Inspiring News and Events

From the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota

Volume 11, Issue 2 | Spring 2024

Inside this Issue

Editor's Introduction

Lani Shapiro

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota Newsletter.

In the Fundamentals column, we continue introducing central principles of the Reggio Approach for people new to Reggio-inspired work. To Image of the Child, Teacher as Researcher and *formazione*, we highlight a fourth fundamental principle, **Documentation**, which can serve as a lens as you read this issue.

In **The Influence of Collaboration on Understanding,** Inez Hohn shares an experience as a lab-school student teacher. She synthesizes extensive project documentation to reflect and draw others into dialogue about her work as a teacher and children's experience thinking together about maps. With permission from Tom Bedard, we're reprinting his blog post titled, **The Life of a Dead Tree Trunk in the Classroom**. This documentation emerged from a question: how are the possibilities for play affected when a particular material is placed in various parts of the classroom? Without a predetermined end in mind, he captured and reflected on traces over time. The resulting documentation presents an image of children as strong and resourceful, makes visible a child revisiting and sharing their work and highlights the use of multiple languages. Inez (a new teacher) and Tom (a seasoned teacher), by documenting their work and reflecting on their process, invite us to enter the dialogue.

The article, **Getting to Belonging, Part Four,** from Rie Gilsdorf and Christy Spencer, also invokes documentation as it describes an iterative process involving adults thinking together. They modeled the process of documentation as they gathered and examined traces from two Network events, *Let's Talk* and *Doc Lab*. They thought together, generated new ideas and subsequently wrote about their process.

Note the Loose Parts Lab column, which provides a busy schedule for coming months.

Regular features identify scholarship opportunities and a call for proposals and resources. Learn more about the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA) and [Reggio-inspired job postings](#).

As always, we are grateful for all the volunteer time and effort, seen and unseen, that goes into the work of the Network and to all of the newsletter contributors for their generosity, time and collaboration in making their thinking visible.

Fundamentals: *Documentation*

The Reggio Approach is a complex system of thought and practice with many dynamic entry points that interact; it is not a method, program or curriculum. ([Key Principles](#))

Documentation is central to the Reggio Approach, a fundamental tool.

> An essential component of a Reggio-inspired program is to make visible the learning of both children and adults. This happens through documentation, in which the process of learning is recorded through note-taking, dialogue, photographs, video and other means of transcribing the interactions of children with the environment, with adults and with each other. Through this process the learning can be studied, reflected upon and re-entered; ideas can be brought in to add variety or complexity to renew the experience.
>
> More than mere "evidence" of completed work, documentation in the Reggio tradition becomes part of a reflective loop: it makes initial ideas visible, creates access points for new participants and new dialogue and paves the way for fresh ideas–which will, in turn, be documented and incorporated into the growing body of thought. In Reggio-inspired practice, documentation helps children grow their ideas; it also opens up an avenue of participation for parents, elevates the professional discourse among teachers, and serves as a source for advocacy in the world of public policy.

[Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota - Seeing Children](#)

Documentation is not limited to making visible what already exists: it also makes things exist precisely because it makes them visible and therefore possible.

Rinaldi, C. 2006 In Dialogue with Reggio

We tend to believe that observation and documentation can be objective, but the Reggio tradition acknowledges that we are always, whether or not we are aware of it, selecting what to pay attention to and what to ignore. Documentation is never neutral. That's why it's important to share it in a tentative and ongoing process and invite other perspectives.

The Influence of Collaboration on Understanding

Inez Hohn

Inez Hohn student-taught at the Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education, the lab school at South Dakota State University. She now teaches Kindergarten at Freeman Academy in Freeman, South Dakota. Inez enjoys finding new ways to engage her students each day as she learns from them. She recently received the Early Childhood Student of the Year, awarded by South Dakota AEYC.

Introduction

How do children learn, not only from experience, but also from each other? How do children co-construct meaning? As a student teacher, these questions informed my work as I facilitated an inquiry of towns and maps with a small group of four and five-year-old children that spanned two months. The four children possessed varying dispositions, skills and background knowledge, which they brought to the investigation.

Map Making

In our initial mapmaking, the children illustrated scenes and buildings that were important to them. Their maps reveal how they viewed the world and what they thought of when imagining a map. They included places we had talked about; for example, Margaret focused on her house, a playground, roads and stop lights. Oliver included houses, farms and playgrounds. Some had roads while others did not. This presented the opportunity to look into how roads are represented on maps.

