

THE DISPOSITION TO DOCUMENT:
THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF TEACHERS WHO PRACTICE
PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION–
A CASE STUDY

LAURIE L. M. KOCHER

B. A., University of British Columbia, 1980
M. Ed., University of Victoria, 1999

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

(Early Childhood Education)

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

2008

ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been a great deal of attention paid in early childhood settings to pedagogical documentation, a practice that has developed in the preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. Following upon the devastation of World War II, educators, parents and children began working in this small city to reconstruct their society and to build an exemplary system of education for young children. This system has become known as the Reggio Emilia approach. A hallmark of the Reggio Emilia approach, pedagogical documentation, is a way of making visible the learning processes by which children and teachers work in early childhood centres. It may include anecdotal observations, children's work, photographs, audio and video tape recordings, and children's voiced ideas. An integral part of the documentation is the teacher's reflective commentary. Pedagogical documentation can also be a focus for linking theory and practice.

This qualitative instrumental case study involved looking at the personal qualities that have enabled three particular teachers located at an early childhood centre in Seattle, U.S.A., to embrace with enthusiasm the practice of pedagogical documentation. What are the lived experiences of these teachers? Do these teachers demonstrate particular attributes that foster a "disposition to document"?

Three teachers, along with two of the school's parents, participated in a series of interviews which were analysed for significant themes. Subsequent conversations with the participants confirmed the initial themes I had drawn from the interview data.

A relationship of reciprocity emerged - working with pedagogical documentation fostered dispositions that each teacher already had, while at the same time, these teachers were drawn to the Reggio Emilia approach because it resonated with them in an intuitive way. Pedagogical documentation demands a high level of intellectual commitment and a passionate engagement with one's teaching. Parallels were also found between pedagogical documentation and phenomenological research.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
Prologue	x
Acknowledgements	xi
Dedication	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Preamble	1
Purpose of the Study	3
Study Focus	3
The Research Questions	7
Context of the Study	8
Reggio Emilia	8
Pedagogical Documentation	9
Hilltop Children's Centre	9
Outcomes and Significance of the Study.....	10
Personal Note	12
Research Challenges and Boundaries	12
Definitions of Terms	13
Organization of the Study.....	15
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature: The Reggio Emilia Approach	17
Overview of Reggio Emilia	17
Fundamental Principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach	22
The Child as Protagonist, Collaborator, and Communicator	22
The Teacher as Partner, Nurturer, Guide, and Researcher	23
Cooperation as the Foundation of the Educational System in Reggio Emilia	25
The Environment as the Third Teacher	26
The Parent as Partner	32
Documentation as Communication	33
Progettazione as Curriculum Framework	35
The Role of the Pedagogista	41
The Teacher's Role	41
The Teacher in Reggio Emilia and in North America	45
Pedagogical Documentation	48
A Pedagogy of Communication and Relationships	52
Summary	54
Chapter 3: Review of the Literature: Transformation Theory	56
Transformation Theory in the Context of Adult Education	56

Mezirow and Transformative Adult Learning	58
Mezirow’s Conception of the Process of Transformation	59
Phase 1: Disorientation	60
Phase 2: Reconfiguring	62
Other Views of the Roles of Reflection and Discourse	64
Group Transformation	64
Emotional Components of Reflection and Discourse	65
The Limits of Rationality and Language	66
Psychological Theory and Transformation Theory	66
Jungian Influences on Transformation Theory	66
Learner Disposition and Jungian Theory	68
The Relations of Personal to Social Transformation	69
The Role of the Educator in Transformative Learning	70
Postmodernism and Transformation Theory	71
Thoughts on Mezirow’s Theoretical Outline and the Contributions of Others	73
A New Direction: The Role of Relationship to the “Other” in Transformative Learning	73
The Qualities of Transformative Relationship with Otherness	74
 Chapter 4: Review of the Literature: Phenomenology.....	78
Conceptual Framework of the Phenomenological Model	78
Phenomenology’s Founding Father: Edmund Husserl	79
Lifeworld	80
Intentionality	81
Phenomenological Reduction	82
Heidegger	83
Merleau-Ponty	84
Gadamer	84
Phenomenology as a Method of Educational Practice	85
Phenomenological Reflection: Pragmatist vs. Phenomenological	85
Conclusion	86
 Chapter 5: Method and Design of the Study	87
Design of the Study	87
Qualitative Research as the Orientation for this Study	88
The Naturalistic Paradigm	88
Qualitative Research	89
Researcher as <i>Bricoleur</i>	90
Central Elements of Qualitative Research	91
The Case Study	94
Methodology	99
Research Design: Instrumental Collective Case Study	99
The Researcher as the Instrument	100
The Researcher’s Biases and Contexts	101
The Role of the Researcher	102
Gaining Entry and Building Rapport	102
Site Selection	102
The Site – Hilltop Children’s Centre	104

The Participants – Ann, Margie, and Sarah	105
The Parent Participants – Alice and Kendall	107
Data Collection	108
Introduction	108
Gathering Data	108
Participant Observation	109
Field Notes	111
Observations	113
Table 1: Observation Sessions	114
Documents	114
Interview Framework.....	116
Interviews – Substantive Conversations	118
Table 2: Interviews.....	119
Critical Friends and Peer Review	125
Data Analysis	125
My Position in the Study	128
Writing in the First Person	128
Reporting the Data	129
Trustworthiness	133
Credibility	134
Transferability.....	135
Dependability	135
Confirmability.....	135
Ethics and Politics in This Study.....	136
Summary	137
Chapter 6: Portraits of Place and Protagonists	139
“Approaching”	139
Portrait of Particular Place – Hilltop Children’s Centre	145
Hilltop’s Approach to Early Childhood Education	145
Respecting Children, Valuing Childhood	145
Taking Inspiration from the Reggio Emilia Approach	146
The Environment as the Third Teacher – Influences from Reggio Emilia	147
Building Bridges and Growing Authentic Partnerships with Families	150
Teaching Philosophy and Practice	155
Child Centered Curriculum	155
Key Principles of Emergent Curriculum	155
Art as a Tool for Thinking and Representation	157
Documentation – “The Art of Awareness”	158
Embracing Difference and Working for Justice	160
Teachers Consider Relationships to be Crucial	160
Conflict Resolution	161
Parent Conferences	163
Ongoing Staff Development	164
The Whole and the Parts	165
Portraits of the Protagonists – Ann, Sarah, and Margie	165
Ann	166
Sarah	169

Margie	173
Defining the Role of the Pedagogista for Hilltop	174
Chapter 7: Presentation of the Data	175
Development of Emergent Themes	175
Table 3: Themes Clustered	178
Table 4: Coding for Interviews	179
Theme: <i>Resonance with “What Could Be”</i>	179
Resonance	179
Image of the Child	183
Personal Engagement	185
Theme: <i>An Amiable Environment</i>	186
Initial Attraction	186
Transforming the Space	188
“The Little Jars” – The Little Changes	192
The Walls Speak	193
Theme: <i>An Infinite Attention to the Other</i>	195
Primacy of Relationships	195
Wonder and Delight	201
Theme: <i>Intellectual Vitality</i>	202
Intellectual Engagement	202
Teacher as Researcher.....	205
Theme: <i>Child Initiated and Teacher Framed</i>	208
Emergent Curriculum	208
Being “Teacher-ly”	213
Theme: <i>A Culture of Documentation</i>	216
Pedagogical Documentation	216
Personal Qualities	221
Evolving Documentation Styles	224
Various Styles of Documentation	226
Pedagogical Documentation and Diversity	235
Who Has Their Stories Told?	237
Theme: <i>Conflict and Collaboration</i>	241
Conflict	241
Collaboration	244
Theme: <i>Mentorship – “Standing Side By Side”</i>	247
Being Mentored	248
Mentoring	249
Professional Development	252
Theme: <i>The Tools of Technology – “A Mixed Blessing”</i>	255
Technology Tools	255
Technology and Research	260
Theme: <i>Social Justice – “At the Crossroads”</i>	261
Social Justice	261
Advocacy	263
Theme: <i>“It’s My Natural Language, Really”</i>	265
Writing to Know	265
Being Skilled as a Writer	266
Hermeneutic Phenomenological Writing	268
Theme: <i>Hilltop’s Organizational Culture</i>	269

Challenges of Time Limitations	269
Dismantling Hierarchy	271
Re-Structuring: Roles, Responsibilities, and Rings.....	272
Theme: <i>Change and Personal Transformation</i>	275
Theme: <i>Research and Future Dreams</i>	277
Summary	280
Chapter 8: Concluding Thoughts	281
Personal Connections	281
Transformation Theory as a Guide	282
Phases of Transformation Theory	284
Revisiting Transformation Theory	291
Teacher Dispositions	292
Intellectual Vitality and Research Orientation: the Teacher as Researcher	294
Committed to Building Deep and Meaningful Relationships.....	295
Fostering an Awareness of Social Justice – Living at the “Crossroads”	297
Tangible Evidence to Support Emergent or Negotiated Curriculum	298
Being Comfortable as a Writer	299
Resonance with Reggio Emilia: “Coming Home - A Sense of The Possible”	299
Pedagogical Documentation as a Phenomenological Act	300
Directions for Future Research	301
The Disposition to Document – Closing Remarks	305
Revisiting the Original Research Questions.....	308
Coda	311
References	314
Appendix A: Conversations with Ann	353
Appendix B: Conversations with Margie	382
Appendix C: Conversations with Sarah	422
Appendix D: Conversation with Alice	449
Appendix E: Conversation with Kendall	454
Appendix F: List of Books and Videos Involving Hilltop Staff	466
Appendix G: A Day in the Life of a Preschooler at Hilltop	467
Appendix H: Hilltop Hoops	469
Appendix I: Working Through Conflict with Children	470
Appendix J: Conference Report Card for Caleb	474
Appendix K: Moving Staff through Difficult Issues	484
Appendix L: Hilltop’s Description of the Role of Pedagogista	490
Appendix M: Documentation as a Verb	492

Appendix N: Ann’s Letter of Introduction to Hilltop Families	496
Appendix O: Restructuring Effort – The “Rings”	498
Appendix P: USQ Ethics Application	505
Appendix Q: USQ Ethics Clearance.....	513
Appendix R: Information Letter to Parents of Children at Hilltop Children’s Centre	517
Appendix S: Consent Form for Participation in the Study (child)	519
Appendix T: Consent Form for Participation in the Study (adult)	520
Appendix U: Request for Permission to Conduct Study – School Administration	521

List of Tables

Table 1:	Observation Sessions.....	104
Table 2:	Interviews.....	116
Table 3:	Themes Clustered.....	166
Table 4:	Coding for Interviews.....	167

List of Figures

Figure 1:	“Men and women together have built the walls of this school, because we wanted it new and different for our children”	16
Figure 2:	Families in Villa Cella reclaim bricks from bombed buildings to build a school	16
Figure 3:	Elements from nature abound in Reggio-inspired classrooms, such as Hilltop Children’s Centre	26
Figure 4:	Art materials displayed aesthetically in the atelier space	28
Figure 5:	Bio boards lining the hallway at Hilltop Children’s Centre	125
Figure 6:	Child sketching, using one of many representational “languages”	129
Figure 7:	Child observes closely before painting in studio/atelier space	133
Figure 8:	Teacups painted by parents as a “gift” to remain in the classroom for the children	137
Figure 9:	Parents creating mural for classroom representing their homes	137
Figure 10:	Family photos are a tangible presence in the classrooms at Hilltop	137
Figure 11:	Ann’s bio board	152
Figure 12:	Sarah’s bio board	155
Figure 13:	Margie’s bio board	157
Figure 14:	Documentation Panel - Transforming Our Space to Create the Studio	173
Figure 15:	Documentation Panel - The Transformed Sunlight Room	174
Figure 16:	Documentation Panel - Inspiration from the Schools of Reggio Emilia	174

Prologue ~ The Painting Lesson



It was similar to learning again how and why to breathe and see deeply when I took up the paintbrush. There I was, standing in front of a wonderful French landscape with only my palette and easel separating me from what it was I wanted to depict. And I squinted and squinted and used all the strategies my teacher had shared about how to see the big general shapes and the value contrasts. I loved what I was looking at and I felt driven to let others in on the beauty that I was observing. I was nearly overwhelmed by a commitment to get it right....And then there were all those decisions...Each decision pointed to many others that had to be made and heightened my sense of commitment and responsibility to those whom I was depicting and those who might view my work. For example, having chosen a particular mix of paints for the sky, I then had to make sure that it would work with what else was on my canvas. I was accountable for all of those choices and then turning them into a representation that would enable others to see the world in a new way (Ouellette, 2003, p. 14-15).

Acknowledgements

My own teaching and way of dwelling in the world with children is forever changed by my work with Ann, Sarah, and Margie. They have welcomed me with open arms to observe closely, listen closely, and think closely with them. They have left their thumbprints on my soul.

The community at Hilltop Children’s Centre – teachers, families, and children – were both gracious and generous in the ways in which they embraced my desire to know them better, and I thank them for including me.

There are many along the way who have sustained me with their gifts of encouragement, challenge, wisdom, comfort, friendship, and places of sanctuary for writing and refuge for the soul. Although I bear lone responsibility for this work, it would never have been accomplished without you.

Thanks are due to Elizabeth Thompson for proofreading the initial draft of this document.

Dr. Noel Geoghegan and Dr. Nerida Ellerton have shown remarkable patience over the distance of oceans and years by not giving up on me. I am profoundly grateful that they agreed to take me on as their student, and for the guidance and challenge they have provided along the way.

I am appreciative beyond measure to my family for liberating me to do this work by taking on the bulk of the practicalities of our shared life, and for allowing me the possibility to “follow my bliss” to where unanticipated doors have opened.

And to the Inklings – it’s time now to scratch those “first words” with fountain pens and ink!

Coming Home

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

*~ T.S. Eliot (1942)
Little Gidding, The Four Quartets*

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the community of seekers and meaning-makers, both the young ones and the not quite so young ones, who have welcomed me along on their journey.

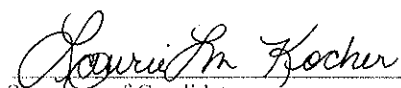
I certify that the attached material is my original work. I declare that no other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement. Except where I have clearly stated that I have used some of this material elsewhere, it has not been presented by me for examination in any other course or unit at this or any other institution.

I have read the Academic Misconduct Policy, Sections 5.10, 5.14 and 5.15 as well as USQ Policy on Plagiarism (<http://www.usq.edu.au/plagiarism/infostud/default.htm>), which are available on the University's web site and understand that I am bound by such Policy and that I may be subject to student discipline processes in the event of an act of plagiarism by me.

I understand the nature of plagiarism to include the use of another person's work without full and clear referencing and acknowledgement. I understand that the work submitted may be reproduced and/or communicated by the University or a third party authorized by the University for the purpose of detecting plagiarism


CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION

I certify that the ideas, results, analyses and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

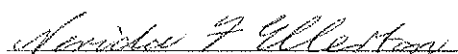

Signature of Candidate

26 March 2008
Date

ENDORSEMENT


Signature of Supervisor/s

26 March 2008
Date


Signature of Supervisor/s

26 March, 2008
Date

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

I think we all put our boats out on a current, set our little sails, and when we hit something that impassions us, and our little boat begins to go there, the wind whistles through our hair, and we know we're on to something... You become alive as you're doing it, and you begin to develop gifts you just didn't know you had.
~ Sister Helen Prejean (cited in Carter & Curtis, 1996, p. 62).

Preamble

In the early months of my M.Ed. programme, I had the opportunity to visit the world-famous travelling exhibition of children's work, *The Hundred Languages of Children*, which comes from the Italian town of Reggio Emilia, Italy. For three whole days, from dawn until dusk, I was immersed in looking closely at every photograph, reading every printed word of the exhibit. I was transfixed. Tears rolled down my cheeks, again and again. My experience is not an uncommon one – I've since spoken with numerous people who have had a similar response. Why is this? Cadwell (2003) suggests that perhaps, in the work from Reggio Emilia, we see:

our own great potential reflected in everything that we lay our eyes on. It is as if we recognize our deepest selves in the glistening murals and the robust clay figures made by children; in the tile-floored, sun-filled spaces; and in the way the adults and children are alive with respect and knowledge of one another. We immediately sense the extraordinary meaning and beauty of everyday life in a school for the youngest citizens – a school that mirrors both who they truly are and who they will become. (p. 2)

In the many panels of the exhibit, it was obvious that the schools of Reggio Emilia are radiant with stories that trace the search for meaning by children and adults, joyfully documenting the educational journey, filled with displays that portray children's fresh ideas in multiple expressions of clay and paint, pen and words, numbers and theories. The exhibit bears witness to what I had always believed possible. The educators, parents, community, and young children of Reggio Emilia live the possible. Perhaps my tears were provoked because I felt a fervent hope that school, as I have dreamt it, and what I thought it could be, might be transported toward the possible.

Edwards, Gandini, and Forman (1998), editors of the book *The Hundred Languages of Children*, the title of which was taken directly from the exhibition, introduce the exhibit as "a beautiful and intriguing display that narrates an

educational story and weaves together experiences, reflections, debates, theoretical premises, and the social and ethical ideals of many generations of teachers and parents” (p. 10). They explain that the exhibit was created by a group of teachers “in dialogue with one another that designed the exhibit to immerse the visitor in a multi-sensory, spiralling journey of learning that is representative of the documentation these educators engage in on a daily basis in the preschools in Reggio Emilia” (p. 8).

I was overwhelmed by the depth and complexity of the children’s work and by the multiple “languages” with which children expressed themselves – with words, movement, drawing, painting, building, sculpture, shadow play, collage, dramatic play, music, to name only a few. I was profoundly impressed with the reflective, sometimes metaphorical, text that accompanied these documentation¹ displays. Transcribed recordings of children’s conversations were paired with the reflective commentary of their teachers. The image of the child as strong, resourceful, curious and competent was everywhere evident in *The Hundred Languages of Children* exhibition. Indeed, children’s thoughts and feelings were offered in such a deeply respectful way that I came away changed. I determined to attempt to document the work of children in my own classroom following the work of educators in Reggio Emilia.

The decision to incorporate the practice of pedagogical documentation into my teaching has had a profound effect on my work. By the very process of capturing children’s images and talk via photography and tape-recording, my beliefs of what young children were capable began to change and evolve, and the focus of my master’s research became an analysis of the audience response to this form of pedagogical documentation (Kocher, 1999). The evidence gathered from my master’s research corroborated my own experience of an increased appreciation of young children’s complex thought processes.

Taking on the role of documenter caused me to become much more curious about how children approach making sense of their worlds. The process of pedagogical documentation (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999) itself has continued to engage me, so that now, somewhat further along on my professional journey, I believe it is important to learn more about what fosters the disposition to document

¹ The terms “documentation” and “pedagogical documentation” are used interchangeably throughout this study.

– what is it about the process that captures our professional imaginations, informs us, and indeed provokes us as professional educators to this kind of personal growth?

Purpose of the Study

Previous studies on the Reggio Emilia approach, particularly those conducted by Elliott (2001), Moran (1998b), and Entsminger (1995), have had strong quantitative bases. Yet in the Reggio Emilia approach, the reliance is on teacher reflection and documentation of work with young children as the primary means of research and evaluation. Such a process falls within a tradition of qualitative research (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998). Elliot (2001), whose own work was a quantitative study into changing perspectives in early education, with a focus on the Reggio approach, perhaps recognizes this in her call for “future research on the change process using a qualitative model” (p. 98) – exactly what the present research project has set out to do as a case study.

Boaler (2003) argues that there is a divide between research and practice, and that *capturing* some of the practices of teaching and converting them into a set of carefully documented records of practice can help to cross this divide. Ayers (1989) and Hatch (1995) take the position that qualitative research can inform our knowledge of best practices with young children. Much can be learned about the value of “building theory from the practices of accomplished teachers” (Hauser, 1995, p. 64), such as those in the present study, to inform their work.

Study Focus

This qualitative instrumental case study involves looking at the personal qualities that enable three particular early childhood teachers² - Ann, Margie, and Sarah³ - to embrace with enthusiasm the practice of pedagogical documentation as inspired by the municipal preschools of Reggio Emilia. I have attempted to “paint portraits” of the three protagonists, and tried to understand how their practice of pedagogical documentation has influenced and changed their teaching practices. I

² Ann and Sarah are both preschool teachers working with children aged 4-5 years. Margie is the *pedagogista* (for further explanation of this term see p. 41) who works closely with the Hilltop community.

³ Each participant chose to be identified by her given name rather than by a pseudonym. I have consistently listed Ann, Margie, and Sarah in alphabetical order so as to avoid any suggestion of hierarchy.

have given consideration herein to the development and evolution of pedagogical practices that arise from reflection on the process of documenting children's learning.

Gandini and Goldhaber (2001) believe that documentation can be an agent of change in order to generate and accomplish a reconceptualization of early childhood education. They write:

The process of documentation has the potential to change how early childhood educators see ourselves as professionals. It certainly requires that we expand our identity from nurturer and caregiver to include theoretician and researcher. We have found that documentation demands a high level of intellectual commitment and curiosity and a passionate engagement in our work. (pp. 143-144)

My own experience with documenting and making visible the complex learning of young children has caused me to wonder if the documentation process does indeed act as a catalyst for dispositional change. Does change happen because of a disposition to embrace the principles of the Reggio approach, or does embracing these principles of Reggio precipitate the desire to change? What makes people receptive to change? An interesting change occurs in teachers who "observe" closely. Clay (1982) suggests that, "they begin to question educational assumptions...The noticing teacher not only discovers new behaviours, and changes in behaviours, but also begins to think about children's learning in new ways" (p. 3). And Evans (1996) offers the following factors as pivotal to change: one's personality, life experience, and personal experiences. These ideas undergird the present study.

My approach to the study of the experiences of these three teachers is influenced by the theories of phenomenology, personal and social constructivism, transformation theory, and narrative inquiry. Specifically, it is consistent with the approaches to qualitative methodology described by theorists such as Kincheloe (2003), Cooper (2002), Radnor (2001), and Young and Collin (1992), who establish links between narrative and cultural reproduction within education and phenomenological consciousness, i.e. experience as "lived," "felt," or "undergone":

Phenomenology produces understandings of the ways in which individuals construct their world and their place in it. This intersubjective knowledge allows us to understand how actors in educational settings give meaning to their lived worlds and facilitates our understanding of how we produce and

reproduce cultural norms and the hidden and ambiguous through which it initiates us into our culture. (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 234)

Social constructivism is premised on the belief that knowledge construction is an (inter)active, dynamic process that is influenced by the historical, social, and cultural ethos in which it occurs (Radnor, 2001). Using both personal and social constructivist lenses allows the researcher to extend the study (Young & Collin, 1992). In describing the dialectical process, Schwandt (2000) writes:

We invite concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in light of new experience. Furthermore, there is an inevitable historical and sociocultural dimension to this construction. We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth. (p. 197)

The centrality of stories or narratives to experience and meaning making has been well documented by Clandinin and Connelly (1994), who assert that, “stories are the closest we can come to experience as we and others tell of our experience. A story has a sense of being full, of coming out of a personal and social history” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 415). As Rodriguez (2002) explains, “We are indeed narrative beings. We negotiate the world and our humanity through narratives. Narratives allow us to grapple with the ambiguity, diversity, mystery, and discontinuity that come with being in the world” (p. 3). Young and Collin (1992) underscore the importance of stories in understanding self and other in the communicative process:

To make sense of the self in context and to be able to express that sense to others, the individual constructs a narrative in which events are connected to one another in relation to self and to others within a structure that integrates the parts into whole and gives coherence and direction through time. (p. 9)

Narrative inquiry has a basis in phenomenology in so far as the main goal is the rigorous study of meaning of experiences (Emden, 1998). Narrative is considered to refer to the ways one makes new meanings out of experience (McEwan, 2001), as a phenomenological understanding of human experience views it as being lived autobiographically.

Narrative inquiry is a systematic epistemological approach that seeks to understand subjective experiences by focusing on the stories that structure and recall those experiences. As a methodology it therefore sits within the interpretive research paradigm. This type of inquiry is characterized by the

revealing and re-presentation of personal experience which serves to provide accounts that enable others to understand how the events and issues experienced by the individual has affected their daily lives. Studies located in the interpretive paradigm are consequently based on certain assumptions. These include that the study is particularistic. It explores and evokes a particular time and space and focuses on finding meaning about a specific issue or problem within that context. It does not intend to speak for all, and indeed acknowledges that it cannot. The primary purpose of interpretive research is to produce thick and rich accounts that reveal the experience of particular participants in order to extend understanding of a particular issue (Stringer, 1999). Interpretive research honours subjectivity, and sees people as reflective and able to articulate their experiences in language, such as telling stories.

From a narrative inquiry perspective, the research design is descriptive narrative research, in that it is not focused on explaining *why* the teachers portrayed here have had particular experiences, but rather *what* their particular experiences were, and *what* meanings they ascribe to them. Descriptive narrative research therefore allows for alternative narratives and interpretations to be recognized (Polkinghorne, 1988). From a postmodern perspective this research question also recognizes that local narratives do not seek to reveal grand ‘truths’ of experience, and can only claim to represent some, rather than all, teachers’ experiences. From a phenomenological perspective, this question seeks to illuminate the meanings of this particular cluster of teachers’ lived experiences and is pre-reflective as it investigates experiences as they are lived rather than as they are conceptualized (van Manen, 1990).

A postmodern perspective emphasizes local accounts and stories, attends to “difference,” is concerned with the multiple nature of “reality,” and recognizes the importance of languages as a medium for the social construction of what may be considered truth (Cheek, 2000). These and other postmodern assumptions have guided the conduct and writing of this thesis.

Postmodernism is interested in exposing social construction and plays with language, revealing dogmas, power, and differences. Postmodernist forms of thinking can also emphasize the value of deconstruction. In terms of meaning, the reading of a text can depend on and refer to other texts, or stories. With inter-textuality, then, what is present in one text points to another and the texts

become linked (Kvale, 1992), which may result in a story that is told differently in the re-telling or reinscribing of it (McWilliam, Lather, & Morgan, 1997). In a world of blurred boundaries, an experience may be interrupted, invaded, or affected by other experiences and events. Language, and the critique of linguistic meaning in texts, is therefore central to postmodern thought, and so a recommendation could be made that in future studies text analysis could include searching for and contemplating the possibilities offered by inter-textuality.

Over the past twenty years there has been a growing recognition that individuals and their “identity” may be constructed by the stories they tell of themselves and their lives. This “narrative turn”, which privileges language and texts as the basis of knowledge in society, considers everything to contain a storied re-presentation. While postmodernism is generally taken-for-granted as being part of the epistemological foundation of narrative inquiry (Josselson, Lieblich, & McAdams, 2003), a narrative approach to human experience can be taken from a range of modern and postmodern positions.

The stories of the teachers in this study embody their hopes, visions, and possibilities, and play an important role in interpreting and constructing personal and professional realities.

The Research Questions

Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence (1999) capture the essence of what it is to be a reflective practitioner when they write:

Practicing a reflective and communicative pedagogy presupposes a reflective practitioner who, together with his or her colleagues, can create a space for a vivid and critical discussion about pedagogical practice and the conditions it needs...With inspiration from the early childhood institutions in Reggio Emilia, in northern Italy, many pedagogues around the world have begun to use pedagogical documentation as a tool for reflecting on pedagogical practice. (pp. 144-145)

This study seeks to understand more about the personal and professional qualities of reflective practitioners in such settings. Therefore, the questions that frame this research project are:

- 1. What are the lived experiences of these teachers who are practicing pedagogical documentation, as modeled in the Reggio Emilia approach?*
- 2. Do these teachers demonstrate particular attributes that foster a “disposition to document”?*

Context of the Study

Reggio Emilia

Reggio Emilia is a city in Northern Italy where educators, parents, and children began working together after World War II to reconstruct society and build an exemplary system of municipal preschools and infant-toddler centres (New, 1993a). Under the leadership of the visionary founding director, Loris Malaguzzi (1920–1994), the system evolved from a parent cooperative movement into a city-run system that exercises a leadership role in Italy and throughout Europe, and now increasingly in Asia, Australia, North America, and other parts of the world (New, 2000). On the international front, the Reggio Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, for example, is known as a source of innovation and reflection (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999). Educators in Reggio Emilia speak of their evolving “experience” and see themselves as a provocation and a reference point, a way of engaging in dialogue that starts from having a strong and rich vision of the child (Edwards, Forman, & Gandini, 1998; Katz & Cesarone, 1994; New 2000). Over the past 40 years, the system has spawned a distinctive and innovative set of philosophical assumptions, a particular curriculum and pedagogy, a method of preschool school organization, and the thoughtful design of environments. This system, taken as a unified whole has become known as the Reggio Emilia approach (Edwards, Forman, & Gandini, 1993).

Pedagogical Documentation

Pedagogical documentation is a way of making visible the otherwise invisible learning processes by which children and teachers work in early childhood centres. It may include anecdotal observations, children’s works, photographs that illustrate a process, audio and video tape recordings, and children’s voiced ideas. A significant component is the teachers’ reflective text, which is an integral part of the documentation. Pedagogical documentation can also be a focus for linking theory and practice, including evaluation, assessment, accountability, and dialogue among stakeholders (Dahlberg & Aasen, 1994). Most importantly, documentation provides a focus for concrete and meaningful adult and child reflection on children’s learning processes.

Nowhere has the process of pedagogical documentation been so well understood and developed as in the preschools of Reggio Emilia. The

influence of these documented moments on the school culture is significant. For one thing, they represent children's construction of knowledge, demonstrate respect for children's work, validate the competencies of children, and communicate a socio-historical perspective to parents, teachers, and children of the school culture. For another, documentation panels and displays reveal teacher ideas and understanding of young children, including the ways in which they co-construct knowledge. In this sense, not only does documentation extend the worth and work of children's co-construction of knowledge but it also serves as a mediational tool for teachers. As teachers engage in "collaborative reflection (so that outcomes are often in the form of collective understandings)... they socially construct new knowledge as they investigate, reflect, and represent children's construction of knowledge" (New, 1992, p. 17). This aspect of Reggio Emilia's work expands upon current understanding of teacher research and development and is consistent with key principles of social constructivism.

This, then, becomes a challenge to teachers to carefully and deliberately gather the children's stories and their own; to offer expansive opportunities for expression of those stories; to follow the tracks the children leave, and to present those landscapes of learning in more public ways. It offers a challenge to the research community to look carefully at the stories teachers uncover and to consider the ways in which teacher knowledge articulates a more complete picture of the teaching and learning process.

Hilltop Children's Centre

Hilltop Children's Centre is a private preschool/day-care programme, which serves children of approximately 3-6 years of age, in Seattle, Washington. Three educators in particular at Hilltop have been incorporating elements of the Reggio Emilia approach into their teaching practice for over ten years, and it is the work of these three that is the focus of this study. These educators have participated in study tours to Reggio Emilia, as well as engaging in independent study on this approach. They have adapted a method of pedagogical documentation that is culturally relevant to their own community. My conversations with these women indicate that there has been an evolution of change in the way they think about children's capabilities. These teachers are "master" documenters. Documentation panels consisting of photographs, transcribed conversations, and teacher reflections cover the school walls. During their many years of documenting children's work, they have created a collection of project history books detailing various investigations and experiences.

In my close observations of these educators individually, it is apparent that each is naturally reflective about what she does in the classroom. Ayers (1989) observes that inviting someone to recreate the story of their personal and professional experiences is also an invitation to reflect upon and examine that experience. It seems that those who choose to write and tell their stories, as these women do through their documentation, are those who tend to be self-reflective (p. 129).

The act of reflection is the interaction between action and learning. As Andrews (1999) describes:

Reflection provides the linkages between the components of the model and practice. It is more than often unconscious. However, if it is deliberate and empirical it becomes a powerful tool for professional development and growth. It becomes an essential component of practice. Reflection then becomes an instrument of professional development, that is, self-development. However, if improved practice is to result from reflection, then it cannot be entirely self-reflection. Instead it must be shared. Often we cannot see what we know, and through reflection and through deliberation with another person (or others) we learn to know what we know, and know what we need to improve practice. (p. 131)

Outcomes and Significance of Study

The research process utilized by educators in Reggio Emilia preschools promotes reflective practice and programme improvement through methods that help educators develop a deeper understanding of their work on an ongoing basis. However, although such research assists the Reggio Emilia educators to refine and improve their work locally, it does not allow external agencies or audiences from other countries to understand outcomes or to measure and compare the impact of their practice over time. Policy makers from other countries and contexts continue to ask for studies of Reggio Emilia schools that measure and compare lasting child-related outcomes and that evaluate programme quality based on external criteria (Daws, 2001; Edwards, 2002). To this end, educational researchers may use a variety of research methods, including interviews, observations, focus groups, and surveys, as well as ethnographic and narrative techniques, in an attempt to study classrooms, children, and families in ways that supply a new kind and level of information to validate the effectiveness of the Reggio Emilia approach. Looking as it does at the practice of pedagogical documentation, this research project, organized as a doctoral study at the University of Southern

Queensland, is one response to that expressed need for information about the Reggio Emilia approach.

Others have explored various adaptations of the Reggio Emilia approach, including: aesthetic education for young children in Reggio Emilia (Lim, 2000); the role of learning assessment in Reggio inspired programmes (Covert, 2000); reconceptualizing early childhood teacher education based on key tenets of Reggio Emilia (Elliott, 2001; Moran, 1998); using technology to enhance observation and documentation skills (Hong, 1998); the role of the teacher in children's acquisition of concepts based on Reggio principles (Chang, 1996); collaborative teaching in Reggio Emilia pre-primary programmes (Rankin, 1996); the educational impact of an adaptation of the Reggio approach on preschool teachers (Sussna, 1995); the change process in a school wide implementation of the Reggio approach (Kersting, 1995); teachers' perceptions of barriers to pedagogic innovation (Entsminger, 1995); and the process of change through adapting the Reggio approach in a middle school (Hill, 1999). In addition, Goldhaber and Smith (2001) and Tegano (2002) have looked at implementing documentation as part of the training for pre-service teachers.

Teaching practices based on constructivist principles encompassing cognitive developmental and socio-cultural theories are evolving. This affects our understanding of the teacher's role in the classroom. Teachers who are trying to implement these principles in their classrooms can benefit from pragmatic examples, such as those offered in this study, to inform their work. Cochran-Smyth and Lytle (1993) state, "what has been clearly missing from the literature on teaching are the voices of teachers themselves" (p. 290). Hauser (1995) expands on this by stating "much can be learned about the value of building theory from the practices of accomplished teachers" (p. 64).

Research identifying international change in early childhood teacher education is limited (Goffin & Day, 1994). With all the burgeoning interest in the work of Reggio Emilia, there has not yet been any research focused specifically upon the experience of practitioners actually incorporating pedagogical documentation, as inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, into their teaching practice. Participants in this study are both teacher-practitioners and teacher-educators. Therefore, this study is in a unique position to provide not only a more

substantive knowledge base in this area than exists at present, but also detailed interpretations which will help inform future research.

Personal Note

I come to this research project as a public school kindergarten teacher with more than twenty years of teaching four, five, and six year olds under my belt. I have also held lecturing positions in a variety of college and university institutions over the last number of years. My position is rather unusual for my context in that I straddle both worlds of early childhood education and primary education. The coursework and research for my master's degree was focused on early childhood education, and as I alluded to earlier, it was during my master's program that I first encountered the educational project of Reggio Emilia. When I was first exposed to the 100 Languages of Children exhibit, tears coursed down my cheeks. I had a similar experience on each of my four visits to the schools of Reggio Emilia – on each occasion I wept, being so profoundly moved that I was left speechless. That is my personal association with the ideas of Reggio, and yet, as a researcher, I'm continually challenged to be somewhat more objective and more articulate about what it is in this work that I find so engaging. This is what brought me to further graduate work, and in particular, to study the experiences of teachers whose responses to the educational philosophy of the Reggio Emilia approach so closely mirrored my own. I have come to recognize that, for me, there was no going back to an earlier incarnation of "myself" as teacher, and so I became curious to know if the dispositions and inclinations I saw within myself were also present in others.

Research Challenges and Boundaries

As with all research, this study is bounded within a particular historical and geographical time and space. It takes place within the context of a large urban centre in the U.S., and it is therefore possible that the teachers' experiences may not be consistent with those of practitioners in small rural areas or in other jurisdictions because of idiosyncratic demographic and cultural factors. This study tells the evolving stories of three particular teachers. Experiential methodology was chosen to highlight the importance of their personal and professional narratives and to capture the complexity and richness of their experiences.

Choosing a qualitative research paradigm and a small sample set precluded external generalization of the findings. However, “internal generalizability” (Radnor, 2001) was derived through the use of cross-case analysis, which Huberman and Miles (2001) propose as “good at finding specific, concrete, historically grounded patterns...” (p. 562). The results of this study are “particularistic” (Huberman & Miles, 2001) and are not intended for large-scale generalization.

Definition of terms

A number of terms are unique to the project of Reggio Emilia, originating in the Italian language and not easily translatable. Other terms, more familiar to the English reader, are clarified as to the meanings assumed in this research study. For clarity’s sake, these terms are defined below.

Advisory council. Each centre and preschool has a council comprised of elected representatives of the staff, parents, and citizens. The size of the council is contingent upon the size of the school. This community-based management council articulates the goals and objectives of the school and solves problems that the schools may encounter (New, 1989; Spaggiari, 1998).

Atelier. A workshop or studio that is used by children and teachers in the municipal preschools. This space contains resources and art materials as well as records of past projects and experiences (Gandini, 1998).

Atlierista. This art teacher is trained in the visual arts and works collaboratively with the classroom teachers in curriculum development and documentation (Gandini, 1998).

Auxiliary staff. These staff members at the schools include cooks and cleaning staff. They have equal status with teachers and are considered to be educators and a part of the children’s educational experience (Borgia, 1991).

Constructivist theory. Piaget’s constructivist theory demonstrates that knowledge evolves through the internal process of inventing understanding by the individual. Through this process individuals create their own adaptive intelligence and knowledge. The key tenet of this theory is that learning occurs through the active construction of knowledge as new information is compared with previous understandings. Knowledge is constructed through experiences involving

interactions between the individual and the environment (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992).

Disposition. Dispositions are frequent and voluntary habits of thinking and doing. These habits of mind are not to be confused with mindless habits, such as stopping at a red light (Katz, 1993a). Katz (1993b) defines a disposition as a “pattern of behaviour exhibited frequently...In the absence of coercion...constituting a habit of mind under some conscious and voluntary control...intentional and oriented to broad goals” (p. 16).

Emergent curriculum. There is no predetermined curriculum. Objectives are flexible and adapted to the needs and interests of the children (Rinaldi, 1994).

Emilia Romagna region. There are 20 regions in Italy and each region refers to a political administrative unit.

Pedagogical documentation. Children’s activities are recorded through photographs, slides, posters, panels, transcriptions of dialogues, as well as audiotapes and videotapes. Teachers’ commentary accompanies these displays (Gandini, 1994).

Hundred Languages. To enhance the creative, social, and cognitive development of children, a wide variety of media and activities are introduced to help children express their ideas and emotions through their natural languages or modes of expression, such as drawing, painting, sculpture, music, building, drama, and so forth (Edwards et al., 1993). Symbolic representation through art is a central curricular feature in the Reggio Emilia approach.

Image of the Child. This is the cornerstone of the Reggio Emilia approach. The young child is seen as having the intrinsic desire to learn, explore, express, discuss, and create. The child is therefore seen as “rich, strong, and powerful” with “potential, plasticity, the desire to grow, curiosity, the ability to be amazed, and the desire to relate to other people and to communicate” (Rinaldi, 1993, p. 114).

Infant-toddler centre (Asili Nido). An educational, full-day, municipally operated child care centre that is for children aged 3 months to 3 years of age (Edwards et al., 1993; Gandini, 1993).

Municipal board. A coordinating board composed of representatives of all the advisory councils as well as representatives of the pedagogical team and the municipal administration (Documentation Centre for Educational Research, 1994).

Pedagogista. The educational coordinators who direct the educational aspects of the schools and centers. Each works with approximately five schools or centres (Palestis, 1994).

Preschool (Scuola dell' Infanzia). An educational, full-day, municipally operated child care centre that is for children 3 through 5 years of age (Edwards et al., 1994). It is not considered to be a preparatory experience for “real” school. The most direct translation is “young children’s school” (Documentation Centre for Educational Research, 1994).

Progettazione. Flexible planning in which educational objectives are projected and activities are planned but provide for the inclusion of unplanned and unexpected learning opportunities or events. New possibilities for extending learning, thinking, and the creation of new knowledge are anticipated and welcomed.

Project approach. An in-depth investigation of a topic that is usually undertaken by a small group of children. The key feature is that it is a research effort focused on finding answers to questions about a topic posed either by the children or the teacher (Katz, 1994).

Reggio Emilia approach or Reggio approach. A term used to designate a distinctive set of philosophical assumptions, curriculum, pedagogy, method of school orientation, and design of environments of the Reggio Emilia preschools and infant-toddler centres. The abbreviated term Reggio approach is also used to describe this philosophy (Bredenkamp, 1993; Edwards et al., 1993).

Reggio Emilia municipal schools and Reggio schools. These terms are used to designate the municipal preschools and infant-toddler centres of Reggio Emilia (Gandini, 1993).

Social constructivist theory. Vygotsky’s extension of constructivist learning theory which emphasizes the importance of culture and social context in the self-construction of knowledge.

Organization of the Study

This thesis is comprised of eight chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the purpose of the study, and the questions that motivate and guide this investigation into the disposition to document. It contextualizes the study within

the field of study of the Reggio Emilia approach interpreted in the context of a particular setting.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature regarding the cultural development, educational development, and organizational structure of the Reggio Emilia Schools.

Chapter 3 outlines Transformation Theory, a major theoretical framework I used in this study. It is a theory that offers a means for examining and understanding life-changing adult learning. By combining these two bodies of literature, I have found a way of setting my study within a particular realm of human activity, that of teaching.

Chapter 4 briefly traces the evolution of phenomenology from its epistemological and ontological viewpoints.

Chapter 5 presents an overview of the methodological perspectives in which this research is grounded. The procedures for data collection, management, and analysis are outlined, along with the challenges inherent in qualitative research. Methodological tensions, ethical issues, and limitations of this inquiry are also articulated.

In Chapter 6, I present a series of “portraits” of the particular setting where this research was conducted, and of each of the three key protagonists. This chapter is intended to introduce the reader to the stories of the individual participants and to facilitate an understanding of the uniqueness of each individual’s experience. Consequently, the data are displayed in individual narratives that tell the stories of each teacher’s experience of working with principles of the Reggio Emilia philosophy, including the practice of pedagogical documentation.

In Chapter 7, in contrast, the data are consolidated to present a cross-case analysis of the findings. This chapter is structured by the primary research questions and focuses on the themes that emerge from the substantive conversations that form the narrative experiences of the protagonists.

Chapter 8 presents a discussion of the overall findings of this study and their implications for theory and practice.

CHAPTER 2:

Review of the Literature - The Reggio Emilia Approach

Men and women together have built the walls of this school, because we wanted it new and different for our children.

~ plaque placed on the outside wall of XXV Aprile school at Villa Cella

In order to create a conceptual context for the present study, it is important to review the existing literature. The Reggio Emilia approach is the premise upon which the present study is based, and a strong working knowledge of its principles and philosophy has been necessary to conduct the research. Therefore, the review of literature begins with an overview of the Reggio Emilia approach, and then moves towards a closer examination of some of its basic premises.

An Overview of Reggio Emilia

Reggio Emilia is a wealthy, cosmopolitan metropolis of 130,000 people located in the Emilia Romagna region of Northern Italy. The region is considered economically wealthy, and rich in art and architecture, industry and tourism (Reggio Emilia, 1992). The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education has been widely recognized, with its innovative programmes acknowledged by educators, psychologists, and researchers from all over the world as the most exceptional example of the highest quality early education that the world has ever seen (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Gardner, 2001; Katz, 1995; Newsweek, 1991). An exhibition of the children's work from the infant-toddler centres and preschools of Reggio Emilia, *The Hundred Languages of Children*, has toured the world, to wide acclaim.

The educational system of Reggio Emilia has been influenced by a tradition of community involvement since its inception after World War II (Borgia, 1991). A municipal history document states that:

In 1945, the most pressing problem for a population that had just come out of a war was that of rebuilding - materially, socially, and morally. Aside from the need to restore buildings, infrastructures, and agricultural and production activities, the people also felt the need to overcome the ideological divisions that had lasted for two decades. Above all, the people felt the need to see that their children would never experience anything as terrible as the war had been for themselves. The groups organized to fight against the dictatorship, the German occupation, and injustice, and for emancipation, social equality, progress, and a better future... [sic] in their children the scope of their commitment. The children would be the inhabitants of that 'new world' that

was rapidly being built. It was thus entirely natural that the C.L.N. (Comato di Liberazione Nazionale) would concern itself with early childhood. (Reggio Children, 1997, p. 6)

Accordingly, after the war, the people of Villa Cella, a village near Reggio Emilia, decided to build and run a school for young children, financed initially with the sale of abandoned trucks and other items left behind by the retreating Germans. Parents did not want ordinary schools. Rather, they wanted schools where children could acquire skills of critical thinking and collaboration essential to rebuilding and ensuring a democratic society (New, 2000).

Loris Malaguzzi joined in this endeavour and later became founder, and for many years director, of the Reggio Emilia system of municipal early childhood education. Malaguzzi loved to recall the genesis of the Reggio experience at the preschool in Villa Cella, and the declaration which is still inscribed on the school as the place where peace-building is achieved by educating the new generations.

XXV Aprile was the first *scuola dell'infanzia* in the Reggio area, built through the hard work and solidarity of women, farmers and workers of the small village of Villa Cella. Malaguzzi described it as “the beginning of our entire experience,” although the first municipal school in Reggio Emilia was not opened until 1963 (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 146). Malaguzzi later told the story to Lella Gandini (Malaguzzi, translated by Gandini, 1998):

Destiny must have wanted me to be part of an extraordinary event. I hear that in a small village called Villa Cella, a few miles from the town of Reggio Emilia, people decided to build and run a small school for young children. That idea seems incredible to me! I rush there on my bike and I discover that it is all quite true. I find women intent upon salvaging and washing pieces of brick. The people had gotten together and had decided that the money to

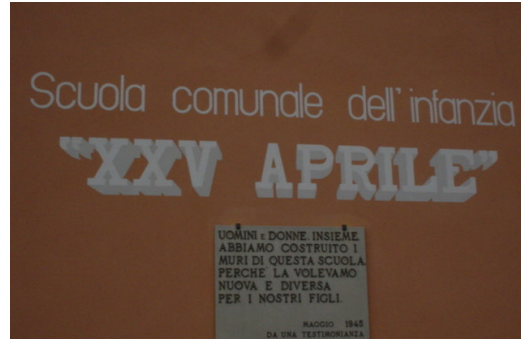


Figure 1: “Men and women together have built the walls of this school, because we wanted it new and different for our children.”



Figure 2: Families in Villa Cella reclaim bricks from bombed buildings to build a school.

begin the construction would come from the sale of an abandoned war tank, a few trucks, and some horses left behind by the retreating Germans.

“The rest will come,” they say to me.

“I am a teacher,” I say.

“Good,” they say. “If that is true, come work with us.”

It all seemed unbelievable: the idea, the school, the inventory consisting of a tank, a few trucks, and horses.

They explain everything to me: “We will build the school on our own, working at night and on Sundays. The land has been donated by a farmer; the bricks and beams will be salvaged from bombed houses; the sand will come from the river; the work will be volunteered by all of us.”

“And the money to run the school?”

A moment of embarrassment and then they say, “We will find it.”

Women, men, young people – all farmers and workers, all special people who had survived a hundred war horrors – are dead serious. (pp. 50-51)

Elsewhere, Malaguzzi recalled:

I had the honour of experiencing the rest of the story, with its difficulty, its petty stubbornness, and its enthusiasm. And it remained an uninterrupted lesson given by men and women whose ideas were [sic] intact, who had understood long before I had that history can be changed, and is changed by taking possession of it, starting with the destiny of the children. (Barazonni, 1985, pp. 14-15)

Today, child welfare remains a major priority in Reggio Emilia, as evidenced by the community’s support of the educational system (New, 1990). Across Italy, children are viewed as the collective responsibility of the state (New, 1993b). In 1993, Malguzzi re-articulated his belief in “a system of relationships that is achieved because of the convictions by all concerned that only by working closely will we be able to offer the best experiences to children” (Gandini, 1996b, p. 20).

In 2000, the municipality of Reggio Emilia supported 21 preschools and 13 infant-toddler centres. The preschools serve a total of 1,508 children between the ages of three and six, and the infant-toddler centres serve 835 children between the ages of three months and three years. The city also supports five infant-toddler centres and one early childhood centre for children from age one to six that are managed by cooperatives. In addition, there is one infant-toddler centre run by parents. The presence of other early childhood services makes it possible to serve 94.6% of all children between the ages three and six and 38% of all children between the ages of three months and three years (Municipal Infant-Toddler Centres and Preschools of Reggio Emilia, 2000). These preschools and infant-toddler centres are incorporated into individual communities by building each as a

unique centre of learning that reflects the character of that particular community (Edwards, Forman, & Gandini, 1993).

The set of philosophical assumptions, curriculum and pedagogy, method of pre-primary⁴ school organization, and design of environments has become known as the Reggio Emilia approach (Edwards, Forman, & Gandini, 1993). Without a doubt, the Reggio Emilia approach has had an effect, both locally and globally. New (1989) has described the overall preschool support structure, noting the influence wielded by school committees in local decision-making:

Each school has a Parent-Teacher Board made up of elected representatives of staff, parents and citizens. The Board, which includes from 13 to 51 members depending on school size, works together on problems specific to their school. One person from each board is elected for membership to 'La Consulta,' a committee which represents a synthesis of the individual school committees. Included as members of La Consulta are representatives from the Directorial staff, Town Council and the local Department of Education. This group asserts significant influence over local government decision-making, in addition to presenting school-related concerns. (p. 4)

Influence extends beyond local politics, however. In 1980 the *Gruppo Nazionale di Studio e di Lavoro sugli Asili Nido* (National Preschool Research Group) was formed in Reggio Emilia. The group is made up of educators, researchers, and university professors. They have held numerous national conferences with the aim of deepening through research and debate the understanding of all matters concerning the concept of preschools (Municipality of Reggio Emilia: Department of Education, 1992). Reggio Children, the International Centre for the Defense and Promotion of the Rights and Potential of All Children, was established on March 11, 1994. Based on an idea originating with Loris Malaguzzi, the centre's mission is "to protect and disseminate the wealth of knowledge and experience accumulated over many years of work in the field of early childhood education by the Infant-toddler Centres and Preschools run by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia" and to create opportunities for exchange and research on the topic of "a new culture of childhood that places real value on the potential and creativity of children" (Giudici, Rinaldi, & Krechevsky, 2001, p. 351).

⁴ The term "pre-primary" schools or programmes in Reggio Emilia refers both to infant-toddler centers, serving children from birth to three years of age, and preschools, serving children from three years of age to six years of age.

In Reggio Emilia there is a “long commitment to, and experience in, experimentation and research and through a continual process of reform and updating, it [sic] is constantly based upon the most recent theoretical methods” (Municipality of Reggio Emilia: Department of Education Historical Outline, 1992, p. 5). Despite widespread interest in their methods, educators in Reggio Emilia do not consider their approach a “model.” Rather, Reggio educators, starting with Malaguzzi, “express hesitation over writing down the principles of their approach because they so highly value questioning, reflection, research, and adaptation” (Bredekamp, 1993, p. 15). They fear that written descriptions will be taken as a prescription, which would go against their philosophy (Bredekamp, 1993).

In several empirical studies of the early 1990s, researchers agreed that the Reggio Emilia philosophy was primarily based on relationships (Gandini, 1993; Katz, 1990; Malaguzzi, 1993a; New, 1990). Katz (1990) provided first hand, qualitative observations and research insights in her description of the origins, educational results generated in Italy, and implications regarding successful adaptation in other cultures. She explained that Reggio Emilia preschools are part of a public system that strives to serve children’s welfare and the social needs of families while supporting children’s fundamental right to grow and learn in favourable environments with key relationships that include cooperative peers and caring, professional adults. As part of this cooperative effort, Reggio Emilia educators teach together for many years with different groups of children, discuss experiences in their classrooms, share documentation, and plan future classroom experiences together. Children are taught by a pair of teachers and remain in the same classroom for three years in a looping arrangement, which provides time and continuity of experience in trusting, supportive environments for teaching and learning (Moran, 1998b).

In 1991, *Newsweek* magazine proclaimed the preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, to be “the best in the world.” It was claimed that the three tenets of communication, exploration, and problem solving complement one another and are paramount in these schools. Together, they form the underpinnings of a robust and collaborative early childhood education paradigm.

Although many regions of Italy, such as Tuscany, Lombardy, Trentino, Piedmont, Veneto, and Liguria, have established high-quality municipal early

childhood systems (Gandini & Edwards, 2001), Emilia Romagna remains one of the most innovative, and the town of Reggio Emilia is particularly noteworthy.

Fundamental Principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach

The Reggio Emilia approach of early childhood education is based on a comprehensive philosophy that is underpinned by several fundamental guiding principles. While, for the sake of clarity, these principles are presented individually in the present study, they should actually be considered a tightly woven, integrated, systemic philosophy, in which each principle reflexively both influences and is influenced by all of the other principles (Gandini, 1998). Moreover, despite their definitive use here, the key tenets of the Reggio Emilia approach are not carved in stone but rather should be considered as essential guidelines to the underlying Reggio Emilia philosophy. The following six principles represent a synopsis of what has been named by the educators in Reggio Emilia as the philosophy's fundamental guidelines (Cadwell, 2003; Edwards et al., 1993; Gandini, 1993; Spaggiari, 1998): the child as protagonist, collaborator, and communicator; the teacher as partner, nurturer, guide, and researcher; cooperation as the foundation of the educational system; the environment as the "third teacher;" the parent as partner; and documentation as communication.

1. The child as protagonist, collaborator, and communicator.

As their primary principle, educators in the Reggio Emilia pre-primary schools believe that children are strong, powerful, and competent from birth. Rinaldi (1998) has described the cornerstone of the Reggio experience, based on practice, theory, and research, as "the image of the child as rich in resources, strong, and competent. The emphasis is placed on seeing the children as unique individuals with rights rather than simply needs" (p. 114). Children are protagonists with the right to collaborate and communicate with others. Their rights are manifested in curiosity, wonderment, exploration, discovery, social construction, and representations of their knowledge.

Children are not passive receptors of teacher-generated knowledge but are able to construct knowledge based on their experiences and interactions with others: "All children have preparedness, potential, curiosity, and interest in constructing their own learning, negotiating with everything their environment

brings to them” (Rinaldi, 1998, p. 114). The child is seen as a powerful contributor to his or her own education (Rinaldi, 1999). Thus, children and their classroom contributions are highly valued. In effect, children, teachers, and parents become collaborators, the three central protagonists in the educational process. The child is a collaborator who relates to and with peers, family, teachers, and the community.

Children are also communicators, developing intellectually through the use of symbolic representations, which may include words, movement, drawing, painting, building, sculpture, shadow play, collage, dramatic play, and music, all of which lead children to surprising levels of communication, symbolic skills, and creativity (Edwards & Springate, 1993). These multiple forms of representation have come to be known as the “hundred languages of children,” after Malaguzzi’s poem (1993c), which reads “the child has a hundred languages, and a hundred hundred hundred more.” Reggio educators believe that children have the right to use many materials in order to discover and communicate what they know, comprehend, wonder about, question, feel and imagine. They make their thinking visible through these many natural “languages” (Cadwell, 1997).

II. The teacher as partner, nurturer, guide, and researcher.

Reggio Emilia-inspired educators fill the simultaneous roles of partner, nurturer, guide, and researcher (Edwards, 1998). As stressed by Loris Malaguzzi (1993b), founder of the Reggio Emilia approach, teachers must have a positive image of children and their vast capabilities. The teacher’s role, as described by Bredekamp (1993), “derives from and cannot be separated from the image of the child” (p. 16). It is essential that teachers see themselves as partners in the co-construction of knowledge with the children. Teachers do not view themselves as leaders who are in front of the children, or as following behind, being by, near, beside, or close to the children. Rather, they are *with* the children, exploring, discovering, and learning together. The whole classroom community understands that each contribution is valued. This, in turn, makes children more powerful contributors to their own education.

A review of the literature regarding the Reggio Emilia philosophical principles indicates that teachers are also researchers who must constantly readjust their image of children and learning. To be effective researchers, teachers

continually hone their observations and listening skills. Educators decide what to teach by “listening, observing, asking questions, reflecting on the responses, and then introducing materials and ideas children can use to expand their understanding” (Rosen, 1992, p. 82). As researchers into children’s skills and abilities, teachers create learning environments that encourage both reflection and examination of their own personal beliefs about what children can and should be doing within educational settings.

Concepts discussed as part of the role of the teacher include reciprocity, research, collaboration, partnership, observation, and documentation (Bredenkamp, 1993). Borgia (1991) describes the role of the teacher not as a transmitter of knowledge but as a collaborator or co-constructor of knowledge. Among the responsibilities of the teacher, Edwards et al. (1993) list the following: promoting children’s learning, managing the classroom, preparing the environment, providing nurturance and guidance, and seeking professional growth. According to Gandini (1993):

teachers maintain a strong collegial relationship with all other teachers and staff and engage in continuous discussion and interpretation of their work as well as of the work of and with children. Teachers see themselves as researchers, preparing documentation of their work with children, whom they also consider researchers. (p. 6)

The challenge for teachers in this learning process is to be present without being intrusive (Edwards et al., 1993). To this end, teachers view themselves as facilitators, provocateurs, learners, stage setters, and the “memory” for the children (Firlik & Firlik, 1993; New, 1991). New (1991) has described this strategy of teacher as participant and observer:

This strategy – of teacher as participant and observer – is not pretence on the part of teachers to encourage children to attend to an activity. It is a pedagogical approach that enables teachers to construct a better understanding of children’s development as they simultaneously encourage children to articulate and test their own theories of the world around them. (p. 28)

For her part, Edwards (1993) discusses the various dimensions of the teacher’s collaborative role in learning within the Reggio approach:

The teacher’s role centres on provoking occasions of discovery through a kind of alert, inspired facilitation and stimulation of children’s dialogue, co-action, and co-construction of knowledge. Because intellectual discovery is believed to be an essentially social process, the teacher assists even the

youngest children to learn to listen to others, take account of their goals and ideas, and communicate successfully. (p. 154)

Collaboration extends into curriculum. In Reggio Emilia, curriculum begins with an idea that evolves over a long period of time into an extensive, complex study. A pivotal tenet of this curricular process is the concept of reciprocity, which implies responsiveness in circular paths of communication, responsibility, and control between teachers and children in the social construction of knowledge (Malaguzzi, 1993a). The teacher begins by carefully observing the children's interests, questioning their ideas, and helping them develop those ideas into concrete learning experiences. Each day's experiences build on the previous day's events. Teachers constantly compare and contrast the children's current ideas with the children's initial ideas and the teacher's own ideas. Children's work is not casually created but rather results from guided exploration of topics and events relevant to the lives of the children.

On the one hand, observers have marvelled at the extent to which the children in the Reggio preschools explore topics associated with such content areas as mathematics and science. They remain puzzled that children are trusted to determine content of emergent curriculum and that they are believed capable of choosing topics worthy of further investigation. On the other hand, teachers see the child as having rights and power, not weaknesses and needs, and the Reggio Emilia centres promote a strong, three-way collaboration between children, their parents, and their teachers (Gandini, 1993a). As Rankin (1992) notes, "The educational reciprocity appears again and again as teacher and learner together guide the projects" (p. 35). Reflective teachers are expected to build upon their own knowledge bases, skills, and attitudes that are of value in their own communities as they construct dynamic and effective learning environments for teaching and learning.

III. Cooperation as the foundation of the educational system in Reggio Emilia

Reggio-inspired teachers are partners with their colleagues. Cooperation among staff members is an essential tenet in this philosophy, and collaboration at all levels is a powerful tool in achieving educational goals. In the city of Reggio Emilia, a head administrator reports to the town council and works with a group of

pedagogistas, the curriculum team leaders for the teachers of five to six centres. Each school contains an *atelierista*, a teacher specifically trained in the arts, who collaborates with the classroom teachers in planning and documentation. The *atelierista* “makes possible a deepening in the instruction via the use of many diverse media” (Edwards et al., 1993, p. 10). All auxiliary staff members are viewed as part of the educational experience, and cooks and custodial staff are often included in planning, implementing goals and field trips (Borgia, 1991).

All classes contain two teachers, allowing for one to be available to systematically observe, take notes and record conversations between the children (New, 1992). Teaching pairs plan experiences for the classroom and collaborate with teaching colleagues and staff members. Traditional isolation is viewed as an obstacle; teachers consider themselves partners in learning. While they strive for individual autonomy where curriculum is concerned, they also work on communication, collegiality, and professionalism (Edwards et al., 1993).

A great deal of time is set aside for planning and staff meetings in Reggio Emilia preschools. Teachers have daily planning meetings to discuss future learning directions. In addition, they attend in-service sessions for approximately five hours a week, devoting additional hours to the documentation of children’s work (Palestis, 1994). Teachers work in shifts so that the school day can be extended to best meet the needs of children and their families. Educators also arrange to meet with parents during the evenings. This schedule can be long and quite demanding, so cooperation among staff members is essential.

IV. The environment as the “third teacher.”

The educators in the pre-primary schools of Reggio Emilia place high value on the physical environment of the school, often referring to it as the “third teacher” or “third educator” (Gandini, 1998, p. 177), in conjunction with the two classroom teachers. Going beyond the mere physical space, the environment is seen as a living, changing system. Greenman (1988) states that the environment “indicates the way time is structured and the roles we are expected to play. It conditions how we feel, think, and behave; and it dramatically affects the quality of our lives” (p. 5). Wien (1997) refers to pedagoga Tiziana Filippini, who, speaking of systems theory, describes the school as a “living organization, involved constantly in interchange, self-nourishment, and adjustment” (p. 31).

The *atelier* is one example of creative environmental design in terms of the physical space. The *atelier*, or art studio, is a “workshop or studio, furnished with a variety of resource materials, used by all the children and adults in a school” (Edwards, et al., 1993, p. 313). A vital part of every Reggio Emilia school, the *atelier* contains a wide range of media and materials for fostering creativity and learning through projects. The *atelier* provides a place for children to use a variety of techniques, it assists the adults in understanding processes of how children learn, and it provides a “workshop for documentation” (Edwards, et al., 1993, p. 121). The *atelier* might be equipped with easels, paints, markers, fine drawing pens, small objects for collage, items from the environment (shells, leaves, nuts, twigs, etc.), a light table to view the transparency of things, clay, wire, transparent containers for viewing and a multitude of other materials (Borgia, 1991; Edwards et al., 1993). Mini-*ateliers* are also present in many classrooms for small projects. Of the *atelier* and its purpose, Malaguzzi says:

The *atelier* was included in each school as part of our wider educational project for young children and it became part of each infant-toddler centre starting in 1970. The work in the *atelier* is seen as integrated and combined with the entire didactic approach. The intent was to react to the marginal place assigned generally to visual and expressive education. We also wanted to react to an education based on words and meaningless rituals and give possibilities to a child seen as rich in resources, and interests to a child interactive and constructivist. We wanted to create possibilities to refine taste and aesthetic sensibility, to observe and find theories about children starting from scribbles and going forward. We also wanted to try out tools, materials, and techniques. We wanted to support creative and logical paths the children would choose to explore. The *atelier*, in our approach, is an additional space within the school where to explore with our hands and our minds, where to refine our sight through the practice of the visual arts, where to work on projects connected with the activities planned in the classroom, where to explore and combine new and well-known tools, techniques, and materials. (quoted in Gandini, 1998, p. 172)

Elsewhere, Rabitti (1992) quoted Malaguzzi responding to a question asked of him regarding how many children who attend the Reggio Emilia schools become artists:

There’s often this misunderstanding about our schools, as we are the only ones to have the atelier... We introduced it in the beginning. The atelier was a way to undermine the tradition, of introducing complexity into a monolithic structure. In the ‘school of words’ we introduced the ‘school of doing,’ activities which meant the introduction and strengthening of many expressive languages, such as painting, sculpture, graphics, which are traditionally considered subordinate to basic skills. It’s not true. They are

complementary. The child learns and understands through art as well; basic academics and creativity can reciprocally strengthen each other. We entrust art with the same task we entrust logic and mathematics. Art expressions are not ancillary to writing and reading... Art – that is creativity, imagination – is not a myth out there, it is inside the child, every child; it is in his/her very way of learning... we believe with Piaget that cognition is born through the acting of the child on objects... That's why the atelier didn't remain a secluded place where to 'make art,' but burst into the school, melted into the school – see the wealth of material around the school, the creation of class mini-ateliers in 1982, and the passing of skills from the atelierista to the teachers and vice versa. The atelier was one of the elements we introduced to break the traditional school structure (p. 21).

As a result of the creative learning environments fostered by the *atelier*, children are involved in active pursuits, and the curriculum content is integrated, engaging, and relevant to them. As children participate in project planning, both age-appropriate and individually appropriate plans evolve. Children are inclined to participate in projects since they are naturally interested in self-selected subject matter. Moreover, such efforts to match curricular materials to children's development exemplify developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp, 1993). Reggio Emilia-inspired teachers support children's efforts to plan creative activities and choose accompanying materials. Allowing time for children to use a wide range of media ensures that students are actively engaged and genuinely interested in their work. Equipping classrooms with an interesting variety of materials provides rich environments for both spontaneity and project revisitation.

In another gesture to the creative deployment of physical space, the extensive use of windows and open spaces allows light to transform the wide variety of objects found in Reggio Emilia-inspired classrooms, including such items as



Figure 3: Elements from nature abound in Reggio-inspired classrooms, such as Hilltop Children's Centre.

mobiles, paintings, and mirrors. Other physical characteristics include indoor courtyards, doors to the outside in each classroom, kitchens open to view, and wall-size windows between rooms and to the outside (Borgia, 1991).

Neugebauer (1994) observes

that “spaces do not have definite boundaries; windows, short walls, dividers, open spaces, mirrors, and mobiles, all carry our eyes from one open space to the next” (p. 70). Nature helps to blur boundaries further by being present in the classroom in the form of wood, plants, stones, and other natural materials.

Carol Anne Wien (1997), a Canadian visitor to Reggio Emilia, makes this observation:

Having seen a concept of *relationality* carried out in the organization of materials in more complex ways than I have encountered in North America, I notice it everywhere. Legos are not simply put in a bin for children’s use: a mirrored table provides a base, and the Legos are used with smooth white beach pebbles, a contrast to the brick-like geometry of the Lego. A wall of shelving that houses old machine parts (such as blenders, clocks, gears, bins of screws and cogs) includes natural materials too – a vase of pussy willows, cascading plants. Documentation displays are never solely in one or two media (photos and text, say) but generally include artefacts, such as clay objects on a surface of stone chips. *Nothing* sits in isolation; *nothing* is seen as independent of either objects or people. This effort to put materials in relation to each other is such a sharp reminder that humans, too, do not grow in a vacuum: we require landscapes and social relations of considerable complexity both for the development of the brain and for group membership. (p. 33, italics in the original)

Reggio Emilia-inspired school environments contain elements of the personalities of students, as well as the culture of the community. As Malaguzzi says “The space has to be sort of an aquarium which mirrors the ideas, values, attitudes, and cultures of the people who live within it” (Gandini, 1994, p. 50).

Thus, school displays personalize what is being done in the classrooms, and children are invited to bring in objects from home to add to the classroom climate. The housekeeping corner of the classroom often contains real dried goods, such as pasta and beans, as well as utensils made of the same materials used throughout the region, and as a result, these familiar details blend the community culture with the classroom culture.

Common to all the schools is the central “piazza,” which is designed to reflect the community’s historical significance, and is similar to the square found in every Italian city. To reflect the children’s adaptation of the piazza, there is often a dress-up area in the space. Edwards et al., (1993) describe space in terms of culture:

The space reflects the culture of the people who create it in many ways and, upon careful examination, reveals even distinct layers of this cultural influence. First of all, there is in these schools a great deal of attention paid

to the beauty and harmony of design. This is evident in both the functional and pleasing furnishings, often invented and built by teachers and parents together. It is also evident in the colours of the walls, the sunlight streaming through large windows, the healthy, green plants, and many other details such as the careful upkeep of the space. This special care for the appearance of the environment, along with the design of spaces that favour social interaction, are essential elements of Italian culture. (p. 140)

Reggio educators incorporate aspects of a home into the school: vases of flowers, real dishes, tablecloths, and plants. There is attention to design and the placement of objects to provide a visual and meaningful context. Even lunchrooms and bathrooms are considered centres of “social exchange” designed to encourage playful encounters (New, 1990). Kitchens are home-like, with their silverware and cloth napkins, and bathrooms are decorated with mobiles, paintings, and colourful arrangements of towels and toothbrushes (New, 1990).

Firlik and Firlik (1993) describe school displays as fostering an aesthetic environment as well:

Displays are typically designed in relation to windows and doors so that natural light can brighten walls directly, or flow through transparent collages or weavings. Light bulbs placed behind or under panes of glass or plastic covered with coloured cellophane often illuminate children’s work from underneath, or from a different perspective...display is a vital part of an extensive documentation process that is a key element of the emergent curriculum. (p. 43)

The objects contained within the space, then, are not simplified, cartoon-like images assumed to appeal to children, but are "beautiful" objects in their own right.



