

### Guidelines and Requirements for Submitted Manuscripts

Those whose proposals are approved must submit their manuscript by December 31, 2017. When submitting a manuscript to *Innovations*, please follow the following formatting and submission guidelines:

- Write in an informal, conversational style rather than in an academic style, characteristic of university term papers. Manuscripts written in active voice vs. passive voice are preferred.
- Submit unformatted, double-spaced manuscript in an electronic Word file in 12-point type. Typical manuscript length is 3,000–4,000 words.
- Include the name of the author(s) as well as title, affiliation, and history of interest in the Reggio Emilia approach. In addition, each author is asked to submit a

thumbnail photograph (head and shoulders, 1.25" wide x 1.5" high, 300 dpi in original JPG or TIFF file).

- Support manuscript with photographs and drawings/representations. Photographs should be submitted in high-resolution images (8" x 10", 100% @ 300 dpi in original JPG or TIFF file). Drawings/representations should also be submitted electronically in JPEG or TIFF files. Authors must submit written permission for all photographs from parents or legal guardians. The NAREA Photographic Release form is available upon request.
- Provide accurate and complete information for references and resources formatted in APA style.

### Peer-Review Process

The peer-review process for the September 2018 issue of *Innovations* will be based on that of the September 2017 issue. The *Innovations* editors and consulting editors will be considering possible revisions to last year's

process in the coming months. Details of the September 2018 issue peer-review process will be published in the September 2017 issue of *Innovations* and posted on the NAREA website.

### REFERENCES

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## The Eighth NAREA Winter Conference – Cultivating the Strong Potential of All Children: Growing a Community Vision for Education

By Patty Randall



Patty Randall is the NAREA professional development and social media coordinator and director of educational practices at Peachtree Presbyterian Preschool in Atlanta, GA.

Before the Eighth NAREA Winter Conference began on March 9-11, 2017 in Durham, NC, the NAREA board co-wrote a “solidarity statement,” which was meant to be a reflection on the current political landscape in North Carolina. The statement gave visibility to NAREA’s commitment to diversity and was posted on the NAREA website and Facebook page and on the local host community’s exhibit website.

The North American Reggio Emilia Alliance “is a diverse community of advocates and educators actively promoting and defending the rights of children, families, and teachers of all cultures through a collaboration of colleagues inspired by the Reggio Emilia experience.” This experience is one that embodies inclusion and respect for diversity.

“The Wonder of Learning - The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit, Reggio Emilia, Italy, has been hosted by communities across North America since 2008 and has been challenging us to reflect on our own culture. Plans to host the exhibit are often made years in advance. Presently, the exhibit is in North Carolina. A group of educators in North Carolina made the commitment to be hosts before the state legislature made its controversial ruling that refuses to recognize gender diversity.

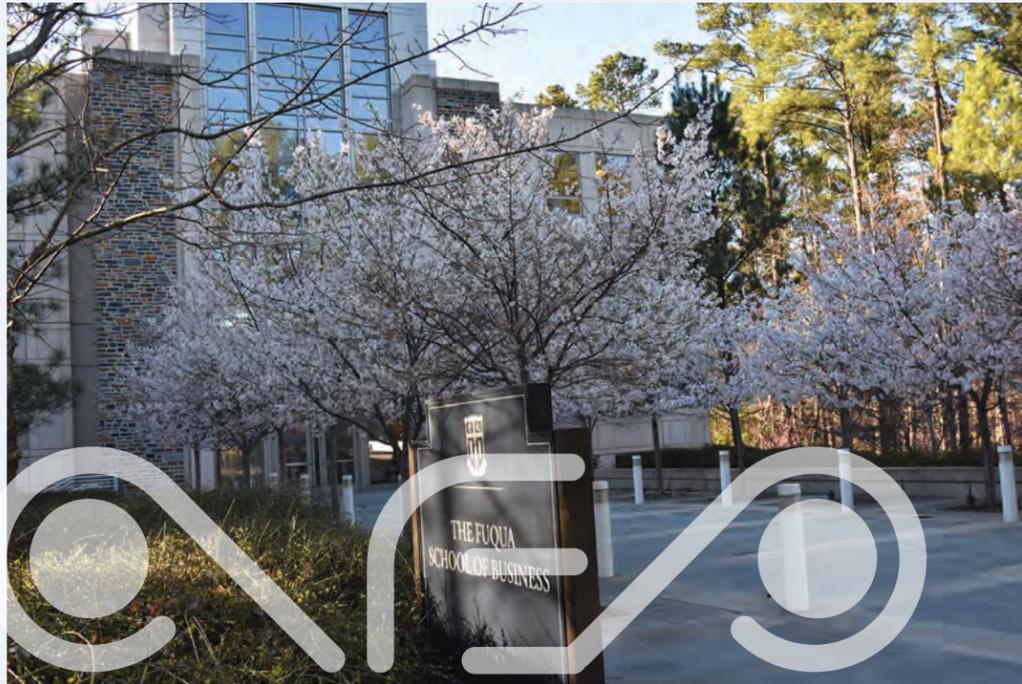
NAREA is aware that some organizations that had planned conferences and other similar events that were to take place in North Carolina have supported a call to boycott and cancelled their events as a way of making a statement of protest to the state government. We agree with the intention of the boycott and also realize that there are many ways to participate in advocating for social justice.