While there are roads in Margaret's map, she focused more on scenic aspects such as houses and a playground.

Oliver's map is a specific scene which includes grass, trees and farm buildings.

An Exchange of Ideas, Resources and Actions

We continued with an exchange of ideas. To elevate the idea of roads on maps, I brought in a variety of road maps and posed ideas and questions. The children responded and crafted interpretations. In turn, they located towns and used their fingers to trace roads, pretending to drive from place to place. They associated roads with traveling and used past experiences to make sense of characteristics of roads, such as how they connect places and that the curvatures matter for smooth driving. They brought their experience to the discussion and in doing so talked about places they had traveled, referencing the maps in front of us. The conversation focused on their hometown, Brookings. They branched out to talk about places they had traveled, such as Sioux Falls, a major

nearby city.

When we revisited map-making, the children focused on the roads. The children took what they noticed from examining the published map and transformed their maps to include more prominent roads. I noticed a deeper understanding in their discussion of road function and representation on maps. From this point, all the children added roads to their maps. One map focused on having straight roads and the child resisted using circular and curvy roads. Their reasoning was to make sure people traveling through the town didn't get sick from all the loops.

"The roads are straight, no circles for roads." -Oliver

"It's a straight-line road and then you go left and right. When people are walking, they have stop signs." -Cora

They focused on including spacing between roads and logical paths to ensure that travel from place to place was possible. They took these ideas directly from the experience of their fingers driving on the printed road maps. Travel became the purpose of roads.

Margaret made sure to make all the roads connected for smooth travel.

Oliver focused on having straight roads with corners so there were no loops.

As we walked around campus, I pointed out the use of sidewalks to travel. The children made the connection that sidewalks were similar to roads. Henry labeled the sidewalks as "walking roads," which opened up another meaning-making conversation. The group noticed the sidewalks as college students walked past them. They contrasted walking and driving in their analogies.

We had some experience with 3-D maps when we used Google maps to get a street view of places in our town. We changed our perspective by switching between street view and aerial view, which allowed us to get a better idea of locations. To navigate our walk, we referenced a 2-D map of the SDSU campus in which the buildings

were drawn to appear three-dimensional. They explored their surroundings making connections between where they were and their location on the map. They again followed the pathways with their fingers. This time, they traced our walking journey. The children noticed the aerial view and realized the connection between sidewalks in aerial view and the same sidewalks in street view. The children's conversations deepened over time. Their understanding of maps evolved, highlighting their growing understanding of the concepts of travel, how travel flows, the purpose of roads and sidewalks and finally how they are represented.

Meaning-Making

Through these interactions and exchanges, children's perspectives shifted. Still working independently, they created a third map, increasingly aware of each other's efforts. Their experience of finger tracing the road maps, their campus walk and what they learned from each other was evident in their third map, which included more elaborate buildings and roads with more connections. They focused on the pathways that connected places and highlighted movement between places. Then, the children worked to solve the problem of representing buildings that fit between connected roads.
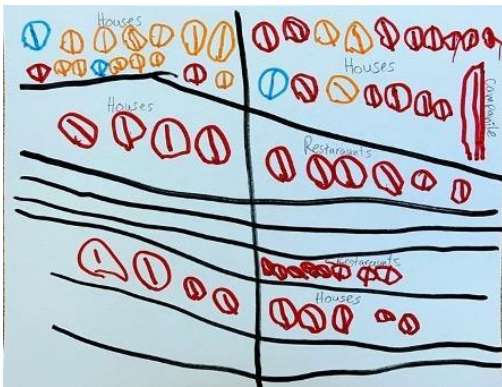
Margaret drew the roads first, focusing on leaving room in between them for buildings.
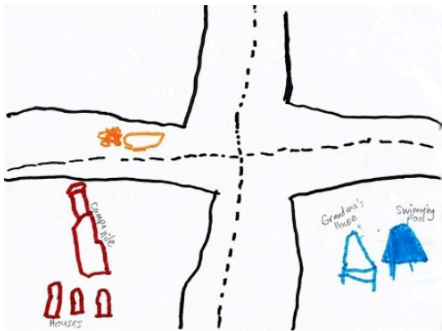

Oliver created an intersection which left room for buildings.

In these drawings, I saw the give and take between their experiences and their growth in knowledge. When I revisited and reflected on this inquiry process, I found that each child influenced the others through common themes, such as landmarks, representing roads, and including space for buildings and homes.

