

Innovations

In Early Education:
The International
Reggio Emilia Exchange



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North American Reggio Emilia Alliance

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North American Reggio Emilia Alliance

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Reggio Emilia's Deep Investment in Professional Development

By Amelia Gambetti and Emanuela Vercalli



Amelia Gambetti is international liaison for consultancy to schools for Reggio Children and co-chair of the Reggio Children International Network along with Emanuela Vercalli, who also collaborates in the planning and organization of professional development initiatives and consultancy projects and is responsible for international relations.

Since the beginning of the Reggio Emilia experience, one of the most important aspects of Loris Malaguzzi's vision was investing in professional development as a resource for ongoing learning, awareness, and motivation about our work. Our evolving interpretation of Malaguzzi's vision has created opportunities for learning that give all those involved in our experience the possibility and the competence to create connections between what had been studied in teacher preparation schools and the initiatives taken inside the infant-toddler centers and preschools through the collaboration among educators, children, and parents. We think this continuous investment in professional development has meant that theory and practice have always remained connected and supported through an ongoing analysis of the work that included observation, interpretation, and visibility.

Making learning visible through the processes of documentation has also been a priority in the work of Reggio Emilia's infant-toddler centers and preschools. By doing so, different experiences were realized that left traces. These traces encouraged actions of sharing that produced analysis and assessment. All this, since the beginning, has contributed to the children's awareness of their own competence and potentials.

Early in the Reggio Emilia experience, different strategies were part of a strong and deep investment in professional development. Among them are the exhibits produced in Reggio Emilia, which have been meaningful reference points. The exhibits have had the aim to become an effective channel of communication

and a tool for giving visibility to the elements of research, innovation, and evolution. Furthermore, exhibits of children's, teachers', and parents' experiences have always been an ongoing example of research projects in which theory and practice were always woven together.

Loris Malaguzzi's creative intuition to include an *atelierista*—a teacher with a background in visual art—and an *atelier*—a space that, since the beginning, has offered many different kinds of materials, tools, and techniques for children and educators to express themselves beyond the verbal language—was the genesis for Reggio Emilia's theory of the hundred languages. A vivid curiosity and deep interest to develop ideas, thoughts, and explorations and strong efforts to support encounters that create complex contexts, in which different experiences could manifest, characterize the experiences of the adults and children of the Reggio Emilia municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools.

The exhibit "The Hundred Languages of Children," was the result of many professional development meetings that took place in Reggio Emilia. Numerous research projects of children and adults were reanalyzed, giving birth to a desire and sense of responsibility to create an exhibit that could build exchanges with other experiences and contexts. Our intention was to offer our work as an example of what can be done with children if even unexpected possibilities are offered—for example, to learn about the body and movement, exploring also the "languages" of shadow, dance, music, wire, clay, and graphic representation.



“The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit started its journey in Reggio Emilia and Europe in 1981. From the interest it received, especially in terms of professional development, another version of the exhibit was requested by North America, where it started its journey there in 1986. Through the years, because of the evolution of our work in Reggio Emilia, the exhibit was periodically updated, up to the point that in 2005, it was necessary to organize another exhibit in which the evolution of our work could be made visible. Through collaboration between Reggio Children and NAREA, in 2008, a new exhibit “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” was opened in Boulder, Colorado. Since then, every six months it has been in 13 different venues in 13 different cities of North America and is still traveling.

We noted with interest that through the years, “The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit has had different partners and collaborators who requested to have the exhibit for longer periods because it had become a tool for professional development. The new exhibit “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” gives visibility to learning processes, strategies for building knowledge, a deeper investment in research, and the role of the educators. It offers itself as a meaningful tool for professional development that encourages collaborations, connections, dialogues, and reflections in a context of complexity, evolution, and innovation.

A few years ago, Reggio Children organized another English version of the exhibit “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children,” which, so far, has traveled to India, New Zealand, Israel, Germany, and Australia. The exhibit has generated an increased movement of educators traveling from Reggio Emilia to the exhibit, and there are also larger numbers of educators traveling to

Reggio Emilia from the different places where the exhibit has been hosted. This increased interest has given Reggio Children the opportunity to organize and develop more and varied professional development opportunities in Reggio Emilia so that these educators from all over the world can visit the infant-toddler centers and preschools and be part of exchanges and dialogues on education with *pedagogisti*, *atelieristi*, and educators of the schools of Reggio Emilia. Participants can be part of the Reggio Emilia approach in the place and context where this educational project has its origins and roots.

Many are the requests that Reggio Children receives to develop relations and dialogues with educators, schools, organizations, administrations, universities, and colleges from different parts of the world. There are also professional development initiatives that include the participation of *pedagogisti*, *atelieristi*, and educators from Reggio Emilia in other countries to develop research projects and conferences based on the idea of creating identities in dialogue.

We think all of these initiatives show a common commitment—a worldwide commitment and responsibility toward the education of very young children. We believe it has become a common goal to increase the quality of our work in order to invest more in very young generations. This can become a positive attitude and message of hope not only for the present but also for the future of our societies.

Our evolving interpretation of Malaguzzi’s vision has created opportunities for learning that give all those involved in our experience the possibility and the competence to create connections between what had been studied in teacher preparation schools and the initiatives taken inside the infant-toddler centers and preschools through the collaboration among educators, children, and parents.

–Amelia Gambetti
and Emanuela Vercelli

Image Credit

Images on the cover and in this article - Ray of light *atelier* at the Loris Malaguzzi International Center from the catalog of the exhibition *The Wonder of Learning* - © Preschools and infant-toddler centers - *Istituzione* of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia and Reggio Children

Taking Care with People: NAREA's Mission in Collaboration with Reggio Emilia's Style of Professional Development

By Margie Cooper



Margie Cooper is founder and executive director of Inspired Practices in Early Education, a not-for-profit organization created in 1999 to host “The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit in Atlanta during the NAEYC conference of 2000. Since then, Inspired Practices has become the organizational home of both Project Infinity, a 13-year ongoing research project involving six programs for young children in Atlanta and Greenville, and the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance. Margie is currently standing chair of NAREA, co-representative of NAREA within the Reggio Children International Network, and member of the board of directors of Fondazione Reggio Children—Centro Loris Malaguzzi.

Taking care with people and with our common spaces is the expression of a sense of belonging and living together. It is the humus in which the Reggio approach grows and which makes a group of people into an educating community. –Graziano Delrio, former mayor of Reggio Emilia (Delrio, 2011, p. 9)

The beautiful notion of “taking care with people” expressed by Delrio is one of a number of shared values NAREA wishes to build with its members and the wider community of North America. This turn of phrase is powerful in its subtle shift from the more familiar “taking care **of** people.” It renders our acts of care from the personal to the communal. In this regard, NAREA finds a shared purpose. While we stumble all along the way, our intention is to build unity and identity among and with all those whose calling is childhood, education, community, and human promise.

Education has always been a wide concept with many interpretations, some of which are in stark contrast to one another. Some view education and childhood as preparation for life as an adult, especially with regard to securing academic skills seen as essential to a work life. Others view education and childhood as custodial—either as a service that affords parents a partnership in child rearing or as a catchall whereby societal desires for improvement and cultural values can be imparted. For too many, education is a view so distant that it is better described as a longing, similar to hunger—60%

of the world’s children do not have access to schools (UNESCO, 2013).

So with differing concepts of education held throughout North America and the world, it becomes part of our work, as individuals and as members of NAREA, to continually give definition to our views of education. Are we aware in our conversations that we might not be building up shared definitions and concepts? One’s view of education, the language one uses to discuss education, and the value of using one word over another carry crucial meaning. Here, Reggio Emilia, through its International Network, of which NAREA is a member, expresses a statement of shared beliefs:

Education is essential to the life of each human being and the community. Education is a fundamental right for all human beings, with no distinction of race, color, gender, language, religion, political opinion, and it is a permanent condition for life. It is collective, without limits, and universal. As water, nobody must be obliged to buy education for his or her own necessity; everybody has the right to have access to good quality education. As it is a common good, education sets as its roots the sharing, the social bond, the collective initiative and proposes the themes of being the same, of democracy, of each person being an owner of rights. –Manifesto, Reggio Children International Network (Reggio Children International Network, 2014, p. 25)



North American Reggio Emilia Alliance

An educational approach that values participation, innovation, collaboration, and ongoing research of adults and children inside infant-toddler centers and preschools ... gives back to the community energy, insight, questions, options, an orchestra of human competence, and differing points of view on contemporary matters.

-Margie Cooper

It has been my very good fortune to be in Reggio Emilia nearly annually or semi-annually since my first visit in the summer of 1991. Regularly encountering this community over a span of these many years has enabled me to appreciate the wide view that citizens of Reggio Emilia take of education. It is a view that is challenging to understand from our different contexts in North America, and I still find it so. What I have grown to appreciate, though, is Reggio Emilia's steadfast commitment to the concept of an "approach" rather than a "method" and the perspective that education is a persistent, tireless political act of the community involving all—adults and children alike.

Perhaps too often, we are not reflecting deeply enough about the critical differences between an approach and a method, and perhaps because of this, we find it difficult to live the pearly essence of the Reggio Emilia approach in our own contexts, even when we can see quite clearly its beauty, the rigor of the experiences of the children and adults, and the reflective traces that give a form and a permanence through pedagogical documentation. Could it be that we are holding too tightly the words and concepts that live within the world of methods, rather than transforming our language and, thus, our thoughts to be reflective of this different worldview that chooses to be known as an approach?

For example, in North America, I often encounter the use of the word "practitioners" as a referent for teachers or educators—especially in pro-

grams for very young children. I would argue that within the behaviorist tradition through which education methodology took root, there is the underlying key concept that practitioners, devoid of the capacity or expectation to engage in research, implement the methods designed by others, often in a particular order that is external to the context of the daily life of any given classroom or school. By contrast, the Reggio approach is couched within a framework that utilizes guiding values and principles seen as alive and evolving over time—not substituted over time but evolving over time. Thus, interpreting, restating, elaborating, and transforming the ways in which the values and principles are articulated creates a permanent layering of advancing thought and understanding over time. These acts of enlargement are referred to as "participated events," meaning there is a permanent view to see oneself as a constituent part of a group and as belonging to the wider whole—the town, the region, the nation, and the world.

The publication *Indications - Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia* is a strong resource for encountering the most current version of the values and principles of Reggio Emilia's approach. Often, North American educators go straight to the list of values when reading this document, yet understanding the processes by which this publication was created is also essential. It is a document reflective of the deeply held strategies for community engagement and voice. By convening a widely representative group



Becoming a group and a member of this movement calls each of us to give a portion of our time to thinking, to exchanging with others, to reading, to taking different actions with children and adults, to collaborative analyses, to misinterpreting, to reinterpreting, to strengthening articulation of learning processes in children and adults, and to innovating, but most of all, prioritizing to “take care with people.”