Figure 4: Art materials displayed aesthetically in the atelier space.

Manufactured and natural materials available for art projects are carefully displayed in transparent containers, and objects are set on or before mirrors to provide multiple views and capture children's attention. The strong role of the arts in Italian culture is evident in the placement of the *atelier* (the art studio discussed above) adjacent to each classroom, as is the role played by the *atelierista* (artist-teacher) in supporting children and teachers in their work.

The term *osmosis* is used by Ceppi and Zini (1998) to describe the relationship of a school to the world outside: "A school should not be a sort of counter-world, but the essence and distillation of the society. Contemporary reality can and should permeate the school, filtered by a cultural project of interpretation that serves as a membrane and interface" (p. 14).

The walls hold the history of the life within the school. Panels of children's words and photos synthesize past projects and chronicle current ones. According to Malaguzzi, "The walls of our pre-primary schools speak and document. The walls are used as spaces for temporary and permanent exhibits of what the children and adults make come to life" (Gandini, 1998, p. 175). Children's work and words are highly visible within the space, communicating clearly to the children, their parents, and the community the respect and value placed on children's abilities. In this fashion, the very walls create another form of transparency or a type of osmosis between the school and surrounding community.

The physical environment of these schools reflects Dewey's educational philosophy and Vygotsky's social constructivist learning theory (Malaguzzi, 1998). The overall environmental structure stems from the belief of Reggio educators that children are "resourceful, curious, competent, imaginative, and have a desire to interact with and communicate with others" (Rinaldi, 1998, p. 114). Cadwell (1997) would agree and asserts that children can best create meaning and make sense of their world through living in rich environments which support "complex, varied, sustained, and changing relationships between people, the world of experiences, ideas, and the many ways of expressing ideas" (p. 93), rather than from simplified lessons or learning environments. Further, children in Reggio schools are learning to value their rich visual heritage and thus become perceptually aware through the support of an environment that is designed for multi-sensory learning. As Cadwell (1997) describes, "no space is marginal, no corner is unimportant and each space needs to be alive and open to change" (p.

93). Finally, as has been pointed out, these environments support the development of children's many languages – and this is considered the right of children (Reggio Children, 1996).

V. The Parent as Partner.

Children, teachers, and parents are three equally important components in the philosophy's educational process. Parents are encouraged to be active contributors to children's activities in the classroom and in the school. Considered essential in Italy, parental participation is manifested in daily interactions during school hours, in discussions regarding educational and psychological issues, and in special events, field trips, and celebrations. Thus, parents actively participate in their children's learning experiences and at the same time help to ensure the welfare of all children in the school (Corsaro & Molinari, 2005; Gandini, 1993). Parents participate in their children's education by giving of their time and talents, and families are expected to bring ideas and skills to school. Curricular and administrative decisions involve parent-teacher collaboration, and parents also serve as advocates for the schools in community politics. As Rinaldi (1998) puts it:

Schooling for us is a system of relations and communications embedded in the wider social system. Certainly one of our basic principles involves participation, in the broader sense of the word. To feel a sense of belonging, to be part of a larger endeavour, to share meanings – these are the rights of everyone involved in the educational process, whether teachers, children, or parents. In our schools, the active participation of the families and collegiality among staff and children working in groups are essential. (p. 114)

In essence, the mutual exchange of ideas between parents and teachers favours the development of a new way of educating children that helps teachers to view the participation of families as an “intrinsic element of collegiality and an integration of different wisdoms” (Spaggiari, 1998, p. 104).

The parents themselves may benefit from their participation, however, as Lillian Katz (1994) speculates:

I wonder if Reggio Emilia's outstanding success with parental involvement is due to the extraordinary quality of the children's experiences, rather than the reverse. In other words, my hypothesis (I emphasize that this is a hypothesis – and Loris Malguzzi wanted [the word] ‘hypothesis’) is that parents become involved, in large part, because of the quality of experiences of their children, and that this quality is not simply the consequence or result of high parental involvement. (p. x)

Intricate and complex organization appears at every level and within every context in the municipal schools of Reggio Emilia – from the collections, arrangements, and care of collage materials on a shelf, to the daily preparation and serving of a nutritious meal for children and teachers, to the thoughtful selection of small groups of children by groups of adults who consider multiple perspectives, to the layered agenda and inclusive dialogue of an evening meeting of parents and teachers. Cadwell (2003) describes it this way:

[It is] organic instead of rigid. It serves a larger purpose. It is not neat and tidy; rather it reflects the complexity and the order of the universe. In some ways, it is as if the organization already exists, waiting to be discovered. It evolves; it is flexible. It has flow and movement. It honours the integrity of all involved. It is not imposed from the top; rather it grows out of a dialogic group working closely together. (p. 5-6)

The Reggio Emilia approach emphasizes that parents are partners - performing basic obligations for children's educational and social development; collaborators and problem solvers; reinforcing the school's efforts with children and helping solve problems; supporters, providing volunteer assistance to teachers, the parent organization and other parents; advisors and co-decision makers, providing input on school policies and programmes through membership in governmental bodies; and as an audience, attending and appreciating children's performances and productions.

VI. Documentation as communication.

Documentation serves many functions and is an important tool in Reggio Emilia-inspired programmes. As Gandini (1998) explains, "teachers routinely take notes and photographs and make tape recordings of group discussions and children's play" (p. 82). Documentation of the children's projects is carefully arranged, using transcriptions of children's conversations and remarks, photographs of ongoing work and activities, and the products that have been produced by the children to represent their thinking and learning (Gandini, 1993). Projects are displayed for observation and reflection by all members of the school and community. Through this documentation, Katz and Chard (1996) note that learning and progress are made visible in visually pleasing ways. Such documentation is an effective way for children, teachers, and parents to expand learning and increase their sense of community through a wide range of media and

materials. Further, these displays convey that children and their work are valued.

Neugebauer (1994) writes:

The presence and work of the children permeates the place. This is a place where children are powerful. This space belongs to them; they can create and recreate. It is organized for their inspiration and control. Not only do the children understand how to move through their environment, but they see everywhere a history, a record, of what has already happened. (p. 68)

One of the most notable characteristics of the Reggio Emilia approach is an emphasis on creativity and symbolic representation. The focus is on having children represent themselves through the multiple “languages” mentioned above. These are not just spoken or written languages but symbolic; including drawing, shadow play, dancing, singing, sculpting, and dramatic play, along with a multitude of other ways children discover to express themselves. Children are exposed to a wealth of high quality materials from an early age and are offered many opportunities to interact with them either individually or with others. Teachers allow children to explore their communicative languages, but are available to help children choose tools, model relevant artistic processes, and discuss project ideas. Children work with media at their own pace, repeating activities and creating art based on imagination and observation. Students receive a wide variety of experiences and multiple exposures to different media for exploration, self-expression, and social interaction in the construction of knowledge.

The visual arts are an avenue for children to make sense of their experiences. Documentation and display of children’s work disseminates knowledge in non-verbal ways that benefit young children and linguistically diverse learners. For linguistically diverse students, for example, these methods represent knowledge that cannot yet be represented verbally. Students’ use of creative expression not only supports their language development, but also affirms their sense of themselves as productive, inventive, and active learners (Abramson, Ankenman, & Robinson, 1995). To this end, careful consideration and attention is given to documenting and presenting children’s thinking.

The documentation shows children that their work is valued, makes parents aware of class learning experiences, and allows teachers to assess both their teaching and the children’s learning. In addition, dialogue is fostered with other

educators. Eventually, an historical archive is created that traces pleasure in the process of children's and teachers' learning experiences (Gandini, 1993).

Progettazione as Curriculum Framework

In the Reggio schools, the educators use a technique known as *progettazione*. This term, which does not have an English equivalent, might be understood as “emergent curriculum,” or “projected curriculum,” although others have used “negotiated curriculum” or “convergent curriculum” (Millikan, 2001, p. 18). Using this technique, teachers lay out general educational objectives but do not formulate the specific goals for each project or activity in advance. Instead, they formulate hypotheses of what *could* happen, based on their knowledge of children and their previous experiences. Carlina Rinaldi (1998), Pedagogical Director of the Municipal Pre-primary Schools in Reggio Emilia, writes:

At the initiation of a project, the teachers get together and proceed in terms of *progettazione*, that is, fully discuss all the possible ways that the project could be anticipated to evolve, considering the likely ideas, hypotheses, and choices of children and the direction they may take. (p. 118)

Elsewhere, Rinaldi (1996) has said that *progettazione* emphasizes “the design and organization of contexts (thoughts, materials, places, and professional knowledge) that will most effectively foster learning and the knowledge-building processes and thus exchange relationships and communication among all the ‘protagonists’ of the infant-toddler and the preschool” (p. 1).

Reggio Emilia's interpretation of *progettazione*, or a kind of “projected curriculum,” distinguishes itself from other contemporary and progressive curricula approaches and yet is similar to recent notions of emergent curriculum, as for example, the work of Bredekamp and Rosengrant (1995), or Jones and Nimmo (1994). These authors describe the way in which teachers support and clear the way for emerging themes within learning and teaching communities. Gandini notes (as cited in Moran, 1998b) that “*progettazione* implies making predictions and flexible plans that take into account all these aspects in the context of the life of the school; it is a dynamic process that generates documentation and is re-generated by documentation” (p. 51).

Such philosophy is characterized by a project approach to learning for both children and educators. The major role of the classroom teacher is to respond to

children's intrinsic curiosity about the world and to extend students' experiences by offering questions, materials, and related experiences that help children gain deeper understandings of the subjects they are exploring. The emergent curricula of the Reggio Emilia learning context, therefore, emphasize projects, which "provide the backbone of the children's and teacher's learning experiences" (Gandini, 1996b, p. 22).

The projects undertaken in Reggio Emilia preschools generally begin with a subject that is familiar to children and which has the potential for something new and exciting to happen. The project must be able to engage the children over time, and have a destination that the children can reach in order to make it more meaningful. Reggio Emilia inspired teachers have found that the best method for finding appropriate subjects for project exploration is thoughtfully listening to the children, asking questions that arouse students' natural curiosities, taking notes on what areas most interest the children, and motivating students with concrete experiences: "The starting point should always be the words, questions, actions, and interests of the group of children" (Edwards & Springate, 1993, p. 11). Reggio Emilia-inspired educators stimulate children's ideas, theories and interests through questions, discussions, and activities, yet they know when to step back and allow the children to work independently. By adapting instruction to daily classroom interests, teachers "open new aspects of the topic that had not been predicted initially. The projects are emergent, planning is present, but projects develop as they go..." (Edwards & Springate, 1993, p. 9).

The goals of a project or an activity are not set in advance so, as a result, flexibility is key in Reggio Emilia classrooms. Although curriculum is not pre-established, teachers do have general educational objectives for children. After a project is initiated, teachers collaborate in deciding on related project activities and hypothesize about possible future directions a project might travel, based on knowledge of the children and their previous experiences. Teachers then make appropriate preparations. Unexpected twists and turns often develop on a project's journey but teachers welcome new possibilities as vehicles for further learning. They willingly make adjustments in direction.

The projects are usually explored in small groups within the classroom and can take from a few days to several months to complete. Children work on projects for as long as their interests are sustained, or until they feel they have

exhausted all avenues of exploration and representation. Rosen (1992) describes projects as including “lots of discussion, graphic representation, and real cooperation from everyone involved” (p. 83). Project work is dependent upon the interaction between children and their environment. During individual time as well as group time, teachers assess children’s understandings of the key experiences in each content area and plan future work in light of the information gleaned from their observations.

Historically, Reggio Emilia’s *progettazione* can be traced back to a curriculum approach referred to as “project work” introduced during the Progressive Education era of the early 1900s. Firlik (1993) argues that children’s collaborative work and “engaging in hands-on, inquiry based, and problem solving projects” is an example of progressive practices that reflect Dewey’s philosophy (p. 39). Dewey (1916) referred to projects as reconstructions, while Kilpatrick (1918) called such an approach a project method.

More recent interpretations of project work include the “in-depth study of a particular topic that one or more children undertake” (Katz & Chard, 1989, p. 2) and “children’s in-depth investigations of topics that interest them” (Hartman & Eckerty, 1995, p. 141). Within each of these definitions, it is emphasized that projects take time, are dependent upon the interaction among and between children and their environments, and provide a continuity of experience. The aspect of time is especially critical to the success of project work, because rather than constructing knowledge through learning discreet skills and disconnected information, “projects require children to connect related information that is usually learned over time” (Hartman & Eckerty, 1995, p. 141).

Project based curriculum is an application of “developmentally appropriate practice.” Teachers provide experiences to children that introduce concepts, materials, and activities in small and large groups. In turn, these activities expand the possibilities for children’s work and provide information to teachers about children’s abilities and interests. The teachers learn to listen to the children, allowing them to take the initiative, while “guiding them in productive ways” (Wright, 1997, p. 364). Katz and Chard (1989), who have written extensively about what is now known as the Project Approach, assert that the purpose of this approach is to cultivate the minds of young children, and this includes emotional, moral, and aesthetic sensibilities, as well as knowledge and skills. Projects provide

a meaningful assessment context for teachers, while addressing specific learning. For example, during project work, teachers are able to observe children's developing abilities and interests, and a teacher may assess how well a child can read and what that child is interested in. Katz and Chard hypothesize that "when children have extensive experience of project work, the utility and relevance of basic literacy and numeracy skills become self-evident, thereby strengthening their receptivity to the teacher's help in mastering skills through systematic instruction" (Katz & Chard, 1989, p. 7). Genuine give-and-take of intellectual inquiry, for both teachers and students, becomes the impetus for developing the next project in an emergent curriculum.

A key element of *progettazione* is not only the choice of a topic worth pursuing, but includes "spiralling experiences of exploration and group discussion followed by representation and expression" (LeeKeenan & Edwards, 1992, p. 31). LeeKeenan and Edwards (1992) refer to a type of spiralling curriculum in which "the children first observe, then do or represent, then re-observe, then redo or re-represent" (p. 31). The concepts of *symbolic languages* or *the hundred languages of children* are metaphors used by Reggio Emilia teachers to refer to the many ways in which children represent and communicate their emerging levels of knowledge. They might express themselves, for example, in words, movement, drawing, painting, building, sculpture, shadow play, collage, dramatic play, and music (Edwards et al., 1993).

This spiralling of experiences and symbolic representations characterizes not only children's work but also the work of the teachers in Reggio Emilia. Teachers utilize various forms of knowledge representations. They depend upon the sketches they collect of children's work as part of their field notes, as well as photographs of classroom experiences and audio tape transcriptions of conversations with children to represent and communicate their knowledge about children's meaning making. The teacher's observations and transcribed tapes are also taken to colleagues for group reflection. Rinaldi (1998) states that:

The documentation stimulates the teacher's self-reflection and produces discussion and debate among the group of colleagues. Such comparisons of ideas among colleagues are as important as those that take place among the children. The group discussions serve to modify, at times radically, the teacher's thoughts and hypotheses about the children and interactions with them. (p. 119)

Forman (1996) presents a case study of a child trying to represent and understand a water wheel as an example of knowledge construction from the constructivist perspective in a Reggio Emilia preschool. He focuses on the progression of the child's understanding of physical perspective in advancing through conflicts in the use of different media. Forman describes how the child proceeds through different stages of the project, beginning with his oral description of the water wheel and perceptions demonstrated through his drawings. The child then progresses through various stages of constructing paper, clay, and wooden models of the water wheel. An assessment of the child's discussions and symbolic representations of the water wheels shows that the student's knowledge base has both broadened and deepened.

Forman's case study highlights the way in which the constructivist approach to learning facilitates the scaffolding of knowledge. Other representative samples of children's work, characteristic of the Reggio Emilia approach, provide rich documentation of children's learning progression over time. Such examples of authentic assessment validate teachers' professional responsibilities to determine children's progress, plan next steps, and communicate clearly with parents and administrators, providing information to both guide and assess children's learning.

Scarpa e Metro (Shoe and Meter), a book in the Unheard Voice of Children series published by Reggio Children (1997), offers another example of how teachers act as resource people for the children, particularly in moments of revisiting or when "loans of knowledge are needed" (p. 17). In this particular instance, initially arising out of their desire to build another work-table in their classroom, the children's first approaches to the discovery, function, and use of measurement leads them to an understanding of standard and non-standard measurement. As Malguzzi describes "complexity of the children's task never daunts or paralyzes their work. Indeed, the greater the challenge, the more tenacious the children become, and moments of serious concentration alternate with moments of playful exploration together, all with the utmost enjoyment" (p. 17).

Thus, investigations may begin almost anywhere and anytime, with provocations arising from many sources. The course of negotiated learning (Forman & Fyfe, 1998), however, begins with observations and documentation. Teachers carefully observe and document to notice when "a topic of play or

conversation or representation seems to hold a certain energy or passion or longevity or pattern, all indicators of the possibilities inherent in the combination of topic, children, and timing” (Oken-Wright, 2003, p. 176).

The role of teachers in developing and participating in *progettazione* is complex and multi-faceted. Teachers in Reggio Emilia have been described by New (1991) as “provocateurs” (New, 1991, p. 28) and by Edwards, Gandini, and Forman (1993) as “partners, nurturers, and guides” (p. 179). They guide children’s inquiry through their use of particular strategies for supporting and guiding learning with the provision of a variety of media that afford children opportunities to portray close representations of their knowledge (Forman, 1994). Teachers participate in and provoke children’s inquiry by posing questions, generating hypotheses, offering suggestions and media, such as clay, wire, or drawing tools, while documenting the process. These processes of inquiry and documentation do not begin and end with children, but extend to their teaching partners, as teachers observe, question, and record one another’s practice.

In her research on Reggio Emilia learning environments, New (1990) examined the preschools’ commitment to the community and the centrality of the project and art-based curriculum. She determined that authentic and most productive classroom projects emerge from children’s expressed interests, parental concerns, teacher’s knowledge of what interests children, and teachers’ observations of children’s needs. New’s (1990) study concluded that classroom environment and curriculum are inseparable in creatively approaching learning and assessment.

Thus, *progettazione* in the municipally run preschools of Reggio Emilia represents more than the mechanics associated with the in-depth pursuit of a topic. Rather, the term *progettazione* places children within the learning and teaching context of adult activities in the preschools, so that the two are inter-related. Children’s project work serves to reflect the socio-cultural context of learning and teaching in these schools. It embodies a framework for teaching and learning that is reciprocal, spiralling, and shared – a framework of partnerships among protagonists who are dependent upon documentation as they collaboratively attempt to create learning experiences which support both the rights and the needs of children to communicate and to learn.

The Role of the Pedagogista

The *pedagogista* has a central role in the schools of Reggio Emilia. Each of seven *pedagogisti* works with several infant-toddler centres and several schools for three-to-six year old children. Although “educational coordinator” or “educational advisor” might be the most adequate translation, neither term is correct (Filippini, 1993). As is true of all aspects of the schools, the term *pedagogista*, as it is used in Reggio, can only be understood within the framework of their schools, based on their image of the child, the resulting role of educators and parents, and the school being seen as a system of social relations. The role of the *pedagogista* is to link the “systems of schools and parents into a coherent whole in terms of values, educational objectives, and educational practice” (Edwards et al., 1993, p. 10).

For her part, Filippini (1993) points out that her ultimate goal as *pedagogista* is to “promote teachers’ autonomy rather than take on their problems and solve them for them” (p. 116). Her task is not to work directly with parents but to help teachers reflect and think about how to organize the most productive communication with parents. As she describes it:

My task is collaborating with teachers...to analyse and interpret the rights and needs of each child and family, and then use this knowledge in our work with children. Equally important is to develop better relationships between parents and teachers and set up meetings so that everyone gets to know one another and the curriculum projects underway can be explored and created together. (Filippini, 1993, p. 116)

There is no principal or director in individual schools. In this light the role of the *pedagogista* is centrally important to help staff clarify each person’s responsibilities in running the school and to be a close, but outside, consultant to the school as a whole and to individuals and groups of educators.

The Teacher’s Role

Central to the role of the teacher in the schools in Reggio Emilia is the responsibility for forming a circle of relationships. Teachers work with one another, with the parents, and with the children to form “a mutual community of learners” among all protagonists. When this basic tenet is understood, other essential components of the teacher’s role become obvious, especially the importance of communication.

Communicating with children means listening carefully to their ideas and participating with them in conversation. “Listening” may be too simple a word to describe the complex process of attempting to be involved, to follow and enter into the active learning of the child, acting as a resource and sometimes as a provoker. Reggio educators (Edwards et. al, 1998), have used the analogy of being able to catch the ball thrown by children and throw it back in such a way that they want to continue the game and perhaps develop other games as they proceed. Moreover, this is not a fast-paced game where children are frustrated in their attempts to keep up but a game where child novices trying to play are assisted and supported by an adult expert. The adult tries to help keep the game going. Sometimes he or she “steps in to return the ball, or puts the ball back in play, or coaches children on technique, or fixes or adjusts the materials, or even calls a break” (pp. 181-182).

Through their careful listening and interpreting as they play this ball game, teachers next have the task of finding interests that are both challenging and satisfying to explore. Through the process of *progettazione* - the Italian concept described above - teachers hypothesize the potential for exploring the children’s ideas. This process of trying to identify directions for emergent curricula is at once exhilarating and surprising for teachers and involves a necessary capacity to listen and interpret carefully and continuously.

The resultant process of discussing the observations of the children, interpreting these observations, and making *progettazione* through negotiation with children for future directions, involves a high level of collaboration at every level. Documentation has to be done in collaboration with all participants to capture a complete picture of the experience. Collaboration and communication, then, are the essential skills forming the core of a teacher’s role (Rankin, 1996).

The teacher-as-listener acts as a co-constructor of knowledge. The belief amongst Reggio Emilia educators is that if children are to be able to co-construct knowledge, they must find the right environment and a partner who can facilitate this learning. Jerome Bruner (1996) asks:

Back to the innocent but fundamental question: how best to conceive of a sub-community that specializes in learning among its members? One obvious answer would be that it is a place where, among other things, learners help each other learn, each according to her abilities. And this, of course, need not exclude the presence of somebody serving in the role of the teacher. It simply implies that the teacher does not play that role as a monopoly, that learners “scaffold” for each other as well. (p. 21)

Bruner's comment illustrates a major shift in the traditional relationship between teacher and learners. The teacher in Reggio Emilia is not viewed as the expert or sole dispenser of information; rather, the role of the teacher is shared equally among members of the group. There is an implicit acknowledgment that all participants can make a worthwhile contribution to the learning experience.

The teacher's role is to create a partnership with the learners, to walk beside them as together they launch themselves into the experience and begin the process of the co-construction of knowledge. At times, however, the teacher will have to act as a provocateur, to prod the learners to move forward or in a new direction. Sometimes it may become necessary to take stronger action, to put children in crises and allow them the opportunity for confusion, so they can come up with solutions. Edwards (1998) has used the term "traffic jam" to describe the same idea of the teacher's assistance in disentangling all the jumbled pieces so that the child is free to move forward again, perhaps in a different direction.

Helping the children sustain their interest may come from the teacher's identification of "knots," the sticking points that may be productive in the creation of dialogue or in the comparison of cognitive understandings and points of view. An example of this is found in the video, "Amusement Park for Birds," (Forman, 1992) where Giorgia and Simone are working in the atelier with the support of Giovanni, the *atelieriste*, to translate their drawings of fountains into versions of clay. Giorgia and Simone have an extended disagreement - that is increasingly articulate and loud - about Giorgia's plan for creating the separate streams of the fountain. Their misunderstanding stems from the fact that Giorgia is counting the streams that remain to be made from her plan of 10 streams when she has finished making three, while Simone is focused on the total number instead of on the number remaining. In fact, the *atelieriste* has suggested that Simone look at Giorgia's work, evidently seeing that their different viewpoints might create a "knot" that could expand their understanding of the different cognitive perspectives each was taking.

The teacher's decision to intervene - or not - so as to let children find their own way and continue on the journey they redefine often sustains interest in the work at hand. In the video segment described above, the teacher, Giovanni, allows the dialogue to continue for long minutes with no intervention at all (often to the discomfort of some viewers). When he does join the conversation, it is primarily in

a listening role and only to help the other two summarize their discoveries of their differing perspectives, and to reinforce the idea that they “both agree, right?” now that they have been able to unearth the source of the misunderstanding. Such decisions about intervention mean that Reggio Emilia teachers try to strike a balance, afraid to miss a “hot moment,” yet unwilling to enter where children may be quite capable of managing their own ideas and exchanges.

The teacher’s role is to observe children and judge when to supply the technical information they require to carry out their ideas. In an observed situation in Reggio Emilia, for example, a teacher worked with a child to help her make a clay drawing of a dancer. It was a challenging task for the child to place the rolled coils of clay to form the dancer’s body, showing how the legs, feet, arms, and hands moved as she danced. The child also had made the dancer’s long hair from thin coils of clay. The teacher discussed with her how to place these coils on the dancer’s head, making them appear to swing above her shoulders to suggest the movement of the dancer’s body. The teacher stayed beside the child for almost half an hour, offering support and giving technical suggestions. She showed the child how to mix “slip,” a soup clay mixture that acts like cement in joining pieces of clay together. When the clay figure was complete, she helped the child carefully lift it onto a sheet of cardboard to dry. This is an example of “lending” children knowledge and technique.

The adult has to understand that children may not have “the strength to sustain work.” It is the role of the teacher, therefore, to help the children stay interested in their work, and bring their thoughts and ideas to fruition. Pam Oken-Wright (personal communication, February 17, 2000), describing the children’s project work, uses the phrase “borrowing a bit of adult control to stay with the project.” The social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1962) is at work here:

The discrepancy between a child’s actual mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance indicates the zone of his proximal development...with assistance, every child can do more than he can by himself - though only within the limits set by the state of his development.” (p. 103)

Similarly, Bruner (1996) describes this process using the expression “scaffolding,” which has become a familiar term (p. 21).

The Teacher in Reggio Emilia and in North America

There are many similarities between the typical role of the teacher in North America and the teacher in the municipal preschools of Reggio Emilia. However, the teacher's role in Reggio Emilia is different in several significant ways, some of which are listed below.

The role of the teacher as an observer is extended to documenter and researcher. Observation is an important skill for most early childhood teachers but the educators in Reggio Emilia have taken observation a step further. Observation, for them, is only the first step in collecting the data used to develop pedagogical documentation that captures the story of the children's experiences in the classroom as well as the progression of their developing understandings. Pedagogical documentation becomes the basis for ongoing dialogue to plan curriculum directions. The teachers then use the documentation to revisit the experiences with the children and to communicate with parents and other visitors to the classroom. Documentation is thereby taken a step further, as it becomes a tool for teacher research, reflection, collaboration, and decision-making.

The role of teacher as programme planner emphasizes the teacher's role as creator of the environment as a third teacher. Preparing a stimulating environment that fosters play, communication and exploration is an essential part of the work of a teacher of preschool children. Creating an environment that acts as a third teacher in the classroom (discussed above), however, is a new and difficult task for those who accept the challenge of Reggio educators to understand how the environment supports both interaction and focused communication.

The role of the teacher as curriculum planner changes to the role of the teacher as a co-creator of knowledge. Teachers usually plan experiences and activities for the children collaboratively with other teachers in the school. In the Reggio Emilia approach, however, the programme is perceived as emerging from the children's interests and ideas, developed in negotiation with them. Long-term *progettazione* guide the thinking of adults in creating meaningful learning experiences. This means that teachers need to meet often to discuss and reflect on their observations and on the transcriptions they make of the children's conversations. Planning is done in cooperation with others, but it becomes more spontaneous, has to be done more often, and involves more collaboration and negotiation with others.

The role of the teacher as parent educator changes to the role of the teacher as a partner with parents. Early childhood educators always have understood the importance of communicating with parents. For school to be a positive experience for children, there has to be congruence between the children's experiences at home and at school. In exploring ideas from the Reggio Emilia approach, teachers find themselves working even more closely with parents. The concept of transparency allows parents to enter into their children's experiences at school. In turn, they understand how valuable their contribution is to their children's education, and become more aware of the many different ways they can participate in the programme.

The role of the teacher as communicator changes to the role of the teacher as listener, provocateur, and negotiator of meaning. Communication, in its myriad forms - written, visual, and verbal - has always been important in early childhood settings but the emphasis on collaboration and documentation in the Reggio Emilia approach has greatly changed the way and the frequency with which the teacher communicates. Listening to children's conversations, interpreting their meaning and questions, knowing how to help them elaborate on their ideas, negotiating with them to further these ideas, reflecting on practice with other teachers, interpreting the program to parents verbally, and documenting the children's experiences have made communication one of the most essential parts of the teacher's role.

The role of the teacher in providing guidance changes to the role of the teacher as a supporter of the competent child. Traditionally, early childhood teachers spend much of their time guiding children's behaviour. During indoor and outdoor play, teachers use various strategies to guide behaviour; they supervise the children at transition times and help them with daily routines such as bathroom, lunch, and snack time. Implementing principles of the Reggio Emilia approach brings the greatest rewards when teachers begin to see children as competent, when the environment begins to act as a third teacher, and when collaboration is in effect. The amount of time needed to manage the classroom diminishes as the teacher becomes a partner with the children in the co-construction of knowledge and teachers become free to do the things they really find rewarding, such as engaging with children in real conversations about things that are important and pursuing exciting ideas with them.

The role of the teacher in maintaining the social relationships in the classroom changes to the role of the teacher in supporting the social relationships in the classroom. Establishing a positive social environment in the classroom and beyond in the community is another essential part of the teacher's role in early childhood settings. A sense of belonging is at the core of every early childhood classroom. Without this sense, young children simply will not thrive. The first task of every teacher is to create what Carolyn Edwards has called "the circle of we" (1998). The educators in Reggio Emilia emphasize how important it is to provide children with opportunities to co-construct their knowledge in the social group, creating what Bruner (1996) calls "a mutual community of learners" (p. 81). The social relationships, or "the circle of we," not only includes children but is expanded to draw in teachers, parents, and the community.

The role of the teacher in facilitating play changes to the role of the teacher as an exchanger of understandings. Learning through play is the foundation of the majority of early childhood programs, with philosophical roots reaching back to Froebel, Dewey, and more recently, Piaget. Teachers spend time and effort creating environments that foster play in all areas of the program. Play is believed to be critical for physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and moral development. Teachers learn how to promote early mathematics and literacy skills through play, as well as science and social study concepts.

Play is also considered an important part of the Reggio Emilia approach but it does not seem as central as in other early childhood settings (Fraser, 1999). For instance, one does not hear the educators in Reggio Emilia extolling the values of learning through play. Fraser infers that the Reggio focus is not on play itself but on the relationships between children and activity. Children certainly have many opportunities to play freely in the Reggio Emilia preschools, but educators do not stress play as the most important medium for learning. What they do stress, however, is "an exchange of understanding between the teacher and the child: to find in the intuitions of the child the roots of systematic knowledge" (Bruner, 1996, p. 57). This emphasis encourages teachers to listen to children, to engage in conversation with them, and to observe, record, and reflect on their behaviour and words.

Moreover, the work in Reggio Emilia emphasizes a socio-cultural context that increases opportunities for children engaged in activities to experience

various, conflicting, and sometimes confusing perspectives. Thus, as described by Edwards et al. (1998), they “create ‘disturbances’ in the physical environment, and they support children’s predispositions to challenge one another’s views” (p. 271), as was seen in the exchange between Giorgia and Simone in the video “Amusement Park for the Birds.” This view sees children as playmates and peers, and also as provocateurs.

Pedagogical Documentation

The system of representing the processes of learning in the preschools of Reggio Emilia has come to be known as *pedagogical documentation* (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999), or simply, *documentation*. LeeKeenan and Edwards (1992) have spoken of documentation as an effort to create an archive tracing the work of children over the period of time they are in school and to trace the history of the school itself. However, documentation serves other purposes as well.

In Reggio Emilia, the walls are used as a space for exhibiting children’s work through documentation panels. These panels and displays are as much a part of the classrooms and corridors of the schools as are the tables and chairs. Often, selections reveal the life of a project, but they might portray even a moment during a single day. These panels include photographs that tell about the process and describe the various steps and the evolution of the project. Descriptions are constructed to include transcriptions of children’s remarks and conversations (often tape-recorded) that accompanied their particular experience. The resultant documentation makes visible the steps of the learning process, while also contributing to the pleasant atmosphere of the space.

Ceppi and Zini (1998) describe such a school or infant-toddler centre as an environment that:

documents not only the results but also the processes of learning and knowledge-building, that narrates the didactic paths and states the values of reference. The environment generates a sort of psychic skin, an energy-giving second skin made of writings, images, materials, objects and colours, which reveals the presence of the children even in their absence. (p. 25)

This metaphor of documentation as a second skin is used elsewhere by Strozzi (2001):

The documentation panels cover the walls throughout the school as if they were a second skin. The panels make you feel that you are, or invite you to

become, a part of experiences and stories. They suggest that future experiences will be valued. The documentation substantiates the value of memory and narration as a right and a vital quality of the educational environment. (p. 62)

The natural process of documentation provides a way to make parents, colleagues, and visitors aware of the high regard that adults have for children's work (Kocher, 1999). Children receive the message that their work is important and valued. Parents see panels that contain clear curriculum objectives. Appreciation for the teachers' efforts is fostered, and parents become more involved. For teachers, meanwhile, a review of the transcripts and photographs helps them to understand children's learning processes and to become clear about their objectives.

Documentation, in the forms of observation of children and extensive record keeping, has long been encouraged and practised in many early childhood programmes around the world (Beneke, Harris-Helm, & Steinheimer, 1998; Cadwell, 1996; Fraser, 1999). However, pedagogical documentation in Reggio Emilia focuses more intensively on children's experience, memories, thoughts, and ideas in the course of their work. Early in their history, Reggio educators (Edwards et al., 1998) realized that systematically documenting the process and results of their work with children would simultaneously serve three key functions:

to provide the children with a concrete and visible memory of what they had said and done in order to serve as a jumping-off point for ensuing steps to learning; to provide the educators with a tool for research and a key to continuous improvement and renewal; and to provide parents and the public with detailed information about what happens in the schools, to serve as a means of eliciting their reactions and support. (p. 10)

Reggio Emilia educators view pedagogical documentation as an instrument of communication and exchange of ideas. They especially try to communicate children's competence and power. To this end, the documentation of young children's work highlights their capabilities (Kocher, 1999) and indicates that through the unity of thinking and feeling, young children can explore their world, represent their ideas, and communicate with others at their highest level. The theory of the Reggio Emilia educators is that when teachers fully understand how exploration, representation, and communication feed one another, they can best help children achieve their full potential. Vecchi (1993) offers these insights into the process:

Recently our interests have also shifted more and more toward analysis of the processes of learning and the interconnections between children's different ideas, activities, and representations. All of this documentation – the written descriptions, transcriptions of children's words, photographs, and now the videotapes – becomes an indispensable source of materials that we use every day to be able to 'read' and reflect critically, both individually and collectively, on the experiences we are living, the project we are exploring. This allows us to construct theories and hypotheses which are not arbitrary and artificially imposed on the children. Yet this method of work takes much time and is never easy. And we know that we still have much to learn. The camera, tape recorder, slide projector, typewriter, video-camera, computer, and photocopying machine are instruments absolutely indispensable for recording, understanding, debating among ourselves, and finally preparing appropriate documents of our experience. (p. 122)

The influence of these documented moments on the school culture is significant. They represent children's construction of knowledge, demonstrate respect for children's work, validate the competencies of children, and communicate a socio-historical perspective to parents, teachers, and children of the school culture. Documentation panels and displays reveal the teachers' understanding of young children, including the ways in which they co-construct knowledge. In this sense, not only does documentation extend the worth and work of children's co-construction of knowledge but it also serves as a mediational tool for teachers. As teachers engage in "collaborative reflection ... they socially construct new knowledge as they investigate, reflect, and represent children's construction of knowledge (New, 1992, p. 17). This aspect of Reggio Emilia's work expands upon current understanding of teacher research and development and is consistent with key principles of social constructivism. As Rinaldi (1998), pedagogical consultant for the pre-primary schools in Reggio Emilia, writes:

Documentation is a procedure that supports the educational processes and it is supported by the dynamic exchanges related to learning. Documentation is the process of reciprocal learning. Through documentation we leave traces that make it possible to share the ways children learn, and through documentation we can preserve the most interesting and advanced moments of teachers' professional growth. It is a process in which teachers generate hypotheses and interpretations of theories that can modify the initial, more general theories. Documentation makes it possible to create knowledge not only for teachers but also for researchers and scholars. (p. 121)

Elsewhere, Rinaldi (2001) makes it equally clear that openness to children's thinking and learning results in more effective teaching: "The greater our awareness of pedagogical practices, the greater our possibility to change through

constructing new space... it is, above all, a question of getting insight into the possibility of seeing, talking and acting in a different way” (cited in Abbott & Nutbrown, 2001, p. 23).

Documentation makes children’s ways of constructing knowledge – including the relational and emotional aspects – visible to both adults and children (Giudici, Krechevsky, & Rinaldi, 2001), while at the same time, teachers can generate and post their own reflections on a project or experience. Documenting children’s learning is not about creating beautiful panels or displays, but about following and shaping the knowledge-building process. It allows teachers to deepen their understanding of children’s strengths and interests, different languages or domains of knowledge, their own actions and pedagogical decisions, and the processes of learning.

Vecchi (1993) has observed that the teacher’s role in the documentation process is to notice an idea’s potential to spark intellectual growth in the group as a whole, to step in, and to restate the idea in clearer and more emphatic language, thereby providing an intellectual spark for further talk and action. The process of documenting and revisiting provides teachers with a way to help children discover their own problems and questions. The teacher’s goal is not so much to facilitate learning in the sense of making it smooth or easy but rather to stimulate it by making problems more complex and involving. For example, teachers may ask children what they need in order to do experiments, even when the teachers realize that a child’s particular approach or hypothesis is not correct. Therefore, the documentation allows teachers to serve as children’s partners, sustaining the children’s efforts and offering assistance, resources, and strategies to get unstuck when encountering difficulties.

Teachers, *pedagogistas*, *atelieristas*, and at times administrators meet each week to share and collectively reflect upon documentation of projects and potential projects. This collective reflection is dependent upon reviews of documentation and the actual representation of children’s knowledge, such as drawings and constructions. Collective reflection often becomes collaborative, as decisions are made on ways to continue to challenge, to scaffold, and to extend children’s meaning making. Thus, the pedagogical documentation serves as a vehicle for continuous curriculum assessment and planning.

In an even broader sense, the documentation and revisiting process serves as a medium through which to learn about children's thinking, about curriculum development, about interactions between teacher and children and teacher and parents, and about the teacher's role, including the teacher as researcher. The teachers hypothesize about their documentation and interpret children's theories, and use this information to facilitate the learning process for both child and teacher (Tarini & White, 1998). In this way, Reggio Emilia educators use the documentation processes to analyse the process of learning and the interconnections between children's ideas, activities, and representations. Rinaldi (1998) describes documentation as:

a point of strength that makes timely and visible the interweaving of actions of the adults and of the children; it improves the quality of communication and interaction. It is in fact a process of reciprocal learning. Documentation makes it possible for teachers to sustain the children's learning while they also learn (to teach) from the children's own learning. (p. 120)

Thus, documentation can contribute to the extensiveness and depth of children's learning. As pointed out by Malaguzzi (1998), through documentation children "become even more curious, interested, and confident as they contemplate the meaning of what they have achieved" (p. 70). Spaggiari (1997) writes:

Children talk, and they have always talked, though their words are rarely listened to and leave no trace. The words of children may at times seem strangely similar to our own, but they recall faraway and unknown worlds and meanings to which we as adults too often remain deaf and insensitive. Giving a voice to childhood means recognizing children's right to be the primary authors of their lives. (book jacket notes)

Finally, according to Jones and Nimmo (1994), documentation of "what happens" in a school setting provides teachers, parents, and children with "a storehouse of memories from which to research, plan, and understand" (p. 30). Through documentation, the often missed words and actions of young children are captured and made visible and families and the community are invited into a relationship of reciprocity with the school.

A Pedagogy of Communication and Relationships

Fundamental to the provision of quality in early care and education is the philosophy of schooling, described by Malaguzzi (1993b) as a "system of relationships" (p. 63). This system of relationships is supported by an organization

“achieved because of the convictions by all concerned that only working together closely will they be able to offer the best experience to children” (Gandini, 1996b, pp. 20-21). When a child is first enrolled in Reggio Emilia infant-toddler centres or preschools, teachers “solicit information about each child’s daily routines and sleeping and eating preferences, and urge parents to stay in the classroom for the first few weeks... until the child is comfortable without a family member” (New, 1990, p. 5). Parents are seen as collaborators. Responsive to staff suggestions and advice, they are providers of information for the child’s background and home life (Borgia, 1991). The Reggio schools maintain a high level of exchange between families and schools. Here, the exchange is not seen as parent substitution but as an “integration of wisdoms” (New, 1989). Lillian Katz (1994), in writing about relationships, says:

My underlying assumption is that individuals cannot just relate to each other: They have to relate to each other about something. In other words, relationships have to have content of mutual interest or concern that can provide pretexts and texts for interaction between them. (p. 28)

Opportunities for interactions include: meetings at the individual classroom level (evenings), individual conferences, meetings around a theme, encounters with an expert, labs, holidays and celebrations, picnics, excursions, etc. (Edwards et al., 1993).

Traditionally, the content of interaction between the teacher and the child has to do with the conduct or level of performance like “You did well!” or “That’s the right idea!” In contrast, in Reggio schools the focus is on the work itself, rather than on the child’s performance of the task (Edwards et al., 1993). Education focuses on each child in relation to the other children, the family teachers, the environment, and the community (Gandini, 1993). Their interaction allows “children to be part of a group in which everyone contributes to one another’s learning, so that cooperation and interpersonal understanding flourish” (Gandini & Edwards, 1988, p. 14).

New (1993) points out that the importance of the “child’s ability to negotiate in the peer group” (p. 2) is an important aspect of the internal culture of the Reggio schools. To this end, Gandini and Edwards (1988) speak of two goals for early childhood teachers: “on the one hand, supporting children’s need for autonomy and self-expression; and on the other, helping children become more sensitive,

responsive, and part of a cohesive community” (p. 14). According to Rinaldi (2001), knowing how to work in a group – appreciating its inherent qualities and value, and understanding the dynamics, the complexity, and the benefits involved – constitutes a level of awareness that is “indispensable for those who want to participate, at both the personal and professional levels, in effecting change and building the future” (p. 27).

Building and maintaining relationships is the thread that guides children through the various times, spaces, and activities of daily life. Filippini (2001) has suggested that:

Schools...too often dedicate their energies primarily to curriculum and didactics, neglecting the broad network of relationships and communication that are an integral part of the educational process, and consequently placing little emphasis on the organization of these relationships. (p. 53)

A form of pedagogy currently emerging espouses a system of socially constructing knowledge. Here, emphasis is placed on the ability to dialogue, and a safe place to debate is seen as promoting the social and educational experience as well as the feelings of attachment and reassurance which are important factors in the “pedagogy of communication” (Spaggiari, 1998, p. 109). Similarly, Rinaldi (1998) suggests that as adults we need to “initiate and nurture situations that stimulate this kind of learning process, where conflict and negotiation appear as the driving forces for growth” (p. 118), while Malaguzzi (1998) has called the system “an education based on interrelationships” (p. 64). Malaguzzi believes that the goal of the school is to create an amiable place; “it must embody ways of getting along together and of intensifying relationships among the central protagonists” (p. 65). He stresses complete attention to the problems of education, participation, and research. This pedagogy of relationships, he writes, can be the tool to create a united and conscious group, allowing the group to “feel good about cooperating and to produce, in harmony, a higher level of results” (p. 65).

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the principal literature regarding the Reggio Emilia approach, the premise on which this study is founded. Pedagogical documentation extends the worth and the work of children’s co-construction of knowledge but it also serves as a mediational tool for teachers as well. As teachers

engage in collaborative reflection, they socially construct new knowledge as they investigate, reflect, and represent children's construction of knowledge. This aspect of Reggio Emilia's work expands upon current understanding of teacher research and development. The theories and studies overviewed so far pave the way to develop a further discussion about pedagogical documentation as a catalyst for teacher growth and change.

Now moving from a review of the principles of the Reggio Emilia approach, I will look in the next section at the literature of Transformation Theory, which provides a theoretical framework for the present study.

CHAPTER 3:

Review of the Literature - Transformation Theory

A pedagogy that presupposes passion respects and makes space for our own and our students' intensity, energy, and honest engagement for the sake of understanding and meaning-making. This is education worthy of its name. It is a gift of sustained discovery and potential transformation. Such education demands our preparation along with our passion.

~ Rosalie M. Romano (2002, p. 376).

Over thirty years ago, Mezirow (1975, 1978, 1981) published his study of the experiences of women who returned to college after a hiatus of several years. Thus began what was to become a public, collaborative process of development of a theory about adult learning⁵ that has become known as Transformation Theory. This theory remains one of the few Western articulations of the processes adults experience when they encounter and embrace life-altering learning. As such, it has much to offer as a lens through which to view the experience of teachers who have felt the transformative powers of a particular pedagogy in their lives, and in this case, the pedagogy of the Reggio Emilia approach.

In the following pages, I review the body of literature that has emerged from the process of theory building that Mezirow initiated (1975, 1978, 1981). This begins by placing the development of Transformation Theory within the broader context of adult education and then explores the framing of the theory by Mezirow. Woven into the discussion are accounts of theoretical critiques and empirical research prompted by Mezirow's configuring of transformative adult learning.

Transformation Theory in the Context of Adult Education

Cranton (1994) has pointed out that throughout most of its history in the Western world adult education has been seen as "a move toward freedom and liberation that is both personal and social" (p. xii). The perception of what that liberation is from, how it is best achieved, and how it manifests has fluctuated over time. My discussion here is limited to recent times, beginning with the latter half of the twentieth century, when formal adult education programmes were largely skills-based. The well-being of a society was largely viewed in terms of increased

⁵ Despite a plethora of journals, books, and research conferences devoted to adult learning around the world, we are very far from a universal understanding of adult learning (Tuinjmans, 1995). For the purposes of this study, adult learning refers to the experiences of individuals in their post-high school years, although not necessarily limited to formal learning in academic settings.

productivity and prosperity, and personal liberation was viewed in terms of increased potential for employment and financial security (Usher, Bryant, & Johnston, 1997). Broadly speaking, in adult education there was little consideration of how skills, actions, and values are intertwined. Indeed, many current adult education programmes have continued to become even more instrumentalist in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Some theorists have claimed that the emphasis on instrumentalism has been a response to the needs of the complex infrastructure of globalization, where adult learners are viewed as commodities, rather than as being the focus of compassionate concern (e.g., Imel, 1998).

While instrumental approaches to adult education abound, other orientations to adult learning have arisen that are based in issues of how individual adults create meaning and how they might be better enabled to thrive in the public and private realms of their lives. In the 1960s, behaviourist theories posited that adults, much like children, learned primarily by responding and adapting to changes in their environment (Mezirow, 1996b). In the 1970s, these claims were balanced by constructivist notions of adult meaning-making as a more internal and multi-faceted process. The constructivist approach was coupled with the idea that the important tasks and mechanisms of adult learning differ substantially from those of children (Cranton, 1994).

Three important guiding principles emerged from the constructivist orientation to adult learning in the 1970s and 1980s: adults construct meaning from experience; adults are capable of and prefer engaging in self-directed learning; and personal autonomy is of paramount importance in the learning processes (e.g., Brookfield, 1986; Candy, 1987, 1991; Houle, 1992; Knowles, 1975; Tough, 1971). Within this time frame of reference, emancipation was conceptualized as a process whereby the adult reclaimed authority from external influences to become more self-governing and self-determining.

In my teaching of adults in university and college settings, and in my work with families, what has always been apparent to me is that it is the whole person that comes to the learning situation. To ignore the importance and the impact of an individual's history, situation, feelings, values, and other innate qualities seems to me to provide a kind of experience that is superficial and disrespectful. Therefore, as a guide in my doctoral research, I sought out a theory of adult learning that

addressed the complexities I perceived and thus was drawn to the work of Jack Mezirow on Transformation Theory.

Mezirow's articulation of Transformation Theory grew out of his constructivist orientation to adult learning. The theory was, to a large extent, an attempt to redress what Mezirow (1991b) identified as the failure to recognize how an adult's "acquired frame of reference" (p. 4) determines and distorts his or her interpretation of experience. Transformative learning, then, was originally conceived as a process by which adults reclaimed authority for and were empowered to construct more fulfilling lives. In the following section, I outline Mezirow's articulation of Transformation Theory.

Mezirow and Transformative Adult Learning

According to Mezirow (e.g., 1978, 1981, 1991a, 1991b, 1996a, 2000), children and adults alike interpret experience and construct knowledge within the two frames of reference provided by points of view and habits of mind. Points of view are systems of belief that have to do with particular situations and with "specific knowledge, beliefs, and feelings that constitute interpretations of experience" (Mezirow, 1991a, pp. 5-6). According to Mezirow (1991a, 1991b), points of view are changed relatively easily, for they are influenced by the acquisition of new skills or information. Habits of mind, on the other hand, are foundational and deeply ingrained in the adult psyche (Taylor, 1998). They consist of "broad, generalized presuppositions" (Mezirow, 1996a, p. 163) that are "integrated psychological structures with dimensions of thought, feeling and will" (Mezirow, 1978, p. 108). Part of the psychological function of habits of mind is to act as "boundary structures" on experience: "We allow our meaning system to diminish our awareness of how things really are to avoid anxiety, creating a zone of blocked perception and self-deception" (Mezirow, 1991a, p. 4).

Throughout childhood, points of view and habits of mind are most often "primarily the results of cultural assimilation and the idiosyncratic influences of primary caregivers" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6). Mezirow (2000) has said that, in transformative learning, the adult must cast a critical eye on these acquired meaning structures in order to detect and correct distortions that act as negative constraints. In other words, the learning task of the adult is to move from formative, outer-determined learning of childhood to inner-directed, transformative

learning. The goal of transformative learning is for the adult to arrive at “a more inclusive, discriminatory, and integrative perspective” (Mezirow, 1996b, p. 167) upon which to base beliefs and actions.

Implied in this is a contingent increase in the adult’s ability to cope with the changes required in removing the blocks on perception that have hitherto acted as safety mechanisms. In Mezirow’s view of adult learning, “there is no higher priority for adult education than to develop its potentialities for perspective [habits of mind] transformation” (Mezirow, 1978, p. 109). A truly transformative learning process, it may then be argued, involves an epistemological shift: a change in the very foundations on which the adult builds knowledge about the world (Brookfield, 2000).

Mezirow’s Conception of the Process of Transformation

Mezirow (e.g., 1991a, 2000) delineated 11 steps in the process of transformation. Following the lead of others (e.g., Cranton, 1994), I have collapsed Mezirow’s steps into three more broadly-conceived phases. “Phase 1: Disorientation” encompasses Mezirow’s first three steps: his account of the adult’s encounter with a disorienting dilemma; self-examination with feelings of inadequacy or guilt; and recognition that assumptions about self, life, or the world are inadequate. “Phase 2: Reconfiguration” involves six of Mezirow’s steps: sharing disorientation and new learning with a group of like-minded adults; exploration of new roles and relationships; renegotiation of old relationships; acquisition of new skills and knowledge; formulation of plans for action; and trying on new roles. “Phase 3: New Perspectives” accords with Mezirow’s two notions that the adult emerges from the transformative learning experience with new perspectives on the self, others, or life, and that the experience has been so powerful that there is no possibility of return to old ways of thinking. In this study, I explore my co-researchers’ experiences of change, with particular focus on Phases 1 and 2. In my own experiences with incorporating ideas from Reggio Emilia into my teaching, and particularly the practice of pedagogical documentation, I recognized the phases of disorientation, as well as reconfiguration and reintegration of identity. In fact, I have found that meaningful experiences with these ideas have been among the most potent in my own growth. However, the phases outlined above appear so succinct as to be glib. A closer look

at each will illustrate some of the complexities of adult experience that are currently being explored.

I think it is important to note that, while Mezirow articulated the general shape of Transformation Theory, it has been others who have provided most of the empirical evidence that either contests or supports Mezirow's original conception of transformative adult learning. Discussion and debate swirl around many aspects of Transformation Theory.

For example, some of the literature on Transformation Theory has contested the apparently linear thrust of Mezirow's articulation of the adult growth process. Also, research by Coffman (1989), Dewane (1993), Brookfield (1987, 1994), and others has suggested that transformative learning is most likely to be spiral and recursive, with adult learners often retracing aspects of the middle, experimental phase before experiencing deep, lasting change.

Other issues under extensive consideration are the nature of disorienting dilemmas, the reflective processes involved in appraisal and self-examination, the relationship of individual to social transformation and the practices of democracy, and the responsibilities and tasks of the educator of adults. Mezirow has habitually welcomed refinement of his original theorizing. He recently referred to his early efforts to shape Transformation Theory as having provided the outer edges of a jigsaw puzzle and invited others to continue to fill in the missing pieces (Alasburg & Mezirow, 2000). In fact, the literature contains many such contributions, and they may be considered according to the phases I outlined above. I now turn to a closer look at Phases 1 and 2 of Transformation Theory. Phase 3 can be viewed as an end point that embodies the learning of the previous phases.

Phase 1: Disorientation

According to Mezirow (e.g., 1991a), it takes a powerful catalyst, in the form of a "disorienting dilemma," to prompt an adult to engage in what is, in effect, the partial dissolution of identity required by the transformative learning process. Disorienting dilemmas present "discrepancies between learners' beliefs, values, or assumptions and new knowledge, understanding, information, or insights" (Cranton, 1994, p. 188). After encountering a disorienting dilemma, the adult is plunged into the process of making meaning out of these discrepancies.

There is wide, although not total, acceptance in the literature for Mezirow's notion that particular events act as catalysts to transformative adult learning (Taylor, 1994, 1998).

Most often, disorienting dilemmas are depicted in terms of tragedy or loss, as, for example, in the case of illness (e.g., Courtney, Merriam, & Reeves, 1998). However, the literature also bears witness to a few dilemmas that are arguably less traumatic and that have still been disorienting, for example, visiting a new culture (e.g., Taylor, 1994), returning to higher education (e.g., Mezirow, 1975; Weisberger, 1995), and, in my personal experience, encounters with the educational project of Reggio Emilia (Kocher, 1999).

It has primarily been the work of researchers other than Mezirow that has alerted researchers to the complexities involved in determining what constitutes a disorienting dilemma. Merriam and Clark (1993) studied the self-described "significant" (p. 131) learning experiences of 400 adults. They found that sudden transformations in the lives of their study participants did, indeed, originate in experiences that were personally construed as a discrete tragic event. However, these researchers also observed that what constitutes a disorienting dilemma for one person may not be a significant event for another. Merriam and Clarke (1993) also pointed out that there has been little, if any, study of cases where disorienting dilemmas have prompted "growth-restricting transformations" and that we might learn further about adult learning by inquiring "whether these are significant in ways similar to learning that is growth-enhancing" (p. 138).

Clark (1993) found that a disorienting dilemma might be a series of events that catapults an individual into a long process of searching for and defining "something which is missing from their life" (quoted in Taylor, 1998, p. 41). Studies by Pope (1996) and by Courtney, Merriam, and Reeves (1998) also suggested that disorientation can be a process, rather than an immediate response to a discrete event. Daloz (2000), referring to his study of 100 people who had shown a commitment to social networks (Daloz, Keen, Keen, & Parks, 1996), said that, although a single event might be the catalyst to change, in most cases the shift was "long in coming and its possibility was prepared for in myriad ways, generally across years" (p. 106).

In a related vein, others have emphasized the need to determine what constitutes learner readiness for transformative learning, once a disorienting

dilemma has been encountered (e.g., Brookfield, 2000; Loughlin, 1996; Taylor, 1994). Brookfield (2000), for example, has suggested that adults must come to transformative learning with an intact awareness of their deeply held beliefs and values, as well as an awareness that the meanings they assign to their experiences are contingent and accessible to alterations. However, in the literature, the awareness of the contingent nature of meaning and the apprehension of personal power have more often been construed as the most important outcomes of, rather than precursors to, transformative learning (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Collard & Law, 1989; Hart, 1990; Loughlin, 1996; Merriam & Clark, 1993). The issues surrounding disorienting dilemmas continue to be a major focus for contemporary enquiry in Transformation Theory (Taylor, 1998).

Phase 2: Reconfiguring

In Transformation Theory, making meaning out of disorientation requires the interwoven processes of critical reflection and rational discourse (Mezirow, 1999). Mezirow (2000) described critical reflection as it manifests differently in the inter- and intra-personal realms. For Mezirow (2000), “subjective reframing involves critical self reflection of one’s own assumptions” (p. 23). While Mezirow has spent little time articulating the dynamics of intra-personal processes of critical self-reflection, most of his writings suggest this is the central concern of Transformation Theory. His reluctance to speak in detail about the inner processes of critical self-reflection may be a tacit acknowledgment of the complexity of the issues involved. It was not until the principles of depth psychology began to creep into considerations of the nature of transformative adult learning that proponents of Transformation Theory began to speak more frequently and in more detail about an individual’s internal processes.

Mezirow has said more about the inter-personal, or communicative, learning than he has about the intra-personal processes of critical reflection: “Objective reframing involves critical reflection on the assumptions of others encountered in narrative or task-oriented problem solving” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 23). This is a process involving dialogue with others. Dialogue need not involve face-to-face interaction: it can involve interaction within a group or between two persons through various means of communication, or it may be interaction with an author or an artist through their works (Mezirow, 2000).

In objective reframing, “there is an intentional effort made by those involved to set aside preconceptions and biases in favour of objective analysis, to weigh evidence, assess arguments, and critically examine assumptions” (Mezirow, 1991b, p. 189). Objective reframing aims not at arriving at some objectified truth, but rather at formulating a communally endorsed “tentative, consensual, best judgment” that is always open to revision (Mezirow, 1996b, p. 163). Mezirow (1991a) set forward his conditions for fostering this kind of dialogue:

Have accurate and complete information. Be free from coercion and distorting self-deception. Be able to weigh evidence and assess arguments objectively; be open to alternative perspectives. Be able to become critically reflective upon presuppositions and their consequences. Have equal opportunity to participate (including the chance to challenge, question, refute, and reflect and to hear others do the same); and be able to accept an informed, objective, and rational consensus as a legitimate test of validity. (pp. 77-78)

Mezirow (1991a, 1996a, 1996b) is optimistic in his view of the potential of human beings to achieve such disinterested consideration. Although he has recently asserted that he has always conceived of Transformation Theory as primarily relevant and applicable to adults of Western culture, Mezirow (1996b) has, in the past, stated that these ideal conditions for rational discourse “are implicit in the nature of human communication” (p. 239), regardless of the specific context or culture. Recognizing that situational restraints often ensure the unlikelihood of ever achieving these “ideal” conditions for rational discourse⁶, Mezirow has nevertheless insisted that it is important to have an ideal toward which to orient human action and values. Otherwise, individuals will be too vulnerable to habit and to the brutalities of relationships based on differentiations in personal and group power (Mezirow 1991a, 1991b, 1996a, 1996b, 2000).

It is clear that Mezirow envisioned a process of transformation that has both private and public dimensions (Mezirow, 1991a, 2000; Taylor, 1998; Wilcox, 1998). As such, he posited a process where much of the formulation of new premises usually takes place in the private realm, with the individual subsequently bringing new ideas to the group for scrutiny (Mezirow 1991a; Taylor, 1998). Discourse may confirm or challenge the new premises, often prompting the

⁶ Until very recently, Mezirow used the term “rational discourse” to denote what he now calls objective reframing. His change in terminology may be in response to criticisms that use of the term “rational” places too much emphasis on the cognitive processes involved in transformation.

individual to further self-reflection or action (Brookfield, 2000). In this vein, Wilcox (1998) has described her notion of a “dialogical relationship” between connection and autonomy in adult learning (p. 2), and Tang (1997), too, has identified a “rhythmic dance of differentiating and integrating,” both within the individual consciousness and in dialogue.

Other Views of the Roles of Reflection and Discourse

In the literature, most empirical studies have found general support for the claim that critical reflection is a significant aspect of adult transformation (Taylor, 1997). Nevertheless, Mezirow’s depiction of critical reflection has provoked others to delineate several other important issues, predominantly the possibility of group transformation (e.g., Yorks & Marsick, 2000), the power dynamics embedded in communication, the emotional components of reflection and discourse (e.g., Loughlin, 1994, 1996; Merriam & Clark, 1993), the role of the unconscious in transformation (e.g., Boyd, 1989, 1991; Healy, 2001; Lauzon, 1998; Scott, 1997), and the limitations of rationality and language (e.g., De Sousa, 1991; Boyd, 1991). I will discuss each of these issues in the following pages.

Group transformation. In contrast to Mezirow, Yorks and Marsick (2000) have suggested that the individual need not be the point of departure in transformative learning. They posit that, although rife with problems, exploration of transformative learning that both originates and is enacted within a group holds promise for organizational, as well as societal, change. However, while it may be possible to foster the sort of discussion envisioned by Mezirow within relatively small learning teams, one can imagine that it is often very difficult, if not impossible, to enact such dynamics in large organizations that have hierarchical power structures. Furthermore, transformations in individual or group perceptions of how things are or should be done may not manifest in discussion or action at all, given the potential costs to careers. Collard and Law (1989), Hart (1990), and Belenky and Stanton (2000) are among others who have criticized Mezirow for failing to address the issues of power relations that are often inherent in communication.

In fact, Mezirow (1989) has said that there often exist institutional and ideological restraints on discourse and reflection. In addition, he has

acknowledged that, “acute deprivation and insecurity, fear, illness and ignorance can make a mockery of the ideal of critical dialogue” (p. 171). However, to Mezirow, the unsatisfactory alternatives to attempting to foster open communication “involve basing understanding upon tradition, authority, or physical force” (p. 188).

Emotional components of reflection and discourse. Although Mezirow (1991a) has stated that transformation is always painful and that it involves both guilt and shame, he has spent little time elucidating what Brookfield (1994, 2000) has called the dark side of personal change. In this regard, Brookfield (1994) has emphasized the need for more depictions of how adults really “feel their way through the processes of transformation” (p. 203).

In Brookfield’s (1994) study of 311 educators’ self-reported accounts of their own transformative learning, he found some of the more disruptive aspects of adult change process. The study participants, on the whole, felt like “imposters” as they contemplated the discordance between the culture’s image of the “professional” teacher and their own feelings of disorientation, which resulted in a “daily sense of themselves as stumbling and struggling survivors” (p. 205). Many experienced a kind of “cultural suicide” as bemused or angry colleagues reacted negatively to their enthusiasm for new ideas and actions (p. 208); “People look back to their time as dualistic thinkers, and to their faith that if they just put enough effort into problem solving solutions would always appear, as a golden era of certainty” (p. 210). The strongest source of hope for the learners was “belonging to an emotionally sustaining peer learning community” that became “like a second family” (p. 213).

Most of the experiences of Brookfield’s (1994) educator-subjects reflected Mezirow’s incremental movement through stages of learning, but many described it as a process of “one step forward, two steps back” (p. 211) and spoke of the terrifying moment when they finally left behind old meanings with nothing to take their place. Interestingly, there is little research that configures transformative change processes as primarily joyful processes of discovery, although the enabling and sustaining aspects of humour have received some attention (e.g., Patteson, 1999; Plett, 2001). I believe this research will show that, for these participants, their experiences have been marked by joyful discovery.

Brookfield (1994) has pointed out that “educators for transformation” are usually reluctant to warn adult learners about the potential for pain that lies in deep learning. Nevertheless, discussions of the pain, confusion, and loss involved in deep adult change processes are beginning to appear more frequently in the literature (Flanagan, 2001; Peddigrew, 2001). Flanagan (2001) also spoke of the parallels between transformative learning and coming to terms with impending death. Scott (1997) has written about the need to have time to grieve the loss of former identity before moving on to the stage of identity reconstruction.

The limits of rationality and language. For many of his readers, Mezirow’s faith in objective reframing is unwarranted, for language itself is viewed as constructed by, permeated with and therefore reproductive of prevailing cultural values (e.g., Brookfield, 2000; Usher et al. 1997). Mezirow’s emphasis on the rational or objective aspects of discourse has also been interpreted as a constricted conception of the varied ways in which humans construct knowledge. O’Neill, Lipsett, and O’Conner (2001) have spoken of realms of knowing that are beyond language and that may be more readily accessible through products and processes of art-making. Images, they said, convey deeper and truer meanings than can words. This turn to the extra-rational aspects of adult learning owes much to the emergence of depth psychology.

Psychological Theory and Transformation Theory

The influences of depth psychology, as configured by Carl Jung (e.g., Jung, 1965; Storr, 1983), are found in the work of many proponents of Transformation Theory (e.g., Boyd, 1989, 1991; Cranton, 1994, 2000; Dirkx, 1997; Scott, 1997). In fact, Mezirow’s articulation of the adult learning processes has many features in common with Jung’s notion of individuation.

Jungian Influences on Transformation Theory

Jung (Jung, 1965; Storr, 1993) described the life span of the individual as divided into two halves, each with distinct learning tasks. The task of childhood is to become acculturated; the task of the adult is to become individuated, that is, to grow into being truly one’s self as distinct from others.

Boyd's (1989, 1981) applications of Jungian theory alerted practitioners to the many layers and types of learning that can take place in small groups. According to Boyd (1989, 1991), there are three interacting systems at work in any group: the social (i.e., the group itself), the personal, and the cultural. Each system is striving for an identity, and each has its own needs. Boyd and Myer's (1987) study of a religious community where senior members were not willing to assume leadership roles demonstrated the importance of understanding how personal and institutional features interrelate. Experienced clergy were more likely to take on duties if their new roles combined work for the Order as a whole with the individual members' more internal search for an authentic sense of self as distinct from the group.

Dirkx (2000) has cited Boyd's seminal influence in adding more depth to Transformation Theory by drawing attention to the formative role of the unconscious in human life and the fact that, within each individual, there is a jockeying to accommodate the needs of the Ego, the Self, and the outer world (Boyd, 1989, 1991). Dirkx (2000) said the following about the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious minds:

We often discover that, despite our best intentions, our being in the world seems to take on a life of its own... Our conscious will is often one sided, reflecting the influence of our socio-cultural contexts and personal biographies... From Jung's perspective of individuation, however, we understand that ego is just one player within the psyche, and not a very powerful one at that. (p. 2)

According to Jungian theory, it is important to intentionally access the unconscious, for otherwise it will make its presence known in the form of disruptive compulsions, obsessions, and complexes (Dirkx, 2000; Jung, 1965). When allowed to "speak," the unconscious expresses itself through symbols and images, as in dreams or works of art. These images are, at the same time, personally and universally relevant (Jung, 1965), for the individual unconscious exists in the company of a universal unconscious of which all humanity partakes. Boyd (1989, 1991) has said that three components of the individual become active in the manifestation of personal dilemmas: archetypal forces, personal history, and current contextual conditions. According to Boyd, a small group is particularly conducive to individual growth in that individuals inevitably trigger the arousal of

archetypal responses in one another and each member becomes acquainted with how primordial patterns are affecting her relationship in and beyond the group.

In Jungian terms then, transformative learning fosters “the natural process of individuation through imaginative engagement with these different dimensions of one’s unconscious life” (Dirkx, 2000, p. 2). Boyd and Myers (1987) referred to such engagement as a process of discernment, involving the components of receptivity to messages from the unconscious, recognition of the authentic nature of those messages, and grieving the loss of an old sense of identity before moving on to new ways of conceiving of the self. Dirkx and others (e.g., Nelson, 1994; Scott, 1997) have equated this type of transformation with spiritual growth, and what designates it as spiritual appears to be a sense of holistic involvement of the individual.

Learner Dispositions and Jungian Theory

Cranton (1994) has pointed out that there have been many attempts within the literature to classify types of adult learners, but that most of these attempts have resulted in dichotomous and exclusionary categorizations. Using Jung’s personality types, Cranton (1994, 1996, 2000) has added to our understanding that adults have varied and therefore preferred learning styles, which must be accommodated for when considering transformational education.

A Jungian perspective portrays personality types in terms of a continuum that encompasses introversion and extroversion at the extremes, and that positions most adults somewhere on the continuum, where both characteristics intermingle. Furthermore, individuals have preferences for how they interpret experience: some operate from the positions of thinking and feeling, both functions Jung described as rational, while others operate through irrational or extra-rational functions of sensing and intuition (Cranton, 1994).

Overt, language-based critical reflection comes more naturally to rational types than it does to irrational types. The latter usually prefer to sit with experience and often claim that insights just come to them full-blown without reflection. Cranton (2000) has pointed out that likely some sort of reflective processing is indeed taking place in irrational types, although the processes are not in the forefront of consciousness, but are “backed up by a secondary, rational psychological type function” (p. 194). Cranton’s point is well taken: it is

incumbent upon the educator of adults to provide learning opportunities that meet the needs of a variety of personality types that are bound to exist in any group and to be aware of her or his own personality preferences that might positively or negatively influence the teaching process.

For his part, Mezirow (1991a, 2000) has not ruled out the participation of intuition, feelings, and metaphorical thinking as possible elements in both initiating and sustaining critical reflection and discourse. Still, these alternate ways of knowing do not occupy much space in his articulations of Transformation Theory. Where Mezirow does admit the efficacy of varied ways of knowing, he usually implies that such insights must eventually take the form of language-based considerations (Cranton, 1994).