The children's ideas about maps developed as they participated in activities, drawing and conversations. They included the purpose, flow and visual representations that are apparent in maps and formed their own versions. Through each step, they made sense of their experiences as they constructed together what maps meant to them. Although they developed individual interpretations, their experience deepened as they collaborated.

Collaboration

This inquiry continued for another three weeks. As the project progressed, I called them to work together on parts of the town.
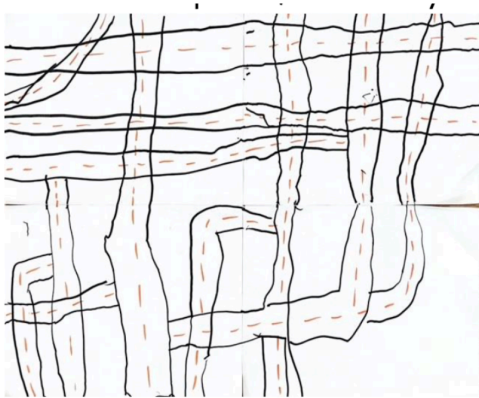

The children collaboratively drew a new map that they later built into a three-dimensional town.

<u>Reflection on My Learning</u>
I reflected on our inquiry project and noticed a process had unfolded. I brought information in the form of activities, materials and experiences and the children made meaning. At the same time, the children brought their ideas to the conversation and formed meaning from what their peers shared. I then crafted my plans to fit what I saw and heard from the group. This shifted the path of our inquiry and sharpened my attention to what the children said and did, ultimately allowing me to better support their engagement and enrich their learning.

The children learned to collaborate through this inquiry. I, too, collaborated, creating an idea map (below) with my mentor that outlined aspects of our journey. The graphic provided a visual representation of our process, promoting further reflection.
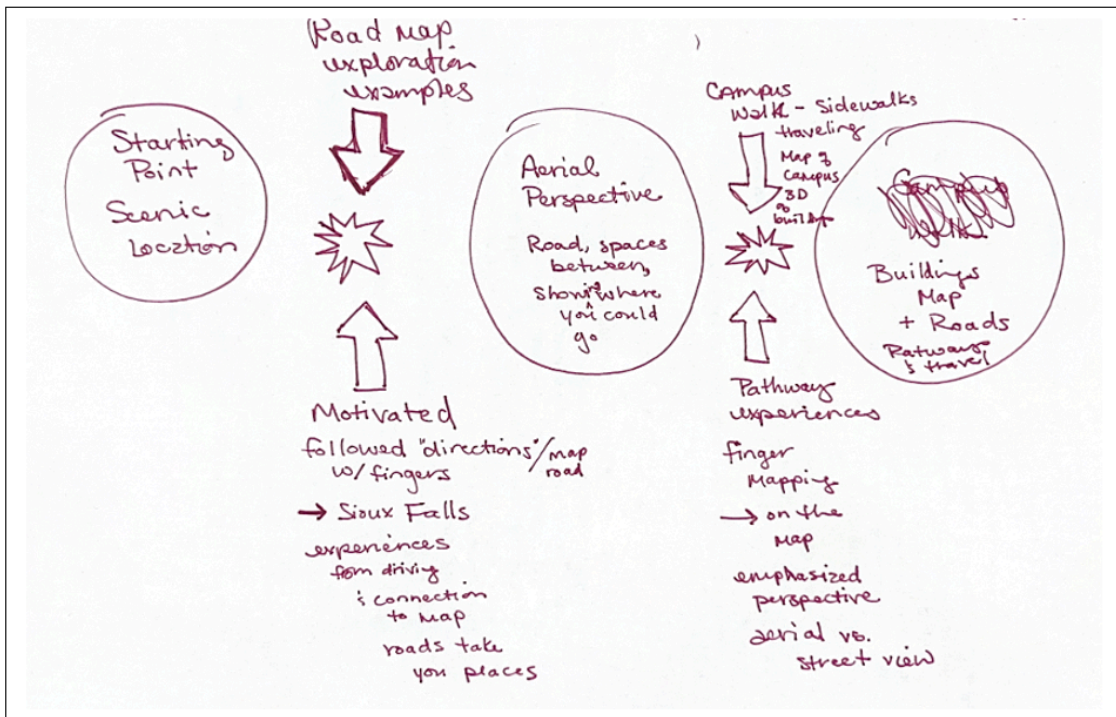
I found a deeper understanding of the interactions that occurred between the children and I, including the energy

bursts that occurred among us. When I pay close attention, I can see the growth of children's thinking more clearly and respond to it.

