Introduction

This issue of Innovations focuses on the role of participation in the life of the school, on listening, and on learning as a process of individual and group construction, three of the educational principles of the Reggio Emilia educational project outlined in Indications – Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centres of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. First, Chiara Spaggiari, a teacher at Gianni Rodari Infant-Toddler Center in Reggio Emilia, shares experiences of developing relationships with children and families in the infant-toddler center in “An Active Attitude of Listening as the Premise and Context of Every Educational Relationship,” which is based on one of her presentations at the 2015 NAREA Winter Conference in New York City. The identity and aims of the Reggio Emilia infant-toddler centers and preschools in Indications highlight the value of interaction and relationships and the role of schools as public places where families and community members are welcome:

The infant-toddler centres and the preschools are educational services that construct a culture of childhood and promote children’s right to care, education, and learning, all based on the value of social interaction. As such, the infant-toddler centres and the preschools are public places; a project and a resource of the community in which democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship are practiced. (Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2010, p. 7)

The value of listening is explained this way in Indications:

The attitude of listening raises the threshold of attention and sensitivity toward the cultural, values-related, and political scenarios of the contemporary world. (Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2010, p. 11)

Next, Amanda Terreri Ferguson, University of Vermont (UVM) Campus Children’s School director, and Jeanne Goldhaber, UVM associate professor emerita, write about a community service project in which children, educators, and families engaged in response to the effects of Hurricane Irene in their community in “Focusing on the Future: ‘Bread for Irene.’” In a further discussion of the identity and aims of the Reggio Emilia infant-toddler centers and preschools in Indications, this statement begins to explain how these centers and preschools are qualified in a system of relationships through participation in the community:

As an active and dialoguing part of the community life of the city, the infant-toddler centres and the preschools are constantly engaged in developing a close relationship with the territory, interacting and collaborating with the entire system of cultural, educational, and economic offers of the city managed by both public and private bodies. (Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2010, p. 8)

Class meetings, which were so instrumental in the experience at the Campus Children’s School, are described as one of the essential elements for the operation of the infant-toddler centers and preschools in Indications:

Class meetings are the priority context for constructing the identity and the sense of belonging to the group of children, educators, and parents. The class meetings, by means of diversified strategies, times, and methods . . . have the aim to promote sociality, to share educational projects and proposals, and to construct exchange and dialogue around the different ideas about children, school, and learning. (Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2010, p. 16)

In the “Voices: Conversations from North America and Beyond” column, Harold Göthson, senior advisor to the Reggio Emilia Institutet board in Stockholm, Sweden, writes about the
role of schools in society today and in the future in “Teachers are Essential to Democracy.” Indications lists “education as a right” as the first element of the identity and aims of the infant-toddler centers and preschools and describes this right in connection to the value of democracy in education, on which Harold bases his article:

Education is an opportunity for the growth and emancipation of the individual and the collective; it is a resource for gaining knowledge and for learning to live together; it is a meeting place where freedom, democracy, and solidarity are practiced and where the value of peace is promoted. (Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2010, p. 7)

Finally, in the “Perspectives on NAREA” column, Judith Allen Kaminsky and Lella Gandini share plans for an annual peer-reviewed issue of Innovations and introduce the new consulting editors who will be collaborating on this project with them. In addition, we share one of NAREA’s new projects, undertaken in order to understand the scale of Reggio Emilia-inspired contexts in North America.

As an active and dialoguing part of the community life of the city, the infant-toddler centres and the preschools are constantly engaged in developing a close relationship with the territory, interacting and collaborating with the entire system of cultural, educational, and economic offers of the city managed by both public and private bodies.

~Indications – Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centres of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

In this issue of Innovations, we offer tributes to Eli Saltz, former director of the Merrill-Palmer Institute, who passed away in December. Along with Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia educational project, Eli was responsible for the creation of the Innovations periodical in 1992. We are pleased to share memories of Eli and Malaguzzi from Lella Gandini, Reggio Children liaison in the U.S. for dissemination of the Reggio Emilia approach; Carlina Rinaldi, president of the Reggio Children-Loris Malaguzzi International Center Foundation; Amelia Gambetti, Reggio Children international liaison for consultancy in schools; Patty Weissman, founding editor of the Innovations periodical; Joanne Hendrick, Innovations editorial board member from 1992-2000; and Carolyn Pope Edwards, Innovations editorial board member from 1992-2004.

REFERENCE
An Active Attitude of Listening as the Premise and Context of Every Educational Relationship

By Chiara Spaggiari

Chiara Spaggiari is a teacher at the Gianni Rodari Municipal Infant-Toddler Center. After participating in and passing the public competition for teachers in the municipal educational project in 2009, she worked as a teacher at the Maramotti Infant-Toddler Center, which is managed by the Panta Rei Cooperative, and the Piccolo Mondo Infant-Toddler Center and Preschool in Barcelona, Spain, which is managed by the Totem and Ambra Social Cooperative. This article is based on a presentation given by Chiara at the 2015 NAREA Winter Conference in New York City on March 14, 2015. Reggio educators Claudia Giudici, Vea Vecchi, and Marina Mori also presented at this conference.

I would like to start by reconnecting with this idea of how a story of children, teachers, and parents begins. I hope to be able to express how the children and parents come in with their own stories and how other stories are created. But first, I want to share a personal story. During the first meeting about the opportunity to come to New York, I asked what my contribution as a young, relatively new teacher could be. I confess that when I was in the car on the way to the Malaguzzi Center to meet with Claudia, Vea, and Marina, I was a little bit scared. But after meeting with them, I began to breathe an atmosphere that felt familiar to me. Much like the way that we create relationships in the school, Claudia, Marina, Vea, and I began to create a relationship. I felt like I was listened to, even considering my relatively brief experience. I felt that I was accepted. And when you feel that you are welcomed and accepted and listened to, you feel more confident about being able to offer even a small contribution. I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to feel like they are being welcomed and their voices are heard.

In order to talk about how a story of children, teachers, and parents begins, I borrowed some words from Paola, a two-year-old girl, who said, “I have an idea that I have to go all over the place.” I feel a lot like Paola. I feel like I have so many things to say, but I thought that Paola expressed it much better than I could in this moment. From her statement, I will begin to tell our story. It is a story that involves the children and their parents because these young children’s experiences at the infant-toddler centers are their first experiences of socialization on a larger scale, and it is often the first occasion for the parents as well. The parents often come into the infant-toddler center a little disoriented and perhaps not really knowing what to expect, so our role as teachers is to make sure they come into this experience without being afraid or nervous and certainly not feeling that they will be judged in any way. We have to make sure they feel welcomed right from the very first days. When we meet parents for the first time, we begin to build bridges and to create new stories, and we realize that the way they look at their child will change. They will see their children with different eyes because they will see them in relationships with others—with other children who are their peers, with other adults who are not part of the family, and with other spaces and environments. It is in the first encounter with these situations and environments that the parents see that the children have their own culture as new citizens of today and the future. This can be a discovery that is a bit perplexing and even unsettling for the parents. It is not always easy. Our role as teachers is to help the parents feel and see the wonder in their children’s eyes because wonder helps activate new thoughts and opens your eyes in new ways. In these first encounters with the parents, they...
often begin to want to know more—to learn more about the world and the culture of children. They may also have the desire to redefine their own image of what it means to be an adult and what it means to be a parent.

One of the mothers said, “Today, for the first time, my daughter did not ask me why I was going to the center this evening. She understood that it is also a place for me and that the parents can also go and talk together at the infant-toddler center.” So the socialization not only involves the children but also the parents. Groups of children and groups of parents are forming. The infant-toddler centers and preschools must offer themselves as public places that provide many different possibilities for meeting among all the different inhabitants of the school or center.

The encounters that take place at the beginning of the school year give visibility to how capable children are in establishing relationships with others, both peers and adults. The children want to encounter others. During the first parent meetings, the parents talk about their concerns and their emotions. Parents who have already had an experience at the infant-toddler center with their older children often offer testimonials for the other parents. In the first days of the “settling in” period in the center, the goal is to create an atmosphere that builds relationships and binds together all of the subjects involved.

When I refer to educational subjects, I do not only mean the people but also the organization of the spaces, the materials, and the dialogue that is established among the various professionals before the children arrive. During the month of August and before the children actually begin attending the infant-toddler center, we have the opportunity to meet with individual families. As a result of the conversations during which the parents talk about their child, we begin to get to know the child and the family better. These are important conversations because they help us begin to prepare the spaces and materials for the children. They help us welcome these children and their families into the center. This kind of attitude and approach characterizes the beginning of the school year and endures throughout the year.

I would like to share the words of one of the mothers, who had already had an experience at the infant-toddler center with an older child, when she talked about this way of welcoming as an ongoing attitude and approach. Alicia’s mother said, “We rediscover every day something new about our children. Every time that I come to pick up my daughter, it is always like a new encounter.” I include this quote to underscore the fact that participation is not simply created by bringing the parents in for meetings with the teacher. Participation is a way of being and a way of living the educational experience. It is something that is created and experienced on a daily basis.

As a result of the conversations during which the parents talk about their child, we begin to get to know the child and the family better. These are important conversations because they help us to begin to prepare the spaces and materials for the children. They help us welcome these children and their families into the center.

–Chiara Spaggiari
Participation with Colleagues and Children

We have found that working together in this way, exchanging and discussing together with parents and colleagues, is not always easy. Each individual has to put himself or herself on the line. We have to realize that our knowledge is not complete. We have to remember that we can always learn. By listening to other points of view, your own thinking and knowledge is enriched. You realize that sometimes you think that a certain thing is right, and then you realize that you can change your mind. This is really difficult. You never know how you are going to think and how you are going to act. There is no recipe as this ongoing dialogue with the parents and colleagues shifts your own thinking.