—Margie Cooper

of adults tasked with its creation, the community’s interpretation and expectation of the infant-toddler centers and preschools are reset, elucidating quite precisely the main tenets of their modern views and expectations. So, in short, it lays out the style through which it can be understood that within Reggio Emilia, adults and children are to design and interpret rich and complex experiences over time, borne from the synergistic relationship among children, parents, teachers, and sometimes other community members, through which subjective learning processes of adults and children are made viewable and, therefore, open to further negotiation, through evolving strategies of pedagogical documentation. Thus, the Reggio approach is neither a method nor a curriculum but is, instead, both a people-building enterprise in the form of education and a community-building enterprise through which the town reinvents itself within an ever-evolving world.

It could be argued that constructing large-scale methodologies, still common as a strategy in today’s North American schools, is a sluggish, antiquated strategy given the pace of change in so many contemporary disciplines—medicine, engineering, technology, and communication, to name a few. An educational approach that values participation, innovation, collaboration, and ongoing research of adults and children inside infant-toddler centers and preschools instead gives back to the community energy, insight, questions, options, an orchestra of human competence, and differing points of

view on contemporary matters. It replaces the assembly line metaphor with one that could be described as entrepreneurial and akin to the crowdsourcing, social media phenomena of our current time. Moving educational decisions and strategies out of the hands of the few and into the hands of all, including children who are the subject of education, has a particularly democratic ring.

So what does all this have to do with NAREA and the efforts we shoulder to support a particular style of professional development? Mainly, we strongly believe in the intelligence and goodwill of educators to give their absolute best to their relationships with children and adults. We want to empower educators by offering challenging content and opportunities for networking with others from across North America and beyond. Further, we think that offering professional development that includes firsthand engagement with educators from Reggio Emilia enables groups of educators to hear different messages within the complexity of the content and begin to build new styles of being a group within their respective communities. We think the complexity of Reggio’s approach, which has been developing strongly for 50 years and from which we are borrowing, takes time and effort to comprehend well. Still, we think finding one’s own way through life **with** others practically defines the human experience.

Becoming a group and a member of this movement calls each of us to give a portion of our time to thinking, to exchanging with others, to reading, to taking different actions with children and adults, to collaborative analyses, to misinterpreting, to reinterpreting, to strengthening articulation of learning processes in children and adults, and to innovating, but most of all, prioritizing to “take care with people.” In part, as we have learned from Malaguzzi (1994), school is seen as a system of interactions and relationships. Thus, it seems wise to continually invest in raising our awareness of the web of relationships we all live within. Beyond what Reggio Emilia has offered to classrooms and schools, it has also expanded the place of education within society by demonstrating the myriad ways schools can strongly influence the community of which they are a part. Schools and communities, then, are both a reflection and a construction of the people who live within them.

NAREA's ongoing professional development project "Dialogues for Quality in Education," which conjoins with the exhibit "The Wonder of Learning - The Hundred Languages of Children" is emblematic of our vision of responsibility, participation, and collaboration. Since 2008, 13 host communities have taken responsibility for the exhibit, which requires deep effort within each community. The results of the determined work within these communities are reassuring—from convening 100 local elementary principals in Albuquerque to placing the exhibit in the state house in Indianapolis, hundreds of our colleagues in these communities have advocated for children, childhood, and a particular vision of education, adults, and participatory community, using their ingenuity, relationships, passion, and determination.

We see time and time again that it is people who give the exhibit its magic—from the participation of those whose traces of life now live within the exhibit to those who assemble to interpret and renegotiate the meaning of its contents. Contributing to building groups of people into educating communities, as Delrio posited, remains NAREA's vision and purpose.

What is probably the most human thing about human beings, what psychologists and primate experts now like to call "intersubjectivity," which means arriving at a mutual understanding of what others have in mind. It is probably the extreme flowering of our evolution as humanoids, without which our human culture could not have developed, and without which all our intentional attempts at teaching something would fail. To cultivate it requires an atmosphere of reciprocal respect and support, the type of respect that distinguishes schools that achieve success. (Bruner, 2012, xviii)

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an Reggio Emilia Alliance

“The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” Exhibit Project: A NAREA Initiative in Collaboration with Reggio Children and North American Communities

By Judith Allen Kaminsky



Judith Allen Kaminsky is the NAREA exhibit project coordinator and editor of *Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Emilia Exchange*. The spring 2008 issue of *Innovations* focused on “The Wonder of Learning” exhibit and included an article by Amelia Gambetti about the concepts, values, and contents of the exhibit, which is currently available on the NAREA website.

The exhibit speaks to all those involved in schooling and to all members of the general public who believe that safeguarding educational processes and their evolution is of crucial importance for society.

–*Wonder of Learning website, 2014*

The art of research already exists in the hands of children acutely sensitive to the pleasure of surprise. The wonder of learning, of knowing, of understanding is one of the first fundamental sensations each human being expects from experiences faced alone or with others. –Loris Malaguzzi

Since 2008, NAREA, Reggio Children, and North American host communities have collaborated in the ongoing organization and management of the exhibit “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children,” which includes traces of work in progress from the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia. The third version of “The Hundred Languages of Children” to tour North America, this exhibit aims to “reconfirm the values at the heart of the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy and to recount the changes, innovations, and developments that have taken place. The exhibit speaks to

all those involved in schooling and to all members of the general public who believe that safeguarding educational processes and their evolution is of crucial importance for society” (Wonder of Learning website, 2014).

NAREA seeks to strengthen understanding of the Reggio Emilia municipal system of infant-toddler centers and preschools by educators and other advocates for young children in order to increase participation in advancing the quality of the human experience for children, families, educators, and communities in North America. Since 2008, more than 60,000 participants have encountered the exhibit and experienced a wide and evolving variety of professional development initiatives aimed at advancing knowledge and action with regard to early childhood education.

NAREA serves in the role of liaison between Reggio Children and host communities for the





purpose of giving more quality to the hosting experience, increasing continuity as the exhibit moves through North America, and enriching collaboration within the community of educators in dialogue with Reggio Emilia's experiences. This collaborative project combines the value and energy of three entities—Reggio Children, NAREA, and the exhibit host communities—working together in the best interest of children throughout our continent and the world. (Orientation to NAREA's Long-Term Professional Development Project, 2014)



NAREA Professional Development Series

North American Reggio Emilia Alliance

Within “The Wonder of Learning - The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit, key aspects of history, the present and future of our life are underlined in the context of elements of evolution, innovation, and research, in a way that will enable visitors to understand how the educators, children, and families of the Reggio Emilia municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools have developed their work—always researching, studying, analyzing, reflecting, and searching for motivations and a new possible way of learning. (Gambetti, 2008, p. 12)

presence of the exhibit in host communities to deepen theoretical awareness of the philosophies and experiences of the Reggio Emilia municipal educational project. The objective of the series is to strengthen dialogue and collaborative participation of educators, parents, administrators, community members, and government leaders within the participating communities, with the overall aim of giving more quality and excellence to young children's early childhood experiences and relationships, particularly with regard to children's participation in settings such as schools and child care centers.

It has been well-documented that encounters with the content of the exhibit as a tool for professional development stimulate groups of educators and advocates in further study, research, and exchange for the purpose of creating new actions that improve the daily life of children and families within their reach. NAREA and Reggio Children have been coordinating a multiyear North American professional development series “Dialogues for Quality in Education” in connection with the

This series has also been characterized by the participation of two Reggio Emilia educators in a special initiative in each host community over the span of the exhibit's presence in North America. For educators in North America who might not have the opportunity to travel to Reggio Emilia, encountering a variety of Reggio Emilia educators through this series is invaluable. During the first phase of the exhibit project, many *pedagogisti*, *atelieristi*, and



teachers from the infant-toddler centers and preschools of the *Istituzione*, Municipality of Reggio Emilia, as well as representatives of Reggio Children, have been keynote speakers at the NAREA Professional Development Series initiatives in the various host communities.

In addition, each host community offers several local initiatives designed in collaboration with NAREA and Reggio Children for the purpose of tailoring a six-month course of study for their local community.

In the first phase of the exhibit project, host communities, in collaboration with NAREA and Reggio Children, identified various professional development foci related to the presence of “The Wonder of Learning” in their community. These have included:

- The school as a place of research
- The school as a place of relationships and connections
- Social justice in diverse early childhood settings
- The school as a place of community, collaboration, research, and innovation

- Crossroads: a meeting place, an intersection of ideas, a turning point—coming together to support, provoke, and explore learning
- Making learning visible in the school and community with children, families, and educators
- Valuing early childhood: an invitation for community dialogue
- Giving visibility to creative thinking and collaboration in our schools and communities
- Encounters with the pedagogical project of Reggio Emilia: collaborations, complexities, and connections
- Partners in education: engaging families, schools, and community
- Dialogue across the Pacific: honoring the child as learner, collaborator, and citizen
- The pleasure of learning: reimagining school as a place of inspiration, innovation, and collaboration
- Promoting the rights of children: community participation and dialogue

Reflections on the Experience of Hosting “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” Exhibit

Just as it has not been an easy road for the educators, families, politicians, and citizens of Reggio Emilia to give birth to the new ideas, experiments, actions, and ongoing research of their now 40-year education project for children birth to six years, it has not been easy for those of us in North America and elsewhere to catch on to the complexities of Reggio Emilia’s values, philosophies, practices, and meanings. However, it is fairly undisputed that we keep trying because their example fills us with hope, stirs our passion for our work and, frankly, provokes us at our core because we think of ourselves as a people who should be capable of better effort

on behalf of our own children “over here.” (Cooper, 2008, p. 14)

In order to understand the impact of “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit and accompanying NAREA Professional Development Series within North America, host communities reflect on the meaning and significance of hosting and encountering the exhibit.