# The Life of a Dead Tree Trunk in the Classroom

Tom Bedard

Now retired, Tom Bedard, M.Ed. has worked in early childhood education since 1986. He has taught thousands of children representing diverse backgrounds and abilities, from infants to preschoolers. His particular interest has been to promote and analyze how children explore the area devoted to sensory play, to better understand their curiosity and competence in all areas of development. He has presented locally, nationally and internationally. Tom was the first early childhood teacher to be a finalist in the Minnesota Teacher of the Year program.

In a way, this post is a sequel to my previous post about the possibilities for play in a provocation I called the Swamp. The environment helped determine the possibilities. And by environment, I meant the process of setting up the provocation by me; I meant the children and the curiosity and imagination they brought to their investigations; and I meant the materials themselves, which begged to be explored.

This post is an experiment to see how the possibilities of play unfolded when just one of the materials offered to the children got placed in other parts of the room. The object and its potential I would like to examine is a piece of tree trunk from a tree I cut down in my yard.
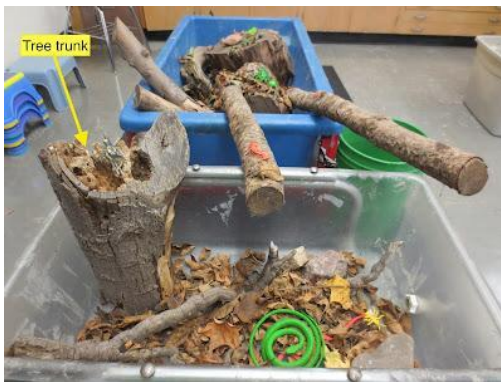
As part of the swamp, the tree trunk was a loose part that could be used as a place where some of the plastic animals could find a home. (If you look closely in the picture above, there is a plastic grasshopper on the tree trunk.)

And because it was a loose part, it did not have to stay in the table. In the picture below, the child lifted the tree trunk out of the table and was about to drop it on the floor.

In a way, he was deconstructing the swamp by piling the pieces of wood on the floor. But at the same time, he was constructing his own collection of wood by using the floor as an open platform to pile.

After the swamp, I moved the tree trunk to the housekeeping area to see how the children would use it in their play and explorations. I placed it on the shelf by the window and by some living plants.

In the picture above, the child noticed that the tree trunk had a hole in it. She found a stick from the bowl of sticks on the bottom shelf and used it to explore the hole. By the way, the hole was an entrance to an old bird nest so it was worth exploring.

One child took the tree trunk off the shelf to put it on the floor where he proceeded to dislodge a piece that had rotted and become weak.

I noticed that the child found the work gloves in the house area to add a little authenticity to his deconstruction operation.

I subsequently moved the tree trunk to the writing table as a provocation with other Fall elements like gourds and corn. The children found many more ways to explore and examine this natural element.

For example, the child pictured below examined the bottom of the tree trunk. That way she was better able to see that the hole was bigger on the inside where the nest had been.

For another example, the child below found a different way to examine the hole in the tree trunk. He used one of the ears of the Fall corn to "measure" the size of the hole.

A good question is: Did any of the children draw the tree trunk? I do not know and since these pictures were taken more than five years ago, I do not even remember. However, one of the more stunning pictures I took was a picture of a child showing his mother the picture of the girl examining the bottom of the stump.

This was the same child who had used the Fall corn to explore the hole in the top of the tree trunk. In other words, the documentation from the week before triggered a memory, a memory that he could share with his mother about his own interaction with the tree trunk.

This was actually an enjoyable reflection for me. I remembered that I had brought a tree trunk into the room to add to the swamp, and I remembered that I had moved it around the room. However, I had not realized how this dried up piece of wood spawned so much engagement by the children in multiple areas of the room, whether that engagement was with the piece itself or in concert with other objects. The quintessential point was that this was a narrative about just one object in a sea of objects in my early childhood classroom. As it moved, so did the narrative. And it was not lost on me that this dried up piece of wood was basically waste wood not even good enough for firewood. Leave it to the children to bring it back to life and make multiple meanings out of it.

