Frankenfoods: Are We Bioengineering Our Children and What Can Curriculum Do?

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Abstract
In this dissertation I explore the effect of biotechnology and food production on children’s physical and mental health. What we eat affects our well-being and unknowingly, we have little control of what exactly we are consuming. Children have even less control and feel the effects of additives and chemicals more than adults. Many of the effects of bioengineered foods are unknown at this time. My dissertation will be a theoretical exploration of biotechnology in food using a bioethical critical perspective. I use my personal experience and research to examine the effects of processed and genetically engineered foods on people, especially children, to inform about the need for a change in curriculum that supports an awareness of the environment and the methods employed in food production. Lately, headlines have been full of illnesses and deaths resulting from processed foods and obesity has become a larger national concern. Lurking just below this is the effects of consuming the “Frankenfoods” of biotechnology. The full and lasting effects of eating genetically modified foods are not yet known: however there are links to precocious puberty, cancer, and other illnesses. I inform the public of the importance of understanding the effects of what we are putting into our bodies and the bodies of our children. I posit that we need to educate in a way that enhances our connection to the natural world with a sustainable and holistic curriculum that employs the Montessori Method.

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In America today, 43 percent of our children fall below grade level in reading. In her meticulously researched and groundbreaking work, Diane McGuinness faults outmoded reading systems for this crisis—and provides the answers we need to give our children the reading skills they need. Drawing on twenty-five years of cutting-edge research, Dr. McGuinness presents bold new In America today, 43 percent of our children fall below grade level in reading. It discusses how most teachers do not know how to teach children to read or write. Without understanding how the English written code was developed, many assume that writing is based on letters. The author argues that this is all backwards. In my last Emergent Curriculum post, I promised to share a story about the difference exploring a child’s interest can make to the learning potential of the child. This is the story of 2 1/2 year old Henry. Henry wasn’t one of those children who stood out from the crowd. In fact, Henry was a wanderer. During free play or activity time Henry would wander from activity to activity, engaging for mere moments with the activity or the other children. In our general discussions about her class, Henry’s educator flagged this as a concern. When I asked her what Henry liked to do, what he was passionate about, what he was drawn to, what he talked enthusiastically about, there was very little we could identify for Henry, certainly not enough to create a curriculum from.