On provoking dialogues around quality in education

The exhibit sparked a great deal of dialogue between educators who visited. People attending the professional development events from multiple states continue to stay in touch. Everyone seemed to recognize the importance of ongoing dialogue with others as a way to move the work forward. There was much interest from the Welborn Foundation and the Prichard Committee, both private nonprofit groups who advocate on behalf of early childhood education and are instrumental in the legislative agendas in their states. The interest of the Welborn Foundation to support this work in the area will prove to be the biggest strength created. Through their interest and support, the dialogue can reach beyond the early childhood community. Their board is comprised of members from all walks of life in the community and across Kentucky and Indiana. They have expressed a strong commitment to increasing awareness around this work. (Kentucky final report, September 2013)

In August 2011, IPS/Butler University Laboratory School opened—a collaboration between Butler University, one of the Indianapolis Reggio Collaborative exhibit hosts, and Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS), with the support of PNC Bank. In January 2013, the IPS Board of Commissioners decided to fund general education public preschool using federal Title I dollars. One of the new preschool classes was placed at the IPS/Butler University Laboratory School with the intent that it would be a Reggio-inspired preschool class. The continued dialogue between Indianapolis Reggio Collaborative educators and the IPS superintendent played a large role in his decision to use public education funds to provide preschool opportunities for the children of Indianapolis. (Indianapolis annual report, October 2013)

Our dialogues in the past year have focused on continuity of the educational principles of the Reggio approach throughout the entirety of our school, infants through 12th grade. The magnitude of this dialogue should not be underestimated, as it represents a strong commitment to quality educational experiences inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach for all students. In March 2012, Riverfield sent a delegation of 45 educators from our Pre-School, Primary School, Middle School, and Upper School, along with 2 university professors and 3 colleagues from other Reggio-inspired contexts, for a week of intensive study in Reggio Emilia. It was a unique and rich experience for all of us. We were struck by the power of a shared vision and momentum for change. (Tulsa annual report, January 2014)

In preparing and organizing for the exhibit, representatives from many different organizations from across the island came together monthly to discuss the logistical and professional learning aspects of bringing the exhibit to Hawai'i and hosting the summer conference. We came to know about each other's programs and goals, understanding the network of support among us. We made our presence and our work in early learning known to the legislature, and our efforts quickly coalesced in informing the legislature about the notion of "quality" early learning. The exhibit provided a commonality and a vision of quality child care programming and work. A Reggio-inspired study group emerged that brought together educators, administrators, and the public-at-large to engage in conversations about our work and as a support for one another. The NAREA professional development initiatives brought together our island community in examining early learning issues and raising new questions about working with young children. The exhibit became the touchpoint and center of collegial and community dialogue. (Hawai'i final report, July 2014)

There was much interest from the Welborn Foundation and the Prichard Committee, both private nonprofit groups who advocate on behalf of early childhood education and are instrumental in the legislative agendas in their states.

—Kentucky final report, September 2013



The continued dialogue between Indianapolis Reggio Collaborative educators and the IPS superintendent played a large role in his decision to use public education funds to provide preschool opportunities for the children of Indianapolis.

—Indianapolis annual report, October 2013



On strengthening collaborative participation

After the exhibit, the city of Chicago's Head Start program wanted to support a follow-up study tour to Reggio, which took place in April 2012. This particular study group was an extremely collaborative group of people. As a result, some became invested in Crossroads for Learning as board members. Crossroads for Learning was officially formed in late 2013 to inspire, support, connect, and challenge educators as they seek to understand and apply principles and practices of the Reggio Emilia approach within their own context in order to advance the quality of programs. (Chicago annual report, March 2014)

A legacy of the exhibit has been the establishment of the Learning Journey Grants program to foster collaboration and in-depth study of principles from Reggio, administered by the Vancouver Reggio Consortium. Six new study groups have been established in the area, all focused on reading and discussing Reggio-related publications. Four new study groups have been established to study pedagogical documentation from practice. Most of these are modeled after the Investigating Quality Project (a research study organized by the University of Victoria), which has expanded in BC and is funded by the government. A pilot project to provide pedagogical facilitators in several communi-

A legacy of the exhibit has been the establishment of the Learning Journey Grants program to foster collaboration and in-depth study of principles from Reggio, administered by the Vancouver Reggio Consortium.

—Vancouver annual report, July 2014

ties is a key component of this effort and is directly based on the study of pedagogical documentation. (Vancouver annual report, July 2014)

On community discussions around values and goals of education

In January 2013, two Indianapolis Reggio Collaborative educators from Butler University and St. Mary's Child Center testified in front of the state legislature on behalf of legislation for a preschool pilot program. A version of that legislation was passed, and our St. Mary's Child Center colleague was appointed special advisor to the State Early Childhood Advisory Committee. It should be noted that this pilot program represents the first funding for preschool in the history of the state of Indiana. (Indianapolis annual report, October 2013)

During the exhibit's time on O'ahu, a public presentation by Lella Gandini was held at Hawai'i's State Capitol. The audience was composed of legislators and/or their representatives, as well as educators, members of the Hawai'i Department of Education, parents, and teacher educators from the private domain. An open and lively discussion, provoked by Dr. Gandini's presentation, followed around quality and best practice. The exhibit's presence provided an appropriate setting for community leaders to visit and be provoked! The exhibit organizers were able to speak to the media about the exhibit and the notion of quality early learning and instructional practice. Stemming from the discussions, workshops, presentations, and the work of a Reggio-inspired classroom as experienced through her son, a parent is funding a series of four to six segments to be aired on Hawai'i public television around the principles of Reggio as inspiration for parents in nurturing the well-being of their children. (Hawai'i final report, July 2014)

I really enjoyed observing parent/teacher interactions as pairs and small groups stopped before particular parts of the exhibit and shared responses and reflections. The opportunity to build understandings together was quite valuable. I believe that the shared moments at the exhibit and subsequent conversations did help create a deeper awareness of the rights of children. (Santa Monica final report, January 2011)

We have made a commitment to invite legislators to our school to discuss issues in early childhood education. Each of these meetings has contributed to our understanding of what various legislators know and care about with regard to education policy. We are building a knowledge base that will help us more effectively communicate with legislators in the future in order to advocate for quality. (Boulder annual report, October 2010)

Ohio is one of the Race to the Top states and an early adopter of the Common Core State Standards. As we navigate this new educational opportunity, Ohio Voices for Learning's (OVL) 2014 Inspired Teachers Institute (ITI) is focused on a celebration of our rich heritage of studying Reggio-inspired practices while accepting the challenge ahead of us. "Looking Back, Looking Forward" will be a retrospective on Reggio-inspired practice in Ohio and an opportunity to embrace the new educational environment from a Reggio perspective. (Ohio annual report, July 2014)

On impacting the visibility of the learning and relationships :

Columbia College Chicago and the city of Chicago's Department of Family and Support Services plan to begin a professional development project in which 10 Head Start programs will begin to explore and adapt Reggio principles within their own contexts. In collaboration with Columbia College, we have planned a small action research project to involve several of the private and public Reggio-inspired early education programs collaborating through Crossroads for Learning. (Chicago final report, January 2012 and Chicago annual report, March 2014)

Ideas from the workshops on project-based learning and social justice are currently being integrated into many local centers. Teachers of young children, adult educators, and early childhood education students developed a new working vocabulary to talk about engaging children and their families and the value of building community. The exhibit helped people better understand what pedagogical documentation is (our local term is pedagogical narration) and what this documentation is intended to showcase. Many teachers were moved to begin to consider how to develop this way of making learning visible in their centers. (Vancouver final report, April 2013)

The First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) Summer Bridge Program has been implemented for the past eight years with two Reggio-inspired program coordinators. This intensive six-week program serves children and families identified as needing support in transition to kindergarten. Many of the families are exposed to multiple stressors with children living in the adverse context of poverty and exposed to violence. The program also serves as an intensive professional development experience for the coordinators and six teachers. Particular emphasis is placed on developing the image of each child as curious, capable, and competent. Professional development experiences shared during the presence of "The Wonder of Learning" exhibit continue to influence the staff. The program coordinators reflected that the experiences of the educators and children in Reggio Emilia helped the teachers connect the values of Summer Bridge with concrete strategies for supporting the visibility and identity of each child. The exhibit deepened their shared understanding and dialogue about the use of the environment, careful observation of children's interests, extended investigations, and even the importance of family-style meals. (Monterey annual report, November 2013)

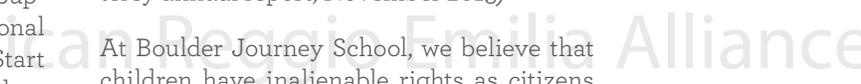
At Boulder Journey School, we believe that children have inalienable rights as citizens of the present and of the future. As a way of underlining this belief, each year on November 20, we celebrate International Children's Rights Day. We think that there is power in visibility. Our hope is that by making strong images of children visible throughout Boulder County, we will spark conversations and build awareness of this important day. This year, we asked families in our school community to distribute posters to local businesses and other public places to be displayed throughout the month of November. (Boulder annual report, May 2013)

On connecting with the values and goals of parents and administrators :

The schools that are obligated to adhere to the state mandates have looked and found creative ways to incorporate the Reggio approach into their curriculum. Marilee Cosgrove, an educator who frequently brings her staff to visit our school, recently contacted us. She is the director of childhood development

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-Santa Monica final report, January 2011



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—Chicago final report, January 2012

services for the Fullerton (California) School District. Their board of trustees has voted to be a Reggio-inspired public school district. We are encouraged by and supportive of their new vision for the children of Fullerton beyond preschool. (Santa Monica annual report, November 2013)

In the spring semester of the 2013–2014 school year, third-grade students at the IPS/Butler University Laboratory School will take the ISTEP state assessment for the first time in the school's history. Ongoing assessment data from the school indicates that each year, the children's academic growth improves. We are confident that longitudinal data at the lab school will demonstrate that not only can Reggio-inspired practice provide a rich and engaging curriculum but also children in such schools can succeed, as measured by standardized assessments. (Indianapolis annual report, October 2013)

Literacy development for **all** children is a strong component of the Oregon standards. The Portland Children's Museum's (PCM) Center for Learning received a contract provided by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to make visible the literacy work happening at Opal School of the PCM with children of all abilities through the Kennedy Center Very Special Arts (VSA) program. The Museum's Center produced a series of videos and accompanying booklet, *Equity and Access through Story Workshop: Supporting Inclusion for Children with Disabilities by Developing Connections between the Arts and Literacy*. The completed materials (videos and booklet) are available online at no cost to the public. (Portland annual report, September 2013)

On documenting the role of the environment:

It has helped to have some educators view schools already influenced by Reggio elements and principles in order to see that there are possibilities within an American inner-city context. However, the exhibit clearly did prompt people to see and comment on the environment and how simple, common materials (black and white paper) or structural items (columns), whether for infants or preschoolers, can provoke and support the breadth and depth of learning. (Chicago final report, January 2012)

One of the best aspects of experiencing the exhibit was understanding the role of the environment. The many projects made visible in the exhibit were around contextual environments that support and promote intentional explorations and investigations organized by the teachers. F5MC Technical Assistance (TA) Project supports child care quality and inclusion through on-site technical assistance that is grounded in best practice research and relationship-based, collaborative work. The school visits at the 2011 NAREA Summer Conference in Pacific Grove featured two centers that began their relationship with the TA project at its inception in 2006, Alegria Migrant Head Start and King City Migrant Child Development Center. The consultants supporting the projects are Reggio-inspired teachers, and several have experienced consultation with educators from Reggio Emilia in their programs. This supports local educators in their curiosities about the Reggio approach as they explore best practices and values in their own context. TA project participants and consultants are exploring the role of their own context and environments, and they support children's expression of their ideas about these explorations through the use of creative materials. (Monterey annual report, November 2013)

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—Portland annual report, September 2013

On organizing an exhibit of the learning and relationships of children, teachers, and parents in their community:

This spring, we held an exhibit of children's work at Mentor Graphics Child Development Center titled "Making connections, creating meaning. Celebrating the work of the center: Children, staff, and families through the documentation of children's thinking." The staff of Mentor hosted a one-day opportunity for educators, parents, and community members to view 21 documentation installations of children's work. The exhibit was complemented by facilitated tours of the infant/toddler and preschool classrooms and dialogue sessions with Mentor staff. (Portland annual report, September 2013)