NAREA will continue with plans for the exhibit and related professional learning events as a way to show an alternative that respects rights and diversity. We have vetted our venues to ensure they have policies in line with our values. The children, families, and educators in North Carolina deserve the opportunity to be inspired to continue to build a different kind of culture, as much as do those in the many other communities that have hosted the exhibit. Perhaps now more than ever, dedications to dialogue and vibrant evidence of what is possible are needed.

With this statement setting the stage, the conference began! The beautiful Geneen Auditorium in the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University served as the venue for all three

Thank you for bearing everything you bear on your shoulders with dignity and courage and the optimism that lives in the hearts of every educator we have ever met. So, while we know we live in a society that finds it easy to overlook the contributions and value of early childhood education and those who have chosen it as a profession, when we are together, we should at least feel solidarity and the respect that we share for one another . . .

—Barbara Acton and Margie Cooper



days, and the Sanford School of Public Policy provided space for breakout sessions on the last day. We were happy to welcome over 290 participants from 29 U.S. states, one Canadian province, Ontario, and four countries, the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Italy. The participants included a variety of educators; some were new to the Reggio approach and others had been studying the Reggio approach for a long time. This diverse group participated in an ongoing dialogue with unique perspectives over the course of the three days.

The two speakers from Reggio Emilia, Italy were both in the United States for the very first time. Elena Maccaferri, *pedagogista*, and Elisabetta Rasori, *atelierista*, joined interpreter Leslie Morrow each morning to give presentations and to encourage exchange between the participants.

The program opened with NAREA co-chairs Barbara Acton and Margie Cooper, who welcomed participants by saying,

We wanted to take the opportunity to thank you—really, really thank you for being here

with us. Thank you for your choice of professions. Thank you for bearing everything you bear on your shoulders with dignity and courage and the optimism that lives in the hearts of every educator we have ever met. So, while we know we live in a society that finds it easy to overlook the contributions and value of early childhood education and those who have chosen it as a profession, when we are together, we should at least feel solidarity and the respect that we share for one another—thank you, thank you, thank you.

Barbara and Margie recognized the advocacy of participants and expressed appreciation for their work with children, families, and colleagues and for being carriers of hope for the future. They explained the conference would be an opportunity to share in continued scholarship.



Cesanne Berry, Marcia Brooks, Sara Orphanides, Sharon Palsha, and Carmen Raynor of the Durham exhibit host committee continued the welcome by sharing a visitor's guide created by children from local Reggio-inspired schools. They shared images drawn by the children of downtown Durham and Duke University, along with the children's commentary. It was a privilege to have the local children "join" us for the opening moments, combined with the voices of the children in Reggio, which accompanied us throughout the three days.

Greetings continued as Elena, Elisabetta, and Leslie were welcomed to the stage. The Reggio speakers began with a plenary session entitled

"An Educational Community: The Educational Project of the Town of Reggio Emilia and the Culture of the *Atelier*," which offered a historical foundation for the values of the educational project in Reggio Emilia. Elena shared,

When we talk about declaring our image of the child, it is an image that is a social construction; it determines the choices and strategies that we make for the children and the places we choose to use for children. This idea has to be constantly renewed. It conditions the way we relate to them. It also conditions our ideas about learning and about school. It conditions the way we involve and engage families through participation. There is a fairly common image everywhere of a child as vulnerable and in need of protection. We've tried to stick with the idea of citizens who can be protagonists of their experience. We try to build contexts that challenge children's potentials. . . . We have to realize that competence is developed under certain conditions, meaning in relation to others.