But I believe that this is the strength and the power of our work because true and deep reflection will take place if you are able to be surprised and amazed by your experience—what you observe and what you do along with others. In homage to “The Wonder of Learning - The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit, I think it is important to cultivate this ability for wonder and amazement. If you look in the dictionary, you will find a number of synonyms for the word wonder: enchantment, marvel, surprise, incredulousness, and awe. We must not think of wonder as something that makes us feel perplexed or bewildered—that makes us feel immobile. Rather, when we feel amazement or wonder about something, we should see it as sort of a doorbell that is ringing in our heads that pushes us to open our eyes, to ask questions, and to make other decisions. We should have this attitude, not only in the face of our own wonder, but also in the face of the wonder of others.

In the face of wonder, we should act like a camera and zoom in on it without losing sight of the rest of the context. We should transform the single event that caused the wonder and give it continuity so that it can be expanded and shared with other people. It is not incidental that some of the antonyms of wonder are words like detachment, indifference, and coldness. As adults, we have to separate ourselves from these concepts. We must not be distant or detached. As adults, as teachers, we have to be able to feel and express emotions, to be engaged and involved, to put ourselves on the line. Many of us see children at play every day and as we know very well, play has cognitive aspects as well as fun and laughter. But, in particular, it involves emotion.

Another aspect of participation is the ability to find a way to create continuity. The teacher has to be able to construct a longer story that can be shared with the group of children and the group of parents.

– Chiara Spaggiari

Another aspect of participation is the ability to find a way to create continuity. The teacher has to be able to construct a longer story that can be shared with the group of children and the group of parents. The group of adults—teachers, the atelieristi, the pedagogisti, the cooks, and the auxiliary staff—meet together regularly to review the documentation of experiences in the center or school and make hypotheses, choices, and decisions about how to continue in order to create continuity. But it is important for the teachers to understand that these hypotheses will not be realized exactly as they may have expected. We see this as part of the experience. As teachers, we always have to make choices.

A university student doing an internship at the Rodari Infant-Toddler Center reflected on our way of working together: “I really had not understood that much from the books, but now it is much clearer. It is sort of like a ping-pong match. Each person is involved. The most important thing is not who wins but rather, playing together.” This is what we mean when we talk about everyday contexts that evolve. This happens if we are able to build these exchanges with other teachers and other colleagues because these meetings help to develop our creativity and our sense of wonder. Each individual contributes his or her own culture, and it is wonderful to feel that there is another part of you. Sometimes I feel like I am a teacher; sometimes I feel like I am an inventor; sometimes I feel like I am an atelierista. I am aware my role, but if I do not push myself to think that I can also give other kinds of contributions, then I never will.
Participation, Reciprocity, and Citizenship

In this play of participation, I would underscore another term, which is reciprocity—reciprocity between adults, between adults and children, and between children and children—and also between the individuals who inhabit the environment and the environment itself. I see this reciprocity when we exchange and discuss together and also in our reciprocal listening to each other. We must not forget that adults learn just like children, thanks to the relationships that surround them, the experiences they have, the new encounters they have, and the surrounding environment. We have to be able to rethink the environment. It has to be able to evolve along with the children’s learning and the adults’ learning.

I believe that every infant-toddler center, every preschool, and every school of any level has to aim high—to consider itself as an engine of research, not just a closed container and not a prepackaged program that simply confirms and transmits what we already know. We have the great fortune to have an extraordinary job, and we have the duty to also be able to communicate this to the surrounding community. This may be a bit of utopian thinking but the idea is to create better citizenship.

–Chiara Spaggiari

Hopefully, the children in Reggio Emilia can feel the way I feel now in New York. I hope that they feel important as citizens who are listened to in terms of their own contributions. I believe that every infant-toddler center, every preschool, and every school of any level has to aim high—to consider itself as an engine of research, not just a closed container and not a prepackaged program that simply confirms and transmits what we already know. We have the great fortune to have an extraordinary job, and we have the duty to also be able to communicate this to the surrounding community. This may be a bit of utopian thinking but the idea is to create better citizenship.

All of these elements are integral to the way that we define care, which is not just about protection and assistance, but rather, the idea of respecting people—respecting their intelligence and their specific characteristics and competencies. For us, our perception of care includes creating a shared world together. Because of this concept of care, it is possible to create a new idea of citizenship. It is with this term citizenship that I would like to conclude my presentation.
Introduction

“But . . . what can children do? What can the children do to help?” asked three-year-old Lyla during a preschool class meeting at the University of Vermont Campus Children’s School. She was responding to a group conversation and images that the teachers were sharing that reflected the havoc of Hurricane Irene in communities across Vermont in 2011. Lyla’s question gave voice to what we have come to view as an impulse or desire on the part of young children not only to participate in the life of their communities but also to contribute to its well-being (Goldhaber, 2010).

It was this very viewpoint that gave the teachers the courage to share true accounts, actual photographs, and video clips of flooded farms and fields and to invite the children to express and exchange their observations, reflections, and concerns. The teachers also came prepared to offer the children the opportunity to bake and sell bread, a well-established and collective skill, so that they could raise money to help the local victims of Irene. The children eagerly accepted the teachers’ proposal, and a project evolved that came to be known as “Bread for Irene.”

But while the title features bread and Irene as the primary protagonists, the story is a much richer and more telling tale. In an effort to share it as a holistic and active narrative, the teachers compiled and organized various artifacts and observations to create the documentary video of the same title. It includes images of the children’s drawings and paintings, recordings of the children’s conversations, images of the bread baking sessions and sales, and reflections of the teachers. However, “Bread for Irene” has more to say than even a five-minute documentary can tell. We are grateful for this opportunity to write about this experience in more depth, as it is one of our most treasured stories. It reflects a nexus, a coming together of the children’s and the teachers’ skills and knowledge, empathy, and sense of agency—traits and dispositions that have been woven together to create the tapestry of this particular classroom culture. In short, it reflects the best of who we can be as a community.
Irene Comes to Vermont

Vermonters are familiar with and somewhat impervious to the effects of sub-zero temperatures and blizzards that leave two feet of snow behind. Hurricanes, however, rarely make their way as far north as Vermont. As a result, when Hurricane Irene barreled through Vermont, dissolving river banks and adjacent roads, flooding farms, and filling houses, schools, and public buildings with water and mud, our state found itself in somewhat unfamiliar territory from both a topological standpoint as well as a metaphorical one.

It was no surprise, then, that in the days after Hurricane Irene, the preschool teachers, Amanda, Adam, and Erika, observed several children retelling stories from the news or recounting the scenes of devastation they had heard about on the news and seen from their car windows on the way to and from school. The preschool teachers responded to individual children but also felt the need to discuss this impactful “current event” with the whole class. They felt confident in the children’s ability to process as a group while remaining mindful of each family’s comfort level with exposing the children to the real-life dilemmas that Irene presented.

Wanting other perspectives and interpretations before moving forward, the preschool teachers brought their initial observations and notes to a school-wide staff meeting. The discussion that followed confirmed a shared belief that this authentic community crisis offered the children a chance to take action, to contribute to the well-being of the world beyond their homes and school walls, and to act on their innate capacity to do good. We agreed that inviting the children to help their neighbors in this genuine time of need reflected our view of children and what we understood to be the ultimate mission of our school.

It was also important to all of us that this opportunity to contribute to community relief efforts was grounded in the children’s own experiences. As a staff, we explored possible connections to past and current curricular “threads” and experiences, both in the preschool and across the school. The connection was baking bread—an experience that all the children in this mixed-age preschool classroom had participated in over their years in the school. As infants, they had explored the sensory rich ingredients of flour, salt, yeast, and water, and played with spoons, bowls, and whisks, the primary tools involved in baking. The children and their teachers also developed ritualized procedures and scripts as they worked with dough and bread. As toddlers, the children measured and mixed ingredients from a recipe and kneaded dough, continuing their playful interactions and embellishing their rituals while also baking loaves to eat and share. As older toddlers, these now experienced bakers teamed up with a UVM Campus Group called “Challah for Hunger” to bake and sell bread to raise money for those in need.

We should also note that bread baking was not limited to this classroom group. In fact, it had become a regular practice across the school. We believe bread baking became widespread because of its capacity to generate joy within and beyond our classrooms. At the height of engagement, bread-baking contests were orchestrated when children, parents, teachers, university students, and faculty baked and tasted loaves to vote on the best tasting challah.

During the staff meeting, many teachers contributed to the discussion. Having settled on bread baking and selling as an outcome, we directed our attention to the initial provocation. We considered, for example, who would lead the conversation. Would a large group discussion during the preschoolers’ daily meeting support the kind of conversation we hoped to have? Did the adults feel brave enough to share information and field potentially hard-to-answer questions? How would we support children to do something that could truly help? How could we direct our efforts to a local group? How would we handle the subject of money, knowing that while cash donations might be most helpful to our neighbors, children at this age were only beginning to construct understandings about finances?

When the meeting wrapped up, the preschool teachers had much to think about and a great deal of support. Selling bread on campus would
be the goal, preschool children would lead the charge, and many classrooms would participate along the way. Committed to using bread as the connecting factor, the team of preschool teachers carefully thought through the initial provocation—specifically, how to present the information and problem to the children, invite their responses, and share the teacher’s idea of baking and selling bread on campus so that we could make a donation to local relief efforts. We carefully considered how to begin a discussion with the children about Hurricane Irene that was factual and honest and offered a preschool-appropriate point of entry while not provoking anxiety. Finally, we wanted to embed the conversation in a context that the children knew intimately, rather than attempting a more random or distant connection. We agreed to withhold our idea to bake and sell bread while the children shared their experiences and thoughts related to the hurricane. We would listen carefully to the children’s comments and be poised to offer the idea if we felt there was a respectful and appropriate opening.