Ohio Voices for Learning does have its own teacher exhibit "Where Ideas Learn to Fly." It was displayed at the Columbus Museum of Art for our May 2011 event and was on display at Primary Village South in Centerville (site of our 2011 ITI). Portions of the exhibit were displayed at the OAEYC exhibit in spring 2014. It will be on display at Kean University in Newark, NJ, from September 2014 until February 2015. OVL is also collaborating with COSI on recreating "Where Ideas Learn to Fly" so that it can be exhibited at the museum and withstand the wear and tear of being in a very visible, active location. (Ohio annual report, July 2014)

"Material Encounters," a project that involved working with several children's centers, an *atelierista*, and *pedagogista* resulted in a small traveling exhibit of photographs and text. This project will soon become a book and website, published by Routledge. Additionally, a cluster of educators taking part in a provincial leadership project have worked together in their community to create an exhibit and series of shareable books compiled from their documentation. (Vancouver annual report, July 2014)

In 2012, the city of Boulder decided to redesign a large public space in the heart of the city by enlisting citizens to contribute ideas. Growing Up Boulder began to work with groups of high school and middle school students, while educators at Boulder Journey School saw this as an opportunity to explore the ideas that young children might have. We asked the question: What would it look like if young children were involved with civic



planning? Three assumptions guided our investigation: Young children have a great deal to teach us about possibilities for planning public spaces, specifically the Boulder Civic Area. In order to gather the children's opinions in a meaningful way, we have to offer them the time, space, and resources necessary to gain a strong understanding of the project. In order to know the context of the children's opinions, we have to involve their families, since they primarily visit the Boulder Civic Area together. Throughout the fall semester, the children and families thought of many ideas for improving the public space. These were presented to city officials and community members in December. (Boulder annual report, May 2013)

On advocating for the rights of children in the community:

In the spring of 2012, a Riverfield Pre-School teacher embarked on a successful campaign bid for the Oklahoma State House. Her experience as an educator and her advocacy for the rights of children and quality education were cornerstones of her political platform. Throughout the campaign, there were numerous opportunities for discussion and debate, bringing to the forefront issues of accessibility, funding, and advocacy for quality experiences for all children. Many of her messages have roots in the strong image of the child and her teaching experience at Riverfield, and her campaign inspired other educators and families to become more vocal in their advocacy as well. She was elected in November 2012 and took office in January 2013. She serves as the vice chair of the Appropriations and Budget - Common Education Committee. (Tulsa annual report, January 2014)

F5MC serves as a catalyst for dialogue and engagement with policy makers and community and business leaders. The exhibit, along



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-Ohio annual report, July 2014



The exhibit, along with a presentation by Nobel Prize Laureate Economist James Heckman in March 2012, was envisioned to serve as a catalyst for future countywide strategic planning for quality early education for all children in Monterey County. In September 2012, the Children’s Council of Monterey County launched the Early Childhood Development Initiative.

–*Monterey annual report, November 2013*

with a presentation by Nobel Prize Laureate Economist James Heckman in March 2012, was envisioned to serve as a catalyst for future countywide strategic planning for quality early education for all children in Monterey County. In September 2012, the Children’s Council of Monterey County launched the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI). ECDI aims to develop a countywide strategic vision, road map, and action plan to help our youngest children, prenatal stage through age 5, reach their full potential in safe and nurturing families. (Monterey annual report, November 2013)

Our governor has announced a new initiative to provide a public-supported, high-quality preschool for every child in the state, starting with high-risk children and families. Early childhood educators are concerned

Conclusion

The image of childhood produced by this new way of seeing represents a powerful political choice: it represents the permanent research a community effects through childhood, on itself, and its way of life, on its present, and on its future. –Carla Rinaldi, *The Wonder of Learning - The Hundred Languages of Children* (Cavallini, 2011, p. 193)

NAREA and Reggio Children have developed a great deal of respect and admiration for the commitment, passion, and tireless work of all those who have welcomed “The Wonder of Learning” exhibit into their communities. We have learned about the many ways in which educators, parents, and citizens have given more quality and excellence to young children’s experiences and relationships by advancing knowledge and action regarding early childhood education. Our colleagues in these North American communities have collaborated with foundations that advocate for early childhood education. They have made connections with legislators, policy makers, and community and

that the governor’s definition of “high quality” sounds more like a traditional approach through direct instruction and assessment. There is a renewed effort among the local early childhood community following the exhibit’s presence and the governor’s announcement to have a voice in this process and to influence the governor’s definition of “high quality.” (Portland final report, October 2012)

The presence of the exhibit was the pebble tossed into the pond, bringing to the surface and forefront the image and rights of children and the critical importance of continuing to advocate for quality learning experiences for our youngest citizens. The professional development series that will be presented on public television and the series of workshops on Reggio principles will continue to keep the dialogue alive. The exhibit helped to inform a clear vision for what could be as we advocate for the rights of each child. The exhibit’s impact is evident in the continued interest from future educators, teachers, administrators, policy makers, and families. Ultimately, the beneficiaries of our ongoing work are the children of Hawai’i, and we are committed to our shared responsibility as a community to support and ensure their success in life. (Hawai’i final report, July 2014)

business leaders through the experience of the exhibit, dialogue with Reggio Children representatives, and visits to local Reggio-inspired schools. These efforts have contributed to new early childhood legislation, the opening of new Reggio-inspired schools, and new early childhood governmental initiatives.

Our host community colleagues throughout North America have also demonstrated the many ways in which they are working to “safeguard educational processes and their evolution” by “always searching for a new possible way of learning” (Gambetti, 2008, p. 12). Many have reported collaborations with Head Start and other programs for children in disadvantaged situations through pedagogical and family support programs. We have learned about ways that the exhibit project has broadened access to Reggio-inspired professional development for educators through scholarships and grant programs, in addition to the scholarships NAREA offers to local educators in each winter or summer conference host com-

munity. Our colleagues have also shown us that the presence of the exhibit and the accompanying professional development series in North American communities has resulted in greater participation of families and increased dialogue with community members about education. This experience has impacted children of primary grades and older and led to the creation of new local Reggio-inspired collaborative groups that support professional development and advocacy.

NAREA and Reggio Children believe that the combined reflections of all exhibit hosts could have significant implications in terms of advocacy and educational policy throughout North America. We are inspired by their accomplishments and eagerly look forward to our continuing collaboration with North American educators who join us in making the “powerful political choice” (Cavallini, 2011, p. 193) required to elevate the quality of early childhood education.

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—Hawai'i final report, July 2014

Exhibit Project Concludes in 2018

NAREA and Reggio Children have extended the exhibit project through 2018. The exhibit will be in New York City in January–May 2015, in Pittsburgh in June–November 2015, and in the Toronto area in June–November 2016. There are currently five open exhibit hosting periods before the conclusion of this project in December 2018:

January–May 2016	January–May 2018
January–May 2017	June–November 2018
June–November 2017	

Those interested in learning more about hosting “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit in their community can contact Judith Allen Kaminsky, NAREA exhibit project coordinator: judy@reggioalliance.org

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Voices: Conversations from North America

Building Connections through “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” Exhibit

By Dewanda Martin, Rosemary New, and Kathy Stewart



Dewanda Martin is director of operations at First Baptist Church Kindergarten (FBCK) in Greenville, South Carolina. Dewanda has also been a member of this educational community since 1991 as a parent and classroom teacher. Kathy Stewart

has been director of education practices at FBCK for 8 years and was a classroom teacher for 21 years. Kathy began studying the Reggio Emilia approach in 1996, when she joined the FBCK staff. In 2003, FBCK joined Project Infinity, a professional development project with seven Reggio-inspired schools in Atlanta and Greenville and an initiative of Inspired Practices in Early Education and its executive director Margie Cooper, in collaboration with Amelia Gambetti of Reggio Emilia, Italy. Rosemary New has been director of First Baptist Church Infant-Toddler Program (FBCITP) for 29 years. Rosemary began studying the Reggio Emilia philosophy in 2005, a year before participating with FBCK educators in a study group in Reggio Emilia. In 2008, FBCITP began participating in Project Infinity.

During the summer of 2009, while participating in a NAREA summer conference in Tulsa, Rosemary New talked with Margie Cooper, NAREA standing chair, about the possibility of bringing “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit to Greenville. She encouraged us to write a proposal and submit it to NAREA and Reggio Children for their consideration. After arriving back in Greenville, Rosemary approached Kathy Stewart and Dewanda Martin about their interest in cohosting the exhibit. It was agreed that the directors of both schools would submit the proposal, which was accepted in late December of that year.

Goals for the Exhibit in Greenville

Why did we want to bring the exhibit to our city? We desired to bring awareness of the young child and early childhood education.

Our goal for the exhibit experience was for educators, business leaders, parents, and politicians to deepen their understanding of children’s thinking and the Reggio Emilia style of collaboration and relationship-based learning.

–Dewanda Martin, Rosemary New, and Kathy Stewart

We believed that offering the reference of both the exhibit and our schools would contribute to our efforts to raise the quality of early childhood experiences within our city. We felt that bringing the exhibit to Greenville would be a powerful tool, giving visibility to the progressive way of thinking and valuing the infant,

toddler, and preschooler that we have been researching through our study of the philosophies and experiences of Reggio Emilia. We hoped that bringing the exhibit to Greenville would support an opportunity for exchange, dialogue, and observation among families, children, and educators to bridge experiences within the community. We aspired to bring education and business leaders together to dialogue about the importance of preparing the next generation of thoughtful, productive, and insightful community members. Our goal for the exhibit experience was for educators, business leaders, parents, and politicians to deepen their understanding of children's thinking and the Reggio Emilia style of collaboration and relationship-based learning.

Before and during our hosting period, we were encouraged in our efforts and goals by many business, education, and community leaders. One of these was Les Gardner, director of development of the Greenville Technical College Foundation: "This exhibit shows us the many different ways that children learn and are constantly learning. Solid awareness of what the exhibit shows us will help make us more effective teachers, coaches, and mentors at home, on the playground, in classrooms, and labs at all educational levels. The knowing and applying of this knowledge through all of education, in every form of education, just might be a significant way to meet the many challenges and take advantage of the many opportunities that we face as a community, state, nation, and world in this, the 21st century."

The Greenville community supported "The Wonder of Learning" exhibit in various ways. A group of community leaders was assembled a year and a half before the exhibit's arrival. The community advisory committee met as needed to formulate fund-raising strategies, identify partnerships, and help spread the word about the mission of the exhibit. We also gathered community partners, which included other early childhood educational groups, universities, and nonprofit organizations.