To illustrate, Elena and Elisabetta shared a video from the daily life in the school with Simone and Tomaso, a child with special rights. After





the video, Elena asked for comments, suggestions, or key words. A discussion followed about the proximal zone of development and the role of the teacher in “creating contexts that are not only physically immersive, but emotionally immersive where body and mind are together and the adult who comes with you is your biggest fan.” Later, Elisabetta shared a presentation entitled “The Culture and Identity of the *Atelier*,” which was grounded in the historical background of Reggio Emilia and continues to evolve in the schools and centers of the municipality.

“The opportunity to learn about Reggio in Italian was such a phenomenal experience! I was so honored to be a part of it all.” -Eighth NAREA Winter Conference participant

The organization of the days followed a rhythm, beginning each morning with plenary sessions offered by Elena and Elisabetta, followed by interaction with the audience and lunch, and concluding with opportunities for discourse and exchange. Two afternoons were filled with breakout sessions and one afternoon was comprised of school and exhibit tours. The afternoon sessions were designed with exchange in mind, a request from past NAREA conference participants.

On the first afternoon, four sessions were offered, and participants could choose one. Session one was titled “Research as a Strategy

for Professional Development for New Teachers, *Atelieristas*, and Pedagogists.” It was offered by Elena and Elisabetta and was filled to capacity. Session two was an opportunity for dialogue between conference participants connected to particular affinities and was facilitated by NAREA board members Jeanne Goldhaber and Jennifer Kesselring. A third session focused on the concept of community vision. It included discussion supported by the *Innovations* article “Participation and Community.” NAREA board members Karyn Callaghan and Brenda Fyfe facilitated this session. Session four encouraged discussion supported by the *Innovations* article “Investing in Early Childhood’ Research Project: A Conversation with Claudia Giudici.” NAREA board members Barbara Acton and Susan Redmond facilitated this last session.

“I am new to Reggio Emilia inspired teaching. I was pleased to get a rich introduction to the teaching style and to listen to the experts explain the process.” -Eighth NAREA Winter Conference participant

The second day was grounded in the quality of everyday contexts that “are intelligent and empathic with the ways children learn.” Elena shared a video of a three-day professional development workshop for teachers connected to movement and dance. She said, “These are small examples of why it is important for teachers to have this experience and relation-



ship that helps them inject more awareness in their *progettazione*, so they can go back to the schools and try to begin experiences with the children.” Elisabetta continued the thread by sharing the way educators look back at knowledge developed previously in order to create new contexts for the current year: “It was a time involving lots of different experiences within the hundred languages.” After the presentations, Elena and Elisabetta encouraged the participants to ask questions and comment on what they had encountered during the conference. The openness of the speakers and participants became characteristic of this conference. It was an opportunity for professional growth, not only for the audience but for the speakers as well.

“I’ve attended several NAREA conferences. It’s always special to have the opportunity to listen to the Italian educators. This time, it seemed to me that the educators were more forthcoming in offering answers to questions, in addition to discussing in an open-ended way.” -Eighth NAREA Winter Conference participant

“I walked away with a wonderful understanding of letting children guide and drive their learning. I also realized the importance of documenting the learning process. I enjoyed learning from the two main speakers.” -Eighth NAREA Winter Conference participant

After a lovely lunch under the blooming cherry blossoms on Duke University’s campus, participants boarded buses to begin school



tours. Carolina Friends School, Lakewood Avenue Children’s School, Our PlayHouse Preschool Durham, and Children First Preschool all opened their doors to welcome participants. Once again, we witnessed an attitude of sharing and solidarity among educators. We encountered schools at varying points in their journey, willing to expose their work, and to welcome the participation of visitors, and for that, all the participants were very grateful.

It's not a model that can be replicated, and it's not simply a list of initiatives proposed to the parents and the community. It's a dynamic process; therefore, it takes its shape from each particular school and the families of each particular school . . . Each school chooses its own way of carrying out participation.