The Relations of Personal to Social Transformation

I anticipated that a teacher's exposure to personally meaningful experiences would probably result in a desire to change her actions in relation to colleagues and students. Mezirow has defined praxis, or action, as "the reflective implementation of a purpose" (Mezirow, 1992, p. 251) and has described action as "an integral and indispensable component of transformation" (Mezirow, 1989, p. 173). Mezirow has said that it is hard to imagine a change in habits of mind that was not manifest in action of some sort. Certainly, in regard to addressing distortions in premises that are socio-cultural in nature, "social action becomes an integral part of the process of transformation" (Mezirow, 1991a, p. 225). I turned to other writers for more insight into how personal and societal/cultural change are related.

Taylor (1998), in his review of the literature, identified Mezirow's failure to more clearly delineate the relationship between individual transformation and social change as "the most controversial issue" (p. 22) in Transformation Theory (e.g., Clark & Wilson, 1991; Collard & Law, 1989; Daloz, 2000; Hart, 1990; Schugurensky, 2001; Taylor, 1997, 1998). Usher et al. (1997), for instance, have argued that the adult of Transformation Theory is depicted as an individual "with an internal organismic rather than a social essence" and that "the social is always outside and oppressively 'other'" (p. 97).

Hart (1990), taking the opposite tack, applauds Mezirow's concern for education that is "liberating rather than merely adjusting" (p. 125). However, Hart

has also criticized Mezirow for neglecting the potentially radical social implications of this theory.

While it is true that Mezirow clearly viewed the costs of socialization as most often too great, I think it is a mistake to assume that at the heart of his theory there exists the “individual-society binary opposition” that some writers have decried (e.g., Usher et al., 1997, p. 97) and that he has ignored the contextual constraints on learning. Rather, Mezirow (1992) has often configured personal transformation as a precursor and accompaniment to forming alliances “with others of like mind to work toward effecting necessary changes in relationships, organizations, and systems, each of which requires a different mode of praxis” (p. 252).

The Role of the Educator in Transformative Learning

One of the more potentially power-laden relationships is that between teacher and student, with the former often being configured as the expert and the latter as largely unknowing. I sought insights from the literature that might help me identify the characteristics of teachers who find the balance between instructing and accompanying others in their learning. This is particularly relevant for this study as I consider Margie’s role as *pedagogista*, or adult educator. Mezirow (1991a, 2000) proffered a different view where what counts is what the individual learner wants to learn. The primary duties of educators for adult transformation are, therefore, to foster learners’ reflection upon their own meaning structures and to create supportive communities of discourse:

The implementation of these ideal conditions [for objective reframing] within the context of adult education implies a conscious effort by the educator to establish and enforce norms in the learning situation that neutralize and significantly reduce the influence of power, the win-lose dialogue, and the hegemony of instrumental rationality found elsewhere in society. Adult education is predicated upon creating free space for reflection and discourse and a reduction of the power differential between the educator and the learner. The educator is seen as a collaborative learner and tries to work his or herself out of a job. (Mezirow, 1996b, p. 171)

A few examples from the literature give some idea of the variety of methods educators may use to prompt adults’ reflection and discourse that have been proposed: Greene (e.g., 1990, 1995) has discussed the “emancipatory potential” (1990, p. 251) of literature and of the arts in general. Cranton (1994, 2000) has suggested using published personality inventories to aid learners in identifying

their orientations to learning, as well as role-playing, journal-writing, analyzing critical incidents, and providing concrete experiences for reflection on unmet expectations and assumptions. Nelson (1994) has written of the power of constructing and sharing autobiographies, and Candy (1991) has proposed the use of Kelly's (1995) repertory grids to identify personal meaning constructs.

There have also been several articulations of the difficulties faced by educators for adult transformation. For example, educators rarely have long enough exposure to any one group of learners to see them through the time-consuming transformative process (e.g., Taylor, 1998), and educators are faced with helping learners develop a plan for support and assistance once the educator is no longer present (e.g., Mezirow, 1991a). As well, educators may question their right to construct experiences that may cause psychic pain to their students and disrupt their lives (Mezirow, 1991a). Educators have to deal in depth with a number of different learning agendas and personalities at one time; and educators may themselves feel insecure about giving up power to the group (e.g., Cranton, 1994). As Taylor (1998) has pointed out, teaching for transformation is a complex process.

Postmodernism and Transformation Theory

There have been some attempts to determine the place of Transformation Theory in what many describe as a postmodern world. Readers may be familiar with the disclaimer that, because it eschews grand narratives (Lyotard, 1994), postmodernism by its very nature resists definition (Kerka, 1997). It may, therefore, be most fruitful to describe postmodernism as a stance of incredulity and skepticism (Lyotard, 1994) and to link its development to a deep sense of disillusionment with modernist promises of universal justice, security, and prosperity (Edwards & Usher, 2001). Dissanayake (1995), a bio-evolutionary scholar of aesthetics has said:

In light of the political calamities and barbarisms of the mid-twentieth century... the modernists' faith in human intelligence and their belief in the progress and perfectibility of human existence seem as antiquated and untenable as medieval theology. (pp. 200-201)

In place of the untenable, postmodernism offers a view of the human knowledge as relative, or situated. Liberation is dependent upon critical awareness

of the dynamics of oppression. This is the ground on which Transformation Theory and postmodernism meet.

Critical reflection on assumptions is at the heart of both postmodern critique and Transformation Theory. Both teach us to be critical of all forms of foundationalism, of totalizing and definitive explanations, and theories and the dominant take-for-granted paradigms... We have a mutual aim to avoid closure of certainty, seek openness to new experience with new and multiple meanings, accept the possibility of uncertainty and unpredictability while recognizing differences and otherness. (Mezirow, 1999, p.2)

The postmodern stance that most, if not all, individual meaning is largely dependent upon and determined by cultural context, appears to be contrary to the conception of human beings offered by Transformation Theory. As I mentioned earlier, the latter posits the existence of over-arching human characteristics that supercede cultural contexts. Among those characteristics, Mezirow cites the importance of connectedness to others, a desire to understand life, and spiritual yearning (Mezirow, 1999).

I must admit that I wondered if Mezirow's conception of human nature as a meta-narrative partook of the humanistic tradition of the Enlightenment (Edwards & Usher, 2001). However, Mezirow (1999) has again claimed at least partial affinity with postmodernism by saying that the extent to which transformation learning is encouraged and possible is determined by prevailing social forces that "dictate whose voice shall have priority and who is permitted to be heard" (p. 168).

Still, the conception of the individual in Transformation Theory continues to be problematic in terms of postmodernism. While Mezirow (2002), on one hand, has said that individual human identity is formed by "webs of affiliation within a shared life" (p. 27) and "jointly produced through discursive practices" (cited in Tennant, 1998, p. 369), the notion of individual autonomy still plays a foundational role in Transformational Theory. According to Mezirow (1999), there is some sense in which continuity of the self enables both the survival and the growth of the individual, and this is reason for hope, not irony or angst.

In relation to this notion that there must be a prevailing sense of self in order for change to take place, Kegan (2000) has described teaching for transformation as the process of assisting the learner in "the gradual traversing of increasingly more elaborate bridges" (p. 60). Kegan has said, "We need to know that, if it is to be a bridge that is safe to walk across, it must be well anchored on both sides, not

just the culminating side” (p. 61). That is to say, that a strong sense of self is both required for and fostered in transformative learning.

Thoughts on Mezirow’s Theoretical Outline and the Contributions of Others

In light of the critical reactions Mezirow has evoked, it is tempting to view his theory of adult transformative learning as inadequate and flawed. However, another way I have found of approaching Mezirow’s theory is to recognize that it is both complex and spacious: complex because Mezirow has tried to outline the discrete domains of human nature activity involved in a comprehensive theory of transformative adult learning (Taylor, 1997), and spacious because it is a theory that has left room for the contributions of others. Mezirow has, on the whole, responded patiently to his critics, sometimes reminding them that they have either misrepresented his writings or failed to realize the implications of his work (e.g., Mezirow, 1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1992).

In fact, one of Mezirow’s most admirable qualities may well be his willingness to publicly present ideas that have not been fully developed: his invitation to others to develop and modify his theories are exemplary of Mezirow’s own belief in public discourse as a means of arriving at fuller knowledge. It also warrants saying that one of Mezirow’s greater contributions to the understanding of life-altering adult learning may be his continuing ability to foster discourse among researchers, theorists, and educators, a discourse that is, on the whole, characterized by respect and diligent exploration.

A New Direction: The Role of Relationship to the “Other” in Transformative Learning

Mezirow (2001) seems aware of the deficiencies to which Brookfield, Taylor, and others have alluded. He noted that North Americans are very good at instrumental learning, but not good at engaging in collaborative discourse – a perspective that would be shared by educators in Reggio Emilia. He calls for more explorations of “how discourse should look.” Mezirow ties discourse and critical reflection to social responsibility and action when he also calls for further exploration of how educators for transformation may become “cultural agents of change.”

One issue that has caught my attention in Mezirow's work is the role of the Other in transformative adult learning. I resonated with the notion that human beings are essentially relational, and that the "Other" of relationship may be variously configured. For me, the practice of documentation and the public sharing of it have helped me perceive the Other. I anticipated that this might be so for teachers in my study, and I began to approach the literature of transformative learning with an eye to assisting myself in the conceptualization and articulation of the Other in adult learning.

Brookfield (1997) has pointed out that many of the educational experiences that adults describe as important to them take place within the context of relationships and that "analysis of this phenomenon from the perspective of learning and education has been neglected" (p. 65). Likewise, in his literature review, Taylor (1998) pointed out that the role of relationships in the transformative adult learning process has been given little intensive attention, despite the fact that much of the empirical research shows that the nature of relationships with others has a huge impact on the quality of learning. In the following section, I present an overview of some of the literature that is both influencing and holding promise for insights into transformational relationships.

The Qualities of Transformative Relationship with Otherness

Several articulations of the dynamics of a transformative relationship have appeared in the literature. Knights (1985) has commented on the quality of attention required for transformative human relationships, saying that we must develop our listening skills and allow individuals the time and space to follow through ideas without interruptions or censure. She added that the experience of receiving someone's undivided attention can be a rare and liberating one. However, it does not appear easy for human beings to accept the human Other. Bohm (1996) and Daloz (2000) have written that we must develop the ability to ride the waves of the storms that inevitably arise when adults with different points of view first begin to negotiate the intricacies of relationship.

Belenky and Stanton (2000) described Mezirow's conception of objective reframing as falling short of the potential that lies in human relationship and dialogue. Using the metaphor of game playing, they distinguished between objective reframing as "the doubting game" and the connected knowing as "the

believing game” (p. 86). Although they acknowledged that the aim of Mezirow’s objective reframing is not to win arguments, they said that the reliance of discourse on critical thinking necessarily emphasizes the activity of finding faults in thinking. In the believing game of connected knowing, the search is for strengths in what the Other presents, not weaknesses. Furthermore, Belenky and Stanton (2000) have stated that Mezirow’s conception of rational discourse implies the company of equals. The “believing game” is, therefore, more inclusive because, by placing the emphasis on understanding the Other rather than figuring out a problem, it welcomes marginalized individuals (see also Elbow, 1986). In their formulation of the dynamics of the believing game, Belenky and Stanton referred frequently to the work of Noddings (1984).

It was the aspect of being able to empathize with and support the Other as depicted in the work of Noddings (1984) that captured the interest of Belenky and Stanton (2000), as well as that of Loughlin (1994). When the latter studied the learning processes of a group of female, social activists in the United States, she found that caring for others and being cared for were both important factors in developing a commitment to social action. A brief foray into Noddings’ articulation of the dynamics of such relationships will explain the power of caring relationship as encountered by Loughlin’s study participants.

Noddings (1984) has said that “receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness” (p. 2) and joy inhabit the relational moment. She distinguishes between the roles of the one-caring and the one cared-for. For the one-caring, relationship is not bound by rules and regulations, for every situation of relatedness is unique. In relatedness, there is a “lateral move” on the part of the one-caring from the rational/instrumental into engrossed attentiveness. In human relationships, the one cared-for reciprocates, not by being subsumed into the world of the one-caring, but by becoming “more fully himself in the caring relationship” (p. 73). Nodding has said that joy arises out of reflective awareness of having moved closer to the idea of self as caring. However, another joy pervades the relational moment and is characterized by a “sense of connectedness, of harmony – the combination of excitement and severity – the sense of being in tune” (p. 144).

According to Noddings (1984), caring comes naturally in proximate and intimate relationships. The capacity to care naturally diminishes as one moves further and further out from the circle of intimacy. When caring is not natural, the

one-caring must foster an attitude of preparedness to receive those paths crossing her own. In effect, the one-caring holds an ideal image of the self as caring and strives to approximate the ideal. It is the experiences of reflective and receptive joy that sustain us as caring individuals.

In her work, Noddings (1984) drew upon the writings of German theologian Martin Buber. References to Buber's (1958) descriptions of human relationships, "I-It" and "I-Thou" have begun to appear in the literature on transformative learning (e.g., Allgood & Kvalsund, 2001; Clark, 1997; Healy, 2001). Again a brief segue into Buber's thought will aid the discussion.

Buber outlined the I-it relationship as one-sided: an individual objectifies, thinks about, and often uses the Other. In I-Thous an individual and the Other exist in dialogic, transactional relationship (Buber, 1958; Clark, 1997): "The Thous meets me. But I step into direct relation with it. Hence the relation means being chosen and choosing, suffering and action in one" (p. 11). The suffering arises from the fact that "no system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between I and Thou" (p. 11): a wealth of possibilities breeds dread" (Kaufmann, 1970).

Like Noddings, Buber believed that meaningful apprehension of the Other requires physical proximity and sensual engagement. Such apprehensions of the Other in all fullness rules out hatred, for "hatred remains blind by its very nature: one can only hate part of being" (p. 68). In the I-Thou moment, time takes on a "present and enduring" (p. 13) quality, and the Other "fills the firmament" of awareness (p. 16). Inevitably, however, individuals must step out of I-Thou, back into the temporal world where the Other is conceived of as It, something or someone that can be contemplated. To Buber, life consisted of a movement back and forth between the two kinds of relationship, but connecting is indisputably the more valuable kind of experience, for he said that, "all real living is meeting" (p. 11).

Allgood and Kvaslund (2001), sharing their experiences with peer co-counseling and, echoing Buber, described the embodied individual as a partial self, saying that we become more whole in the unit of I-Thou in that our awareness and knowing are expanded. Clark (1997) reminded her readers that I-Thou relationships might be formed with other people, nature, art, and God. Clark added

the possibility of being in relation with both unconscious and conscious parts of the self, maintaining openness to what each manifestation of Otherness can teach.

Much of what Noddings and Buber have said echoes in many of the elements of Transformation Theory: relationships are essential to growth; parties in relationship need to set aside personal agendas in order to gain insight into the world view of the Other; communicative learning is extolled above instrumental learning; and the individual is often vulnerable and out of control in the moment of relation. In addition, Buber's and Noddings' avowals that human beings have a basic need to be in relation parallels in some senses Mezirow's assertion that the qualities necessary for communicative learning are innate in human beings. Noddings and Buber also enlighten our understanding of relation in the emphasis they place on the proximity and sensual experience of the Other and of the emotion of joy that is born of relation. In terms of education, Noddings (1984) has talked about fostering "the receptive phase in understanding" and said that both animate and inanimate objects can provide us with experiences in receptivity (p. 164). Yet, to me, and perhaps to others, the words that Noddings and Buber used feel more evocative than those of Mezirow, and perhaps are more suitable to the mysteries that reside in the relational moment.

In the next chapter I will explain some of the conceptual framework of phenomenology, and why it is relevant to the study at hand.

CHAPTER 4:

A Conceptual Framework of the Phenomenological Model

Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences.

~ Max van Manen (1990, p 9).

Conceptual Framework of the Phenomenological Model

The term ‘phenomenology’ is a compound of the Greek words *phainomenon* and *logos*. It signifies the activity of giving an account, giving a *logos*, of various phenomena, of the various ways in which things can appear” (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 13). In other words, in this type of study the researcher tries to identify the lived experiences of participants directly involved with the phenomena. “Understanding the ‘lived experiences’ marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method” (Creswell, 2004, p. 15). Phenomenology has been applied in two ways since it was introduced by Husserl in 1913; first, as a philosophical sense in which one tries to understand as a logical process of thinking about the world, and second as a methodology “that attempts to use the attitude of phenomenology to construct patterns of research that reveal lived formations of meaning” (Brown, 1991, p. 18). Phenomenology is the foundation of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998, p. 4). It is concerned with being able to examine experiences from “many sides and perspectives until a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience is achieved” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 58).

The intent of this chapter is to briefly trace the evolution of phenomenology from its epistemological and ontological viewpoints. Phenomenology has the potential to “sponsor a certain attentive awareness to the details and seemingly trivial dimensions of our everyday educational lives” (van Manen, 1984a, p. i). It is this potential that I wish to explore through a discussion of how phenomenology can be utilized as an active method of educational practice.

While there are several interpretations and directions of philosophic phenomenology, this chapter will include a basic overview of phenomenology starting with its key founder, Edmund Husserl – since Husserlian phenomenology underpins and guides all phenomenological inquiry – and then

trace phenomenology's evolution towards interpretive and hermeneutic methodologies through the primary works of Martin Heidegger (1962), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), and Hans-George Gadamer (1975).

Phenomenology's Founding Father: Edmund Husserl

Edmund Husserl was concerned with how we perceive another person's body as a living body, as a centre of consciousness and feelings (Morin, 2005, p. 25), and in the part humans play in the actual construction of the world as it is experienced (Willis, 1999, p. 45). Giorgi (2000) identifies that a Husserlian method of phenomenology "discovers the essence of phenomena with the help of free imaginative variation" (p. 6). That is that one is able to put themselves imaginatively in the place of another. The aim of this approach to philosophy is "to describe experience as it really is, not to explain or analyze it" (Edwards, 2001, p. 80). Phenomenology as a philosophic tradition and field of study emerged as a "systematic study of the essentials correlation of subjectivity with objectivity" (p. 7). The key aspect of phenomenology concerns meaning, involving readiness to suspend taken-for-granted beliefs (attitudes) in favour of a critical stance towards everyday experiences (Collins, p. 181, cited in Merriam, 1984). It can be considered a "human science method: a profoundly reflective inquiry into human meaning" (van Manen, n.d., para. 2). Although Husserl focused on epistemological frameworks within his original philosophy of phenomenology, he still provides the foundation for understanding the place of human experience. Experience becomes the ultimate ground and meaning of knowledge (Kohak, 1978). It is through this reflection and focus on experience that other philosophers built on the ontological and hermeneutic aspects of that experience. Heron (1996) states that "a person seeking to pursue a phenomenological task needs to...bring these implicit everyday epistemic frameworks into clear relief and become fully aware of them" (p. 120). Although it is impossible to reduce complex phenomenological principles to a logical sequence of steps and techniques, key tenets of philosophical and scientific phenomenological inquiry may be leveled and utilized throughout curricula.

What does phenomenology entail, and how did Husserl envision it? It can be argued that "an attempt to reduce the works of a great philosopher to a

few basic propositions understandable to an audience not familiar with his thought is, as a rule, a hopeless undertaking” (Collins, 1983, p. 180). There is also the argument poised by Paley (1997) that Husserl’s philosophic phenomenology is not meant to be applied to the scientific method for study, but to articulate a philosophy that has the potential to evolve. Building on philosophic phenomenology must stay grounded in key definitions and discussions around Husserl’s philosophical phenomenology.

Husserl’s philosophic phenomenology must be acknowledged in order to reflect on other uses of phenomenology outside of qualitative research. Husserl’s original vision of phenomenology, be it positivistic in nature or not, provides key insights into the nature of experience and should not be discounted in favour of more post-modern perspectives. Key phenomenological concepts that Husserl identifies that provide a framework for the development of phenomenology as an educational focus include: lifeworld, intentionality, and phenomenological reduction. These important ideas of philosophic phenomenology have the potential to guide the novice educator and student on the basic tenets of phenomenological inquiry and create a foundation for the development of educational practice.

Lifeworld

The premise of *lifeworld* refers to the actual experienced world of a person corresponding to that person’s intentional awareness (Collins, 1983). This world within phenomenological discourse is the “experienced life world” understood as a fluid overlapping of which the person finds her or himself as a part of all the familiar and recurrent experiences of body, time, space, and social relations which make up a person’s felt world (p. 102). The enquirer using Husserlian phenomenology asks about the meaning of human experience; reality in itself becomes the *lifeworld* (Koch, 1995, p. 830). The *lifeworld* is where the phenomenologist starts from, since it is in the “bridging of reflective awareness that the nature of events experienced in our natural attitude that we are able to transfer or remake ourselves in the true sense of *Bildung* (van

Manen, 1984a, p. ii).⁷ It is the goal within the development of a phenomenologically-guided educational practice to begin with the ability of the educator to situate the student in the lifeworld of another.

Intentionality

The concept of consciousness is re-situated and re-defined within phenomenological inquiry. For consciousness to be pure in nature there needs to be a shift away from previous positivistic theories that attempt to explain phenomena, towards the phenomena itself. This involves investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it (van Manen, 1984a, p. 2). Husserl describes these phenomena as intentionality or the “directness or aboutness of conscious experience” (Morin, 2005, p. 5). He viewed this type of consciousness as an active and creative endeavour rather than a passive or static directedness (p. 54). It is through the process of phenomenological reflection that one can “turn back towards consciousness itself, and explore the essence of conscious acts, if scientific philosophic knowledge is to be clarified, then the role of subjectivity in knowledge needs to be truly grasped” (p. 6). We are conscious of people, objects, and our surroundings at all times within our lives, be it an active consciousness or sub-consciousness; Husserl refers to these conscious processes as intentional. Husserl’s concept of intentionality differs from a normative state of consciousness, as he sees consciousness as being directed toward an object, and he calls this *noesis* (from the Greek word meaning “mental perceptions, intelligence, or thought”). The *noesis* has an essence to which Husserl refers as *noema* (from the Greek word meaning “that which is perceived, a perception, a thought”) (Phillipson, 1972). Phillipson further states that Husserl says these noetic-noematic structures of consciousness are never in isolation from each other, but always correlated. The phenomenological agenda is an attempt to get back to the first naming of these experiences, “to understand and describe phenomena exactly as they appear in an individual’s consciousness” (Phillipson, 1972, cited in Willis, 1996, p. 96).

⁷ van Manen (1984a) uses the term *Bildung* to describe education and further describes phenomenological research a curriculum of being (p. ii).

Phenomenological Reduction

Welch (1999) identifies three steps to phenomenological investigation. The first step is referred to as *reduction* or the *epoche*, where mental acts are described free of presupposition – the phenomenologist suspends his beliefs and brackets both the subject and the object. Husserl used the term *epoche* to describe “the disruption or break with the natural attitude, and characterizes it as a ‘certain refraining from judgment’, *bracketing*, or putting out of play” (Morin, 2005, p. 7). It is the ability to “suspend the belief component or commitment of our intentional experiences” and to experience phenomena from a pure view free of our presuppositions and thoughts of the world (p. 7). This allows one to study the “essential structures of the world” (van Manen, 1990, p. 175). It is questioned whether this suspension of beliefs is possible, as it is not measurable in empirical terms and is subjective in nature. Some argue that it is only imaginative and lacks any way of proving that this actual suspension of beliefs has occurred. However, as Stewart and Mickunas (1990) state, “it is imperative for one to open oneself to all kinds of experience in order to decide whether empiricism is a sufficient theory for explaining human knowledge” (p. 26). This is the position that phenomenology takes, that there are multiple essences and views of the world that extend past positivistic or empirical base. It just takes the development of new skills to be able to see the life world of others from a phenomenological perspective. Husserl maintains that “bracketing objects does not alter experience for us in any way: nothing is lost, but the domain of subjectivity and knowledge is properly brought into view, purged of the presuppositions imposed on it by the natural attitude” (Morin, 2005, p. 27). We describe our experience as involving a unified self – that is, a self which is itself a unity and which is inseparably bound up with its environment (Edwards, 2001, p. 80).

The second step is known as *eidetic reduction* which is the analysis performed to reveal the defining form and structures of consciousness, meaning, and experience. Eidetic phenomenology suggests that there are “essential structures to any human experience, these structures are what constitute any experience. The goal of eidetic phenomenology is a description of the meaning of an experience for the perspective of those that have had the experience” (Paley, 1997, p. 9).

Finally, there is the *phenomenological reduction* which searches for the essence of the object of the conscious process (Welch, 1999, p. 241). Phenomenological reduction involves “reducing a complex problem to its basic elements” (p. 26). It is the ability of one to ignore his/her previous prejudice about the world, and “it is the hope that by this narrowing of attention to what is essential, he/she will discover the rational principles necessary for an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation” (p. 26).

Although there are different focuses from other phenomenologists in regards to the ontological concerns and advancement of understanding of others basic phenomenological tents such as the lifeworld, intentionality, bracketing, and reduction remain as the foundational processes. It is from this foundation that other philosophers such as Heidedgger, Merleau-Ponty, and Gadamer evolved phenomenology.

Heidegger

Heidegger rejected the notion that we are observing subjects separated from the world of objects about which we try to gain knowledge; rather, we are beings inseparable from an already existing world (Magee, 1988, cited in Drauker, 1999, p. 361). Understanding of itself occurs because we are “born into the world...as self-interpreting beings” (Kocher, 1995, p. 9). Much of what we do does not require consciousness or awareness, but rather everyday skillful coping. Heidegger takes the position that presuppositions cannot be suspended because they “constitute the possibility or intelligibility or meaning” (Ray, 1994, cited in Drauker, 1999, p. 120). He sees us always being already in the world, that experiences can only be understood in the terms or context of one’s background. That is, we are tied to our social backgrounds and meanings, and cultural contexts. Therefore he concentrated more on the understanding of others than on the phenomenological description itself. Therefore, also, the goal of Heideggarian research is to seek to understand the meaning of human experiences and practices, if we remove presuppositions we remove the possibility of the intelligibility of meaning (Ray, 1994). Thus Heidegger does not support the notion that experience in itself can be purely bracketed and isolated free of presupposition. Heidegger sees us as always being in the world, not as a mind and body separate within it. We are always

tied to meaning, and in order to study one's behaviour it must be studied within its context (Benner, 1985, p. 51). Heidegger sees the person as a "Being" which has significance and value (p. 49). People are guided by their own interpretive understanding, that is, the person is self-interpreting (p. 51).

Merleau-Ponty

Maurice Merleau-Ponty revisited many of Husserl's original ideas while reflecting on the ontological concerns that Heidegger brought forward, although his perspective was really rooted more in phenomenological than ontological concerns. In particular, he focused on the perpetual experience and the need to re-focus on experience through its confusion and flex (Welch, 1999, p. 237).

Merleau-Ponty also identified that phenomenology "can be practiced and identified as a manner or style of thinking, that it existed as a movement before arriving at complete awareness of itself as a philosophy" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. viii). He also saw phenomenology as only being accessible as a phenomenological method (p. viii).

Gadamer

Gadamer continued to develop ontological definitions of understanding brought forward by Heidegger, with the focus on interpretation and understandings in relation to their fore structures and cultural context (Welch, 1999, p. 27). He viewed interpretations as not being generated in "individual consciousness as subjects relating to objects" (Pascoe, 1996, p. 3). He saw us as always "interpreting in the light of our anticipatory pre-judgments and prejudice, which are themselves changing in the course of history, our understanding of the meanings that are given to situations and events are always evolving and changing" (p. 5). By utilizing the hermeneutic circle of interpretation within educational practice and attending to the fact that subjectivity is indeed a privileged position, the educator can help guide us in identifying, attending to, and understanding the experiences of others.

Phenomenology as a Method of Educational Practice

Much of the discussion in this chapter stems in large part from the work of Max van Manen, who reflected primarily on the place of phenomenological inquiry in education. van Manen identifies phenomenological inquiry as being viewed as a: 1) methodology; 2) form of writing; 3) method and procedure; 4) epistemology of practice; 5) orientation; and 6) source of meaning.

Phenomenology may be considered a “human science method; a profoundly reflective inquiry into human meaning” (van Manen, n.d., para. 1).

Phenomenology can be utilized as a research method. This use of phenomenology probes into sources of meaning, articulates phenomenology as a philosophical discipline, and stimulates the development of reflective practice. van Manen (1984a) speaks of studying phenomenology in terms of its practical consequence for human living.

My conceptualization of a phenomenological method in education does not situate itself in one pervading phenomenological school of thought, but pulls from several different views of phenomenological inquiry; that is, I suggest that phenomenology can be represented in curricula as both a philosophy and a science. A phenomenological viewpoint begins from the foundational work of Husserl and his epistemological views of consciousness and person, toward the ontological focus of Heidegger, showing the relationships that others have within the world, towards Merleau-Ponty who integrates the two schools of thought, and finally Gadamer who seeks to extend understanding within this philosophic viewpoint.

Phenomenological Reflection: Pragmatist vs. Phenomenological

A key discussion focuses around the use of phenomenology as a reflective process once it has been identified as a pedagogical tool. When examining the use of experience within an educational context it is important to articulate the difference between what Yorks & Kasl (2002) term a pragmatice (uses experience as a noun) and a phenomenological (uses experience as a verb). The pragmatist view sees how experience relates to learning, viewing experience not as the direct sensation of the felt encounter, but as the meaning that we make of that encounter (p. 181). Heron (1992) on the other hand, in his phenomenological view of experience, treats experience as a process and

encounter with the world (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p. 182). Heron articulates experience as a felt encounter, as a verb instead of a noun. He also sees each experience as perceptions, multiple ways of knowing, that must be balanced each within its own cannon of validity; and as a theoretical distinction between feeling and emotion (p. 182). These perspectives and ways of knowing have much relevance to the way that experience can be processed and integrated into educational practice.

Conclusion

Husserl's original phenomenological philosophy needs to be recognized as the foundation for the use of phenomenological inquiry in educational practice. From his original discussion on lifeworld, intentionality, and phenomenological reduction educators can begin to situate the use of phenomenological inquiry in educational practice. Education has the ability to integrate several differing epistemological, ontological, and hermeneutic aspects of phenomenology. Phenomenological inquiry has the potential to expand its use not only as a method of qualitative research, but also as a method of educational practice. The field of adult education has much to offer, not only in the works of Max van Manen, but through both pragmatic and phenomenological views of experience. Phenomenology has much to offer for the development of reflective practice.

Now, having explored phenomenology and some of its nuances, I will move into explaining the methodological choices made in order to enact this research study.

CHAPTER 5:

Method and Design of the Study

Why should one adopt one research approach over another? The choice should reflect more than mere whim, preference, taste, or fashion. Rather, the method one chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with the deep interest that makes one an educator (or parent or teacher) in the first place.

~ Max van Manen (1990, p. 2)

The study of current relevant educational literature, coupled with self-reflection, introspection, and dialogue with colleagues, informs this examination of the practice of pedagogical documentation and personal disposition. Particular attention is paid to the case of three educators (two teachers and one *pedagogista*) in one early childhood setting who participate in activities related to the pedagogical documentation of children's learning.

This chapter presents an overview of the underlying principles and research paradigms that guide this study. It begins with a description of the methodological perspectives that ground this research, and follows with an outline of the procedures used to select participants and to collect, manage, and analyse the data. It concludes with a discussion of the methodological challenges inherent in researching human experience and other issues that underpin this project.

Design of the Study

van Manen (1990) posits that there is a dialectic between question and method. Why should one adopt one research approach over another? The choice should reflect "more than mere whim, preference, taste, or fashion. Rather, the method one chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with the deep interest that makes one an educator (or parent or teacher) in the first place" (p. 2).

With this in mind, I turned to the research process favored by educators in Reggio Emilia to determine a research design model. Their work promotes reflective practice through methods that help educators to develop a deeper understanding of the context of their work and to assess the needs of their stakeholders. This reliance on teacher reflection and documentation of their work with young children as their primary means of research and evaluation falls within the tradition of qualitative research (Edwards, Forman, & Gandini, 1998). As such, it provides an ideal backdrop to the present study. Thus, a qualitative method, that is, a naturalistic inquiry and holistic perspective, organizes the research design,

data collection, and analysis. Naturalistic inquiry which is rooted in ethnography is not concerned with proving or disproving a theory by imposing *a priori* constraints on the analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Rather, it is concerned with recording the essence of the experience at each site in order to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon being explored.

This chapter includes my thoughts regarding the design of the present study.

Qualitative Research as the Orientation for this Study

The purpose of this section is to discuss the qualitative research orientation and its theoretical assumptions. The qualitative case study is examined and recommended as the best methodology for the present study based on its particular strengths for discovering and understanding the documentation experiences of three educators in a Reggio Emilia-inspired programme. The central research questions for this study were:

1. *What are the lived experiences of these teachers who are practicing pedagogical documentation, as modeled in the Reggio Emilia approach*
2. *Do these teachers demonstrate particular attributes that foster a “disposition to document”?*

The Naturalistic Paradigm

Paradigms are defined as “axiomatic systems characterized by their differing sets of assumptions about the phenomenon into which they are designed to inquire” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 311). Guba and Lincoln (1985) propose the “naturalistic paradigm” as the undergirding belief system for qualitative research.

The “naturalistic paradigm” posits multiple and intangible realities that can only be studied in a holistic manner. Research into these multiple realities will “diverge,” not converge. Prediction and control are not likely outcomes of this type of research; however, the “results” in a qualitative research project tend to be deeper understandings of the phenomenon being studied.

To understand more deeply some aspect of human behaviour is the overarching goal of qualitative research. Lincoln (1995) further proposes that if the researcher operates out of the “naturalistic” paradigm, then the research questions will be about the “lived experiences” of the participants in the study and a qualitative design will be selected. Sherman and Webb (1988) conducted in-depth analyses of leading qualitative researchers’ statements about their work and

concluded that, “qualitative (research) implies a direct concern with experience as it is ‘lived’ or ‘felt’ or ‘undergone.’ Qualitative research, then, has the aim of understanding experiences as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it” (p. 7).

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research, as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers are oriented to study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p. 2).

Such qualitative research is undertaken in a natural setting where the researcher is an instrument of data collection, gathering words or pictures, analysing them inductively, focusing on the meaning made by the participants, and describing a process that is expressive and persuasive in language (Creswell, 1998). The researcher asks open-ended research questions, wanting to listen to the participants being studied and shaping questions after “exploring,” and refrains from assuming the role of the expert researcher with the “best” questions. Questions change during the process of research to reflect an increased understanding of the problem. Furthermore, these questions are taken out to the field to collect either “words” or “images,” in four basic types of information: interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 1998). As Wolcott (1995) comments, “They [researchers] establish what a stranger would have to know in order to be able to participate in a meaningful way” (p. 60).

Maxwell (1998) enumerates five research purposes for which qualitative studies are particularly useful: understanding the meaning, for participants in the study, of the events, situations, and actions in which they are involved, and of the accounts they give of their lives and experiences; understanding the particular context within which the participants act, and the influence this context has on their actions; identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, and generating new, grounded theories about them; understanding the processes by which events and actions take place; and developing causal explanations.

The following are generally accepted characteristics of qualitative research as described by Merriam (2001):

- There is an overarching interest in understanding the meaning people have constructed.
- There is an inductive approach to knowledge generation.
- The researcher focuses on gaining the emic, or insider's, perspective.
- Meaning is mediated through the investigator's own perceptions.
- The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
- Research usually involves fieldwork.
- The end product is narrative and descriptive.

Proponents of qualitative research designs emphasize the promise of quality, depth, and richness in the research findings. Researchers who are convinced that a qualitative approach is best for the discussion at hand must make a case that “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) and detailed analysis will yield valuable explanations of processes (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Characteristics of the study at hand, which are more or less common to most forms of qualitative research, are that the design was emergent, flexible, and responsive to changing conditions of the study in progress; the sample selection was non-random, purposeful, and small; and I, as the researcher, spent considerable time in the natural setting of the study, often in intense contact with the participants.

The following section will discuss central elements and processes in good qualitative research.

Researcher as Bricoleur

The researcher in qualitative research must typically be able to employ many different types of methods, analyses, and interpretations according to the research topic at hand. Levi-Strauss (1966, p. 17) came up with the title *bricoleur* to describe the qualitative researcher who is a “jack of all trades or a professional-do-it-yourself person.” The bricoleur produces a *bricolage* which is “a pieced together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 3). By using a combination of methods and different types of empirical materials, the researcher produces a bricolage (i.e., a piece of qualitative research that has “increased rigor, depth, and breadth) (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 4).

The researcher is also a theorist. It is critical that he/she reflects on personal experiences, beliefs, and cultural context before entering into this type of research. By bringing into consciousness personal biases and beliefs about reality, it then

becomes possible to enter the research field from a more neutral and open stance. As the bricoleur performs the tasks of the research process “ranging from interviewing to observing to interpreting personal and historical documents to intensive self-reflection and introspection” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 4), he or she is better able to shift from a personal perspective to the perspectives of those being studied.

Central Elements of Qualitative Research

So what is the first step? How does one begin this complex process? How does one know if something is robust qualitative research? A productive way to think about this is to review the central elements of good qualitative research which guided and informed the present study, as described by Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) in *Understanding Quantitative and Qualitative Research*:

Holistic perspective. The naturalistic paradigm posits multiple realities that can only be understood from a holistic perspective. This holistic perspective means that the phenomena (culture, group, process) being researched must be looked at in its entirety. As Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) put it, “the matter being researched is greater than the sum of its parts, and its full significance emerges by maintaining a broad encompassing perspective” (p. 109).

Naturalistic orientation. Whatever being studied is in its natural state. This means that the researcher must remain open to whatever emerges from the study. Sometimes this can mean that the initial focus gets completely shifted to something more central that emerges.

Non-intervention, non-manipulation. The methods of qualitative research should not alter the phenomenon being studied; the phenomenon should speak for itself just as it would if the researcher was not present (although it must be acknowledged that the researcher’s presence likely does have an impact).

Context sensitivity. The context of the phenomena under study is crucial. Qualitative research is very cognizant of cultural contexts as they have major impacts on an individual’s constructions of meanings. “Considerable attention is given to analyzing social settings...context is crucial for fully understanding behavioural and social events” (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 110).

Importance of participants’ perspectives. This key element is woven throughout qualitative research through the focus on “lived experiences.” The

qualitative researcher must first become fully conscious of his/her own perspectives so that then he/she can seek out and consider the perspectives of the individuals living in the process or phenomenon being studied. This focus on shifting from one's own perspective to that of others is critical in naturalistic research because it recognizes multiple realities. The realities of others can only be discovered and reported by a researcher who is open to other perspectives. There is much discussion in the qualitative research literature about the issue of "voice." The voices of the participants and the voices of the researcher are considered to be essential pieces of "good" interpretation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). With this in mind, throughout this study I have written in the first person.

Direct collection of data. The open-ended interview, direct observations, recorded dialogues, and thick descriptions are all done by the researcher personally. It is important for the bricoleur to be directly and intimately involved with the collection of the data.

Rich, descriptive data. As the researcher observes the setting and participants, he or she records volumes of rich, elaborate, and descriptive data. Nothing is judged to be trivial, especially in the beginning. Body language, facial expression, voice inflections, physical settings, and social interactions are all described so as to give the reader the sense of "being there". These data are recorded in narrative form; direct quotations are used to capture participants' experiences and understandings; diagrams of the settings, often with sociograms, may be used to round out the picture.

Researcher as the primary instrument. The researcher collects these rich details and observations, then steps back and analyzes them and then interprets them. The researcher is the "prime filter and interpreter" (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 111).

Personal contact with empathic neutrality. This is one of the most difficult tasks of qualitative research. The researcher must enter the field with no theory to prove or outcomes to verify. The chief task of the researcher is to capture some understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Qualitative methods seek to discover important questions and relationships (Hubbard & Power, 1993). This can only occur if the researcher adopts a neutral stance and remains open to the emerging themes of the phenomenon.

As the researcher conducts extensive open-ended interviewing and records detailed observations, interactions, and dialogue, he or she inevitably establishes personal relationships with the participants of the study. These personal relationships can then help the researcher shift perspectives and begin to see the phenomenon under study from the participants' views. The researcher must be very careful, however, not to step over the line and become emotionally involved or to begin identifying with some participants more than with others. He or she must walk "a thin and taut tightrope...seeking extensive personal contact and yet simultaneously adopting an empathic yet neutral position among varying viewpoints and constituencies" (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 112).

Design flexibility. Qualitative research has an emerging and evolving nature. Before the research begins, there are no initial hypotheses to be tested or specific theories to be proved. Detailed procedures are not developed prior to the beginning of the research. Instead, the research design starts with some broad research questions and initial data collection such as observations and very open-ended interviewing. The research design becomes more and more structured and focused as the data are collected and emerging themes and processes become apparent. The researcher must at all times be ready "to make unsignaled, abrupt turns and to change directions to pursue emergent leads as she or he proceeds along the road to investigation" (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 112).

Inductive analysis. Analysis begins as the inductive research process begins. The researcher starts with preliminary data collection and begins to look for emerging concepts, meanings, or relationships. These emerging concepts then direct the researcher's further observations and questions. The qualitative research process begins very broadly and then funnels down to more and more specific and focused inquiry. Eventually, the researcher reaches a state of saturation where the same themes and concepts are emerging and re-emerging over and over. This inductive process is internal to the researcher as he or she gathers the data, reflects on them, makes meaning of them, and then gathers more, always seeking to find deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Throughout this inductive process, it is the data that funnels the questions and observations.

Discovery of meaning and understanding. The open-ended beginning process of qualitative research becomes a benefit as the researcher is more open to the discovery of meanings. The absence of preconceived theories or hypotheses

allows the researcher to explore new understandings and insights. Qualitative researchers often report feelings of “surprise” (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996) as they make these discoveries.

Prolonged period of activity in the field. This element of qualitative research comes out of its anthropological roots. It is essential that the researcher conduct a long enough period of observation to get the full picture of the phenomenon under study. It is recommended that “theoretical saturation” (Adler & Adler, 1998) be reached; that is, continued observations continue to support the emergence of the same themes and categories.

The above elements directed the present study in all of its aspects.

The Case Study

Once the researcher has identified a paradigm to which he or she feels committed, it is time to start thinking about methodology. Qualitative research in early childhood education has taken many forms, with the case study as one of the most promising. When a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed, case study is an ideal methodology (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). The following discussion will clarify case study methodology and its suitability for this research project.

The phrase “case study” is a generic term for the investigation of an individual, group or phenomenon. While the techniques used in the investigation may be varied, the distinguishing feature of case study is the belief that human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or integrity and are not simply a loose collection of traits. As a consequence of this belief, case study researchers hold that to understand a case, to explain why things happen as they do, and to generalize or predict from a single example requires an “in-depth investigation of the interdependencies of parts and of the patterns that emerge” (Sturman, 1994, p. 61).

Case study is distinguished from all other qualitative research because a single case, event, or programme is researched, frequently including the accounts of subjects themselves. Merriam (1998) suggests that “case study is appropriate when the objective of an evaluation is to develop better understanding of the dynamics of a program” (p. 39), and that “case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (p. 40). Single-case studies are also ideal for revelatory cases where an

observer may have access to a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible (Yin, 1994).

According to Edwards (2004), cases are often referred to as “the bounded systems which we explore in our study” (p. 126). This particular case study looks intensely at a small participant pool, drawing conclusions only about this group and only in this specific context. In fact, the case study is a form of research that is “defined by interest in individual cases, not by methods of inquiry used” (Stake, 1994, p. 236). Emphasis is placed on designing the study to optimize the understanding of the case rather than the generalization beyond the case. Stake (1994) has noted that different researchers have differing reasons for studying cases. In the *Intrinsic Case Study*, the researcher desires a better understanding of one case. The case study is not undertaken primarily because it represents other cases; rather through its uniqueness, it becomes interesting (Stake, 1994, 1995, 2000). Merriam (1988) concurs, stating that a case might be selected because “it is intrinsically interesting; a researcher could study it to achieve as full an understanding of the phenomenon as possible” (p. 28). The researcher’s purpose is not to understand or test abstract theory, nor to develop theoretical explanations; instead, the intention is to “better understand intrinsic aspects of the particular child, patient, criminal, organization, or whatever the case may be” (Berg, 1998, p. 216). Along similar lines, Bromley (1990) describes a case study as a “systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest” (p. 302). Merriam (1988) indicates that one of the special features of case study is that its heuristic nature may enhance the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon, bringing the discovery of new meaning, extending the reader’s experience, or confirming what he already knows.

An educational case study is described by Bassey (1999) as an empirical enquiry that is:

- conducted within a localized boundary of space and time;
- into interesting aspects of an educational activity, or programme, or institution, or system;
- mainly in its natural context and within an ethic of respect for persons;
- in order to inform the judgments and decisions of practitioners or policy-makers;
- or of theoreticians who are working to these ends;
- in such a way that sufficient data are collected for the researcher to be able
 - a) to explore *significant* features of the case,

- b) to create *plausible* interpretations of what is found,
- c) to test for the *trustworthiness* of these interpretations,
- d) to construct a *worthwhile* argument or story,
- e) to relate the argument or story to any *relevant* research in the literature,
- f) to convey *convincingly* to an audience this argument or story,
- g) to provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments. (p. 58)

Qualitative case studies have been characterized by Wilson (1979, p. 448) as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic:

Particularistic means that case studies focus on a particular situation, event, programme, or phenomenon. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent. This specificity of focus makes it an especially good design for practical problems – for questions, situations, or puzzling occurrences arising from everyday practice.

Descriptive means that the end product of a case study is a rich, “thick” description of the phenomenon under study. Thick description is a term from anthropology and means complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated. Case studies include as many variables as possible and portray their interaction, often over a period of time. The description is usually qualitative – that is, instead of reporting findings in numerical data, “case studies use prose and literacy techniques to describe, elicit images, and analyze situations...They present documentation of events, quotes, samples and artifacts” (Wilson, 1979, p. 448).

Heuristic means that case studies illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study. They can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience, or confirm what is known. Previously unknown relationships and variables can be expected to emerge from case studies leading to a rethinking of the phenomenon being studied (Wilson, 1979, p. 448).

Stake (1995) acknowledges that previously unknown relationships and variables can emerge from case studies and lead to a rethinking of the phenomenon under study. Stake further maintains that the knowledge learned from case study is different from the results of other research in specific ways. It is more concrete, resonating with the reader’s experience because it is more vivid and sensory than abstract. It is more contextual, again like experience, and distinguishable from the

formal, abstract knowledge of other designs. Case study knowledge is developed by reader interpretation, arising out of the reader's own experience and understanding. This leads to reader generalization when the "new" case study data are added to the "old" knowledge he or she already has. Finally, the knowledge is based more on reference populations determined by the reader, who, in generalizing, extends that knowledge to populations in his or her experience. Often, this case will be as important to readers as any other case – they care about it; their interest in generalizing from this case to others is small, but people can learn much from single cases. Familiar with other cases, they add this one in, thus making a slightly new group from which to generalize, a new opportunity to modify old generalizations (Stake, 1995, p. 85).

In case study research, data come largely from documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and physical artefacts (Yin, 1994); case studies of individuals often involve in-depth interviews with participants and key informants, observation, and excerpts from participants' personal writings and diaries. No single source has a complete advantage over the others; rather, they might be complementary and could be used in tandem. Thus a case study should use "as many sources as are relevant to the study" (Yin 1994, p. 80).

Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers' experiences. These insights can be construed as tentative hypotheses that help structure further research; hence, case study plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base. Because of its strengths, case study is a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education. Educational processes, problems, and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice. Case study has proven particularly useful for "studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy" (Merriam, 2001, p. 41).

Knowledge derived from case study is:

- More concrete – case study knowledge resonates with our own experience because it is more vivid, concrete, and sensory than abstract.

- More contextual – our experiences are rooted in context, as is knowledge in case studies. This knowledge is distinguishable from the abstract, formal knowledge derived from other research designs.
- More developed by reader interpretation – readers bring to a case study their own experience and understanding, which lead to generalizations when new data for the case are added to old data.
- Based more on reference populations determined by the reader – in generalizing as described above, readers have some population in mind. Thus, unlike traditional research, the reader participates in extending generalization to reference populations. (Stake, 1981, pp. 35-36)

An exemplary case study having relevance to the present study is described in William Ayers' (1989) "The Good Preschool Teacher." Ayers developed in-depth portraits of six preschool teachers that revealed some of the essential meanings in each of their lives and how these meanings were associated with their teaching practice. Themes and categories of associations emerged from this research that provided insight into how teachers are a "rich and worthy source of knowledge about teaching" (Ayers, 1989, p. ix). Walsh, Tobin, and Graue (1993) propose that qualitative research in early childhood education via case studies, such as Ayer's work, offers much promise for deepening our understanding of how children and teachers construct meaning out of the experience of their daily lives.

Yin (1994) has described three kinds of case studies: the explanatory, the descriptive, and the exploratory. Although all three elements of explanation, description, and exploration are inevitably present in case study research, the choices of case study participants are determined by the broadest aim of the research. In terms of Yin's typology, I sought to explain and thereby understand more about the characteristics of the experiences that had led several teachers to delight and growth in the use of the Reggio Emilia approach, and particularly, the practice of pedagogical documentation. Therefore, the umbrella criteria I used in purposefully choosing my case study participants (Patton, 2002) was their involvement with Reggio Emilia inspired teaching practice, and their expressed belief in the importance of pedagogical documentation. I was not interested, in the scope of this research, in exploring negative cases (Patton, 2002) where pedagogical documentation was not a part of the teaching practice.

I felt that a multiple case study format for this study would allow the influences of different contexts and personal dispositions to emerge (Patton, 2002;

Yin, 1994). In conducting and reporting the three case studies, I sought to honour the individual experiences of participants (Stake, 1995), as well as to detect cross-case emergence of patterns and themes (Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994).

While not extensive, the literature contains specific guidelines for researchers to follow in carrying out case studies. Yin (1984, 1994), Stake (1978, 1994, 1995, 2000), and Merriam (1988, 2001), in particular, have designed protocols for conducting the case study which enhance the reliability and validity of the investigation.

Through an in-depth study of the particular experiences of three educators, this inquiry has led to a deeper understanding of pedagogical documentation. This case study, therefore, is an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) because it is instrumental in accomplishing greater understanding of the phenomenon of pedagogical documentation. It is also a collective case study (Stake, 1995) because there are three particular studies within the case. The qualitative paradigm provided the theoretical underpinning and guidance for this instrumental collective case study.

Methodology

This section provides the chronology of the emerging qualitative research design (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996) as it moved through the phases of (a) gaining entry into the research setting, (b) selecting participants, (c) data collecting, (d) analyzing data, and (e) interpreting and reporting results. Essential qualitative research issues, such as (a) the researcher as instrument, and (b) the criteria to support the trustworthiness of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1983) are addressed in order to support the quality of this study.

Research Design: Instrumental Collective Case Study

This collective case study portrayed the experience of working with pedagogical documentation of three educators in a Reggio Emilia-inspired preschool program, thereby further illuminating our understanding of the phenomenon of this practice. In the tradition of the instrumental collective case study, there were “important co-ordinations between the individual studies” (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Investigation of the three particular subjects worked in concert with the investigation of the broader case, that being Reggio-inspired pedagogical

documentation. The research design was continually refined and readjusted, especially in the beginning stages, as I, in my role as researcher, entered into the “dance of qualitative research design” (Janesick, 2000, p. 384).

Because working in the field is unpredictable a good deal of the time, the qualitative researcher must be ready to adjust schedules, to be flexible about interview times and about adding or subtracting observations or interviews, to replace participants in the event of trauma or tragedy, and even to rearrange terms of the original agreement. Simply observing and interviewing does not ensure that the research is qualitative, for the qualitative researcher must also interpret the beliefs and behaviours of the participants. In a sense, while in the field, the researcher is constantly immersed in a combination of deliberate decisions about hypotheses generated and tested on the one hand and intuitive reactions on the other. There are, in the vast literature of sociology, anthropology, and education, common rules of thumb on which most researchers agree:

1. Look for the meaning and perspectives of the participants in the study.
2. Look for relationships regarding the structure, occurrence, and distribution of events over time.
3. Look for points of tension: What does not fit? What are the conflicting points of evidence in the case?

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) view the qualitative case study research design as a funnel. The beginning phase of this collective case study was the wide end during which I cast a “wide net” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) as I looked for possible data sources and sites. I then began to collect data, and, while reflecting on that data, made decisions about further data collection strategies. As the data and analysis began to interact, the funnel narrowed and I developed a sharper and sharper focus. Questions became narrower, observations more focused, and analysis began to uncover repeating themes and categories. At the narrow end of the funnel, data saturation was reached, and I embarked on the interpretation and reporting phase. The following section will review this research process.

The Researcher as the Instrument

As researcher for this study, I was the primary instrument for all data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Qualitative research is “ideologically

driven...there is no value-free or bias-free design” (Janesick, 2000, p. 384). It was necessary, therefore, to identify and report my own values, experiences, and qualifications to do the study. By raising an awareness of my own biases and context for understanding, I believe I have enhanced the credibility of the study (Janesick, 2000).

The Researcher’s Biases and Contexts

I have been involved in varying aspects of early childhood education for the past 26 years as mother, elementary school teacher, kindergarten teacher, teacher-educator in college and university programmes, coordinator of a university institute for early childhood education and research, and doctoral candidate in early childhood education. During my master’s studies, I encountered the Reggio Emilia approach at a travelling exhibition of children’s work from that town. I was particularly struck with the documentation panels of the exhibit, and incorporating pedagogical documentation, inspired by Reggio Emilia, into my own classroom teaching became the focus of my master’s thesis.

Several years later, when I embarked on the doctoral candidacy journey at the University of Southern Queensland, I was still engaged with the notion of studying teachers’ experiences with pedagogical documentation. My explorations took me to Hilltop Children’s Centre in Seattle, where I was struck by the value of high quality conversations with young children, small group work and interactions, the partnership of child and teacher as co-researchers, and the immense value placed on the practice of documentation.

I am biased toward a view of learning that sees the young child as an active, engaged, social, and competent learner. I have experienced the power of listening to children’s ideas and thereby acting as a co-researcher with children. I have discovered, as I have worked to hone the ability to listen to children’s conversations, that young children are natural and spontaneous conversationalists who toss the ball back and forth and use provocative, exciting ideas to stimulate each other’s play and learning. These experiences with young children reflect the Reggio Emilia principle of the “image of the child” as “rich, strong, and powerful” (Rinaldi, 1993, p. 102) who is a “communicator with a unique personal, historical, and cultural identity” (Edwards, 1993, p. 152). These understandings and experiences have supported me as researcher during this research process.

The naturalist prefers humans-as-instruments because of their greater insightfulness, their flexibility, their responsiveness, the holistic emphasis they can provide, their ability to utilize tacit knowledge, and their ability to process and ascribe meaning to data simultaneously with their acquisition (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 325).

The human as instrument is, however, imperfect and therefore it is essential that the criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) for ensuring the trustworthiness of the proposed study are followed (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). These issues of trustworthiness will be fully addressed in a later portion of this chapter.

The Role of the Researcher

In the arena of qualitative research, one can see what Lather (1991) calls the “diffusion of intimacy and authority” (p. 89) that characterizes the postmodern era: the stance of the researcher as neutral observer who remains outside the community being researched and who is invisible in the written text, thereby gleaning and conveying “objective” truths, is being deconstructed. Equally important is the awareness that all texts, rather than being objective, are value-laden: the personal biography of the researcher influences all aspects of the research process (Britzman, 1993).

By constantly checking with the participants to ensure that I had both transcribed and heard their words correctly, I felt confident that, from the beginning of the research process, I was doing my best to ensure the validity of my interpretations, and that what I described was recognized by the participants as reflective of their experiences (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). By revealing what I found to be themes in the data as a whole, I invited what Eisner has defined as consensual validation of the data, that is, an “agreement among competent others that the description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics of an educational situation are right” (Eisner, 1998, p. 112).

Gaining Entry and Building Rapport

Site Selection

Within any study there are numerous sites that can be visited, events or activities that can be observed, people who can be interviewed, documents that can be read.

Time and access for fieldwork are almost always limited and choosing one's sample is crucial. According to Stake (1995):

we need to pick cases which are easy to get to and hospitable to our inquiry, perhaps for which a prospective informant can be identified, and with actors (the people studied) willing to comment on certain draft materials. (p. 4)

Having determined what my research interests were, I had some clear ideas about the sort of setting that I wanted to investigate in order to explore the characteristics of individuals who are committed to the use of pedagogical documentation in their teaching practice. My sample, then, was a purposeful one.

Purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned. Patton (1990) argues that:

the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling. (p. 169, emphasis added)

To begin purposeful sampling, one must first determine what selection criteria are essential in choosing the people or sites to be studied. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) use the term criterion-based selection when referring to purposive or purposeful sampling (p. 69). In criterion-based selection one creates "a list of the attributes essential" to the study and then "proceeds to find or locate a unit matching the list" (p.70). The criteria established for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide the identification of information-rich cases.

Great care was taken at the outset of the planning phase of this research study to ensure that rich data would be retrieved, and criteria were developed for selecting the research site and participants. These included:

- Identification of a school that was implementing pedagogical documentation
- The reputation of the school regarding its implementation of principles of the Reggio Emilia approach
- The selected school would have teachers identified who were able and willing to provide the researcher with rich information and knowledge regarding their experiences with pedagogical documentation
- The teacher-researchers would have participated in a study tour to the early childhood programmes of Reggio Emilia, Italy

Determining who, what and when to sample evolves from the initial knowledge, understanding and experience of the researcher; from recommendations given by gatekeepers, informants and experts; and from progressive understanding of the phenomena under study (Patton, 1990). To select the early childhood educators best fitting the above criteria, a concentrated effort was made in searching for books, articles, and journals on the Reggio Emilia approach and reviewing them. I was already an active participant in an online Reggio listserv (discussion group). Through this participation, I became aware of particular contributors to the listserv who typically had interesting and provocative things to say. This exposure led me to visit several sites and spend time observing in classrooms and speaking with parents and teachers. Through this procedure, three educators at Hilltop Children's Centre in Washington State emerged as potential candidates, and were ultimately approached about participation in this study.

The three case study participants/co-researchers were chosen because:

- Each has participated in a recent study tour to Reggio Emilia, Italy
- Each is knowledgeable about the philosophy of the Reggio Emilia approach
- Each is a respected leader in the field of early childhood education
- Each has had experience implementing principles of the Reggio Emilia approach into classroom practice
- Each has refined and developed a practice of documenting children's learning, modelled after the Reggio Emilia approach
- Each is naturally reflective about her own teaching experiences
- This researcher has access to these participants and their multiple perspectives

The time frame from initial exploratory visits to Hilltop Children's Centre to the final observation session was approximately two years.

The Site – Hilltop Children's Centre

Hilltop Children's Centre began serving the Seattle community in 1971, and is located on the upper floor of a Lutheran church in a quiet residential neighbourhood. The area is one of the more affluent sections of the city. Hilltop is a private, non-profit childcare program offering full day care for children aged three to six, as well as before and after school care and full day vacation care for

youth aged six to ten. I think it is important to point out that, while each of the three research participants is a Caucasian female, Hilltop makes a concerted effort to employ a staff diverse in gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation in order to reflect their commitment to anti-bias and diversity work.

In confirming Hilltop Children's Centre as the right site for examining the practice of pedagogical documentation for this research study, the following factors were considered: (1) willingness of the educators at the school to allow this study of their own documentation of young children's experiences; (2) willingness of the teachers to discuss issues, concepts, and activities related to their practice of documentation; (3) and evidence of the school's commitment to and teachers' efforts to develop the practice of documentation.

The director of describes Hilltop as:

a learning community, built around relationships among all the children, families, and teacher that make up our program. Our work together is shaped by our commitment to emergent curriculum and anti-bias practices, and by the ideas and experiences of the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

Three educators in particular at Hilltop have been incorporating elements of the Reggio Emilia approach into their teaching practice for over fifteen years. In addition to pursuing independent study on this approach, each of these teachers has participated in study tours to Reggio Emilia. They have adopted a method of pedagogical documentation that is culturally relevant to their own school community. Through my observations at the school and my conversations with these teachers, I have observed that there has been an evolution in the way they think about children's capabilities since their initial exposure to ideas from Reggio Emilia. For one thing, these teachers are "master" documenters. Documentation panels consisting of photographs, transcribed conversations, and teacher reflections, cover the school walls. For another, during their many years of documenting children's work, they have amassed a collection of teacher-created project history books, detailing various investigations and experiences.

The Participants – Ann, Margie, and Sarah

With a desire to limit this study to a reasonable scope, and particularly to focus on richness of information (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen, 1993), I have chosen three teachers and their work for in-depth study and analysis. Each of

these three represents a unit of analysis. These three - Ann, Margie, and Sarah⁸ - are primary sources of knowledge in examining and understanding pedagogical documentation, as inspired by the schools of Reggio Emilia and interpreted for a North American context. Each woman was selected based upon input from others (this included suggestions of schools working with principles from Reggio Emilia, as well as recommendations from other teachers who knew the work and reputation of these individuals), as well as my desire to provide distinct voices reflecting different experiences.

Ann, Margie, and Sarah have all been to Reggio Emilia as participants in the study tours offered by Reggio's team of pedagogical consultants. In addition, Ann and Sarah have each published articles and book chapters sharing their experiences in translating the ideas of Reggio Emilia into their Seattle setting. Sarah published the story of a Reggio-inspired project in *Innovations*, the official US journal of Reggio experiences; Ann has been published in the NAEYC journal, *Young Children*, and in the newsletter of their Washington State AEYC affiliate. In addition, she has co-authored the book *That's Not Fair* (2000, Redleaf Press), which combines anti-bias work with the Reggio-inspired ideas of the image of the child, in-depth project work using a variety of representation materials, and extensive examples of growing curriculum and involving families through observation and documentation. Ann, Sarah, and Margie have each contributed chapters to *Insights: Behind Early Childhood Pedagogical Documentation* (2006), an Australian publication. (Their involvement with that book was a direct result of their participation in this research study.) In addition, Ann and Sarah are featured in three staff training videos that are used extensively across the United States and Canada in pre-service college classrooms and in-service early childhood programs striving to interpret the ideas of Reggio Emilia for a North American context. Ann and Sarah receive frequent requests to speak to and consult with other early childhood educators. They co-founded the Hilltop Early Childhood Training Institute, along with Margie and other staff members at Hilltop Children's Centre, where they serve as core faculty.

For her part, Margie has co-authored six books, all with references to the principles of Reggio Emilia. She is the producer of the aforementioned videos and

⁸ Each participant chose to be identified by her given name rather than by a pseudonym.

has been the staff trainer at Hilltop Children's Centre for the past 15 years. She regularly consults with programs seeking to apply the ideas of Reggio Emilia, at either a beginning or an advanced stage. Margie is adjunct faculty with Pacific Oaks College Northwest where she regularly teaches a course on Emergent Curriculum with John Nimmo, using a key text on Reggio Emilia, *The Hundred Languages of Children* (1998), to which John is a contributor.

In my many conversations with these teachers individually, I have observed that each seems naturally reflective about what she does in the classroom. The act of reflection has been described as the interaction between action and learning. As Andrews (1999) says:

Reflection provides the linkages between the components of the model and practice. It is more than often unconscious. However, if it is deliberate and empirical it becomes a powerful tool for professional development and growth. It becomes an essential component of practice. Reflection then becomes an instrument of professional development, that is, self-development. However, if improved practice is to result from reflection, then it cannot be entirely self-reflection. Instead it must be shared. Often we cannot see what we know, and through reflection and through deliberation with another person (or others) we learn to know what we know, and know what we need to improve practice. (p. 131)

While inviting someone to recreate the story of their personal and professional experiences is also an invitation to reflect and examine that experience, it seems that those who choose to write and tell their stories, as these women do through their documentation, are those who, as described by Ayers (1989), tend to be self-reflective (p. 129).

The Parent Participants – Alice and Kendall

After the study was well underway, I was invited by Sarah to participate in a parent meeting. This was a meeting of a working group of parents who were helping Sarah in the process of moving to temporary classroom space as the church that Hilltop rents space from was undergoing a renovation project. It occurred to me at that meeting that it would enrich this study to include the voices of parents and their perspectives on the process of pedagogical documentation. Kendall and Alice volunteered to be interviewed for my research. Although seeking the perspective of parents was not in my original research proposal, and does not form a major part of this project, I do think the inclusion of their voices lends another

layer to the understanding of how pedagogical documentation is understood within the context of the Hilltop community.

Data Collection

Introduction

The research questions guided the phases of data collection and analysis. As previously stated in Chapter 1, the questions that frame this research project are:

1. *What are the lived experiences of these teachers who are practicing pedagogical documentation, as modeled in the Reggio Emilia approach?*
2. *Do these teachers demonstrate particular attributes that foster a “disposition to document”?*

The original research question(s) serve as a directive that leads the researcher immediately to examine a specific performance, the site where events are occurring, documents, people acting, or informants to interview. It helped me, as the researcher, get started and helped me to stay focused throughout the research project. Whenever I would begin to flounder or get lost in the masses of data, the original question provided clarification. Then, through the analysis of the data, which starts with the first collection of data, the process of refining and specifying the question begins (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 39-40). Data collection and data analysis began together, as happens in qualitative research, and were interwoven throughout the process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Gathering Data

The data collection process in this study was threefold: (1) initial data were drawn from examination of various documents related to the program of the school; (2) open-ended, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three educators and two parents associated with the school; and (3) observations of the classroom and art studio activities were undertaken. The data were considered from a holistic perspective; that is, each triadic data set was not seen as a separate part, but as deeply connected to the others, so that the school’s philosophy, the educators’ concepts, and the real practices in classroom settings reflected the whole picture of the use of pedagogical documentation. In these ways, a triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) of both sources and methods was used to more fully develop the story of participants’ experiences.

Data collection activities included:

1. Direct observation by this researcher as a participant-observer in several classrooms at Hilltop Children's Centre
2. The gathering of field notes, both written and tape-recorded, during these observation settings
3. Review of various documents archived at Hilltop Children's Centre (project history books, documentation panels and photographs on display on the walls, communication books with families, children's personal journals, school policy documents, letters sent home to families, staff memos, and so forth)
4. Conducting interviews with five informants/co-researchers (two teachers, the teacher-pedagogista, and two parents)
5. Transcribing these interviews
6. Content analysis: coding the gathered data, searching for overarching themes using the constant comparison method of data analysis
7. Writing the final report using "thick description." (Geertz, 1973)

These are each described more fully in the following sections.

Participant Observation

Throughout the data collection phase of this research project, my role was that of participant observer in several of the classrooms at Hilltop Children's Centre. Participant observation, as described by Patton (1987), is a field strategy that "simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection" (p. 74).

By being a part of the social setting, the researcher sees patterns of behaviour, experiences the unexpected as well as the expected, and develops a quality of trust that may motivate participants to tell the researcher what they otherwise might not (Patton, 1987). Participant observation provides the opportunity for acquiring the "status of trusted person" (Patton, 1987, p. 12). Although participant observation ideally continues throughout the period of data collection, it is particularly important in the beginning stages, informing the researcher about appropriate areas of investigation and developing a sound researcher-other relationship (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Interview questions that develop through participant observation are connected to known behaviour, and therefore answers can be better interpreted (Merriam, 2001).

Participant observation is a field strategy that “simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection” (Patton, 1987, p. 74). In participant observation, the researcher shares as intimately as possible in the life and activities of the people in the programme. The purpose of such participation is to develop an insider’s view of what is happening. This means that the researcher not only sees what is happening, but feels what it is like to be part of the group. In addition to participating in regular classroom activities at Hilltop, I was able to attend a working session with parents, a three-day long staff retreat, and a series of full day training sessions offered to educators in Australia. In each of these additional activities I was a fully active participant.

Observational data, especially from participant observation, permits the researcher to understand a programme setting to an extent not entirely possible using only the insights of others obtained through interviews. As a participant observer, I was able to gather a great deal of information through informal, naturally occurring conversations during participation in daily activities of the school.

Wolcott (1988) distinguishes three different participant-observer styles: the active participant, the privileged observer, and the limited observer. The active participant has a job to do in the setting in addition to the research; the privileged researcher is someone who is known and trusted and given easy access to information and the context; the limited observer, who observes, asks questions, and builds trust over time, doesn’t have a public role other than researcher. Taking on any one of these styles depends on the opportunities the setting provides as well as the researcher’s abilities and desire to do so (p. 194). At varying times, my role took on each of these three styles. In my first few observation visits to Hilltop, I was the limited observer, quietly watching from the sidelines, taking photographs and notes, and reading various documents. As the staff and families became more familiar with my presence, and as rapport and trust developed, I was offered increasing access to documents that were not in the public domain, such as staff development notes, individual children’s journals and reports, and so forth – I became a privileged observer. When I was invited to participate in the weekend staff retreat, which took place at a private facility located on a remote island, my participation was fully active.

Lofland and Lofland (1984) make a point regarding the “mutuality of participant observation and intensive interviewing”:

Classic participant observation...always involves the interweaving of looking and listening...of watching and asking...and some of that listening and asking may approach or be identical to intensive interviewing. Conversely, intensive interview studies may involve repeated and prolonged contact between researchers and informants, sometimes extending over a period of years, with considerable involvement in personal lives – a characteristic often considered a hallmark of participant observation. (p. 13)

Experiencing the environment as an insider necessitates the participant part of participant observation. At the same time, however, there is clearly an observer side to this process. The challenge is to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the experience as an insider while describing the experience for outsiders.

Field Notes

Fieldwork is the central activity of qualitative research methods. The expression “going into the field” means having direct and personal contact with people in the programme in their own environments. Qualitative approaches emphasize the importance of getting close to the people and the situations being studied in order to understand personally the realities and minutiae of daily programme life. The evaluator gets close to the people under study through physical proximity over time, as well as through the closeness in the social sense of shared experience and confidentiality.