Getting to Belonging Part Four
Putting Design into Practice
Rie Gilsdorf and Christy Spencer

Rie Algeo Gilsdorf, MS, MA, has broad experience as a principal, arts administrator, instructional coach, teacher of science and dance and parent in many settings, including the Reggio-inspired programs of Portland's Opal School and The Blake School in Minneapolis. Rie is a past Board Co-Chair and Civic Engagement Committee Chair of the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota and current member of its Resource Development Committee. She now provides racial equity seminars, coaching and consulting through Embody Equity (www.EmbodyEquity.com).

Christy Spencer, MA is inspired by children's curiosities and perspectives, and roots her practices in relationships, deep listening, designing dynamic learning environments, observation and pedagogical documentation. Christy has worked in various Reggio-inspired contexts, including The Blake School, Boulder Journey School and the Minnesota Children's Museum. She has been a RINM Board and committee member. Current professional interests encompass exploring the intersection of design thinking and the Educational Project of Reggio Emilia, mindfulness practices, anti-racist theory, neuroscience around empathy and humanitarian projects focusing on children's rights.

Over the past year in *Getting to Belonging* we have had our heads deep in theory, explicating the relationship between a design process and Reggio-inspired pedagogy as they pertain to developing a broader consciousness of race and difference. We've broken down each into component parts and attempted to weave them together. This entails oscillating back and forth between theory and practice. It is time to venture into practice.

Documenting Two Prototypes
In this piece we reflect on documentation of two prototypes and the insights they reveal. Similar to the Reggio-inspired practice of offering a provocation and then reflecting on it, we chose current RINM formats, *Let's Talk* and *Doc Lab*, two virtual events. They were opportunities to explore the future by doing, gathering feedback and reflecting on what worked, what didn't and what might come next. The first, *Let's Talk* in January 2024, offered an open-ended conversation framed as an opportunity to explore considerations and anxieties involved in talking with young children about race. February's *Doc Lab* focused on exploring race in early

childhood by studying documentation of children's work.

Structurally, *Let's Talk* emphasizes dialogue with an invitation for participants to bring their own questions. This event, following previous Network Gatherings, asked, "What do you worry about in exploring race and culture with young children?" Thus, educators' anxieties became the springboard for this discussion. The conversation had an organic flow and was lightly facilitated with the only ground rules being to listen with curiosity and speak your truth.

By contrast, *Doc Lab* focused on transcriptions of student conversations and utilized a formal [protocol](#) to structure the conversation. The protocol included specific prompts, each with an allotted time, from observation and description, to questioning, to speculation about children's strategies for constructing understandings. The structure positioned participants as careful, nonjudgmental observers and colleagues. It also required more active facilitation as well as in-depth note taking to enable later reflection.

The Role of Intentionality

There was a palpable difference between the two prototypes, despite significant overlap in participants. As we later reflected on documentation of the events, we became more aware of the nuances within the structures. As our awareness grew, it became apparent that we had unintentionally created a discrepancy in tone between the two.

The *Doc Lab* felt collaborative and supportive. The protocol positioned the presenting teacher to first listen, saving clarifications for later. This listening practice involved letting go of the role of teacher as expert. The predictability inherent in the structure invited vulnerability, of the presenting teacher and of the observers who must comment on children's work with minimal context.

Let's Talk began with prompts about anxiety, unconsciously positioning people to show up either in certainty or defensiveness. As a result, a subtle tone of rigidity arose. Unlike *Doc Lab,* this format had neither traces of children's encounters nor a structured protocol to provide a supportive container that would have allowed participants to embrace ambiguity. The conversation spiraled away from possibility as it amplified limiting concepts we fully believe, but that are figments of the imagination. "We can't. . . because. . . ."

The language we captured from each conversation is also telling. In *Doc Lab*, we noted words such as "tricky," "nuanced," "context," "interconnectedness," "dynamic," "flexible." These words acknowledged the complexity of the children's expression and the teacher's nimble responses. On the other hand, *Let's Talk* produced words such as "ominous," "fear," "pressure," "confronting," "avoidance," "roadblock." These words indicated a mindset that is not conducive to curiosity, creativity or compassion. *Doc Lab's* language of potentialities was strengthened by its protocol's progression from observation through speculation.

Making Space for the "Why" and "How"

In *Let's Talk*, participants shared books, websites and scope and sequence documents, but we now realize this exchange didn't encourage deeper critical discourse. Rather than "How might we use this?" the conversation leaned toward "I did this," or even "Do it this way," adding to a tone of certainty. While these resources were useful, a "why and how" conversation might have deepened the conversation.