-Elena Maccaferri

"I enjoyed seeing the schools. I felt like everyone was so kind, helpful, and eager to offer guidance. I look forward to learning more and hopefully bringing the inspiration into my classroom." -Eighth NAREA Winter Conference participant

"I enjoyed being connected to other educators and felt hopeful about finding out about Reggio-inspired public schools in surrounding states. I toured the Lakewood Avenue School and The Durham Early School. It's always helpful and interesting to see how other schools do things and work creatively with their restrictions or challenges." -Eighth NAREA Winter Conference participant

In addition to school visits on the second day, participants had the opportunity to encounter the exhibit, "The Wonder of Learning - The Hundred Languages of Children." The exhibit was located in Northgate Mall in two storefronts, one next to a beloved carousel. The exhibit was open throughout the conference, offering ample time for multiple encounters.

The local host committee offered two cultural events in the evenings. On Thursday evening, the Scrap Exchange opened its doors to participants, offering a chance to explore and shop in this creative reuse center. Approximately 40 conference attendees explored the center, whose mission is to promote creativity, environmental awareness, and community. To add to the festivities, a local barbeque food truck was onsite, serving up local fare. After the conference day on Friday, The Little School of Hillsborough held a reception and school tour, which included a specially prepared menu created by local chefs. Over 120 educators joined

the faculty of The Little School for an evening of beautiful food, fellowship, and exchange.

In addition to the evening events, The Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University and the Sarah P. Duke Gardens were open for self-guided tours on Saturday and were free to educators with a NAREA Winter Conference badge. Groups of educators, who were attending the conference together, used these cultural opportunities to build collegiality and continue the day's conversation.

"The schools were amazing! I especially enjoyed The Little School evening reception. The school looks like they have a good sense of community and practice what is best for the children." -Eighth NAREA Winter Conference participant

The final day of the conference opened with a session entitled "Participation as a Common Good for a Permanent Educational Culture." Picking up aspects from the previous days—the culture of the *atelier*, aesthetic dimension, *progettazione*, and the role of the teacher—Elena and Elisabetta shared examples connected to the fundamental value of participation. Elena said,

It's not a model that can be replicated, and it's not simply a list of initiatives proposed to the parents and the community. It's a dynamic process; therefore, it takes its shape from each particular school and the families of each particular school . . . Each school chooses its own way of carrying out participation.

The session concluded with a discussion between the speakers and participants during which Elena shared,

Malaguzzi used to talk about how stories run along a very delicate silk thread. We are confronting a difficult period, but we are helped by the tenacity of teachers who, through their hard work, continue to guarantee the quality of service.

Her words seemed profoundly meaningful as the collective group of tenacious educators prepared to return to their respective contexts.

"The 'Documentation of Progettazione' presentation on Friday morning and the 'Participation for a Common Good' presentation on Saturday by Elena Maccaferri and Elisabetta Rasori were superb. The buzzword 'innovative' describes their research and theory building. I am inspired by the ideas and explorative research by Elena and the follow up by Elisabetta with reflections on outcomes and results. Their two perspectives as *pedagogista* and *atelierista* were complementary—like an expansive conversation." -Eighth NAREA Winter Conference participant

It was with genuine delight and gratefulness that our colleagues from Reggio Emilia, Italy, Elena Maccaferri and Elisabetta Rasori, were welcomed to the Winter Conference. We are thankful for interpreter Leslie Morrow's untiring efforts during the conference. We offer our deep appreciation to the educators and families from Carolina Friends School, Lakewood Avenue Children's School, Our PlayHouse Preschool Durham, Children First Preschool, and The Little School of Hillsborough for all

"The 'Documentation of Progettazione' presentation on Friday morning and the 'Participation for a Common Good' presentation on Saturday by Elena Maccaferri and Elisabetta Rasori were superb. The buzzword "innovative" describes their research and theory building. I am inspired by the ideas and explorative research by Elena and the follow up by Elisabetta with reflections on outcomes and results. Their two perspectives as *pedagogista* and *atelierista* were complementary—like an expansive conversation."

-Eighth NAREA Winter Conference participant

they did to prepare for and host the conference. It is our hope that the time spent together at Duke University—participating in scholarly research of the Reggio Emilia educational project, and promoting and defending the rights of children, families, and teachers of all cultures—will serve as support for everyone who attended. The positive experience of the conference reflects the last line in the NAREA solidarity statement, "Perhaps now more than ever, dedications to dialogue and vibrant evidence of what is possible are needed."

#### Image Credit

Images courtesy of Patty Randall and Elizabeth Cady