Observational notes, or field notes, are documents or artefacts created by participants and researchers to represent aspects of field experiences (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995; Sanjek, 1990; Van Maanen, 1988). Field notes describe what is observed in the research setting. They are dated and record such basic information as where the observation took place, who was present, what the physical setting was like, what social interactions occurred, what activities took place, and other descriptive information that would permit the researcher to return mentally to that setting later through revisiting the field notes. Patton (1987) offers the following summary guidelines for fieldwork:

1. Be descriptive in taking field notes.
2. Gather a variety of information from different perspectives.

3. Cross-validate and triangulate by gathering different kinds of data – observations, interviews, programme documentation, recordings, and photographs.
4. Use quotations; represent programme participants in their own terms.
5. Select key informants wisely and use them carefully. Draw on the wisdom of their informed perspectives, but keep in mind their perspectives are limited.
6. Be aware of and sensitive to the different stages of fieldwork.
 - a) Build trust and rapport at the entry stage. Remember that the evaluator –observer is also being observed and evaluated.
 - b) Stay alert and disciplined during the more routine middle-phase of fieldwork.
 - c) Focus on pulling together a useful synthesis as fieldwork draws to a close.
 - d) Be disciplined and conscientious in taking field notes at all stages of fieldwork.
7. Be as involved as possible in experiencing the programme as fully as possible while maintaining an analytical perspective grounded in the purpose of the fieldwork.
8. Clearly separate description from interpretation and judgment.
9. Provide formative feedback as part of the verification process of fieldwork.
10. Include in the field notes and evaluation report your own experiences, thoughts, and feelings. These are also data. (pp.105-106)

I found several advantages to observational fieldwork. By observing the programme, I was better able to understand the context within which programme activities occur. Understanding context is essential to developing a holistic perspective. Firsthand experience with the programme allowed the research to be inductive in approach. By being present, I had less need to rely on prior conceptualizations of the setting. I could directly experience the programme itself, thereby making the most of an “inductive discovery-oriented approach” (Patton, 1987, p. 73). As the researcher, I had the opportunity to see things that might routinely escape the conscious awareness of participants in the programme. Because all social systems involve routines, participants in those routines may take them so much for granted that they cease to be aware of important nuances. The nuances, however, are apparent to an observer who has not been previously immersed in those routines (Patton, 1987).

The data collected during my observations took three forms, primarily – field notes, audio-tapes, and photographs. My field notes contained sketches of the school and classroom environments, descriptions of classroom activities, art activities, a record of numerous short conversations, comments, and interactions between teachers and children, teachers and teachers, teachers and parents.

Following Creswell (1998), I developed an observational protocol for recording information. This protocol had a heading describing information about the observational session and then included “descriptive notes” where I would record a description of activities, sometimes including a drawing of the physical setting, and often a series of photographs. I would also record “reflective notes” – notes about the process, reflections on activities, and summary conclusions about activities for later theme development. A line down the centre of the page divided descriptive notes from reflective notes. A visual sketch of the setting and a heading gave additional useful information, and photographs provided a strong memory prompt. I found that revisiting the numerous photographs I took while on-site helped to provoke memories that were not recorded in written form.

I attempted to write field notes without unduly affecting either my participation or the quality of my observations. Given these constraints, the basic rule of thumb I followed was to write promptly, and to complete field notes as soon and as often as was physically possible. Often I made use of a tape-recorder to record thoughts, impressions, and observations immediately upon leaving the research site. I was able to make use of the time while driving home from Hilltop (approximately three hours driving time by car) to tape-record my thoughts, some of which were later transcribed. Field notes included my insights, interpretations, beginning analyses, and working hypotheses about what I observed happening in the programme. Insights, ideas, and inspiration came to me while making notes.

Observations

Because this collective case study was instrumental, (Stake 1995), the context of Reggio Emilia curricular components and features was important. During the preliminary phase of the study, detailed, in-depth observations were made of the Reggio Emilia components/features that were in operation in the selected preschool programme. These detailed observations along with the subsequent in-depth interviews with the teachers supported me in discovering and

identifying Reggio Emilia-inspired curricular components that were operating at Hilltop Children's Centre.

All observations were directed by the research question so as to facilitate further understanding of the case (Stake, 1995). Since the study was focused on the phenomenon of pedagogical documentation in the context of the Reggio Emilia approach, observations were continually focused around the practice of documentation that took place in association with Reggio Emilia curricular components and features.

A record of these observation sessions, with dates and duration of the observations, follows:

Table 1: Observation Sessions

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Duration</i>
September 14, 2001	Hilltop Children's Centre	4 hours
October 26, 2001	Hilltop Children's Centre	5 hours
November 12, 2001	Hilltop Children's Centre	5 hours
January 11, 2002	Dinner meeting, private home	3 hours
April 22, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	5 hours
April 23, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	3 hours
April 24, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	3 hours
April 25, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	4 hours
April 29, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	4 hours
April 30, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	5 hours
May 2, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	5.5 hours
May 3, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	4 hours
May 4, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	5 hours
May 7, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	2 hours
May 9, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	5 hours
May 13, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	4 hours
May 14, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	5 hours
May 15, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	2 hours
May 17, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	5 hours
May 22, 2002	Hilltop Parent Meeting	2.5 hours
May 23, 2002	Hilltop Children's Centre	4.5 hours
September 13, 2002	Trillium Retreat Centre	5 hours
September 14, 2002	Trillium Retreat Centre	8 hours
September 15, 2002	Trillium Retreat Centre	4 hours

Documents

Documentary data are particularly good sources for case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated.

Merriam (2001) suggests that documents are, in fact, a "ready-made source of data

easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator” (p. 112). Programme records and documents serve a dual purpose: (1) they are a basic source of information about programme activities and processes, and (2) they can give the researcher ideas about important questions to pursue through more direct observations and interviewing (Patton, 1987, p. 233). Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest that analysis of these data sources “lends contextual richness and helps to ground an inquiry in the milieu of the writer” (p. 234). Merriam (2001) concurs, adding that the data found in documents can be used in the same manner as data from interviews or observations and can “furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track change and development, and so on” (p. 126).

It was important at the very beginning of this research project to negotiate access to programme documents and records. There was no hesitation whatsoever on the part of the educators, school director, or parents when I asked to see or make copies of various documents; in fact, on numerous occasions, various written pieces of which I had no prior knowledge were offered. The only limitation placed on me was by two parents who offered their children’s personal journals and report letters – their request was to have the child’s name changed if the work was to be used in this report.

This leads to another important point. As with all information to which a researcher has access during observations, the confidentiality of programme records must be respected. The extent to which I include actual references to and quotations from programme records and documents in this final report was negotiated on the basis of which documents ought to be considered part of the public record of the programme being studied, and therefore able to be publicized without breach of confidentiality.

The documents I collected at Hilltop Children’s Centre include correspondence to and from programme staff, public correspondence with families of enrolling children, organizational rules and regulations, memos between and among teachers and staff, formal policy statements, school bulletin boards or displays, daily documentation, teacher created long-term project history books, children’s individual journals and report letters, and published journal articles and books. This rich collection of documents has provided me with information about many things that could not be observed because they had taken place before data

collection began. All these documents were readily made available to me, in addition to an archive of books documenting past projects undertaken with children. In several instances, upon learning that only one copy of most of the individual project history books existed, I made two copies – one for myself, and one as a back-up copy for Hilltop.

These documents were primary sources that revealed something about the philosophy, pedagogy, history, and culture of the school, and were critical for understanding how the practice of pedagogical documentation has evolved at Hilltop Children's Centre. Thus, they provided valuable information in and of themselves. In addition, they provided an important stimulus for generating interview questions.

Interview Framework

Qualitative interviewing provides an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight. As Lofland and Lofland (1984) have noted, the interview is a directed conversation. The interview can elicit views of this person's subjective world. The interviewer sketches the outline of these views by delineating the topics and drafting the questions. Interviewing is a flexible, emergent technique; ideas and issues emerge during the interview, and the interviewer can then immediately pursue these levels.

Interviews may yield more than data for a study. Research participants may find the experience of being interviewed to be cathartic, and thus the interviews may become significant events for them. Furthermore, participants may gain new views of themselves or their situations. Many participants gain insights into their actions, their situations, and the events that shape them. Simply telling their stories can change the perspectives participants take on the events that constitute those stories and, perhaps, the frames of the stories themselves. These shifts in perspective may range from epiphanies to growing realizations.

In this section, following Kvale (1996) I outline ways of designing an interview investigation. This shows, essentially, the course of my interview investigation through seven stages, from original ideas to the final report. This

is a simplified linear presentation that attempts to structure the often chaotic field of interview studies.

1. *Thematizing*. Formulate the purpose of an investigation and describe the concept to be investigated before the interviews start. The *why* and *what* of the investigation should be clarified before the *how* – the method – is posed.
2. *Designing*. Plan the design of the study, taking into consideration all seven stages of the investigation, before the interviewing starts. Designing the study is undertaken with regard to obtaining the intended *knowledge* and taking into account the *moral* implications of the study.
3. *Interviewing*. Conduct the interviews based on an interview guide and with a reflective approach to the knowledge sought and the interpersonal relation of the interview situation.
4. *Transcribing*. Prepare the interview material for analysis, which commonly includes a transcription from oral speech to written text.
5. *Analyzing*. Decide, on the basis of the purpose and topic of the investigation, and on the nature of the interview material, which methods of analysis are appropriate for the interviews.
6. *Verifying*. Ascertain the generalizability, reliability, and validity of the interview findings. *Reliability* refers to how consistent the results are, and *validity* means whether an interview study investigates what is intended to be investigated.
7. *Reporting*. Communicate the findings of the study and the methods applied in a form that lives up to scientific criteria, takes the ethical aspects of the investigation into consideration, and that results in a readable product. (p. 88, italics in the original)

As I became immersed in this study, I realized that the richness of data available was overwhelming. I decided to focus my research more narrowly on the interviews, or substantive conversations, that took place with the participants. The time spent observing children and teachers at Hilltop, reviewing programme documents, reading pedagogical documentation stories

and children's journals, participating in meetings, and so forth, prepared me well for the conversations which would then become the focus of this thesis.

Interviews – Substantive Conversations

Three interview sessions were conducted individually with two of the teachers (Ann and Sarah), and four interview sessions with the teacher-consultant (*pedagogista*⁹), Margie. Each interview ranged from 90 minutes to three hours in duration. A single individual interview was also conducted with each of two parents (Alice and Kendall) of children at Hilltop Children's Centre. One of these was 45 minutes in length, the other 100 minutes. The number and duration of the interview sessions were determined by the time it took to ask the full range of questions I had prepared for each participant. These interviews with the two classroom teachers, the *pedagogista* (teacher-consultant), and two parents were tape recorded, with the participants' knowledge and permission, and were fully transcribed by me. I found it interesting that each participant interviewed, when given the option of using her own name or a pseudonym, opted to have her actual name used. In the case of the two parents interviewed, although each indicated a preference to have her given name used, they both asked that pseudonyms be given to their children.

The locations where the interviews were conducted varied greatly, with each being chosen by the interviewee. Seven were conducted in the homes of the participants, three on-site in the library at Hilltop Children's Centre, one at the participant's work office, and two outdoors in a small public park. It was my intention to provide a non-threatening context in which the interviewee felt comfortable to share her personal views and experiences, and this was achieved, in part, by having her determine a meeting place. A table depicting interview dates, duration, and location is below:

⁹ The Italian term "pedagogista" does not have an English equivalent, but is taken to mean a staff trainer or consultant. In Reggio schools, the pedagogista has responsibility for consulting with half a dozen schools. Margie's role at Hilltop is similar to that of a pedagogista.

Table 2: Interviews

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Location</i>
Ann	April 26	90 minutes	Her home
Ann	May 6	110 minutes	Her home
Ann	May 11	80 minutes	Neighbourhood park
Sarah	May 8	90 minutes	Hilltop library
Sarah	May 10	80 minutes	Hilltop library
Sarah	May 15	75 minutes	Neighbourhood park
Margie	May 19	80 minutes	Her home
Margie	May 21	50 minutes	Her home
Margie	May 25	50 minutes	Her home
Margie	May 28	185 minutes	Her home garden
Alice	May 29	45 minutes	Her work office
Kendall	May 30	100 minutes	Her home

Notes were taken during the interview, including reflective notes and demographic information such as the time, date, and location of the interview. This procedure aids in providing an audit trail. Two member checks were performed. The first member check involved my sending each interviewee a copy of the transcript as soon as it had been transcribed, typically within a day or two following the interview. This allowed the participant to correct the transcript if necessary. The second member check was performed once the results section had been written, allowing the participants to agree or disagree with the interpretations made by the researcher.

I found, as other researchers have, that transcribing the interviews myself helped me to recall the experience, expand the details, and provide a fresh perspective on the material: Spradley (1979) explains, “Tape recorded interviews, when fully transcribed, represent one of the most complete expanded accounts” (p. 75). As I transcribed the interviews, I came to understand transcription as a process through which I was transforming myself – distancing myself from the interview situations and participants, or, as I thought at the time, editing myself out of the interviews. I edited out my feelings about each conversation, regrets at failing to pursue something that might have been significant, the awkwardness or fun of each exchange. This “editing” was purely internal, achieved while typing word for word the audio-recordings of the interviews. Increasingly, I was able to

conceptualise myself as someone who would read the transcripts in the light of a particular analytical framework, alongside colleagues who had not participated in my conversations with the interviewees. Through transcription and my own re-orientation towards the data, I was reconstituting the socially and temporally situated interviews into something much more familiar to me: a group of texts, or even one large text, that could be read with or without reference to the original conversations, or to the speakers.

Each transcript was then carefully reviewed and studied several times in order to identify emerging themes. These emerging themes were identified and highlighted when an interviewee repeated the same words, phrases, or sentences several times, elaborated at great length, or stressed items. All highlighted parts of each interview transcript were coded according to similar content and themes. Then the coded data were recorded in separate word processing files. Each of the full transcriptions and the emerging themes recorded was shared individually with the participants, in order to collaboratively identify and define the essence of the experience of pedagogical documentation at the school for these particular teachers. In this process, the coded data were revised and reclassified by both the participants and the researcher.

In choosing to use interviews as a significant component of this research study, I was mindful that some early childhood researchers have spoken out in favour of using interview methodologies to capture the voices of teachers, voices they contend are habitually marginalized (Hauser, 1995). Patton (1987) has stated that good questions in interviews should be open-ended, neutral, sensitive, and clear to the interviewee. Face-to-face, one-on-one, in-depth interviews were conducted within a framework of open-ended questions that defined the area to be explored, at least initially, and from which either the interviewer or interviewee could diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. I sought responses to such focus issues as “How is the disposition to be a documenter fostered?” and “How does pedagogical documentation inform your work with children?” These terms were familiar to those being interviewed. The same questions were asked to each person, but the order in which they were asked changed as each individual interview proceeded, allowing for a “flexible and spontaneous format” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p.169). I found that I needed to be interactive and sensitive to the language and concepts used by the interviewee,

and tried to keep the agenda flexible. An anecdotal style was encouraged, thereby bringing the power of narrative to the study (Witherell & Noddings, 1991).

The substantive conversations (interviews) in this study were informed by feminist perspectives (Reinharz, 1992) in so far as I could, as researcher, shape events in which the participants in the interview jointly construct meaning (Mishler, 1986). Of such joint construction, Graham (cited in Reinhartz, 1992) claims that interviews have become “the principal means by which feminists have sought to achieve the active involvement of their respondents in the construction of data about their lives” p. 18). Riessman (1993) has proposed that, “interviews are conversations in which participants - teller and listener/questioner – develop meaning together, a stance requiring interview practices that give considerable freedom to both” (p. 55). And Mishler (1995) comments on the collaborative development of field texts when he claims:

It is clear that we do not find stories; we make stories. We retell our respondents’ accounts through our analytic re-descriptions. We too are storytellers and through our concepts and methods...we construct the story and its meaning. In this sense the story is always co-authored. (p. 117)

Belenky, Clinch, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) propose the value of open-ended questions, claiming that such questions allow them to hear what their participants have to “say in their own terms rather than test [their] own preconceived hypotheses” (p. 19). Reinhartz (1992) supports this view when she claims that interviews generally “offer researchers access to people’s ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher” (p. 19). The nature of the substantive conversations sits comfortably with narrative as a genre for representing the texts co-authored by such conversations.

Riessman (1993) also states her preference for “less structure in interview instruments, in the interest of giving greater control to her respondents” (p. 55). To this end, Riessman’s suggestion that an interview guide, supplemented with probe questions, was used as a stimulus to sharing ideas in these substantive conversations. The use of this guide provided the element of some structure to the interviews, although the questions themselves were quite open-ended.

The general questions asked to provoke conversation during the series of interviews with Ann, Margie, and Sarah (the three educators) were as follows:

- Could you tell me about your own background, education, training?
- How did you come to the field of early childhood education?
- Could you describe your role at Hilltop for me?
- How and when did you first encounter the work of Reggio Emilia?
- Could you tell me something about your explorations/study into the Reggio Approach? (Independent reading, participation in study tours to Reggio Emilia, observations in other programs, seminars, workshops, conferences...)
- In what ways does the Reggio Emilia approach resonate with a) you personally, and b) with issues in early childhood education?
- How has your exposure to the Reggio Emilia approach impacted your work in the field of early childhood education?
- Are there aspects of the Reggio Emilia approach that you find controversial?
- We often hear of how difficult it is to translate the Reggio approach to a North American context. Do you find this to be so, and if so, can you name what some of the difficulties might be?
- Can you tell me how you, personally, define “documentation”?
- What are some of the essential components of documentation, in your opinion?
- Are there ways in which using documentation has influenced your work?
 - How much, if any, was new for you?
 - Was there a natural “fit” at all to the way your work was already evolving?
- Do you have some thoughts about how the “disposition to document” can be fostered?
 - What about a climate or culture of documentation?
- Are there personal qualities that you’ve observed about yourself, or about people who seem inclined to be “good” documenters?
- Do you have a sense of whether this “disposition to document” is inherent? Instinctual? Learned?
- Are there ways in which such a disposition can be fostered?
- What do you see as potential barriers to collaboration?
- Are there particular difficulties to doing documentation that you’d like to speak to?
- How has using the “tools of technology” affected your work with documentation?
- Can you speak to the issue of administrative support (or lack thereof) for documentation?

- Is there a particular documentation story that has special or profound meaning for you?
- Where is the growing edge for you? Is there any particular direction you see yourself going with this work?
- What sorts of support would enable you to take this work further?
- Is there a personal metaphor that describes your journey into documentation?
- If you could describe a vision for a documentation centre, what would it look like?
- Is there anything else you'd like to add to this "conversation"?

When interviewing Alice and Kendall, two of the parents of children who attend Hilltop, the general questions included:

- Could tell me about your experience of Hilltop as a parent?
- Could you talk to me a little about the various forms of documentation that Hilltop's staff participates in?
- Are there ways that we could support this work, specifically documentation, more effectively?
- Can you tell me about what you particularly value or appreciate about this educational experience for your child?

My tasks, as interviewer, included providing focus, observing, giving direction, being sensitive to clues given by participants, probing, questioning, listening, amalgamating statements, and generally being as involved as possible. Throughout, I was mindful of Ely's (2001) description of interviews as "interwoven dances of questions in which the researcher follows as well as leads" (p. 59).

Subsequent to my asking each respondent a key question, there followed a more or less extended negotiation of shared meaning (Kvale, 1996). My role was to assist the participants in exploring and elucidating their ideas as they endeavored to express them to me. While the respondent was the authority on his/her own ideas, I was accorded the authority on the matter of what the interview was about and what was relevant to it. Thus the interview conversations consisted of a continuous process of negotiation about the meaning of the question, the meaning of the respondent's response, the meaning of that response in relation to the question, and the overall meaning of the interview.

Gathering experiential material and analyzing this material, as with all aspects of the research process, are not really separable and they should be seen as part of the same process. In this study, the conversational interview method served both to gather lived-experience material (stories, anecdotes, recollections of experiences, etc.), and as an occasion to reflect with the interviewees on the topic at hand.

The conversational interview turned increasingly into a hermeneutic interview as I went back again and again to the interviewees in order to dialogue about the ongoing record of the interview transcripts. As suggested by van Manen (1990), the hermeneutic interview tends to turn the interviewees into participants or collaborators of the research project.

Jokes and other transactions with mostly social meaning were shared before, after, and during the interviews. These exchanges built and maintained rapport, which facilitated “serious” communication; I was able to pursue sensitive avenues because of the comfortable social space we negotiated.

After each interview took place and was transcribed, the transcript was given to that particular participant. This allowed for each to reflect on her experience, as it had been recorded, before embarking upon the next conversation. It also made it possible for each woman to elaborate or clarify comments that had been made in the interview, or choose sections to be deleted from the final shared version.

Once I had identified themes from the collected transcripts, these themes became objects of reflection in follow-up hermeneutic conversations in which the three major protagonists in this story - Ann, Margie, and Sarah - and I collaborated. My goal in these follow-up discussions was to interpret the significance of the preliminary themes in light of the original research questions. In a post analysis interview with these three, an additional two theme categories were drawn out of the data. Although the themes they named were already embedded in the rest of the analysis, they all felt strongly that they needed to be highlighted as separate issues. I believe that the addition of these themes lends strength to the completed study. As McHugh (1974, cited in van Manen, 1990) has observed, the participants of a human science dialogue try to strengthen what is weak in a human science text. They do this by “trying to formulate the underlying themes or meanings that inhere in the text or that still inhere in the

phenomenon, thus allowing the author to see the limits of his or her present vision and to transcend those limits” (pp. 100-101).

Bollnow (1982) has described how good conversations tend to end: they finally lapse into silence. He does not mean, of course, that after such conversation is transcribed into print, further conversational interpretation is not possible. Often, the sense of truth experienced in a good conversation leads to a satisfaction that asks for further work. At the same time, when a conversation gradually diminishes into a series of more and more pauses, and finally to silence, something has been fulfilled. It is the same fulfillment that marks the triumph of an effective human science text: to be silenced by the stillness of reflection. While I by no means think that the conversations with Ann, Margie, and Sarah have ended, I have relished the stillness of reflection during the post-conversation process.

Critical Friends and Peer Review

There are many formal and informal ways that researchers or authors seek collaborative assistance in their writing. The research group or seminar circle is a formal way for convening and gathering the interpretive insights of others to a research text. But there are also less formal ways of testing one’s work – such as sharing the text with advisers, consultants, reviewers, colleagues, and friends. Whether formal or informal, what one seeks in a conversational relation with others is a common orientation to the notion or phenomenon that one is studying. Gadamer (1976) describes the method of conversational relation as “the art of testing” (p. 330). The structure of conversational relation resembles the dialogic relation of what Socrates called the situation of “talking together like friends.” I was fortunate to be able to seek the input of “critical friends” at several junctures throughout this study. Their advice was invaluable in helping to point out where my thoughts did not flow clearly, and where further elaboration, clarification, or reconsideration was necessary.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, as described by Huberman and Miles (1994), data analysis begins before the data collection, continues during data collection and after data collection. Throughout this study, data analysis occurred simultaneously

with data collection. This is an iterative process in which analysis began with the first data collected, and the emerging insights and tentative hypotheses directed the next phase of data collection. This led to refinement of questions, collection of more data, which led to more insights, and so on.

All collected raw data were organized into three sets: the first set consisted of the documents collected throughout the entire study; the second set was the interview data with the participating educators and parents; and the third set was the observational data derived from the observation of children's and teachers' activities in classroom and art studio activities.

Organizing and simplifying the complexity of data into some meaningful and manageable themes or categories is the basic purpose of data, or content, analysis. I began by reading through the field notes, interviews, and other collected documents, writing comments in the margins indicating thoughts about what could be done with different parts of the data. This was the beginning of organizing the data into topics and files. The copy on which these topics and labels are written became the indexed copy of the field notes and interviews. Several readings of the data were necessary before indexing was completed. Establishing categories from qualitative data seems rather like a simultaneous left-brain right-brain exercise. That is, one job is to distil categories and the other is to keep hold of the large picture so that the categories are true to it (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 2001). Using Dey's (1993) terminology, the analytic procedures have included finding a focus, managing data, reading and annotating data, categorizing data, and connecting categories and corroborating evidence. Devising categories is a largely intuitive process (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), but it is also systematic and informed by the study's purpose, the investigator's orientation and knowledge, and the meanings made explicit by the participants themselves (Merriam, 2001; Patton, 1987).

Categories and subcategories were constructed through the constant comparative method of data analysis (Merriam, 2001; Patton, 1987). This iterative process involved studying the data segments, determining if they were in the most appropriate category, rearranging the segments, and refining and amending the categories. The heart of this method is the continuous comparison of incidents, respondents' remarks, and so on, with each other. Units of data – units of information – are literally sorted into groupings that have something in common.

A unit of data is any meaningful (or potentially meaningful) segment of data; at the beginning of the study I was not always certain about what would ultimately be meaningful. The task is to compare one unit of information with the next in looking for recurring regularities in the data. The process is one of breaking data down into bits of information and then assigning these bits to categories or classes. Dey's description (1993) mirrors my experience when he suggests that, "in the process we begin to discriminate more clearly between the criteria for allocating data to one category of another. Then some categories may be subdivided, and others subsumed under more abstract categories" (p. 44).

Through careful reading of all the collected documents, some important aspects directly or indirectly related to information on pedagogical documentation and on teacher transformation were highlighted. As themes or pertinent ideas emerged, they were marked with coloured highlighter pens. All data were coded and categorized by similar themes and issues, and small Post-it notes labelled with the themes and issues were attached to them. These data were revisited and reviewed from time to time during the interview and observation period in order to gain insights for interview protocols and observation guidelines, and so that they could be used as references in analysing the interview and observational data.

Content analysis involved identifying coherent and important examples, themes, and patterns in the data, looking for quotations or observations that go together or are examples of the same underlying idea, issue, or concept. Patterns, themes, and categories of analysis emerged out of the data rather than having been decided prior to data collection and analysis. Analysis of the data continued using constant comparison until reaching theoretical saturation, the point at which no new data emerged relevant to an established category, no new categories were necessary to account for the phenomena of interest, and the relationships among categories were well established (Merriam, 2001; Patton, 1987).

Finally, reflective analysis was incorporated into the process. This involved my decision to rely on personal intuition and personal judgement to analyse the data, rather than a reliance on the "technical procedures involving an explicit category system" (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 570).

My Position in the Study

Important characteristics of qualitative research are the “use of self as an instrument” (Eisner, 1998, p. 33) and “the presence of voice in the text” (Eisner, 1998, p. 36). Self-as-instrument, rather than having the self dependent on other instruments, connotes personal control, personal responsibility, and personal creativity: it is impossible to detach myself from my research. I recognize the importance of identifying my own biases and ideology for the study, while at the same time realizing that this very position allows me to engage in the situation and make sense of it. Like Janesick (2000), I tried to “raise awareness of my own biases” and to “stay attuned to making decisions regarding ethical concerns, because this is part of life in the field” (p. 380).

I was concerned that I enable “an authentic dialogue between all participants in the research process in which all are respected as equally knowing subjects” (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 129) and that the research process be an empowering one for all of the women involved. A qualitative research paradigm provided a means of conceptualizing and enacting the roles of the researcher and the research participants in relation to the research process that ensured that an exploitative power dynamic was minimized: the research participants and I became collaborators in the creation of knowledge (Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Lather, 1991).

Writing in the First Person

Although it is not overly common in academic research to write in the first person, this was an intentional choice on my part. Research is an activity which involves many choices: there are choices to be made about research design, about methodology, about data collection, and about many other aspects of the research process. Increasingly, research is coming to be viewed less as a neat, linear process, and more as a complex process in which there may be frequent changes of direction and emphasis. Given this change of orientation for some educational research, it is perhaps natural that the use of first person has become more accepted in certain circumstances. This is particularly true of action research studies, and of research influenced by phenomenological and interpretative perspectives (Oliver, 2004).

I determined that the use of the first person, “I”, could be justified in this qualitative research report as I, in my role as researcher, am the main research tool. This position is supported in the qualitative research literature (for example, Geertz, 1997; Shelton-Reed, 1997; Holloway, 1997). The language is not detached and dispassionate because of my deep involvement and engagement. Geertz (1998) warns against “author-evacuated” texts. The researcher is also the result of a relationship with others, a “we.” Shelton-Reed (cited in Holloway, 1997), too, advises writers to “speak with their own voice” (p. 73). To speak of “the author”, “the researcher”, or “the writer” in one’s own research report makes the writing lifeless and abnegates the role of the researcher as a research tool (Webb, 1992). For all of these reasons, I have made a very conscious choice to situate myself as fully present in the text by writing in the first person.

Reporting the Data

Extremely rich, detailed, and in-depth information characterize the information gathered in a case study (Champion, cited in Berg, 1998, p. 12). Knowledge, as described by Cresswell (1998), is within the meanings ascribed by those who apply it; knowledge is gained through people talking about their meanings; knowledge is laced with personal biases and values; knowledge is written in a personal, up-close way; and knowledge evolves, emerges, and is inextricably tied to the context in which it is studied.

One of the most difficult dilemmas to resolve in presenting a case study, however, is deciding how much concrete description to include, as opposed to analysis and interpretation, and how to integrate one with the other so that the narrative remains interesting, relevant, and informative. Balance needs to be achieved between description and interpretation. Erickson’s (1986) differentiation among particular description, general description, and interpretive commentary is helpful in determining this balance. These three components are units in the process of data analysis, and they can become “basic elements of the written report of the study” (p. 149). That is, the raw data are reported as particular description, patterns discovered in the data are reported as general description, and higher levels of abstraction become interpretive commentary.

Case studies typically examine the interplay of all variables in order to provide as complete an understanding of an event or situation as possible. This type of comprehensive understanding is arrived at through “thick description” (Geertz, 1973, p. 7), which involves an in-depth description of the entity being evaluated, the circumstances under which it is used, the characteristics of the people involved, and the nature of the community in which it is located. Thick description may involve interpreting the meaning of demographic and descriptive data such as cultural norms and mores, community values, ingrained attitudes, and motives. Denzin (1989) describes thick description as:

deep, dense, detailed accounts of...experiences. These accounts often state the intentions and meanings that organize an action.... Thick description contextualizes experience...It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another... It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (p. 83)

While writing up the results of this case study, it has been important to provide specific information about, as well as a detailed description of, the subject(s), location, methods, role in the study, etc. This thick description of methods and findings allows readers to make an informed judgment about the findings. It is up to readers to decide what findings are important and which may apply to their own situation; if I, as the researcher, have fulfilled the responsibility to provide thick description, this decision is much easier to make.

As this study developed, my focus became the substantive conversations that took place during the interview sessions. These conversations were based on a background of having been immersed in the “climate” of Hilltop Children’s Center as a participant observer, and having read copious examples of documentation stories produced by Hilltop staff over a number of years.

Karen Gallas’ (1998) image of the beachcomber aptly captures my efforts at highlighting particular moments to portray, the bits of “blue glass”:

My focus as a researcher changed over time. I often had the image, as I thought about this piece of work, that I was like a beachcomber. At first, taken with the texture, colour, and shape of sea glass, the novice beachcomber picks up every piece. It is the aesthetic and physical phenomenon, the action of water on glass over years, the delight in finding

treasure strewn over a beach that fascinates, and the collection process is almost indiscriminate. Later, blue glass becomes the prize because it is so rare, and in the process of looking for the blue glass the beachcomber's focus narrows. As it does, the beachcomber begins to notice subtleties of colour and shape: how one colour of glass can best be seen when it lies close to a contrasting colour. Soon the collector widens her search again to consider how blue interacts with other colours and shapes, and as she does, she notices new colours, textures, and even materials to be collected. (p. 11)

For the purposes of this study, I've built the narratives from the substantive conversational interviews. It has been a continual challenge to select those bits of cobalt blue glass to include. In the process, I have edited out my own voice as much as possible, while still attempting to maintain a natural "flow." Thus, the narratives stand on their own and are presented in their entirety in the Appendices (Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, Appendix D, Appendix E) section. Significant portions of these narratives, woven together with reflection and commentary from the literature, are presented in the data section in Chapter Six.

The final written form of the thesis has taken on the framework of a descriptive narrative. Reason and Hawkins (1988) write about story telling as a qualitative method of inquiry which can potentially capture the liveliness, involvement and passion of researchers' lived experiences. For Polkinghorn (1988), narrative inquiry can be of two types – descriptive and explanatory. By and large, these two forms of inquiry use the same kinds of narrative data, collected by such means as interview and document analysis. In descriptive narrative, the purpose is "to produce an accurate description of the interpretive narrative accounts individuals or groups use to make sequences of events in their lives or organizations meaningful" (pp. 161–162).

There is much support in the literature for the use of narratives as an integral component of teachers' professional learning and an appropriate research medium (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Jalongo and Isenberg (1995) advocate the usefulness of teaching narratives, arguing that:

Teachers' stories, these positive and negative personal accounts of our lives in classrooms, are central to the type of inquiry and reflection that lead to professional development and personal insight. Educators must delve beneath the routine, the surface, the business-as-usual if they are ever to unearth the heart of teaching and, in the process, nurture their souls as teachers. The word *soul* is used deliberately here, not to raise religious eyebrows but to refer to our inner being rather than our professional façade... we contend that it is through careful examination of real-life classroom experiences – both lived one's self and borrowed from other teachers – that

teachers explore the complexities of what it means to teach. It is in the narrative mode that teachers consider daily dilemmas, examine their motives and misgivings, savor their successes, and anguish over their failures. (pp. xvi-xvii, emphasis in the original)

Further, Carter (1993) adds that:

Stories become a way of... capturing the complexity, specificity, and interconnectedness of the phenomenon with which we deal and, thus, redress the deficiencies of the traditional and atomistic and positivistic approaches in which teaching is decomposed into discrete variables and indicators of effectiveness. (p. 6)

Van Manen (1990) argues that the aim in narrative research is to build an “animating, evocative description (text) of human actions, intentions, behaviours, and experiences as we meet them in the life world” (p. 19). O’dea (1994) concludes that “far from eschewing subjectivity...narrative method openly endorses it, endeavoring to give [time and space] to the practitioner who has long been silenced in the research relationship” (p. 162).

This particular research project involves a commitment to the exploration and interrogation of the teachers’ subjectivities, which rise to the surface more clearly through the genre of narrative, than through the use of other more traditional forms of data sources in educational research. The use of narrative as a text for analysis supports Kanpol’s (1997) notion of the “subject as his or her own authority” (p. 14). Further, a key criterion for inclusion of narratives in this research project is resonance. That is to say, teachers’ narratives are powerful and useful texts for analysis on the basis of their resonances, or their capacity to evoke key aspects and themes in teachers’ lived experiences related to pedagogical practice.

This research project contains multiple voices: mine as researcher, educator, and woman, the voices of my co-investigators whose narratives appear later, as well as those of other interested educators whose commentaries appear throughout. Further, our voices are interwoven. For example, I am located in each narrative, as I have asked particular questions, introduced and analyzed the teachers’ own words, written accompanying commentaries, privileged some material and omitted other material, and so on.

Finally, using Smyth’s (1994) framework, an attempt has been made to delineate some of the broad features that characterize this research. From my vantage point as the researcher, it appears that these features include:

- The importance of the educative function of the research for both the researcher, the co-investigators, and the others whose voices are heard here
- The joint ownership, to varying degrees, of the research project by the co-investigators with the use of substantive conversations representing the field texts
- The value of particular stories about particular people
- Acknowledgement of the researcher as part of the process

These features are, of course, at one and the same time, both the source and the result of the philosophical base that underpins this research project.

Whatever the relationship, researchers, like the other participants, come with stories of their own, already engaged in narrative processes. Together, all partake in the authoring of new stories. All live, tell, and modify through re-telling and re-living, stories which interact reflexively with each other. Clandinin and Connelly (1994) “imagine therefore that in the construction of narratives of experience, there is a reflexive relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story and reliving a life story” (p. 418). The end result of this thesis is, I hope, a rich narration which contributes to revealing the actual phenomena situated in context, and to the understanding and interpretation of the events under exploration.

Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1994) point out that the conventional criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity are inconsistent with the procedures of naturalistic enquiry. As an alternative to reliability and validity, Guba and Lincoln, put forward the concept of *trustworthiness*, which is further elaborated upon by Bassey (1999). The following draws on their account:

- 1) Has there been prolonged engagement with data sources?
- 2) Has there been persistent observation of emerging issues?
- 3) Have raw data been adequately checked with their sources?
- 4) Has there been sufficient triangulation of raw data leading to analytical statements?
- 5) Has the working hypothesis, evaluation, or emerging story been systematically tested against the analytical statements?
- 6) Has a critical friend thoroughly tried to challenge the findings?

- 7) Is the account of the research sufficiently detailed to give the reader confidence in the findings?
- 8) Does the case record provide an adequate audit trail? (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 76-77)

Throughout the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process I have followed the qualitative research strategies for ensuring the “trustworthiness” of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Being trustworthy as a qualitative researcher means at the least that the processes of the research are carried out fairly and that the products represent as closely as possible the experiences of the people who are studied. The entire endeavour must be grounded in ethical practices about how data are collected and analysed, how one’s own assumptions and conclusions are checked, how participants are involved, and how results are communicated (Ely et al., 1991, p. 93).

The following criteria are named by Guba and Lincoln (1982) as having importance for “designing, monitoring, and judging an inquiry, whether from the perspective of the inquirer, a monitor, or an editor who might be asked to publish the results of such research” (p. 325-326).

Credibility

Credibility ensures that you are telling the story about the phenomenon at which you are looking. The researcher does have access, although indirect (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) to the multiple realities she works with in the research setting. The following are some of the methods used by the qualitative researcher to strengthen the research by bolstering its credibility.

- 1) *Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation*: Spending long periods of time in the field offered opportunities to follow up on emerging themes and categories with more focused interview questions. Persistent observation caused me to look at the big issues deeply.
- 2) *Saturation*: After prolonged and persistent observations, the point of saturation was reached when themes and categories began to repeat themselves over and over. Discoveries were made that then supported more and more data.
- 3) *Triangulation*: By using different methods and multiple sources, I looked for convergence of data. The research gained in credibility because there was more than one source of the data and more than one source of interpretation. Multiple sources of collected data included observations, interviews, review of documents, and analysis of children’s work.

- 4) *Member checking*: I went back to the teachers and said “This is what I heard you say, is this what you said?” Member-checking was accomplished with the teachers throughout the course of this study to find out if recorded dialogue is correct. “Thus, the crucial question for the naturalist becomes ‘Do the data sources find the inquirer’s analysis, formulation, and interpretations to be credible (believable)?’” (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 326). I also engaged in member checking with the teachers for the purpose of finding out if the researcher’s analysis, formulation, and interpretation about the teachers’ practice with respect to Reggio Emilia curricular components/features being implemented in the programme were correct.
- 5) *Referential adequacy materials*: These are documents, photographs, recorded conversations, and other raw data or “slice of life” materials that are not analysed and can be used for later review to test interpretations of analysed data.

Transferability

This criterion rests with the reader. The method of developing thick description enables the reader to relate to the research. Thick descriptions of each participant’s experience and of the Reggio Emilia curricular content are included. This measure of transferability is often a test of the power of a piece of research in its ability to affect change.

Dependability

By giving the data to other researchers, qualitative researchers can assess the dependability of their coding schemes. Through peer debriefing, researchers can give each other feedback on coding and categories, emerging research questions and possible themes. If others see some of the same themes etc., emerging, the research gains dependability. I engaged in peer debriefing of all field notes, interview transcripts, analytic memos, emerging codes and themes, and all interpretation and write up with the study co-participants and several “critical friends” – these included fellow doctoral students and academic colleagues.

Confirmability

This criterion asks if the data support the interpretation that the researcher makes. Through the use of triangulation, recorded dialogue, thick descriptions, and prolonged observation, I have built a case for my interpretation. When reading the write-up one can assess the confirmability by this evidence that I have used to make my case.

Ethic and Politics in This Study

Whatever methodological choices we make in our research activities, our work always needs to pay careful attention to issues of power and ethics.

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) claim that ethics in qualitative research is dominated by two concerns: informed consent and the protection of subjects from harm. I carefully discussed with each participant what her potential involvement in this research project would be, and each signed an informed consent form (see Appendices S and T). Additionally, permission was sought from the school administrator to locate this research on site (see Appendix U). Ethics clearance was sought and granted by the University of Southern Queensland' Institutional Review Board (see Appendices P and Q) prior to commencing data collection. These are all standard, but important, research practices.

In fieldwork, particularly in education, the emphasis is on the relationship between participant(s) and researcher. The issues involved in establishing and maintaining the rapport in this relationship are essentially ethical ones. Hollingsworth (1993) characterizes the research relationship as collaborative, implying a mutual engagement with the research process on the part of teachers and researchers. Patterson and Thomas (1993) go further and claim a special relationship between classroom teachers and university-based researchers where the research needs to be designed with particular attention to including the voice of classroom teachers. This argument for a collaborative style of research places quite different ethical concerns at the centre of the research process and moves away from the older concerns about disinterested detachment on the part of the researcher. Ethical practice centres here upon the relationship between researcher and researched. Doig (1994) argues for an action research methodology which balances theory and teacher voice. I had these ideas in mind as I made choices throughout researching and writing this thesis as to how much of the teachers' voices to include. This also factored into my decision to include the lengthy conversations with participants in the Appendices section. I realize this decision has made for a lengthy document, but I felt it was an ethical choice to make available as much as possible the teachers' voices. As I have referred to elsewhere, I made a point of having each teacher read and comment on the transcript of

our interviews before proceeding on to data analysis. This was another way to make sure that their voices were honoured and their ideas accurately represented. A further focus group session was held with all of the teachers to check impressions of emerging themes before the final document was written, and this way, again, the teachers were fully included in the process.

A more general point raised by Cornett and Chase (1990) is that the degree to which a study is ethical or unethical does not ultimately rest with the scientific research community, some abstract canon of ethics or even an ethics checklist. Rather it is the result of a process of continuous interaction between the researcher and participant. This process must be based on an element of trust which may be built up through the participant finding the researcher approachable, communication that is two-way, a sense that the researcher is 'human' and able to reveal personal aspects of him/herself and assurances of confidentiality. Trust is the foundation of an ethical study.

While the guarantee of anonymity through the use of pseudonyms may protect participants from negative consequences, it also excludes them from public ownership of the data and input into its use. The power imbalance between researcher and teacher is thence accentuated and opportunities for a mutual collegial process potentially lessened or missed. Therefore, the participants' clear desire to be recognized and, indeed, acknowledged as co-researchers, by requesting their real names and location be used, also made it possible to co-author a book chapter that arose from this research.

Summary

The purpose of this study directed the choice of the research design. Through qualitative methodology of the "instrumental collective case study" (Stake, 1998), I have portrayed the experience of working with pedagogical documentation of three educators in a Reggio Emilia-inspired preschool program, thereby further illuminating our understanding of the phenomenon of this practice. The research design was continually refined and readjusted. In the tradition of the instrumental collective case study, there were "important co-ordinations between the individual studies" (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Investigation of the three particular subjects worked in concert with the investigation of the broader case, which is

Reggio-inspired documentation. The research conducted involved qualitative data collection strategies including in-depth observations, open-ended interviews and conversations, development of thick descriptions, and thorough review of artefacts (Bogden & Biklen, 1998).

No other issue so clearly distinguishes interpretive researchers from others than their confidence in the worth of case studies, here defined as the in-depth description of a single individual, event, or site. Interpretive researchers make sense of the world by thick description and narrative. As Donmeyer (1990, cited in Walsh, Tobin, & Graue, 1993) points out, case studies have the virtues of being accessible (most readers find narratives more interesting and intelligible than statistical studies) and interpersonally meaningful: when reading a case study, we get a chance to experience the world through the eyes of the author as well as the subject of the study (p. 468).

It is the humbling responsibility of the researcher to do justice to the experience of study participants, both in the seeing and in the conveying of the intricacies of their experiences. There is, thus, an onus to provide information about the researcher's orientations to the issues being studied and a responsibility to report research protocols with enough clarity to enable others to follow, understand, and, possibly, replicate the research. This chapter on methodology is written in order to ensure, as much as possible, transparency in the orientations and processes involved in this research.

CHAPTER 6: *Portraits of Place and Protagonists*

Context is crucial to documenting human experience and organizational culture. By context, I refer to the setting – physical, geographic, temporal, historical, cultural, aesthetic – within which the action takes place. Context becomes the framework, the ecological sphere in which to locate people and action in time and space and as a resource for understanding what they say and do.

~ Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis (1997, p. 41).

The chapter will begin by introducing Hilltop Children's Centre in Seattle, painting a brief portrait of the centre and giving relevant background information on its approach to education, and tying it into the Reggio Emilia approach to education discussed in a previous chapter. Subsequently, portraits will be sketched of the three primary protagonists in this story, Ann, Margie, and Sarah. In essence, by drawing on first-hand commentary from those most closely connected with the centre, this chapter will provide a context within which to locate the experiences of these three as teachers who practice the art of pedagogical documentation.

Approaching...

As my car climbs the steep hills of Seattle, approaching the Queen Anne neighbourhood, I feel quietly curious about what I will encounter at Hilltop. The occasional contributions of Ann and Sarah on the Reggio listserv have intrigued me enough to inquire about the possibility of visiting their real, physical site. Although they are infrequent writers, whenever one or the other "speaks" online, I pay attention. I sense quiet, considered thoughtfulness in their postings, always offered in a tentative, gentle way. It is this that nudged me to make the initial contact with them, to ask about visiting Hilltop. Nearing the address scribbled on a piece of paper, I drive through a tree-lined neighbourhood, with traditional brick and clapboard houses, manicured lawns, and the occasional American flag flying from the veranda. Rounding a corner, I

find a parking spot in front of a sprawling, brick Lutheran church. Although Hilltop has shared space with the church for over thirty years, the relationship, as I understand it, is limited to a rental agreement: Hilltop is not a church-affiliated preschool program. Approaching the entrance, I am struck by how obscure the sign indicating the school is – it would be easy to miss if you weren't looking for it. I step through an iron gate, noticing that there is a small grassy patch to the left of the entry door, and a similarly grassy patch with a sand box to the right. The outdoor play area seems very sparse. A small sign indicating the name of the school, and its recognition of accreditation by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), is to the right of the door.

Entering the building, I walk down a small flight of stairs into a fairly dark, carpeted hallway. I notice a large bulletin board, obviously belonging to the church, which has photos of Bible study groups and church mission projects. Another small sign with Hilltop's name hangs over a door, indicating that the preschool centre is through that door and up a flight of stairs. I enter through the doorway, and to my left immediately see a collection of photos and stories about children and their work. In the hallway is a small table with leaflets for various community schools and services. A vase spilling over with brilliant flowers is on the table. When I stop to read the stories on the wall, which describe various goings-on in assorted classrooms, I am immediately impressed by the portrayal, in words and photos, of classroom experiences. This sharing of information goes far beyond the typical school bulletin board display of children's craft creations.

The stairway is also lined with many panels, each created by a staff member, which includes a photo and a brief biography of the individual. They are fairly uniform in size, but vary greatly in the style of presentation. Some are typed, others hand-written, some in a flowing hand, and still others with a rougher style of handwriting. Most include a photo or two, and a personal philosophy statement. Some have poetry added to them, and many are embellished with leaves, flowers, buttons, ribbons, shells. Each panel is obviously very personal and highly individualized. The school's teachers are highlighted by these "bio-boards," but so, too, are the school's director, the cook, and Margie, the staff trainer or *pedagogista*. It seems as if every staff member affiliated with Hilltop is represented.



Figure 5: Bio boards lining the hallway at Hilltop Children's Centre

At the top of the stairway is another door, opening into the school site itself. A quotation from Mara Davoli, an educator from Reggio Emilia, is prominently posted in the entryway, greeting all who enter:

A child enters our school with a story, a life in her family. If we keep the child at the centre of our work, we must consider her family, or we have an incomplete child¹⁰.

A second comment, this one from Reggio pedagogue Carlina Rinaldi, is posted nearby:

A school has three subjects: children, teachers, and parents - all are protagonists. A school is an organization that fosters collegiality, freedom, subjectivity, and the co-construction of knowledge among these three subjects.

And a third, from yet another Reggio educator, Paolo Cagliari, says:

In the alliances between parents and teachers, we have the opportunity to be close to the children.

The message regarding the high value placed on relationships between families and teachers is hard to miss.

I enter another hallway, lined with an array of children's personal cubbies, filled with coats, lunch-kits, and an assortment of personal treasures, such as blankets and stuffed animals. Bulletin boards abound, all neatly covered with plastic page holders containing sheets filled with text and photos. The sheer volume of reading material is overwhelming.

Outside of one cluster of rooms, the bulletin board bears the title "Garden Curriculum Board." The words are surrounded by leaves hand cut

¹⁰ All italicized text in this chapter is drawn directly from either Hilltop programme documents or conversations with the protagonists.

from paper painted an earthy shade of green. There are several headings listed: social and anti-bias learning, community happenings, art and symbolic representation, stories and emerging literacy, socio-dramatic play, on-going projects and emerging interests, social learning, sensory and physical knowledge, logical-mathematical thinking. I take photos of each these postings as a way to jog my own memory later. Atop one of the cubby-hole shelves is a white binder, labelled "Garden Curriculum." I flip through the pages encased in plastic sheets, and realize the pages are collected and organized under the same headings as those on the curriculum board.

As I read, parents and children continue to arrive. Adults stop to greet each other, and children find friends joyfully. A few stop to take a glance at the photos and text on the bulletin boards, but most seem to be busily occupied helping their children settle in for the day.

I spot a tall woman engaged in conversation with a parent, and assume this is Ann. I choose not to interrupt, quietly slipping into the centre room of the cluster of three at this end of the hallway (the Garden class, which is Ann's, is located in a suite of three rooms, all located next to each other). A bearded man is sitting at a small table with two young girls, perhaps four years in age. Together they are choosing bottles of aromatic oils, sniffing the contents, and reading the labels. J. (I overhear one of the girls calling him by name and identify him as a teacher) explains to the girls that a friend who had owned this collection of aromatherapy scents has given them to Hilltop.

Ann catches my eye, crossing the room to greet me with a hug. Her warm greeting makes me feel welcome. She shows me where to put my personal

belongings away and gives me a quick orientation to the school's physical setting. I settle in to observe and take notes, with plans to meet up again with Ann later in the day to discuss my observations. I have a good sense already that this is a place where I can learn a great deal (field notes, April 20).

Portrait of a Particular Place - Hilltop Children's Centre

Hilltop Children's Centre is a full day childcare centre. There are about seventy children enrolled at Hilltop, ranging in age from three to ten years old; most are preschoolers (under five years of age). The families and staff at Hilltop reflect the dominant culture of the urban neighbourhood in which the centre is located. The majority are European American, with a handful of exceptions. Typically politically liberal, religiously unaffiliated, and "culturally hip," the parents at Hilltop are mainly professionals, working full time in law offices, architecture firms, computer software companies, and other high-income fields.

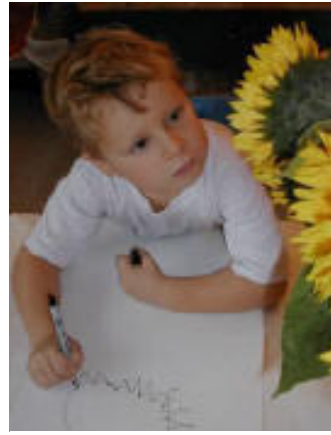


Figure 6: A child sketching, using one of many representational "languages"

Hilltop Children's Centre identifies itself as a place where...

~ children are valued for their ability to do meaningful work, their wonder and curiosity, their perspectives, and ability to play

~ families are valued for their bonds and traditions, their ability to play, their commitment to work, home, and community, and their dreams for their children

~ staff are valued for their vision, their delight in children, their skill and knowledge, their commitment to families

As is clear in the above comments, the staff members involved with Hilltop take pride in staying on the cutting edge of the child-care/early education field, and not surprisingly, the program has been featured in numerous journal articles and in videos (see Appendix F). At the heart of the program is a commitment to child-centred learning, to social problem solving and critical thinking, to an emergent approach to curriculum, and to pedagogical documentation.

Hilltop's Approach to Early Childhood Education

Respecting Children, Valuing Childhood

Hilltop's approach to early childhood education is an interconnected web of practices that echo back to the Reggio Emilia approach to education as discussed

in Chapter 2. Hilltop's usage of such practices is anchored in an understanding of children as curious, eager to explore and learn, competent and resourceful, ready to collaborate, and full of wonder and delight. Ideas and practices are explored from different perspectives, creating a richly textured, vibrant fabric of threads that together give expression to their approach to early childhood education within the context of full day child-care.

The goals teachers hold for children's experiences at Hilltop are reflected in the day's flow and emphasis (see Appendix G for a "Day in the Life of a Preschooler at Hilltop"). Teachers express a desire that children's time at Hilltop be characterized by:

- *long, uninterrupted work time, in which children's passions, questions, understandings, and experiences serve as the foundation for their work;*
- *opportunities for children to use many media to represent their thinking and feelings;*
- *opportunities for children to get messy and dive into sensory exploration;*
- *time, space, and supplies for children to transform materials, making, shaping, taking apart, recreating;*
- *many opportunities and substantial adult support for children to practice resolving conflicts with each other, working through problems to reach satisfying solutions that promote continued play together;*
- *adults moving with respect and quiet gentleness in the rooms, acknowledging with voices, movements and demeanour that the rooms are the children's workspaces, dreaming spaces, feeling spaces, living spaces, and adults are there to listen and to support and to listen again.*

Taking Inspiration from the Reggio Emilia Approach

Hilltop teachers openly draw inspiration from the schools of Reggio Emilia.

A program document states:

Our commitment to an image of children as rich in resources, full of wonder and curiosity, and eager to learn and to collaborate, as well as our grounding in child-centred curriculum practices led us to the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. As a staff, we first encountered the philosophy of the schools in Reggio Emilia during a staff meeting in 1995. Since then, we've been exploring key principles from Reggio, drawing inspiration from the teaching and learning in the schools there. We weave together key elements of the Reggio approach with a commitment to anti-bias and culturally relevant practices, and to growing a community at Hilltop that reflects our unique identities and experiences.

Elsewhere, Hilltop teachers explain that the schools in Reggio Emilia inspire them to:

- *understand children as competent, resourceful, eager to learn, anchored by relationship, and overflowing with delight and wonder*
- *pay close attention to the use of space and time in our classroom environments, creating a learning environment which reflects our understanding of children*
- *offer children a range of media with which to represent and communicate their theories, understandings, and questions*
- *grow curriculum projects which provide opportunities for children to communicate and reflect on their thinking in collaboration with each other*
- *engage in authentic partnerships with families*
- *understand ourselves as learners and researchers, supporting and challenging each other in our professional growth*

Thus, there is a clear and openly stated link between Hilltop and the theories of education as developed in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

The Environment as the Third Teacher: Influences from Reggio Emilia

As described earlier, Hilltop Children's Centre is located in the upper floor of a sprawling brick Lutheran church building. The structural space indoors is relatively neutral and unremarkable. Sarah's classroom space includes one large classroom, with a small studio space located directly across the hallway. Ann's space consists of a suite of three rooms, one larger and two smaller rooms, one of which is also used primarily as a studio. The outdoor play-scape is limited to a tiny, grass covered play yard, smaller than the front lawns typical of homes in the surrounding neighbourhood. To compensate for this lack of outdoor play space, the staff utilizes nearby parks and school playgrounds daily in order to provide the children with opportunities to be physically active out-of-doors. There is also a large gymnasium located in the basement that is shared with Hilltop's after school care program. During the day, teachers have discretionary use of this space to have children engage in big muscle activity.

Despite the physical limitations of this rented facility, environments that are beautiful and inviting are valued by the teachers at Hilltop. Therefore, particular attention has been given to creating a simple, attractive environment, one that invites curiosity and exploration. The rooms are filled with light, both natural light

coming in from the big picture windows, and warm focused lighting from small table lamps. Certain areas of the room are furnished with uncluttered shelves holding open-ended materials and objects from the natural world. Collections of rocks, shells, seed-pods, and driftwood abound. These supplement basic early childhood supplies like blocks, puzzles, play dough, and dress-up fabrics and embellishments. Materials are organized into containers of similar colour and design, contributing visually to a sense of unity and a lack of clutter. Ingenious storage use is made of wicker baskets and wooden bowls, collected from a variety of sources, and this lends another natural element to the space. Bulletin boards are empty in the first weeks of the school year, ready to be shaped by the life of the children who will inhabit the classroom, rather than filled with decorations created by adults.

Teachers create long stretches of open time for the children's play and exploration during the day, believing that children deserve to engage deeply with each other and with their ideas, questions, and challenges. Care is taken to minimize transitions and interruptions of the children's play and work. In explaining this value to parents, teachers have described their thinking in a parent information bulletin:

Our time is very flexible and open, and our goal is to be responsive to the work that kids are doing, rather than establishing a teacher-driven schedule. As children arrive they make their first plans for their play, and then leap in! The planning board is just inside the middle room; you may want to make a ritual of guiding your child to the planning board as you arrive, helping her or him make a first plan before you say goodbye. Teachers move through the room, working with kids, observing their work, listening to and documenting their conversations, their questions, their understandings and inventions with notes, tape recordings, photos, and sketches. Children are welcome to change plans and work areas, though they often become immersed in a project, an idea, or a game, and stay with it. Most often we will split up into two or three self-selected groups, with some children continuing play in the classroom, some heading to the studio, and some going outside or downstairs for more active play. Children may work in both the classroom and studio in the course of a morning, or may choose to spend their whole morning in one space or the other, depending on the kind of work they decide to engage in (A Day in the Life of the Preschooler at Hilltop, Appendix G).

The flow of time throughout the day is open; the mornings are protected time for children's play and work, with no transitions or interruptions until lunch. Children are encouraged to save their work from one playtime to another, so that they can deepen their explorations and their collaborations with every re-visitation.

In sum, classrooms are created as open spaces, rich with inviting materials for the children to use in their pursuits and play – open-ended materials that invite the children to represent their experiences, questions, theories, and delights. In the classroom spaces, children have opportunities to engage in sensory exploration, drama play, block building, game playing, puzzle work, writing and drawing, and reading. Children are seen playing with their peers or alone, building with blocks, dressing up, immersed in constructing with Lego or blocks, up to their elbows in “blubber” or play dough, reading books, sorting tiny objects, or writing letters and drawing pictures. With some creative arranging of the facilities, teachers have crafted studio spaces in which children have opportunities to develop relationships with a range of art media, and which serve as a work space for in-depth projects pursued by small groups of children.



Figure 7: Child observes closely before painting in studio/atelier space

Small groups of children gather in the studio spaces each day. The studios are used for focused project work and for spontaneous explorations. In the studios, children are invited to use many media to explore their ideas and represent their understandings. Children may engage in exploratory work, sensory discovery, or detailed intricate work with varied art and construction media.

Adults work closely with the children, facilitating their use of materials, asking questions, or offering materials that provoke children to stretch their thinking. Teachers watch and listen to the children closely as they work, taking photos and making notes about the children’s work, offering resources to support and extend their play, and playing alongside the children. Seldom (if ever) are teachers observed involved in didactic teaching, or leading a formalized group learning activity. Rather, teachers watch for and seize “teachable moments” that arise naturally from children’s play, and use those moments to encourage literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills.

Children’s development is fostered across the range of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993), with social, physical, and cognitive development valued equally:

“We believe that children learn as they pursue their passions and questions; our job, we believe, is to deepen and extend that learning.”

Building Bridges and Growing Authentic Partnerships with Families

As families register their children for enrolment at Hilltop, they are given a packet of information. This is offered as a way for families to learn some initial information about the staff and how they approach time spent with the children.

Included in this packet is:

- a letter of welcome to the child from the children in the Garden/Sunlight Group;¹¹
- an introduction to the Garden/Sunlight Group for parents;
- letters of introduction from each of the teachers on the Garden/Sunlight Group teaching team;
- a description of the flow of the daily life in the Garden/Sunlight Group and of the climate teachers seek to create in the classrooms and studio;
- an overview of teachers’ approach to conflict and its resolution;
- a pamphlet describing some ways that families can support and extend the anti-bias work teachers do with children at Hilltop;
- Hilltop’s toy policy;
- a letter from the kitchen manager about the school’s approach to food allergies.

Even in the introductory letter to families, it is apparent that teachers invite two-way conversations. The high value placed on relationships is reflected in the following excerpt from this letter:

We see this as the beginning of a rich and growthful [sic] dialogue with you, a dialogue which begins with our written exchanges of information and which will continue throughout the coming year in individual conversations, in community gatherings and group meetings in our exchanges in children’s journals, on the curriculum board outside the classrooms, and in notes we write each other. We expect to learn from you about your children and about your values, goals, and hopes; we expect your reflections, insights, and questions to shape the life we share with you and your children.

We look forward with eager anticipation to the time we will share with you and your children—to the relationships that will blossom and solidify, the questions we’ll pursue together, the discoveries that we’ll delight in, and to the community that we will become.

Welcome!

¹¹ Garden and Sunlight are two of the four classes at Hilltop; Ann teaches in Garden and Sarah in Sunlight. The teaching staff in other classrooms prepare similar welcome packages for new families.

The Hilltop staff members welcome family participation. In the following, Ann explains how members of the staff feel about developing relationships with families:

The children at Hilltop are spending their childhoods with us. It is not only a delight, but our responsibility to know the children as intimately as we can. And we cannot truly know the children unless we know their families.

We emphasize authentic relationships with families, increasingly inviting families to join us in shaping the curriculum, the environment, and our understandings of children. We're engaging with families around both "hot topic" conversations and simple play - bonfires, nature walks, sing-alongs [sic]. As we invite families into collaborative relationship with us, our practices are shifting, becoming more open and much richer.

A primary goal we have in our work at Hilltop is to support and nurture the deep and potent bonds that parents and children share. It is important to us that families are reflected in a range of ways in our classrooms. We want the children to encounter many bridges that link home and Hilltop, family life and the life of our community at Hilltop.

Parents and teachers in one classroom talked together this fall about the values they hope to nourish in the children and in themselves - values that we place at the heart of our program at Hilltop. Here are the values we identified together for our relationships with children:

We want children to feel rock-solid safe. We celebrate their uniqueness and want them to be affirmed in their individuality and encouraged to pursue their passions and interests and to cultivate their gifts. Hand-in-hand with this, we want children to experience community and relationship, to be at ease with a range of people, to embrace difference, and to deepen their compassion for others. We want there to be room for children's emotions, for exuberant play, for conflict and collaborative problem solving, and for quiet introspection. We want the children to learn to act for fairness. We want children to see their lives reflected and affirmed in many ways, so that they develop a sense of their history as thinkers, players, and friends. We want children's family bonds to be nurtured. We value transparency at Hilltop, so that there are many windows into children's lives here and a sense of seamlessness between home and Hilltop.

And in a letter to all Hilltop families, Ann reiterates:

Alliances don't have boundaries; they don't have carefully protected turf. Alliances are relationships, messy, full of surprise and delight, deeply emotional, intimate, challenging. Alliances are adventures, long and complex journeys undertaken with commitment and curiosity.¹²

We are committed to building alliances with families - open-hearted relationships that will nourish our community, in which we move beyond the formal roles of "teacher" and "parent" and open our lives to each other as

¹² The phrase "alliances" is an intentional reference to the quote that hangs in Hilltop's entryway: "In the alliances between parents and teachers, we have the opportunity to be close to the children" (Paola Cagliari)

passionate, foolish, tender-hearted people. We believe parents to be powerful in their bonds with their children, curious about their children's strength and vulnerability, eager to participate in an exchange of ideas, resourceful and competent and deeply in love with their children. We're eager to learn from you about your hopes, values, commitments, and goals for your family, and to share our vision and values with you.

How do parents respond to this approach to learning and to building relationships with families? Comments such as the ones cited below are typical:

~ I was sort of stunned last summer at how quickly we were invited to pot-lucks, get-togethers with the other families, after school activities, and how friendly everyone was. I guess, to me, what really blew me away was that they had a bonfire on the beach and a swim party on the weekend that the parents organized, and the teachers showed up. That sort of level of integration of the teachers into the community I think is incredibly valuable, and I don't know, quite honestly, how much of that is Hilltop, and how much of that is the Reggio Emilia philosophy, but that strong sense of community is really one of the strengths of Hilltop. They have this sense that the other parents and all the other teachers, and the teachers in the other rooms, were sort of all there for them, and the director, too (KG1).

~ Gosh, this is just so wonderful, the way to make the kids feel so warm and nurtured, and they tend to sort of remove ... the divide between[school and] home and family. It is making them more interwoven, which I think is a more natural way for children to see things - they see that as an extension of their community, and not as a place that they just go to and come back (KG1).

~ I think the stuff they do around building community is phenomenal. The way they do the room events, and they draw the parents in, and they help parents get to know each other, it's really built a community around Hilltop that's had a profound effect on my whole family...it just really nurtures it for the whole community, meeting new people, staying involved. It's definitely like a family place. Knowing that you're sending your kid to a great educational experience... it's very community oriented (AS1).

On several different occasions, over different years, families have been invited to participate in creating a surprise gift that will remain in the classroom(s) for the children. This is a tangible way for loved ones to be immediately present, a constant reminder of family for the children. A school invitation to one of these events reads:

During our meeting, we'll spend some time painting teacups for your children! Our intent is to have a tea-cup for each child, decorated by her or his dad or mom, to use during the year for soothing tea before rest time, cocoa in the winter after a chilly day outside, and special celebrations and rituals. And, decorated by you, the teacups will serve as a tangible reminder of you to your children—more precious than any teacups we teachers could offer.

Figure 8: Teacups painted by parents as a “gift” to remain in the classroom for the children.



And on another occasion, following a parent gathering, Hilltop sent out the following notice to parents:



Folks created a mural together to represent their families coming together in community: they sketched their families' homes along a street. This mural is a joy to the children in our group! Some homes are missing from our mural, though: the mural will be in the studio on Monday and Tuesday so you can add your home to it, if it's not already there. Please plan on spending a few extra minutes in the morning or evening to sketch your home on the mural; it matters a lot to your child that her or his home is included.

Figure 9: Parents creating mural for classroom representing their homes.

Here as well, parental response is favourable:

~ We make gifts for our children, and you work with the other parents on some type of collective project that you give to the room. This year we drew a picture of our neighbourhood, we made a neighbourhood of our homes, and we each drew a picture of our homes, but made it like it was one big neighbourhood, and made a big mural that we left for the kids, and then they can go and see their parents' art, you know. And it was...you just never get asked to do that kind of stuff. It was fun, the parents had a blast, and so that kind of launching is really about setting the tone for parents, for communicating and working together (AS1).

Thus, parents willingly play an active role in shaping the environment of Hilltop. Examples such as the teacups and the mural are a way for families to be present in the classrooms: they are “bridges” linking families to the community at Hilltop. There are other concrete ways that families are invited to be visibly present in the classrooms:

Because we take seriously the idea that “a child enters our school with a story, a life in her family,” it’s important to us that your family is reflected in a range of ways in our classrooms through the year. We want the children to encounter many bridges that link home and Hilltop, family life and the life of our community at Hilltop. There are a couple of concrete ways to make your family visible in our classroom right away—to be present to your child during the time that you’re apart.

- *Bring a photo of your family in a frame that can stand on a shelf. Any size is fine for our eclectic and warm collection of family photos that sits on the tops of shelves in the classrooms. If your family lives in two homes, please feel welcome to bring several photos that represent your child’s family. The family photos are treasured by the children: they often hold their family photos when they’re sad, or set them next to their mats during nap time, or proudly display them to their friends.*



Figure 10: Family photos are a tangible presence in the classrooms at Hilltop

- *Create a “family page” for our family book. There is a blank page attached to this letter; please work together with your children to create a page that represents your family. Use photos, or draw; get crazy with glitter and paint. Let your page reflect your family’s spirit and aesthetic. We’ll collect your family pages in a notebook in our classroom that we keep on our bookshelves. This book is a treasured item in our room; children linger with the family book often during the day, visiting mamas and papas, brothers and sisters, touching their homes.*

Family books and photos are a treasured part of the classrooms and help to bring the family into the school.

Teaching Philosophy and Practice

Child Centred Curriculum

At Hilltop, curriculum is viewed as everything that happens during the time together with children. Ann writes: “*We believe that each moment offers an opportunity to explore relationships and create a community that nurtures children, teachers, and families; each moment holds a question to pursue, a hypothesis to investigate, or a discovery to celebrate*” (Pelo & Davidson, 2000, p. xiii). Curriculum happens all day, in every routine, action, interaction, and rearrangement of the room.

Curriculum at Hilltop unfolds from careful observation of the children's passions and pursuits and from dialogue as a teaching team about underlying themes and questions that the children are exploring. Exploring how collaboration can happen in the teaching teams is an ongoing focus of staff meetings and professional development activities. Moreover, in this school, teachers regularly take notes, photos, and audio recordings of the children at play and use the resulting “traces of documentation” as a guide for curriculum planning. Such data also serve as the basis for the various displays about children's play and learning.

Key Principles of Emergent Curriculum

Emergent curriculum stems from the interests of the children and is embedded in a reciprocal relationship between teachers and children, both having valid goals and ideas. It requires energy, flexibility, observation, listening skills, and commitment.

The image of the child guides decision-making. Staff members at Hilltop see children as competent, full of wonder, committed to relationships, willing to investigate, critique, reflect, and collaborate. This understanding shapes the decisions about how to arrange the classroom environments, schedule time throughout the days, and plan curriculum.

