the classic children's book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, we are starting a dialogue between parents and doctors that will go beyond the waiting room and into the home, enabling 21 million children to make more nutritious choices and lead healthier lives." President Bill Clinton, Campaign News Release, March 8, 2011, [www.wegivebooks.org](http://www.wegivebooks.org)

The Campaign is encouraging parents to talk to their children about making healthy choices.

- Teach your child that apples, pears, plums, strawberries and oranges are all fruits. Ask them if they can name other fruits.

- Talk to them about how fruits are good for your body.
- Talk about how when the caterpillar overeats, he gets a stomachache---so it is important to stop eating when you feel full.

You're encouraged to go to the following websites to access free resources including:

- A reading guide on how to discuss healthy active living using *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.
- A special growth chart to keep track of a child's journey to becoming healthy & strong.

[www.healthiergeneration.org/veryhungrycaterpillar](http://www.healthiergeneration.org/veryhungrycaterpillar)

[www.healthychildren.org/veryhungrycaterpillar](http://www.healthychildren.org/veryhungrycaterpillar)

### Other *SECA Reporter* Articles You Might Want to Access

- *20 Healthy New Year Resolutions for Kids*, Winter 2011
- *Staying Healthy in 2011: Have You Set Your Goals?* Winter 2011
- *Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity: the First Lady Launches the "Let's Move" Campaign*, Summer 2010
- *Jamie Oliver and the Food Revolution*, Summer 2010

## A Community Service Project for Your Program?

The materials for the campaign are being furnished by *We Give Books*, a digital initiative from Penguin, the publisher of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and by the Pearson Foundation. Visitors to We Give Books will have the chance to read a library of great children's books for free, any time they like, and each time they read a book at [www.wegivebooks.org](http://www.wegivebooks.org), the Pearson Foundation will donate a brand-new book to a leading literacy group. Groups that are currently listed on the website include:

- Hope for Haiti
- The Ocho Project (underprivileged children across America)
- Harlem Children's Zone
- Room to Read (disadvantaged communities in Asia)
- NEA—Books Across America (school libraries in disadvantaged communities)
- Jumpstart for Young Children (Jumpstart Libraries in pre-school classrooms)
- Books for Asia
- Tinga Tinga Tales (East Africa)
- Global Explorers—Learning AFAR (students from Houston ISD, Chicago and New York)
- United Way of Florida
- NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence

The groups each have a donation goal, and you'll see how many books have been donated to date. You'll also find recommended children's books for each group that are available to read. It would be fun to get parents and children to read books online, document their donation and chart your class's donations. You could combine a lesson about "giving to others", healthy living and a math lesson. Doesn't get better than that!

# BABY EDUCATIONAL MEDIA: DOES IT REALLY WORK?



A new study published in the academic journal, *Psychological Science*, suggests that the claims of infant learning from Baby Media are exaggerated.

Judy S. DeLoache, a researcher at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, conducted a study to see if the claims of infant learning were indeed valid. She recruited a group of 96 families with children between the ages of 12 and 18 months and asked some of the children to watch an unidentified, best-selling educational DVD. Some of the children watched alone, some with parents. The rest of the children watched no DVD but were taught the same words featured in the commercial programs through everyday interactions with parents.

The study continued for four weeks, and after that time, researchers concluded that the toddlers learned little from the DVD, regardless of whether their parents were present or not. They could not determine that this group had learned any more by watching the DVD than the control group that was not exposed to the DVD. "The highest level of learning occurred in a no-video condition in which parents tried to teach their children the same target words during everyday activities." Source: *DeLoache, Judy S., (2010), Do babies learn from baby media? (Abstract), Psychological Science*, <http://pss.sagepub.com>.

## What Do Other Experts Say?

Research findings such as these help to reinforce the position on television/media viewing that has been adopted by the American Academy of Pediatrics. **The Academy recommends that parents limit television viewing for children younger than 2.**

"We would gently urge parents of kids under the age of 2 to avoid screen time with children," according to Dr. Don Shifrin. "Play is the work of childhood. Sitting down in front of a screen is not the work of childhood." Dr. Shifrin is a clinical professor of pediatrics at the University of Washington School of Medicine and a spokesperson for the Academy. Source: *Popular Baby Media May Not Actually Advance Learning*, March 10, 2011, [http://news.yahoo.com/s/hsn/20110311/hl\\_hsn/popularbabymediamaynotactuallyadvancelearning](http://news.yahoo.com/s/hsn/20110311/hl_hsn/popularbabymediamaynotactuallyadvancelearning)

