I believe that the core relationship children have with the oral tradition and play is transformation. Children will take the thing or space they are playing with, do something new with it and feel a sense of ownership. It becomes theirs.

Cyberspace is the new space, is the new playground. As children get familiar with the technology they'll find that it has no fences, no walled yards. This space is wide open. Cross Cultural communication will be inevitable. It is only natural to expect the kids of the next century to adapt their games and folksongs to this new space & thereby claim it as their own. It will be the next step in the natural progression of our culture.

From the Author:

One of the difficulties I had as a teacher was in understanding the dialect, and one of the difficulties the children (my students) had was in understanding my dialect. These children and indeed all children were required to learn to read by using books that were written in standard English. Yet my students didn’t speak standard English. Standard English was/is a second language for them. Some might argue that a person must first speak the language before they can read and write in it. Look at babies, first you learn to talk then everything else will follow. The Brain is wired for language, Speech is the root of all language learning. That is why the poetry of children’s music is a perfect tool to use as a bridge from the home language to Standard English.

Some people who speak in a patois, or a dialect of standard English, can experience a barrier that may keep them separate from the mainstream of society. Standard English is the language of financial success. In order for
people to join in the American dream they are required to speak the language of currency, academic English.

Dialects which differ from the standard spoken and written language have come to be considered inferior to the standard language. Since the dialect is considered inferior, it is easy to embarrass children when we ask them not to speak that way, or tell them they are wrong. In embarrassing them, we cause them to feel shame about who they are and what they are speaking, which is a language. Their whole family may speak this way and an even bigger conflict erupts. *It is very difficult to carry a burden of shame about the people you love. Children are not psychologically sophisticated enough to handle this kind of dilemma, most adults can't handle it either. Their shame makes them feel alienated from and disrespected by the society they wish to join. It should seem obvious that when you shame and alienate someone, you don't give them any reason to respect you or join you. Like it or not, this is how children feel. The exact opposite of motivation!* It takes more than phonics, whole language, balanced reading, or stories that are culturally oriented to teach reading. In this situation, there must be a more humanistic approach that involves the whole child. It is very important for all people to have their language respected. If it can be communicated that their language is colorful and descriptive and eloquent in its own way, (which it is) then we can give their language the respect it deserves, and can then respect the people who speak it. People will then feel more inclined to respect Standard English speakers and mainstream culture in return, and will be more inclined to join in. Motivation is the key to learning anything.

**THEMATIC READING PROJECT:**

I have dreamt of making my thematic reading curriculum available since 1977 when I taught second and fourth grades on St. Croix in the American Virgin Islands. The school provided reading materials that were in standard English without resources that would allow teachers to acknowledge the children's dialect, Creole. As a result, the children were routinely left back and thus my fourth grade class included students from 10 to 16 years old. Motivated by frustration and concern, I combined my music training in the Orff-Schulwerk technique (learning music through body movement), and my elementary teaching degree with the children's playground songs chants and games which I learned in their dialect, and then asked them to learn in Standard English. Motivation was the key to our success and the desire to share was the door we opened together. I used this material very successfully for what was to become their "Interactive Folksong Reading Curriculum" copyright 1997. Later on, I published the compilation of traditional children’s playground poetry in the work titled DOMINO. It is the only live sound field recording from this area of the world, in the Library of Congress Folklore Archive.

**MISSION STATEMENT:**
I hope to give teachers and students in the nation a reason to use a computer, learn to use the world wide web, -- integrate technology, literacy and music into the classroom curriculum. Teach the 60% of urban children in every City School District throughout the US to read and write Standard English. Statistics say these children never read beyond the forth grade level, graduate from high school or will find employment. For more info on this topic let me refer you to Drs. John Rickford and John Baugh who are experts in the field of Linguistics, and familiar with my work. I consider this a problem of epidemic proportions, and consequently puts the nations health at risk. Policy makers would be advised to treat this as a public health issue.

Play is what builds the mind--play and serious competition. Between play and the damned serious hierarchical games of children and adults we are forced to exercise an enormous repertoire of abilities.

Play--serious play or play for fun--comes to us naturally. We don't have to force ourselves into it. Practice adds cultural adornments which distinguish one group from another, and aid us in forms of teamwork not built into our brain's innate vocabulary.

DOMINO Book & Cassette From the American Virgin Islands
Cross Curricular - Interdisciplinary - Multi-Cultural Resource
60 Traditional Children's Songs, Proverbs, and Culture
45 minute Live Sound Field Recording

"One of the things we have learned is that Music is a code that leads us into an inner life" ----- Yo Yo Ma

"The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift." ----- Albert Einstein