Launching the Initial Provocation: The Role of the Natural World

It is at this point that we relied on the children’s existing relationship to and theories about the natural world. Over the past ten years, our school has been particularly interested in learning about young children’s experiences in the natural world. Based on these many years of observation and reflection, we value the natural world as a context that invites and promotes inter-subjectivity and acts of empathy (Smith and Goldhaber, 2015). For example, when observing children in a nearby natural preserve called Centennial Woods, teachers witnessed toddlers cheering one another on and offering a supportive hand to a classmate struggling to navigate roots and hilly terrain, preschoolers carefully moving a small toad out of harm’s way, and older toddlers expressing their concern for the trees being blown by the wind and speculating that the trees may need protection from familiar storybook giants and other fairytale phenomena.

Both at school and with their families, the children also spent several summers growing and harvesting flowers and produce at the Intervale Community Farm, a local CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) cooperative. Situated in a floodplain, it experienced considerable damage as a result of Hurricane Irene. Neighboring farmers at Diggers Mirth Collective Farm captured the onset and aftermath of the hurricane through a time-lapse film that depicted the rain and subsequent flood waters inundating their fields and then retreating. The teachers felt that this representation of the storm’s devastation fit our proposal’s intentions in that it quietly illustrated natural devastation without potentially frightening images such as homes being destroyed or cars being swept away by the strong currents of a river swollen by hurricane rain. The film also resonated with us as it showed the waters flood and retreat, a hopeful “ending” that we hoped would inspire children to become part of the solution.

The preschool classroom has a standing practice of gathering for “meeting”—a time when both teachers and children have an active voice. Amanda led the conversation while supporting teachers listened carefully and took notes as the Diggers Mirth time-lapse was projected. As the images appeared on the curtain, the children responded. Many of their initial responses related to a direct consequence and fix. For example, Zaki suggested, “We could get shovels and dig underground and make a new building.” Brynna recommended that the people (whose houses were damaged) could move to a “safer” location. Other children offered the idea that we could replace items that were damaged. Superheroes and piggy banks were mentioned more than once. After hearing the preschoolers’ ideas, the teachers felt encouraged by what they interpreted as the children’s desire to help and introduced their
proposal to work as a school to bake and sell bread to raise money for the Intervale Community Farm. Amanda connected the children’s thoughts about piggy banks to a request from the Intervale farmers, Becky and Andy, to join the initiative to raise money to help farms recover. The preschoolers eagerly accepted the proposal and immediately took action.

Thoughts, Words, and Images

In the following weeks, conversation accompanied work with paint, markers, and pens, providing multiple and varied opportunities for the children to represent their thinking in concrete and abstract forms. The collection of artifacts includes pen drawings, folded notes to farmer friends Becky and Andy, watercolor paintings and marker illustrations accompanied by transcribed conversations. Many of the children’s representations capture the movement and emotional tenor of a storm while also conveying a message of hope. Ahron’s drawing, which is thick with grey marks standing for clouds and lightning cracks, also has two subtle suns peeking through the layers. For some children, the act of creating a series of works also permitted them to process the hurricane in their very own way. For example, Mason, while asserting that “nothing bad is happening to anyone,” made drawings with blue, green, and grey lines scrambling around the pages, representing the natural world and devastation he had seen around his home and in the images from the documentary. He said, “See this green; it’s the veggies washing away.” In his last drawing, he made a large yellow sun with rays stretching across the page and then stapled the drawings along one side, resembling a book. On
another day, he made connections to literature: “It is sort of like Jack and the Beanstalk because the giant is something terrible and Irene is something terrible.” Perhaps he found comfort in compartmentalizing “terrible things” into the world of fantasy, or perhaps he found a realistic incarnation of a subject he has encountered in books.

We believe it is important to help children build connections across domains of knowledge, and we offered an assortment of media so that they could explore and express their theories and reactions to Hurricane Irene as a phenomenon. As children worked with different media while sharing their thoughts with each other, their theories and works developed and changed over time. For example, Rashmi initially stated that we might be able to stand the downed trees and plants back up. She revisited this theory when painting, wondering more about the actual power and devastation of such a storm that could knock very big trees over and then questioning whether it is physically and scientifically possible to stand a tree up and have it grow again.

Across media and time, we also observed the interplay between children’s developing skills and their strong desire to represent their own ideas, to work through emotions, and to connect their own experiences with Irene. Motivated by their desire to communicate their feelings and thinking, they worked to develop their abilities to hold a pen or paintbrush, make choices about medium and color, or use representation-al symbols to communicate. For example, Ione challenged herself to write conventional letters

The teachers noted how the children accessed their previous experiences and current understanding about the natural world to make sense of the phenomenon of Irene. Through scaffolded encounters and conversations, the children presented new wonderings and sometimes challenged their own and each other’s thinking.

~Amanda Terren Ferguson and Jeanne Goldhaber
so that two of her favorite farmers could recognize their names. She spelled out, with great care and persistence, “To Becky and Andy” on the page with her drawing.

The teachers noted how the children accessed their previous experiences and current understanding about the natural world to make sense of the phenomenon of Irene. Through scaffolded encounters and conversations, the children presented new wonderings and sometimes challenged their own and each other’s thinking. While in an early conversation, a child proposed that “Abiyoyo,” a folklore giant, is responsible for the destruction, the children now used words like flood and compared rivers to lakes, relying on their newly acquired scientific and geographical knowledge. Reese said, “If the trees are in deep, deep mud, how do the squirrels climb up? They like to eat wood and nuts.” Perhaps he was considering not only the direct impact on the trees but also the impact on the other creatures that rely on the trees for food and shelter. We saw the influence of the children’s prior knowledge of the natural world in combination with the big question at hand: “How can we, as individuals, respond to the problems associated with this hurricane?

Bread Making, Baking, and More

These weeks also involved bread making—lots and lots of bread making. The children came to the table as expert bakers. As babies, these children had explored the properties of flour, and as toddlers, they had mixed flour and water and punched, pulled, and rolled various types of dough. By the time they were preschoolers, the children had extensive knowledge about the processes and properties of certain special ingredients, such as yeast being the bread’s “muscles” and vanilla as a secret sweet addition. Baking sessions became rich with tradition as they were accompanied by time for oral storytelling.

Bread baking in general and “Bread for Irene” in particular provided an unrivaled context for literacy and mathematics. While the teachers wove in opportunities to represent the process of bread making, the children often chose to document it with no teacher invitations or prompts. For example, the children represented...
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the list of ingredients in many ways: in small books with words and illustrations developed in collaboration, in long strips of paper, and in single drawings. In a group effort, children made eight careful eggs and four specific spoons to correspond exactly with the recipe. One day, the teacher posed a provocative question regarding the parts of a recipe to the children, asking, “How can you also represent the steps we use in making bread?” The children’s subsequent drawings included people mixing at tables along with ingredients. Some children drew and numbered grids, a technique related to the storyboards they had become accustomed to using to make superhero stories similar to comics. The grids depicted items such as the large silver bowl, yeast, whisks, a carton of eggs, and measuring cups.

Mastery of the original recipe and the scientific processes of baking made room for experimentation. The children knew enough about the basic recipe that they could adjust for secret ingredients they wanted to add, such as honey, carefully calculating the measure of wet to dry ingredients. Bread making also involves counting, measuring, sequencing, and patterning—a multi-step process that requires children to bring awareness to specific actions, to wait and anticipate an outcome, and to follow rules in the most authentic way, i.e., if we forget an ingredient or rush through a step, the final outcome is not as tasty. There is no better way to experiment with trial and error. The traditional six-strand braid presents a challenge to even those with experience. The older preschoolers used a pattern to keep themselves on track, calling out “all the way over and down the middle” while they maneuvered the strands. Bread baking satisfies our goal as teachers to find ways to embed any list of standards naturally and with intrinsic motivation.
Bread For Sale!

Selling the bread around the UVM Campus was a school-wide endeavor. The preschoolers fashioned a small cart and made sandwich board signs. The signs featured the words “Bread for Irene” and also a large smiley face that the children said means, “to all the people, a smiley face.” The preschoolers began the sale in two different locations on campus, while small groups of children from various classrooms took shifts to fan out across campus to sell bread. The teachers supported children in becoming savvy sellers. For some children and...
Innovations in Early Education

It took a great deal of courage to call out “Bread for Irene!” or to have a conversation with an unfamiliar person. For others, courage was not a problem and, as a result, initial social blunders were committed, such as walking directly up to passersby, thrusting bread toward them, and demanding money. Spencer, one of the older toddler teachers, coached children behind the bread stand to explain why they were selling bread and how the funds raised would be donated and also how to respond politely even if their sales pitch failed. Heeding Spencer’s advice, two-year-old Simone explained to a customer tenderly, “It is really cold, and the plants all fell on our house.” Given that Simone’s house wasn’t in fact damaged by the storm, we wondered if this was a slip of pronouns or if it signified her personal, empathetic response to others’ experience.

Their wagon loaded with bread and on their way to meet their parents on the central green for a take-home bread sale, a group of the youngest toddlers’ laughter and enthusiasm caught the attention of the pedestrians, many of whom stopped to buy bread. Between “in-transit” sales and a bit of inventory “shrinkage” due to some inadvertent nibbles, the children’s wagon was empty by the time their parents arrived.

All told, the children’s sales totaled $500. The children helped to address and seal the cash in an envelope that was mailed to Becky, Andy, and the other farmers at the Intervale Center. In return, they received an official letter thanking them for their donation. As happens with most service learning, children and adults were immensely satisfied with the outcome of supporting relief efforts while clearly getting more in return. We had grown as a school as a result of “Bread for Irene,” an experience through which we reaffirmed our values and acted as our very best selves.

Closing Reflections

Writing this article has given us the opportunity to reflect on experiences that the video “Bread for Irene” could only highlight or, perhaps for the sake of time, not even include. Revisiting the images, transcripts, and artifacts that were collected over a month or so has reaffirmed many of our working theories regarding the power of meaningful engagement in context, the process of documentation, the role of the teacher, and schools as places for democratic participation.