Teachers pay careful attention to the use of space and time. Teachers think of the classroom environment as a co-teacher (the “third teacher”), setting the tone for children’s days in the classroom and inviting them to explore, collaborate, reflect, and communicate with a range of media. Similarly, the schedule of each

day allows for long stretches of open-ended time during which children can pursue their questions, passions, and developmental themes.

Curriculum planning is based on observation. Teachers observe children as they play, paying close attention to recurring themes, children's understandings and misunderstandings, developmental issues, and underlying questions. These observations, in turn, guide curriculum planning, as teachers attempt to create opportunities for children to deepen their thinking, represent their understandings, and encounter new perspectives.

Curriculum projects grow through many opportunities for children to present, reflect on, and think critically about what they know. Teachers offer children many opportunities to communicate their understandings by representing them with a range of media. They encourage children to revisit earlier ideas by studying their representations, revising or reasserting them, and by studying other children's representations.

Teachers thoughtfully document the life of the classroom and emerging curriculum projects. Teachers collect "traces" of children's thinking by taking photos, making audiotapes and videotapes, and taking notes about children's conversations and play. This documentation helps children revisit and reflect on their play and thinking. It also helps make the daily life of the classroom visible to children's families.

In-depth projects. At Hilltop, teachers view themselves as researchers, carefully watching and listening to children as they play and work. Through observing and documenting children's play, teachers think, talk, and speculate about the underlying developmental themes and questions that the children are pursuing. What is learned about children's understandings, questions, and pursuits guides the curriculum planning. When activities and topics of high interest emerge, teachers turn their attention to fostering in-depth project work around these topics and issues.

Typically, in-depth project work involves a small group of children rather than an entire classroom. Four or five children may be wrestling with a particular issue, such as understanding how friendships evolve and change, and a small group of children at a similar stage of development may find themselves exploring how to make, enforce, and follow rules. Meanwhile, several other children may be fascinated with creating directions for block constructions, or creating a video for

teaching classmates how to play basketball (see Hilltop Hoops, Appendix H). Teachers gather these various small groups of children into a project work group to facilitate the children's exploration and collaboration. These projects may last a morning, a week, several months, or several years.

Life in the classroom continues in its usual way, even as some children become absorbed in projects. There are periods of the day, and indeed, times during the year, when no obvious project work is underway:

We value these times for the informal work of learning more about who we are, working with intense feelings, or relaxing together in easy friendship.

Through in-depth project work with children, teachers attempt to foster investigation, placing high priority on building relationships, and an appreciation of diversity and divergent thinking. They believe that these things are more important than teaching preschoolers specific information about a particular topic:

We want children to develop a love of learning and inquiry, an interest in taking new perspectives and in collaborating with others. We want to enrich their childhoods with a deepening sense of belonging to a group that has a growing, collective history.

The children obviously respond to this approach, as is seen in this example:

"I know!" exclaimed a child one morning after a fierce game of basketball. "How about we play basketball and Ann is the coach and somebody makes a movie of us? If she makes copies, then every kid who doesn't know how to play basketball can have one of those movies and they can learn!" (Hilltop Hoops, Appendix H)

Art as a Tool for Thinking and Representation

At Hilltop, teachers seek to offer children many opportunities to represent and re-represent their understandings. For example, children are invited to draw their block structures, or to dictate recipes for the play dough cookies they create, or to use clay to recreate a drawing of a beloved animal. They are encouraged to move back and forth between media, to work on different scales and to move from two to three dimensions. The practice of representing and re-representing an idea often sparks a transformation of thinking, and is beneficial to both student and teacher.

On the one hand, through representing and re-representing their ideas, children:

- *develop fluency in many “languages”*
- *become more aware of their understandings*
- *change perspectives*
- *notice new details and nuances*
- *refine their questions and theories*
- *develop a history of their thinking, as they carry an idea from one day to another and one language to another, revisiting and refining their ideas*
- *see each other’s thinking*
- *communicate with each other and with adults*
- *practice collaboration and conflict*

On the other hand, when children represent and re-represent their thinking, teachers:

- *learn about children’s passions, pursuits, understandings, and misunderstandings*
- *identify next steps in an in-depth project, as they deepen their understanding of the children’s thinking*

These opportunities to represent and revisit their experiences and understandings in a range of media encourage children to extend and deepen their thinking, to change perspectives, and to communicate their understanding.

Documentation ~ “The Art of Awareness”

As an expression of their commitment to create bridges between home and school, teachers have created the curriculum boards in the hallways and common areas outside of each classroom. On those boards are posted anecdotes (documentation) about children’s play and learning. Teachers share reflections and musings about the days spent with children, highlight important happenings in the school community, and keep families posted about ongoing project work. They aim to add at least one new posting each day.

At Hilltop, documentation is valued as a central element of the program, as the following program pamphlet makes clear:

Our anecdotes, photos, sketches, and transcriptions provide a mirror for children in which they see themselves; looking in this mirror, they are invited to revisit experiences and ideas and to reflect on them. Children often decide to recreate an experience when they look at photos and hear stories of

their play: they may rebuild a block structure, or dive back into a pretend game, or dig in with clay or paint to recreate a representative piece or a sensory experience. Children may take up a juicy topic again, returning to an earlier conversation and imbuing it with new ideas. When children revisit and reflect on their experiences and ideas, they deepen and expand their understandings. They come to see themselves as thinkers, builders, artists, and craftspeople with an intellectual and aesthetic history. And they see themselves in relationship to other children's ideas and experiences, discovering new perspectives about themselves and their companions. With our documentation, we become keepers of the community history that informs and shapes who we are—children and adults—together. We share our documentation with your children daily, both in their journals and informally as we play and work together.

Our documentation also provides windows for you into your children's lives at Hilltop. Our stories, photos, transcriptions, and reflections offer you glimpses of children's thinking and feeling, of their joyful discoveries and proud accomplishments, their struggles, questions, hopes, and relationships. Your child won't always be a protagonist in the postings, but each day's posting will give you a taste of the community in which your child spends her or his days, and can certainly be a launching pad into conversation with your child about the day. Chances are, even if your child didn't participate in the particular project or game highlighted on the curriculum board, she knows about it, and can begin sharing her day with you as you talk together about what you read on the curriculum board.

We put copies of documentation in your child's journal, as well, when your child has been a protagonist in the story we're telling with the documentation. You're welcome to take your child's journal home to read together as a family or over a cup of tea after your child's in bed.

Again, parents respond favourably to the Hilltop approach:

~ You know, one thing that I think about is that when I leave I get to take that journal, or when Caleb leaves in September, he gets to take that journal home, and it will be ours forever and ever. I have these visions of Caleb being eighteen years old, sitting and reading through that journal and looking at pictures of himself, and just how much he'll know this piece of his life so well as a result of that (AS1).

~ I find this kind of documentation much more valuable in terms of helping me understand what's going on, what some of the issues are, than those standard notes home every day... In terms of really understanding what's happening with my daughter, this form of communication is far more valuable than anything I've had in other schools... My sense is that the ability to do this kind of documentation and observation attracts a different quality of people into teaching than you would find elsewhere, because, from what I've noticed from being at Hilltop, it turns it from a childcare job like a service business into an intellectual endeavour, and I very much value that (KG1).

Most Hilltop teachers work several hours per week away from the children. This is time dedicated for assembling the documentation of children's work, studying it for developmental and topical interests and issues teachers can support and extend, writing in journals, having conversations with parents and other staff members, and generally doing the studying, planning, and communicating that are important pieces for each of the adults in this collaborative community.

Embracing Difference and Working for Justice

For many years, each Hilltop teacher brought his/her passions (or his/her lack of passion) about anti-bias issues to the classroom, and each teaching team found its own way to integrate anti-bias work and activism into the life of the classroom. More recently, however, the staff members have begun to talk together about issues of diversity and anti-bias work, exploring what a centre-wide commitment to anti-bias work might mean for the program and reflecting on ways to involve parents in creating a school as dedicated to anti-bias work as they are to an emergent curriculum. A pamphlet that provides an overview of anti-bias practices with children is included in the initial registration package:

Hilltop teachers devote part of their team meetings each week to discussing current anti-bias efforts and opportunities in the classroom. We purposely introduce meeting topics, thinking games, teacher skits and other activities to provoke conversations about bias and fairness. In addition, we support in-depth study projects that contain elements of activism for social justice. Though perhaps not immediately visible on our walls, all of these anti-bias efforts are recorded in our documentation of classroom work. Our wish is to nurture within each child a disposition to speak and act for peace, tolerance, and justice.

Throughout the year, teachers hope to engage with families in dialogue about their anti-bias work and what they're doing about diversity issues at Hilltop.

Teachers Consider Relationships to be Central

Teachers emphasize relationship building and collaboration among children, and between teachers and children. Teachers actively seek out opportunities to collaborate with other teachers and with families, discussing their understandings of and questions about children's play. When families are asked to share their perspectives and invited to help make decisions about classroom life and

curriculum, understanding is enriched and families are included in the shared school life of the children.

Conflict Resolution

At Hilltop, conflicts between children are viewed as opportunities for children to deepen their self-awareness, to take others' perspectives, and to strengthen their friendships. When a conflict arises, teachers work with the children to resolve it, acting as facilitators and coaches to support the children as they communicate their feelings, ideas, and needs. Repeatedly, I observed adults supporting children's social problem-solving and conflict resolution, encouraging children to talk with each other and to negotiate mutually agreeable solutions. The primary focus is always on helping children practice and master the process of navigating conflict and negotiating solutions together (see Appendix I, Working Through Conflict with Children, for an example of what this looks like in practice).

Teachers choose from a range of roles when conflicts arise. A teacher may choose to act as a coach, helping children find appropriate language for talking about a problem, or the more subtle role of facilitator during a conflict. Or a teacher may simply listen to children talk about a problem, mirroring their understandings and ideas back to them, and offering gentle suggestions for approaches to a problem. The priority is always to nurture children's self-awareness and communication:

Rather than establishing a list of rules, we prefer to state very clearly the underlying principles that guide our way of being in the classroom, and then approach each new situation from that starting point. Our most basic expectations are:

- *safety for everyone - we need to protect our own and each other's bodies and feelings by being gentle, calm, and careful.*
- *respect for everyone - we seek to use words and actions that demonstrate love and caring for one another.*
- *responsibility for our own actions - each person in the classroom monitors and controls her or his own body and language.*
- *appropriate use of materials - supplies are used for their intended purpose, or in creative ways that don't damage them.*

Usually, any behaviour or situation that seems like a problem has probably reached the threshold of one of these basic agreements. If we see a child

doing something unsafe, disrespectful, irresponsible, or inappropriate, we will remind him or her of our expectations and encourage them to resolve the problem in appropriate ways, offering our support. We strive to work out all interpersonal conflicts and issues verbally, by identifying the problem and then generating possible solutions until one can be agreed upon by everyone involved. This form of conflict resolution, often called “social problem-solving,” is more respectful of children’s processes than a teacher-dictated solution, and builds social and cognitive skills, as well. We have a practical guide (See Working Through Conflict with Children, Appendix I) which details the process we use for problem solving and which may be useful to you as you negotiate conflicts at home with your child.

In the course of a year together, certain situations may arise often enough that a shared “agreement” becomes standard policy for the whole class. Some of these common-sense agreements may carry over from year to year or from room to room, but they are always based on the basic principles of safety, respect, and responsibility.

Sometimes, however, when a problem emerges, direct intervention from an adult is needed. A teacher will then remind a child about the classroom agreements, explain and follow through on the logical consequences of their actions, invite them to make more appropriate choices, and describe a contingency plan if inappropriate behaviour continues. A child may be asked to meet with a teacher in the hallway, away from the distractions of the play area, for these sorts of conversations. In some cases, when the safety or comfort of the group is being compromised, a teacher may take a child out of the room for a few minutes while she or he calms down and order is restored.

Conflict resolution is closely tied to good communication:

Sometimes during our work time in the morning, we’ll have a “spicy” work time. For spicy work, we divide the children into groups of three or four; each small group has the task of choosing an activity together. The all-important structure of spicy work is that each person in the group has to agree about the material the group will play with. Our goal in building spicy work into our weekly schedule is to provide the children with a structured opportunity to learn and practice skills in talking, listening, and negotiating decisions together. Our spicy work is a way for us to build our community.

The overall goals are to foster in children competence in negotiating and resolving problems that they encounter and awareness of themselves as able, caring people, well-loved and respected by the adults around them. Parents and children alike appreciate this fact:

~ I know one of the things that's been sort of a challenge and a benefit to my oldest daughter, to Kelsey... she hadn't had a lot of experience to work at social interactions. I could see how hard the teachers worked at teaching the kids the social skills to get along in the world, and all the efforts about how to do negotiations, and that's turned out to be an incredible benefit for Kelsey, who is very intense, very strong-minded, and has sort of a hard time with cooperating... It quickly became obvious that this was an area that she was challenged in, and so, therefore, having some place that would spend a year with her really consciously working on those skills was fabulous (KG1).

Parent Conferences

Teachers talk with parents regularly throughout the year about their children's pursuits, triumphs, challenges, and developmental journeys. These conversations are usually informal and spontaneous. In addition, teachers meet annually with each family in a formal conference to reflect together about children's learning and development. A parent comments:

~ This fall, for the parent conference, Kelsey's teacher Sarah offered to come here for dinner for her conference, which blew my mind. Of course, to Kelsey, this was like, the treat of the world, to have your teacher come to dinner (KG1).

The intent with such conferences is to offer parents a developmental snapshot of their children, anchored in observations of children at work and play at Hilltop, and to talk with them about their questions, concerns, and hopes for their children. Teachers see these conferences as an opportunity to deepen their understanding of each child, to celebrate their relationship with each child, and to strengthen their relationship with each family. In the conferences, teachers aim to communicate a way of seeing children that recognizes their unique strengths and passions, that honours their developmental journey, and that embraces their struggles with compassion and gentleness.

Conferences begin in mid-February. Teachers prepare by reflecting on a child's growth and learning, passions, pursuits, strengths, and challenges. She or he will also talk with other teachers on the teaching team to gather other perspectives on a child and to deepen her or his understandings about the child's developmental journey. The teacher prepares a written and/or visual "developmental snapshot" of a child, capturing in words and/or images a child's growth and learning (see Appendix J, Conference Report for Caleb, for a sample of one child's "developmental snapshot"). For their part, parents prepare by reflecting on their understandings of their child's developmental journey and by identifying particular

questions or concerns that they'd like to talk about with their child's teacher. They may bring photos, drawings, or other traces of their child's life at home to share during their conference. One parent says:

*~ I'm a **huge** fan of documentation... and of what I call Ann's "report card," her annual report that she writes for parents. I don't know if you've seen one of those, you can ask her to have Caleb's, both of them. I've even had her e-mail them to me so I can send them out to my family, you know, pictures and all, because they're so... they're her reflections and summations, and they clearly have this form that they go through of things they're supposed to talk about, the different developmental things and for the ages that they are. But the way that Ann does it is just brilliant, and I've sent them out to my family both times, and said, "You'll know your grandson (your nephew, whatever), better after reading this than anything." It's so amazing how she describes Caleb, and what he's good at and how he sees the world, and giving people a little insight into his kind of take on life, and what he struggles with, and what he's really good at. It's just amazing. So, that's one piece that just feels like such a gift, and I don't feel like we'll ever get it to such a degree from any other teacher forever (AS1).*

Ongoing Staff Development

Hilltop considers staff development an essential part of achieving high quality in childcare. The centre-wide professional development takes a range of forms:

- Each teacher receives paid planning time. Teachers use this time to reflect on the notes, photos, and recordings they've made of children's play, gathering insights about children's developmental themes, understandings, passions, and pursuits. Teachers may use their planning to write about children's play to post on the curriculum board for families to read, to plan ways to support children's play and learning, and to talk with other teachers to deepen their understanding of how to best support children's growth.
- Each teaching team meets weekly for an hour. Teachers use this time for collaborative discussion of children's individual developmental issues, for reflecting on and analysing notes, photographs, and audio and video recordings of children's play, and for planning curriculum.
- Staff members meet together as a whole group for several hours. During the monthly staff meetings, key principles of their work are explored. Recent staff meetings have focused on developing strategies for celebrating holidays in ways that joyfully honour the children and families in the program, honing observation skills, and exploring ways in which teachers can invite children to communicate their theories and questions in a range of art media.
- The entire staff gathers for in-service study once each quarter. During this in-service work, teachers dive into in-depth exploration of topics such as: What does it mean to be a teacher? How do we want to approach

challenges and conflict together as a staff? (See Moving Staff Through Difficult Issues, Appendix K).

- The staff spends a weekend together in early fall or spring for an annual retreat. This time is used for setting a vision for work together during the school year.

To support this on-going professional development, a staff trainer/*pedagoga* from an area college consults with the program for five hours a week on anti-bias and peace education, as well as on administrative development.¹³

The Whole and the Parts

Hilltop Children's Centre is a remarkable place filled with dedicated, passionate teachers. It is important, I think, to point out that Ann, Sarah, and Margie work within the context of a whole system of support and professional development. While this research specifically focuses on the work of these three individuals, their work represents a part of the whole, and must be considered in this context. Margaret Wheatley's (1999) words come to mind:

Seeing the interplay between system dynamics and individuals is a dance of discovery that requires several iterations between the whole and its parts. We expand our vision to see the whole, then narrow our gaze to peer intently into individual moments. With each iteration, we see more of the whole, and gain new understandings about individual elements. We paint a portrait of the whole, surfacing as much detail as possible. Then we inquire into a few pivotal events or decisions, and search for great detail there also. We keep dancing between the two levels, bringing sensitivities and information gleaned from one level to help us understand the other. If we hold awareness of the whole as we study the part, and understand in its relationship to the whole, profound new insights become available. (p. 143)

Having given some consideration thus far in this chapter to the context of the "whole," the following sections will portray the individuals who make up the "parts."

Portraits of the Protagonists – Ann, Sarah, and Margie

I would, at this point, like to introduce the women whose experiences will be recounted in the chapters to come. When contemplating writing these introductions, I was faced with the dilemma of having to decide just what details of the lives of these women were most important to understanding this study. I was

¹³ This is the role that Margie plays at Hilltop Children's Centre.

also aware that there is a danger of drawing false or superficial connections between events and circumstances. I decided to keep my descriptions brief, allowing each woman to reveal, primarily in her own words throughout the ensuing chapters, what she felt we needed to know about her in order to understand the nature of her experience with Reggio-inspired teaching and with the practice of pedagogical documentation.

Ann

Ann, a Caucasian, American-born woman, is in her late 30s. She holds a master's degree from Purdue University. When asked to describe herself and her work at Hilltop, she writes:

There's a poem by Mary Oliver that asks, "What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" That question lingers with me . . . My work with children and families fills a big piece of my life and my heart. I am deeply nourished by the relationships with children, families, and co-workers that are at the centre of my days at Hilltop, relationships full of joy, honesty, belly laughter, and soulfulness. My writing about teaching also feeds me; the act of articulating the thinking and feeling that shapes my work deepens my awareness and my practice.

I've recently begun to learn circus arts, mostly studying aerial tricks on the rope and on the trapeze--and I've got the bruises and rope burns to prove it! I am a devoted yoga practitioner; in fact, that's what drew me to the rope: it looks like yoga in the air. I hike and bike and am outside as much as I can be. Being alive in my body and in this beautiful world is a joy to me.

I'm a reader and a writer, a feminist committed to peace and to justice. I relish a good conversation with a friend over a couple of beers. I like cats very much and dogs from a distance. A bonfire on the beach is heaven to me. The windowsills of my home are lined with rocks and stones and shells. Spring and summer are my seasons. My favourite refrigerator magnet reads, "The aim of life is to live, and to live means to be aware - joyously, drunkenly, serenely, divinely aware."

I grew up in Spokane. Both my parents are teachers, and two of the three of us kids have become teachers. But I didn't set out to be a teacher! I did my undergraduate work at Whitman College in Walla Walla and majored in

literature. While at Whitman, I became involved with issues of justice and social change, involvement that continues for me today. My commitment to peace and justice work was my doorway into work with young children. I was drawn to early childhood, where attitudes form and become cemented. I wanted to help shape children's understandings of themselves and the community in which they live. I was young and eager and passionate—and often clumsy, I think, in my excitement about helping children flourish as compassionate, generous people. But my vision for my work provided me with a foundation for my teaching, a beginning place for learning about how young children think and grow and communicate, a motivation to be curious about and attentive to the children.

I've been teaching young children now for twelve years, and I've been at Hilltop since 1992, when I finished my master's degree in Child Development and Family Studies at Purdue University. My teaching has deepened and expanded as I've built on that early foundation of curiosity and wonder. I continue to be excited about and committed to supporting children's developing values about themselves and community and relationships. I believe that children are rich in resources, competent in dialogue and communication, curious, ready to wonder and be amazed, eager to establish relationships, able to form and investigate hypotheses, alive to their bodies, and compassionate.

My teaching is anchored in my values for children. I want children to laugh hard, dance and leap, make messes, and snuggle up for stories. I want children to take themselves seriously, to honour their feelings and their ideas, to be reflective and self-aware. I want them to explore many perspectives, to listen to many points of view, to work collaboratively with other children. I want children to see themselves as members of a community and to take responsibility as members for the shape of that community. I want them to delight in their shared experiences, to make up jokes and repeat them over and over with great hilarity until they become part of our community culture. I want children to identify unfairness and know that they are powerful to comment on it and to act to change it. And for myself? I want to put children and childhood at the heart of my work, to enter the world of children with respect and joy.

In an effort to reflect the lives of the people who spend their days at Hilltop, the practice of creating bulletin board displays and documentation panels focuses not only on the children but also includes the staff at the school. Ann describes these bio-boards:

We've also begun to share stories and reflections that help parents know us teachers: Who are our heroes? What nourishes us? What are our passions and joys outside of our work? Each staff member at Hilltop creates a "bio board," a display panel that highlights her or his life beyond the usual mundane details about teaching experience and educational background. Parents regularly comment on our bio boards, asking questions sparked by an image on a board, or sharing stories, favourite camping spots, or new music they've discovered – building connections with us as they come to know us more authentically (2002, p. 40).

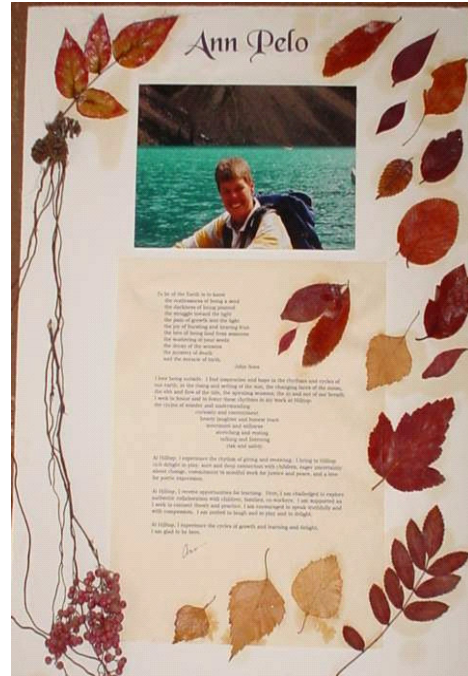


Figure 11: Ann's bio board.

Ann's bio board¹⁴ reads:

To be of the Earth is to know

*the restlessness of being a seed
the darkness of being planted
the struggle toward the light
the joy of bursting and bearing fruit
the love of being food from someone
the scattering of your seeds
the decay of the seasons
the mystery of death
and the miracle of birth*

~ John Soos

¹⁴ Every staff member at Hilltop Children's Centre creates a personal "bio" board that hangs publicly in the front foyer of the school. These are highly individual, containing a brief introduction, and perhaps photos, sketches, poems or similar personalized embellishments.

I love being outside. I find inspiration and hope in the rhythms and cycles of our earth, in the rising and setting of the sun, the changing faces of the moon, the ebb and flow of the tide, the spiralling seasons, the in and out of our breath. I seek to honour and to foster these rhythms in my work at Hilltop:

*the cycles of wonder and understanding
curiosity and contentment
hearty laughter and honest tears
movement and stillness
stretching and resting
talking and listening
risk and safety.*

At Hilltop, I experience the rhythm of giving and receiving. I bring to Hilltop rich delight in play, sure and deep connection with children, eager uncertainty about change, commitment to mindful work for justice and peace, and a love for poetic expression.

At Hilltop, I receive opportunities for learning. Here, I am challenged to explore authentic collaboration with children, families, co-workers. I am supported as I seek to connect theory and practice. I am encouraged to speak truthfully and with compassion. I am invited to laugh and to play and to delight.

At Hilltop, I experience the cycles of growth and learning and delight. I am glad to be here.

Sarah

Sarah, a Caucasian, American-born woman, is in her mid 30s. She holds a master's degree from Pacific Oaks College. In describing herself, she writes:

I've been teaching four and five-year-olds at Hilltop since 1995, as well as leading workshops for other educators through the Hilltop Training Institute. I strive to include song and laughter in every day with children. I love designing and caring for beautiful, functional classroom environments, and facilitating and documenting children's explorations of their own questions and pursuits.

I've been teaching young children since I was 16, and I've never had a job outside the field of early childhood education. As an undergraduate at Yale

University, I studied child psychology and played the flute in two bands and three orchestras. I went on to get a master's degree in human development from Pacific Oaks College, where I specialized in educational administration. My work with kids and families is profoundly influenced by my visit to and study of the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

When I'm not at Hilltop, I can probably be found swimming, playing the flute, or relaxing with my husband, Scobie, and my cat, Shadow. I love baking cookies and pies, reading mystery novels, and island-hopping in Scobie's cute yellow airplane. My absolute favorite food (except for ice cream) is bagels with cream cheese and hot sauce. Try it - you'll like it!

A co-worker describes Sarah:

Sarah is one of the finest teachers I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. Her organizational skills, her attentiveness to the needs of children, and her strength of spirit have greatly shaped and enriched the Sunlight Room, Hilltop Children's Centre, and my working life.

Sarah has a gift when it comes to organizational systems. She personifies the statement I heard at the Reggio conference a few years ago in Colorado: "organization is a value." For her, organization isn't just about knowing where the proper paperwork is, although that's certainly part of it. Rather, it's a tool for creating a system that will allow children and teachers alike to realize a greater potential. As Sarah's co-worker, I live in this system, I benefit from it, I've grown dependent on it and have even worked to refine it, but I could never have created it. That's Sarah's special area of mastery, and I'm honored that I've been able to observe and learn from her example.

Sarah is incredibly attuned to the children in her care. She listens carefully. She responds with respect. She's quick to react to immediate needs, such as a crying child, or when someone's being unsafe in the classroom, but she's also masterful at creating long-term plans for meeting a child's deeper needs. When sharing ideas or information with her students, she's clear, patient, and deeply respectful of each individual's developmental needs. Sarah believes that all children deserve to be surrounded by beauty, order, and opportunities to learn and explore, and she's materialized those beliefs in the incredible care that she takes in classroom design.

More than Sarah's ability to create a beautiful classroom, what makes her an exceptional teacher is her strength of spirit and her visible love of children. She takes delight in the people left in her care and she puts her whole heart into that important job! Sarah makes her love and commitment visible every day in the hundreds of decisions asked of her and her ability to keep coming back, even when it gets hard to do so (MA, 2002).

Sarah's bio-board reads:

The Well Rising

*The well rising without a word
the spring on a hillside
the ploughshare brimming
through deep ground
everywhere in the field –
The sharp swallows
in their swerve
flaring and hesitating
hunting for the final curve
coming closer and closer—*

*The swallow heart
from wingbeat to wingbeat
counseling decision, decision:
thunderous examples.*

I place my feet with care in such a world.

~ William Stafford



Figure 12: Sarah's bio board

You just think wonderful thoughts...and they lift you up in the air. ~ Peter Pan

Children are geniuses at finding ways to play. ~ Daisaku Ikeda

Once children are helped to perceive themselves as authors or inventors, once they are helped to discover the pleasure of inquiry, their motivation and interest explode. They come to expect discrepancies and surprises. ~ Loris Malaguzzi

I work with young children because I value their wonderful thoughts, the genius of their play, their motivation and interest, and most of all, their surprises. I work at Hilltop because as a school it shares and promotes those values. I work at Hilltop because here I am encouraged to pursue an emergent curriculum, surrounded by supportive families and co-workers. At the heart of this emergent curriculum are some basic concepts that guide my teaching:

honesty, trust, and risk

responsiveness, observation, and documentation

reciprocity, communication, and collaboration.

Before I came to Hilltop...

My commitment to Early Childhood Education grew through a combination of several influences from my own childhood. I'm a child of two university professors, and a veteran of full-day childcare. I started working with young children at age 11, when my brother was born, first caring for him at home, then working at his preschool programs. I feel strongly about supporting working families by providing quality care and education for their children. As an undergraduate at Yale University I majored in child psychology and worked in the kindergarten program at the lab school for Stanford University, where I taught a mixed-age class of 3- to 5-year olds, and a child development seminar for undergraduates. I've complete coursework for the M.A. in Human Development at Pacific Oaks College, and continue to work on my master's thesis, focusing on the documentation of emergent curriculum¹⁵. When I first learned about the remarkable preschool programs of Reggio Emilia, Italy, I was struck by the beauty of their spaces, their intense focus on the visual arts, and their deep respect for children. Visiting those schools inspired and challenged me to constantly examine how I teach, striving to learn continually from the children and adults around me.

When I'm not at Hilltop, you can find me...

Swimming, playing the flute, playing with my kittens Max and Shadow, building things, flying kites, and taking walks with my partner Scobie.

¹⁵ Sarah has since completed her master's thesis.

Margie

Margie, a Caucasian, American-born woman, is in her early 60s. She holds a master's degree from Pacific Oaks College. Describing herself, she writes:

I write a regular column in Child Care Information Exchange and have contributed to other books, such as “Alike and Different: Exploring Our Humanity with Young Children” and “Growing Teachers: Partnerships in Staff Development,” both published by NAEYC. I have produced of a number of early childhood training videos that feature Hilltop children and programs. Together with Deb Curtis, I am a co-founder of Harvest Resources, an organization providing resources for training early childhood education professionals. We have co-authored six books, all with references to the principles of Reggio Emilia. In our work, we emphasize connections between what early childhood professionals want for children and their families, and how teachers need to be educated and treated.

Margie's bio board reads:

I am fiercely passionate about children having a childhood, about play for children and adults, and about learning with all our senses. My vision for a more human society includes universal health care and child-care, with sustainable communities that know how to work respectfully and non-oppressively with diverse cultures and perspectives. This vision guides my work with early childhood programs as well as how I try to live my life.

Feminist poets and writers have strongly influenced my life and thinking, as have several important male figures. I especially thank Audrey Lorde, Alice Walker, Adrienne Rich, Terry Tempest Williams, Michael Dorris, Barry Lopez, James Boggs, Thich Nhat Hanh, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. With regard to education and adult learning, I closely follow the work of Paolo Freire, Betty Jones, bell hooks, Lilian Katz, Janet Gonzales-Mena, and Bill Ayers. Each of them have influenced my thinking and teaching, as has my soul mate and colleague, Deb Curtis.



Figure 13: Margie's bio board

Issues of peace and justice are passions of mine, as is spending time with Mother Nature. The commercialism of our lives, TV news, boring and irrelevant classrooms, noise and traffic jams all drive me nuts. In recent years I've learned how to write, produce videos, and work cross-culturally and enjoy each of these very much. I think of myself as a spiritual person, a gardener, a sensual being and lover of life. I am also learning to live with death as dear ones slip away.

I can't think of anything more important than work with young children. It's a concrete way to experience wonder and zest, trusting relationships, and the excitement of learning new things. I see the work of early childhood education as having the potential to create new culture. That vision guides and sustains me, as do all the many dedicated improvisational artists – caregivers, teachers, directors, and activists – who bravely do this fierce work with so much stress, so little pay, respect and recognition.

Defining the Role of the Pedagogista for Hilltop

In her role as pedagogista at Hilltop Children's Centre, Margie and the teachers she works with are finding that the ideas of the Reggio educators don't readily translate into English, and the term "pedagogista" conveys this dilemma. As Margie writes:

We have education coordinators, staff trainers, and, in recent years, mentor teachers, but none of these roles quite compares to that of pedagogista, someone who helps the teachers think about the learning process for both the children and themselves. Teachers are expected to see themselves as researchers and collaborators, and the pedagogista helps them identify their questions, pursue hypotheses, observations, and forms of documentation that will facilitate learning for the adults, while communications and preserving a record of what is unfolding. How different this is from our roles of coordinator, director, or even teacher educator in college or workshop settings...it is critical that we find a way to create this role of pedagogista, which is unlike any administrative position we have yet invented (Carter, 1998, p. 41-42). (See Appendix L for Hilltop's description of the role of the pedagogista).

Now having established a framework for this study by providing portraits of the place, Hilltop, and the protagonists, Ann, Margie, and Sarah, the next chapter will present their stories of experiences with pedagogical documentation.

CHAPTER 7: Presentation of the Data

If we were to explore just a few of the many dimensions of childhood; record and consider our observations – what might schooling and its curriculum look like? What would need to change? What new possibilities would education offer the child? What role would the teacher play?

~ Edith Cobb (*The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*, 1977)

Development of Emergent Themes

Qualitative research involves almost continuous and certainly progressive data analysis from the very beginning of data collection. This process of analysis guides the researcher to focus and refocus observational and/or interview lenses, to phrase and rephrase research questions, to establish and check emergent hunches, trends, insights, ideas, to face oneself as research instrument. The final phase of data analysis is somewhat different, however. It takes place when the researcher has left the field and sits alone. This is the time to begin to tackle the questions that lurk in the back of the researcher's mind along the way while searching amongst the copious field notes, analytic memos, transcribed interviews, and every other bit of collected evidence that the study demands. As Ely et al. (2001) ask: "What do I do with all of this? It is time to start taming the chaos" (p. 140).

One widely used approach to final analysis is the search for themes. A theme can be defined as a statement of meaning that (1) runs through all or most of the pertinent data, or (2) one in the minority that carries heavy emotional or factual impact. It can be thought of as the researcher's inferred statement that highlights explicit or implied attitudes toward life, behaviour, or understandings of person, persons, or culture (Ely et al., 2001, p. 150).

Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggest that identifying salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link people and setting together is the most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis and one that can integrate the entire endeavour. Following Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), I found that "the researcher does not search for the exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories of the statistician, but instead to identify the salient, grounded categories of meaning held by participants in the setting" (p. 116).

A careful pre-site visit review of documents provided preliminary ideas for the themes that might emerge as unifying threads pertinent to this study. This preparation not only served to suggest possible themes early on, but also helped to prepare for the on-site activity of listening for emergent themes. My research stance evolved from quiet watchfulness – where I was mostly taking in stimuli and listening carefully – to the more purposeful activities of initiating relationships with the protagonists, scheduling interviews, and developing a plan of action.

The day-to-day process of listening for emergent themes functioned as a sort of on-site hypothesis finding and testing. I listened for repetitive refrains in literal statements uttered by the actors and as recurring themes evoked throughout the text of repeated stories. At the end of the day, I would review field notes and observations while they were fresh in my mind, reflecting on the emergence of possible themes. Particular concepts and phrases that I proposed initially were subsumed by the emergence of other, more clearly descriptive and resonant themes.

The process of sorting, grouping, and classifying that follows data collection as it is described by Goetz and LeCompte (1984) conveys my experience:

The notes are developed into a primitive outline or system of classification into which data are sorted initially. The outline begins with a search for regularities - things that happen frequently with groups of people. Patterns and regularities then are transformed into categories into which subsequent items are sorted. These categories or patterns are discovered from the data. They emerge in a rather systematic, if not totally conscious, application of the processes of theorizing. (p. 191)

My final data analysis began with a very systematic reorganization of materials. Having everything together in several three-ring notebooks, I began by rereading the entire log. My analytic memos and observation comments served as a guide to what I was looking for. While analysing the field log for categories, my starting questions were: “What is the smallest meaningful chunk of narrative that I can call a category?” “What concept does it imply?” “What categories will help me to organize the essential aspects of what is recorded here?” This act of creating categories, subcategories, and discovering their links brought me into what Ely et al. (2001) term “intimate re-acquaintance with the data” (p. 145).

Creating categories triggered the construction of a conceptual scheme that suited the data. This scheme helped me to ask questions, to compare across data, to

change or drop categories, and to make order of them. The process of establishing categories has been described as “a very close, intense conversation between a researcher and the data that has implications for ongoing method, descriptive reporting, and theory building” (Ely et. al, 2001, p. 87). Almost every excerpt contains more than one idea of what would fit under more than one heading. The concept of “mutual simultaneous shaping” discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is an appropriate descriptor for the interactive process and concurrent ambiguity described by Meloy (1994) that the human being, as research instrument, experiences.

To analyse is to find ways to tease out what is considered to be essential meaning in the raw data; to reduce and reorganize and combine so that the readers share the researcher’s findings in the most economical, interesting fashion. This is an iterative and generative process; the themes emerge from the data and they give the data shape and form (Ely et al., 2001). I have gathered, organized, and scrutinized the data, searching for convergent threads. My intention is to present in miniature the essence of what I, in my role as researcher, saw and heard over time. The development of emergent themes in this chapter reflects my effort to bring interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order to the collection of data.

In the following section I will present data culled from the substantive conversations (interviews) held with the protagonists of this research study. (Although adding greatly to the length of this thesis, the edited and coded interviews, in their entirety, are contained in Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, Appendix D, and Appendix E. I have included them for the reader(s) who may wish to refer to these conversations in their “fullness”). My intention is to have the voices of these women strongly present in this text. The use of narrative as a text for analysis supports Kanpol’s (1997) notion of the “subject as his or her own authority” (p. 14). That is to say, the teachers’ narratives are powerful and useful texts for analysis on the basis of their resonances, that is, their capacity to evoke key aspects and themes in teachers’ lived experiences as it relates to pedagogical practice.

During the data analysis, groups of themes were clustered together. These clusters are represented in the below.

Table 3: Themes Clustered

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Cluster</i>
<i>Resonance with “What Could Be”</i>	Resonance/ Image of the Child/ Personal Engagement
<i>An Amiable Environment</i>	Environment and Space/ Initial Attraction/Transforming the Space/“The Little Jars”/ The Walls Speak
<i>Infinite Attention to Another</i>	Primacy of Relationships/Wonder & Delight
<i>Intellectual Vitality</i>	Intellectual Engagement/Teacher as Researcher
<i>Child Initiated and Teacher Framed</i>	Emergent Curriculum/Being “Teacher-ly”
<i>A Culture of Documentation</i>	Pedagogical Documentation/ Evolving Documentation Styles/ Various Styles of Documentation/ Documentation and Diversity/ Who Has Their Stories Told?
<i>Conflict and Collaboration</i>	Conflict/Collaboration/Isolation
<i>Mentorship – Standing Side by Side</i>	Being Mentored/ Mentoring/Professional Development
<i>Tools of Technology – A Mixed Blessing</i>	Technology Tools
<i>At the Crossroads</i>	Social Justice/Advocacy
<i>It’s My Natural Language, Really</i>	Being a Writer
<i>Hilltop’s Organizational Climate</i>	Challenges of Time Limitations/ Roles, Responsibilities, and Rings
<i>Change</i>	Change/Personal Transformation
<i>Future Dreams</i>	Research/Future Dreams

The individual interviews with the primary protagonists, Ann, Margie, and Sarah, as well as with the parents, Alice and Kendall, are identified in the following table:

Table 4: Coding for Interviews

<i>Name</i>	<i>Interview</i>	<i>Code</i>
Ann	One	<i>AP1</i>
Ann	Two	<i>AP2</i>
Ann	Three	<i>AP3</i>
Sarah	One	<i>SF1</i>
Sarah	Two	<i>SF2</i>
Sarah	Three	<i>SF3</i>
Margie	One	<i>MC1</i>
Margie	Two	<i>MC2</i>
Margie	Three	<i>MC3</i>
Margie	Four	<i>MC4</i>
Alice	One	<i>AS1</i>
Kendall	One	<i>KG1</i>

Emergent Themes

In the following pages, I will identify the themes that emerged from the data and weave excerpts from my conversations with the three protagonists of this story with commentary.

Theme: Resonance with “what could be”

Resonance

As each of the respondents talked about her initial reactions to being exposed to the early childhood programmes of Reggio Emilia, there was a powerful sense of resonance: “this is right, this is a good fit, this is as things should be.” This response struck on such a deep emotional level that tears were provoked – a not uncommon reaction that has been described by others.

For Ann, Margie, and Sarah, who had each been working in the field of early childhood education for a while prior to her first encounter with Reggio

Emilia, their words describe this response, almost with a sigh of relief that there was a place in the world where children's school experiences meshed with the dream of what could be possible, and with what each was already attempting to do in her own work. There was a sense of "coming home," of recognition, of resonance with what "could be." In particular, viewing the video *Portrait of a Lion* and *The Hundred of Languages of Children* travelling exhibition were named as significant encounters with Reggio Emilia.

~ I think that's what brought me to tears. Some place is doing all these things that I dream about and they're not just doing it in some alternative, backwards place. They're not just doing it by removing themselves from the world, they're out in 'the marketplace.' That's just such a beacon of hope. I mean, it sounds trite, but it really is, it's such a beacon of hope... (MC3).

~ I remember where I was sitting, watching [Portrait of a Lion], alone, with tears streaming down my face... (SF3).

~ When I saw the exhibit [100 Languages of Children exhibit] before going to Reggio... I just cried, it was so stunning and so beautiful. It confirmed in me that this little, tiny thing I was trying to do had a whole other theoretical foundation and practice to it that I didn't know anything about. Even though I was just sort of feeling my way with it, it was the right track to be on, in terms of what I thought was an expression of the values that I work with, as well as a powerful tool to use (MC4).

~ What I was seeing was all my yearnings for how to be with children right there, in images and words, and being lived out... (API).

~ Seeing all that in the video [Portrait of a Lion] was pretty life changing for me. It was an experience of seeing what I believed but hadn't maybe articulated to myself, certainly not to anyone else, but seeing it lived out... Having that experience of now having images and ideas and words was, it was life changing, it set me on this journey that I'm still on. That's my memory of my first encounter with Reggio (API).

~ What I was experiencing was this, the "heart" piece. Seeing people living with the kind of heart and spirit that I wanted to live with in my days with children... something to strive towards without really knowing what I was striving towards. So it was after that experience that I then started doing some of the reading and thinking and learning, the theoretical pieces or the pedagogy or some of those key principles. But that wasn't what hooked me. It was... I was hooked in my heart. That's the place that anchors my thinking about Reggio (API).

Many observers, regardless of whether they are teachers, administrators, politicians, architects, journalists, parents, or grandparents, feel awestruck during their first moments inside one of the schools in Reggio Emilia. In Cadwell's (2003) words, "this work is so expansive and much bigger than early childhood education... people are attracted to it almost like a fountain, a source of resurgence (p. 192). Similar to the response described by Ann, Sarah, and Margie, often they are speechless, moved to tears. Why is this? Cadwell (2003) posits that:

Perhaps we weep in these schools because we long for the meaning and beauty of life as it can be lived, not only in school, but everywhere. Perhaps we mourn because we see what we have missed... These schools are living testimonial to the possible. They stand for the possible. They demonstrate the possible. The educators, parents, community, and young children live the possible. It is not just talk or a dream. The schools are real and alive. (p. 2)

Interestingly, a parent had a similar reaction upon reading some of the documentation binders compiled by Hilltop staff. As she was visiting the school, considering whether to enroll her children, this was her response:

~ I just picked up a journal on the shelf. It was a Sunlight Room journal, and they had the whole documentation of the work that they had done with the kids the day after the crash¹⁶, and I just wept. And I was like, "Oh, my God, my kid has to go here." I thought, I would not have known, as a parent, how to process stuff like that with a kid. I just learned so much from that, and that was my, you know, amazing introduction to documentation for such a heavy topic. I love it (ASI).

Coupled with this strong sense of resonance and recognition is a feeling of hope and encouragement. Throughout my conversations with these three women, the recurring topic of how difficult it is to continue working in childcare, in part because it is so badly under-funded and under-recognized, was mentioned. Working with principles and ideas from Reggio Emilia, including pedagogical documentation, has been "refilling" and has provided the impetus to keep working in the field of early childhood education.

¹⁶ This refers to a tragic airplane crash in which an entire family, including children who attended Hilltop, had recently died.

~ It's hard to even find words for it because it was such a heart-level experience... I'd been exploring ideas and practices from Reggio for several years and I had a really similar experience of... weeping both from being so deeply moved with this joy at what children and families and teachers were experiencing together, in Reggio, and weeping with this yearning for my own work, to continue to deepen in those sorts of ways of building relationships with children and families, and supporting children's thoughtful collaborations - weeping out of the sense that I am so excited about it, and so overwhelmed by the 'bigness' of it. It's exactly what I want to be doing, and if I can't be doing that then I don't want to be doing this work (AP1).

~ I've yet to learn anything about the schools or from the folks at the schools that rubs me the wrong way, and every time I have a new encounter at a workshop or read a new book or meet somebody or have a conversation with somebody, I get just another piece of, "Yep, this is still a fit, there's still more for me to learn from this model, and everything I hear about it just re-engages me in the work." Every time I have some kind of little dose of inspiration from Reggio, I'm refilled to keep doing the work - which is huge, which is huge because the work is so draining (SF3).

~ Fortunately, it's not even like, "Oh, here's this other thing to copy," it really is like, "Wow, there's inspirational work happening out there that makes me want to do some, and makes me want to keep refining my practice and put new energy into this and value it"... so, that's been the hugest influence on my work, just the constant... reassurance, or re-commitment that I get when I have contact with anything out of Reggio Emilia (SF3).

~ At that point, I didn't even know that much about documentation, in terms of the way Reggio thinks about it. But again, it was like this big "aha" for me, I was like, this is what I want them to be doing, to be focusing on the kids and observing the kids. I'd come to that conclusion before I'd had much exposure to Reggio, actually (MC1).

~ I think it's why I'm still in the field. I think it's what's sort of grabbed me hard enough to keep doing this work... once I sort of learned about it, I haven't been on the search for other things ever since. Once I visited [Reggio Emilia], I felt like, okay, this is the clearest model or example of the principles I'm trying to work with, and so, I just haven't had a lot of question marks since then, either about whether or not to be in the work, or about how I want that work to be (SF3).

The pedagogy of the municipal preschools of Reggio Emilia provides a particularly rich opportunity for revisiting our understandings of teaching and learning. Many similarities exist between progressive American education and the pedagogy of Reggio. Both are cultures that value education that nurtures the

whole child, promote individual children's potentials, and prepare children to be active members of their communities. Mardell (2001) suggests that "the schools of Reggio draw us in because they represent an extraordinary realization of these goals" (p. 281). New (1994b) made the observation that "many of us first become interested in Reggio Emilia because it provides such a compelling illustration of our own ideals of early childhood education" (p. 36). Cadwell (2003) describes these schools for young children in the city of Reggio Emilia as a "beacon of hope for humanity – hope of a new way of living and a new way of being together" (p. 194). These thoughts are articulated in the observations of Ann, Margie, and Sarah noted above.

Clearly, there is a sense of resonance, a heart-felt connection with this portrayal of living with children in an authentic, intentional way. It is almost as if each woman articulates an experience of coming home, of arriving, metaphorically, in a place where the lived experience meshes with the dream of what could be possible. Van Manen's seminal work, *Researching Lived Experience* (1990) comes to mind as he describes phenomenological research:

From a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And since to know the world is to profoundly be in the world in a certain way, the act of researching – questioning – theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become fully part of it, or better, to become the world. Phenomenology calls this inseparable connection to the world the principle of "intentionality." (p. 5)

The vehicle of pedagogical documentation is what makes this principle of intentionality, in both the schools of Reggio Emilia and at Hilltop Children's Centre, visible and shareable.

Image of the child

At the very core of the work of educators in Reggio Emilia is the image of the child as capable, curious, and competent.¹⁷ Rinaldi (2001d) provides a description of this image of the child:

¹⁷ For further discussion on Reggio's "Image of the Child," refer to Chapter 2.

We talk about a child who is competent and strong – a child who has the right to hope and the right to be valued, not a predefined child seen as fragile, needy, incapable. Ours is a different way of thinking and approaching the child, whom we view as an active subject with us to explore, to try day by day to understand something, to find a meaning, a piece of life. For us, these meanings, these explanatory theories are extremely important and powerful in revealing the ways in which children think, question, and interpret reality and their own relationships with reality and with us. Herein lies the genesis of the “pedagogy of relationships and listening,” one of the metaphors that distinguishes the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia. (p. 79)

In my observations of Ann, Sarah, and Margie, such a shared image of the child is a dominant factor in their teaching practice, although it might be expressed in other terms.

~ Obviously before Reggio I didn't have the language of 'the image of the child,' but I did have the insight about how are they thinking about who children are. I've always talked in terms of childhood of what this time of life is all about, what childhood is really about. It's one way I've come at it, I think, with a lot of compatibility to Reggio ideas, with my language and my way of thinking about what this time of life is about, whereas I think the Italians would say, "What's your image of the child?" I think there's a lot of overlap in what we're meaning by that (MCI).

~ What was impacting [sic] for me was the profound respect for children and the joy and delight in children... I mean, the images with the shadow [in the video Portrait of a Lion], when they projected the big images of the lion, and the kids sort of went after them, had the chairs and were engaging in this incredible physical combat or interaction with the lions, and being out in the piazza drawing the lions, crawling on the lions, and... Experiencing the lions, in their bones, in their blood, in their selves (API).

~ You can see these images and see in them that the kids are treasured and valued, and that really shows in the environment, the amount of care, and the aesthetic quality... what the physical environment says about the 'image of the child.' (SF1).

Karen Gallas is an American educator and writer named by Hilltop teachers as being another influence on their own work, particularly in the area of close listening and allowing for the unfolding of emergent curriculum. Although Gallas (1994) does not use the term “image of the child,” she writes thoughtfully of how her own awareness of the intellectual abilities of young children continually surprises her: “As a teacher of young children, I have learned that the

questions children ask often reflect a very deep effort to understand their world and that their ability to form theories about difficult questions far surpasses my expectations....” (p. 77). Elsewhere (Gallas, 1994), she writes:

It is often the case as I listen to young children talk that I am in awe of their capabilities as thinkers. What confounds me is how children of this age can often devise explanations for difficult questions that are very close to theories currently accepted in the scientific community, theories that they would not have had access to in the resources available to them. Through this process of thinking together and using their natural ability to make connections, children show remarkable tenacity and creativity as thinkers; they are willing to grapple with the most difficult ideas, and they have no difficulty “de-centering” in the midst of a discussion. That is, their flexibility as thinkers enables them to work with many ideas at one time, and they constantly attempt to build stories and images that allow those ideas to be synthesized into a coherent theory. (p. 109)

Surprisingly, the particular phrase “image of the child” did not arise more often in our conversations, but, as Margie indicated, her construct of “child” had been similar before her exposure to Reggio Emilia. For many people, their initial exposure to ideas from Reggio Emilia is profoundly impacted by such a notion of the capable, rich child, which is often contrary to the North American construct. However, this image of a powerful, full-of-potential child is so embedded in the educational philosophy of these Hilltop educators that, for Ann, Sarah, and Margie, I think it is just a given principle.

Personal Engagement

Ann, in particular, describes her documentation practice with passion and intensity, using expressive terms like it “feeds me,” and “nourishes me.” As van Manen (1990) describes it, “a person who turns toward phenomenological reflection does so out of personal engagement” (p. 154).

~ I feel the way it feeds me, it's energizing, I love the way in which I pay attention to children as I'm writing, as I'm taking a photo, I feel the contact of it (AP2).

~ I felt that as this moment where, of recognition that this practice had become, like I'd absorbed it into my bones, into my understanding, in an utterly powerful way (AP3).

~ One way that I experience the power of this little being called documentation is finding myself invited to be nourished, to be challenged to be a close observer, and to be really present in the world (AP2).

~ That just feeds me so deeply, and is for me the thing that gives meaning to any of this (AP3).

A pedagogy that provokes such passion and makes space for intensity, energy, and honest engagement for the sake of understanding and meaning-making is described by Romano (2002) as “a gift of sustained discovery and potential transformation” (p. 376).

Theme: An Amiable Environment

Initial Attraction

Discussing the environment of the Reggio Emilia schools, Malaguzzi (1998) states, "Our objective, which we always will pursue, is to create an amiable environment, where children, families and teachers feel at ease" (p. 63). The beautiful school environments prepared and provisioned by educators made a significant impression on both Ann and Sarah when each visited the children's centres of Reggio Emilia.

~ I think the physical environments were the first hook for me. That's true for a lot of people, and it certainly was for me... I'm a person who is very tuned into the physical environment, and arranging and caring for the physical environment. That's one of my favourite past-times. So that was a big hook for me, what the physical environment says about the 'image of the child' (SF1).

~ It was definitely intensified by being there, by seeing it, by being in the physical spaces and in the classrooms - that just took my breath away (AP1).

Visitors who enter the Municipal Infant-toddler Centers and Preschools of Reggio Emilia for the first time are often struck by the care and attention given to the environment. As expressed by Strozzi (2001), “being attentive to the context means ‘living the atmosphere,’ making palpable what is usually invisible: joy, curiosity, interested, affection, autonomy, possibility, desire, expectation, tranquility, satisfaction, intimacy, individuality, belonging. These aspects become

visible not because we list them but because we appreciate them and practice them in our daily life” (p. 58-59).

A basic, underlying principle that the educators in Reggio Emilia have incorporated into their classrooms and piazzas and dining rooms is that school needs to be comfortable, pleasant, orderly, inviting, and homelike. Cadwell (2003) advocates that children, teachers, and parents have the right to spend their days in school “surrounded by places and spaces that will enhance our lives, support our growth, and hold us in respectful ways” (p. 117). The efforts made by Hilltop staff to create such homelike environments are noticed by the parents. This particular observation draws a contrast between Hilltop’s environment and that of another, more commercialized school setting:

~ When I went and toured the school I really noticed the effort to make things look beautiful, and look homey, and it was very different from our other school, which was in a business park. It was highly professional, sort of “top flight” facilities, and excellent teachers, sort of the same caliber of teachers that they have at Hilltop in terms of most of them having Master’s degrees, but it was definitely sort of much more corporate, “professionalized”... you knew they were providing a “service” (KG1).

Margie also has a great interest in developing appealing environments for both children and the adults who spend their days with them, and has co-written a book with colleague Deb Curtis, *Designs for Living and Learning* (2003), specifically about this topic. She questions the messages implicit in the design of an environment in this activity she does with various groups in her role as a staff trainer:

~ I show pictures of a bunch of non-related, child care or early childhood programs, bank lobbies and prison yards and gorgeous landscaped gardens and whatever, and say, “In each of these, if this is where you spent the bulk of your waking hours, what story would this shape about who you are?” It’s very powerful - it’s so simple, really (MC2).

This observation of the messages inherent in the environment is also made by Strozzi (2001): “The physical environment is inviting. Its furnishings suggest to the children and their parents stories to be created or continued” (p. 61).

In preparing the environment to facilitate learning, the educators are influenced by the way in which they see the children as rich, strong and powerful

(recalling the “image of the child”) and believe in children as explorers and investigators, thus they establish spaces that will “excite, engage, and enrich children’s understanding about their world” (Fraser, 1999, p. 55).

Transforming the Space and Creating a Studio

Upon returning from a study tour to Reggio Emilia, Ann and Sarah, along with Margie, had a definite sense of wanting to make significant changes in the working environment. This development of the new studio space, which involved both literally and metaphorically knocking down walls, was a momentous event as chronicled by all three. These changes were to transform on many levels what the teachers did with children, with parents, and with one another.

~ When I was in Reggio, I remember dividing the notebook that I was taking notes in into two sections. One section was notes from the lectures and what I was seeing and experiencing, and then this other section was ideas that were bubbling and boiling over about what that might all translate into at Hilltop... there were some specific things – move the furniture around this way, or... actually it wasn’t really much about furniture, there was a lot about how to start, how to change, mostly how Sarah and I were living in our two classrooms with our two groups of kids (API).

~ She [Ann] was getting more and more clear about how she wanted to teach, and who she wanted to teach with, and what kind of environment she wanted, and there weren’t too many other people there that were similar in that way (MCI).

~ “Well, what if we do this, and what if we make a studio, and what if we then make that be the classroom and we’ll put our groups together and we’ll have one big group...” [A]nd wishing as soon as I’d said it I could take the words back because it was such a leap, it was so terrifying and exhilarating at the same time. It was the ultimate letting go of having my own space and all of that stuff that is part of our U.S. culture... certainly part of what I’d been experiencing, even with its edges, wishing for cooperation but fearing this moment of truth... there were some aches and some things for me that were uprooted... and it was exactly the right thing to do... (API).

~ A lot of people there kind of complained how inadequate the space was... [thinking] “I wish we could knock this wall down” ... You kind of both (Ann and Sarah), independently... figured out how to knock the wall down in your minds, that’s what you’ve figured out how to do... this is going to be an incredible journey (MCI).

~ And then when we first created an art studio space... we worked for a while with a system that had two sides of the page, what happened in the classroom and what happened in the studio, and we tended to push ourselves to keep track of how we were using that space, because we were basically learning how to use it. It was totally new to us having that space (SF1).

There are several major ideas embedded in this series of statements about the environment. First, it seems that the intention to create a studio space at Hilltop had the possibility to introduce a changed approach to teaching by creating a dedicated space for children to explore both art experiences and representational languages. Secondly, by combining classroom space and groups of children, the creation of a new teaching partnership between Ann and Sarah was formed. Ann refers above to both the desire for cooperation with a colleague, and a fear of letting go of her own space. And thirdly, finding a way to document the activities that took place in the studio signified a shift in the style and purpose of their pedagogical documentation. Cadwell (2003) makes a similar observation:

If we live in a space and respond to it, little by little, fashioning each part of it into more of what we need and what is pleasing to us, then things continue to grow. We make a change; then the change alters the way we do things and new possibilities emerge. We are inspired to make another change, and so it goes. This is the way of an “alive” environment. (p. 107)

An artefact of these changes is present in the studio in the form of a large, papier maché boat that hangs from the ceiling. The emerging story of the Titanic project, during which this boat was created, and how the teachers adapted their ways of working to help children represent their growing understandings, is told in a video documentary produced by Margie that is called *Setting Sail*. Cadwell (2003), who has experienced similar shifts in her own school, writes:

Our history and development as teachers sings through these works as well. I recall past projects through which our whole community learned how to follow children and how to lead in an open, fully focused way, not following one curriculum guide but rather our collective intelligence and our combined resources. (p. 113)

The presence of the boat contributes to the aesthetic of the space, as well as being a constant piece of history of the children who have gone before those who now inhabit the school.

The idea...is about living in a space that you want to sustain and maintain in harmony with and in response to the changing, growing, human beings who occupy it every day, month by month, year by year. As we all, children and adults, live and work in the atelier, we envision additions and/or transformations that will help us hold, organize, and continue to play and interact with collections of materials, children's work, our work, our history. (Cadwell, 2003, p. 107)

This is also reflected in the way Ann and Sarah describe the development of their own studio space at Hilltop in the documentation panels they created to share these evolving ideas with families.

~ That Friday that we began to transform the physical spaces we use was profoundly emotional for me. I and [sic] delighted and worried and reminisced and imagined...it was hard for me to let go of "my room" and the meanings that came with that phrase, the independence and satisfying responsibility. The room that was mine held rich memories of transformative moments with kids. It had been a good classroom, and held much reflective, collaborative, joyful learning. How to let go of it?... At the same time, I was eager for the change, thirsty for the collaboration it would carry, the challenges to my practices as a teacher, the rich possibilities for theorizing and investigating and debating ideas. I was ready to take another step in my journey as a teacher, continuing to pursue ways to articulate and express my vision for children, for families, and for teachers. And I was excited to join with Sarah and L. in authentic collaboration, with the vulnerability and power it carries. The transformation in the rooms seem not so much about a Studio and a Classroom, but about change and risk and growth and collaboration... When I look at the photos we took before we hauled everything out of the old Starlight room and started over, I see a small space trying to be too much. The room is better, much better, as a Studio... and I am a better teacher for letting go of Starlight Room (AP, documentation panel, "Transforming Our Space").



Figure 14: Documentation Panel – Transforming Our Space to create the studio



Figure 16: Documentation Panel - The transformed Sunlight Room



Figure 15: Documentation Panel – Inspiration from the schools of Reggio Emilia

~ Reggio folks often refer to the environment as the “third teacher.” They believe that placing beautiful things in the space will enhance children’s aesthetic sense. I believe that beautiful spaces command children’s care and respect. I believe (“credo che...” as Malaguzzi said, every three minutes) that children deserve beautiful spaces, and teachers, too. This is where we live, it’s where these young individuals spend most of their waking lives, and I want them to grow up in a place of beauty, with precious things and comfortable places... I have a deep rational streak, and I believe in a classroom design that makes sense, that’s easy to use and take care of, that allows for both calm and energetic flow, that encourages the behaviours we desire for ourselves and each other. I’m thrilled to be taking better advantage of the space that we do have. Heck, we live in the top of a Lutheran church, and we should commend ourselves for creating nurturing, provocative, beautiful spaces in that setting. Imagine the rooms with no color, no furniture, and then think about what each piece already adds to that feeling. Now we get to make choices about that space, and place things carefully to come even closer to the environment we envision... There is a beautiful poem by naturalist William Stafford that describes several incredibly precious and beautiful things in nature, then ends with the line “I place my feet with care in such a world.” That’s the feeling I want children and adults to have when they walk into the classroom. I want people to walk in with a sense of respect for the space and the things that happen there, because they are so touched by the aesthetic appeal of what they see. I want each space to call out its purpose to a child: “play here,” “jump high,” “rest your body here if you need to,” “listen to your friends in this

space,” “create, draw, paint, build, sculpt!”... I know, too, that making changes in this space will provoke us as educators, as people, as friends... We’re creating a situation that forces us to collaborate, that throws new problems and challenges at us, and (I hope) re-energizes us and forces us to look at ourselves and at the children with new eyes... (SF, Documentation Panel, “Transforming Our Space”).

The introduction of the *atelier* and the figure of the *atelierista* was a choice decisive for the identity of the Reggio experience (Gandini, 1998). The benefits lie not only in the specific aspect of arts education, but in the “creative process common to all the expressive languages, fostering the sort of ‘contamination’ that give rise to an original way of conceiving and developing an educational project” (Fillipini, 2001, p. 56). Similarly, the creation of this new studio space was a decisive choice for identity for Hilltop.

The “Little Jars” – The Little Changes

Caring about the environment where you live contributes to a sense of belonging and to showing respect for those who live there; it is an integral part of the educational process (Giudici, Krechevsky, & Rinaldi, 2001, Strozzi, 2001). Sarah, in particular, expresses an intense interest and pleasure in arranging and caring for the physical interests, citing it as one of her “favourite past-times.” Finding a way to replicate something from Italy was named as an entry point for her in terms of adapting the school environment to reflect principles of the Reggio approach:

~ It was to the point that, when I came back from Italy, I was stuck with reproducing this one particular thing that I’d seen - little glass jars, with cloth covers, filled with little, tiny, beautiful seeds and beads and things like that. I got back and I was just intent upon creating that. I found a place in the classroom and I found little glass jars and I found things to put in them and I made little cloth covers for them and it had no relevance to anything I know or care about, anything kids know or care about. It was against school policy to have glass jars within kids’ reach. It was barely used or noticed by kids, but I had to do it. I couldn’t believe it, that that was there, and this was in one of the nidos, one of the toddler rooms. This whole shelf full of beautiful jars with beautiful things and I couldn’t escape that image, somehow. It seemed like a ‘doable’ thing, and it so didn’t change the rest of the environment, or collectively how we approached curriculum, or the relationships we built with families... I mean, it didn’t get at any of those core pieces, but I needed to do it! And, now I do sort of look down

my nose at folks who see things in the physical things in the environment of Reggio and latch onto that... well, if "I could just get me a light table, then I'd be 'doing' Reggio." I... am sort of scornful of that, but I really have no right to be if I look back to that... that was my first response, too, when I got home (SF1).

Cadwell (2003) speculates that some "'copying' may be an attempt to embrace and experiment... some 'copying' is trying to find one's way in the dark. We are still trying to learn how to be original" (p. 193). Elliott (2002) observes that making changes in the physical environment is often reported as a successful move towards adapting the Reggio approach. Changing the environment is a tangible action that can cause positive feelings for the individuals. This is evidence of change that is highly visible and easily celebrated. Similarly, Hall and Hord (2001) report that for teachers to experience positive change, some aspects should be visible changes.

The Walls Speak

When observing at Hilltop, I was struck with the absence of commercialised artwork and displays on the walls. One visitor described the look as "almost minimalistic." There are a few well-placed, strategically chosen quotes, selected from various sources, but the walls definitely "speak" of the values held by the Hilltop community. The pedagogical documentation plays a huge role in both conveying this message and in contributing to the aesthetic quality of the space.

~ It's important that [documentation] be part of the visual environment because of all the messages that sends to kids, and to everyone who walks into the building, "This is what we value, this is what we put on the walls." (SF2).

~ We can agree that this range of colours is what we'll use for [documentation] panels or whatever is going to be the thread, because I think it's important to communicate on a visual level for families that walk into Hilltop, for example, that Rainbow, Sunlight, Garden, and Big Kids [classrooms] are all part of a thoughtful, organized, shared vision, and we're going to live into that in different ways (API).

The hope of building strong relationships and connections with families is clear in the way Hilltop educators express their values in their documentation and

in what it contributes to the environment. The work of William Ayers (1993) has been an influence on their thinking:

I want to build spaces where each person is visible to me and to everyone else, where students are known and understood, where they feel safe and valued. I want the context of students' lives to provide a lot of the raw material for learning, and I want there to be an easy flow between their worlds – an interactive, porous, integrated, and *relational environment for living and learning*. (p. 60, emphasis in the original)

~ Definitely, that is an important piece to me, offering back to the children some way of understanding their work or seeing their work in a new way. It feels important for me to create windows for families into their children's lives, so that's another value that I bring to documentation. Making children's experiences as transparent as possible is one way that I hope to strengthen the family relationships. Certainly what that also does is to invite families into the processes that are unfolding in the classroom (API).

~ So it's a way for families to feel involved in what's happening in the classroom. And at Hilltop there's this other layer of having so many visitors to our school that it feels important to communicate the life of the classroom and what we're about, or what we're trying to be about, with our documentation (API).

Documentation as a public statement serves several purposes at Hilltop, in addition to adding to the pleasing nature of the space. In addition to providing a vehicle for children and teachers to revisit experiences by looking at the posted photos, parents and visitors are invited to interact with one another, with the children, and the school staff regarding their observations.

~ I love interactions that the public pieces [posted on the walls] spark with families (AP2).

~ I don't want it [e-mail] to be the only way [of sharing documentation], because I think the point of documentation is that what the kids see reflected on the walls around them is their work, their words. The Reggio educators talk about documentation as the 'second skin' on the walls of the school. It's important that that be part of the visual environment because of all the messages that sends to kids, and to everyone who walks into the building, "This is what we value, this is what we put on the walls." I wouldn't want to see it disappear completely for that reason. There's the interactive element, too. Someone sitting at home looking at it on a home computer isn't necessarily going to give immediate feedback. I like that there's the whole time spent [with families] lingering in the hallways, reading these stories about these kids at play. It has to do with thinking of schools as places for families to be, a sort of central place of

community. But honestly, I think, a lot more parents would spend time looking at and reading documentation if it came easily to them on their computer (SF2).

As I think about school environments, I recall the words of Carlina Rinaldi (1992): “The best environment for children is one in which you can find the highest possible quantity and quality of relationships.” Hilltop’s environment, the place that is being built over time, continually changing and growing, is now made up of a high quantity and quality of relationships of all kinds among the materials, the space, and the people of all ages.

Describing the documentation panels as a “second skin” in the schools of Reggio, Strozzi (2001) elaborates to say: “the panels make you feel that you are, or invite you to become, a part of experiences and stories... The documentation substantiates the value of memory and narration as a right and a vital quality of the educational environment” (p. 62). This is a school where, as Cadwell (2003) states: “discovery, wondering, working together, and clear communication serve as guideposts for all of us. The complexity and depth of what we do here is palpable. The respect that we hold for one another’s lives is present on the walls” (p. 15). Surely this is the case for Hilltop, also.

Theme: “An Infinite Attention to the Other”

Primacy of Relationships

The educational project of the Infant-toddler Centers and Preschools of Reggio Emilia is a participation-based project that finds its true educational meaning in the participation of all concerned. There is a recognition that everyone – children, teachers, and parents – is an active subject in the educational relationship, each contributing complementary and necessary knowledge. The school-family relationship is considered to be particularly important as a context that can foster children’s individual and group learning (Giudici et al., 2001).

Relationship building is viewed as cooperative and collaborative and the backbone of the system (Gandini, 2002). From the peer interactions of children, to teachers, to interactions with parents, to teachers with children, or to children with other children, and with the interactions in the environment, some sense of

cooperation or collaboration is occurring. Hilltop parents comment on what an important part of the school experience this is:

~ I think the stuff they do around building community is phenomenal. The way they do the room events, and they draw the parents in, and they help parents get to know each other, it's really built a community around Hilltop that's had a profound effect on my whole family... it's definitely like a family place. Knowing that you're sending your kid to a great educational experience... it's very community oriented (AS1).