The Exhibit Opens

On January 3, 2014, during one of the coldest weekends ever in Greenville, we welcomed the arrival of the exhibit crates from Hawai'i. The exhibit was assembled within a few days by an enthusiastic group of parents and educators in a beautifully refurbished and recycled shopping mall that houses educational institutions. One of our parents commented, "During my time installing the exhibit, I took a moment to reflect on the message it sends—**wonder**. I learned how children explore their own ideas, conversations, and interactions with other students. The exhibit gave me a better perspective on my own children's sense of wonder. I continue to be amazed at how children capture and visually interpret experiences at such an early age."



Our opening celebration on January 23, 2014 welcomed our educators, families, supporters, partners, and colleagues from Project Infinity. The educators from Project Infinity's Atlanta schools served as resources during the time of our preparations for the exhibit's arrival and during the hosting period. The opening ceremony included the reading of a congratulatory letter from Dick Riley, former U.S. secretary of education and former governor of South Carolina, who could not be in attendance: "In the year 2000 while serving as U.S. secretary of education, I brought several representatives from the Department of Education to visit the renowned preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. The purpose of our journey was to elevate the importance of high-quality education for our youngest citizens—the infants, the toddlers,

and the preschoolers. It was exciting for me to see Greenville educators—good people, good educators from my hometown in my home state—engaged in making connections with these world-class schools and faculty to learn new strategies for working with young children. We share the view that excellence in learning must be pursued continuously for **all** children ... and the earlier the start, the stronger the result. I would like to be with you as you launch the beginning of several months when educators from all over the country—and especially our region—will expand their ideas and innovation in working with young children, as they study and learn from the work created by the children of Reggio Emilia.”

Our K-5 class visited the exhibit soon after its arrival. They had shown an interest in “contraptions” during the school year and were intrigued by the children’s work within the exhibit. They excitedly viewed the panels and artifacts and made sketches of their own. One child commented as he pointed to the column artifacts, “Guys! You’ve got to see this!” Another child responded, “Columns are my favorite shape. They remind me of my sparkly boots.” A third response was, “I’ve been so inspired. I want to draw my own contraption.”



the exhibit in Greenville.

During the year, First Baptist Church Kindergarten and Infant-Toddler Program participated in and hosted several smaller conferences for local educators to raise awareness of Reggio values by offering opportunities for new ways of viewing the educational experience of young children. We partnered with the Greenville County Childcare Association, Institute for Child Success, Greenville County First Steps, Greenville County Schools, and Lifelong Learning to offer initiatives connected to the exhibit and the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Derek Lewis, executive director of First Steps, noted that these groups share a common goal “of providing all children in our community and state with high-quality opportunities in early childhood education to help create a solid foundation for the future.” Our goals were to encourage new attitudes about the capabilities and intelligences of young children and to offer new insight into how early childhood learning occurs. One participant remarked, “I will spend more time listening and focusing on what the children do and learn from their experiences.”



Angela Barozzi, Leslie Morrow (interpreter), and Paola Cagliari

Professional Development Opportunities

“The Pleasure of Learning: Reimagining School as a Place of Inspiration, Innovation, and Collaboration” was our professional development focus during the hosting period. Our professional development offerings began before the arrival of the exhibit with a professors’ lunch in February 2013, when 25 participants from 11 colleges and universities gathered to dialogue, using the exhibit as a tool in their work with students. On November 8, 2013, Lella Gandini and Amelia Gambetti led a one-day conference of 150 participants. Sharing stories from the exhibit that focused on the strong image of the child, Lella and Amelia generated excitement about the arrival and presence of

A highlight of the exhibit experience was sharing our school, church, and beautiful city while hosting the NAREA Winter Conference on February 27–March 1, 2014, for 365 educators from 24 states and 5 countries. We were fortunate to have Reggio educators Paola Cagliari and Angela Barozzi as keynote speakers. Paola and Angela shared experiences from Reggio Emilia and the exhibit, inspiring the participants to be more imaginative, innovative, and collaborative in their work with young children. A gospel choir, local storytellers, and artists participated in the conference in order to offer glimpses into the culture of Greenville and the surrounding area. One participant commented after the conference, “I just wanted to personally thank you



so very much for hosting the NAREA Winter Conference. I had the privilege of participating with eight of my educators in this amazing weekend of reflection and inspiration. It was a joy spending time among other colleagues embracing this wonderful approach. I hope you recognize that your hard work has directly impacted educators and their students in the surrounding area. This hard work and dedication did not go unnoticed. I look forward to continued correspondence between our schools and sharing this amazing journey with you.”

Lella Gandini and Amelia Gambetti returned for our closing initiative on May 2–3, 2014. One hundred fifty participants gathered to focus on literacy and story connected to the exhibit and experiences in Reggio Emilia, supported by presentations from Project Infinity schools.

Not only do we see the exhibit’s presence as a professional development tool for the educators within our community, we also view it as deep professional development for our own teachers. It created many opportunities for dialogue. As we have learned in our journey, the more contact and encounters one has with the experiences of educators in Reggio Emilia, the greater the possibility for infinite growth. Hosting the exhibit brought an intentional and constant awareness of our space and our work, which would support and sustain this growth. We began by studying the exhibit catalog, section by section, with our joint staffs beginning in January 2012, a year before the exhibit was due to arrive. We continued meeting within the exhibit in small groups to study each section as part of our professional development during the exhibit’s five-month stay. One of our educators commented, “I have visited the exhibit 26 times. I have examined and shared these panels with family members, colleagues from my school, and attendees from two conferences, as well as multiple times alone. I now have a notebook **full** of quotes, descriptions, diagrams, questions, and ideas. I realize that the point of the exhibit is **not** to produce replicas in my own

school but to allow my vision of what **can** happen to improve. I have come to the conclusion that ‘The Wonder of Learning’ exhibit isn’t just about showcasing the inherent capabilities of young children but also of adults.”

The Lasting Impact of the Exhibit

At the end of May, the exhibit was packed up and sent on its way to Albuquerque. As we’ve heard from other exhibit hosts, it was a bittersweet moment. The preparations and the hosting of the exhibit took countless hours by many dedicated people, but we have no regrets in bringing this extraordinary exhibit to our city. This experience has changed us as individuals and as schools. The effects from this experience will continue to grow us as Reggio-inspired educators.

So what’s next? We are developing new relationships with educators in our community who are inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy and are furthering the connection with these schools. The exhibit supported our work with Project Infinity and its purpose “to seek to build strong and lasting relationships of professional exchange between small groups of unrelated schools by uniting in ongoing study of the philosophies and experiences of Reggio Emilia.” We predict that the exhibit’s presence in Greenville will continue to support the work of Project Infinity, in addition to inspiring other schools and organizations to revisit their own work in light of the values and experiences of Reggio Emilia.

The connections made and partnerships formed as a result of bringing the exhibit to Greenville continue to reverberate throughout our community. Our goal of bringing together a wide variety of organizations that desire to provide and support high-quality early childhood experiences is being realized. We envision creating lasting change that is exponential and cultivating a culture that ensures the rights of all children.

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—Dewanda Martin, Rosemary New, and Kathy Stewart

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The Reggio Emilia Approach in Australian Contexts

By Jan Millikan, Libby Cumming, Lisa Burman, Sue Dahlenburg, Jo French, and Tina Adamo



Jan Millikan is founder and former director of the Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange (REAIE), an entirely volunteer group that serves the membership through project groups and collective decision-making. Jan currently serves as the international project group convener for REAIE and is its representative to the Reggio Children International Network. Libby Cumming is an early childhood consultant with over 30 years' experience in government and independent preschools and serves as documentation

center project group convener at REAIE. Lisa Burman is an experienced teacher and school leader and currently works as a pedagogical consultant in Australia, supporting educators and preschool and primary school leaders to develop site-wide plans for pedagogical change. Sue Dahlenburg is principal lecturer within the Children's Services Program for Technical and Further Education South Australia and has worked in the early childhood education field for over 25 years. Jo French is a registered nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Women's and Children's Hospital Adelaide and has a consulting role at the Ranges Early Learning and Care Centers for integrating infant and family development into the service's model of care. Tina Adamo is currently early childhood advisor for Catholic Education South Australia and has worked in education for over 30 years.



North Australia

The Australian Context and the Development of REAIE

Jan Millikan



Australia has a landmass as large as the United States but a small population of just 23 million scattered across a vast country of widely differing climates and vegetation. There are many small isolated communities and long distances between populated areas. Communication at all levels is a challenging issue.

Along with these challenges, Australia has three distinct providers of compulsory education: state departments, Catholic education, and independent schools. The pre-compulsory years of schooling are birth to six years, although the majority of children commence formal schooling at five years of age.

In 2009, all Australian governments agreed to a National Early Childhood Development Strategy and, as part of this reform, developed the first National Early Years Learning Framework. The framework provides a set of outcomes, principles, and pedagogical practices.

The first interest in Reggio Emilia emerged in 1990 when Jan Millikan accompanied a United States study group to Reggio Emilia, organized by Angela Ferrario. As a result of this initial visit, “The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibition traveled to Melbourne in 1994 and was accompanied by a conference with speakers from Reggio Emilia. This event provided a catalyst for a much broader audience.

Our knowledge of the educational project in Reggio Emilia gradually increased through annual study groups and publications from Reggio Emilia in the English language and with the initial development of REAIE in 1995. The publication of *The Challenge*, our organization’s journal, also enabled the sharing of beginning attempts at documentation by educators across Australia.

REAIE draws on the Reggio Emilia experience as the ongoing catalyst for thinking, research, and advocacy in Australian educational settings. REAIE has a vision for a just and civil society that values our shared humanity, fosters strong democratic communities, recognizes the uniqueness of each individual, and appreciates diversity.

“The Wonder of Learning” Exhibition

Jan Millikan

Every two years, REAIE organizes a national conference in alternating states across Australia. The conferences are also accompanied by the presence of a version of “The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibition and, importantly, by two speakers from Reggio Emilia. Our last conference was in 2013 in Queensland, and it was accompanied by “The Wonder of Learning” exhibition on its first visit to Australia.

We recognize children as social beings from birth, full of curiosity and imagination and having the potential and desire to find connections and meaning in all they experience. We acknowledge their ability to reflect upon and contribute to their own learning through their many languages of expression and communication. We recognize that all children have a right to be heard, to be respected, and to feel a sense of belonging to their family, school, and community. We see this as the foundation for becoming responsible citizens of the world.

The mission of REAIE is:

- to support, nurture, and promote connections and collaborations between members;
- to develop, maintain, and share information resources that draw on the Reggio Emilia experience;
- to advocate for the role of research as a vehicle for learning for adults and children;
- to be recognized as an influential voice on the visibility of children in education policy, theory, and practice; and
- to establish a financially sound, sustainable national organization.

In 2001, we were fortunate to receive a bequest that enabled us to open an office and become incorporated as a national organization with an elected committee. The mantra of REAIE is to respond to its vision and mission and to enable and support network groups across Australia.