Meaningful engagement

We have found that when children are invited to participate in meaningful work, they are eager, focused, collaborative, and prone to working through challenges or frustration. For example, the preschoolers were moved to write with conventional letter symbols and to consider the relationship between words and pictures so that they accurately expressed themselves to a wide audience. The words “Bread for Irene” needed to be written in a way that passersby could interpret. Or, in preparation for a trip to the kitchen to procure ingredients, the children had to accurately record the ingredients and amounts on a “shopping list.”

Yet another experience of the principle of meaningful engagement involved braiding a loaf of challah. With six strands a challenge even for adults, we believe that the children’s mastery of this complicated task requiring coordination, repetition, patterning, and confidence was inspired by their desire to not only produce successful loaves of bread but also to help, to do good. We hold dear these values, particularly at a time when young children’s schooling is more and more frequently reduced to a set of skills practiced and measured in isolation.
Teachers are constantly negotiating how to maintain a reflective stance while being an active agent in the classroom. What is the teacher’s role in balancing opportunities toward a destination while still being open to the possibilities children discover and present along the way? What does “following the children’s lead” mean?

—Amanda Terreri Ferguson and Jeanne Goldhaber

We see work such as that involved in baking and selling bread as calling upon and combining multiple teachers’ and children’s passions, skills, and knowledge while capturing the attention of and inspiring our wider community. We often measure the success of an experience like that of “Bread for Irene” in terms of the joy it generated—a feeling that is, in fact, not necessarily synonymous with fun, but rather an emotion that comes when the heart and head are engaged with others in something that is meaningful to many.

The process of documentation

This project taught us about the process of documentation, which we envision as a “cycle of inquiry” (Gandini & Goldhaber, 2000). To be honest, we are constantly befuddled by the challenge of archiving digital media. Vast photo libraries often become invisible when computers are upgraded, key artifacts are not always saved in a way that makes them accessible to others, and the sheer quantity of data we can collect with smartphones and iPads can overwhelm us. We are impressed (and a bit surprised) that we were able to retrieve the data collected over this experience with relative ease!

Serendipity also plays a role in our efforts to document. In fact, this project exists in our collective memory, in part because of lucky circumstances. As the project was in full swing, we received an offer to fill some “airtime” at the university-hosted “Outstanding Teacher Day.” We leapt at the opportunity to share what young children can accomplish when given the opportunity. The invitation sparked the creation of the five-minute film “Bread for Irene.” Though we were all collecting photos and video, recording conversations, and saving artifacts, it is very possible that we would not have summarized or publicized this project in such a format had it not been for this invitation. As much as we described the work of children as being elevated and inspired by a meaningful context, Amanda feels the same about her motivation as a documenter: “I experimented with using imagery and layering of audio, written text, photos, and videos to tell a story that would have taken far more words if expressed in a different way. It was a risk to produce something so quickly, as I knew there would be important parts of the process that weren’t visible. However, the product, or final piece of documentation, is very different than anything else I have created artistically and the stand-alone ability of the video and magic of YouTube have so far stood the test of time” (personal reflection, January 22, 2016). While it is important to take great care in the process and art of documentation, there is also merit in mustering one’s courage, taking a leap, experimenting with new art forms, and sharing a new or emerging theory or perspective when the opportunity presents itself.

The role of the teacher

Teachers are constantly negotiating how to maintain a reflective stance while being an active agent in the classroom. What is the teacher’s role in balancing opportunities toward a destination while still being open to the possibilities children discover and present along the way? What does “following the children’s lead” mean? Though we have no clear-cut answers to these questions, we do think that “Bread for Irene” struck this balance in a number of ways. First, the teachers were responsive; they heard the children’s initial wonderings about Hurricane Irene and collaborated to make a proposal about how to respond to these observations. This proposal was brave and also drew from prior experiences and the school’s existing culture. Along the way, the teachers supported the children and the school in achieving a very specific goal or destination while maintaining a responsive and dynamic process. For example, after the original sessions when children used markers to draw their interpretations of
Hurricane Irene, the teachers discovered that the children were interested in and had more to discover about using watercolor. As a result, they wove in opportunities for children to make choices about media in order to best represent their ideas. Similarly, the teachers analyzed the children’s bread making and noted the interest in sequence, step following, and “rules”—broader concepts that were then purposefully woven into the curriculum.

Teachers also structured time and overall plans so that children had ample opportunities to pursue their interests or theories over days and weeks and to return to salient ideas. There is always an interplay between thoughtfully arranged times and groupings and times when children play independently and respond to the classroom environment, get outdoors, share meals, and rest. These interactions between people and between people and materials are the context within which the “Bread for Irene” experience thrived. In these ways, the project grew out of and also contributed to the overall classroom and school culture.

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Schools as places for democratic participation

It has taken us many years to recognize children’s capacity to participate in and contribute to the well-being of their communities. Over time, we began to take note of and document the engagement and joy children brought to genuine invitations to help, whether it was hammering nails back down into the loose boards of an outside deck, transplanting an indoor tree named “Big Al” by the children to a larger pot, or creating mobiles to hang over the infants’ cribs.

With every experience, the children taught us not only that they welcomed the opportunity to contribute to their community but also that our school community did not stop at our front door or playground fence; they taught us that we are “in and of” the world. This realization was at the heart of the teachers’ decision to bring the topic of Irene to the children. While our school was not directly affected by the hurricane, our Vermont neighbors had been and thus, so were we.

These encounters with the community were also a mechanism for advocacy, as each passer-by who observed or interacted with the children encountered the potential of children’s right to active and meaningful participation. Children are so often relegated to the realm of “cute,” an endearing term but one that prevents us from seeing the children as they are—complex, curious, caring, capable. These characteristics can lend themselves to the creation of a school culture that seeks out and welcomes challenge, complexity, and even crisis and invites children to participate in the real work of a democracy. The children’s eagerness to respond to Lyla’s question, “What can the children do to help?” was reflective of a growing school culture that was built on a history of similar experiences, as mundane as groups of children loading their classroom’s snack scraps’ pail onto wagons and pulling them to the central composting bin every day to problem-solving how to help salamanders cross a busy road in rural Vermont during their breeding season.

—Amanda Terreti Ferguson and Jeanne Goldhaber
Concluding Thoughts

From time to time, the preschoolers’ “Bread for Irene” jingle, heard in the background of the film, still pops into our heads and reminds us of the ways that a few tiny voices can add up to collective power. And, as we all struggle to make sense of the present—heart-wrenching stories of mental health epidemics, gun violence, or displaced refugees that confront us in the news—Lyla’s voice empowers us. A simple act, such as a small school making and selling bread, turned our focus toward a more hopeful future.

REFERENCES


The Politics of Teaching

Focusing on the role of teachers is not counter to mainstream educational research and politics. In the Swedish educational context, much attention and concern is placed on the results of the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) evaluations that identify numeracy, literacy, and natural science as priority fields for resources and development. The PISA assessments and techniques have been broadly criticized for poor scientific quality, yet its architects have become a kind of international board of education affecting Swedish and international educational politics. The competition between countries has influenced policymakers to define education mainly as a task of supporting the concept of knowledge and academic achievements, pushing education as a tool for building a culture of citizenship and democracy into the background. In Swedish legislation, education as a right is initially formulated as the democratic role of schools but the legislation later stipulates that teaching should be scientifically based on evidence from good practice. This sounds good but is practically used as if science was a value-neutral tool with a taken-for-granted goal to develop “best practice.” This reduces the philosophical aspects of ontological and epistemological questions necessary for critical voices to a matter of “common sense” and “what works.”

Yet within these frameworks, much emphasis is placed on the skills of the teacher, as indicated in John Hattie’s world-renowned report Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement (2009), which...
It has been said that this is why the former Soviet Union eventually dissolved. To continue to exist, it was necessary to educate their people to think and to question. But these abilities are difficult to control. It is vital to focus on the importance of bringing the issues of knowledge close to the issues of citizenship and democracy. This conviction strongly relates to the American educational experience of pragmatism developed by Charles Pierce and William James, with its most famous practitioners Alice Chipman and her husband John Dewey.

Democratic Schools and Democratic Societies

Over the last several years, I have been invited to work with schools in the United States. Many of these schools are deeply related to the pragmatic movement, and the educators struggle to maintain the aspect of schools as a place to support citizenship and democracy in a time that is focused on tests and academic skills, even in early childhood. Together we believe in democracy as a right and a tool for shared values that supports diversity, applauds the idea of opposing points of view, and believes in dialogue that confirms possible and diverse viewpoints.

We see this type of dialogue as a starting point because we do not perceive dialogue as synonymous to debate. This perception is so dominant in our practice of democracy—in politics but more importantly, in the daily practice of the media and in everyday conflicts—the idea of winners and losers—the idea of the dictatorship of the majority—the dictatorship of the winning viewpoint! When it comes to political or business matters, the people—the everyday recipients of decisions—become targets for implementation, rewards, gifts, sponsors, programs, and curricula on which the recipients will be tested according to the only “winning answers.”

We have all looked to the experience in Reggio Emilia, which supports the idea of citizenship that is dependent on education as a common wealth—a right for all, as important as the right to water, air, and reproduction. This idea is not unique to only Reggio Emilia; this concept was also developed in a time when it was important to construct the idea of shared laws in order to make it possible for the United States to survive. John Dewey, a student of Pierce and James, wrote, “What nutrition and reproduction are to physiological life, education is to social life. This education consists primarily in transmission through communication. Communication is a process of sharing experience till it becomes a common possession” (Dewey, 1916, p. 11).

Dewey and Chipman believed that in order to promote democracy, a school where you learn to learn together with the “other”—the stranger—is needed. Xenia is one of five words that the ancient Greeks, including Aristotle, used to describe love; it means kindness to the guest or stranger. If Aristotle found a reason to consider the point of view of the “other,” we know that this is not only a contemporary issue.
Democracy is Built on a Paradox

The interesting thing about democracy is that the concept is the first human societal idea to confirm conflicts as contributing to a society based on our “agreement” to include all people. The Greeks are said to have constructed democracy as a concept, but their definition did not include women or slaves. They made the agora a place for decision-making between a few distinguished men. During World War II, Winston Churchill said, “It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried” (UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2013). Democracy offers us a very weak organizational idea of society, since it doesn’t necessarily promote the idea of staying together and thinking the same. But unity is a necessity, so this is a paradox.