Orchestrating gatherings in the beginning of the school year, and throughout, gives the families a sense of the strong community that they are entering. The teachers and parents welcome them together and communicate to the new families how rich a network the school is and how vital their presence is. Above all, there is a desire to welcome and orient new families, as well as to communicate pleasure in their arrival. In Reggio schools, welcoming is considered a value. “Welcoming” implies listening, openness, recognizability (Rinaldi, 2006). A child, parent, anyone who works at the school must feel the sense of well being that comes from being awaited and welcomed with pleasure. As Strozzi (2001) expresses it, “the school is not a place for anonymous users, but for people who live a portion of their lives together” (p. 64).

~ Just really spending some time and getting to know people... it's just been a really good reminder that having a commitment to community pays off, and it's really rewarding on a personal level, and then also on a very broad level, too. This way you can feel like everyone is getting something out of it. Yeah, it's a real strong little force! (AS1).

~ Gosh, this is just so wonderful, the way they make the kids feel so warm and nurtured, and they tend to sort of remove that, I don't know if they remove the divide between home and family [and school], but it is making them more interwoven, which I think is a more natural way for children to see things, that they see that as an extension of their community, and not as a place that they just go to and come back (KG1).

The larger picture includes the community of all children and adults as learners; the important links between home and school; the parents' hopes and dreams for their children; and the parents' desire to uncover and appreciate the joy their children experience by learning in the context of a group.

~ I think it has been very deliberate on the part of the staff. I mean, they have some things that they do, now that we've been there for two years, I can understand it more clearly, but the fall meeting that they do with the parents where we... they have us make gifts for your child, and you work with the other parents on some type of collective project that you give to the room... You don't have so much of the teacher/parent combination, but you have the parent/parent combination happening, so whenever there is some problem solving around room issues... we've found that the parents have been really active in communicating with each other and dealing with this whole team of adults working to make things better for the kids (AS1).

~ That sort of level of integration of the teachers into the community I think is incredibly valuable, and I don't know, quite honestly, how much of that is Hilltop, and how much of that is the Reggio Emilia philosophy, but that strong sense of community is really one of the strengths of Hilltop. They have this sense that the other parents and all the other teachers, and the teachers in the other rooms, were sort of all there for them, and the director, too (KG1).

In the Reggio Emilia experience, participation does not indicate simply the involvement of the families in the life of the school. Rather, it is a value, an identifying feature of the entire experience, a way of viewing those involved in the educational process and the role of the school. Carla Rinaldi (cited in Cagliari & Giudici, 2001) states:

Participation is an educational strategy that characterizes our way of being and doing school. Participation involves the children, the families, and the teachers and is viewed not only as 'taking part' in something but even more as being a part; that is, the essence and substance of a common identity, a 'we' to which we give life by participating. (p. 136)

In order to take this step, teachers accept the challenge to take the risk of shared ownership of their work by opening themselves up to parent opinion and parent voice. This involves truly becoming available for the concerns, joys, and questions of parents, and realizing that parents and teachers, together, are responsible for the optimal growth of children. An example of this occurred when parents approached Sarah about a cluster of girls who were having a very difficult time with friendships:

~ Sometimes I think there was a sense of trying to leave it so open to the kids, and the kids didn't have all the negotiation skills and the emotional maturity to deal with some of this with these very strong-minded girls. There were a lot of hurt feelings that happened before the teachers eventually... we basically asked them to come in and provide a little more structure and help, because the kids'

self-esteem was really going down because of it. So they started something called the Friendship Work Team. In some ways I think it was a real challenge for Sarah because this was not a child generated idea, this was a parent generated idea: “our kids need some help learning how to get along, and they need some guidance, and before they can do it in a completely unstructured activity, they need some help doing it in a more structured, safe setting, where feelings are not going to get so hurt that they lose the lesson.” So, Sarah tried to figure it out, she took the five girls that both sort of loved each other and had real challenges getting along, and then we added in a sixth girl so the numbers would be even. She agreed to meet with them every Wednesday to have some sort of group time to help them work together. At first the other parents were sort of concerned that this was a little unstructured, but she tried to come up with activities... Sometimes they talked about friends and friendship, and sometimes that was already so painful and emotional that we encouraged them, the teachers, to help them to do an activity together, so they had some positive examples of what it meant to work together well (KG1).

Reggio *pedagoga*, Paola Cagliari, observes that friendship is such an important issue for children, and suggests involving parents to discuss this issue, much as Sarah included parents in the situation described above:

We might discuss what strategies the children use to find friends. How can we adults, both parents and teachers, be a part of this experience of supporting friendships? In an exchange like this, we are offering many possibilities for dealing with possible problems and offering numerous points of view in this exchange of mutual support. (cited in Cadwell, 2003, p. 187)

Building and maintaining relationships is the guiding thread that accompanies children through the various times, spaces, and activities of daily life; it is the main occupation to which they dedicate energies and passion from the moment of birth. Schools, on the other hand, “too often dedicate their energies primarily to curriculum and didactics, neglecting the broad network of relationships and communication that are an integral part of the educational process, and consequently placing little emphasis on the organization of these relationships” (Filippini, 2001, p. 53). The following comments also reflect the belief, articulated by Ayers (2002), that, “teaching is at its centre about relationship – with the person, with the world” (p. 48).

~ All the dynamics of a family or whatever has always been there on the staff, no matter what the workplace is (MC1).

~ I like that there's the whole time spent lingering in the hallways, reading these stories about these kids at play. It has to do with thinking of schools as places for families to be, a sort of central place of community (SF2).

~ How do I involve families in the process of creating a school? (SF1).

Davis and Sumara (1997) believe that teaching “acquires its form within a complex relational web that seeks to affect the understandings and abilities of the individual members of that community” (p. 122). Comments by both teachers and parents at Hilltop indicate this belief is at the core of their teaching philosophy.

~ It's being in relationship with children and families, and that's what it's about for me - the deep and intimate and meaningful relationships that are there (AP3).

~ Those are all sort of ways of living out what this thing is that I want to do, which is just to live in deep and intimate and joyful relationships every moment with children and families, and that seems so at the heart of what this work is about for me. It's life, it's life - it's not just work. That relationship is infused with respect and with curiosity and with self-awareness and with awareness of these other folks... those are the pieces that anchor the work that I'm doing, that make me want to do the documentation piece or the representation piece or the “let's grow this project” piece. Let's be really intentional about the relationships we are cultivating with families and how we're doing it. It's because of that vision of it all being about relationships (AP1).

~ What that's all about for me is the practice of staying intimately present to the children, present with delight and curiosity, and readiness to reflect on what they're doing... In large part, the reason I know them intimately, I think, is because of this practice... (AP1).

~ That's sort of the heart of the whole relationship piece... the whole heart of the beginning and sustaining piece for me of this work. Documentation is the practice that cultivates relationships, that reflects and cultivates relationships (AP1).

~ I'm realizing as I say all that that I'm thinking a lot about parents as the people reading and receiving the documentation... I think we are very actively doing it for the children, and I think then it becomes less of a public thing, because we offer it to the children in the context of relationships (AP2).

~ For however long we're going to be here and do this work... it's really worth giving yourself over to learning about human development, and thinking in

terms of values, and being intentional in what you're doing, because it will serve you so well in your entire life, in every relationship that you form (MC2).

~ There are some really less than satisfying things about the travel¹⁸ because you don't have ongoing relationships with people. We have a few contracts where we go back over the course of a few years and that kind of thing, but you don't have ongoing relationships, you don't see the fruits of what you're doing, really (MC3).

~ [I value] the teaching of really concrete skills about how to get along in the world, and that this is one of the few places that sees that as skills that can be taught and nurtured (KG1).

~ It's not about how it [documentation] looks but about relationships with families, and what their relationships are with you and with the group. Then, how could they not linger? (AP3).

~ ... the living, breathing meaning of it for me is being in relationship, being in community (AP3).

~ The process or way of being in the world, is really... a way of understanding our work, or understanding our relationships with children and with each other that is about mindful presence and authentic engagement and curiosity and delight. How that all gets lived out or made tangible is the form of this thing we call documentation, this paper we put up on the wall, this document we send out to the web-page, whatever form it takes, but that in fact documentation is an expression of a way of being with children (AP2).

The Reggio Emilia approach views relationship building as cooperative and collaborative and the backbone of who they are as a system (Gandini, 2002). From the peer interactions of children, to teachers, to interactions with parents, to teachers with children, or to children with other children, and with the interactions in the environment, some sense of cooperation or collaboration is occurring. Usually these types of interactions are developed through discourse and documentation of the negotiated process of learning (Edwards et al., 1998).

Ayers (2002), in describing the “good teacher,” writes:

the good teacher offers unblinking attention, even awe, and communicates a deep regard for students' lives, a respect for vulnerability. An engaged teacher begins with the belief that each student is unique, each the one and only who will ever trod the earth, each worthy of a certain reverence. (p. 41)

¹⁸ Here Margie is referring to the consulting and training work she does at various locations both within the U.S. and internationally.

There are also many similarities here with the view of pedagogy expressed by Bill Readings (1996) when he says: “I want to insist that pedagogy is a relation, a network of obligation ... (in which) the condition of pedagogical practice is an infinite attention to the Other” (p.16). This “infinite attention” pervades every aspect of relationship at Hilltop.

Wonder and Delight

The cultivation of wonder and its validation in the child is not generally one of the stated goals of school curricula, but it is one that I believe holds great potential for teachers. Cobb (1977) describes wonder as a “prerogative of childhood” that later becomes an “essential instrument in the work of the poet, the artist, or the creative thinker” (p. 27). Through paying close attention to the children and what they do, teachers may “find pleasure and joy, wonder and curiosity in the new things that come out day by day” (Cadwell, 2003, p. 163). This comes out clearly as Margie and Ann express their beliefs about teaching.

~ Certainly, always what has been at the heart of her [Margie's] work has been ideas about close observation of children, and great delight and joy in children, and thinking about what can grow out of our observations of children, being reflective, and self-aware, and aware of the children (AP1).

~ To move from, to move to a place and stay really grounded in place of wonder and delight and curiosity... (AP3).

~ Well, you know, I think it is, first of all, creating the disposition to notice and delight and be curious about what you're seeing (MC1).

~ I'm simultaneously helping them get the disposition to just be curious about and notice and see (MC1).

~ ... getting curious about what those challenging behaviours might be, or how to find delight and wonder and have our fundamental understanding of each kid be about their strengths and delights and gifts that they bring to the world. So, documentation is one way of doing it, and not in any formal way (AP3).

One of the most precious gifts that Ann, Margie, and Sarah share with each other and with the children and families they work with is a mutual awe and wonder at the power of childhood, the freshness of the children's viewpoints, and

the strength of their minds and imaginations. By reclaiming a sense of wonder, teachers also develop the ability to follow the leaps of thought that children so easily make. This supports a mutual quest for understanding. It is a practice of searching together for new meaning, one that creates a community of seekers. One is left to ponder, with Gallas (1994), “what powerful understandings our children might achieve if their natural abilities as creative and critical thinkers were encouraged” (p. 110). Elsewhere, Gallas (2003) puts out a call to educators to “reclaim, rename, and re-imagine teaching and learning” and to “the cultivation of wonder through observation and questioning, openness to not knowing, valuing the unanswerable” (p. 165). The voice of the teacher, when situated in an attitude of wonder and inquiry, has the possibility to create a new culture in the educational community.

Theme: Intellectual Vitality

Intellectual Engagement

Teaching is, as Ayers (2002) describes it, “excruciatingly complex, idiosyncratic, back-breaking, mind-boggling, exhausting, wrenching...teaching at its best requires heart and mind, passion and intellect, insight and intuition, spirit, understanding, and judgement. Teaching, again at its best, can be an act of hope and love” (pp. 39-40). Ayers description aptly encompasses many of the descriptors that Ann, Margie, and Sarah have used to describe their pedagogical documentation work. This next section presents observations on how intellectually engaging it is for them.

~ Certainly I'm so engaged by the intellectual piece, and so engaged by the professional development. All of that is definitely there... (AP3)

~ Sometimes I feel they don't want to... unless it's really intellectually stimulating (KG1).

~ I can turn to notes that I've taken or the transcriptions of conversations and be thoughtful about project work that could grow out of it, or a question I'd like to pursue with the kids the next day, or a prop that I could bring into the classroom. And that's all great. It's "juicy" work for me, too, but the intellectual

engagement, I think, is a key value for doing documentation. But even if I didn't do any of that, if all that happened was that I paid close attention, took notes and photos about what I saw, and that was it in terms of my active doing as a teacher, it would still have profound meaning for me and the relationships that grow out of it. And I would be sad not to be doing that other stuff, because I love that, the intellectual, reflective, playful [sic] work is fabulous (API).

~ You know, there's the theme for the day or the week or the month, or, "Alright, I did this once with the kids and it was great so now I'll do it every year with kids." I mean, all of that can be wonderful and can come from a great heart for kids, but it doesn't have the intellectual engagement that is so nurturing. I love that... being curious, [wondering] what their theory about this. [Realizing that] I didn't even notice this until I was transcribing this conversation that this idea keeps coming up over and over... when I was sitting there I didn't notice it but now I notice it and wow, what does that mean and what's that about. I love listening in on children's theories, and then coming up with my own theories about what they're thinking, and what that might be about, and what to do next (API).

Ann's delight in listening to children's theories and trying to understand them is mirrored in Seidel's (2001a) query: "How do we come to understand the world and our experience of it? ... How can one person come to understand another's understanding? In what ways can the effort to understand another's understanding become the foundation of a serious pedagogy?" (p. 307).

~ That's a message that belongs in the work, because, you know, I'm smart, and I'm a thinker, and a writer. You know, "You don't have to engage intellectually," it's not what's perceived as what's needed for this work. It's not the expectation of most people when they come to this work, and I think that's partly why I think I was so attracted, initially, to these lab schools that were connected to universities, because it felt like, "Oh, well, the work with children isn't, you know, intellectually stimulating, but I could be working with undergraduates or doing research, or working with these researchers, or...". I was trying to be the intellectual part of myself in that way, and that's kind of what changed in living it full days here at Hilltop... just realizing that it's all here. I'm really smart, I'm really well educated, and I use every ounce of it every day. Sure, there are moments, you know, there are the moments of living with kids that aren't, sort of, intellectually rewarding or fulfilling, except that, if you really come at, "Who is this kid?" with curiosity, or, "How do I know this family?" or, "What is the interaction?" If you take in the message that you can be really curious about everything that happens, then yeah, it is totally, completely, completely intellectually fulfilling work, which so many people just don't get (SF3).

Malaguzzi (cited in Gandini, 1998) says that the archives and the documentation “change completely the professional stature of each person who is within the school” (p. 176). This perception is evident in the way Sarah describes her documentation work.

~ I don't know what's making me want to say this now, but... I'm quite conscious right now of how incredibly precious, to me, these books of documentation I've created are. Not just sort of as a treasured item, but as this really solid evidence... that I've got something to show for what I do here every day. It's huge. I mean, I've been at this school eight years and teaching another ten years off and on before that, and... I think I might be just insanely demoralized if I didn't have a shelf full of those books in my home, and here in my school, because the pay is lousy, it's really hard work, it's deeply misunderstood by a lot of people, and... if there was a fire, I would go for those so fast. Part of it's because of the heart and the work that's gone into them, but partly just because... that's pretty huge... (SF3).

~ Is that the key, or a key, to the intellectual engagement? Is the documentation what keeps you intellectually linked in to this daily work? That's where my mind goes with it, anyways. How big a component is that? Here we are, smart, thinking, intellectually curious people who are attracted to work with young children, and is documentation part of what lets you be both of those things at the same time...? A big piece for me has been the intellectual engagement part of it... (SF3).

Seidel (2001b) recognizes the importance of this intellectual engagement when he states, “In the arena of the improvement of public education, it is hard to imagine significant progress without engagement of the full intellectual curiosity and investigative powers of the adults” (p. 332). Giudici et al. (2001) describe this intellectual engagement evident in the programs of Reggio Emilia in another way: “Another affinity between our educational traditions is a concern for the epistemological questions at the centre of the experience of teaching and learning” (p. 158).

Teacher as Researcher

In Reggio Emilia, documentation of children at work and play is understood both as assessment and as research methodology, and teachers are regarded as teacher-researchers. These actions, instead of being considered exclusive of each other, are considered inextricable. They are one and the same. “Documentation

and research are not something added on to the teaching; they are part and parcel of the action of teaching” (Seidel, 2001b, p. 333). Within the framework of teacher-as-researcher, teachers carefully examine their actions and perceptions. The act of teaching becomes more self-conscious, and teachers become aware of things that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. As Gallas (1994) puts it, “thus the boundaries between teaching and research blur: What we perceive in either role changes the way we structure our practice of both” (p. 152).

~ It’s a way of thinking and seeing and hearing that is backed up by a set of tools to help you do that. It’s helpful to have a particular curiosity or question in mind, in a lot of cases, the teacher-as-researcher kind of idea (AP2).

~ And I feel that the same levels of new awareness, of “aha’s” or, “I want to learn more, I’m really curious about this aspect of children’s learning.” I learn more about it, and the way to learn more about it is through continuing to live this process of documentation. So it’s taken the place, in a very significant way, of that other way of learning about children, which is looking at anecdotes, at the research and the writing. It IS research and writing, and I’m living it all day every day (AP2).

~ ... being anchored by the question of what it is to be a researcher... because that gets at all the pieces, the observation piece, the collaboration piece, the reflection piece... in fact, our over-arching question for the year then, planning learning experiences and opportunities at our staff meetings and in-services that get at that [question], “what is it to be a researcher?” So teachers at Hilltop all see ourselves as that, as a researcher, and as collaborative researchers. That seems to be a big idea, really naming that as at the heart and soul of what it is to be a teacher/researcher at Hilltop (AP2).

~ ... curiosity and research as tools of deep caring, not as sort of clinical, check list-y, “How is this child’s development?” but as in trying to really know this kid and his family, and what it means that he’s screaming today. I think those are tools that get exercised when you’re sort of actively practicing documentation. I mean, they’re there for you. I have a lot less paperwork to show for it this year, but some really deep connections with kids and families (SF3).

Vecchi (2001) challenges educators to create a culture of research, maintaining that:

- understanding can be fostered by the reflective thinking generated by in-process documentation and the constant comparison of ideas with others;

- it is necessary for teachers to continue to learn; therefore, documentation materials such as these (or of a different kind) give us an opportunity to understand a little more about the children's and our own thinking strategies, and allow us to engage in something as important as exchanging thoughts and ideas with others. (p. 210)

~ That foundational piece gives rise, I would say, to this other key piece or aspect of documentation, which is this reflective, interpretive piece, so that's built on this careful observation, careful presence, careful descriptive narrative, whatever the right word for that recording piece is. That next layer is about, for me, in my understanding... starting to get curious about what this experience has meant for children. Or, asking questions, either myself or collaboratively with other people, "What's important about this? What themes keep showing up? What questions are the kids trying to understand? What understandings or misunderstandings are they communicating about in this?" Doing that reflective piece that builds on close observation, because I do kind of see it as layered, documentation as this layered experience, this layered practice... There is this reflective, collaborative, discursive, whatever, that piece that happens, and some note-taking then about that captures some of our adult reflections or questions or, "I wonder ifs..." and I think that final layer, then, of documentation is that thing that is often referred to as documentation, the tangible thing out in the world to look at. But I think of that, really, as only the final step, and the documentation is all the other stuff as well (AP2).

In the context of such a culture of research, the pedagogical research process is continuous. Ann, Margie, and Sarah, buoyed by their pedagogical documentation practice, are constantly modifying their hypotheses, predictions, and interpretations as the children's projects develop. They communicate their data daily to other teachers, children, and parents. "They use multiple languages to make their research visible: transcriptions of children's conversations, slides and photographs, documentation panels on the classroom walls of children's work at varying degrees of development, and formal and informal presentations to groups of teachers," much as elaborated on by Giudici et al., (2001, p. 155).

Reggio teachers observe children throughout the school day: in moments of play and activities that are planned and organized by the children themselves, as well as during longer, more complex projects in which children and teachers work on topics not only for an extensive period of time but also from different points of view. Both these situations offer children and teachers an enormous variety of themes and problems to investigate. The experience gained through

working on project strategies increases the teachers' ability to anticipate the paths of research the children may undertake, and to hypothesize methods and lines of observation (Giudici et al., 2001). Through the process of documentation, teachers bring together theory and practice; they become researchers of the human experience of teaching and learning.

Theme: Child Initiated and Teacher Framed

Emergent/Negotiated Curriculum

The theory of knowledge to which Reggio educators subscribe is constructivist, or more precisely, social constructivism. This theory holds that knowledge is gradually constructed “by people becoming each other’s student, by taking a reflective stance toward each other’s constructs, and by honoring the power of each other’s initial perspective for negotiating a better understanding of subject matter” (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, p. 239). The principles of this epistemology lead to practice similar to what has been observed in Reggio Emilia, a practice that Forman and Fyfe (1998) prefer to call “The Negotiated Curriculum”:

This term “negotiated” captures the centrality of the social co-constructivist principles mentioned above. In the negotiated curriculum the teachers seek to uncover the children’s beliefs about the topics to be investigated. Their study goes beyond simply identifying the children’s interest. Their analysis reveals the reasons behind the children’s interest, the source of their current knowledge, their articulation about its detail. Children are encouraged to talk about what they know before they begin their projects. And at a meta-linguistic level, the children talk about how they represent what they know. In this co-constructivist curriculum the teachers form a community of learners with the children and with the parents and the other teachers. (p. 239-240)

Educators in Reggio Emilia work within a framework known as *progettazione*. This term, which does not have an English equivalent, might be understood as “emergent curriculum,” or “projected curriculum,” although others have used “negotiated curriculum” or “convergent curriculum” (Milikan, 2001, p. 18). As Forman and Fyfe (1998) put it, “the curriculum is not child centered or

teacher directed. The curriculum is child originated and teacher framed” (p. 240). (This framework is more fully described in Chapter 2). In Italian, the verb *progettare* has a number of meanings: to design, to plan, to devise, to project. The use of the noun *progettazione* in the educational context, at least in Reggio Emilia, is in opposition to *programmazione*, which implies predefined curricula, programs, stages, and so on. The concept of *progettazione* thus implies “a more global and flexible approach in which initial hypotheses are made about classroom work (as well as about staff development and relationships with parents), but are subject to modifications and changes of direction as the actual work progresses” (Giudici et al., 2001, p. 17).

Ann, Margie, and Sarah refer to this idea of *progettazione*, or emergent curriculum, as underpinning their work with children, and draw connections to how the practice of pedagogical documentation supports and enables this way of teaching.

~ As I grew into the practice of supporting emerging projects, I learned more about how to use the documentation that I collected. I noticed myself wishing to understand if my guesses about the children’s interests were on target or way off base, knowing that it mattered deeply to the success of the emerging project. I began to turn to my carefully collected notes for guidance. When I studied my notes and transcriptions alone or with a co-teacher, I could see “underneath” the children’s words to the themes and issues under-girding them. I noticed when ideas were repeated, or when a theme showed up over and over. I began to see through to the heart of children’s play. And with that understanding, I could respond in meaningful ways, taking an active role in shaping an activism project. I could better supply the classroom with props that would sustain children’s play. I could plan trips or invite visitors to the classroom. I could ask provocative questions of the children. I could develop strategies for the children to represent their thinking. Listening to the children is my guest guide for supporting emerging projects; the documentation I collect while the children play and talk deepens my listening (Pelo & Davidson, 2000, p. 78).

~ It wasn’t really appealing to me [this other way of doing curriculum] and I actually didn’t really do it, because pretty early on I was being mentored by Margie about this idea of “Reggio.” The ideas about growing curriculum from what children were immediately interested in pursuing, passionate about, what questions were they raising... So, I was doing some exploring of what that would feel like, what that would look like (API).

Rubizzi (2001), in a chapter called “Documenting the Documenter,” describes a Reggio preschool teacher’s revisiting of her observation notes:

Laura, alone in her classroom, goes over the notes she took during the meeting with the children. She reconstructs in more detail the events she observed and the concepts the children seem to have dealt with, and makes note of possible foci for the continuation of the project. She believes that this is a very productive procedure to follow as the project unfolds, providing a sort of written “recent memory” that will be reinforced or modified when rereading the dialogues and consulting any available photographic images. With this approach, the teacher gets used to proceeding by searching for meaning, and it becomes possible to generate preliminary hypotheses of what will be “re-launched” to the children. (p. 101)

Laura’s experience closely mirrors Ann’s practice of reviewing her own notes to hypothesize about which direction(s) a project might head in.

~ It was a constant process of meeting, and new questions coming, and then me bringing those specific questions to the kids, and having the next thing grow out of that... in the past I’d had more of a sense of where we were headed, or where I wished for us to be headed or what I thought would be fruitful for us to explore... With this I really, absolutely, had no idea what we would possibly do, except that we needed to do something. And then to go from that to this really clear sense of the dance, of the movement between my role as receptive and active and ... for the kids, between generating ideas, and then having those ideas mirrored back to them. I really also, intentionally, would read back... “I was listening to our conversation, and here’s something that you all said,” and then I would read it and say, “Here’s a question I thought of.” Or, “I studied the drawings you made last time and here I want to remind you of those drawings. Let me show you, and here’s something I was thinking about as I looked at these drawings.” So we would take up both what their original work was and what my reflections were, and then they would create the next level of work. It was very powerful for me... that experience in that project has shaped how I now understand my work in a really powerful way... I have an even deeper sense of trusting into this unfolding process (AP3).

~ Thinking of this real recent project of a few months ago around how airplanes fly... that was very much my experience of that project, that I’m not really sure where we’re going to go, but I trust that once we have that first meeting, then, we’ll all have something to look towards to give us some direction, even if it only needs to be direction for the next time that we meet, and then that only needed to be direction for the next time after that (AP3).

~ When I was working on the book, *That's Not Fair*,¹⁹ I was trying to describe that sense of only needing to know the next bit, and my editor wrote in a little quote... about if you travel from New York to Chicago you don't have to see all the way to Chicago, you only have to see as far as your headlights are shining, and that by only being able to see that far you'll make the whole trip. [It was] H. L. Menken, or somebody like that. That's definitely stayed with me as an image now that, in an earlier way I don't think I really would have gotten or trusted to... (AP3).

~ Living documentation with kids, that process of showing up at eight in the morning, and sometimes really having no idea about the day, sometimes having a really clear idea based on the day before, but really able to trust to what will unfold. One way that I can step into what's unfolding is being a careful observer and documenter, and that then opens new doorways for the kids... trusting to that process all the time. So whether it's a big in-depth project, or a ten-minute chunk of time in the classroom, I really can rest into that container... (AP3).

This negotiation of ideas that is a cornerstone of emergent curriculum gives the children a strong sense of participation and of building an experience together, “so ideas fly, bounce around, rise up, fall apart slowly, or spread, until finally one of them takes a decisive hold; it flies higher and conquers the entire group of children” (Strozzi, 2001, p. 75). American educator Karen Gallas (1994) also writes of how she has come to follow the emerging interests of her students:

As a teacher researcher, when I begin to keep track of the meanings children bring to school, I often find that what they want to know as a class differs from what the adults in schools want them to know. I am not always convinced that adult agendas are any more valid than children's agendas, and as I scrutinize children's drawings, conversations, writings, and play for meanings, I am compelled to follow their interests more readily than those of the adults who write curriculum studies but never know the children. (Gallas, 1994, p. 129)

Sarah, who has become particularly passionate about teaching in an emergent way, articulates her commitment to this style in a way that resonates with Gallas' ideas:

~ I tell parents at the beginning of each year I don't know, I can't tell you what we're going to study this year and to be honest, I don't actually care that much, but I know it will be rich, I know it will be great, and my main job is to help

¹⁹ *That's Not Fair: A Teacher's Guide to Activism With Young Children*. Ann Pelo and Fran Davidson (1999). Redleaf Press.

these kids be in the world with other people. Everything else is pretty much gravy (SF1).

~ At a recent meeting we spent time just brainstorming. As Malaguzzi says, "You think of a thousand possibilities so that when kids come up with the thousand and first, you're not surprised." And so, we just practice thinking of a hundred ways this could go, not with the intention of covering all of the possibilities, but being prepared for any one of them to be what possesses us for two months (SF2).

~ I was re-reading over our notes from last time, and I was wondering whether that story of that first documentation panel I put together, the knowledge that I was headed toward a finished product, a panel, reminded me to try to jot down something the kids said, to try to save a piece of artwork, to try to take a few photos of kids working, it sort of had that influence. One of the things I discovered writing my thesis was that documentation is, in the biggest sense of the term, a really close description of what teaching an emergent curriculum looks like. It's the main activity, if you take documentation in its biggest description that includes the reflective part, and the use of what you've collected to be thoughtful and playful about what you might want to do next (SF2).

~ This is a question I put forward in my thesis: "What would it look like if you tried, if your intention was to train teachers in an emergent or child-centred way of teaching, and you decided to go at that through teaching them documentation skills and practices, how would that work?" (SF2).

~ I put on a presentation with a group of teachers who were with me during the wood factory project, and the rabbit story, and the kite story... We put together a workshop for a California AYE convention called "Come Fly With Me." We sort of generated this idea of flight as an image for what emergent curriculum feels like. The shaky take-off, the uncertainty, the fear, and also the manoeuvrability once you're in the air, the perspective that you get once you're in the air. Malaguzzi uses the word the reconnaissance [to describe] the job that teachers have. I like this idea, that from up in the air teachers do this reconnaissance of what's going on, and all of that is very different than what it looks like to be driving on the ground and sticking to a planned series of, "You can all go down this road and turn left or turn right," but when you're in the air, left, down, up, right, they're all more fluid. That's actually a helpful metaphor for me to think about what emergent curriculum is like (SF2).

~ I don't know what documentation would be inside that metaphor - maybe it would be the safety instructions in the seat back pocket. To me, documentation is that something to hang onto in the turbulence and the uncertainty of flight, the anchoring structure in a very organic curriculum. I don't know if that's a great metaphor for documentation, but definitely it's how I think about emergent curriculum. Ann talks about it as leaping off a cliff, not being sure where you're going to land (SF2).

This process of teaching with an emergent curriculum is full of uncertainty. Teachers who are committed to the importance of the creative process live with a certain amount of ambiguity and tension, with disequilibrium in the Piagetan sense. Sometimes the end result of a study is unknown and unanticipated, and the path toward that result is unclear. Gallas (1994) suggests that teachers and children involved in learning often share this uncertainty, but they can learn to live with, and even appreciate, the place of tension and ambiguity in the learning process.

Being “Teacher-ly”

Working within the framework of emergent or negotiated curriculum can be fraught with a degree of uncertainty, albeit equally full of rich possibility. The educators who are part of this study have come to rely upon pedagogical documentation to lend some structure to the experience, a way of creating traces or evidence of both children’s and teachers’ thinking.

Ann describes her evolving pedagogy of listening, observing, and documenting in the book she co-authored with Fran Davidson (2000), *That’s Not Fair!*

When I first began the practice of taking notes about children’s play and making recordings of children’s conversations, I didn’t really understand how to use all the documentation I gathered. I did it because I’d read about it being the Right Thing to Do. I’d carefully transcribe a recorded conversation among children, and then go on with the plans I’d already made. I mostly thought of the notes and conversations as ways to capture on paper the sweet and appealing thinking of young children. I’d share my transcriptions with parents, inviting them to “listen in” on conversations that they would otherwise miss. (p. 78)

The careful observation and close listening that are required to document effectively causes a shift in the way these teachers work. As Rinaldi (2001d) described it, “the role and competency of the teacher are qualified in a different way from how these elements are defined in an educational environment in which the teacher’s job is simply to transmit disciplinary knowledge in the traditional way” (p. 88).

~ It's a total paradigm shift in the way we think of the role of the teacher. And sometimes, I think, one of the things we're plagued with in childcare, as a result of this deplorable wage situation and bad working condition and so forth, is that people want to do 'teacher-ly' kind of things to make their own self-esteem feel better, because they so much don't want to be viewed as the "babysitter." And they so much want to be respected by the parents, and... doing these traditional teacher kinds of behaviours seems to be what would make them feel better (MCI).

At the same time, these teachers express a desire to be recognized as thoughtful professionals. Providing some evidence of children's learning, for example, via documentation, gives some assurance of "teacher-ly" activity that is well regarded by parents and peers. Gallas (1994) comments on this perception that "classrooms are supposed to be orderly and structured, and teachers are expected to have control and to direct the process of learning." At the same time, Gallas goes on to explain, her position as a teacher-researcher "often begins by situating itself in an attitude of not knowing and loss of control, not in a physical sense, but in the existential sense of losing control of the meaning of habitual practices" (p. 8).

~ That was my first introduction to Reggio. I was working at the time with a teacher for whom the emergent curriculum piece was natural. It was not, for me, and we struggled tremendously... She really had an instinct to go with the flow of what kids were doing, and in spur of the moment ways, follow up with the teachable moment type interests... And that was not comfortable for me at that time. I loved, I mean, I still love, structure and clarity, it felt crazy, it felt out of control... (SF1).

~ That's sort of how I found and clung on to documentation, because I was this sort of person who loved structure and order and clarity, but I kind of wanted to step into this world of a uncertainty in following kids where they go, and adventuring with children, and documentation seemed to be maybe the major route... you can follow the kids where they're going, and as long as you keep track of it, it gave me the veneer of control... It was like evidence that okay, things were happening, even if the moment felt almost more spontaneous than I could handle... It's very helpful to be talking about this out loud. Then the next loop of the spiral feels much richer, you know you're going to take a strong teacher role again, but you know you're basing it on what you saw, so you're not as worried that you're grabbing control away from kids again (SF1).

~ It's still easy to fall into thinking of the documentation as the end point... I still breathe a sigh of relief every time I complete a document. Not just the project

history books. Even the thing I was typing up today in the office, today's "piece." This thing happened, and it's partly this relief that this moment is at least captured to some degree, so it's not lost... it's in the history. Partly it's the sense of, "I've something to show for what we've been doing." That's still a huge reassurance, for me, and my biggest defence against anybody who might say, "What do you do here all day? You don't do anything, you don't have a lesson plan." And I can say, "Well, no, but I can show you what we did every day this week, and how rich it was." So that looks like money in the bank, knowing that those stories are there (SF1).

Hurst and Lally (1992) observe that assessment of children's progress is the best source of justification for what teachers do in their classroom curricula and teaching practices. It is essential to teachers because assessment provides necessary information for their own self-evaluations and justifies classroom methodologies when teachers' performances are appraised. Educational assessment also offers information and rationale when proposals, procedures, or programs are being critiqued.

~ It's as if I'm defending against real or imagined external critics who say, "You just play all day, and you're not doing anything." I like having evidence, or... traces, that's a nice word, of real things, real thinking, kids are doing real thinking (SF1).

~ A great metaphor from Malaguzzi - I don't know if he's written about it anywhere but he talked about this with us when I was visiting there in 1993 - he said it's as if the children and the teachers are together in the basket of a hot air balloon, and the children know, and the teachers know that they'll have the most fun, and see the most things, and have the most experience of the world together if the hot air balloon is allowed to lift off the ground and rise up, untie the ropes, drop the sandbags and let it go. Parents and the other adults standing around on the ground... licensors, administrators, policy-makers, it doesn't feel safe to them, they want the balloon to stick firmly on the ground, where they can keep an eye on it and they know everybody is going to be safe and okay and everything is comprehensible and understandable. And so he says that our job as educators is to convince those people that we're skilled pilots of hot air balloons. So that could be an image for documentation. These are your credentials, "Look, I know how to fly this hot air balloon. I've had all these safe hot air balloon journeys, they've all started and ended safely, with lots of wonderful stuff in between, and that's what's going to happen for this group of kids" (SF2).

~ Documentation gives us something to hold onto as we're making this journey together into the unknown (AP3).

~ Documentation has... It sure has been an anchor in, an anchor that's... allowed me step into this very open-ended...way of being with children... Most of the teacher scripts that we're taught, are really heavy on planning... To let go of that way of teaching, and step into this other planful [sic] intentional way that is looked at as much more open. I think documentation can be something to hold onto in that process. It's this "teacher-ly" thing to do, which is what I did it in the beginning, I mean, that's why I did it (AP3).

Pedagogical documentation has been found by Ann, Sarah, and Margie to be both an anchor and a research tool. Again, Gallas (1994) captures the essence of their experiences in her writing:

Effective teachers who keep track of their students' expressive, emotive, and intellectual interests cannot develop responsive curricula from platters of neatly bound notebooks. They hunt, gather, are clairvoyant about the future, re-envision the past, scrutinize the present, and consider the broad context of the world their students encounter every day. They attempt to construct a classroom environment and a curriculum that offer a transcendent view of knowledge: knowledge that reflects the immediacy and passion of children's curiosity, that includes the structures that build literacy in all disciplines, and that is grounded in a wide range of expressive opportunities. (p.129)

Theme: A Culture of Documentation

Pedagogical Documentation

According to Rinaldi (2001d), pedagogical documentation's "force of attraction lies in the wealth of questions, doubts, and reflections that underlie the collection of data and with which it is offered to others – colleagues and children" (p. 86). Children's narratives, if uncovered and honoured in the context of the classroom, can become powerful vehicles for thinking and learning (Gallas, 1995). Elsewhere, Gallas (1994) refers to the importance of narrative thinking as a "form of knowledge... [where] children regularly weave a story, filled with their intimate musings, to help themselves think about difficult questions" (p. 77).

The following description that Ann provides in a package of training materials aptly captures the culture of documentation that has been developing at Hilltop Children's Centre.

Documentation means a way of being with children—a habit of paying attention, watching and listening closely, reflecting together about what we

see, planning from our reflections and understandings, and telling the stories in ways that enrich our communities. Gunilla Dahlberg, a leading thinker in our field, describes this as “pedagogical documentation” (n.d., Documentation as a Verb).

What she describes is an attitude, a way of living with children with awareness, and not a mechanical process (see Appendix M, Documentation as a Verb):

~ The way to learn more about it is through continuing to live this process of documentation (AP2).

~ One way that I experience the power of this little being called documentation is finding myself invited to be nourished, to be challenged to be a close observer, and to be really present in the world (AP2).

An important part of documentation, both the process and the product, is that it can help create a collective memory for the group, allowing children to revisit their thoughts and ideas and pursue them either individually or in groups. Making visible in the classroom environment images of learning and being together in a group fosters a sense of group identity and generates other possibilities for extending and deepening learning. Looking at earlier drawings and comments allows children to build on and critique their previous thoughts and hear reactions from their peers, and theories can be developed and modified. Documenting children’s work in this way enables everyone involved to learn about a particular project and about children’s learning processes more generally. This creates the possibility of a shared community of knowledge and invites others to engage in a dialogic process. Documenting children’s work in this way sends a strong message that children’s efforts and ideas are taken seriously (Krechevsky & Mardell, 2001, p. 290).

~ When they draw a project to a close, Ann always builds in an element of how they’re going to teach what they’ve learned to someone else. Sometimes it’s that they’ll make a book about it... the whole project around balance and the Kapla blocks, it was specifically focused on that idea that we’re going to figure out how we’ve learned to build with these Kapla blocks and teach it to other people, but really her underlying thing was that it was a mechanism to consolidate their learning, to sort of scaffold them to the next place (MC3).

When their learning is documented, children can revisit and thereby interpret their learning experiences and also reflect on how to develop these

experiences further. Interpretation and reflection become fundamental aspects of documentation that are not only retrospective, but also are projected toward the creation of future contexts for learning. “Documentation is not limited to making visible what already exists; it also makes things exist precisely because it makes them visible and therefore possible” (Giudici et al., 2001, p. 17).

~ I taped that meeting and then did my usual practice of listening to it to transcribe it and felt then this sudden and dramatic deepening of my understanding of what can grow out of that kind of documentation, because as I transcribed, as I listened and transcribed, and then re-read what I was transcribing, question after question, curiosity after possibility came to me in a way that hadn't happened so, I don't know, so effortlessly, before (AP3).

When documenting children's activity, teachers maintain their multiple foci on the intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic aspects of learning. In studying and analyzing tape-recorded conversations, adults listen for topics that “stimulate the most interest and passion” (Krechevsky & Mardell, 2001, p. 291). Gallas (1994) has also described the powerful impact that transcribing children's conversations has had on her:

Only when the children's remarks were made visible to me through transcribing them did I look and see that in many cases I was missing the point of their comments and also limiting where they might go with their talk. By listening alone, I could not visualize the impact that my interventions were having. The process of painstakingly transcribing the tapes, and then looking carefully at what happened when I spoke, forced me to rethink the purposes and outcomes of my participation... What was most surprising to me, however, as I changed my role in the talks, was the way in which children worked together... giving each other brainstorm: collaborating, exploring, making connections between seemingly unrelated experiences and talking in ways that I could not recognize as being scientific. (p. 86)

The teachers at Hilltop, and in other Reggio-inspired programmes, use ethnographic research methods of data collection to collect information to study children's theory-making and to compile their pedagogical documentation. Gallas (1994) describes how this transpires in her classroom, a process very similar to the one that Sarah also details:

Teacher-researchers working with ethnographic methods are distinguished from most other effective teachers in this one important area: We purposefully gather data with which to reflect upon our teaching, our

questions, and our children's learning. In the process of data collection, we take advantage of some very basic ethnographic research techniques that are especially suited to the classroom. We keep field notes, collect artefacts (samples of children's work), and use audio- and videotaping technologies. This process of data collection is ongoing. It becomes part of the life of the classroom and is absorbed into the interactions between teacher and students. Thus, over the course of a school year, I compile an enormous amount of information that helps me to reflect on the classroom and to answer my more difficult questions about teaching, learning, and the process of education. (p. 109)

Sarah has been encouraging her co-workers to collect these artefacts as she nudges them along into this ethnographic practice of documentation:

~ I'm guessing that it's been easier for other folks to 'get' what I'm pushing ahead on. I think I feel it's been some sort of nudge towards uncovering kid's theories towards construction. I made the offer of, "Hey, I'm great at collecting little bits of paper and typing things up – why don't I just do that part of it. Whenever you hear kids say something just jot it down, it doesn't matter how scribbly [sic] it is, just get it to me, and if they draw something, just get it to me and I'll gather it. I'll do that part, that part's easy for me." But I'd love it if you'd all be involved in listening for these little bits and responding to them with kids and let me do the gathering and sticking it up on the board piece. I'm really happy with how quickly the board is filling up since we've started to gather things. The story is suddenly unfolding on our walls, and I'm really pleased with that (SF3).

Documentation makes children's ways of constructing knowledge – including the relational and emotional aspects – visible to both adults and children. Teachers share children's work and words with parents, they refer to children's speech and samples of children's work on the walls. Teachers also generate and post their own reflections on a project or experience. Documenting children's learning is not about creating beautiful panels or displays, but “about following and shaping the knowledge-building process. It allows teachers to deepen their understanding of children's strengths and interests, different languages or domains of knowledge, their own actions and pedagogical decisions, and the processes of learning” (Krechevsky & Mardell, 2001, p. 289).

~ When we were just doing a quick write up of the day, it really was just a simple story telling of what had happened, and, without the layer, the extra layer of here's what I, the teacher, was thinking, here's what I think about it afterwards - the sort of transparency of teacher process and how those decisions get made... that's what I'm trying to put more of when I get time to do it more (SF1).

~ *My hope, and my goal personally... in the support work that I do with teachers at Hilltop, is that the public, tangible piece reflects all those other layers, so that it looks like concrete words, images, descriptions, of this moment that's being documented – so they look like maybe a photo, and some narrative text or some descriptive text, or some snips of the dialogue that kids were engaged in, some expression of that close watching piece. And then some reflection, the documenter getting at something, sharing, “This caught my attention because...” or, “This seemed important to me because...” or, “This has tickled me because...” That may be a way in. Or, “When I see children do this, I'm reminded of the way children learn about...” or, “This is a big step developmentally for this child, which is why I'm wanting to tell this story...” or, “In the life of our classroom, this has this meaning or reflects this part of our life in the classroom, or seems to me to be shifting something in our classroom culture.” So some sort of reflection about why, why did I stop and pay attention to this, why did I write this down, why did I take the photo that I took, make the effort tell the story, so that a reader - or a reader in our Hilltop world – is given a window into, not only the specific moment that is happening with children, but sort of the underlying... getting a window into the thinking and feeling that creates the context of the moment, whether it's the children's thinking and feeling that I'm going to reflect about or my thinking and feeling that I'm going to reflect about, or this larger community that we're part of... some way to locate this moment that is being written about. An invitation to the reader to help see and understand some of the meanings that it contains - and to be in relationship with that moment. There's certainly great value in telling the story and letting the story have its moment and be just that, stopping there, but I think... a hope that I have is that documentation engages a reader on many levels, so it's not just watching something but getting curious side-by-side with the writer of this piece, or feeling my heart shift as I'm reading this, or a new understanding or a new opening or a new delight, some invitation to be engaged or to be in relationship with what happened (AP2).*

Teachers visiting Cadwell's Reggio-inspired programme in St. Louis, Missouri, sometimes ask, “How do you observe? What do you write down? What are you looking for?” Cadwell (2003) explains that the practice of thinking together “about what we might do, might look for, and might discover, gives us a beginning structure to hold our wondering and our curiosity, as well as our provocations and speculations. It gives us a collective, organized place to begin” (p. 36). Ann describes documentation in a similar manner:

~ *... trusting the process or documentation to create a container for that unfolding, collaborative, investigation, exploration, wondering together. Documentation really creates... a container. It gives us something to hold onto as we're making this journey together into the unknown (AP3).*

~... *thinking of that in a way is documentation, or archive, holding the history, holding the stories of the children, and telling those stories again and again (AP3).*

~ *It's very easy for me now, I mean, the process of observing, taking notes, taking photos, telling the story. Turn around is really easy, all those pieces are bedrock for me, so some places where I'm wanting to stay fresh in that, and not let it become, "Well, this is what I do every day, blah, blah, blah," is to think really carefully about the story I'm trying to tell. I've really been paying attention to that. I'm learning from Margie and Deb about their sort of framework of, "Is it the child's story, the teacher's story, the growth and development and learning story?" Trying to be thoughtful about what story I'm wanting to tell and why, and trying to become more and more transparent with that in my writing... sometimes actually knowing it for just myself, and telling the story from that perspective, not necessarily, "And so, dear parents, this the child's growth and development story." At least, to keep myself being intentional and aware... (AP3).*

Personal Qualities

Ann, Margie, and Sarah were asked to specifically name some of the personal qualities or characteristics that they recognize in themselves as being helpful in the documentation process. Among the characteristics that were named were: being very organized, being deliberate about tape-recording conversations, developing an instinct about what to save or photograph, being curious, having the mindset of a teacher-researcher, being hungry to reflect, and being influenced by the philosophy of the Reggio approach in assorted contexts.

~ *We've talked about organization, writing, and in terms of the display part, there's some comfort with a sense of design. Mine looks like a full page, but other peoples' might look different (SF2).*

~ *I've seen people who have ways, who have notebooks tucked into their pockets or things like that, but I've never done that. I feel like I'm not all that good at capturing those little comments on the fly, but... I can remember things sometimes and then I grab a sticky note and jot them down. More often... I feel I remember to do it when I know I'm going to invite a conversation with a group of kids. I'll bring a clipboard and a pen, or if I'm planning a conversation with a small group that I'm hoping to record and transcribe... some of that has been very rich to have, to go back to. So there's capturing the words, there's grabbing the camera and snapping a couple of pictures, there's asking kids if you can hold onto a piece of artwork, or copy and give it back to them, collecting things in that way. Those are the main activities (SF2).*

~ It helped a lot that I was, that I am, a really organized person, and that holding onto things and keeping track of them comes naturally for me. I think that could easily get in your way. Even starting with the basic idea of, you know, you see something going on around this topic, make one place where you start saving those things, because then you'll have them to look at, to pull together (SF1).

~ That's the kind of stuff that Sarah is just brilliant at figuring out. She makes graphs and charts, she's just phenomenal at how she figures that stuff out (MC4).

~ It doesn't make sense for me to see it differently than that, we're all there, we truly live together each day and then there are these moments where you've got to capture that, jot it down, take a picture of it, remember it somehow, and that's where maybe the instinct part grows in. You could tape record from seven in the morning until six at night, or you could run video-tape, multiple video-tapes, all day long, and capture everything. That doesn't give you anything, and it's worth acknowledging that I'm a very particular filter for what gets saved. The things that trigger me that I jot down, photograph, hang onto, have everything to do with who I am, I think. But, you know, instinct is maybe too simple a word for it. It's very much to do with experience and a sense of, "I have a theory of where this might go," or "I want to hang onto this because..." or "I need to remember this because..." It's rather hard to grasp (SF1).

~ So those are some of the ways, in my classroom teacher role and my administrative support role, to cultivate more experiences of collaboration around analytical and reflective thinking, and to also cultivate some dispositions to get people hungry for it... to get people so... other people yearning for it, and missing it when it doesn't happen, and start taking some leadership around making it happen. Or to just feel too excited to NOT tell the story, and wonder about what to do next (API).

Gallas (1994) suggests that, while intuition cannot be taught or be measured, and is hard to describe systematically and therefore hard to document, "it is the foundation on which artful teaching is built" (p. 16). She goes on to explain her assumption "that the artistic process is a complex system in which both critical and creative thinking are involved and in which intuition plays a major role" (p. 16).

~ It's a whole set of instincts and inclinations, actions, that follow you around, so that you carry it around with you. So what that looks like is, you know, just the thought that when you see something happening that rings that bell for you, you grab the camera and take a picture of it, or grab a scrap of paper and scribble it down. The starting point of it... so then you've got your photo, your piece of artwork that you've saved, or something you've scribbled down, and

you do the next thing with it. You look at it again, or you quite simply offer it back to the child, or put it into the child's journal or put it in a place for the child's family to find it, or you share it with a co-worker and think about it together, or you use it for the next step – the next step would be that you use it to think about what comes next, or what does it mean that this kid did or said. And all that is sort of the active part, and then at the end of all that comes the compiling of whatever those pieces are into a document (SF1).

~ We talked about needing to have an environment in place, and your disposition to think of your job being observing children and capturing these unfolding stories, and the structure that you need to support all that. I think it's really important to stress that documentation is a process, not just a noun, it's a verb, not just a noun... it's a way of thinking and seeing and hearing that is backed up by a set of tools to help you do that. It's helpful to have a particular curiosity or question in mind, in a lot of cases, the teacher-as-researcher kind of idea (MC4).

~ A lot more of my time is about really direct contact interaction with kids, and really direct contact interaction with families, and a little bit less about that stepping back, being reflective, "let me write about this or photograph this"... but the disposition carries over, I think, so that I feel that I am able to hold this crying or screaming child and not be just in the place of, "Oh my God, this child is crying and screaming," but sort of, um... I don't know... somehow, somehow fitting that into... I don't know how to say it without sounding like I'm more emotionally distant... I actually feel more emotionally connected and tuned in to kids and families than I ever have, and I think it is a by product of that willingness or openness to a curious approach, or investigative or 'research-y' way of coming at the work, instead of just fire-fighting and trouble shooting (SF3).

~ I'm also aware on this teaching team of each of us holding different starting places in how we think about children, or different habits about how we interpret children's behaviour, and I've been consciously trying to challenge people to have my perspective – I may as well say that! (AP3).

~ I'm spending my time on...in-depth observation... and writing about the children that I'm with every day. And I feel that the same level of new awareness... or, "I want to learn more, I'm really curious about this aspect of children's learning" (AP2).

~ I felt that as this moment where, of recognition that this practice had become, like I'd absorbed it into my bones, into my understanding, in an utterly powerful way (AP3).

~ This is my love and my passion, and what's hard for me is putting any boundaries around it at all. I could do this 24/7 because it feeds me, in fact. Not because I have to, but because this is joyful and delightful to me. Give me a little extra planning time and see what I can do. Stand back!" (AP2).

~ There is this hunger there to do the reflection (AP2).

~ So, it's a little bit of chicken and egg, okay, those are the people who chase these experiences down because they already have that drive or disposition, or you could say, well, as a result of having those experiences, going to Reggio Emilia, or going to this summer institute at Boulder, helps get some "juice" or some models or some drive to start doing more documentation. I don't know exactly which it is, it just seems to correlate pretty well so far... (SF3).

As Ann describes it, "documentation is a verb, not a finished product to be written and filed away or forgotten. It is a way of being in relationship, a disposition to pay close attention and to engage our minds and our hearts during our days with the children in our care." This statement summarizes what the essence of the practice of documentation at Hilltop is.

Evolving Documentation Style(s)

Over the years that teachers at Hilltop have been documenting children's learning, their style has been continually evolving, from the early days of documenting children's studio work, to developing the curriculum board, to recording the stories of long-term projects. Ann and Sarah have definitely had a very strong influence on the form that the documentation style has taken on throughout Hilltop, although they continually raise the issue of wanting to include more voices and diverse documentation styles.

~ I remember coming to an agreement at that meeting that we would generate one or two or three specific questions that parents could ask their kids, and that we would post those... So we agreed we were going to come up with these specific questions, and from there, the next thing I remember is starting to do some descriptive writing, which is maybe more traditionally what it looks like (AP1).

~ I remember this conversation really clearly, saying to Sarah, "Man, I'm going on and on, and I'm only getting to talk about this one little experience, but I'm wanting to say all this stuff! "It seems important because..." or, "Isn't this exciting," or, "What we might do next is..." or, "What this brought up for me was..." We were being so, that was so cool, but it would only be this one little thing, and there were three or four other things, other stories to tell for the day. That's when we went to the curriculum boards that we have now. We are hungry to tell these stories and do this reflection, and it started with getting deliberate

about developing one or two or three questions. I think that's a pretty cool little trajectory to know about... (AP2).

~ The main documentation we were offering was just the 'question of the day.' It was along the lines of a question that parents could ask their kids that prompted them to tell a story of what had happened that day and that sort of grew into a quick one page write-up of some of the things that happened today. I tried to mention most of the kids and give parents a sense of "see what my kid did today." And then when we first created an art studio space, then we worked for a while with a system that had two sides of the page, what happened in the classroom and what happened in the studio, and we tended to push ourselves to keep track of how we were using that space, because we were basically learning how to use it. It was totally new to us having that space (SF1).

~ I think about when I first began doing this work that we call documentation. I would often write down, or tape-record and transcribe, kids' conversations. I didn't have that much of a sense of why I was doing it or what I could do with it, other than capture this dear moment and be able to share it, to broadcast it. I know that I'm in a really different place now, and part of how I'm in a different place is just by doing it, just by day after day being in that process of doing it, and having the expectation be that I'd write something (AP1).

~ The nature of those individual headings, of what gets written up under those headings has really changed, certainly for me, and I think for everyone, from anecdotal to anecdotal and telling the story from a specific perspective and naming that perspective and reflecting on it from that perspective, the child's perspective, or the teacher's perspective or whatever. And now the pages go on and on and on, you know, instead of a half a page that goes there, sometimes it's here are my four pages about this moment. That's because there is this hunger there to do the reflection (AP2).

~ So that was a switch to having... not being committed to writing up the story of the day, each day, but sort of looking at the six or eight types, it varied at the time, but some level of broader categories, and trying to keep fairly current write ups in each one. Now we're sort of scratching our heads about that one again... (SF1).

~ And so when I look at other teachers at other places, I see maybe it's a half page with an anecdote, a year ago, but now it's looking like a full page, and there's more, "And another thing I want to tell you about..." or "What was exciting was..." So that's exciting to see. I don't know why I'm going on and on about that (AP2).

Rinaldi (2001d) recommends that these writings should communicate for those who were not present in the context, and should also include the "emergent elements" perceived by the documenter, "rendering the significance that each

author attributes to the documentation and the questions and problems he or she perceives within a certain event” (p. 87).

~ My co-teacher D. captured a series... throughout the course of the morning, fifteen snapshots, and she had them developed that night and just pasted them into a stapled together construction paper book. She had the boys dictate some words to go with the pictures, and read it the next morning at our group meeting. That was powerful in itself, just reflecting back what they'd done, shining a spotlight on these boys who had done this really collaborative and productive play. Then we disassembled the book and made a small panel out of it, just photos and typed up their comments under each photo, which was the first time we'd typed anything for that class. I remember working hard at learning how to make the font big enough to make the heading 'The Wood Factory.' We stuck it up in this sort of an atrium space out by the door of the classroom. It was up there for probably a couple of weeks (SF2).

~ Those sorts of comments about seeing themselves and seeing each other in the documentation, and then realizing what was possible in their own work as teachers doing documentation. Partly seeing what's possible in terms of many ways documentation can look, and that it's not big and scary and hard, forty five minutes with the Polaroid [camera] and a few quotes can become this full story right here, with this awareness behind it. So, taking some of the scariness of the actual practice out of it, but also seeing the power of it... for people to experience that power first hand (AP3).

As pedagogical documentation has evolved at Hilltop, it certainly is a narrative form, both visually and with text. The reader can be a colleague, a group of colleagues, a child, children, parents, anyone who has participated or wants to participate in this process. Rinaldi (2001d) describes it as “both intra-personal and inter-personal communication, offering both those who document and those who read the documentation an opportunity for reflection and learning” (p. 86).

Various Styles of Documenting

Embracing varying styles of documentation has been the focus of concentrated effort, particularly for Ann in her newly defined role as staff development coordinator and for Margie as *pedagogista*. Because the documentation work that Ann and Sarah has done over the years is of such high standard, and has become recognized nationally (and internationally) through some of the books and videos that have been produced that highlight stories from

Hilltop, there is a sense that the bar has been set very high, and that there is a “one right way” for documentation to appear. Ann, Sarah, and Margie have resisted this interpretation, but this continues to be a challenge for Hilltop educators as they work together to create a culture of documentation. This value of enveloping many voices into the documentation process, which is shared by educators in the schools of Reggio Emilia, is evident in the following comment by Rinaldi (2001a):

In the Reggio educational experience, we have always maintained that participation (feeling a sense of belonging and partaking) is not limited to just the families, although family participation is absolutely crucial. It is a value and a quality of the school as a whole. This means providing for spaces, languages, and, more generally, organizational methods and strategies that make this kind of participation possible, which we have always worked toward in our experience. It means that the educational and pedagogical aims must be clearly stated, but at the same time, participation requires a certain sense of indefiniteness and ample spaces of possibility. (p. 42)

~ I said at Hilltop... “I’m traveling all around the country showing a much more, what I would call, elementary or less sophisticated way, to enter this documentation process, and I think that’s what we need to do at Hilltop. It’s problematic because you already have this whole sophisticated system by two of your teachers, but it has put the bar so high and intimidated other people, and made them think, ‘Oh, I could never do that.’ And so, we have to kind of bust this thing open if you want really want it to be something other than the ‘Ann and Sarah’ show” (MC1).

~ What I said to Ann and Sarah, was... all this documentation isn’t as sophisticated as it used to be, because a lot more people are going to be doing it, and they don’t have that level of sophistication. But if our goal is to have a lot more people doing it, then, that’s a developmental process, that’s how we have to do it (MC1).

~ I gave people the photos I had been taking and the transcriptions and then we created these panels. Each panel was wildly different... what happened immediately, and continues to happen... is that people started writing for the documentation board, people... who had never written anything. It can be so intimidating, that documentation has to look a certain way, and that when we do that, when we focus on that we’re really paying attention to the display element rather than that documentation is this living, breathing experience, an encounter with those ideas. I think that as people begin to experience that... “Oh, I know how to have an idea about the play I just saw,” or “I know how to be excited about the block construction,” or “I know how to tell a story because I do that all

the time informally when families come to pick up their children... Oh, the lego ship your daughter built today was amazing.” They go, “If that’s what I can do, well then alright, I can do that” (API).

~ He has been here for almost a year, just about exactly a year, and has... gotten some good practice capturing sort of passing moments, charming moments, conversations with kids, and has either been jotting notes about that or taking photographs about that, and turning those notes and photographs into something those kids can keep in their own journals that go to their families (SF3).

~ ... it’s not going to look anything like what I do, or like what Sarah does. And what Sarah and I do looks wildly, wildly different, in much of the language that we use, and the filters that we see through. And, my hope and my vision for Hilltop is that more and more voices will be folded into that mix, so that it may look like sort of wild circles over your letter “i’s” writing, or your loopy handwriting that you write your handwritten story with, and it goes next to the two page type-written with photos embedded in it documentation piece, which is next to a gigantic photo with a one line caption, which is next to a photocopy of a kid’s work with a quick teacher’s question about it. But all of that becomes part of a culture of documentation, which then is, in fact, a way to do the diversity work. If more voices are being heard in that arena, then the voices will be... more people, I think, will be willing to speak out and use their voice... to find their voice, to know that they’ll be heard, to know that their voice is celebrated and included and integral to what we’re doing. It’s not just that we’re doing a certain way of being in the world that Hilltop’s about, that in fact it’s bigger and longer and deeper than that. And the documentation can be one way to achieve that goal. There’s my lofty thinking about it. It is so useful to remember that there is no one right way. It shows up in some of the conversations on the listserv lately, I don’t remember when the conversation was, but one of the few times I’ve written, trying to make the point that this conversation is sounding like we need to figure out the way to do documentation, and I wanted to challenge that. That seems exactly the wrong way to approach it. My understanding of what the Italians keep saying is that, all along, we don’t want it to start looking like “Reggio,” ... then Reggio would have this very formal, rigid look about it, but if your heart and your spirit are about paying close attention and doing something, some practice around that, whatever that practice looks like, then that’s going to look a million different ways. It’s going to look different for the eighteen-year old African American woman who was raised by her German grandmother who works at Hilltop than for me – and it should. We can do some of that for aesthetic purposes, we can agree that this range of colours is what we’ll use for panels or whatever is going to be the thread, because I think it’s important to communicate on a visual level for families that walk into Hilltop, for example, that Rainbow, Sunlight, Garden, and Big Kids are all part of a thoughtful, organized, shared vision, and we’re going to live into that in different ways. We can find subtle ways to communicate the shared piece and subtle and not so subtle ways to communicate the really different ways of that happening (API).

~ *One thing that is encouraging or exciting to me at Hilltop is seeing the ways in which each staff person is finding their way into this place called documentation, this way of being called documentation. The ways in which the range of voices that are being heard both communicates a range of ways of seeing things in the world, as well as a shared context in which we're living. Out of one classroom comes five distinct world views, yet those world views are deeply connected by a shared vision for the work that we're doing with children, a shared understanding of what it means to be in relationship with children, at the heart, that sort of shared understanding. I think certainly on every team there are five, or four, or three incredibly distinct perspectives (AP2).*

~ *When all five voices on the team are doing it, then there are at least those five moments up there. Not only five perspectives, but five moments... (AP2).*

~ *There are definitely teachers here who have leapt in, a few, some with their own style. There are different layers of documentation here at Hilltop, too. There's the curriculum board, we're trying to get as many people as possible to contribute to that. And then, I think there's... also this layer of ongoing, in-depth project work, there's that documentation, if you talk about documentation, how that documentation is collected and used and displayed, and I think Ann and I have done a lot of that, and other folks have not done that. M. has done some. But if Garden and Sunlight Rooms are what you're looking at as a case study, then yeah, we're the folks that have taken primary responsibility for nearly all of the project work that's happened, and documented the process of that (SF1).*

~ *For sure it's not the only way for documentation to look. In fact, I think it would be a great challenge to myself to sort of say, "How few words can you use to tell this story?" I don't provoke myself with that challenge very often! It's easier for me to tell it in a lot of words. You might have noticed that about me. Yeah, I get teased about that. At the conference in Boulder that I went to, some educators from one of the schools in St. Louis, from the College School, I think, were sharing some documentation that Amelia Gambetti had worked with them very hard on... one panel, and it had almost no words. It was just telling a story in pictures. I was quite struck by that. I think if I had any experience as a photographer I might lean in that direction. That would be a great skill to have. That's one of the things, you know, the documentation we see coming out of Reggio Emilia, my understanding is that a lot of it is put together in collaboration with the atelierista, who may be a photographer by training, or a graphic artist by training - I'm none of those things. I'm married to a graphic designer, that might help a little, just having his influence around. I'm someone that likes playing with the layout of a page or a panel, so in terms of the display end of things that's helpful. I think the fact that I'm a good writer pushes me towards documentation that looks like a lot of writing, with a picture or two pictures, and I'm actually quite happy, pleased with myself, when I have enough pictures that I don't have to write as much (SF2).*

~ What I have in my head is this binder format that you've seen, that works fine. It's been a while since I've designed a large panel. I'm doing a version of that right now with the construction project that's happening. I'm at the stage I described in my thesis of everything that comes in, tacking it up on bulletin boards chronologically so that the story is right there on the wall. And then, when the whole thing feels done, I'll pull all that down and compile it, probably into a binder rather than into a panel, and I think that's where Reggio educators would automatically turn that into some kind of panel. They would cull just a few key pieces and narrow it down to an eye-catching display panel. We've been using the binders in part because we don't have archival storage for documentation, partly because for the training that we've done for other teachers, it makes it so easy to just bring it in a binder to show people, it makes that portable. I'd love to have more of a facility... I'd love to have a huge worktable, and materials to put big documentation panels together, and then a way to display them, and a way to archive them after a while. We don't really have that now (SF2).

~ What other personal qualities? We talked about organization, writing, and in terms of the display part, there's some comfort with a sense of design. Mine looks like a full page, but other peoples' might look different (SF2).

~ But there's also, yeah, just a history of recognizing that, despite really good intentions, the only in-depth stories that I feel have lived a full cycle and had the whole story told have been facilitated by Ann or myself. There have been other tries, by other staff members, or pieces of involvement by other staff members, but I still think that's just objectively true at our school, that the only stories that have really had that full cycle of back and forth between kids and teachers, using documentation as the tool for fleshing out the project, it just hasn't actually been done by anyone besides Ann and myself - unless we want to decide that that's just the reality of our school, and find some way to get other folks into the cycle. I should say that M. in the Rainbow Room has definitely has done really rich projects with kids and told the story of them... her story telling is different, which is fine, which there should be room for. But I think partly because of the age of the kids that she's working with, and her own style, and the fact that, those stories tend to be stories where the whole group sort of lives a topic together. So...they're very rich and the stories are well told, there's maybe not quite the same sense of negotiated curriculum (SF3).

~ The reality is that Ann and I have some similar influences coming in, and we have worked closely together here and developed a way of working together, a way of documenting that has a sort of look and feel. Already I think you could look at a document without a name on it and guess if it was hers or mine, but for a lot of years we were the only people doing it at all, or doing it in that fashion. I guess that's a more accurate way to say it. And so my sense is that for folks coming in to Hilltop, or at Hilltop but new to documentation, that that's fairly off-putting, or the sense that to even step in, you wouldn't even put your foot in the

water because it's not going to look like what Ann and Sarah are producing every other day (SF1).

~ At Hilltop, some of the challenges around making space for, and expecting to hear from, a range of voices, grows out of... patterns around the informal but very entrenched hierarchies of influence and importance and centralness [sic] to the program, and the more we're dismantling those hierarchies, the more room there is for movement (AP2).

~ In a way what I can say is that we have struggled tremendously with how to do that. And I think that's partly been true because [...pause...] there's a sense out there that there's a "Hilltop way" of documenting, and if you're not doing it that way, then you're not doing it right (SF1).

~ I think I move between feeling energized by the ways in which all of us are in really different places in this journey, and feeling a bit overwhelmed by it. Sometimes discouraged... no, discouraged isn't quite the right word. Feeling it, seeing it as a really profound challenge, but I mostly feel energized by it (AP2).

Ann, Margie, and Sarah can find encouragement in their efforts to nurture emerging and diverse documentation styles in this observation by Reggio educators:

What elements of a professionally enriching exchange can we expect to find in this sharing of ideas? The true value of this moment lies not so much in deciding on a documentational procedure that all will respect but in the fact that it bears witness to the different mental procedures through which the teacher has tried to generate a hypothesis of documentation. Its extraordinary value lies in perceiving oneself as a distinct individual in comparison and dialogue, and thus in a position to identify those areas of learning and exchange on which to concentrate. There is also the more articulated and precise perception of how our own thoughts can benefit from and evolve by listening to other points of view. Finally, our exchange leads us to examine the deeper meanings of documentation, thereby updating the idea of documentation itself. (Rubizzi, 2001, p. 103)

Malaguzzi (1998) challenges teachers to communicate with families regarding their children's experiences in a way that will change their expectations:

Teachers must leave behind an isolated silent mode of working that leaves no traces. Instead, they must discover ways to communicate and document the children's evolving experiences at school. They must prepare a steady flow of quality information targeted to parents, but appreciated also by children and teachers. This flow of documentation, we believe, introduces parents to a quality of knowing that tangibly changes their expectations.

They re-examine their assumptions about their parenting roles and their views about the experience their children are living and take a new and more inquisitive approach towards the whole school experience. (p. 69)

Certainly, the response to the documentation of the parents I spoke with at Hilltop is extremely favourable. However, both respondents raised the concern that, in parents' eyes, the documentation is of varying levels of quality, depending on who creates it. Quality seems to be a more significant concern for them than that multiple styles and voices are represented, a value held highly by Hilltop staff, Ann, Margie, and Sarah in particular. This is a source of tension.

~ I think the documentation is great. What I've mostly heard from other parents is that there is a parent recognition amongst the more savvy parents that there is a difference in the documentation, depending on who does it at the school, and in the Garden Room, anyways, Ann is considered to be the 'master,' and there is parent envy amongst parents that don't have Ann as their primary teacher. The same with the report cards, or whatever they call them, but it's like a book, this report card that comes out once a year. The parents, just sharing stories, there's a recognition that there's a real difference in the teachers. When you have Ann for your teacher, you feel much... I feel it is a gift, in addition to just a technique or a requirement. There's definitely a big piece of Ann's heart that goes into each of those, too (ASI).