“The Wonder of Learning” exhibition was displayed at the Ipswich Gallery north of Brisbane for eight weeks and was accompanied by interactive experiences in the children’s gallery, which were offered to groups of children 3-12 years of age. This also involved a research project related to children’s questions and interactions, both individually and in groups. Reflections on the exhibit were received verbally, through written notes, and on the gallery’s

Facebook page. Here are some examples:

“Amazing exhibition ... so much to take in. Well done to the gallery for presenting it so well.”

“Very in-depth exhibition ... really great to see this. All politicians **must** see it!”

“‘The Wonder of Learning’ exhibition allowed teachers to see different ways of documenting to make children’s learning visible and how planning may look and feel. It helped them realize how children see different things in the world and how important conversations are to understanding children’s thinking. It enabled them to realize that they need to look more into

a child’s understanding of the world around her and slow down!”

“More exhibitions like this are a must.”

Extensive media promotion took place throughout the eight weeks. Six hundred people from every state and territory in Australia and some parts of the Asia Pacific region visited the exhibit. There were many who traveled very long distances and returned on more than one occasion to revisit the powerful experience of this exhibition, which was viewed by 17,218 visitors during its time in Australia in 2013.

The Documentation Center

Libby Cumming



One of REAIE’s new initiatives has been to establish a documentation center at the national office in Melbourne. In 2011, a small group began discussing this possibility and worked together to create the center, which displays, among other things, projects, daily journals, and portfolios. In 2013, a small grant enabled the purchase of display cabinets for clay and wire pieces, an overhead projector, computer, television, DVD player, and several iPads. Documentation that is loaned or donated is constantly rotated. There are also opportunities for people to browse through and purchase resources from Reggio Emilia.

The Documentation Center is open at advertised times, with a facilitator provided, and attracts practitioners from child care centers, kindergartens, primary schools, universities, other tertiary institutions, and network groups. Visitors come from all over Victoria, and from other states in Australia and overseas. The space has become an important place for collaboration, wondering, and networking—a place that inspires as well as challenges.

One of REAIE’s new initiatives has been to establish a documentation center at the national office in Melbourne ... The space has become an important place for collaboration, wondering, and networking—a place that inspires as well as challenges.

-Libby Cumming

Carla's residency was titled "Reimagining Childhood" ... The challenges, provocations, and inspirations of this residency continue to offer an extraordinary experience, not only for the possibilities that it provides, but also for the desire and intention to change.

-Jan Millikan

Thinkers in Residence

Jan Millikan

Since 2003, the Department of Premier and Cabinet in the state of South Australia has organized a "Thinkers in Residence" program, which has been a catalyst for bringing new ideas and change to the state of South Australia. The "thinker" works in collaboration with stakeholders (known as partners) to consider challenges and possibilities. The final report for each residency provides recommendations to the government and has the potential to bring about significant changes to state legislation and action.

A wonderful impetus to our understanding of ourselves and our educational endeavors occurred in 2012-2013 when Carla Rinaldi from Reggio Children accepted an invitation to be a "thinker" in this South Australian initiative. Partners in her residency represented all stakeholders interested and involved in the provision of early childhood education within the state of South Australia. Some of the stakeholders were also affiliated with national organizations.

Carla's residency was titled "Reimagining Childhood." Anticipated outcomes were related to reconceptualizing the child and childhood from the perspective of all those involved with and for children and in consideration of the rights of children as citizens from birth. REAIE was a partner in the residency, which was also a response to the premier's promise to the state of South Australia: "Every Chance for Every Child."

Carla's first visit in March 2012 provided her with many and varied opportunities to meet with partners and become familiar with services and systems providing for the education and care of young children and aware of the complexity of service provision and the fragmentation of services. A response to these issues was addressed during Carla's second visit, enabling a number of ongoing projects to be established.

Carla's residency also attracted enormous interest in the wider community with over 2000 people attending her inaugural lecture. The challenges, provocations, and inspirations of this residency continue to offer an extraordinary experience, not only for the possibilities that it provides, but also for the desire and intention to change. Although this project is essentially tied to South Australia, it has the possibility to influence policies, principles, and actions across the whole of Australia. To further extend this possibility, REAIE organized a national conference in Adelaide that was titled "A Challenge for Rights, Potentials, and Responsibilities." The Adelaide 2014 Architects and Educators Conference in the Asia Pacific region was also strongly influenced by Carla's visit.

A link to the report of Carla's residency in South Australia can be found on the REAIE website: www.reggioaustralia.org.au/

Representatives of four of the partner groups for this residency share their ongoing experience in response to Carla's provocations:

Early Childhood Organization of South Australia (EChO)

Lisa Burman

EChO is a volunteer organization that provides professional learning opportunities for early childhood educators across the independent, Catholic, and public sectors. It is concerned with the learning of children from birth to eight years of age. We were excited by the challenge of designing an appropriate response to our involvement with the Rinaldi residency in consideration of our own cultural, historical, and educational context. We hoped to create a momentum for change by involving educational leaders of the sites participating, building early childhood educational leadership and vision, and supporting each site to contextualize their own learning.

We hoped to create a momentum for change by involving educational leaders of the sites participating, building early childhood educational leadership and vision, and supporting each site to contextualize their own learning.

-Lisa Burman

Our partnership in the Rinaldi residency deepened our understanding of what it means to acknowledge the voice of the child, the intent of documentation, and the importance of seeing the environment as a “third teacher.”

-Sue Dahlenburg

In 2013, four sites agreed to be “prototype” learning teams, and the learning from this experience resulted in opening the project to a larger group in 2014. The project now involves 26 sites that form 19 learning teams. Each learning team consists of a core group of five to eight educators and an EChO mentor, who walks alongside them throughout the project. Mentors visit the learning teams at their sites eight times during the year. Four times a year, all learning teams and mentors meet, and the image of the child as a competent and capable learner from birth acts as a compass for the entire project, continually challenging us to reflect on how we view childhood and how our educational practices and structures reflect this image. The participants have been challenged to view themselves as “everyday researchers.” Over 120 educators are involved in these “learning days.”

The final component is the “leaders’ sessions,” held once a term when educational leaders from four to five learning teams meet with their mentors to share experiences and question and support each other in leading pedagogical change. This type of mentored inquiry deviates from “outcome driven” inquiry and engages in new thinking related to what it means to work with children and families when we **intentionally** see the child as a competent and capable learner from birth.

Technical and Further Education
South Australia (TAFE SA)

Sue Dahlenburg

TAFE SA is a major provider of education and training in South Australia for educators working in diverse educational and care services for children from birth to five years. It delivers high-quality, nationally recognized qualifications, including a diploma in early childhood education and care. The educational delivery of TAFE SA’s programs for children’s services focuses on ensuring that students, in their preparation as early childhood professionals, develop the skills required to implement a relationship-based approach in their work with

children. Our partnership in the Rinaldi residency deepened our understanding of what it means to acknowledge the voice of the child, the intent of documentation, and the importance of seeing the environment as a “third teacher.” This has a significant impact on what we teach and on employment outcomes for our students/graduates.

The Rinaldi residency brought new opportunities and inspiration to the Children’s Services Program at TAFE SA, with several staff involved in the many additional opportunities that were offered as a result of this residency. These experiences challenged views of educational delivery and the question arose: How do we perceive children as learners, and what influence does this have in our educational delivery? By revisiting the educational principles and philosophies of the Reggio Emilia approach and Carla’s many provocations, our educational delivery was also enhanced through collaboration with a nearby children’s center.

We noticed many changes in the student’s understanding, along with an increased ability to deconstruct and reconstruct practices, approaches, and ways of working with children. This, in turn, influenced the educational delivery and methodologies used by lecturers when working with students. We questioned together: What is the intent of our documentation when working with students and children? This led to a new journey with students and their studies in the diploma of Children’s Services (early childhood education and care) Program.

TAFE SA Children’s Services programs have several campuses across Adelaide, with a Center for Learning and Practice in each, where local community members can bring children to engage in quality play environments with students and staff. Carla’s residency influenced the thoughts behind the physical environments provided for children. Students also revisited ways of listening to the child’s voice and explored new ways of interacting and questioning the children. The statewide

TAFE SA Children's Services team will continue to weave the educational principles, philosophy, and the many provocations of Reggio Emilia through the educational delivery of its programs.

The Women's and Children's Hospital South Australia

Jo French

Several hospital staff were involved in the Rinaldi residency, and the experience affirmed our decision to implement a change of philosophy. Initially, this was prompted by the proposed redevelopment of the neonatal nurseries, a multimillion-dollar project to expand and redesign the nurseries to provide best practice care in a large teaching hospital that caters to newborn infants from several parts of Australia. The development of a center for earliest childhood in a large government hospital is a challenging undertaking as the existing culture stems from long-term practice. This practice is based on the transfer of ownership in the care of sick and premature infants to medical and nursing staff ("the experts") from parents, who themselves are experiencing a stressful and unfamiliar situation over which they have little control.

The change in practice that is most challenging for the staff is the development of true partnerships with parents, acknowledging each infant as part of a family existing outside the hospital, rather than belonging to the hospital. Our previous practice delayed the attachment of parents to their infant until discharge. We now seek to actively encourage and facilitate parents developing real relationships with their baby during their admission and becoming partners with the staff.

A survey found that as a group, the almost 150 nursing and medical staff were aligned very closely in their values and their commitment to delivering quality care. These values reflected the philosophy of Reggio Emilia and linked well with current best practice research in neonatal care, which promotes optimal outcomes

for development. Current research suggests that it is neuroprotective to respond to the fundamental need to belong and to be part of a secure reciprocal relationship with your family from the earliest period. This relationship further enables support for desired outcomes.

Hospital staff participated in "practice reflection" in areas of care that influence parent participation. This involved revisiting policies and reviewing possible ways to involve parents in a meaningful way by supporting them in undertaking tasks previously performed exclusively by staff. This change has been successfully implemented, with staff anecdotally expressing satisfaction in promoting parental involvement.

The ability of staff to work with parents rather than directing them remains a challenge because of the time, funding, and expertise to support such practice development in a very large group of staff and families. Linking a philosophy of care through two government departments, health and education, aims to support the transition of parents from the hospital into the community, with both organizations using the same language and expectations of our smallest citizens. The importance of using the Rinaldi residency to help guide and support improved caregiving in nurseries cannot be overstated. Although frustrating and slow, change in health practice using the knowledge and research of early childhood education is unique and an opportunity to lead improvement in neonatal care in Australia.

Catholic Education South Australia (CESA)

Tina Adamo

Although it is difficult to describe or measure the impact of the Rinaldi residency on CESA, the word **seismic** does come to mind as a fair summary. Soon after the residency concluded, CESA offered a two-day collaboration with Carla Rinaldi and Jan Millikan. The collaboration was a vehicle for school leaders, teachers, curriculum consultants, and executives from the Catholic Education Office to collectively

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The challenge was to find ways to walk alongside these schools and teachers, not as consultants or advisors but as co-learners and co-researchers.

-Tina Adamo

explore the question: What kind of school, what kind of educator, and what kind of me for what image of the child? A fundamental aim of the collaboration was to support the emergence of learning communities where teachers are researchers and schools are places of research.