To be able to support diversity, we have to agree on some shared values. The problem is that even these agreements will be criticized in a democracy built on rights. Yet the question is about the values related to building a democracy:

- The value of subjectivity
- The value of contrasts, variations, and diversity
- The value of mutual interdependence, negotiation, and compromises
- The value of learning as the right to change your mind

A democratic society encourages and values knowledge as a matter of different points of view, complexity, and multiple interpretations in confronting dialogue.

Education and/as Democracy?

Unfortunately, our idea of democracy is not the dominating discourse of education. The history of education is a story of obeying, accepting, and separating. The birth of democracy in Swedish education was mainly influenced by the German culture and its discussions about the meaning of bildung [education, formation, self-cultivation]. German philosopher and psychologist Johann Friedrich Herbarth focused on organizing the new academic subjects according to established knowledge and research. His idea was to educate civilized citizens by transmitting a cultural code of what should be known. On the other hand, Prussian philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt espoused the idea of a citizen governing himself from his passions and interests. In early childhood education, this was similar to the thoughts of Swiss pedagogue Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and German pedagogue Friedrich Fröbel.

Then the voice of Dewey entered the pragmatic movement, which argued for an education that is useful for both the individual and democratic society. This approach respected knowledge but was eager to connect it with the student’s own experiences and background. This became a perspective of major influence in Swedish educational politics after WWII. Dewey believed that in a society built on growing diversities in wealth, religion, and race, it is necessary to create a public school where people learn how to learn with people who are different. Society’s differences create different lifestyles and different interests for gaining power. In this kind of society, you have to educate to support understanding, not only of the rights you are given in society but also of the duty you have to respect the same rights for the “others”—your classmates, your neighbors, and those beyond your neighborhood!

This is why the school in a democracy has to be shared and for all. Education is not only an individual need but also the need of a democratic society. Of course, there are other ideas of education and democracy that are common today—ideas that argue that separation is more democratic, for example, when the parents decide to separate their children from others by homeschooling them. Another idea still is to let the church educate children and decide that they should be grouped in classes according to their religion.

In Sweden, the Finnish population has argued for special Finnish schools because of historical oppression within Swedish society. Oppression from the majority is the argument, but this can also be seen as a symptom of a failing school system for all. Others argue for social separation or separation according to skills. One of the strongest arguments from Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia educational project, was to reject separation—of experiences, of thinking and doing, of rationality and emotions, of body and brain, and so on.

Diversity is the impetus for understanding and learning. This makes democracy a very special epistemological culture that invites challeng-
ing established ideas rather than confirming those that are already known. This is a culture of learners who change their minds. Cultures are often defined according to similarities that confirm our way of thinking and our way of living. This results in education being an issue of transmission. Here, the child, the new member, is not welcomed with his or her own curiosity—the child who is always asking “why?” In a culture of similarity, the revolutionary question “why?” must be controlled.

A democratic society always invites this question because its citizens respect other cultures (multiculturalism) and are open to dialogue between cultures (interculturalism) and learning from other cultures (transculturalism). This is the challenge for us, as democrats (those who believe in democracy)—whether we are Republicans or Democrats, conservatives or liberals—to invite dialogue and organize spaces for that dialogue that changes us and our society into one that celebrates diversity as a tool for learning.

Through reading the works of Gregory Bateson (Steps to an Ecology of Mind, 1972 and Mind and Nature, 1979), I have learned that it takes an encounter with a difference that we respect as a difference to make us reflect. The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze wrote, “Everybody knows very well that, in fact, men think rarely and more often under the impulse of a shock than in the excitement of a taste for thinking” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 13). This places our ability to use our minds to reflect on democracy as an ontological, epistemological, and societal perspective. The democratic citizen has to be seen as a learning species that needs to confront and challenge knowledge within the ethics of democracy. This could bring us to the conclusion that it is important for democracy to have places like schools where we question our truths and celebrate our different perspectives—where we “learn by doing.”

The educational project in Reggio Emilia is extending the thoughts and practice of Dewey and pragmatism with its strong focus on the relationship between the city and the schools, emphasizing parental participation as an educational issue related to children's backgrounds, experiences, and interests. In addition, our Reggio colleagues have expanded literacy and numeracy into the concept of the hundred languages, which has great relevance in this time of globalization and transience.

The Reggio educators believe that this is the time to expand the concepts of identity and culture. In his impressive trilogy, The Information Age, Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells (1996, 1997, and 1998) asserted that if we look to the past for a European identity, we will only find hostility toward “the other.” He said that a modern European identity must be constructed. Reggio Emilia’s broad concept of progettazione could be a helpful tool. As I see it, Reggio Emilia’s most important contribution to education is the struggle to connect didactics with society and democracy. Carlina Rinaldi, president of the Reggio Children-Loris Malaguzzi International Center Foundation, ended an International Network meeting in Stockholm by saying, “We do not believe in schools; we believe in the necessity of a new global democratic citizenship. Schools are tools for this” (personal notes, June 14, 2007). This means that it is not enough to secure schools; it is fundamental for curricula to challenge traditional teaching patterns. As a matter of fact, Paola Cagliari, director of Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers, Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, said at a meeting with compulsory school educators in Sweden that “most curricula today are based on socio-constructivist thinking; the huge challenge is to change teaching habits” (personal notes, October 8, 2013).

I agree with Carlina and Paola, but I still believe that curricula should identify the relationship between learning, knowledge, and the ethics of schools as micro-political democratic arenas in a more expressive way. This is necessary to develop the education of teachers regarding group learning, parental participation, and relating academic issues to the experiences and interests of children. Therefore, we must challenge the dominating discourses of evaluation and the outcomes of education with teachers, administrators, parents, and all citizens with the power to affect the resources and orientations of school politics.

**Teachers are Trying in Spite of Obstacles**

Teachers have an essential professional role in a democracy. Education is the key element that makes a democracy work. The school is the institution in society that affects the social identities of every citizen. When society provides school to all, the school becomes a political arena where the students become public citizens.

Diversity is the impetus for understanding and learning. This makes democracy into a very special epistemological culture that invites challenging established ideas rather than confirming those that are already known. This is a culture of learners who change their minds.

-Harold Göthson
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and not private personalities. If the decision to attend public schools is compulsory, then it is not only a right but also a duty to participate. The school itself becomes a place where you meet others that you have not chosen. Therefore, you will find your identity in a public place that you have a duty to attend.

This creates opportunities to think about and debate how educational organizations support societal ideals. This also makes the teachers’ everyday decisions important, because they will affect every student’s public identity in a public space. When all children have the duty to attend school, all growing citizens will meet a teacher. This is why the teacher’s role is an essential professional role in a democracy.

If all of society’s citizens are present in the school at some time, the outcome of political decisions about curriculum and what should be assessed makes the teacher representative of political intentions and compromises. This makes it so important to relate didactical issues, as a whole and on an everyday basis, to the quality of the society that the school supports. Is it a society for individual competition, for division of labor according to societal needs, or is it a society for democratic citizenship where knowledge and learning are part of the rights and needs of a democratic citizen?

Schools were declared compulsory for all in Sweden before democracy was in place. The idea was to follow a moral code in order to gain the obedience of the lower classes. Later the industrial societies forced the school to redefine its classical disciplines so that they related to academic disciplines. Why is this important? Because it shows us that the reasons for a school to exist can also differ within the same school system. This allows for alternative development.

My hope is for a democratic education that fosters a new global democratic citizenship. It will not be easy, but I believe it is crucial for the survival of democratic values in our globalized time. I agree with Dewey’s arguments for a school in a democracy. He believed that the definition of rights and duties developed by the founders—the right to vote, to speak in public, to write and publish, and to organize—is not enough to ensure the survival of democracy in the United States. Democracy cannot survive as simply a question of jurisdiction and institutions. Democracy has to be seen as actions that realize the meaning of the agreed-upon values about which we can disagree—the rights of the individual, the value of contrasts and diversities, the value of mutual interdependency, and the value of learning as hypothesizing for the possibility of a hundred perspectives and expressions—in a school where we can learn to use these values.

This is why the United States and all democratic societies need a general education for all. As in Sweden today, there are growing tensions based on diversity in wealth, in race, in religion, and in cultural heritage. Therefore, we need a public school where we meet in diversity and learn to learn together. This leads back to the decisions of everyday life in the micro-society that is lived by teachers, children, and families. There, in real life, the question “how do different children learn?” should be answered, not in general by researchers but by teachers. In fact, it should be the most precious question for each teacher or team of teachers who are working together with their classes.

Again, this points to the crucial role of the teacher and the teacher’s need for strategies for reflection. Teachers have to be as careful in their choices as academic researchers, but their guiding principles are different. The teacher is always involved in a process in which she or he is part of the context. The teacher has to relate all decisions to the kind of citizenship she or he supports. This makes the quality of the teacher’s reflections crucial. To develop this quality, the teacher needs to develop temporary truths, as Howard Gardner argued in a lecture in Stockholm with 1250 preschool teachers in June 2015. He stressed that the teacher’s skills for creating truths should be different from a scientist’s, but the two roles can inspire each other.

It is necessary to develop schools as reflective and learning places for students as well as for teachers. As a matter of fact, the student’s reflection and learning requires the same dispositions in teachers. The teacher has to become a researcher of her or his unique cultural context for learning, guided not only by educational theory but also by democratic values and a hopeful image of humanity and of conflicts that are unavoidable but possible to negotiate. Reggio Emilia has much to offer in this regard, partially due to inspiration from the
The teacher has to become a researcher of her or his unique cultural context for learning, guided not only by educational theory but also by democratic values and a hopeful image of humanity and of conflicts that are unavoidable but possible to negotiate.