One metaphor that came up during *Let's Talk* was Malaguzzi's idea that "the eye jumps over the wall,[1]" which suggests going beyond boundaries to see with fresh eyes. This generative idea moved the conversation to the notion that we as adults need to go over the wall; children are always ready to do this. This is just the kind of organic flow that we have seen arise in *Let's Talk*. However, it was quickly squelched as conversation reverted to how adults can get past the anxieties of going over the wall. Soon the voice of certainty crept back in, attempting to grasp onto resources as a way of coping with these anxieties.

Doc Lab participants also shared resources. The difference lay in the foregrounding of the "why" and "how" –

the children's responses and the exchange between teacher, children and resources. Broad themes such as democracy, fairness/justice, interconnectedness and gratitude were woven together in a process of revisiting and recombining resources and experiences. The resources, from a classroom scale to an outdoor pond, served as tangible scaffolding for the big ideas and these ideas provided a thematic framework for the resources. This beautifully illustrates the iterative and generative process of negotiated curriculum.

Intentionality and consciousness – the "why" and "how" – come into play in selecting resources and using them as provocations. Both are crucial. Even the most excellent book or resource only creates part of the conditions for rich understandings to be made. And, with "why" and "how" in mind, resources are literally everywhere. For example, in the exchange presented at *Doc Lab*, the presenting teacher wove a common classroom scale into themes of race and belonging. In addition to providing a concrete metaphor for these abstract ideas, it offered a reference point for children to enter the conversation.

Suggested Iterations: Let's Talk & Doc Lab
What comes next? What could we tweak and try again? Reflecting on *Let's Talk*, we want to make clear that this format leads to valuable emergent conversations if presented with intention. In the case of conversations about race, it could include starting from "How do we?" vs. "I'm worried about." The latter leads to a deficit mindset, expressed as "we can't." Starting from the "why" and "how" promotes an asset mindset that reveals more possibilities.

Historically, *Let's Talk* and *Doc Lab* have not been paired. If we were to prototype a similar pairing we might reverse the order and use *Let's Talk* to continue the conversation. This would allow all participants to share inspiration they took from the *Doc Lab*, how they translated it into their environment, how children responded and how it affected their practice. Our intention would be to create space for new curiosities to arise and dive deeper into the discourse in a spirit of collaboration and support.

Both the *Doc Lab* and our reflections on it have been fruitful in that they promote a spirit of prototyping and experimentation that inspires action. It strikes us that this should not be a "one and done," but rather an ongoing practice that invites multiple people to share documentation on the topic of equity across human difference. We could also experiment with different modalities: video, audio, transcripts, photos, artifacts. We also learned that we should allow a full two hours for conversation.

Conclusion:
In this series, "Getting to Belonging," we proposed a Reggio-inspired design process for adults, to animate substantive change and actualize early childhood communities that are dialogic and democratic. The series explored how these ideas might support complex and nuanced conversations about human difference, especially racial difference, that engender a sense of belonging. *Doc Lab* and *Let's Talk* are practices that support this work. These adult conversations must precede dialogue with children, and the arc of this learning comes to fruition in ongoing work alongside children.
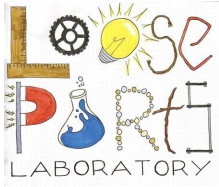
Getting to Belonging Part One
Getting to Belonging Part Two
Getting to Belonging Part Three

Citation:

1. Spaggiari, S. (2004). "The path toward knowledge: The social, political and cultural context of the Reggio municipal infant-toddler center and preschool experience." *Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange*.

Loose Parts Lab Update

 The Loose Parts Laboratory is a space curated with a variety of materials donated to distribute for low or no cost. Vision: The Loose Parts Laboratory aims to provide a growing initiative of increasing materials, patronage and volunteers. As part of this endeavor, in addition to the material offerings, we hope to make the space available to the community for gatherings of parents, senior groups, professional associations as well as professional development for educators.

The Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota continues work on the Loose Parts Laboratory, collecting and curating items that would normally end up in the waste stream or landfills. This invites today's children to see potential in otherwise discarded materials. Even small objects such as plastic caps can have a useful life after their initial intended purpose is complete, providing opportunities for children to think creatively, solve problems and find joy.

We brought materials to several Network gatherings and, this past January, presented our work to an international Zoom group led by Roberta Pucci, an atelierista from Italy.