The planning group for this collaboration challenged themselves to move from the traditional processes and ways of facilitating a workshop to becoming a learning community guided by documentation and the pedagogy of listening. Documentation from the collaboration became a basis for continued reflection, analysis, and interpretation. Carla agreed that the two-day collaboration went well, but she held on to her enthusiasm, reminding us that real learning is transformative in practice as well as in attitude and understanding.

The challenge was to find ways to walk alongside these schools and teachers, not as consultants or advisors but as co-learners and co-researchers. A core pedagogical group of existing consultants from the Catholic Education Office was willing to explore the concept of researching in the schools and what it means to be a learner from the outside alongside teach-

ers on the inside.

In July this year, the 13 research schools in phase one shared their documentation with Carla, and an additional 8 schools became involved with this initiative. At the heart of what we heard from teachers, schools, parents, and school and office leaders was a desire for political, cultural, and pedagogical change.

After consultation with the lead associations and reference groups for CESA, it was decided to dedicate 2014 to our own year of reimagining childhood. “CESA Reimagining Childhood 0–18” was borne as a multisector initiative, based on dialogue and centered on the search for more contemporary responses to the questions: What kind of school, what kind of educator, and what kind of me for what image of the child?

The momentum is both unsettling and exciting. This synchronicity offers our sector and state great possibilities. No one quite expected that “CESA Reimagining Childhood 0–18” would have such momentum, stirring energy and connection along the way. It will continue into 2015.

Conclusion

Jan Millikan

The schools in Reggio Emilia act as a mirror, not a model. When we look in a mirror, we see ourselves, and when we look at the practice and pedagogy of the Reggio Emilia schools, we find a provocation to challenge **our** assumptions and question **our** practice. Pedagogy is a matter of choice, choosing from many possibilities, a process that is informed by continual questioning, reflection, and research. For members of REAIE, the educational project in Reggio Emilia is a catalyst for reflecting on the image of the child, the image of the teacher, and the image of teaching and learning in the Australian context. (REAIE website, 2014)

As a member of the Reggio Children International Network, REAIE appreciates the ongoing opportunities for continuing relationships and collaborative effort in working toward the “defense and promotion of the rights of all children,” Reggio Children’s mantra. The world needs Reggio Emilia.

REFERENCE

Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange website: www.reggioaustralia.org.au/

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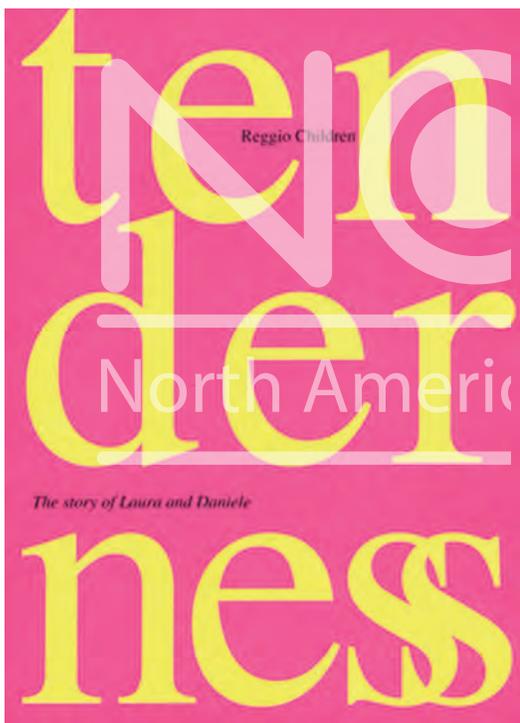
Images in this article courtesy of Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange

Reflections on *Tenderness* – *The Story of Laura and Daniele*

By George Forman



George Forman is emeritus professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and co-editor of The Hundred Languages of Children – The Reggio Emilia Experience in Transformation, along with Lella Gandini and Carolyn Edwards. George is the recipient of the 2014 NAREA Lifetime Achievement Award.



This small poignant book, as part of the Reggio Children series “The Unheard Voice of Children,” reveals in their own words the depth of friendship between two kindergarten-age

children. One reads the transcript of their conversation without context other than the words and with minimal commentary by adults. This format expresses the theme of the series, the unheard voices of children, which this book represents with minimal interpretation—to wit, two short notes at the end, one by Susanna Mantovani and the other by Carla Rinaldi. The question naturally arises: How should one comment on a book that has itself eschewed commentary? Perhaps one considers the book as an invitation to project meaning into the text from one’s own interests and conceptions of childhood. In hopes that my reflections will be useful to you, I will discuss the impact this book had on me, which is to say, I will discuss the impact that Laura and Daniele’s conversation had on me.

When we read unedited transcripts of children’s conversations, we are often stunned by the complexity of their minds, their nuanced understanding of custom, human nature, and, in this case, the dynamics of being friends. In particular, we are stunned by the logic they use to fill in the inevitable gaps in what they remember from direct experience. As Carla Rinaldi reminds us, it serves us well to listen.

When we read unedited transcripts of children’s conversations, we are often stunned by the complexity of their minds, their nuanced understanding of custom, human nature, and, in this case, the dynamics of being friends. In particular, we are stunned by the logic they use to fill in the inevitable gaps in what they remember from direct experience.

–George Forman

Of all the attributes of the children from the preprimary schools in Reggio Emilia, the high level of their co-constructions stands out as a defining attribute.

—George Forman

Here are some of my favorites:

Laura says, “My last name is my daddy’s name, because nowadays children’s last names are their daddies’. But if Mommy and Daddy were both named Sassi, then I would have both their last names” (p. 8). I assume Laura knows her mother’s surname originally was not Sassi but more than this, she overrides this fact with a bit of fun, perhaps thinking, “What if a man and a woman with the same last name before marriage got married?” She plays out the logic of this uncommon event by implying she would, therefore, be named after both her mother and her father. The depth of her logic is remarkable as well as her need to seek parity between men and women.

Laura takes care to unpack the gradations of friendship, from plain friends to best friends to “bestest” friends—those that make her “heart almost explode...” (p. 12). We know children younger than Laura have no compunction about calling all children their best friend as the occasion merits. But Laura has developed a context-free way to calibrate the level of friendship per child. Such a metric could be used to influence children seeking a higher ranking on her friendship scale, but it also serves as an indication of her social intelligence. She can have two friends with whom she holds different levels of attachment, but they are all in the same class, “friends,” but “not twins” (p. 12). Laura loves to play with these extensions of logic from “the same but not completely the same” (not twins) to “different but not completely different” (all friends). She continues this declension of friendship operationalized by criteria actions, such as talking together at lunch. Laura offers a complete thesis. She shows these same nuanced understandings of beauty and happiness (p. 10).

Laura then makes a proclamation no one expects her to sustain: “I believe everything he says because I love him” (p. 14). Later in the book, she confronts Daniele about his tall tales about their meeting in heaven but, with the perspective of a caring older sibling, excuses him for being “half right and half a mess” (p. 44), admitting she listens to his “little stories” to make

him happy (p. 44). Again Laura shows her ability to conjugate differences and be sensitive to the context of her abiding friendship with Daniele. We could call these mixed messages, but I prefer to call them an honest peeling away of the authentic layers of an intimate friendship.

Daniele introduces himself with what must be a standard practice of names, both surname and first, but with a bit more fantasy than Laura’s introduction and a bit more digression: “You need your neck to hold your head up ...” (p. 18). One senses we are about to hear more stories with much hyperbole, and we do: “If you don’t have a neck, your head would be too short, and then you’d look like you were four” (p. 18). His descriptions revolve a bit more around physical dimensions of the body, and the skin, ears, and eyes compared to Laura’s discussion of feelings and relations to friends. Daniele also expresses some gender-related rules: “Men fix things that break ... But you need a woman to make dinner ...” (p. 24)—to which we smile in anticipation of what Laura will say to these stereotypes.

The following topics are discussed in turn: how babies are born, the enormity of their love for each other, ancient times and meeting in heaven, the truth or fantasy of Daniele’s stories, and the promise and roles of marriage. The value of listening to the voices of children is apparent throughout the book, including during Laura and Daniele’s rather lengthy discussion of how babies are born, a topic of universal interest to children, with universal intuitions that may be incorrect but make sense.

Daniele, consistent with his propensity to go for tall tales, explains that the stork opens the mommy’s tummy, a revision of Laura’s claim of Jesus doing magic. Laura recants on the role of Jesus and emphasizes the role of the doctor in making “the baby come out from the pee-pee place” (p. 32). While this explanation has moved from magic to birds to doctors, Laura has bypassed a review of where babies come from in the first place. Perhaps she hopes to sustain the flow of the conversation by shifting to a topic about which they both may have more ideas.

Daniele reminds Laura that the topic was the origins of the baby and his perplexity over the fact there is no hole in the mommy's tummy. Laura, using her capable command of inferential thinking, posits that babies begin "as little as crumbs and Jesus made us go into the tummy ..." (p. 34). This version of growth *in utero* is impressive. Yet Laura relies on Jesus for conception rather than fathers. The use of Jesus to place the seed could well come from the more general theory that "big things grow from little things" as opposed to "big things grow from the combination of two little things" (egg and sperm). My point is this: even if children were told about the sperm and the egg, such a combination of agents would be completely superfluous to their more strongly-held intuitions, and therefore, the lessons of the adult are assimilated into these intuitions.

This dialogue between Laura and Daniele lays out a beautiful example of co-construction of knowledge. Through a combination of knowing a few facts about prenatal life, their intense ability to listen and play off each other, and their willingness to speculate on what makes sense in terms of time and physical conditions required, they come to an agreement about this most interesting process of life.

These sets of beliefs came, not at one time in the mind of either child, but by degrees during their exchange. Of all the attributes of the children from the preprimary schools in Reggio Emilia, the high level of their co-constructions stands out as a defining attribute. I believe we can depend on Laura to co-construct with Daniele a view of gender roles that is more in tune with modern times.

We pause here to consider, in principle, the advantages of children constructing a shared understanding. One could predict that this process yields an averaging of their youth-related ignorance, or one could predict an emergent form of plausibility more robust than averaging. If we claim the latter, the dialogue presented in this book is a strong example.

We should not assume such skill comes natural to an age. As I intimated earlier, I believe this skill is the *sine qua non* of the preprimary schools in Reggio Emilia. The children love each other, the children know each other, and the children have learned how to express not only their own ideas but also what they do not understand about another child's ideas. Bravo to the teachers there who have established this culture of positive relations.

REFERENCE

Municipality of Reggio Emilia – Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools. (1995). *Tenderness - The Story of Laura and Daniele*. Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children.

Image Credit

Image in this article courtesy of Reggio Children

The NAREA Lifetime Achievement Award

By Patty Randall and Lauren Dap



Patty Randall is projects and events coordinator for NAREA and director of educational practices at First Presbyterian Preschool in Atlanta, Georgia. Lauren Dap is administrative coordinator for NAREA.