–Harold Göthson

work of Dewey. Mostly, the Reggio educators offer us the idea of a researching practice that constructs temporary truths with the children, parents, teachers, and the city as a whole. In the micro-political culture of each school, there is always the question of the choice of projects, of material, and of group formation, as well as the choice to involve children in a reflective culture based on pedagogical documentation that makes learning sharable and enables group learning to become the highest form of learning.

In my work with Swedish schools from early childhood to school-age settings, I have been impressed by the way teachers with minimal support are experimenting and challenging themselves as teams and as individuals. While writing a book together with Swedish compulsory school teachers inspired by the Reggio Emilia educational project, I felt very hopeful that my vision for democratic schools is not only for the future. Rather, this vision of schools is currently being realized in Sweden, in the United States, in Argentina, and in many places around the globe. Therefore, we need to strengthen our international networks. In my visits abroad, I have tried to offer concrete examples to encourage others and to give visibility to this effort by Swedish teachers and others.

In conclusion, we must use the potential of teachers to build a process for an education that struggles to promote a global democratic citizenship that includes all citizens. It is not easy to coexist with the dominant discourse in education today, but our efforts are necessary and crucial for the health and the survival of our democratic cultures.

REFERENCES
Tributes to Eli Saltz, Former Director of the Merrill-Palmer Institute

Dr. Eli Saltz passed away on December 24, 2015 at the age of 89 years old. In this issue of Innovations, we pay tribute to Eli and remember his important role in the Reggio-inspired community of educators in the United States and, in particular, his participation in the creation of Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange, along with Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia educational project. In fact, Eli and Malaguzzi’s collaboration in the conception of this periodical is noted on the first page of every issue of Innovations, which was published by the Merrill-Palmer Institute (now the Merrill-Palmer Skillman Institute) from 1992–2007 and by the Wayne State University College of Education from 2007–2012.

Eli joined Wayne State University (WSU) in 1958 as an assistant professor of psychology. When the Merrill-Palmer Institute became part of WSU in 1982, he became the Institute’s director and remained in that role until his retirement in 1997. Eli was also editor of the Merrill-Palmer Quarterly from 1981–1982. At the time he assumed the directorship, Merrill-Palmer was on the brink of financial ruin. Under Eli’s leadership, the Institute was quickly restored to its position as one of the leading child and family research institutions in the nation. He received the Wayne State University Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award in 1981 and, with his wife Rosalyn, in 2000, received a joint award, the Betty Garlic Lifetime Achievement Award from the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children.

Eli was a prolific researcher. He was author of The Cognitive Bases of Human Learning and published more than 75 articles in scholarly journals and books on subjects ranging from learning and memory, the benefits of thematic and imaginative play, natural language concepts, the structure of language, and teen pregnancy, among other topics.

In the following pages, educators from Reggio Emilia and the United States who knew Eli and worked with him share their memories and express their condolences to Rosalyn and his family.

The Merrill-Palmer Institute of Wayne State University has a long history of research and innovation in the area of child development, including the development of the philosophy of the Head Start and Foster Grandparent programs. Through the interest of Eli and his wife Rosalyn Saltz, [professor at the University of Michigan–Dearborn and director of the UMD Child Development Center] in Italian progressive education in the 1980s and their visit to Reggio Emilia, “The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit was located in Detroit in 1991. Their conviction was that the Reggio Emilia approach represented the belief that all children are entitled to a “head start.”

I had the good fortune to participate in one of the professional development initiatives connected to the presence of the exhibit in Detroit and experience the hospitality of Eli and Rosalyn in their home when the idea of establishing a vehicle of communication between Reggio Emilia and the United States was first generated. I also participated in Eli and Rosalyn’s conversations with Loris Malaguzzi about the decision to launch Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange in 1993. These meetings took place in Chicago when Malaguzzi was awarded the Kohl International Education Prize, sponsored by the Kohl Foundation in Wilmette, Illinois. Patty Weissman, editor of Innovations from 1992–1998, also participated in these meetings.
In “Greetings from the Director of the Merrill-Palmer Institute” in the first issue of Innovations in the fall of 1992, Eli wrote:

It is with great pleasure that we at Merrill-Palmer have initiated Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange. The experiment taking place in the Reggio preschools has inspired many educators throughout the world. While it is probably not realistic to think of transplanting the Reggio [approach] to another country without modifications that take into account cultural differences, many of us feel that we have a great deal to learn from the Reggio experience and from attempts, here and abroad, to [interpret] key aspects of that experience.

The publication of Innovations will facilitate exchange of relevant information and experiences concerning extensions of the Reggio experiment by educators in this country and abroad.

Almost the entire northern tier of Italy has been in an exciting stage of experimentation with new methods to extend early education to the great majority of young children, rich and poor alike. The approaches taken in Reggio are recognized throughout Italy as among the best and, in some of their aspects, certainly the best. (Saltz, 1992, p. 3)

In “Letter from Loris Malaguzzi” in this same issue, Malaguzzi offered his best wishes on this new venture:

Sept. 15, 1992
Dear Eli,

Ten handshakes for your idea and 10 more for carrying it out, and then 10 sets of good wishes for its success. It is a generous and worthy idea.

From what I learn from Lella Gandini, I see that you have in mind a newsletter that gives information about the adventures and resonance of our educational experience in the United States. I also see that you have in mind a newsletter that tends to expand the knowledge about our work while, at the same time, strengthening the connections of friendship and exchange among the people who have already encountered our approach. I am thinking here of many people: those who have come to visit us with delegations, those who came for a long stay, those who conducted with us (and continue to do so) research projects on children’s processes of learning, those who participated in meetings, institutes, or seminars, and finally those who have worked to host, or viewed, or studied our exhibit “The Hundred Languages of Children,” which since 1987, is touring in the United States.

I want to give you some relevant data. In the last four years, 31 delegations with a total of more than 800 persons came from the United States, while in just the last 12 months, nine of these delegations with a total of 250 people visited us. In the same four-year period, the city of Reggio Emilia welcomed 32 delegations from other countries, such as Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, India, Mexico, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Thailand. All of this highlights the strength of the attraction that our experience has and the enormous web of friendship that our experience has created around us.

Also in this recent period of time, there have been more than 20 major meetings, institutes, and seminars in the United States with the participation of educators from Reggio Emilia and of our American friends. Furthermore, at least 30 American universities have had exchanges or

Yes, dear Eli, your initiative will produce a reciprocal and deeper knowledge of what brings us close and of what differentiates us. The more it will offer reflections, dialogues, and comparisons, the more it will achieve good results. The true intercultural theme of our time (in a world more open and supportive) is for educators to open up to new questions, to new answers, and to new educational ideas.

–Loris Malaguzzi
contact with our experience. The relationship between our network and that of our American colleagues has become richer, thanks to two very beautiful documentaries. One was produced by Eugene Marner (in the series “Childhood”) and the other by Paul Kaufman (in the series “The Creative Spirit”). They were presented on public television by PBS in 1992. Furthermore, the designation by *Newsweek* of the Diana School as the best and most advanced school for young children in the world created great upheaval—almost too much—even in a country such as ours where the whole educational system is under heavy criticism.

Another important element is the imminent release in the United States of a book that will tell about the Reggio experience with our contribution and that of our American colleagues—a book introduced by our special friend Howard Gardner. Furthermore, we are preparing, with George Forman and Lella Gandini, another surprise that they will soon reveal.

We can certainly say together that a good tract of road has been built, and many more passages have been opened.

Yes, dear Eli, your initiative will produce a reciprocal and deeper knowledge of what brings us close and of what differentiates us. The more it will offer reflections, dialogues, and comparisons, the more it will achieve good results. The true intercultural theme of our time (in a world more open and supportive) is for educators to open up to new questions, to new answers, and to new educational ideas.

Infants and children in all places in the world cannot continue to have rights only on paper: the right to have good parents, good housing, good food, good schools, good teachers, and good governments is what they ask for and what is urgently needed. If we adults will keep in mind that the children are always the holders of new possibilities and perspectives—and not only in the field of learning and knowledge—perhaps we will not carelessly dissipate, with guilty nonchalance, the good that they, along with us, possess.

Dear Eli, I am confident that these thoughts are at the basis of your idea. I am very happy to follow your initiative with you and with all the American friends to whom I offer my good wishes and whom I thank affectionately.

Before leaving, I want to salute also your wife, Rosalyn, to thank her particularly for her initiatives and for the earnest interest I remember seeing in her eyes.

An affectionate embrace, Loris (Malaguzzi, 1992, p. 2)

Therefore, thanks to Malaguzzi, who encouraged me, and thanks to Eli Saltz for his role in creating Innovations, which continues to bring to the United States the creative and hopeful messages from Reggio Emilia that help all of us to think about children, teachers, parents, and schools as sources of positive engagement and constructive dedication.

–Lella Gandini

It is particularly touching for me to remember those meetings in Chicago and to go through the first issue of Innovations with affection. I remember how pleased Malaguzzi looked while browsing through its pages in the presence of Sandra Piccinini, who was then an important representative of the mayor and the municipal government of Reggio Emilia. I also remember Malaguzzi asking me many questions.

Much of my professional life was launched by Malaguzzi in 1976, when I was contributing to the educational magazine *Bambini*, which Malaguzzi had begun to publish with a well-known publishing house in Milan. Being aware that I was living in the States part of the time, he asked me to interview some of the most notable researchers in child study in the United States. I interviewed Dr. Spock, Hans Furth, Barry Brazelton, Jerome Bruner, Howard Gardner, and others.

Therefore, thanks to Malaguzzi, who encouraged me, and thanks to Eli Saltz for his role in creating Innovations, which continues to bring to the United States the creative and hopeful messages from Reggio Emilia that help all of us to think about children, teachers, parents, and schools as sources of positive engagement and constructive dedication.