How can you participate?
Volunteer – We need volunteers to help at our Open Shop days and markets. Once a month or once a year, everything helps.
Shop – We are open every third Sunday from Noon – 3 pm. If this time does not work, we will happily make appointments.
Donate – Consider making a donation. Does your workplace match donations to 501 c3's? Consider a matched donation to the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota to support our work.
Attend an Event
May 15, 2024 Hopkins Vehicle Fair – Come play and explore with Loose Parts! Free!
May 19, 2024 LPL Open Shop day – Noon – 3 pm
May, June and July – Explorations of Loose Parts in St. Louis Park facilitated by Loose Parts Lab through SLP's Community Ed.
June 1, 2024 St. Anthony Art Fair tent
June 8 and 9, 2024 Excelsior's Art on The Lake tent
Check the RINM website or LPL Facebook page for additional events.

HOW can we help YOU? Staff training? Particular items? Reach out with your specific needs. We would love to help. loosepartslabmn@gmail.com

Sponsorship Opportunity

The Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota (RINM) is making it possible to be a year-round sponsor for a $100.00 donation.

The Network has been providing support to early childhood programs through its many opportunities for professional development since 2007. Most of these opportunities are free of charge to participants.

Individuals and programs can take advantage of Monthly Gatherings that provide professional development hours. There are also Documentation Labs, Book Study, "Let's Talk," monthly Zoom gatherings and a collection of titles of Reggio-related books available through the Debra S. Fish Early Childhood library which is part of the St. Paul Library system.

Network communication is maintained through monthly up-date emails, the Quarterly Newsletter and a website filled with information about the Reggio Emilia Approach. Schools and centers have the opportunity to post job openings on the Network website. There are two scholarships available through the Network – an Education Scholarship, which can support attendance at training events given by staff from Reggio Emilia, and a Scholarship to attend the Network Monthly Gatherings.

Our newest project is the Loose Parts Lab. Teachers, parents and other community members can frequent Loose Parts and find materials that can be taken back to classrooms and homes where children can create, learn and explore new ideas with recycled and repurposed materials.

As a Sponsor of the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota, your logo will be displayed on the Quarterly Newsletter, website and at Monthly Gatherings. Your logo will be associated with the work of RINM and will make your organization stand out and be recognized as a program associated with quality!

If you would like to become a sponsor for the 2024-2025 year, please complete this linked form and send it to Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota, 525 Pelham Blvd. N., Saint Paul, MN, 55104 with a payment of $100.00. You may also donate the $100.00 by going to the website and clicking on the donate button. If you have questions, please contact Marty Watson at martywatson549@gmail.com.

Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota Scholarships

RINM Education Scholarship

The Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota's Education Scholarship is available to those interested in learning more about the Reggio Approach. Everyone is invited to apply at any time of the year (a minimum of 6 weeks before an event you plan to attend). This scholarship may be used for registration costs to local, national or international Reggio-inspired workshops and conferences. Preference will be given to professional development opportunities where educators from the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy are presenting. Funds are limited and awards are made at the discretion of the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota Board.

RINM Education Scholarship Application

Monthly Gatherings Scholarship

This scholarship, established by the Network's Board, is in honor of Sandy Burwell, a founding member of the

Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota. Sandy has been particularly devoted to the Saturday Gatherings. The dates for the Monthly Gatherings Scholarship cover a full calendar year, from January to December each year. Apply now!

[Monthly Gathering Scholarship Application](#)

Calls for Participation

"Participation, in fact, is based on the idea that reality is not objective, that culture is a constantly evolving product of society, that individual knowledge is only partial; and that in order to construct a project, especially an educational project, everyone's point of view is relevant in dialogue with those of others, within a framework of shared values. The idea of participation is founded on these concepts: and in our opinion, so, too, is democracy itself."

-Paola Cagliari, Angela Barozzi and Claudia Giudici

Join Us

The Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota is an all-volunteer non-profit 501c(3) organization. Most of our work occurs in committees, where issues are studied, proposals developed and activities implemented. We are looking for a wide range of people with varied skill sets to join our work. Critically, we need people who are willing to collaborate, to do some planning up front, jump in and learn as they go. We would like to hear from you. There are no fees or dues involved, just an interest in learning and growing together. Help us grow our active and vibrant collaborative.