"They don't really understand the relationship between what's happening on screen and the real world around them....For example, babies can't understand that a cup

on the screen is the same as a cup in their hand -- unless there is a parent there to make the connection," said Dr. Rebekah A. Richert, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of California, Riverside. Source: *Popular Baby Media May Not Actually Advance Learning*, March 10, 2011,

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/hsn/20110311/hl\\_hsn/popularbabymediamaynotactuallyadvancelearning](http://news.yahoo.com/s/hsn/20110311/hl_hsn/popularbabymediamaynotactuallyadvancelearning)

## For Parents Who Want to Use Baby Media: Recommendations from Dr. Shifrin

- Pre-watch a video to make sure it goes at a slow, deliberate, "Mr. Rogers"-type pace. Children learn best at that pace, and less so with what he called "Warner Brothers"-style pacing.
- Watch the video with their baby, talking throughout it like a color commentator would do for a sports event and drawing connections between ideas in the video and objects around them in the home.
- Turn off the television when the video is done and let their baby play a while, possibly engaging in activities related to the video. "If they're watching a video showing them how to construct something or feed a bird, then go out and do it in real life," he suggested.

Parents and professionals who would like to have more information about "stages" of child development can go to a website created by the Centers for Disease Control and check out **Learn Some Positive Parenting Tips**. You'll find a wealth of information there about language and cognitive development. <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Parenting/>

"The key element is parents being involved," Dr. Richert said. "It's not just the kids watching on their own. It's not really effective to put them in front of the television on their own and expect them to make those connections."

## Other SECA Reporter Articles You Might Want to Access

*Make Time to Talk: How Young Children Develop Oral Language, Fall 2010*

*Television and Young Children: What the Experts Say, Summer 2010*

# SECA Awards Do Make a Difference

From the Executive Director, Glenda Bean

Each year, SECA provides three of our state affiliates with \$500 scholarships, the **Helen Harley Scholarship**, to assist one member of their leadership to attend the SECA conference. In 2011, Alabama, Arkansas and Florida recipients were selected by their state affiliates, and the awards were announced at their 2010 state conferences.

At the Florida AEYC conference in Orlando, I had the privilege of notifying the award recipient, Angela Loring, that she had been selected by her affiliate to attend the conference for the first time. After the meeting, I met Patti Hester, a member who had received the same scholarship in the early 1980's. She wanted to share with me how much it had meant to have that SECA support and I asked if she would put her thoughts in writing.

## FROM PATTI

While attending the 2010 FLAEYC conference,

I had the honor of being present when the new recipient of the Helen Harley Award was announced.

This was very touching for me because in the early 1980's (1981 or 1982) I received the Helen Harley Award. This is still very dear to my heart. I believe the opportunity given to me helped me begin my long journey of child care service.

Today I am still involved and currently working with others to start an affiliate in northwest Florida. Thank you SECA!

*Patti Hester, Florida AEYC*

SECA continues to support our affiliates with funding and resources to help develop those "leaders of tomorrow". Georgia, Kentucky and Louisiana will select these recipients for the 2012 conference in San Antonio, Texas.

## Our 2010 SECA President's Award

Each year, the SECA President's Award is given to an outstanding state advocate for children and families and the recipient is selected by a state affiliate. In 2010, the Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma selected Representative Boren as the recipient of the award.

On February 25, 2010 the Southern Early Childhood Association recognized Representative Boren with the 2010 President's Award. The presentation was made at the start of Representative Boren's town hall meeting held on the campus of Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Dr. Sally Nichols-Sharpe, Past President of the Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma presented the award and introduced early childhood leaders from local, regional, and state organizations that were present at the event.

In presenting the award Sally stated

"As early childhood professionals we understand the importance of having a strong professional organization that supports our work through journals, professional development opportunities, and public policy initiatives to name a few. The Southern Early Childhood Association is such an organization. It has provided outstanding support

for over 60 years, to more than 20,000 early childhood professionals. The Southern Early Childhood Association is committed to improving the quality of care and education for young children and their families through advocacy and professional development. The Southern Early Childhood Association is made up of 14 states and the Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma has been a proud affiliate for over 50 years. As professionals we look to this organization to keep us up to date on current research, trends, issues impacting young children, and current legislation".



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