REFERENCES


It is with great sorrow and sadness that I have learned of the departure of our beloved Eli. Along with being an outstanding scientist, Eli was a good human being who cared about the world around him. I still have vivid memories of the time I spent with him, Loris Malaguzzi, Amelia Gambetti, and others early in the 1990s, when it was decided to give birth to Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange.

NAREA did not exist and neither did Reggio Children. But the seeds of this very meaningful project have grown a lot, and it is impressive to see that after more than 20 years, Innovations continues to be an important quarterly periodical that seeks to elevate both the quality of life and the quality of schools and centers for young children through articles and reports.

Eli represents a milestone in our history, and I would like to remember him as one of the strongest advocates for promoting positive development, whether on the part of children, his students, or his colleagues.

–Carlina Rinaldi

Eli represents a milestone in our history, and I would like to remember him as one of the strongest advocates for promoting positive development, whether on the part of children, his students, or his colleagues. I have a clear memory of the conversations between Eli and Malaguzzi. I remember that Malaguzzi repeatedly confided in him his concern for what he considered the greatest limit for the development of a system of services for early childhood. The poor perception of the social and political dimensions of early childhood services had resulted in the development of “places” that seemed to be fragmented, isolated, and not essential parts of a “recognition of the right of children to have and live in quality services.”

It was in the context of these conversations that Malaguzzi shared with Eli his idea to develop an organization that could connect the most positive experiences of the country, becoming an organic voice, able to speak about childhood, culture, and the politics of the country. Using a very effective metaphor, Malaguzzi called this organization an “umbrella,” a connector of the experiences and the most positive forces in the country, so that they could disseminate and research strength, energy, and political and pedagogical goals. They also discussed the possibility of creating a periodical that could be a sort of “amplifier” of what had been realized and researched—a bridge between the experiences in the United States and the reality of the preschools and infant-toddler centers in Reggio Emilia.

Eli, with his unique way of listening and offering acute observations during the conversations, allowed Malaguzzi to move more and more inside this vision, making it his own and deciding to invest (also financially) in this project, starting from the idea of the periodical. Rosalyn, Eli’s wife, has played a very important role as well, as she was and still is a very passionate educator and supporter of Loris Malaguzzi and of the pedagogical experience of Reggio Emilia.

Many others took up the proposal and developed it with rare dedication, despite all of the difficulties, among them, learning how to work in a group and as a group. It is difficult to name everyone without running the risk of forgetting someone. I remember the patient work—like “textile workers”—of Lella Gandini and Amelia Gambetti, who continue to collaborate but above all to support an experience that has built and qualified the links between the educational reality of the United States and the experience of the preschools and infant-toddler centers of Reggio Emilia.

It was really hard to imagine at that time that all of the conversations could generate the precious patrimony that is now represented by NAREA and the periodical Innovations. For all of the reasons I just shared, we feel we always have to thank and remember Eli Saltz.
I was particularly touched by the news about Eli Saltz. I would like to express all my support to his family and to his closest friends in this sad moment in their lives. I think it is also a sad moment for all the ones who have known him and had the pleasure to share with him various experiences connected to work and life.

I was a young teacher when I met him and his wife Rosalyn for the first time in Reggio Emilia. I remember when they came to La Villetta School. At that time, I worked as a teacher in the school and, along with Loris Malaguzzi, I had the opportunity to share our experiences and to tell stories about my involvement with children and parents. Eli was very appreciative and, with his smile and warm words, he could express in many ways how much children's participation in the life of the school provoked joy and happiness in him.

In that period, the creation of Innovations took place, and I began almost right away to give to it my contribution by writing articles about my new experience in North America. In my first articles in 1992–1993, I remember that I wrote about my new experiences, my challenges, and my positive results in my work as a head teacher at the laboratory school.

A few years later, I traveled to the Merrill-Palmer Institute in Detroit with Lella Gandini for a conference about the Reggio Emilia approach, and I met Eli and Rosalyn once again. Eli was very happy to see me. I remember him with open arms, welcoming me and happy to see that his invitation became a real encounter in his context. He was proud of my investment in learning English and of my choice to be in the United States, sharing experiences about my work in Reggio Emilia but also in other North American schools that I had begun to visit.

Eli was also very proud that all the conversations, the projections of ideas, and the thinking that Loris Malaguzzi and he had developed over the years of their relationship that had led to the creation of Innovations and, consequently, to the establishment of an ongoing dialogue between Reggio Emilia and its educational experience and North America and its educational experiences inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach.

–Amelia Gambetti

At that time, I was learning English, and I remember how much he encouraged me to continue my learning, because he wanted me to go to the United States and visit the Merrill-Palmer Institute at Wayne State University. Some years later, it happened, because my life entered in a new important chapter.

In the fall of 1992, I moved to the United States, accepting the invitation of the University of Massachusetts–Amherst to be a visiting lecturer in their laboratory school. At that time, George Forman was a professor of education and Lella Gandini was an adjunct professor at the university.

Through the years, I have continued to develop my connection with Innovations because I believe in the importance of its message, and I am proud of the results that we have attained, especially knowing that all of this was generated from an idea of Eli Saltz and Loris Malaguzzi.
Eli was drawn to the Reggio approach because it resonated with who he was as a person. He shared Loris Malaguzzi’s vision of democratic, creative, fulfilling, and meaningful education—“an education based on relationships.” This vision lives on through the thousands of U.S. teachers and parents who have been inspired by the Reggio approach and are creating optimal learning environments for children and their families.

Eli’s creativity was sparked in the early 1990s when he and his wife, Rosalyn, encountered the early childhood program in Reggio Emilia, Italy, and met its founder, Loris Malaguzzi. Together they imagined forging a bridge between Reggio educators and those in the United States through the initiation of a newsletter to promote the exchange of ideas.

In 1991, the Merrill-Palmer Institute co-sponsored “The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit and invited Reggio educators to Detroit. After organizing a meeting between Reggio and U.S. colleagues (at Rosalyn and Eli’s home), Eli entrusted me with inviting a newly formed editorial board to our first discussion about the creation of Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange. The early Innovations editorial board meetings were filled with collective excitement as formidable minds tossed around ideas, argued, laughed, shared food and good Italian wine, and, ultimately, agreed upon ways to introduce and explore Reggio principles with teachers in this country.

Patty Weissman, co-author with Joanne Hendrick of The Whole Child: Developmental Education for the Early Years and Innovations founding editor

Eli was really part of many memories I have connected to his beautiful relationship with Loris Malaguzzi, but also connected to George Forman and Lella Gandini—important people in my life who provided a fertile ground for me to begin my experience in North America—an experience that has given to me the possibility to grow and to continue to learn.

Eli’s unique personality, our encounters, his friendship with Loris Malaguzzi, and all of the contributions that he has given to the field of education will always stay with me as a tangible memory of wonderful and meaningful stories that have left indelible traces in my personal and professional life. I send my affection and all my heartfelt condolences to Rosalyn and his family.
It was with sorrow that I heard about Eli Saltz’s recent death. He was such a vital, energetic person and one who played a key role in generating connections and collaborations between the United States and Italy during the formative period of the 1990s. Without him and his wife, Rosalyn Saltz, the wonderful periodical, Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Emilia Exchange, would not have gotten off the ground. It was important—indeed essential—during those days to have someone of his standing and reputation to champion the cause of the periodical and to build rich associations between Reggio Emilia and the Merrill-Palmer Institute in Detroit. Thus, it is with gratitude and respect that I remember his vision and dedication to fostering interaction and dialogue between U.S. and Italian early childhood educators.

[El] was such a vital, energetic person and one who played a key role in generating connections and collaborations between the United States and Italy during the formative period of the 1990s.

—Carolyn Edwards
This year, the work of Innovations is entering a new phase in its development. In an effort to enable the contribution of more and diverse voices in what we hope will be an increasingly democratic dialogue regarding elevating the quality of early childhood education, Innovations will publish one peer-reviewed issue annually, beginning in September 2017. To support the development of the identity of this annual issue and a process for peer review that we envision to be consistent with the values of the Reggio Emilia approach, a new group of consulting editors has been formed. These consulting editors are actively engaged in the study and expression of the Reggio Emilia approach and are enthusiastically committed to supporting and promoting both NAREA and Innovations. The first group of consulting editors includes Carol Bersani, Jeanne Goldhaber, Eileen Hughes, and Gigi Schroeder Yu.

Carol Bersani was a professor at Kent State University for 45 years, including 40 years as director and pedagogical coordinator of the Kent State University Child Development Center. She also coordinated the Early Childhood Education teacher education program for 23 years. She was a member of the Innovations editorial board from 2004–2015. Carol’s study of the Reggio Emilia approach began in 1992. She has participated in five study tours to that city, always in collaboration with other educators. From 1998–2003, she and her school were members of the Virginia Tech Collaborative, a group of four universities where laboratory school teachers were studying the Reggio Emilia approach. That experience further developed her thinking about children as researchers and teacher research that is interwoven with that of the children.

Jeanne Goldhaber, associate professor emerita, taught in the Early Childhood PreK-3 Teacher Preparation Program at the University of Vermont for 25 years. The University of Vermont teacher education program has prepared many students to be teachers in Reggio-inspired schools throughout the United States. Jeanne’s first trip to Reggio Emilia was in 1991, when she discovered what a group of committed and passionate people can do when motivated by a clear and articulated vision of a world.
We would like this annual peer-reviewed issue to be a vehicle that supports the collaboration among teachers and teacher educators by integrating reflection and analysis of the shared and reciprocal research and inquiry of teachers, children, and families that will be featured in every issue.