A memorable ceremony was held at the 2014 NAREA Summer Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Lella Gandini, Carolyn Edwards, and Amelia Gambetti shared humorous experiences and touching reflections about their many years of working with George Forman and the qualities he has contributed to the educational project in Reggio Emilia, Italy. At the conclusion of their remarks, he was awarded the NAREA Lifetime Achievement Award and joined a distinguished community of educators as family, friends, and professional colleagues wished him heartfelt congratulations!



Lella Gandini, George Forman, and Carolyn Edwards

The award was established in 2004 in recognition of the ideas and style of Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the philosophies and experiences of Reggio Emilia's decades-long education project. Malaguzzi is remembered for his persevering commitment to innovation and research in education.

-Patty Randall and Lauren Dap

The NAREA lifetime achievement award is granted to those whose storied careers have offered significant contributions to the field of education. The award was established in 2004 in recognition of the ideas and style of Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the philosophies and experiences of Reggio Emilia's decades-long education project. Malaguzzi is remembered for his persevering commitment to innovation and research in education. He, in concert with educators, children, and parents of Reggio Emilia, advanced an unwavering image of the competent child, collaboration, visibility of learning processes, beauty, collegiality, perpetual transformation, citizenship, and wisdom. The award is bestowed upon those in Reggio Emilia and North America whose careers embody the spirit of Malaguzzi's contributions.

Margie Cooper, standing chair of the NAREA board, said, "The lifetime achievement award gives visibility to those who have given many contributions to the forward thinking and advancement of education. It also contributes to feelings of worthiness and pride. Not only did George receive the award, but all the colleagues, friends, and coworkers received it. When we participate in a celebration and recognition of one of our education peers, we feel well."

Over the years, the ceremony has evolved. In the beginning, the ceremony was seen as a debate of ideas. Margie Cooper shared, "I remember Lella Gandini's ceremony. Lella was the first to be recognized because she represented Italy and North America, and she was one of the most significant leaders of ideas of Reggio Emilia. At the time, Terry Acevedo was tackling bringing Reggio Emilia to the Head

Former Recipients

Lilian Katz and Lella Gandini, Amelia Gambetti, Jerome Bruner, Municipality of Reggio Emilia and Carla Rinaldi, Carolyn Pope Edwards, and Vea Vecchi



Start program in Tucson. It was the height of the standards movement in early childhood education, and there was a wide belief that Reggio Emilia could not be successful in a bureaucratic container. A panel that included Lella, Amelia Gambetti, Terry Acevedo, and others was organized. Lella, as recipient of the award, was to participate. Amelia had collected photographs to share, and Lella jumped in, giving commentary along the way. At the end, there was a collective feeling of possibility—that no matter the circumstance, change is always possible.”

Over the years, the ceremony has become more formalized. This began with Carla Rinaldi, the first to be awarded at a NAREA conference, in 2008 in Boulder. Carla accepted the award in the name of the municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy, sharing with others the spirit of collaboration and collegiality, which is a hallmark of Reggio Emilia’s style of working.

There have been eight recipients to date: Lella Gandini, Reggio Children liaison in the U.S. for the dissemination of the Reggio Emilia approach (2004); Lilian Katz, professor emerita, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and co-director of the Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative (2005); Amelia Gambetti, Reggio Children international liaison for consultancy to schools and International Network co-chair, *Istituzione Scuole e Nidi d’Infanzia* advisory council (2006); Jerome Bruner, research professor of psychology and senior research fellow, School of Law, New York University (2007); the municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy (2008); Carolyn Pope Edwards, Willa Cather professor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2010); Vea Vecchi, *atelierista*, responsible for exhibitions, publishing, and *ateliers* at Reg-

gio Children (2012); and George Forman, professor emeritus, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

NAREA is pleased to announce the 2015 recipient, the first from Canada, Susan Fraser. Susan continues in the spirit of the award and is viewed by many as the pioneer who brought Reggio Emilia ideas to Canada. We look forward to celebrating with Susan a lifetime of work in the advancement of education.

An important aspect of our work is awarding and celebrating people who are leaders because of their significant gifts to the field of early childhood education. NAREA has a commitment to recognize lifetimes that have mattered to the forward progress in the field and inspired us to continue our work. Awardees receive a certificate that reads, “It is an honor to recognize those individuals whose tireless passion, originality, intelligence, and accomplishment in service to children, families, educators, and communities in a spirit of hope for the future inspire us all to be proud members of the community of educators!”

NAREA has a commitment to recognize lifetimes that have mattered to the forward progress in the field and inspired us to continue our work.

—Patty Randall and Lauren Dap

Resources

Message from Reggio Children

The office of Reggio Children is pleased that there is so much interest in North America about our infant centers, preprimary schools, and educational philosophy. We note with pride the resources published and professional development initiatives organized about the Reggio Emilia approach to education. We caution interested educators that some resources and initiatives related to the Reggio Emilia approach have not accurately reflected our experiences and philosophy. In order to ensure accurate representation of ideas concerning Reggio, we urge publishers and producers of resources as well as organizers of initiatives concerning the Reggio Emilia approach to coordinate their plans with Reggio Children, s.r.l., via Bligny 1/a, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy, reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it, www.reggiochildren.it

Bibliography

Visit the NAREA website for a comprehensive listing of resources related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy.

Reggio Children Publications

Resources published by Reggio Children are available from Learning Materials Workshop.
800-693-7164
mail@learningmaterialswork.com
www.learningmaterialswork.com

International Professional Development Initiatives in Reggio Emilia, Italy

November 24-28, 2014
International Study Group

Contact: Reggio Children
www.reggiochildren.it

North American Study Groups in Reggio Emilia, Italy

March 21-26, 2015
U.S. Students and Professors Study Group

May 16-23, 2015
U.S. Study Group

Contact: Angela Ferrario
aferrario@comcast.net

NAREA Jobs Site

Searching for Reggio-inspired employment? Searching for Reggio-inspired candidates? See the NAREA Jobs Site section of our website to post or apply for positions. Reggio-inspired educators are in demand, and NAREA strives to connect employers with employees through this service. Please help us spread the word in your community.

Call for Cover Photographs

If you have photographs from your educational community that represent the values inherent in the Reggio Emilia philosophy and you would like to see one of them published on the cover of *Innovations*, please submit jpg or tiff files of high-resolution photographs (300 dpi @ 8" x 10") to Judith Allen Kaminsky, judy@reggioalliance.org

Contacts for Reggio Children

NAREA

North American Reggio Emilia Alliance
reggioalliance.org

Amelia Gambetti

Reggio Children international liaison for consultancy to schools
International Network co-chair
reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it
www.reggiochildren.it

Lella Gandini

Reggio Children liaison in the U.S. for dissemination of the Reggio Emilia approach
lellagandini@gmail.com

Angela Ferrario

Reggio Children liaison in the U.S. for study groups
aferrario@comcast.net

“The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” Exhibit

June 19–November 30, 2014

Albuquerque, NM
Hosted by New Mexico Wonder of Learning Collaborative, the exhibit is located at New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science. A series of initiatives will be organized in connection with the presence of the exhibit.

Contact: Gigi Schroeder Yu
gigi.wonderoflearning@gmail.com
newmexicowol.squarespace.com

January 15–May 15, 2015

New York, NY
Hosted by Beginnings Nursery School, Thinking Beyond the Square, and New York City Encounters with Reggio Emilia, the exhibit will be located at the Williamsburg Northside School in Brooklyn. A series of initiatives will be organized in connection with the presence of the exhibit.

Contact: Jane Racoosin
jane@beginningsnursery.net
www.newyorkcitywol.org

Visit www.thewonderoflearning.com and reggioalliance.org for more information about the exhibit.

Conference Calendar

Discount for NAREA members at all initiatives listed

Brick by Brick Series, Part 1

October 11, 2014

St. Louis, MO

Exceeding Expectations and Addressing the Standards through the Reggio Approach: Infants through Age Eight

Speakers:

Jennifer Strange, Brenda Fyfe, and Maplewood Richmond Heights Public School District and Cape Girardeau Christian School for the Young Years educators

October 11, 2014

Boston, MA

Speakers:

Lella Gandini and New England NAREA board members and colleagues

October 18, 2014

Atlanta, GA

Learning as a Process of Individual and Group Construction

October 25, 2014

Bloomfield Hills, MI

Weaving Together the Research and Inquiry of Children, Teachers, and Families

Speaker:

Carol Bersani

November 1, 2014

Tulsa, OK

Contact:

NAREA, reggioalliance.org

“The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” Exhibit Initiatives

Albuquerque, NM

October 24-25, 2014

Reflective Practice: Creating Professional Development Practices that Support the Teacher as Researcher

Contact:

Gigi Yu, gigi.wonderoflearning@gmail.com
newmexicowol.squarespace.com

“The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” Exhibit Initiatives

New York, NY

November 15, 2014

Dialogue of Two Cities – NYC and Reggio Emilia: Exploring Possibilities for Quality Early Childhood Education for All Children

April 17-18, 2015

The Hundred Languages: A Metaphor for the Extraordinary Potentials of Children and Adults

Contact:

Jane Racoosin, jane@beginningsnursery.net
www.newyorkcitywol.org

The Sixth NAREA Winter Conference – Exploring Possibilities: Viewing All Children as Citizens, Researchers, and Innovators of the World

New York, NY

March 12-14, 2015

Speakers:

Educators from Reggio Emilia, Italy

Contact:

NAREA, reggioalliance.org

The Eleventh NAREA Summer Conference

Pittsburgh, PA

June 18-20, 2015

Speakers:

Educators from Reggio Emilia, Italy

Contact:

NAREA, reggioalliance.org

Call for Submissions

NAREA is pleased to announce two new features to *Innovations*. “The Story of Us” is envisioned as a regular feature that will introduce readers to the many and varied stories of Reggio-inspired schools in North America. “*Mangiare in Bellezza*” (translation: eating beautifully) will focus on beautiful foods, recipes, and environments in your schools. We invite you to send submissions for these new exciting features and share the story and beauty of your work with young children. Contact Patty Randall for submission guidelines, patty@reggioalliance.org

NAREA Mission Statement

The North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA) is a network of educators, parents, and advocates seeking to elevate both the quality of life and the quality of schools and centers for young children.

We envision a world where all children are honored and respected for their potential, capabilities, and humanity.

Our mission is to build a diverse community of advocates and teachers to promote and defend the rights of children, families, and teachers of all cultures through a collaboration of colleagues inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

Visit reggioalliance.org for regularly updated conferences and initiatives calendar



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Emilia Exchange

North American Reggio Emilia Alliance



Our experience also confirms that children need a great deal of freedom: the freedom to investigate and to try, to make mistakes and to correct mistakes, to choose where and with whom to invest their curiosity, intelligence, and emotions. Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes, and their ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds, and colors. They need the freedom to realize how reason, thought, and imagination can create continuous interweavings of things, and can move and shake the world.

- *Loris Malaguzzi*