

## YOUTH IN THE FRAGMENTED SOCIETY

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### ABSTRACT

Recently in Japan, the crimes caused by youth have been highlighted in the newspapers. Their lack of enough experience with human and nature contact might be one of the reasons for their violence. In the town planning system, places for youth to meet has not been given enough consideration. Commercial spots, such as amusement centers, game centers, convenience stores, etc. have become the places for youth to be. Semiotic theory analyzing commercial society might be fit mostly to youth activities in cities, as the example of cognitive maps of youth shows. There are many temptations in amusement centers that involve youth with drugs, sexual commercialism and violence. Furthermore, information technology has changed the style of communication between youth, as we have seen recently with the shocking news in which a 12-year old girl killed her friend at school, because of a disagreement in an internet chatroom. On the other hand, data from several international comparative studies about youth consciousness show the pessimistic Japanese youth consciousness concerning social matters and hope for the future. The nexus of youth participation in community planning is very important for re-structuring the relationship between youth and community. Youth have the ability to analyze community issues and make plans for problem solving. Youth leadership might contribute to community capacity building. Even though there are still large criticisms regarding children and youth participation, such as "even adults had not taken part in the community, not to speak of children and youth," some cases show the potential for youth and children to involve adults in their action research programs in their community and encourage their participation in community development.

## CAN WE OVERCOME OUR MODERN HABITS OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND DESIGNING?

Elijah Mirochnik

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### ABSTRACT

Two of my projects with children, one in the early 1980s and the other in 2004, will lead to a comparison between the shift that I have made from a modern to a postmodern enactment of teaching and learning. In the earlier project, I initiated an educational model that brought together planners, politicians and public school children in Portland, Oregon. An air-inflated geodesic dome constructed by public school children displayed their visions of a "kid-friendly downtown." Their drawings became the data source that planners used to initiate policy and development incentives geared toward incorporating spaces and activities for children within the Portland downtown. In a recent project, I worked with a fourth grade teacher and children in a Washington, D.C. public school. Children created an air-inflated "body bubble," as part of a science unit that intentionally challenged the modern paradigm of scientific objectivity. Activities that enabled children to talk about, write about, and create art about their bodies in the first person "I" voices, were woven into their science curriculum. My recent work with children attempts to engage children in a process of transgression from the modern. In the case presented, transgression from a scientific vocabulary that privileges mind over body, and higher objective knowledge over second-class personal and artistic knowledge. In my presentation I will explore how the writings of Richard Rorty have helped me reinvent myself as a teacher through the use of a transgressive vocabulary that challenges old notions about knowledge, teaching and learning. I will explore how the fictional languages of the arts and the personal languages of autobiography.