–Judith Allen Kaminsky and Lella Gandini

that respects and celebrates children, families, and teachers. She served as an Innovations editorial board member from 2000-2009 and has been a NAREA board member since 2009. Jeanne has authored or co-authored several book chapters and books related to the Reggio Emilia approach, including Bambini: The Italian Approach to Infant/Toddler Care; Teaching and Learning: Collaborative Exploration of the Reggio Emilia Approach; First Steps Toward Teaching the Reggio Way; Next Steps Toward Teaching the Reggio Way; Insights and Inspirations from Reggio Emilia: Stories of Teachers and Children from North America; and Pinching, Poking and Pretending: Documenting Toddlers’ Explorations with Clay.

Gigi Schroeder Yu has worked in the field of education as an art educator, researcher, professional development provider, and higher education instructor for more than 20 years, drawing inspiration from the work and words of children throughout that time. She began studying the Reggio Emilia philosophy over 16 years ago while working as a studio coordinator for Chicago Commons. She currently works with teachers studying the Reggio approach as an Early Childhood Art Resource teacher for the Albuquerque Public Schools. In addition, she collaborates with early childhood organizations in the Southwest inspired by the principles of the Reggio Emilia approach. In this capacity, she supports a dialogue about the relationship between children’s interests and teachers’ research. Gigi continues to be inspired by the early learning programs of Reggio Emilia, Italy and their deep respect for children’s expressive languages as part of their learning process. She was the project manager for “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit when it was in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2014.

Eileen Hughes is a professor and program director for the Early Childhood Teacher Education Program at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington, where she has worked for the past 10 years. Prior to that, she directed the Early Childhood Education Program at the University of Alaska Anchorage from 1993-2006 and is now a retired professor emerita from UAA. Eileen was a member of the host community for “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit in Portland, Oregon, where it was located in 2012. She has spent time engaging with children, families, teacher educators, and university students in the collaborative study of inquiry-based learning. Eileen’s inspirations in her lifelong journey to understand and interpret the underlying principles of the Reggio Emilia approach continue to advance the study of her own teaching practices and in her collaboration with others in the field.
We would like this annual peer-reviewed issue to be a vehicle that supports the collaboration among teachers and teacher educators by integrating reflection and analysis of the shared and reciprocal research and inquiry of teachers, children, and families that will be featured in every issue. We will invite authors to offer their reflections on their experience, and the consulting editors will also add another layer of analysis while tracing the threads of experiences and concepts shared and offering readers an opportunity to relate what they have learned to their own contexts in order to understand the meaning and implications for their own work. Our goal is to support the work of Reggio-inspired teachers in North America by thinking together in order to generate new thinking, in the hope of reaching a more profound level of understanding.

The process for peer review will be designed in relationship with the values that we are all constructing together, including learning as a process of individual and group construction and supporting the learning processes of children and adults through educational documentation, which includes listening, observation, and interpretation. Our goal is engage teachers, children, families, and community members in order to establish a collaborative partnership for systems change and social justice that recognizes the rights of children to quality education.

We will continue to share with the readers of Innovations our plans for this new peer-reviewed issue, including a call for submissions, throughout this year and next. We welcome your thoughts, suggestions, and ideas as we move forward with this new venture. Send to: judy@reggioalliance.org

Our goal is engage teachers, children, families, and community members in order to establish a collaborative partnership for systems change and social justice that recognizes the rights of children to quality education.

~Judith Allen Kaminsky and Lella Gandini
During the last quarter of 2015, NAREA staff took the responsibility to interpret the scale of Reggio Emilia-inspired contexts in North America. There are many different ways to build understanding of this particular question, and here is our first attempt.

This map of Canada and the United States indicates the number of schools, centers, organizations, and universities represented by individuals who have participated in NAREA initiatives either through membership or registration to professional development in the period 2002 through 2015.

**Summary Points**

- In the United States, there are 2,885 institutions represented from all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam.
- In Canada, there are 283 institutions represented from 9 of 11 provinces.
- In both the United States and Canada, 27% of participating institutions are in the public sector.
- Beyond the United States and Canada, 115 institutions from 37 other countries have participated in NAREA through membership or registration.
Community Networks

Not reflected in the map is NAREA’s awareness of the various network groups that exist within the United States and Canada. These networks are organized in a variety of ways ranging from informal to formal. Informal networks might convene in routine ways for shared book studies or to discuss the ongoing work in classrooms. Formal networks might be incorporated as not-for-profit organizations or projects that craft shared encounters for professional development or shared responsibility for producing work products such as book publishers or architects. The following list reflects a beginning effort in compiling locations where such networks exist. We are open to receiving additional information that may not be listed here.

Albuquerque/Santa Fe, NM
Amherst/Northampton, MA
Atlanta, GA
Boston/Cambridge, MA
Boulder/Denver, CO
Burlington, VT
Calgary/Edmonton, AB
Chicago, IL
Ohio
Detroit/Ann Arbor/E. Lansing, MI
District of Columbia, VA and MD
Durham/Winston-Salem/Greensboro, NC
Greenville/Spartanburg, SC
Honolulu, HI
Houston, TX
Indianapolis, IN
Miami, FL
Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
Monterey County/Salinas, CA
New Jersey
New York/Brooklyn, NY, CT
Owensboro, KY/Henderson, KY/Evansville, IN
Pittsburgh, PA
Portland, OR
Richmond, VA
San Diego, CA
San Francisco, CA
Santa Monica/Los Angeles, CA
Seattle, WA
St. Louis, MO
Toronto, ON
Tucson/Phoenix, AZ
Tulsa, OK
Vancouver, BC

Interest versus Impact

Early reviewers of this information pointed out that the data reflected interest, rather than impact. While we would like to argue that such sweeping interest in a period of 25 years (since the first groups of North American educators began traveling to Reggio Emilia) is in fact impact, we agree that much more is needed to more fully describe the impact Reggio Emilia has had in the United States and Canada.

If you are interested in offering suggestions as to how we might begin to develop a relevant story of the impact of Reggio Emilia’s municipal education project in North America, please contact Elizabeth Cady: elizabeth@reggioalliance.org. The field of early childhood education is fast changing, and for those who wish to advocate and advance an image of children, adults, and education in keeping with Reggio Emilia’s principles and values, the time is now to build a strong contribution to the public debate of what constitutes exceptional quality in education.
Resources

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. 802-862-8399 info@learningmaterialsworkshop.com www.learningmaterialswork.com

North American Study Groups in Reggio Emilia, Italy
Contact: Amelia Gambetti
agambetti@reggiochildren.it

International Professional Development Initiatives in Reggio Emilia, Italy
April 17–22, 2016
International Study Group – The Reggio Emilia Approach to Education
Contact: Reggio Children
www.reggiochildren.it

Contacts for Reggio Children
NAREA
North American Reggio Emilia Alliance
reggioalliance.org

Amelia Gambetti
Reggio Children international liaison for consultancy to schools
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Lella Gandini
Reggio Children liaison in the U.S. for dissemination of the Reggio Emilia approach
lellagandini@gmail.com

Angela Ferrario
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aferrario@comcast.net

“The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” Exhibit
January 22–May 15, 2016
Miami, FL
Hosted by L’Atelier School in collaboration with the Florida Reggio Collaborative, the exhibit is located at The Shops at Sunset Place in South Miami and accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.
Contact: Candice Acevedo
floridareggiocollaborative@gmail.com
www.flreggiocollaborative.org

June 23–November 13, 2016
Toronto, ON
Hosted by the Ontario Reggio Association, the exhibit will located at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel and be accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.
Contact: Karyn Callaghan
karyncallaghan@gmail.com
ontarioreggioassociation.ca

June–August 2017
Ann Arbor, MI
Hosted by University of Michigan Children’s Centers and University of Michigan-Dearborn College of Health, Education, and Human Services, the exhibit will be accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.
Contact: Jennie McAlpine
mcalpinj@umich.edu

January–May 2018
Seattle, WA
Hosted by WA Collective for Children as Citizens, the exhibit will be accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.
Contact: Paula Jones
paula@ourbeginning.com

June–November 2018
Boston, MA
Hosted by the Boston Area Reggio Inspired Collaborative, the exhibit will be accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.
Contact: Kelly Pellagrini
kelly@charlestownnursery.org

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

Discount for NAREA members at all initiatives listed

NAREA Brick by Brick Series – Reggio-Inspired Practice in Diverse Contexts and Diverse Communities
Providence, RI
April 9, 2016
Speakers: Lella Gandini, Barbara Acton, and Rebecca Love
Contact: NAREA, reggioalliance.org

“The Wonder of Learning - The Hundred Languages of Children” Exhibit Initiatives
Miami, FL
April 22-23, 2016
Dialogues on Education: The Reggio Emilia Approach, the Montessori Method, and Experiences Beyond School Age
Speakers: Amelia Gambetti, Beth MacDonald, and Jennifer Kesselring
May 7, 2016
Traces of the Exhibit: Change and Evolution of a Growing Collective of Schools
Contact: Candice Acevedo
floridareggiocollaborative@gmail.com
www.flreggiocollaborative.org

Twelfth NAREA Summer Conference – Engaging Children, Families, and Educators in a Spiral of Learning: Embracing Openness and Uncertainty
Toronto, ON
June 23–25, 2016
Speakers: Moira Nicolosi and Giovanna Cagliari
Contact: NAREA, reggioalliance.org

Toronto, ON
November 11-13, 2016
Speakers: Amelia Gambetti and Lella Gandini
Contact: Karyn Callaghan
karyncallaghan@gmail.com
ontarioreggioassociation.ca

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” (Eating Beautifully) will focus on beautiful foods, recipes, and environments in your schools. We invite you to send submissions for these new features and share the story and beauty of your work with young children. Contact Patty Randall for submission guidelines, patty@reggioalliance.org

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 submitting jpg or tiff files of high-resolution photographs (300 dpi @ 8” x 10”) to Judith Allen Kaminsky, judy@reggioalliance.org

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.

Visit reggioalliance.org for regularly updated conferences and initiatives calendar

Image Credit
Image on back cover courtesy of Reggio Children
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

Innovations
In Early Education: The International Reggio Emilia Exchange