~ Actually, this is a case where the documentation was incredibly valuable, because the teachers would give detailed documentation, and you could easily see, in the first transcript, the tension, the shifting alliances between these little girls. I mean... it's like a six page transcript of the kinds of conversations that a parent would never get to be a part of, otherwise (KG1).

These thoughts offered by Hilltop parents are representative of Rinaldi's (1998) observation that:

Documentation provides an extraordinary opportunity for parents, as it gives them the possibility to know not only what their child is doing, but also how and why, to see not only the products but also the processes. Therefore, parents become aware of the meaning that the child gives to what he or she does, and the shared meanings that children have with other children. It is an opportunity for parents to see that part of the life of their child that often is invisible. Furthermore, documentation offers the possibility for parents to share their awareness, to value discussion and exchanges with the teachers and among their group, helping them to become aware of their role and identity as parents. (p. 122)

~ I know that in one of the other schools that we considered - they are not as "Reggio Emilia" as this one, but they've clearly taken some of the principles -

each child has a journal, and the teacher did say that they make an effort to go into each child's journal once or twice a week to write something. So, there is more a specific focus on what your child is doing, whereas the way Hilltop is doing it, they tend to document activities, rather than children. There is a lot of stuff about my child because she is involved with a lot of activities, but it doesn't necessarily accurately track her (KG1).

~ And then, in the documentation of my younger daughter, she's with M. [in another class], she's a very different personality, she's very easy-going, happy, the kind of kid that every teacher just wants to cuddle up to and take home, she's bright and sunny. So, she's featured in a lot of the documentation in the classroom because she's often doing interesting things, and she's smiling in every picture. It was interesting in the teacher conference... the teacher conference for her was actually much more typical in terms of what she's done, and so it didn't really tell me anything I didn't already know. The documentation in the Rainbow Room has been, they've had one really fabulous teacher, M., who does everything, and so she definitely documents for the class as a whole. The other teachers don't add very much. Again, the documentation I get is what the class is doing, and my daughter may or may not happen to be featured... and I hear other parents saying this, too, they like hearing about the classroom activities, but what they really want to know about is their kid. I think with the documentation there is a challenge of how you balance that (KG1).

Typically in North America, most aspects of assessment and virtually all assessment practices are focused on individual performance and achievement. Reggio educators argue that “systematic and purposeful documentation of the ways groups develop ideas, theories, and understandings is fundamental to the meta-cognitive activity that is critical to the learning of individuals as well as of groups” (Giudici, Krechevsky, & Rinaldi, 2001, p. 16). This seems to be an area that could bear further elaboration with Hilltop families in order to clarify the goals the teachers hold for their documentation practice.

~ We do talk to parents carefully about the board from the perspective of acknowledging that their kid won't be up there every day, and in fact, it may be a lot of days in between postings that involve their kid, and it doesn't mean anything, it doesn't mean that their kid is not experiencing what's happening. Wanting to help parents have a feel of a larger community, so it's not about, “This is about me and my kid, and I'm looking at or scanning the documentation to find my kid's name... My kid's part of this community, I'm part of this community, so I want to read this, whatever, this dead fish or this block tower or this finger paint, even if my kid wasn't even here on the day that any of those things happened. I need to know because we are all part of this community... and it's going to be helpful that we all know the story” (AP2).

~ When I think of the schools in Reggio, that's one real immediate piece that comes up, is that families there seem committed to the children in the community. Certainly with a particular investment in their own child or children, but that investment doesn't come with disregard for, or ignorance about, or disinterest in the rest of the community. And so, things like really tangible practices, our curriculum board and the way we communicate with families [through documentation], being explicit that: "You're not going to see something about your child every day, but you'll see something every day about some element of this community that your child is a part of, and so coming to know that community is a way to come know your child" (AP3).

~ It's sort of overwhelming to me, in a way, I mean, to think of Reggio as this culture, this city, of people, committed to children and childhood. We don't live in that culture by any means, and so how we go about creating that culture in the community at Hilltop is a place that I think about a lot. I think of the families and staff at Reggio, I guess particularly around the issue of families, being curious not only about their own childhood, but about children. I think that is a piece that I've been trying to pay attention to in my work with parents. How to help cultivate that spirit in families here, where many cultural forces... have taught us to not necessarily go to that place... I imagine we're kind of the best in the world at individualism, and I'm not saying that with any kind of pride. I feel that this work is, potentially, really radical and political work, and that's one way in which I understand it to be radical, political work - shifting how we understand relationships, how we understand identity, how we understand community (AP3).

Parents obviously have very high expectations for the delivery of "service" provided by Hilltop educators. While appreciation is expressed for the efforts toward establishing community and building relationships, and recognition that some of the pedagogical documentation that families receive is a "gift," at the same time there is an evaluative component placed on the documentation.

~ I talked to another parent who was much less happy with the documentation because they were assigned to a teacher who was not as good at it, and felt like there was not much in there (KG1).

~ It may be intimidating for different staff members when some people have particular strengths in this area. I hadn't thought about the competition aspect (KG1).

~ The other thing, I think, is that sometimes they feel like they don't want to document things until they can write up a whole big page, and a lot of times I'm really happy to get two or three sentences of something interesting that happened... (KG1).

~ There are good writers and there's not good writers, and some of it is about how much is writing really a key component of that job (ASI).

In my experience and observations, the documentation prepared by several of Hilltop's staff, Ann and Sarah among them, is among the most complex and intellectually engaging I've seen anywhere in North America. I have to wonder if Hilltop families realize that the documentation developed at Hilltop is of such unusually superb quality, and far beyond the norm that is typical in childcare institutions. In a consumer driven society, I wonder if there is an expectation that this is a service provided for a fee? Not only has the bar been raised amongst the teachers, but also amongst the parent community in terms of their expectations.

Similarly, Kersting (1995) found that parents have various levels of understanding of the documentation process. In her study, all parents agreed that they found pleasure in reading the final presentation, but not all understood the process, or all the benefits of documentation. In fact, she indicates that an opportunity for further investigation would be to conduct a study on what information the parents have, what information they need, and what their involvement might be once they were given this information (p. 100).

Pedagogical Documentation and Diversity

In the Reggio educational experience, participation is a value and a quality of the school as a whole. This means providing for spaces, languages, and, more generally, organizational methods and strategies that make this kind of participation possible. "It means that the educational and pedagogical aims must be clearly stated, but at the same time, participation requires a certain sense of indefiniteness and ample spaces of possibility" (Rinaldi, 2001a, p. 42).

Hilltop teachers not only see pedagogical documentation as at the centre of all of their work, but are committed to celebrating and embracing diversity in multiple forms. Encouraging a variety of styles of documentation is one way to make that commitment visible.

~ I've been really putting a fair amount of energy and work into fostering more collaborative engagement with colleagues, doing documentation together. I think there are a couple of factors for why it hasn't been happening. One of those

factors is that people are really at different places in our journeys as teachers, generally, and also in relationship with ideas from Reggio... The dynamics of, "Oh, I don't know enough," or intimidation, or, "I can't be like her so I'm afraid to try," or, "I'm a first year teacher just barely managing to keep my head above water..." (AP1).

Documentation as a learning process, but also as a process of communication, presupposes the creation of a culture of exploration, reflection, dialogue, and engagement. This, according to Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (1999) is a culture "where many voices – of children, pedagogues, parents, administrators, politicians, and others – participate and can make themselves heard, and through that ensure that a multiplicity of perspectives can be scrutinized and analysed" (p. 154).

*~ One thing that is encouraging or exciting to me at Hilltop is seeing the ways in which each staff person is finding their way into this place called documentation, this way of **being** called documentation... The ways in which the range of voices that are being heard both communicates a range of ways of seeing things in the world, as well as a shared context in which we're living (AP2).*

~ All of that becomes part of a culture of documentation, which then is, in fact, a way to do the diversity work. If more voices are being heard in that arena, then... more people, I think, will be willing to speak out to... know that their voice is celebrated and included and integral to what we're doing... It's not just that we're doing a certain way of being in the world that Hilltop's about, that in fact it's bigger and longer and deeper than that. And the documentation can be one way to achieve that goal (AP1).

The act of documenting changes teachers' understanding of what goes on in the classroom. It slows them down, encouraging them to reflect on and understand the deeper meaning and value of a learning experience. It forces them to compare what they thought they would observe to what really went on, and informs their decisions about where to go next. Documenting children's learning entails making decisions about the moments and experiences that are most meaningful to record. Rather than trying to tell the whole story of an experience or putting up the work of every child, teachers become selective about what to document. Instead of simply describing the experience of the learning group, this view of documentation involves a deeper analysis of the purposes behind it and behind the related learning processes and products. Since it is often through discussion with others that we become clearer about our beliefs and values,

collaboration with colleagues becomes a particularly significant part of the process. Both Reggio educators and American teachers who have learned from the Reggio experience attest to the importance of documenting, studying, and collectively analyzing children's individual and group work for sharpening and deepening the focus of learning (Krechevsky & Mardell, 2001).

Like the schools in Reggio Emilia, Hilltop Children's Centre is a living, organically evolving community, responsive to the needs of both families and staff. The challenges have been many, but the intense commitment that is present in most of the teaching staff has caused them to persist in pursuing their dreams of "the possible." As Filippini (2001) expresses it, "It is our actions that make the difference, and this implies our responsibility to be not so much the interpreters as the builders of the experience" (p. 54).

Who Has Their "Stories" Told?

Documenting children's learning entails making decisions about the moments and experiences that are most meaningful to record. Rather than trying to tell the whole story of an experience or putting up the work of every child, teachers become selective about what to document. Instead of simply describing the experience of the learning group, this view of documentation involves a deeper analysis of the purposes behind it and behind the related learning processes and products.

Several issues emerge with the question "which children have their stories told?" As Ann points out, if only selected teachers are actively documenting, then the children they most frequently spend time with are those whose stories are highlighted on the public curriculum board. This points to the need, or desire, to have more teachers involved in the documentation process.

~ One of the people on our team... charted who, which children appeared most frequently on the curriculum board, or just who was on the board and who wasn't - whose stories were mostly being told, and whose stories were not being told. He brought it up at a team meeting... it was big for me to hear, this conversation, because I'm the person who does most of the documenting in our room. I often write two, if not, well, always one if not two a day. I often do that during my break, just because of how my life works. So, at this moment I got kind of defensive. "What's he saying? That I never write about E. or J.?" And then,

actually, when I was able to let go of that and begin really listening, we had this great conversation about what was showing up on the curriculum board, and it was one way of tracking where I was spending my time. Then noticing where I was spending my time, and who was getting up on the board, the people on the board were the most active, intense, often described by some of the teachers on our team as ‘challenging’ kids, and I was hanging out with them all the time. Partly because I’m just generally drawn to those kids, I have deep relationships with those kids. I love the kind of play they do, I love the big, loud, wild, build, jump, run, play kind of stuff. The other teachers actively avoid some of that kind of play (AP2).

~ It’s about other people doing the documentation... so a way into that piece was noticing what kids were being written about. It was a really sort of cool loop. Instead of saying, “Whoever is doing the documenting needs to write more about those kids,” it was, “Wherever each of us is living our days, we need to tell those stories” (AP2).

~ And, in fact, knowing that we’re living our days in these different sort of contexts, different kids are all going to get up there. “R., you love hanging out in the middle of the room, playing puzzles with kids, and the kids that love to do that are going to do that every day, and they are definitely not over in the building area, building up to the ceiling with their hard hats and tool belts and crashing the structure down. Those kids are never really going to cross paths. So, you’ve got to tell the story if it’s going to be told. Or, you’ve got to start hanging out over there so I can do the puzzles if I’m going to be the story teller of the classroom.” Really clearly not going that route, of not saying, “Oh, Ann, you’re the story teller, you’ve got to step it up to get these other kids up there,” but instead saying we’ve got to all step it up, so that all the stories are being told. It was a really good moment, a really good conversation (AP2).

~ Getting a system whereby it’s clear that every kid is having some experience of being documented in a regular way. That’s a whole system to figure out in and of itself. That’s the kind of stuff that Sarah is just brilliant at figuring out. She makes graphs and charts. She’s just phenomenal how she figures that stuff out (MC4).

A separate issue is that of understanding what the purpose of documentation is. Is it research? Is it collective memory? Is it individual assessment? Reggio educators point to the cultural differences between North American assessment in educational contexts being focused on the development of the individual, while Reggio documentation tends to focus on the socio-cultural dynamics of how children negotiate theories in a group context. This is a topic that bears further exploration with the Hilltop parent community.

~ I think the way it's done, right now, the challenge is that it's very interesting for the teachers to do it like this, but it isn't systematically meeting parents' needs, because... how much my child gets documented depends on the randomness of the teacher and what their interest is. There isn't like, a guarantee that once a week they'll go write an update about what my child has done, if that makes sense (KG1).

~ I would personally appreciate it if there was more of an effort to make sure that at least once a week, or twice a week, there was something, some effort to be made on a regular basis to ensure that every child has something written about what they did in their journal. A little more focused and deliberate, particularly for a child who is quiet. One of my friends came up last summer, and when she went to visit the preschool, she looked at all the stuff on the bulletin boards, and it was very interesting... her comment was, "Boy, who is that girl R.? She must be the alpha wolf in the class because she's in all the documentation" (KG1).

Pedagogical documentation, as it has been developed in Reggio Emilia, is more focused on children than on a child. The documentation presents the spirit of the school, the pedagogical principles at work, which may include one child as the protagonist here and another as the protagonist there. Forman and Fyfe put forward the caution that "the interest of the featured child's parent could be inversely related to the interest of the other parents. The other parents need a message to which everyone can relate" (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, p. 246).

~ I'm definitely selfish. I focus on the ones that have my kid in them, or the ones with the kids that I know better (AS1).

The point needs to be made, in order for families to understand the purpose, that documentation is not an attempt to evaluate the individual development of each child, or the effectiveness of the teacher's teaching strategies.. The viewer is asked to assume that "what one sees in the documentation of four children has happened at other times with all the children" (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, p. 246).

Seidel (2001a) notes two profound differences in orientation between American schools and those of Reggio:

First, our [American] orientation to notice, document, and report only on the work of the individual, as opposed to Reggio's focus on the group and the ways in which individuals move, interact, contribute, and learn from "the ways of learning of others," and second, our focus on outcomes, achievement, and measurement of improvement over time, as opposed to

Reggio's focus on the actions of teaching, learning, playing, thinking, and other epistemological considerations. It is important to notice that these are differences not only from the mainstream of American practice, but from some of the most progressive approaches to assessment in our schools. (p. 311)

While these differences may be at the root of what Americans find particularly challenging about Reggio's pedagogical practice, it is also probably the "depth of the affinities in [their] values and perspectives on children, teaching, and learning that explain how attractive Reggio's practice is to those same American educators" (Seidel, 2001a, p. 311).

The educators in Reggio Emilia study and assess the development of the individual, but also the development of the group, the development of a community of learners, and a community of caring people. By presenting documentation on the work of the group, and relating particular children's progress to the development to the group, teachers, parents and children focus on the social dynamics of learning. Through the negotiated curriculum (Forman & Fyfe, 1998) educators collaborate to develop a social consciousness about the rights of all young children.

In the experience of Reggio Emilia, over time, parents shift from being interested only or primarily in their own child, to being concerned with other children and the whole group, to an interest in childhood in general (Giudici et al., 2001). Cadwell (2003) observes that, in an American context, "we don't look at relationships first. Assessment in the United States focuses on one child in isolation... We need to continue to educate ourselves and the parents about creating a much richer and bigger picture of life in school" (p. 199). While still acknowledging parents' primary interest in their own children, Ann, Margie, and Sarah, along with the community of teachers at Hilltop, have the hope that this shift will happen in their own school.

Theme: Conflict and Collaboration

Conflict

Conflict and collaboration have gone hand in hand at Hilltop as teachers and staff members try to navigate the boundaries of forging authentic, rich working relationships. The high value placed on relationships is evident by the commitment shown to acknowledge, confront, and work through these challenges. As Rinaldi (2001a) puts it:

This means “listening” to the differences (we talk about the “pedagogy of listening”), but also listening to and accepting the changes that take place within us which are generated by our relationships and particularly by our interactions with others. It means letting go of any truths we consider to be absolute and being open to doubt, giving value to negotiation as a “strategy of the possible.” (p. 42)

~ We've really focused this last period on what's getting in the way of collaboration, apart from the structure issues, and it has to do with our ability to challenge each other, and our fears of conflict... (MC1).

~ It's easy to, again, reflect the scrunchy, interpersonal issues onto, “We can't do that because we can't get time off,” but it was really clear that even when we could carve out these little blocks of time, people couldn't use them to sort out differences very well. I sort of approached it by saying, “People have focused a lot, and have gotten really good at helping kids work through conflicts, and understanding that it isn't a bad thing. Your job is not to go stop the conflict... we need to be doing that among ourselves a little better, and drawing on what we were good at to help us in this area where we're not so good.” (MC2).

Many North American observers have noticed that, in Reggio Emilia, teachers do not shy away from conflict. Culturally, Italians are typically animated and passionate in conversation, and often this energy and enthusiasm provokes divergent opinions. This is often uncomfortable where, in a North American culture, avoidance of conflict prevails. However, this also leads to intellectual rigour as individuals engage in collaborative discourse. As Cagliari and Giudici (2001) express it, “The goal... [is to] construct public spaces within which to produce shared reflections, enabling each person's self-reflection to circulate and

increase” (p. 140). The effort and commitment to confront and work through collaboration and conflicts with Hilltop teachers emerged in our conversations.

~ So that piece, I think, created a different way to come at this collaboration/conflict issue. We kept coming at it from different angles of what gets in the way of collaboration when you have a different point of view from someone else. It's partly fear, it's partly this notion that somebody's idea is better or not better, worthy or not worthy, it's partly for fear that people might not like you. So we created activities where we acknowledged, without naming who had those feelings, this might be some of the reasons that are true (MC2).

~ The whole first session was just around self-awareness, and beginning to recognize the different places each person comes from in their own personal history, and ideas about conflict, what their own experiences have been, and that kind of thing. Sometimes it was just a spontaneous thing at the end, not spontaneous, but a short, quick thing at the end. Sometimes it was more an assignment ahead of time, “Come and bring an object that represents what you feel you have to give the collaborative process.” [Ann] created an ‘altar’ for these things to be placed on, without even discussing them first, they were just assembled and people who brought them put them there. There was just silence with music for people to just sit and look at these representations that people brought (MC2).

Filipinni (2001) points out that working through conflict and building collaborative relationships requires commitment and intentionality: “Staff collegiality is not taken for granted; it must be supported by professional development initiatives and also requires that times and opportunities be established within the work schedule (p. 55).

~ Ann would always read a piece of transcript or notes from the last meeting, or bring something, some recalling of what we did last time on this issue. It was leading up to creating a set of principles that they all wanted to adhere to about how they were going to handle, how they were going to approach their relationships. This is all sort of the precursor of collaboration, really, but it's really about setting the stage for what we're going to do when we bump up against our differences in a way that doesn't feel so good, as opposed to running and hiding or attacking or deferring, instead of really going at it with each other, which is just too scary for most (MC2).

In order to establish this kind of atmosphere, occasionally it's necessary to “rub up against each other's rough edges” in order to begin to polish each other. There have been painful periods with tears and tension and unhappiness. In a democracy there must be discussion, deliberation, dialogue. And while in every

dialogue there are mistakes, misperceptions, struggle, and emotion, it is the disequilibrium of dialogue that leads to exploration, discovery, and change. Folks at Hilltop have worked to listen and to adjust and to forgive and to know and accept each other as close colleagues. These teachers hold on to the vision of transformation that Ayers (2002) speaks of:

we speak with the possibility of being heard, and listen with the possibility of being changed... we commit to questioning, exploring, inquiring, paying attention, going deeper. But it is not enough to put ourselves forward and assert our perspective; we must also allow for the possibility of being ourselves transformed. (p. 42)

~ I came in and did one of these staff meetings somewhere in the midst of this flow of the ones that Ann and I were planning. I can't remember why she asked me to do it. Maybe she just wanted to participate. We created places to go stand and talk to somebody, or go tell a story about a time you feared how your differences with someone was going to turn out and it turned out great - just a bunch of different ways. The thing that started happening - which is what our hope was, but you never know - was that they began to develop this whole new appreciation for each other. "That thing that you do that drives me so crazy, I now have a whole different insight into why you do that, and it will shift my whole relationship to you." And they started saying that to each other. It was incredible, and so liberating (MC2).

~ If we keep plugging away at it, it's just going to make things better at Hilltop, it will make things better in that relationship. I've heard little bits and pieces of stories that have really worked, so I think the stage is now set for going after this collaboration piece. They've got a set of principles they've agreed upon, but again, it's not what we immediately think about when we think about collaboration. It's more of an agreement about how we're going to relate to each other, and sort of the foundation for going on. Stuff that might be presumed in Italian culture, stuff that maybe is different than Italian culture... (MC2).

As a result of working at addressing the issues of conflict, Hilltop staff members, facilitated by Ann, drew up a code of ethics for how they would honestly confront one another. Included in this code of ethics is a commitment to deal with one another directly, to handle little problems before they get big, to recognize each other's strengths, to pitch in and help one another, and to respect each other's rhythms. Staff members are, as a result, more able to accept one another's constructive critiques. This helps to foster an attitude of collaboration. In such an atmosphere, children, parents, and teachers can all flourish. "All of

this also requires a high degree of complicity, exchanges, comparisons, and reciprocity – which you only acquire over time and with experience, all within the overall context of a collaborative approach” (Gambetti, 2001, p. 132).

Collaboration

One of the hallmarks of the Reggio Emilia approach is collaborative activity. From the theoretical frameworks to the pragmatics, collaboration influences the what, the how, and the why of this approach (New, 1998). At the same time, collaboration was named, in this study, as one of the areas of challenge. Each interviewee said that while collaboration was one of the tenets of the Reggio Emilia approach, finding time for collaborative activities was a struggle, that when achieved, was rewarding; thus, the conundrum of both challenge and success.

~ Then we expanded from there, so the following year we were continuing to deepen our understanding of what good collaboration looked like, and also what collaborative curriculum planning looked like. In the height project we involved all the kids at one point or one way or another, and over those next few years that grew into the practice of small groups taking up project work, for example. The height project was a huge leap from September, and then a year later we had made another, we had made several huge changes... so it certainly was an undertaking and a journey. It wasn't like an initial decision which then led to really clear, set practices that we would then live for the next year... It feels like a huge part of my life, because the learning was so intense. That's amazing (API).

~ The staff in the public schools are screaming for more collaboration time, more time to talk to each other... They're carving out time by adding it here and there (MCI).

~ It was the ultimate letting go of having my own space and all of that stuff that is part of our U.S. culture and certainly part of what I'd been experiencing, even with its edges, wishing for cooperation and collaboration but fearing this moment of truth and oh, God, there was some aches and some things for me that were uprooted... and it was exactly the right thing to do... (API).

An important aspect of the Reggio Emilia Approach that consistently includes collaborative activities and is supported by social constructivist perspective is the notion of deep, sustained dialogue sessions. Teachers dialogue with other teachers. These sustained dialogue sessions are collaborative and

reflective in nature. The sessions are used to construct meaning and co-construct ideas among and between teachers, children and parents (Bersani & Jarjoura, 2002). The practice of generating beginning questions together requires organization and time; it also presumes a mutual commitment to follow through in discussing and sharing, interpreting and critiquing the work of the children as well as the work of the teachers.

~ And then there's the other goal or value that I hold for documentation, which is about growing curriculum in cooperation with other teachers by studying documentation together. That's a piece of the journey for me that I don't experience very often, because of... a lot of different reasons, really. And I want to keep naming that as a goal and a value for myself. That's a really key piece of documentation for me. I get this image of us using this in our team meetings, pouring over transcriptions and photos and picking out the themes that are unfolding and doing some planning together about who is going to facilitate which piece of this, or what ideas come up, to do that kind of work together. That isn't so much happening for me right now at Hilltop (AP1).

~... offering very specific questions to reflect on in collaboration with each other, so there isn't that tone of "Well, I really don't know what to do with this." (AP1).

~ So teachers at Hilltop all see ourselves as that, as a researcher, and as collaborative researchers (AP2).

~ Spending time doing the active work of documentation as a group, "Here's what the kids said, here are some photos, here's what she drew, what do you think I should do next?" I think we're really thirsty for more of those kinds of conversations together, and rarely find time for them. I've just recently made a plan with the teachers on my team that we would set aside ten minutes of our team meeting just to talk about the construction project that's happening now (SF2).

Cadwell (1997) indicates that working together as collaborative colleagues was one of the most significant starting points and important aspects of adapting the Reggio Emilia approach for the United States culture in their St. Louis, Missouri, school. Individuals had to re-examine and ask themselves hard questions about the everyday choices they were making. In this process, teachers had to organize themselves in order to work collaboratively. They discovered that working collaboratively was a challenge, but they experienced the success of "transforming relationships" as a result (p. 105).

~ In Sunlight Room recently... I felt so much satisfaction in my trainer role – my God, it's working! They did a collaborative brainstorming webbing sort of session about how to respond to this huge construction that's happening outside there, the elevator construction that has started. They just did it pretty informally, but they had people write down each on little index cards or sticky notes and then organized the sticky notes. All these sort of seem to be exploring this general idea, or these seem to be responding to this part of the kids' interest. Then they did some planning out if it, which was huge. That was a ground-breaking moment at Hilltop (AP1).

In this way, teachers take turns bringing to the table what is in progress; through sharing it with colleagues, it is possible to involve more voices, more perspectives and invite wider possibility and greater scope into particular unfolding experiences. Teachers state that they learn most by observing peers (Lieberman, 1995). Establishing a process where teachers can network with one another as they begin to implement new innovations is a useful strategy.

Although there have been successes at moving towards a more collaborative teaching model, Ann, in particular expresses a deep seated yearning for a more intense experience of connection and collaboration.

~ I have this yearning for collaboration... that meets me up at my edge, not coaching, not mentoring. I mean, I'm certainly committed to and ready to do that work, but my yearning is for taking up an idea with someone and then, thinking about how to build in, given sort of these informal and formal leadership [opportunities]... my yearning for collaboration - how do we take up project work together... how am I more and more able to name what I'm wanting to be in choosing to be in a leadership role, in a conversation, when I'm choosing to be in a peer-collaborator role? (AP2).

~ There was now this person who was as deeply engaged on a heart and head level by these same ideas that I was, so, there being that companionship, though we weren't literally leaning into any formal collaboration then... (AP1).

~ I think one thing that was then and continues to be... a struggle or challenge in this work, is this experience of doing it alone, especially initially at Hilltop. And then... more in partnership with Sarah when she came to Hilltop... the two of us were doing it alone, in terms of the whole centre. And now... it looks like me being further along on a journey about Reggio than some of other teachers that I work with... not further along because I'm more of a sophisticated thinker or a better human being in the world or anything like that, it's just the sheer lifetime lived encountering those ideas. So a different experience of loneliness, and yearning towards what collaboration on an authentic and

profound level could be, and not experiencing that. That's the thread that is woven through this journey also for me, for what that's worth (AP1).

~ In terms of other ways that that links into my growing edge, I feel really aware right now of being thoughtful about my role on my teaching team. There are five of us, and I have a lot of experience... and I have this acknowledged leadership role at Hilltop... I have this yearning for collaboration... not coaching, mentoring (AP3).

Malaguzzi (cited by Filipinni, 2001) referred to this yearning as a search for completeness:

All this gives substance and meaning in our daily work to the idea that each act of perception is an act of creation that requires both the awareness of one's responsibility as a builder of possible worlds and the awareness that it is one of many points of view; that is, a sense of relativity emerges that strengthens one's desire to seek completeness in others. Right from the start, said Loris Malaguzzi, children search for completeness, and they realize that this can be achieved not only through internal dialogue but also through dialogue with others. And the same is true for all of us. (pp. 55-56)

By demonstrating a theoretical understanding of the Reggio Emilia pedagogical practices, there is an inextricable relationship with the beliefs and values in a socio-cultural context. In this process, as New (1998) says, some disequilibrium occurs. First, the ambiguity in the application of theory requires that individuals face issues involving negotiating roles and relationships. This is an area where the Reggio Approach encourages discussion about how to create relationships (Edwards et al., 1998). Second, the nature of collaborative experiences often brings about intellectual vitality; a sense of passion for teaching that is experienced by Reggio-inspired teachers (Tegano, 2002). The combination of the ambiguity of taking theory into practice and the nature of collaboration may cause individuals to experience disequilibria, and thus the view that collaboration is both a success and a challenge.

Theme: Mentorship – “Standing Side by Side”

Hilltop Children's Centre has made a concerted effort to provide mentorship to their teachers, primarily through the creation of their own version of the role of

pedagogista (see also Appendix L). As they describe this role, responsibilities include:

- Supporting teachers in continually seeing and valuing children’s play and seeking to understand their meaning-making process
- Regularly assessing the classroom environment and offering ideas and suggestions to teachers as to how to better reflect and promote the value of childhood
- Cultivating refined observation and documentation skills across the teaching staff, doing individual mentoring as needed
- Exploring with teachers possible “provocations” for children’s pursuits and learning
- Supporting teachers in collaborative discussions to recognize emerging ideas in children’s play and conversations, and the potential this suggests for work teams or in-depth project work
- Guiding teachers through the process of in-depth project work, supporting them in the specific, daily practices of using documentation with children, their families, and the teaching team to uncover and co-create curriculum; as needed, offer guidance for work team formation and studio work

Participants describe their experiences of mentorship in two ways: from the perspective of being mentored, and from the position of mentoring others.

Being Mentored

~ Margie would help me think about little ‘nugget’ moments that were happening in the classroom, and how I could fertilize and grow those moments into whatever they might grow into with my support and facilitation (AP1).

~ A lot of one-on-one coaching that I was receiving from her... really helped me deepen my thinking and my questioning about Reggio (AP1).

~ Margie does that kind of experiences with her training a lot, mirroring back to people, “Here’s what I saw you do.” The power of that... to think we can do that for children so easily, really so easily, and with such a huge impact. Then there’s all the layers, and the scariness comes back up, “I’m not doing it right,” or, “I’m not doing it good enough,” or, “Mine looks different than that,” or, “I want to tell it in this really different way and is that okay here?” or, “I don’t even have the time for it,” or, “What’s the story I’m supposed to be telling here?” All those mixed layers of training (AP3).

Educators in Reggio Emilia, as part of their ongoing professional development, regularly observe each other and discuss their work together. A

fairly new teacher in Reggio commented on how observing her more experienced colleagues at work “certainly help[ed] me, because I realized there was no single theory that could explain to me how to operate in practice. So I observed, I tried to understand, and I started to build relationships” (Gambetti, 2001, p. 121).

Mentoring Others

In Reggio Emilia, educators respond favourably to this experience of side-by-side mentoring through observation and discussion: “In a sense, there’s something reciprocal in observation. I find it helpful to feel that I’m being observed; it makes me feel valued, or rather, it makes it easier for me to capture the valuable aspects of my actions” (Gambetti, 2001, p. 121). This modeling in Reggio is a significant influence for Hilltop.

~ These are things I’ve done at Hilltop... standing side by side and narrating what I’m seeing, or the questions that it raises for me (MCI).

~ In the Garden Room we’ve done... some shared experiences where I’ve told a story of something that I saw kids doing, and after some of the discussions that we’d had in the big staff meeting... the guided reflection questions... we were practicing having those kinds of conversations together (API).

~ ... when I think of addressing some of these issues, what I’ve been trying to cultivate at Hilltop, both in my teaching team and in coaching other teaching teams about is to just, just do it - sort of stupid, but true. We’ve done some in-service training around just practicing looking at a short transcription and talking about it with some very clear, guided questions. “What do you think the meaning of this play might be for children? Why do you think that?” “What strengths are the children drawing on in their play?” “What questions might the children be exploring in their play?” Offering very specific questions to reflect on in collaboration with each other, so there isn’t that tone of “Well, I really don’t know what to do with this.” (API).

~ It’s an idea that came with Margie that grew out of a sense that, “Boy, I’ve grown some skills around this, and not a lot of the other folks I teach with have practiced this - how can I do this work in a way that’s helpful to them, and not just go off by myself and do it?” So we came up with the idea of doing it publicly or transparently at these meetings so that what I’m trying to do is bring my process to those meetings and just do it out loud with them, as a way of modelling it. It’s my hope to involve them in it, getting their input, so that growth is something that we all participate in (SF2).

~ *The pointers I've found myself giving him are all about things that fit under my big umbrella of documentation, from the basics of, "Well, before we have this first meeting with them, find the tape recorder, make sure it's working, make sure you have a blank tape, we're going to record it, and we're going to transcribe it. That'll give us something to go on for the next meeting." Really reining him back from his five ideas he already had about the concrete projects around the topic this group would do, and I said, "... for starters, write all those ideas down, we're documenting your thoughts process, too, we're going to keep notes about that" (SF3).*

~ *I often find, unless I'm simultaneously helping them get the disposition to just be curious about and notice and see, and getting an environment in place, just some sort of basic routines, and interesting things for the kids to do, then I have to keep taking a step back. So now I sort of have a little checklist in the back of my head – I've actually developed some of these for training – about what has to be in place before you can actually observe and document (MC1).*

~ *We touch base about the plan, and then she works on it and comes back. She's gotten very skilful at that. The staff has just really risen to the occasion; they're really there (MC2).*

~ *I'm trying to figure out in my own mind where the notion of self-reflection comes in there. I don't think this is a sequential process, so I often just go after different entry points as I get to know different individuals... This is the conversation I had at another centre today: "Do you see yourself consciously having a set of values, a clear set of values and ideas about children that shapes everything that you do, so that you don't just have knee-jerk reactions to things, and you don't just go to an activity book to do things, or imitate what you've seen someone else do?" Those are the sorts of things I try to structure training around (MC1).*

~ *... we were talking... about supporting everyone on staff in their journey into documentation... my training plan that I'm slowly evolving for next year, being anchored by the question of what it is to be a researcher... I think it's what we're going to take up as our guiding question for us in our training next year. That gets at all the pieces, the observation piece, the collaboration piece, the reflection piece... our over-arching question for the year then will be planning learning experiences and opportunities at our staff meetings and in-services that get at the question "what is it to be a researcher?" So teachers at Hilltop all see ourselves as that... as collaborative researchers. That seems to be a big idea, really naming that as at the heart and soul of what it is to be a teacher/researcher at Hilltop (AP2).*

In Reggio Emilia, often children work in small-group projects with one classroom teacher and the *atelierista*, while another teacher observes, sometimes supports, and coordinates the activities of the other children who are usually

working in groups around the room. At Hilltop, throughout the day the teacher and the co-teacher or *pedagogista/mentor teacher* share ideas about what they are seeing, making decisions about whether or not to intervene and how to sustain children's motivation and support their learning. "This daily exchange is fundamental to shaping and adjusting the research path and determining what will be documented and how" (Giudici et al., 2001, p. 154).

~ To me, facilitating an in-depth project equals documentation with a capital D, or documentation as an active practice and a product (SF3).

~ I've decided I'm going to step a little beyond my expected role as co-teacher and say, "Let me help you, let me be your ally in this, just because I've lived it five or six or seven cycles of that, here at Hilltop, and other experiences before I came here, and it isn't easy." This is the first time I've ever sort of consciously said, "Let me shepherd you, a new teacher through this process of facilitating an in-depth project" (SF3).

~ ... really reining him back from his five ideas he already had about the concrete projects around the topic this group would do, and I said, "... for starters, write all those ideas down, we're documenting your thought process, too. We're going to keep notes about that, but those [ideas] might not be what happens. We need to step back enough to figure out what's grabbing these kids, why is it that these six, seven kids keep coming back to this topic [of] mazes." I think there's great possibility for richness there, and it's a great group of kids. I think it's fertile, but I think this is where... being someone who facilitates through documentation will take you a completely different path than being someone who facilitates through providing pre-structured activities - completely different. And you'll get a completely different result. And so this is my first try at trying to figure out how to steer... if we use active documentation... it will go a completely different way than if we let our job be designing these discrete experiences, you know, a list of these discrete experiences for this group to have (SF3.)

Reggio teachers have found ways to guide, lead, probe, and provoke a group of children in distinctive ways. Edwards (1998) articulates this well: "the teacher leads the learning of a group of children by searching for individuals' ideas to use to frame group action" (p. 154). Edwards emphasizes that this is done in many different ways. Hilltop teachers read the transcripts of conversations to children, searching with them for questions to pursue. In this way, teachers sustain the ongoing cognitive and social process by repeating or clarifying children's ideas; teachers are alert for ideas and conflicts that can become hypotheses for later testing and exploration.

Simona, a young teacher in Reggio Emilia, observes that, “sometimes talking to your colleagues is not enough. Then you find that the *atelierista* or another colleague with more experience can help you, particularly someone who’s had the opportunity of reflecting on what you’ve been doing” (Gambetti, 2001, p. 126).

~ [In] the article I wrote when I came back from Reggio, I concluded that one of the most important things that you could do was to get a *pedagogista* on your staff (MC2).

Professional Development

In Reggio Emilia, the citywide school system employs a number of *pedagogistas*, each of whom work in a consultative capacity with six or seven schools. A part of their role is to facilitate professional development activities for teachers. Seattle, Washington, where Hilltop is located, has nothing so comprehensive in terms of staff development for early childhood educators. The efforts of Hilltop go far beyond the norm in North America as they dedicate time and financial resources to provide for Margie’s part-time role as *pedagogista*, and for Ann’s newly created role of staff development coordinator. Rinaldi (2001a) points to the value of this professional development being located within the context of the particular school:

Formation for teachers (weekly staff development meetings, for instance) can be a context in which other views can represent both an opportunity and a potential threat, but where negotiation and cooperation can be the ultimate outcome. It is for this reason that in Reggio Emilia the primary contexts of professional development are inside the schools themselves or in the system-wide professional development program. Not as “contexts” in which one simply describes to the others what he or she has learned, but as places where we can reflect on what has happened inside (as well as outside) the school, in order to self-assess and assess the quality and quantity of learning opportunities that we offer the children, the families, and the teachers themselves – opportunities for learning and sharing values. (p. 45)

Hilltop staff members continually name this professional development initiative as being a significant part of their organizational structure.

~ Basically, the way I describe the role of the *pedagogista* is as somebody to help you think about the learning and teaching process. That was sort of how I

defined it. So... whenever I could, I would go hang out in the classrooms, observe kids, talk to them, I went to the staff meetings, tried to get us focused on discussing observations and stuff like that (MC1).

~ My role at Hilltop has changed over time. I started out being what's labelled as 'staff trainer... In the endeavour to not have a two-tiered quality childcare system, the city of Seattle structured this program, which I think is really ingenious, where if you agree to take subsidized kids, low income kids, and you get a contract with the city to do that, you get a trainer for x number of hours a week, and you get access to a public health nurse for consultation, and a few other goodies. You get some free workshops that you can go to, and so forth. So, probably ten years ago I started at Hilltop under that program (MC1).

~ Those are some of the ways, in my classroom teacher role and my administrative support role, to cultivate more experiences of collaboration around analytical and reflective thinking... and to also cultivate some dispositions to get people hungry for it, to get other people yearning for it, and missing it when it doesn't happen, and start taking some leadership around making it happen ... (AP1).

Filippini (2001) articulates how crucial it has been in Reggio Emilia to be able to reflect on teacher practice, and how significant this has been to the development of the approach:

Revisiting and reflecting on our actions, to which we give priority in our professional development and which are aided by the documentation process, enable us to take constant stock of and closely examine our experience and understandings. Reflective thinking allows us to step back from ourselves, creating a distance that prevents us from getting caught up in "events," thereby increasing our awareness of what we are learning and also the dimension of the possible – of that which it is possible to know and be. This phenomenon permeates the processes of adults and children alike. The more this reflective process becomes a collegial endeavor (thanks to the organization of the work schedule so that we share our thoughts with our colleagues as well as with the children's families), the greater the possibility of more dialogic approaches that help us to appreciate the intentionality, the values, and the meanings present in the organization. (p. 55)

~ One thing... in this training role I'm in... is somehow finding what it will be for each staff member that will engage and delight them in this work, and... what will make them want to do this next piece, this documentation piece. Each person is phenomenal in his or her work in the classroom, in terms of presence with children and close observation (AP2).

~ A large part of what drew me into the program development/staff development role that I'm [now] in was wanting to work with our staff in this

intimate setting where these relationships are really strong, as opposed to... some... two hour workshop... But to really think about how this documentation piece - how is it at the heart of our program? And how, with it at the heart of our program, does it shape all of our practices? I think that's the very powerful piece (AP3).

Phillips and Bredekamp (1998) reinforce this idea of building professional development around documentation: “As a collaborative interaction with other teachers, the documentation process gives meaning and concrete references to the teachers’ learning process. Teachers have records of their own ideas in historical context, and a means to revisit their own growth and change” (p. 447).

Margie, writing for an audience of early childhood educators, draws upon her experience working alongside of teachers at Hilltop:

In my opinion [most professional development efforts] often fail to achieve lasting results because they are focused on training technicians, rather than reflective practitioners; and they typically don’t address the organizational climate and support systems that motivate teachers to continue their professional development. When you are taught how to think through the complexities of your work with children, you are likely to become more engaged and find the work more satisfying, than if you are merely taught a set of techniques to use. If you work in a setting that values and provides time for focused discussions with your co-workers, you have the opportunity to expand your thinking, and improve your practice. (Carter, 2006, p. 24)

Ann, Margie, and Sarah, along with their Italian colleagues in Reggio Emilia, identify time and specific working conditions as requirements to make it possible for schools and teachers to become real and effective sources of learning. As Filippini (2001) explains:

In our ongoing and permanent staff development, we place a great deal of emphasis on promoting constant learning and an attitude of research, an openness to change and to discussing diverse points of view. Therefore, the organization of work must enable and support communicative dynamics which, by interweaving individual and collective thought, leads us to experiment with the existence of “possible worlds” and the possibility of constructing new meanings or, better, shared meanings. (p. 54-55)

Theme: The Tools of Technology – “A Mixed Blessing”

Technology Tools

In Reggio-inspired programmes, such as Hilltop’s, documentation affects all aspects of teacher development, especially the teacher’s role as a co-constructor of knowledge with children and as developer of curriculum. Documentation is a bridge between theory and practice, and using the tools of technology helps to accomplish this. Because the use of technologies, such as 35-mm camera or digital camera, video-camera, tape-recorder, scanner, computer, and printer are considered absolutely indispensable for recording and understanding teaching practice, the effectiveness of technology has become an important issue in the process of creating effective documentation displays. At the same time, using the tools of technology has come to Hilltop as a mixed blessing. Without a doubt, for those, like Ann, Margie, and Sarah, who are comfortable computer users, the advent of digital photography, in particular, has simplified the task of compiling pedagogical documentation.

~ Personally, I had a lot more comfort with computers than maybe other folks, and I also feel like I hardly know anything. But to be able to do the written reflective piece, and have it there, you know, and it’s not all hand-written... plop in the photos, and maybe I’ll make one of photos with several kids that will go up on the board, and then I’ll copy the text and plop in the three photos I took of D. at different places in this, and then copy the text and plop in the three photos of H... So then each kid has a copy for his journal, I have a copy for myself. I can make a little CD and I’ve got the year on a CD, so my little professional portfolio is “ta-dum,” there it is, sweet and easy. Publication coming out of that is so easy. And for doing the web page, I hand the technology guy [a parent volunteer] the CD of the three things I want to go on... It’s amazing, and I love it, I love it (AP2).

~ The turn-over time that I can do all that in... half an hour, as opposed to, you know, just push print and it all prints during nap and at the end of nap I pick it up. [Compare that to] take a photo, take the film at some far away time and drop it off for developing, you finally pick it up, you pay the money, you get reimbursed, you divide them up – “Okay, I took these three, but I don’t know whose photos these are, you guys figure those out.” Glue them in, write, write, write...” It’s just so, oh my God, it’s so great. How did we do it before? That’s what I wonder (AP2).

Cadwell (2003) writes of how the use of digital technology has similarly created new opportunities for colleagues at her school in St. Louis to work together, as well as to be able to use digital photos, in particular, on a daily basis.

We all have access to our shared documents, both written and photographic. We can work on these things during school hours. We do not have to leave the building to access and review photographs together. We are able to use photographs in the daily journal because we are able to print them immediately. (p. 39)

~ And [it's] so easy to turn it right around with kids – I love that. “Here, I took the photo, I took six photos of you in these building stages, and come sit with me and we’ll watch it on the camera, I’ll play it back to you.” I mean that’s incredible right there, to offer that. Or, like the other day we were making a book for J. as he was getting ready to leave... We took the photos, we had the camera right hooked up to the computer, we watched the pictures traveling through. “Oh, look, the pictures are on the screen. What words do you want to say to J.? Okay, now push this button and watch it come out the printer.” How exciting is that to a four year old? Often, if there’s a printed thing that’s going up on the board, I’ll alert the kids who were a part of whatever... is... being written about - “Oh, when your mom comes to pick you up... be sure to have her read the board!” I love that. They’ll... drag them over and look. Talk about, “So, what did you do today?” “I don’t know, nothing,” versus THAT. That’s huge, I think, that piece right there (AP2).

~ I guess one major impact on families with the digital photography that we’re doing more of now is that I’m able to print copies of documents that have photos and text for every family to keep, and that wasn’t true before. I’d usually just make one set of photos, that’s all we could afford, and they’d sort of go in the book that told the whole story, that would be available for the all families to see, and maybe one of the written pieces. I could make black and white copies and put it in the children’s journals, or maybe I’d have an extra photo or two here and there that I’d attach, but now I’m really giving the whole, as much of the story as I have of the project, to each family of each kid that’s involved. So that’s a pretty huge change... (SF2).

At the same time, the use of computer technology has been a surprising source of friction and frustration. What was originally hoped to “level the playing field” has actually caused increasing discomfort for some Hilltop teachers who are less willing or comfortable to embrace new technologies.

~ The idea, originally, about the technology, is that it would help level the playing field a bit, because there were people there who were computer-phobic, and technology-phobic, even about using digital cameras. I just pushed and pushed them to go digital with the cameras. And that’s been a stretch... [W]e

discovered as we went, it didn't level the playing field, because there was this whole sort of phobia around the technology. So, then we had to get some support and training available for everybody, even on using the digital camera and these laptops (MCI).

~ I was so resistant when we got the digital camera. I worked hard on getting the grant, but I was just, "Oh my God, I have to learn something new, I can't stand it and it's too hard." I laugh at that now because, oh my God, I love what this technology makes possible for us. And, I hate that it's a burden. I think the hard challenge is the way in which it's a hurdle for some staff. I'm afraid of the way it may create this division, who does the hand-written documentation and who does the computer documentation, and wanting to be really thoughtfully careful about one not being more valued than the other. But that's more training and getting more comfortable with that piece, because it's amazing (AP2).

~ There's making sure those voices get heard. I mean, there is some, "I don't get the technology, I've never done computers, I've never even gone to college, why would I start learning computers now." But I still want to tell my story, and I'll write it up here with loopy circles over the 'i's and stick it on the board, and if you give feedback that's positive about that - you just watch I can do." For other staff, about the computers it's just, "I try, and it's hard, and if I lose a photo it's so discouraging." So that's the vague, technology training sort of issue. One person on my team is really dedicating a lot of time to figuring that out, and the more support we get for her, the more she eats it up (AP2).

Using technology also comes with the frustration of machines breaking down and being difficult to repair.

*~ [F]or several weeks I hadn't been doing that [daily documentation] particularly, between technology *%&^%-ups, oh, my God... between the computer not working very well, and it still isn't, and the camera wasn't working, and the chord wasn't working – so, that was one thing that was happening (AP2).*

~ It almost strikes me that in order to support documentation, you need a tech person around to help let the teachers focus on what they do, and have someone else taking care of the technical side of things (KG1).

Having digital documentation creates another tension between the Hilltop staff and the families of students. Teachers have the desire to have documentation posted publicly on the walls of the school, in part for the benefit of the children who see their stories reflected back to them day to day. Sarah refers to parents (and visitors) reading the documentation on the walls as contributing to a sense of community and providing an interactive element as people discuss the postings with each other and the teachers. Parents, on the other hand, would appreciate the

convenience of having the digital documentation sent to them directly on their computers via e-mail. While teachers recognize this convenience factor for families, and are not entirely resistant to this idea, they maintain that viewing documentation stories in the privacy of one's home does not enhance a spirit of community building. There is also an awareness that documentation that is not done digitally would not be shareable in the same way, and would further create a sense of discrepancy between documentation styles and talents that Ann, Sarah, and Margie have particularly tried to eliminate.

~ One of the issues that surfaces from time to time on the Reggio listserv is the issue of how you get parents to read the stuff. I'm always a little puzzled... I wonder what's not happening in those programs that parents aren't that invested. Is it some sense of really not being part of the program, really on the periphery, really not welcome? What is it about? Because I don't see how families would not be interested... [T]hese rich, beautiful stories about the children, however they are told (AP2).

~ I think the intention is that some of the work that we're doing can go right on the web-page that's just been developed, and families, and others, can get to it that way. Already I've put a few things up there. I wonder if, given the community of families that's here at this school, if that might be an easier, more fun way for them to get at it. I have this image of them showing it to their colleagues at work, or hunkering around the computer at home with their kids (SF2).

~ Something we've just started to dive into is getting all school announcements out to families that way [via e-mail]. It's interesting to think about what the curriculum classroom uses of that might be. I don't want it to be the only way, because I think the point of documentation is that what the kids see reflected on the walls around them is their work, their words. There's the interactive element, too (SF2).

~ I like that there's the whole time spent lingering in the hallways, reading these stories about these kids at play. It has to do with thinking of schools as places for families to be, a sort of central place of community. But honestly, I think, a lot more parents would spend time looking at and reading documentation if it came easily to them on their computer (SF2).

~ I've even had her e-mail them [bi-annual report cards] to me so I can send them out to my family, you know, pictures and all, because they're so... they're her reflections and summations, and they clearly have this form that they go through of things they're supposed to talk about, the different developmental things for the ages that they are. But the way that Ann does it is just brilliant, and

I've sent them out to my family both times, and said, "You'll know your grandson (your nephew, whatever), better after reading this than anything" (AS1).

~ One thing that I've been thinking about raising with Ann is the idea of e-mailing them out, because for me, like, it would be a huge distraction at work, on one level, but for me, just to get the quick e-mails, either sitting at my desk where I can take two minutes and read them, as opposed to when I'm racing in to pick up my kids and trying to get home... it would be a really nice, I mean, since it's already there in writing, to have them just kind of pop up. You could choose to be on the list-serv or whatever, or not if the parents felt they didn't want to be bothered, but that would be such a treat for me to do that, to have that come in and to connect with my child that way during the day. If it was just posted on the website, well, I'm just the type of person that I won't take the time, I need it to kind of pounce and go "Oh, it's the latest from Ann. I'll read that!" As opposed to thinking, "Oh, I wonder if there's anything new up on the web-site," having to be very deliberate about going to look for it. I need some kind of prompting (AS1).

~ I think technology is probably the best example of using this [documentation] to be able to... I don't know how much other parents have done it, but being able to forward... since it's already been written, it's such a luxury for me. I could see something coming across via e-mail and my deciding to send it out to like, the two grandparents, and say, "Check out what Caleb's up to." In terms of supporting it, enhancing the community support, it would pay off fund-raising wise, too (AS1).

~ I get the value of getting documentation on e-mail to a parent, and I know some parents wish we did that. However, I don't think it builds community. Really, it's more work for the individual teachers, and it doesn't build community. I think it would be nice to occasionally send some things on e-mail, but I really think that... Ann's been, in a growing way, training her parents to read about other kids that aren't just theirs. To learn about childcare and learn about the friends your child has and so forth (MC4).

~ I would love to have anybody e-mail me anything. That's the best way to get in touch with me. I love reading the stuff on the bulletin boards, but unfortunately I find when I'm picking up or dropping off my kids, I have two of them, and it is chaos, trying to... it's like herding cats to get the two of them in and out the door. So I don't have very much time to read it on the bulletin board. I have to sneak in before I pick them up to try and read it, and hope they don't see me. Then I feel badly that I have to go pick up my kids, or if I've already picked them up, they're asking me to do things. So that's not a very good way... I try to remember to pick up her journal, but I often only remember to take the journal home every other month. It's like, the times that I have to look and think about this is usually after my kids go to bed, so if there was some way to get some of that into my hands earlier... a website has interesting possibilities. That would work very well for me. I'm on the computer all the time, although it does sort of make

it even more public, and you have some sense that the documentation... that there's some things in my child's journal that aren't up on the [web]... (KG1).

~ Maybe doing some of the documentation on the website, stuff that's the main class activities, would actually get it into more people's hands. I mean, I think generally, with parents you have to give them the information in a lot of different mediums, and hope one of them hits (KG1).

~ I've noticed since they've started using e-mail to communicate with parents, the director e-mails communication to parents, there's suddenly a lot more information getting out to parents. I mean, I would love it if the teachers were directly on e-mail and we could e-mail them with questions, because sometimes trying to talk to them before, you know, when you're doing drop-off or pick-up is really challenging. Hilltop has created group e-mail addresses for each of the classrooms, and I would adore having Sunlight Room teachers e-mail us some of the classroom wide documentation, because then, ultimately, it makes it easy to forward on to friends and relatives (KG1).

As Forman and Fyfe (1998) argue, the form of documentation should suit the population for whom it is targeted.

Take the example of a class where parents bring their children to school or frequent the classroom regularly. In this case, wall panels very well may be an efficient means of communication. On the other hand, in a program where parents seldom visit the school or frequent it only occasionally, other forms of documentation may be more effective in communicating and affirming parent involvement. A newsletter or minutes of parent meetings could be sent home. A lending library of videotapes or multimedia of parent involvement inside or outside the classroom might be made available. A combination of these forms of documentation may be even better, since children, teachers and visitors to the schools are also audiences for parent involvement documentation panels. If teachers wish to use any of these records to develop partnerships, they need to be designed in ways that invite response and dialogue. (p. 254)

The parents in this study express a strong desire to have documentation shared with them digitally via website or listserv. This is worthy of further consideration, perhaps, for Hilltop teachers.

Technology and Research

As teachers become more and more familiar with digital cameras, video cameras, and computers as tools for documentation, it may become worthwhile to explore if and how digital technology modifies learning. Cadwell (2003)

challenges teachers to reflect on “the process that traditional education permits and facilitates as well as the process supported and nurtured by digital technology. Only in this way can we investigate an area that is yet unexplored: that of the connections that are created by weaving the two together” (p. 170).

Along this idea of technology and research, Burrington (n.d.) challenges those who work with young children to identify as researchers as opposed to ECE teachers:

Technology makes the process richer. You have to be a pretty good observer, you have to understand ... observation itself is a subjective act. You have to know the children you're observing. You don't need technology for this. You need intuition, discipline, desire, you need... some habits that being a good observer would help one to cultivate the predisposition to write down, to remember, to look for meaning. To assume that if children are doing it there is inherent meaning. To juxtapose what you know about development, about what children that age are typically doing. I've seen teachers, really good teachers, document who don't have the technology as well but if we gave it to them they would fly. So much about early childhood is anecdotal, because teachers don't have a way of indexing those anecdotes or sharing them with one another or making public that they're kind of relegated to the level of anecdote. But if we were, say, to identify ourselves more as researchers than early childhood teachers, maybe then we could cultivate a feel for commanding and using technology and communicating the importance that technology could play in getting that out there. We understand that technology helps make the process richer.

This notion of teacher-as-researcher, coupled with working to incorporate the use of technology tools into documentation practice, is definitely in evidence at Hilltop Children's Centre.

Theme: Social Justice – “At the Crossroads”

Social Justice

Issues of fairness and social justice are dear to the hearts of Hilltop staff members, in part thanks to the passion that Ann, Margie, and Sarah bring to these issues. This is reflected in a deep commitment to fostering children's dispositions to be aware of things that seem unfair and to create opportunities for children to

become agents of change. This has resulted in long-term projects addressing pollution, homelessness, and wheelchair accessibility, to name a few.

~ I think learning how to be in the world with other people is what they're here for. So often that ends up being the curriculum they find. So, that's what spicy work is, a chance to practice all that (SF1).

~ My main job is to help these kids be in the world with other people (SF1).

~ I mean, there are certainly ideas that I can engage with and feel challenged by and feel, like, I want to be challenged or understand more about, or challenge other folks about, one being the thread of anti-bias/diversity, for example (AP1).

~ We live in Seattle, which in the American context, is a pretty liberal city, and it sort of fits with what I experience of the adult culture here that peace activism and anti-bias activism are woven into our work with kids. That's not a thing we've borrowed from Reggio, it's something that, I think, comes out of the fact that the families and teachers who make up this school, bring that wisdom... that is an example of us doing our thing (SF3).

~ Doing peace and justice work with kids - that's sort of been my core, my spine to my work, that's been the sort of deepest anchor. That's what drew me to working with young children in the first place. It's painful to me to see in our field the deep divisions between camps, so that anti-bias diversity work is really separate from Reggio-inspired, child-centered work with kids... I think that's insane because I think they fit together like hand in glove. If, in fact, we're paying such intimate and close attention to children and building deep relationships with them that deeply respect who they are individually and culturally, we can't help but do anti-bias and diversity work... There's no way to do that work without paying close attention to children, and hearing from them what their passions and pursuits are, and meeting them in that place, and letting that be the curriculum that we live with children. So, for example, in working on "That's Not Fair" (Pelo & Davidson, 2000), Fran and I articulated a goal of bringing those two pieces together. That felt really important to us (AP1).

Introducing herself to new families in a letter at the beginning of the school year, Ann expresses this desire to enable children as change-makers:

I want children to identify unfairness and know that they are powerful to comment on it and to act to change it. And for myself? I want to put children and childhood at the heart of my work, to enter the world of children with respect and joy (Appendix J).

In the period of time following the interviews conducted for this thesis, Ann contributed a chapter to a book focusing on pedagogical documentation. In that chapter, which she titled “At the Crossroads,” she wrote the following:

As we’ve become more and more skilful at the practice of pedagogical documentation, social justice issues have risen to the surface and become a concerted focus of our teaching and learning... The crossroads where social justice work and child-centered, Reggio-inspired teaching meet is a place of vitality, challenge, and profound engagement with fundamental values and vision. At the crossroads, we are called into a way of being with children and families that demands passionate dialogue and action. At the crossroads, we are challenged to listen closely to children’s understandings of their lives—their expression of individual and family identities, their experiences of culture and relationships, their encounters with justice and oppression. At the crossroads, we are asked to weave together the dispositions to pay attention, reflect on children’s play and conversations, plan from our reflections, and tell the stories that enrich our community. At the crossroads, we are called to weave together a commitment to responsive pedagogy with a commitment to work for just, non-violent communities. (2006, p. 174)

Ayers (2002) summarizes this attitude eloquently:

Seeing the student, seeing the world – this is the beginning. To assume a deep capacity in students, an intelligence (sometimes obscure, sometimes buried) as well as a wide range of hopes, dreams, and aspirations; to acknowledge, as well, obstacles to understand and overcome, deficiencies to repair, injustices to correct. With this as a base, the teacher creates an environment for learning that has multiple entry points for learning and various pathways to success. That environment must be abundant with opportunities to practice justice; to display, foster, embody, expect, demand, nurture, allow, model, and enact inquiry toward moral action. A classroom organized in this way follows a particular rhythm: questions focus on issues or problems (What do we need or want to know? Why is it important? How will we find out?), and on action (Given what we know now, what are we going to do about it?). (p. 48)

Advocacy

Reggio educators are strong advocates for quality early childhood education programmes. Edwards (1993) points out that the role of the teacher in Reggio goes beyond what U.S. educators generally define as the essential elements of teaching in early childhood:

In the United States, when defining the role of the early childhood teacher, we usually begin by laying out its essential dimensions, for example: (a) promoting children’s learning in cognitive, social, physical and affective

domains; (b) managing the classroom; (c) preparing the environment; (d) providing nurturance and guidance; (e) communicating with important constituencies (parents, colleagues, administrators, the public); and (f) seeking professional growth. The work of Reggio Emilia teachers covers these same aspects, and in addition they would stress two other roles that they see as essential: (g) engaging in political activism to defend the cause of public early education; and (h) conducting systematic research on daily classroom work for purposes of professional dissemination, curriculum planning, and teacher development. (p. 152)

Pedagogical documentation, such as that developed by Ann, Margie, and Sarah, has powerful potential to act as an advocacy tool.

~ ... I'm straddling a bunch of different worlds, advocacy being a big one. It took me a while to find a good balance between documenting for advocacy purposes, I mean, other people were documenting for professional purposes, which I think is somewhat what the Italians would say they're doing ... (MC4).

Child study researchers Hurst and Lally (1992) assert that teachers must daily plan time for active observation, reflection, assessment, and appropriate responses to the development of children's thinking. Appropriate pedagogical knowledge informs classroom observations and aids in planning future curriculum and assessment. These researchers stressed that a foundation of child development is needed to understand the importance of what children do and why they do it. They emphasized the significance of educators taking the initiative to educate society about the principles of developmentally appropriate learning assessment.

~ My work, and my vision, is that we have to chip away at a number of things simultaneously, and we have to chip away at the paradigm shifts for teachers and the way staff development is done, we have to chip away at getting some systems and structures in place, to give more, make more available, and we have to chip away at these budgets and compensation issues, and, obviously, parent awareness, public awareness, that kind of thing. You can't do one to the exclusion of the others. You may have to take turns, you can't necessarily do them all simultaneously, but in terms of child care, they just have to be chipped away steadily, and you just have to keep pushing the boundary out, pushing the barrier a little further away from you, so you can get some breathing space (MC1).

Gallas (1994) has also acknowledged the potential of teachers, at a grassroots classroom level, to advocate for what they believe to be best curriculum for children.

If I recognize that children's stories are making statements about how they understand their world, that conviction sways the course of my teaching, takes it in new directions and deepens its impact for the children. So, too, as teachers move into positions of personal authority where they believe that the events they witness in their classrooms, if documented, provide persuasive records of the kinds of complex and varied work that children can undertake when offered broad expressive opportunities, the tone and intent of conversations about education also change. (p. 162)

And in Ann's own words:

The stories that we tell of children's investigations and play have the potential for changing how people understand and value childhood. We share our stories with other early childhood professionals and with visitors from the community. Our stories call attention to the too-often unheard or disregarded voices of children. (2006, p. 188)

Theme: Being a Writer – "It's My Native Language, Really"

Writing to Know

Van Manen (1990) and Richardson (1994, 2000) both develop similar concepts of the role of writing in human science research. Richardson (1994) states that language produces meaning and creates social reality. It is through writing that "(I) find something that I didn't know before I wrote it" (p. 517). Elsewhere (Richardson, 2000), she suggests that writing is also a way of "knowing" – a method of discovery and analysis. "By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. Form and content are inseparable (p. 923). Writing teaches us what we know, and in what way we know what we know.

Cadwell (2003) also captures the essence of what it is like to be a documenter, a writer:

I am compelled to write in order to uncover what I don't know, to travel with ideas until they take me beyond what I know to reveal new and deeper sense. In writing I am on a quest. There is more to discover. One way to search is to tell stories to each other and to listen carefully with our inner

ears for the particular soundings these ideas create in our lives and in our practice. (p. 10)

This compelling need to write, as Cadwell expresses it, is similar to the way Ann describes her experience of preparing text for documentation. Ann goes so far as to say that writing is her “native language,” suggesting that the practice of pedagogical documentation is a good fit for her for that reason. In fact, she describes being sustained by documentation:

~ It's my native language, really. So there's that personal piece for me, too, of feeling sustained by documentation, because it is going to this native language place. And feeling like it's a place where I really practice and deepen my writing skills, and become a better a writer – that can only be a good thing (AP2).

The act of writing moves our thinking to a deeper level and connects field notes to conceptual ideas (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Having a purpose, such as writing for a particular audience, helps to consolidate one's thinking.

~ I think the work of writing for Childcare Information Exchange [a professional journal] was really useful for me, to force me every month to be thinking through issues, the idea of 'consolidating your thinking and being ready to teach it to somebody else.' In some ways, that's how each of Deb's and my books has proceeded... We've learned a lot. If we take time to stop and write a book about it, we'll figure out some more things (MC4).

~ Simultaneously, our thinking now needs to go to a new level, if we take the time to write a book, it will. And every time we submit a book proposal, an outline of what the book would be about, the final product is significantly different because our thinking starts growing and changing in the process of writing it. That's been great (MC4).

~ My writing about teaching also feeds me; the act of articulating the thinking and feeling that shapes my work deepens my awareness and my practice (API).

At the same time, the act of writing is also a research practice through which we can explore how we construct the world, ourselves, and others (Richardson, 2000). Writing as method does not “take writing for granted, but offers multiple ways to learn to do it, and to nurture the writer” (p. 924).

Being Skilled as a Writer

Being skilled as a writer certainly helps to determine the shape of pedagogical documentation. Ann, Margie, and Sarah would all describe themselves as “comfortable” writers. Behar (cited by Josselson, Lieblich, & McAdams, 2003), describing the characteristics of the “art” of scholarship, writes: “[Writing] must be done with grace, with precision, with an eye for the telling detail, an ear for the insight that comes unexpectedly, with tremendous respect for language...and with a love of beauty” (p. 203).

~ It helps a lot that I write easily, and that comes from being the kid of two college professors, that comes from being a good writing student in high school and in college, and going to a college that emphasized writing. That’s shaped the form... that shapes what my documentation looks like. And, for sure it’s not the only way for documentation to look, in fact, I think it would be a great challenge to myself to sort of say, “How few words can you use to tell this story?” I don’t provoke myself with that challenge very often! It’s easier for me to tell it in a lot of words (SF2).

~ I think the fact that I’m a good writer pushes me towards documentation that looks like a lot of writing... (SF2).

~ To really sink into the experience, or a moment that I’m watching unfold, and to write about it... I mean, writing is something that I do anyways, so this way of being, that we call documentation, is a really great fit (AP2).

Human science research *is* a form of writing. According to van Manen (1990), creating a phenomenological text is the object of the research process (p. 111). Barthes (1986) also draws a parallel between research and writing, stating, “research does not merely *involve* writing: research is the work of writing – writing is its very essence” (p. 316).

Cadwell (2003) has likewise experienced how the act of writing has honed in her the skill of listening. “Sitting at this desk...has become a ritual that has convinced me to listen. I am learning through writing to be a witness to the story that unfolds here and to the connections that reveal themselves that I did not anticipate” (p. 102).

Hermeneutic Phenomenological Writing

The type of reflection required in the act of hermeneutic phenomenological writing on the meanings and significances of phenomena of daily life is fundamental to pedagogic research. As van Manen (1990) describes it:

The fundamental model of this approach is textual reflection on the lived experiences and practical actions of everyday life with the intent to increase one's thoughtfulness and practical resourcefulness or tact. Phenomenology describes how one orients to lived experience, hermeneutics describes how one interprets the "texts" of life, and semiotics is used here to develop a practical writing or linguistic approach to the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics. What is novel to this text is that research and writing are seen to be closely related, and practically inseparable pedagogical activities. (p. 4)

Ann draws a similar conclusion:

~ It IS research and writing, and I'm living it all day every day (AP2).

The text offers a concept of research that takes its starting point in the empirical realm of everyday lived experience. Here again I turn to van Manen (1990): "The notion underlying this approach is that interpretive phenomenological research and theorizing cannot be separated from the textual practice of writing (p. ix).

~ [When I write] I feel able to do more nuanced thinking about children and learning and able to dig deeply as well as to see broadly what's the heart and soul of learning and play... (AP2).

Van Manen's (1990) thoughts seem to embody the experience described by the participants in this research study of being writers of pedagogical documentation:

Writing shows that we can now see something, and at the same time it shows the limits or boundaries of our sightedness. In writing the author puts in symbolic form what he or she is capable of seeing. And so practice, in the life-world with children, can never be the same again. My writing as a practice prepared me for an insightful praxis in the life-world. (I can now see things I could not see before). Although I may try to close my eyes, to ignore what I have seen, in some way my existence is now mediated by my knowledge... Writing exercises us in the sense that it empowers us with embodied knowledge which now can be brought to play or realized into action in the performance of the drama of everyday life. (p. 130)

Theme: Hilltop's Organizational Culture

The essential nature of the organization is at the heart of the Reggio

Approach. Tiziana Filippini (2001), *pedagogista* in Reggio Emilia, states:

We have paid particular attention to how the values and aims are connected to the design and organization of work, schedules, spaces, school environments, activities, staff development, family participation, and relations with the city. This is in order to welcome and give value to the ongoing relationships of interdependence, exchange, and collaboration that develop among the protagonists of the school, who are engaged in integrating their knowledge and contextualizing it. (p. 53-54)

Recognizing that Hilltop Children's Centre exists in a particular place, in a particular culture – Seattle, Washington, in the United States - it goes without saying that the organization and the context will be vastly different from the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. However, Hilltop's staff members have worked very hard to incorporate and adapt some of the organizational concepts of the Reggio schools into their own setting, while finding their own systems, as well.

By no means were all aspects of Hilltop's system of organization addressed in my interview conversations with Ann, Sarah, and Margie. The following comments reflect the specific areas of organization that were raised by them in our conversations.

Challenges of Time Limitations

Time, or the lack thereof, for teachers to work on documentation, alone or collaboratively with colleagues, is continually raised as a frustration. Hilltop Children's Centre operates as a full day, not-for-profit childcare facility, so the hours are much longer than those of a regular school day. In order for teachers to have time to study and prepare documentation, hours away from the responsibilities of caring for children must be found. This has, in part, been addressed more recently as Hilltop has experimented with the "Rings" organization (see Appendix K), with planning and documentation time built into the schedules of those teachers who choose to take that on as a primary responsibility. Time for teachers centre-wide to meet together is also a huge challenge. At present, the centre closes two hours early one day a month to

provide meeting time, but it's clear that this in an inadequate amount of time. The need for time for more experienced teachers to take on a leadership role in terms of mentoring or training is also raised. Time to take advantage of staff development initiatives is something that teachers express a desire for more of.

