

# Call for Proposals

## 2026 Peer-Reviewed Issue

### THE AESTHETIC DIMENSION IN LEARNING: POSSIBILITIES FOR BEAUTY, WONDER, AND ETHICS IN EDUCATION

#### BACKGROUND

From the inception of the Reggio Emilia educational project, Loris Malaguzzi and his colleagues understood aesthetics as an essential aspect of learning. As atelierista Vea Vecchi (2010) described it, the *aesthetic dimension* is “a significant, fundamental presence” that is exemplified by “an attitude of care and attention for the things we do, a desire for meaning; it is curiosity and wonder; it is the opposite of indifference and carelessness, of conformity, of absence of participation and feeling” (p. 5). She further suggests that “if aesthetics fosters sensibility and the ability for connecting things far removed from each other, and if learning takes place through new connections between disparate elements, then aesthetics can be considered an important activator for learning” (p. 9). Indeed, in her discussion of progettazione, Stefania Giamminuti (2024) says, “We dissent with those who suggest that aesthetic care is superfluous in early childhood settings. The aesthetic dimension . . . is indispensable” (p. 147).

In a chapter entitled “Is Beauty a Way of Knowing?” in *The Hundred Languages of Children*, Margie Cooper (2012) describes the aesthetic dimension as a “crucial human endowment that both urges and satisfies humans along their particular, unique course of development” (p. 296). Reggio Emilia is an educational approach that understands aesthetics as essential to learning, an approach in which Loris Malaguzzi conceptualized aesthetics as “not a separate dimension from experience but rather an element of it” (Cooper, p. 299). Other thinkers have also been influential in the appreciation for the role of the aesthetic dimension in education that characterizes the Reggio Emilia educational project. In discussions of aesthetics, educators from Reggio Emilia make reference to thinkers from diverse contexts, representing an array of disciplines—including Italian architect Tullio Zini (Rinaldi, 2021), British anthropologist Gregory Bateson, German philosopher Immanuel Kant, American psychologist Jerome Bruner (Vecchi, 2010), and Canadian artist/philosopher Erin Manning (Giamminuti, 2024).

The call for proposals for the 2026 peer-review issue of *Innovations* asks authors to consider the role of aesthetics in the Reggio Emilia educational project and in schools that are inspired by Reggio Emilia, with support from a question posed by Vecchi (2010):

Is it so mistaken to believe in the possibility of learning in which wonder, ethics, beauty, pleasure and rigour are the basis of knowledge? (p. 25)

Vecchi’s question asks us to reconsider the ways in which teaching is often done, with pre-determined goals, with a focus on educational standards and normalizations, and with the urge for efficiency that is increasingly a hallmark of contemporary education.

- In a society that embraces democracy and democratic engagement, what role should aesthetics play in educating for democratic citizenship?
- How does aesthetics emerge in and have influence on children’s experiences in schools?
- What might it look like for teacher formation and professional development to include an aesthetic dimension?
- In which ways can schools avoid the “risk of a superficial aestheticism, an aesthetic façade” (Vecchi, 2010, p. 11) in the effort to develop the aesthetic dimension in education?
- What is the disposition of the teacher who understands and embraces the aesthetic dimension as a necessarily ethical aspect of their work?
- How can the aesthetic dimension that characterizes education in Reggio Emilia be brought into dialogue with other considerations of aesthetics, across disciplines?

## THE RATIONALE FOR A PEER-REVIEWED ISSUE AND DESCRIPTION

To include more diverse voices in an increasingly democratic dialogue among early childhood educators, *Innovations* publishes one peer-reviewed issue annually. This issue includes articles meant to support collaboration among educators by integrating interpretation and examples within reciprocal research and inquiry of teachers, children, and families. In addition, the peer-reviewed issue includes reflections related to each article, written by one of the consulting editors with the goal of inviting readers to relate what they have read to their own contexts. Our intention is to support the work of Reggio-inspired educators in North America by thinking together through deeper and more complex interpretations and reflections of our work and that of our colleagues.

*Innovations* endeavors to reflect a view of learning as a process of individual and group construction and to support the learning processes of children and adults through educational documentation, which includes listening, observation, and interpretation. Our goal is to establish a collaborative partnership among educators, children, families, and community members for systems change that recognizes the rights of children to equitable and just education.

*Innovations* values education “based on mutual respect, valuing the diversity of identities, competencies, and knowledge” (Preschools and Infant-toddler Centres – Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, p. 7). For the peer-reviewed edition and in the full richness and spirit of Loris Malaguzzi’s concept of the hundred languages, we encourage proposals from all early childhood communities. This includes those who have been traditionally marginalized. We affirm and elevate voices of historically resilient communities, including Indigenous people, immigrants, and descendants of enslaved people.

## PROPOSALS FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Interested authors must submit a 500–700 word proposal for their proposed manuscript to NAREA (narea@reggioalliance.org) by **December 1, 2025**. Those submitting will receive responses regarding approval in early January. Authors must include a list of a minimum of four references that will be used to support the manuscript, written in APA reference style. This should include publications, both historical and contemporary, from Reggio Emilia educators and/or educators inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach. Manuscript deadline is **February 15, 2026**.

## NAREA WEBSITE

Please see NAREA’s website for additional proposal requirements and for a reference list with potential citations: [www.reggioalliance.org/innovations](http://www.reggioalliance.org/innovations).

## REFERENCES

- Cooper, M. (2012). Is beauty a way of knowing? In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia experience in transformation* (3rd ed., pp. 295-302). Praeger.
- Giamminuti, S. (2024). The value of artfulness and an ethic of making. In S. Giamminuti, P. Cagliari, C. Giudici, & P. Strozzi (Eds.), *The role of the pedagoga in Reggio Emilia: Voices and ideas for a dialectic educational experience* (pp. 127–166). Routledge.
- Preschools and Infant-toddler Centres – Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. (2010). *Indications – Preschools and infant-toddler centres of the municipality of Reggio Emilia*. Reggio Children.
- Rinaldi, C. (2021). *In dialogue with Reggio Emilia: Listening, researching and learning* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Vecchi, V. (2010). *Art and creativity in Reggio Emilia: Exploring the role and potential of ateliers in early childhood education*. Routledge.

### NOTE:

1. Previously published manuscripts will not be accepted
2. More than one proposal from the same author group will not be accepted

Please contact the office for further information: [narea@reggioalliance.org](mailto:narea@reggioalliance.org)  
Or visit the NAREA website at: [www.reggioalliance.org/resources/innovations/](http://www.reggioalliance.org/resources/innovations/)

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