Committees

Resource Development

- To develop diverse sources of financial and material support to sustain the Network
- Budgeting, grant writing, fund raising

Contact Marty Watson martywatson549@gmail.com

Outreach & Growth

- To plan events, promote growth in Reggio-inspired knowledge and practice and expand the Network
- Event planning, knowledge of the Reggio Emilia educational project, community organizing

Contact Heidi Wolf hwolf@bsmschool.org

Loose Parts Laboratory Materials Center

- To develop and grow offerings of materials and workshops
- Curate, maintain and display materials

Contact the LPL committee at loosepartslabmn@gmail.com

Communications

- To make the work of the Network visible, coordinate communication, improve tools to highlight and

elevate the work of the Network and build relationships
- Writing, editing, research, graphic arts, social media, information/project management

Contact Lani Shapiro lani.shapiro@gmail.com

Civic Engagement (currently dormant, but could rise with interest and leader)

- To provide information and resources to policy makers, educators and other citizens in order to influence education policy and promote learning through inquiry
- Knowledge of early childhood and/or K-12 education policy and evidence-based research to support the Reggio approach

Contact Patti Loftus pattiroseloftus@gmail.com

If you are interested in volunteering to support the Network, please email the chair of the relevant committee. If you have general questions or would like to contribute to the Network in another way, please contact board members at reggioinspiredmn@gmail.com.

Share your knowledge or experience

The Outreach and Growth Committee has started to plan the Monthly Gatherings for the 2024 - 2025 school year. The Network broadened during the pandemic as we met via the Zoom platform, and we are excited to continue a virtual component for all our gatherings. This means that you can participate as a host/presenter even if you are not living in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area! Presentations need to include and build on Reggio principles and may include past or current work or area of study. Presentations often include a variety of approaches, including discussion, hands-on experiences and video/or Powerpoint.

Please consider this as a personal challenge to lead or co-lead a Network event. We would like to incorporate your experiences into upcoming events.

Some questions to get you thinking:

- What have you been exploring and learning with your children?
- What conversations have given you insight into their theories?
- How are the Hundred Languages expressed in your setting?
- What strategies, intentions and hypotheses have you discussed as a staff?
- What have you struggled with and created solutions around?
- What other learning stories could you tell?

A stipend of up to $200 is given for a 2-3 hour Gathering, with additional funds if your presentation has Parent Aware/Develop MN approval.

Proposals for presentations will be welcomed until June 1, 2024. We look forward to engaging with participants from all over the US and the world! Here is the link: https://forms.gle/pHMzedRfNoxd9NTJ6

NAREA

Be sure to check out the events offered by NAREA, the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance. NAREA exists to connect early childhood educators and advocates together in discovering, interpreting and promoting Reggio Emilia inspired education. If you are a member, you will receive another discount. With ZOOM classes, there

are many more opportunities to become involved with the Reggio Emilia educators in Italy. For more information, visit https://www.reggioalliance.org/anarea/.

Network of Networks

In June 2022, North America Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA) Board members Jeanne Goldhaber and David Fernie convened a discussion to consider possibilities for collaboration among regional Reggio-inspired networks in North America. Representatives from existing and aspiring networks continue to meet virtually to explore common concerns. We have identified three areas for shared consideration: outreach and diversity, advocacy and emerging regional networks. We meet virtually once a month. Would you like to join? Contact reggioinspiredmn@gmail.com for the next date and link.

Meanwhile, we see opportunities for exchange both within and across networks. Informal networking has already begun. Folks from other regions have found their way to our Network's Monthly Gatherings, virtual Book Study and Let's Talk. We have begun to cross-promote virtual events, widening and deepening the possibilities for all.

Public Library Resources

The Debra S. Fish Early Childhood Resource Library is located at Think Small, 10 Yorkton Court, St. Paul, Minnesota. The collection is part of the Saint Paul Public Library system catalog http://www.sppl.org/ and is available through the statewide virtual library, MnLINK at https://www.mnlinkgateway.org. The Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota partners with the Debra S. Fish Early Childhood Resource Library to provide access to literature about the Reggio approach. All the resources are translated into English (even if the title is listed in Italian). All you need is a library card. Resources can be delivered and returned to ANY Minnesota public library.

Debra Fish Library resources are available by request. This link lists the collection clustered under general topics related to Reggio thought. The links (SPPL or MNLink) will take you directly to that title in the collection. Additionally, you can search by keyword "Reggio" in the library catalogue.

Job Opportunities

Click here for current job postings: www.mnreggio.org/jobsforum

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