~ It's the same everywhere. Teachers don't have enough time to talk about their teaching process (MC1).

This need for time is also recognized by educators in Reggio Emilia:

Yes, this would help in reflecting more deeply on the experience. I think having time to reflect is very important to me. I think it's extremely important to reflect, and consequently having the time to do so is very important, too. The need for the time to reflect, to formulate questions, to understand and develop ideas, to consolidate, all this makes me feel that the time factor certainly seems to be very significant in the learning processes. And I mean in every respect – even the time to communicate, for example. (Gambetti, 2001, p. 122)

~ But, you know, it's so pitiful the amount of time that they have. They have one hour a week, which really works out to about forty five minutes... by the time they all get there because they've been relieved by the people who are relieving them, and then thirty minutes of that is taken up by, "Who's feeding the fish," and administrative kinds of things... So then we pressed really hard to get an hour and half, to carve that time out (MC1).

~ Six and a half hours a week [of preparation time] certainly doesn't all go to documentation. There are lots of other school-wide projects that I'm involved in and phone calls to families and talks with other teachers - that's where lots of those hours go. But, I don't know, I sure love the sound of what J. W. was describing [at a recent workshop] where the Neruda²⁰ school teachers are salaried, and their amount of hours with kids stays the same, and they just have this pool of two hundred hours a year that they use to do the rest of the work. Right now that sounds appealing. I could work twenty more hours a week if I wanted to, and do all this stuff, but I wouldn't get paid for it, that's not a choice. I love this work, obviously, so I'm not actually... well, yeah... At the moment I would make the trade, I would, yeah, I'd work six hours a day and have the last two for doing the rest of the job, even if it meant being away from kids, I think. That's part of what was appealing to me as J.W. was describing a daily schedule where that doesn't feel like you're missing huge pieces of the day... That sounds pretty good to me right now (SF2).

~ Very different from the school in New Haven, very different from Hilltop. Huge school, part day program, very sort of consciously a "nursery" school, not

²⁰ Neruda is the name of a school in Reggio Emilia that was named for the Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda.

childcare, not full day care... and, in some ways that was a great luxury, because there was a lot more time for meetings between teachers, for planning and setting up the environment... but it wasn't the same sort of intense living with children and families that I saw at this school in New Haven and that I'm doing here at Hilltop (SF3).

~“I'm a first year teacher just barely managing to keep my head above water and that's enough - that's not even on my list. Maybe five years from now I'll get to that.” And time, the recurrent question. Time is a huge factor (AP1).

~ And so, the sorts of... there's always that tension for me of how to do, I mean, even the daily documentation piece, I do it in during my break and during nap, mostly, so I already feel like I'm squeezing out the time in the places that I can squeeze it out (AP3).

Although Hilltop Children's Centre has made a determined effort to carve out time for teachers to meet in collaboration and to work on documentation, it seems that there is never enough time. Still, the time that is set aside each week for teachers to work together, prepare documentation, meet with parents, and so on, is an essential support structure for professional development.

Dismantling Hierarchy

Over the years, the staff of Hilltop Children's Centre has been committed to the idea that all members are co-teachers, with no hierarchy in teacher titles or job descriptions. The high quality of complex documentation that Ann and Sarah had developed over the last number of years, and their development of long-term projects through an emergent curriculum, had generated a great deal of interest in the local early childhood community. However, there was a perception that the work of Ann and Sarah was somehow “superior” to the work of any of the teachers at Hilltop – and this had become the source of a great deal of tension and unhappiness. This, coupled with the animosity that a few were regularly taking on more responsibilities than others, had led to a mixture of guilt and resentment. The development of the Rings organization of staff responsibilities {see Appendix L) arose out of a self-defined need for teachers to look for more appropriate definitions of their roles, based on a careful analysis of the complexity of their

work. It was also a way to address the perceived hierarchy of what had, unfortunately, become known as the “Ann and Sarah” show.

~ They had incredible conflict and turmoil all the time, and all while that was happening, there was sort of this ‘Ann and Sarah’ show - that’s what Sarah and I now jokingly call it. Lots of visitors were coming to see our classroom, but no other classroom. People were asking us to lead workshops but no one else, so definitely there was this odd tension in our school. In the course of several months the whole teaching staff of that classroom quit, some in frustration at the lack of support, others for other reasons (API).

~ I had worked hard and tried to advocate for... Hilltop to actively, and intentionally, and deliberately dismantle this unspoken but very solid hierarchy... It was very important to me personally. Sarah and I were at the top of it, and everyone else was way below us... and it could not continue any more. Part of that dismantling meant breaking up our team, our classroom... So, that’s what I did, I made that decision to move [to a different classroom and teaching team] (API).

~ At Hilltop, some of the challenges around making space for, and expecting to hear from, a range of voices, grows out of... patterns around the informal but very entrenched hierarchies of influence and importance and centralness [sic] to the program, and the more we’re dismantling those hierarchies, the more room there is for movement (AP2).

Restructuring – Roles, Responsibilities, and Rings

Margie, in her role as *pedagogista*, along with Ann, in her role as staff development coordinator/teacher, challenged the staff to recognize and acknowledge these tensions. Through this process, the discussion got the frustrations and joys out on the table and paved the way for a restructuring process which involved every staff member collaborating to look at possible structures which would incorporate all responsibilities and allow for differing levels of commitment, with accompanying allocations of paid time away from children. Ultimately, the structure that was embraced by everyone was a concentric ring model with a core of responsibilities that everyone would assume in the centre, and additional responsibilities for each ring further out from the centre. A self-assessment tool was developed for each member of the staff to determine his or her placement in the new structure.

~ *Some of the process of creating the Rings was needing to name what the minimal expectations of every staff member were, and then spell it out. At Ring One, which is the custodian, which is everybody, you know, and then adding a few additional responsibilities, and that's Ring Two, and that's every teacher – you can't be a less than Ring Two teacher at Hilltop. If you want a bit more responsibility, that's Ring Three, and a bit more is Ring Four. I think, in terms of those layers or elements, everyone at Hilltop is expected to be present with children in a mindful, curious, delighted way. Ring Three teachers are expected to do some writing about that, and documenting, making the public piece around that. I mean, Ring Four teachers are expected to do that, but a bit more frequently. And about just carrying more of the responsibility for that. So, Ring Three teachers are beginning to step into that. It was really helpful in that process to have that conversation about what the bottom line pieces are (AP2).*

~ *So, really trying to look at the experiences teachers were having and start identifying the responsibilities that are inherent in making a classroom run, and letting people name the level of responsibility that we each wanted. Certainly some of those responsibilities involve documentation, as well as curriculum planning and so forth (AP2).*

~ *We had that conversation, and asked, "Is it expected that every single teacher will, during the course of a week, write something that goes on the curriculum board?" We decided, really consciously, that no, we wouldn't do that. And then, what we did was assign resources – planning time, really, that's the only main resource that we assigned – but a certain amount of planning time in relationship to what the expectations were. So, I as a Ring Four teacher have significantly more planning time than a Ring Two teacher, and actually, pretty significantly, more than a Ring Three teacher. What we really consciously did, also, was decide not to do anything about money, because "my" work isn't more important than a Ring Three teacher's work. That was another thing we were trying to dismantle in this Ring system, that some work was more important than other work, or that some staff were more valued than other staff. If you walked in the door and were right there present with children, you were doing exactly what was expected of you. If you want to take on some more tangible responsibilities, that's great, and we need that to happen, and we'll give you the time and the staff support, as much as we can, to get that done, but that doesn't mean you're a better teacher or that you're more important to us (AP2).*

~ *The "Rings" organization grew directly out of requests from Ann and myself to clarify who is supposed to do what at this school, because before those were in place we really had all the same job description, but were all doing very different amounts and kinds of things. We just sort of wanted it spelled out and made clear, to de-mystify this idea that everybody should show up at Hilltop from day one and be doing work that looks like Sarah's and Ann's. What we arrived at was this idea that folks could choose, you know, "this is who I am right now, this is where I am in my process of becoming a teacher," or, you know, "in my busy life right now this is what I want to take on." We worked as a staff to clarify, to*

say, “Alright, everybody does this much, if you’re going to be a teacher at Hilltop you do these things.” And if you choose, you can layer on this next ring of things. In return you’ll get an amount of planning time each week to do documentation or whatever. Later on, if you want, you can layer on yet more onto that, and you’ll get more planning time. So, there are meant to be no distinctions in value, or leadership, even, although the lived reality is that folks with more planning time tend to have a bigger influence on culture and what will happen. So, we’re still in the process of figuring out that relationship (SF1).

~ One of the things that got spelled out is that Ring Two teachers are not required to take on any in-depth project work, Ring Three teachers are supposed to facilitate one in-depth project each year, and Ring Four teachers are supposed to facilitate two in-depth projects each year. We’ll get to the end of the year and we’ll see, but right now it doesn’t look like it’s going to play out that way. On Sunlight team right now it looks like I’m holding the primary responsibility for three, and those will be the three in-depth projects, that get... clearly identified and seem to have come to some sort of conclusion. I don’t know how that’s going in Garden Room. Why would it be any different? We don’t have a network in place to grow folks into doing that. There’s not a lot of training or support or mentoring from folks who are already doing it, and I’m spending most of my time doing it, and not finding a whole lot of time to teach each other folks how to do it. That’s where we’re stuck (SF1).

~ He was hired right at the time that we went through the restructuring process, with the Rings. That was the first time... that was the first person that we hired where it was kind of spelled out, “You will facilitate projects like this, and you will do this kind of documentation.” Not just, “We’ll give you some planning time,” but “documentation is a part of what it looks like to be a teacher in your position. It’s part of your job description.” So... that could be a really helpful ingredient, to kind of say, “Oh, so you want to be at teacher at Hilltop. Well, here’s what that looks like” (SF3).

Although the Rings concept is unique to the Hilltop community, many of the values of the schools of Reggio Emilia that Filippini (2001) emphasizes are inherent in the Rings structure:

We chose to have a working team in the school, where collaboration and collegiality are seen as quality features of the school’s identity. The distribution of jobs, as well, is not only a functional choice but is devised so that every person, despite their different roles, can feel that they are included as an active part in the realization of the experience. These choices are both premises and conditions that foster the assumption of responsibility and continuous negotiation toward redefining one’s own role and that of the school. Staff collegiality is not taken for granted; it must be supported by professional development initiatives and also requires that times and opportunities be established within the work schedule. (p. 55)

People have eased into the new structure with fewer tensions and more clarity about responsibilities and leadership. These teachers have not only engaged in collaborative inquiry because it is expected but also because they care about their work, one another, and the children they teach. The resulting interpersonal and professional relationships which have developed are supported by an environment and pedagogy of collaborative inquiry in which the initial orchestration and requirements of tasks and routines contribute to each team's interpretation and particular use of those tasks and routines.

Theme: *Change and Personal Transformation*

Fu, Stremmel and Hill (2002) indicate that awareness of self in the process of change in early childhood education becomes a challenge to individuals. For change to move forward, issues involving self must be addressed. In the conceptual framework of the Reggio Emilia approach, promotion of *self* has a different connotation. Self in this context refers to developing a deeper understanding and awareness of the meanings and significance of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions in the teaching process. Rinaldi (2004a) questions what constitutes the formation of individuals as teachers:

It is simply learning: the job of teachers is to learn, because they are teachers. It means keeping our distance from an overriding sense of balance, from that which has already been decided, pre-constituted, or considered to be certain. It means staying close to the interweaving of objects and thoughts, of doing and reflecting, theory and practice, emotion and knowledge... We are talking about formation for teachers and children alike, rejecting the idea of formation as "modeling," as passage from one state to another, from various "ways of being" to another "way of being." The aim of this kind of formation is to think and act with reference to the process of becoming, of change. (p. 44)

Reggio pedagogue Carlina Rinaldi has often been heard to say: "To learn is to change, to be changed." Cadwell (2003) elaborates on this point to say, "real learning is more than accumulation or assimilation; authentic learning pulls us toward evolution and transformation" (p. 159). The three protagonists in this

research study certainly indicated that their experience with documentation has caused change both in their pedagogical practice and in their personal evolution as teachers.

~ I think back to eight years ago, whenever that was, six, seven years ago, what that process meant for me is radically different than what it means for me now... how I know myself as a teacher is radically different, because of just having lived these years of documentation in so many ways. That's what's been pivotal in my growth (AP3).

~ Does pedagogical documentation act as a catalyst for change? It definitely has for me! (SF2).

~ Does pedagogical documentation act as a catalyst for change? Oh, I think so, definitely I think so. It provokes this, I mean the process of putting it together yourself, looking it over, provokes new thinking. I think showing it to other people is another thing that provokes new thinking, for yourself and for the person you're showing it to. I think it produces a growing sense of competency for children, when they see documentation. When I think about it, like documenting adult work, it either has the impact, either the way that it did on Sarah - not like it gave her first understanding of documentation, by any means, but it had a powerful impact. It's not that it gave her more confidence or anything like that, but I don't even know how to describe what it did for her. She hasn't described anything other than sobbing about it. What it did for M. was really different than that. It's taken in, depending on where people are in their own journey, it has a different meaning for people, but it almost always has a meaning, this thing that they do has been valuable enough to be the focus of documentation and intention and presentation. It's just a powerful idea (MC4).

~ Does the process of pedagogical documentation actually act as a catalyst for change for teacher/researchers? Ah... I think that is exactly the right question to be asking. My own personal experience is that profoundly, YES (AP2).

Gallas (2003) writes of having had a similar experience of change as she refined her own practice of documenting her interactions in the classroom with children. She likens her role as researcher-in-the-classroom to that of an ethnographer:

Through documenting my observations and interactions with children and through exploring my own process of imagination in the ethnography gradually changed how I carried out my role as a teacher, reshaping my interactions with my students and my approach to curriculum, blurring the boundaries that separated me, as teacher and adult, from my students, as children and learners, enabling my students and myself to reclaim, rename, and re-imagine our classroom. (p. 163)

When teachers learn new ways to listen and interact with children, when they begin to see learning as a central motive for being together, change the way they think about children and parents as learners and create ways to research and reflect on their teaching, they not only change the vehicle of teaching and learning, but “the journey and the destination of learning changes “(Bayes, 2004, p. 295). Changing ways of working with children and parents influences the way in which we document the learning taking place.

Theme: Research and Future Dreams

When asked about future dreams for her work as teacher-researcher, Ann expressed interest in gathering together some of the documented projects that she has undertaken over the years with children. An underlying theme of this collection of works would be to identify the teacher intention piece of the research. Eleanor Duckworth (1987) has indicated a place in the field for just such research:

I am not proposing that schoolteachers single-handedly become published researchers in the development of human learning. Rather, I am proposing that teaching, understood as engaging learners in phenomena and working to understand the sense they are making, might be the sine qua non of such research. (p. 140)

~ A big, project-y growing place, or a place where I'm wanting to invest some energy and time and thought is around creating what Margie and I keep calling "the little books" that have grown out of projects that have happened. And again, with those little books, building on the documentation that's already in place, the stories of what I've experienced with children, what children have experienced together. And then adding a level - a layer - of teacher reflection with a very specific focus. So, matching a project with a particular focus that would be helpful, hopefully, for teachers to take up. A perspective around helping children articulate and collaborate around theory-making, or using representation and re-representation, or I don't even know, good questions to ask... people often ask me, "How do you know what to ask children?" So, thinking there's projects that will be... the age work team is perfect example of that (AP3).

~ Looking at a project with an underlying teacher intention piece - that's a big documentation growing edge, pushing edge, stretching edge, work. And in terms of other ways that that links into my growing edge, I feel really aware right now of being thoughtful about my role on my teaching team (AP3).

~ I see these little books, Margie suggested this and I've held on to this image, as a set, certainly each could be free-standing, but you know, like a little "Narnia." And this [research] could be another piece of that. A university could say, "We want, we're taking up this, we want to have some textbooks available, but we're not going to go to textbooks, we want real stories." So there could be these project stories, and there could be our collaborative book, and I think that could be amazing (AP3).

Gallas iterates an observation observed by others, myself included (Kocher, 1999): "I am never disappointed by the results that the children achieve, and usually I am astonished to see the power and depth of their thinking process" (Gallas, 1994, p. 120). The collection of "little books" that Ann proposes would put some of those amazing stories into the public realm, and help encourage other teachers to dream toward the possible.

Establishing some sort of a documentation centre, inspired by the one that exists in Reggio Emilia, has been a long time fantasy of mine. The vision is a bit nebulous, but essentially it would be a gathering point for educators interested in and inspired by the practice of pedagogical documentation to come together. I invited Ann and Sarah to dream out loud with me:

~ That's a piece that Reggio has down, and that's the piece that we are at not even the beginning, we're at the beginning of the beginning... We in the United States don't have any models for, you know, you go away and get your teaching training, and you either find a place that matches that, or you unlearn it, or you do it despite the program you're in, or whatever. The fit is good or bad, or... So there's a need for research into that piece. I don't mean just hard, book-learning research, but lived research. This is what we live together with kids, let's think about it, talk about it, reflect on it, get curious about it, go back, do the next layer of study. I mean, that's the piece that's very engaging to me, much more so then go out and find original sources and do that kind of research. That's not un-engaging, but the idea of living side by side with a group of teachers, living these moments together, and reflecting on them, doing research about them together, about their meaning that they hold for the children, about the meaning they hold around child development, the meaning they hold for our own development as teachers... that's being partners together, that's what I hope for in an intimate relationship. And to have the possibility there to do that, as my daily work, is breathtaking. It's sort of overwhelming to me, in a way (AP3).

~ I think of that [the vision of a documentation centre as a site for research and study] both for the immediate impact it would have on our work, and on our lives as teachers and in child-care, when we're not used to thinking of ourselves

as particularly important... That's really huge. What does it look like? What are my dreams about it? In terms of physical space, having some beautiful place to take up important work, and having the technology available to do that in. A place that's set aside, that's about taking up big ideas with each other, you know, staffed internally, or a class that's part of the centre, or teachers coming from all over the region, however that looks, but that kind of study... I think about that being connected somehow with the idea of sabbatical, or sabbatical projects, that could be an anchor point for that kind of work. I can dream on and on and on... the possibilities about being that intentional about this part of our work... it feels transformational (AP3).

~ When I think of a documentation centre, I can imagine a place... similar to an archive, or a place for research and interchange, research and exchange. I don't see it as a place that teachers would go and work on their documentation. Right now I'm feeling like it doesn't make sense to take that part of it out of the school building somehow. And I don't know how the documentation centre in Reggio functions, in that way. My fantasy is a place within the school that has the technology and tools and space and quiet for teachers to work alone or together on... either reading about, reading in process, reflecting and planning, and creating displays, whatever those panels or pages, whatever format they take. The space for that inside a school would be great, and what I can imagine outside the school is more a place where some of the products of documentation could come together, although... if that magically existed, right now, would I be using it? It's hard to imagine, because the time is so filled right here... but, maybe it would be a resource for training teachers, or for professional development in some way... I think if it was going to be a place like that in, say, Seattle, it would need to go along with some kind of a consortium of schools, since we don't have the central organization, we're not connected by the municipality or anything. So you'd want to have a consortium of schools that were contributing to and using this documentation centre so that there was a chance for this professional development initiative that all the teachers from the consortium would be a part of. I've never experienced that here, so I don't know if it's possible. I mean, in a way, just trying to learn to do that between classrooms within our school, taking baby steps that aren't quite working yet... (SF3).

Ann, Margie, and Sarah, each in her own way, personifies the kind of researcher that Duckworth (1987) describes:

This kind of researcher would be a teacher in the sense of caring about some part of the world and how it works enough to want to make it accessible to others; he or she would be fascinated by the questions of how to engage people in it and how people make sense of it; would have time and resources to pursue these questions to the depth of his or her interest, to write what he or she has learned, and to contribute to the theoretical and pedagogical discussions on the nature and development of human learning. (p. 140)

Summary

The ongoing dialectic between process and product assures that the discovery of themes throughout the process of data collection and analysis informs and is informed by the imposition of themes on the product – the interpretation represented in the final portrayal. In the identification and confirmation of all these themes, there has been triangulation of the data from interview transcripts, observed on-site activities, and an assortment of written materials. The emergent themes identified herein are not the only themes that resonate throughout this research project. With regard to the identification and application of emergent themes, the question that I found myself repeatedly asking was: Do the identified emergent themes resonate throughout the protagonists' language and the institutional culture? Do the emergent themes that I have identified adequately scaffold my interpretation and resonate throughout the dimensions that I recognize as relevant? As I have studied the lived-experience descriptions of these women and discerned the themes as they began to emerge, I noted that certain experiential themes recurred as commonalities in the various descriptions I gathered. As I worked with these ideas, one of my tasks was to hold on to these themes by lifting appropriate phrases or by capturing in singular statements the main thrust of the meaning of the themes. It also bears stating that the identification of emergent themes depends on the particular voice of the researcher, and the tenure of the relationships developed with the protagonists on the site. Nonetheless, if I have chosen well, the selected emergent themes will be truthful in terms of the subject they help portray. It is my hope that the educators whose stories are told here will find this to be so.

CHAPTER 8: Concluding Thoughts

Stand aside for a while and leave room for learning, observe carefully what children do, and then, if you have understood well, perhaps teaching will be different than before.

~ Loris Malaguzzi (1998, p. 82)

Personal Connections

Through this research I have been allowed a more intimate look at the impact of pedagogical documentation on the personal and professional lives of three particular educators: Ann, Margie, and Sarah. In this final chapter, I draw together conclusions from Chapter 6, where I discuss the themes that emerge through this study. I also make some comments on the usefulness of Transformation Theory to my research before providing some closing remarks.

From the outset, I have to acknowledge that I live inside the issues I am researching. I know how the practice of pedagogical documentation has been a profound influence on my own teaching. My biography is, thus, “thoroughly intertwined with the research project” (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 19). I recognize that this gives me a particular stance in relation to the research: it provides me with insights unavailable to someone not so positioned; it provides a passion and commitment that energizes and drives my research and, I hope, enlivens my writing about it. It also means that my own agenda as “an emancipatory inquirer” (Lather, 1992, p. 95) and my life experiences have shaped how I conduct the research and interpret the data (Eisner, 1998).

In developing a “conversational relation” (van Manen, 1990) with a certain notion that has captured my interest, I also cannot ignore the insights of others who have already maintained a conversational relation with that same phenomenon. Fitting into a research tradition means contributing to this tradition: (a) in gaining a better grasp of the topics to which this tradition has dedicated itself, and (b) in articulating and in experimenting with the methodological approaches that further the human science tradition (van Manen, 1990, p. 75). This has been my goal throughout the research process of this study.

Transformation Theory as a Guide

Transformative Theory, which was introduced by Jack Mezirow in 1978, has evolved into “a comprehensive and complex description of how learners construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experience” (Cranton, 1994, p. 22).

Mezirow (2000) defines transformative learning as:

The process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide actions. (p. 7)

Simply, transformative learning replaces a point of view or mind-set with one that is more developed or mature (Merriam, 2001). The goal of this learning theory is learner empowerment through critical reflection (Cranton, 1994). This theory suggests a triggering event catalyzes the transformative learning process. This learning process requires thinking deeply about assumptions that change due to this triggering event. The learner constructs new meaning of their experience from the new context created by the triggering event and through conversation with others to assess and justify their assumptions. This transformative process results in reflective action from changes in life experience (Mezirow, 2000).

Transformation Theory has provided a useful theoretical framework for this research. The theory alerted me to watch for such things as the vulnerability and disorientation that adult learners often feel (e.g., Clarke, 1995; Daloz, 2000; Mezirow, 2000), the affirming aspects of group support (Boyd, 1989, 1991; Brookfield, 1994; Taylor, 1988), the recursive or spiral nature of deep learning (e.g., Coffman, 1989; Dewane, 1993), the qualities of the effective teachers of adults (e.g., Kegan, 2000; Mezirow, 1991a), the fact that school cultural and teacher change are entwined in myriad ways (e.g., Boyd, 1989, 1990) and the notion that changes in beliefs and actions stem from new personal experiences (e.g., Mezirow, 2000). Perhaps the most important effect of reading the literature of Transformation Theory was to bring into full consciousness some of the

thoughts about learning through relationship that had been tarrying at the edges of my consciousness.

Transformation refers to movement through time of reformulating reified structures of meaning by reconstructing dominant narratives. The process may itself become a frame of reference, a *dispositional orientation*. According to Mezirow and Associates (2000), we transform frames of reference – our own and those of others – by becoming critically reflective of their assumptions and aware of their context – the source, nature, and consequences of taken-for-granted beliefs. Assumptions on which habits of mind and related points of view are predicated may be epistemological, logical, ethical, psychological, ideological, social, cultural, economic, political, ecological, spiritual, or may pertain to other aspects of experience.

Transformation often follows some variation of meaning becoming clarified:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame
3. A critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying on of new roles and relationships
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22)

Although the phases outline the process of personal transformation, they do not always occur in the exact sequence presented above. Learners can also experience more than one phase of the process simultaneously.

A mindful transformative learning experience requires that the learner make an informed and reflective decision to act on his or her reflective insight. This decision may result in immediate action, delayed action, or reasoned reaffirmation of an existing pattern of action. Taking action on reflective insights often involves overcoming situational, emotional, and informational constraints that may require new learning experiences in order to move forward. Novak claims,

“Perspective transformation represents not only a total change in life perspective, but an actualization of that perspective. In other words, life is not *seen* from a new perspective, it is *lived* from that perspective” (quoted in Paprock, 1992, p. 197).

Phases of Transformation Theory

As described in Chapter 3, in which I reviewed the literature on Transformation Theory, I have collapsed Mezirow’s steps into three broadly-conceived phases.²¹ “*Phase 1: Disorientation*,” which encompasses the adult’s encounter with a disorienting dilemma; self-examination with feelings of inadequacy or guilt; and recognition that assumptions about self, life, or the world are inadequate. “*Phase 2: Reconfiguration*”: sharing disorientation and new learning with a group of like-minded adults; exploration of new roles and relationships; renegotiation of old relationships; acquisition of new skills and knowledge; formulation of plans for action; and trying on new roles. “*Phase 3: New Perspectives*” accords with two notions that the adult emerges from the transformative learning experience with new perspectives on the self, others, or life, and that the experience has been so powerful that there is no possibility of return to old ways of thinking.

Phase 1: Disorientation.

Most research into significant adult learning has found that the catalyst to such learning is what Mezirow (1991) has called a “disorienting dilemma,” an experience that conflicts with the learner’s beliefs about life, but which must somehow be accounted for. Life beliefs are not easily or lightly altered; they place important boundaries on experiences. In so doing, however, such beliefs may be seen to define our experiences and knowledge, as the following interview excerpts demonstrate:

~ Seeing all that in the video was pretty life changing for me. It was an experience of seeing what I believed but hadn’t maybe articulated to myself, certainly not to anyone else, but seeing it lived out ... Having that

²¹ See Chapter 3 for further discussion of Transformation Theory.

experience of now having images and ideas and words was, it was life changing, it set me on this journey that I'm still on. That's my memory of my first encounter with Reggio (API).

~ My exposure to Reggio has had a huge impact on my work in early childhood education. The biggest answer is that I think it's why I'm still in the field. I think it's what's sort of grabbed me hard enough to keep doing this work...not that I felt myself drifting away necessarily, but once I sort of learned about it, I haven't been on the search for other things ever since (SF1).

Considered from the point of view of Transformation Theory, the disorientation suggested by each of the protagonists was of the kind that accumulated over years and culminated in a feeling that something was missing and that something had to change (e.g., Courtney, Merriam, & Reeves, 1998; Daloz, 2000; Pope, 1996; Taylor, 1998). Recognition of the deeply held beliefs about what teaching could look like, the “possible,” were encountered in the images and pedagogical documentation of the experiences of the educational project of Reggio Emilia.

And yet, the use of the term “disorienting dilemma” (Mezirow, 1991) to describe such a catalyst to learning troubled me. While I understood that the term implied an encounter with something out of the ordinary in a person’s life, it also suggested that angst and confusion accompany learning. Not all who write about adult education describe an adult’s limited comprehension of the world in the same negative terms that Mezirow (1991) uses, but most admit that significant learning broadens the perspective of the learner in important ways. Nadler (1995) refers to the adult’s habitual way of thinking about the world as the individual’s “circle of comfort” (p. 52). It takes a powerful experience, one that touches the learner deeply, to act as a catalyst and bring about learning that changes a person’s central beliefs. McGough (1997) suggests that an adult may retreat from a disorienting dilemma, rather than embarking upon the learning process, because he or she is not ready to learn. Rather than retreat, however, Ann, Margie, and Sarah each embraced this process.

Phase 2: Reconfiguration

The importance of feeling part of a learning community is emphasized in Transformation Theory. The findings of Brookfield's (1994) study of educators' self-reported accounts of their own transformative learning endorses the importance of being with like-minded learners who are facing similar challenges. An essential part of the learning process includes rational discourse with at least one other person, usually a teacher whom the learner judges to possess greater knowledge in the area of concern. All three women said it was helpful to them to be part of a group of learners, for even if their work manifested different levels of ability, they drew encouragement and inspiration from one another. They clearly looked forward to meeting with the other teachers and felt that this was where their true experience of community lay (Phase 2 of Transformation Theory).

They acknowledged that welcome changes were happening for them (Phase 2 of Transformation Theory).

~ This is my love and my passion, and what's hard for me is putting any boundaries around it at all. I could do this 24/7 because it feeds me, in fact. Not because I have to, but because this is joyful and delightful to me. Give me a little extra planning time and see what I can do. Stand back!" (AP2).

~ So that's sort of how I found and clung on to documentation, because I was this sort of person who loved structure and order and clarity, but I kind of wanted to step into this world of uncertainty in following kids where they go, and adventuring with children, and documentation seemed to be maybe the major route...you can follow the kids where they're going, and as long as you keep track of it, it gave me the veneer of control (SF1).

Ann and Sarah have both mentioned that having a mentor in Margie, who was gentle, supportive, and willing to share her own life experiences, eased discomfort as together they explored the meaning of their new learning (Phase 2 of Transformation Theory). In this case, Margie often acted as the mentor or *pedagogista* for both Ann and Sarah.

~ Margie would help me think about little 'nugget' moments that were happening in the classroom, and how I could fertilize and grow those moments into whatever they might grow into with my support and facilitation (AP1).

In terms of Transformation Theory, “trying on” the role of documenter could be considered a feature of the experimentation and reconfiguring of identity that is typical of the intermediate, second phase of deep change process where the learner has embraced her “dilemma” and the challenges it presents, but still has not arrived at a new way of being in the world. And yet, with practice, inhabiting the role of documenter has become an essential part of each of these teacher’s identities. This new way of being in the world is reflected in van Manen’s (1990) words: “I am not just a researcher who observes life, I am also a parent and teacher who stands pedagogically in life... the ability to make sense of life’s phenomena resides in the strength of that fundamental orientation that one assumes as theorist and researcher” (p. 90).

The impulse to share, to teach another colleague, was strong. To me it also indicated that Sarah was broadening her notions of her own teaching abilities and the possible kinds of relationships she might have with their colleagues:

~ This is the first time I’ve ever sort of consciously said, “Let me shepherd you, a new teacher through this process, of facilitating an in-depth project.” You know me well enough to know that to me, facilitating an in-depth project equals documentation with a capital D, or documentation as an active practice and a product (SF3).

~ It’s an idea that came with Margie... “Boy, I’ve grown some skills around this, and not a lot of the other folks I teach with have practiced this - how can I do this work in a way that’s helpful to them, and not just go off by myself and do it?” So we came up with the idea of doing it publicly or transparently at these meetings so that what I’m trying to do is bring my process to those meetings and just do it out loud with them, as a way of modeling it. It’s my hope to involve them in it, getting their input, so that growth is something that we all participate in (SF2).

Greene (2000) reminds us that we must learn to live with the turmoil and conflict that accompanies the collision of professional and personal worlds, for it is these collisions that generate a need to change and which eventually lead to greater understanding of the Other. Navigating conflict, coupled with a commitment to maintain the integrity of relationships, emerged in a number of my conversations with the participants.

Phase 3: New Perspectives

As these teachers engaged in discourse about their learning, it appeared likely that they were developing shifts in attitudes and actions that would become consolidated and permanent (Phase 3 of Transformation Theory).

Ann said that her documentation practice, combined with her university background in literature, had reminded her that her identity rested firmly in the act of writing, indicative of impressive levels of integration into both her personal and professional lives (Phase 3 of Transformation Theory).

~ It's my native language, really. So there's that personal piece for me, too, of feeling sustained by documentation, because it is going to this native language place. And feeling like it's a place where I really practice and deepen my writing skills, and become a better writer – that can only be a good thing (AP2).

What these teachers told me convinced me that they had each experienced an important and lasting shift in their perceptions of themselves and their capacities, a defining characteristic of Phase 3 of Transformation Theory.

~ A big piece for me has been the intellectual engagement part of it. That's a message that that belongs in the work. I'm smart, and I'm a thinker, and a writer, and... it's not what's perceived as what's needed for this work. It's not the expectation of most people when they come to this work, and I think that's partly why I think I was so attracted, initially, to these lab schools that were connected to universities, because it felt like, "Oh, well, the work with children isn't, you know, intellectually stimulating, but I could be working with undergraduates or doing research, or working with these researchers, or..." I was trying to be the intellectual part of myself in that way, and that's kind of what changed in the living it full days here at Hilltop, was just realizing that it's all here. I'm really smart, I'm really well educated, and I use every ounce of it every day (SF2).

~ So, is documentation the key, or a key, to the intellectual engagement? Is the documentation what keeps you intellectually linked in to this daily work? That's where my mind goes, anyways. How big a component is that? All of what we've just said, here we are, smart, thinking, intellectually curious people who are attracted to work with young children, and is documentation part of what lets you be both of those things at the same time...? A big piece for me has been the intellectual engagement part of it... (SF2).

~ It's helpful for me to start with remembering that documentation is a process and a product, it's both things... sometimes I write about practicing active documentation, to highlight the idea that... documentation doesn't just mean something on the wall, that it's a conscious practice. I think that's true of the way someone, for example, practices Buddhism. There are times of day or week where you are actively giving it all of your focus, and the rest of the time you're sort of living in relation to it, you're living it the rest of the time even if you're not giving it a hundred percent of your focus to it... I have this image of, it sounds too grand, to maybe align to documentation to a religious practice... about mindful awareness or something (SF1).

I found this last quote a profoundly insightful comment, for it testified to the power of documentation to enlarge our conceptions of ourselves and the world around us (Bai, 2003; Franck, 1973). In effect, what Sarah verbalized here is what Mezirow (2000) has defined as the most important task of adult learning, to expand thinking beyond the limitations of the familiar and habitual.

Such observations indicate to me that their thinking about the place of pedagogical documentation in their own lives had been dramatically altered by their own experiences (Phase 3 of Transformation Theory).

~ This whole process of pedagogical documentation is definitely a catalyst for change... it definitely is for me (SF2).

~ And so by the same token, I can't imagine doing the work without that, without that opportunity still to live the stories and tell the stories. That's huge in that way...[I]n some ways it's the opposite end from ... documentation as a training tool, or bringing teachers into the work, but isn't that amazing, that the same tool can bring teachers in and then keep teachers there (SF3).

Sarah, who describes herself as formerly very structured and goal oriented, now enjoys teaching more and finds it increasingly challenging (Phase 3 of Transformation Theory).

~ I don't know what documentation would be inside that metaphor - maybe it would be the safety instructions in the seat back pocket. To me, documentation is that something to hang onto in the turbulence and the uncertainty of flight, the anchoring structure in a very organic curriculum. I don't know if that's a great metaphor for documentation, but definitely it's how I think about emergent curriculum (SF2).

Kegan (2000, p. 232) notes that learning that reflects on itself can only be accomplished through transformational education, “a ‘leading out’ from an established habit of mind,” an order of mental complexity that enables self-direction, a qualitative change in *how* one knows.

The educators in this study - Ann, Margie, and Sarah - displayed many of the characteristics of good leadership as outlined by Transformation Theory: empathy (e.g., Belenky & Stanton, 2000), honesty (e.g., Cranton, 1994), a tolerance for conflict (e.g., Bohm, 1996), a willingness to self-disclose (e.g., Cranton, 1994), an ability to engage deeply with groups and group processes (e.g., Retherford, 2001), and a willingness to give up as much of the traditional power associated with the teacher’s role as possible.

Mezirow (1991) describes transformative learning as consisting of a linear progression that takes the individual from an encounter with a disorienting dilemma to the construction of new beliefs about life. The learner reflects on old values and assumptions, self-consciously “tries on” (p. 168) new ways of being and acting, and constructs a new belief system that encompasses new experiences and influences future action. However, I suggest that, rather than constructing new beliefs about life, transformative learning in the experience of these three individuals resulted from a recognition and affirmation of their firmly held beliefs about teaching and learning that were being enacted or lived out in Reggio Emilia, ideas that resonated profoundly with each of the women.

It is a combination of conditions – personal reflection, group discussion (often including discussions about documented materials), action, time, purpose, and feedback – that act together as a system, resulting in the teachers being continually engaged in learning about their own practice. The key for change is that the conditions are complementary, focusing on the teachers’ own practice as they reflect upon it and share experiences about their own teaching. The process for change is non-linear, created by the dynamic interactions among the multiple conditions for teacher learning (Waldrop, 1992).

The experiences of Ann, Margie, and Sarah accord with the processes outlined in Transformation Theory, and they do much to inform researchers about

professional development in the practice of pedagogical documentation. Their respective passion, confidence, and skills as documenters took years to truly take root and to blossom. And yet, once firmly established in their new learning, each individual teacher experienced changes to notions of herself, her students, her profession, and beyond. Transformation Theory suggests that, with all its valleys and peaks, it is not unusual for this profound affect of deep learning to take hold of one's life. The theory also predicts the complexity of the adult learning journey and the contextual conditions that impede or propel the implementation of new learning (e.g., Brookfield, 1994; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; Peddигrew, 2001). Given the complexity of transformative learning, teachers who are working with pedagogical documentation require emotional support, expert guidance, and the awareness of school administration that there are many challenges and rewards in applying this practice in the classroom.

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters one's way of being in the world. O'Sullivan (2003) describes it thus:

Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (p. 329)

Revisiting Transformation Theory

Patton (2000) suggests that using theoretically derived hypotheses allows researchers to forgo "the pretence of the mental blank slate advocated in purer forms of phenomenology and grounded theory" (p. 493). That is to say that using an explicit theoretical framework may be one means of avoiding some of the pitfalls associated with the notion that it is possible to approach research without bias, an important aspect of a positivist orientation (Eisner, 1998; Kirby & McKena, 1989; Patton, 2002). Appropriately developed theory also provides a

basis for generalization of results to the theoretical level and provides a template for comparing studies (Yin, 1994).

Initially as I was preparing for my study, I purposely sought out writers whose notions were concerned with the process of significant change in the lives of educators. Through this initial exploration I encountered Mezirow's work on Transformation Theory.

When I used the theoretical framework of Transformation Theory in my case study research, I did so with an interpretivist stance. That is to say that I used my own knowledge of the literature concerning Reggio-inspired education and my own experience with the practice of pedagogical documentation to "make sense of the evidence" (Patton, 2002, p. 477), and to judge where the theoretical framework was appropriate or in need of amendment in relation to my case study participants.

I encountered the work of van Manen on phenomenology relatively late in my doctoral work, long after I had made a commitment to using Transformation Theory as the main theoretical framework for my research. I realized that proponents of Transformation Theory had been inching towards van Manen's ideas in an attempt to re-instate communicative over instrumental learning. I feel that van Manen's work adds a new dimension to Transformation Theory. Through his writing, I find the courage to believe in my hope that Reggio-inspired teaching has the potential to be what Bai (2002) has described as "both the oasis for these weary and wary teachers...and the rallying ground for major educational renewal" (p. 20).

Teacher Dispositions

Teacher-researcher Karen Gallas (1994) challenges teachers to "carefully and deliberately gather the children's stories and their own; to offer expansive opportunities for expression of those stories; to follow the tracks the children leave, and to present those landscapes of learning in more public ways" (p. 162). Ann, Margie, and Sarah take up this challenge with their collection and analysis of documented stories. Working with pedagogical documentation means, for

them, a way of *being* with children with intentionality - a habit of paying attention, watching and listening closely, reflecting together about what has been seen, basing their planning on emerging reflections and understandings, and telling the stories in ways that enrich the community. Their pedagogical documentation represents an active, vibrant practice - the practice of deep engagement by adults in the lives of children. These documented stories, together with the body of knowledge from the research community (Gallas, 1994) form a larger and more powerful picture of how children learn and of how the contexts which best foster learning can be supported.

It has become clear through this research project that the “disposition to document” hones a heightened awareness, one that, as Sarah has described, becomes almost an intuitive or instinctual practice in the midst of experiencing situations. Such a disposition indicates a reflective orientation to life. Van Manen (1990) expresses it thus: “By thoughtfully reflecting on what I should have done, I decide in effect how I want to be... I infuse my being and my readiness to act with a certain thoughtfulness” (p. 116). In this state of heightened awareness, and even in the choices of what is observed, these teachers are already “documenting,” even if tangible records are not kept right in the moment.

Telling of one story of negotiated or emergent learning, a month-long investigation around snow, Pam Oken-Wright (2003) comments on the teacher’s disposition:

Topics emerge, teachers document and wonder and provoke, children respond, and so on in an exquisite, non-linear dance with layer upon layer of meaning. It *cannot* be planned, but it *can be planned for* through the teacher’s disposition to observe, document, provoke, and think, through the preparation of the environment to invite interactions and encounters through which children’s ideas emerge, and through the development of a culture of conversation and construction of theory. (p. 176, emphasis in the original)

The educators at Hilltop, and referring specifically to those who have been part of this study, care deeply about their work and about their relationships with children and families. Through their pedagogical documentation they strive to make this accessible and visible to others – their practice encompasses the observing, documenting, provoking, and thinking that Oken-Wright describes

above. Their school community supports them tangibly with time and resources to pursue their research questions to the depth of their interest and to write about what they've learned, and they are keen to contribute to theoretical and pedagogical discussions of children's and teachers' learning – this is a commitment to the culture of conversation and theory that Oken-Wright speaks of.

When considering the question of disposition, and whether these particular educators have unique qualities that cause them to be so committed to this practice of pedagogical documentation, there are some strong themes that have emerged in this research. Working within a climate that promotes intellectual vitality and a research orientation, being committed to building deep and meaningful relationships, fostering an awareness of social justice, gathering tangible evidence to support an emergent or negotiated curriculum, being comfortable as a writer, and finding resonance with the educational project of Reggio Emilia all come forward as areas of passion. These, and other significant themes, are described at greater length in Chapter 6.

Intellectual Vitality and Research Orientation: the Teacher as Researcher

In Reggio municipal infant-toddler centres and preschools, the concept of “being in a state of permanent research” is very much a part of teacher identity. Gambetti (2001) refers to teachers as “pedagogical researchers” (p. 118). Ann describes the experiences of her colleagues at Hilltop as individuals who have taken on the identity of teacher/researcher:

~ our over arching question for the year then,[is] planning learning experiences and opportunities at our staff meetings and in-services that get at that [question], “what is it to be a researcher?” So teachers at Hilltop all see ourselves as that, as a researcher, and as collaborative researchers. That seems to be a big idea, really naming that as at the heart and soul of what it is to be a teacher/researcher at Hilltop (AP2).

Being anchored by the question of what it is to be a researcher gets at all the pieces: it is not just being involved in a reflective practice project but being a reflective practitioner; it is not participating in an action research investigation but

conducting constant inquiry; it is not being a part of a peer coaching project, but being collaborative as a way of working. In short, teachers, “come to internalize these ways of being to the point where it becomes second nature to be a perpetual learner” (Rubizzi, 2001, p. 110).

Documenting children’s learning is a key element in forming the identity of the community of Hilltop Children’s Centre. As Krechevsky explains (2001), “documentation offers a research orientation, creates cultural artefacts, and serves as a collective memory. It gives children, parents, teachers, and others a basis for discussion and reflection about children’s ways of learning and living” (p. 259). The practice of pedagogical documentation, along with the archive of documented stories, completely “changes the professional stature of each person within the school” (Malaguzzi, 1992, cited in Gandini, 1998, p. 176).

For Ann, Margie, and Sarah, working with pedagogical documentation has certainly had an impact on the way they see themselves as professionals and as researchers. As documenters, their written work puts into symbolic, textual form what they are seeing in the children’s experiences. Van Manen (1990) expresses it thus: “My writing as a practice prepared me for an insightful praxis in the lifeworld – I can now see things I could not see before...and so practice, in the lifeworld with children, can never be the same again” (p. 130). Viewing oneself as a theoretician and researcher fosters the intellectual commitment and curiosity and passionate engagement with one’s work described earlier by Gandini and Goldhaber (2001).

Committed to Building Deep and Meaningful Relationships

Carlina Rinaldi (cited in Cadwell, 2004) acknowledges that “the best environment for children is one in which you can find the highest possible quantity and quality of relationships” (p. 136). The primacy of relationships is a strong theme that pervades the work at Hilltop. As Ann expressed during one of our conversations:

~ the whole relationship piece is the whole heart of the beginning and sustaining piece for me of this work. Documentation is the practice that cultivates relationships, that reflects and cultivates relationships... Certainly I’m so

engaged by the intellectual piece, and so engaged by the professional development, I mean, all of that is definitely there, but the living, breathing meaning of it for me is being in relationship, being in community (AP1).

These Hilltop teachers have worked hard to effectively develop systems, and in particular their practice of pedagogical documentation, where collegiality and collaboration support relationships among the children, educators and parents, relationships with the community, opportunities for learning and the co-construction of knowledge. Working with an emergent or responsive curriculum that is negotiated with all the stakeholders is a dynamic process that generates documentation and is re-generated by documentation. Building and maintaining relationships is the guiding thread. As Rinaldi (1998) puts it, “documentation influences the quality of relationships among and between teachers, children, and parents... documentation becomes the heart of each specific project and the place for true professional training of teachers” (p. 122).

Bill Readings (1996) says: “I want to insist that pedagogy is a relation, a network of obligation... (in which) the condition of pedagogical practice is an infinite attention to the Other” (p. 16). This notion of “infinite attention” encompasses the way Ann, Margie, and Sarah describe documentation not as a product, but as a verb, as a way of being in relationship. “Pedagogical documentation, embraced fully... calls us to live in authentic, vulnerable, transformative relationship with children, their families, and each other” (Pelo, 2006, p. 190).

With relationships at the heart of their daily lived experience with children, Ann, Margie, and Sarah have their eyes wide open and riveted on the learners, taking up Ayer’s (2002) call for “honest and righteous teachers to stay wide-awake to the world, to the concentric circles of context in which we live and work” (p. 42). Hilltop teachers, who have a strong belief in children who are capable, competent, and creative, coupled with a fierce interest in a sense of fairness, (a belief or image of the child also held by educators in Reggio Emilia), are committed to fostering opportunities for children to be active protagonists in their worlds. By so doing, teachers invite students to become “capable, more

thoughtful and powerful in their choices, more engaged in a culture and a civilization, able to participate, to embrace, and, yes, to change all that is before them” (Ayers, 2002, p. 42).

Fostering an Awareness of Social Justice – Living At the “Crossroads”

For Ann, Margie, and Sarah, the practice of pedagogical documentation, coupled with the principles of emergent curriculum, fit “hand in glove” with social justice work. Guided by their goals for social justice learning and by the philosophy of the Reggio Emilia approach, the teachers are committed to investigating issues of importance by offering provocations and listening carefully to children’s responses. By studying their documentation notes, they can see underneath the words of the children to the themes and issues under-girding them. The children’s responses, in turn, help teachers plan the next provocation to challenge or expand children’s theories, questions, and cognitive challenges. With that understanding, they can respond in meaningful ways, taking an active role in shaping a project that might include an activism component. Ann describes this social justice work with children as being at the “core” of her work:

~ It’s my core, my spine to my work, that’s been the sort of deepest anchor. That’s what drew me to working with young children in the first place... If, in fact, we’re paying such intimate and close attention to children and building deep relationships with them that deeply respect who they are individually and culturally, we can’t help but do anti-bias and diversity work... There’s no way to do that work without paying close attention to children, and hearing from them what their passions and pursuits are, and meeting them in that place, and letting that be the curriculum that we live with children (AP1).

Bringing social justice work and pedagogical documentation together is really important to these teachers. Elsewhere, Ann (2006) has described this juncture as a “crossroads”:

The crossroads where social justice work and child-centered, Reggio-inspired teaching meet is a place of vitality, challenge, and profound engagement with fundamental values and vision... At the crossroads, we are asked to weave together the dispositions to pay attention, reflect on children’s play and conversations, plan from our reflections, and tell the stories that enrich our community. (p. 174)

These teachers are committed to nurturing within each child a disposition to speak and act for peace, tolerance, and justice. With that as a base, the teachers attempt to create an environment for learning that has multiple entry points. Such an environment must be, as described by Ayers (2002), abundant with opportunities to practice justice; to display, foster, embody, expect, demand, nurture, allow, model, and enact inquiry toward moral action. In fact, Hilltop teachers have discovered within their own practice that pedagogical documentation “leads surely and inescapably to social justice work with young children. When we listen to the children, allowing their passions and pursuits to guide our planning, we will find ourselves at the crossroads with anti-bias, social justice efforts” (Pelo, 2006, p. 188).

Tangible Evidence to Support Emergent or Negotiated Curriculum

Hilltop teachers are committed to working with an emerging curriculum, one which is responsive to the passions and interests of the children. This requires a great deal of trust in the children to have a desire to pursue topics that have richness and complexity to them, and in the teachers to be sensitive and aware to what these “big ideas” might be. This has potential to be a source of tension for teachers who take seriously the responsibility to be thorough and thoughtful in their planning. Sarah readily acknowledges her own love of order and structure – this is a significant component of her own personal disposition. She describes documentation as a really close description of what teaching an emergent curriculum looks like:

~ It's the main activity, if you take documentation in its biggest description that includes the reflective part, and the use of what you've collected to be thoughtful and playful about what you might want to do next... The stories give you little pieces to hold on to that can represent that time lived. It's partly a sense of relief that this moment is at least captured to some degree, so it's not lost... it's in the history. Partly it's the sense of, "I've something to show for what we've been doing." That's still a huge reassurance, for me, and my biggest defence against anybody who might say, "What do you do here all day?" (SF2).

Sarah considers her collection of documented projects incredibly treasured items that provide really solid evidence or traces of doing rich, important work

with children. As she expresses it, “To me, documentation is that something to hang onto in the turbulence and the uncertainty of flight, the anchoring structure in a very organic curriculum” (SF2). Documentation helps to provide this organizational structure to her work with children, and this meshes well with her own desire for order and organization.

Being Comfortable as a Writer

A significant component of Hilltop’s sophisticated pedagogical documentation is the teacher’s reflective commentary, and so somehow it is not surprising that one who is a competent writer would be drawn to this practice. Ann and Sarah have both commented that their comfort level with professional writing helps with this aspect of their documentation. As Ann expressed it:

~ Writing... it’s my native language, really... When I write, I feel able to do more nuanced thinking about children and learning and able to dig deeply as well as to see broadly what’s the heart and soul of learning and play. It IS research and writing, and I’m living it all day every day... (AP2).

The writing process itself helps to deepen one’s own thinking, or, as Richardson (2000) says, “writing is a way of ‘knowing,’ – a method of discovery and analysis” (p. 923). According to van Manen (1990), in phenomenology, one studies the obvious: a phenomenon that is right before us but that is not well documented or described. He also writes that the aim of phenomenology is to “transform lived experience into a text that expresses something essential in re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful” (p. 36). This is exactly what happens in Hilltop’s documentation – Ann, Margie, and Sarah are able to think “out loud” in the written text of their documentation, to be transparent in their thinking, and thereby invite the reader into their reflective processes as they come to “know.”

Resonance with Reggio Emilia: “Coming Home - A Sense of the Possible”

In our individual conversations, Ann, Margie, and Sarah each identified a powerful sense of connection upon her initial exposure to the work of the educators of Reggio Emilia. Referring in particular to viewing the video *To Make*

A Portrait of a Lion, which portrays one particular project undertaken by Reggio educators with young children, Ann comments:

~ The heart and soul piece, the way of being with children in the world - the pedagogy that grows out of the image of the child, the image of the teacher, the image of the family - is so deeply resonant for me. Watching the video 'Portrait of a Lion,' I had this experience of weeping, just weeping - weeping both from being so deeply moved with this joy at what children and families and teachers were experiencing together in Reggio, and weeping with this yearning for my own work to continue to deepen in those sorts of ways of building relationships with children and families, and supporting children's thoughtful collaborations (AP1).

These women speak profoundly of a sense of resonance, of a heart-felt connection with this portrayal of living with children in an authentic, intentional way. Canadian researcher Max van Manen's seminal work, *Researching Lived Experience* (1990) comes to mind as he describes phenomenological research:

From a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And since to know the world is to profoundly be in the world in a certain way, the act of researching – questioning – theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become fully part of it, or better, to become the world. (p. 5)

It is almost as if each woman articulates an experience of coming home, of arriving, metaphorically, in a place where the lived experience meshes with the dream of what could be possible.

Pedagogical Documentation as a Phenomenological Act

As I have listened closely to Ann, Margie, and Sarah speak of their experiences as teacher-researchers and documenters at Hilltop Children's Centre, I have been struck again and again at the similarities between the ways in which they describe their personal and individual orientations to this work, and the way that Max van Manen writes about phenomenology as researching lived experience. Phenomenology is a certain mode of reflection done traditionally by scholars who write. The text engages the reader in a pedagogic reflection on how we live with children as parents, teachers, or educators. A certain form of consciousness is required, a consciousness that is created by the act of literacy: reading and writing. It is the "minded act of writing that orients itself

pedagogically to a notion that is a feature of lived experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 124). According to van Manen (1990), the aim of phenomenology is to:

transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence – in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived experience. (p. 36)

The documented “ordinary moments” or anecdotes that these teachers have collected provide a launching point for thoughtful reflection and deconstruction. These anecdotes form, in van Manen’s (1990) terms, “a concrete counterweight to abstract theoretical thought” (p. 119). Phenomenological description is not intended to develop theoretical abstractions that are separated from the reality of tangible, lived experience, but rather, “phenomenology tries to penetrate the layers of meanings of the concrete by tilling and turning over the soil of daily existence.” (p. 119).

Van Manen (1990) describes phenomenological orientation as a kind of conversational relation that the researcher “develops with the notion he or she wishes to explore and understand” (p. 98). There is a conversational relation between the speakers, and the speakers are involved in a conversational relation with the notion or phenomenon that keeps the personal relation of the conversation intact. Gadamer (1975) has described this process as having a dialogic structure of questioning-answering. Every time a view is expressed one can see the interpretation as an answer to a question that the object, the topic or notion, of the conversation asks of the persons who share the conversational relation. The conversation has a hermeneutic thrust: it is oriented to sense-making and interpreting of the notion that drives or stimulates the conversation. It is for this reason that the collaborative quality of the conversation lends itself especially well to the task of reflecting on the themes of the notion or phenomenon under study (van Manen, 1990).

Directions for Future Research

In slowly coming to a more sophisticated understanding of postmodernism, narrative inquiry, and interpretive phenomenology, I have read and re-read,

interpreted and synthesized many a good book and scholarly text. I have experienced some travail in this methodological journey and at times wandered, and wondered, through a maze of brilliant, yet dense and complex, philosophical works.

I believe that the affirmative postmodern position on personal experience is one which considers the exploitation of those who have been marginalized can be counteracted by a focus on the local, individual, “ordinary” experience through recognizing traditional local narratives or storytelling, or, as in the present study, instances of pedagogical documentation.

Scholars, teachers, and teacher educators have recently been working with these ideas through using postmodern methods of deconstruction to analyze pedagogical documentation (Lenz-Taguchi, 2006; MacDonald & Sanchez, 2008, Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008). Lenz-Taguchi (2006) explains:

Working deconstructively with documentation means that we can analyze how children and we ourselves, as early childhood educators, understand what is taking place...what discursively informs the children, as well as the preschool teachers. This way of deconstructively reading the text of the document helps us make visible or, so to speak, tell the story of teachers’ daily practice, which, in turn, provides a concrete starting point for thinking deeply about these practices and their philosophical or theoretical underpinnings. (p. 260)

Future research could well focus on this work.

The process of educational change for the teachers in this study has been influenced greatly by the framework of support that has evolved at Hilltop. This framework creates a combination of conditions that helps teachers to cope with the non-linear process of change. Such a framework invites teachers to be reflective about their practice, to engage in change efforts with a purpose, to participate in regular conversations with their peers as a community, to seek alternative perspectives in the form of conceptual inputs, to try out ideas in action and to seek feedback from their colleagues and other stakeholders. Ann, Margie, and Sarah also conceive of teaching as an art or profession that makes them aware of the complex nature of their practice and hunger to learn more about teaching. Importantly, the school organization has been restructured to include times for teachers to share their teaching experiences and to work on their documentation.

Key components of the culture of Hilltop's school community include paying attention to the range, quality, and choice of materials; recognizing the role of the adult as researcher and facilitator; maintaining a view of the environment as a powerful tool for learning; acknowledging the value placed on working in groups; creating large blocks of uninterrupted, unscheduled time; and holding an image of the child as a powerful and competent researcher with a hypothesis (Krechevsky, 2001, p. 248). It is the interplay among all of these conditions that makes possible this trajectory of growth in the teachers' learning.

One amazing attribute of a complex, dynamic system is that even a small part of it reflects the whole contained within it, reflecting, as Cadwell (2003) describes, "light from a prism" (p. 12). The work of teacher-researchers Ann, Margie, and Sarah has been nurtured within a much larger context - that of Hilltop Children's Centre, a Reggio-inspired school in Seattle, Washington. A learning environment is created from more than just the sum of the conditions; it is the connection between them that is essential. For the conditions to interrelate, there needs to be a "congruence" or "fit" between them so that they have a common thread, with each one reinforcing the others. This synergy does not result from the sum of conditions alone, but rather results from their dynamic interplay. Hence, the interrelationships among the conditions cause a "multiplier" effect that is greater than the sum of the conditions alone creating a synergistic effect (Lawler, cited in Hoban, 2003). The cause of the multiplier effect comes from the reciprocity among the conditions such that the more reflective a teacher is, the more they contribute to discussions and seek student feedback, which further enhances their reflection resulting in "cumulative and continuous learning" (Hoban, 2003, p. 75).

As a direction for future research, I would like to see the application of complexity theory to teacher development in Reggio-inspired schools. Uptis (2004) provides a succinct definition of the theory: "[It is] the study of adaptive and self-organizing systems... That is, complexity science seeks to understand phenomena that organize, in some way, in a bottom-up collective - collectives where there is no single agent or orchestrator in control of the whole" (p. 9).

Educational change, viewed through the lens of complexity theory, can be useful to help understand the dynamic and interrelated nature of the change process. In contrast to a mechanistic paradigm, which focuses on independent elements that have a linear cause and effect relationship, complexity theory is a world view focusing on multiple interdependent elements and the non-linear interactions that emerge. Systems thinking is a mindset or lens that complements complexity theory by “focusing on interrelationships and helps us to understand the dynamic interactions indicative of complex systems” (Hoban, 2003, p. 30). Senge (1990) further describes systems thinking as “a discipline for seeing the ‘structures’ that underlie complex situations...systems thinking offers a language that begins by restructuring how we think” (p. 69).

A paradigm for change based on complexity theory promotes a conception of teaching as an art as well as a belief that educational change behaves as a complex system and needs to be supported by a framework to promote long-term teacher learning. This framework is needed because changing one’s teaching practice is a non-linear process that occurs over a long period of time and so needs to be supported by a combination of personal, social and contextual conditions for teacher learning that interrelate as a system. When teachers begin to change their practice, it disturbs the balance of their existing classroom system that is similar to working on “the edge of chaos” (Waldrop, 1992) until equilibrium or order is again established. The learning encouraged is often transformative, resulting in a change in teaching practices, and generative, with teachers producing new knowledge about, or artefacts for, their own practice (Hoban, 2003).

The focus on relationships, and not merely the parts themselves, must also include the organizational dynamics. A system does not obtain its identity and characteristics from the aggregate of its parts or the relationship among pairs of parts of the whole. There is a unity that is defined by systemic organization that is greater than the composite of the individual parts. The logical formulation of the system itself is greater than the particular or individual organizational relations among the parts. Systems theory is about the exploration and

examination of the organizational properties of systems that lend coherence and meaning rather than the particular arrangements found in individual instances of systems. This represents the underlying systems logic (Fleener, 2002, p. 105).

The works of writers that Malaguzzi and other Reggio educators read, like Bateson's *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity* (1979) and Maturana and Varela's *Tree of Knowledge* (1987), are rich with these thoughts. The ideas and theories of these authors are intriguing, dense, and, for me, sometimes difficult to follow. These ideas spiral around how we construct knowledge, how we are connected to one another and the universe, how we create our own realities, how there is really not an objective reality "out there" but rather a network of interconnecting patterns of which we are all an integral part. Malaguzzi reinterpreted and reworked these authors' theories and ideas into a form that enriched the real life and growth of the schools in Reggio Emilia (Cadwell, 2003).

It is important for all members of the educational community to understand how a framework such as a professional learning system works as this gives them a basis to design a learning environment for teachers that creates the conditions for change to occur. To sustain change, a professional learning system needs as many conditions for teacher learning as possible to be in place so that they enhance each other to create a synergy (Hoban, 2003). This synergy exists at Hilltop, although it is dynamic and always changing and evolving.

The Disposition to Document: Closing Remarks

It is often the commitment of an individual or small group of teachers to the rather arduous road of learning and innovation that makes a difference to their work. Pedagogical documentation, while being deceptively simple, is actually extremely challenging. The teachers who, in this study, do manage to overcome the myriad external and internal challenges in using pedagogical documentation, report a renewed sense of commitment, energy, and joy in their teaching. Their stories reveal the intellectual rigor, engagement and level of collaboration that their experience with documentation has required (Clyde & Shepherd, 2006).

In the early days of their practice as documenters, these teachers wondered what to document and how to do it. Pedagogical documentation was an add-on, an extra task added to the rest of their already rich teaching work. Their current experience is mirrored in the words of Louise Cadwell (2003) as she describes how teachers at her school in St. Louis journeyed into this way of teaching:

Now [documentation] is in the middle of everything, the centerpiece from which we move out, the hub of the wheel, the motor that drives the work. To say that it is in the middle of our work, however, is not to say that it has become easy to do. In the midst of our complex lives, we share many practices, one of which is observation and documentation. In our commitment to this practice, we move along together. We travel, pushing each other, pulling each other, going somewhere, making meaning ourselves, discovering, looking deeply at children. We are amazed and excited every single day. This is what catches us and won't let us go. (p. 97)

When we experience the unspeakable or ineffable in life, it may be that what remains beyond one person's linguistic competence may nevertheless be put into words by another person (Dienske, cited by van Manen, 1990) – perhaps by someone who has special skill in writing. Indeed we are sometimes surprised when someone is able to say what we wanted to say while we could not find the words. It is for this reason also that the research-writing process requires of us that we sometimes “borrow” the words of another person since this person is able, or has been able, to describe an experience in a manner (with a directness, a sensitivity, or an authenticity) that is beyond our ability. Sometimes this other person is “a thoughtful poet, a philosopher, an author of fiction, or a person with a certain verbal talent” (van Manen, 1990, p. 113). I believe that this is why pedagogical documentation meets with such a strong sense of resonance for many observers – and, in particular, why the work of Ann, Margie, and Sarah is so powerful.

These educators express a desire for their writing to serve pedagogy. Language is perhaps the only way by which the pedagogic experience can be brought into a symbolic form that creates by its very discursive nature a conversational relation. Writing and reading are the ways in which a conversational relation is sustained: a discourse about our pedagogic lives with children. Van Manen (1990) provokes one even to wonder whether the charge of

pedagogy to address adequately its own nature is possibly too much to ask of ordinary conversational discourse. He asks, therefore, “what form of writing is needed to do justice to the fullness of pedagogy and pedagogic experience?” (p. 111). My response is that pedagogical documentation, as modeled after the early childhood project of Reggio Emilia and enacted by teachers such as Ann, Margie, and Sarah, is just that form of writing.

Whatever approach we seek to develop, it always needs to be understood as an answer to the question of how an educator stands in life, how an educator needs to think about children, how an educator observes, listens, and relates to children, how an educator practices a form of speaking and writing that is pedagogically contagious. The very fact that we write about curriculum, teaching, or education can already be regarded as a manifestation of pedagogic orientation. And yet, my personal experience is that few educators display an understanding of the need for orientation in a reflexive and ontological sense. To say that our text needs to be oriented in a pedagogic way is to require of our orientation to research and writing an awareness of the relation between content and form, speaking and acting, text and textuality. To be oriented as researchers or theorists means that we do not separate theory from life, the public from the private. We are not simply being pedagogues here and researchers there – we are “researchers oriented to the world in a pedagogic way” (van Manen, 1990, p. 151).

A researcher who sees himself or herself as educator and who wants to arrive at better pedagogic understandings of questions concerning children’s experiences – children reading, children at play, children learning in classrooms, children experiencing family break-up, children having difficulties, children experiencing loss, and so on – needs to inquire (reflect, speak, and write) in a manner that is both oriented and strong in a pedagogic sense. In other words, as we speak or write, we need to see that the textuality of our text is also a demonstration of the way we stand pedagogically in life. “It is a sign of our preoccupation with a certain question or notion, a demonstration of the strength of our exclusive commitment to the pedagogy that animates our interest in text in the first place” (van Manen, 1990, p. 138).

Revisiting the Original Research Questions

Throughout this study, I have sought to understand the personal qualities that have enabled three particular early childhood teachers – Ann, Margie, and Sarah – to enthusiastically embrace the practice of pedagogical documentation. The questions that have framed this research project are:

1. *What are the lived experiences of these teachers who are practicing pedagogical documentation, as modeled in the Reggio Emilia approach?*
2. *Do these teachers demonstrate particular attributes that foster a “disposition to document”?*

What has emerged through this research is that Ann, Margie, and Sarah have each had a remarkable, intuitive response to the work of educators in Reggio Emilia, a response that resonates with a vision of great possibilities. The values, ideas, and ideals of the Reggio approach seem to be interwoven throughout their work now. Having keen observational skills, delight in and curiosity about children, the ability to articulate and put into text their reflections, a commitment to nurturing relationships, and intellectual engagement that is fostered by the active role of researcher, are all dispositions that these teachers bring to their work. It is also the description of the phenomenological researcher.

Even after engaging in this close collaboration with these three now over many years, I cannot strongly state with conviction that, in fact, their encounters with the work of Reggio Emilia, and pedagogical documentation in particular, has been a catalyst for dispositional change. And yet, Ann, Margie, and Sarah have each independently and enthusiastically responded in the affirmative when asked this very question. It may be that it is a relationship of reciprocity – that perhaps initially Ann, Margie, and Sarah were drawn to the Reggio Emilia approach because it resonated within each of them in an intuitive way, and that their subsequent work with pedagogical documentation has fostered dispositions that each already had. I’m inclined to think this is the case. Van Manen (1990) writes, “when we raise questions, gather data, describe a phenomenon, we do so as researchers who stand in the world in a pedagogic way” (p. 1) – this way of

standing in the world is reflected in the way that Ann, Margie, and Sarah speak of their experience both as teachers and as documenters. As Heesoon Bai (2003) has said, “Any sustained practice conditions and forms a particular more of consciousness, or if you like, a way of seeing and being in the world.”

~ The process or way of being in the world, is really what it is, a way of understanding our work, or understanding our relationships with children and with each other that is about mindful presence and authentic engagement and curiosity and delight. How that all gets lived out or made tangible is the form of this thing we call documentation, this paper we put up on the wall, this document we send out to the web-page, whatever form it takes... documentation is an expression of a way of being with children. I think of documentation as growing out of deep listening and close observation... that's a core piece of documentation, really being present to what the children are experiencing, doing, saying, playing about, arguing about, collaborating about, feeling about. So, that is a central component of documentation, that mindful presence... (AP2).

I find a strong parallel between phenomenology, particularly Max van Manen's description of human science research, and the experience of Ann, Margie, and Sarah as documenters. The way in which each of them stands in pedagogical relation to the world, and their abilities to write reflectively on the meanings of phenomena of daily life lived in this community, are echoed in these words of van Manen's (1990):

Pedagogy requires a phenomenological sensitivity to lived experience (children's realities and life-worlds). Pedagogy requires a hermeneutic ability to make interpretive sense of the phenomena of the life-world in order to see the pedagogic significance of situations and relations of living with children. And pedagogy requires a way with language in order to allow the research process of textual reflection to one's pedagogic thoughtfulness and tact. (p. 2)

What these particular teachers are doing in their everyday practice appears to be, indeed, un-named phenomenological research of the lived experience of these teachers and children. Each embodies the disposition of a researcher who wonders, imagines, speculates, and thinks deeply about the nature of her work with children, and is committed to “render the children's, the parent's, and [their] own thoughts and ideas readable in clear, appealing, and accessible ways in the school” (Cadwell, 203, p. 12).

I am reminded of the poem by William Stafford that graces Sarah's bio board:

The Well Rising

*The well rising without a word
the spring on a hillside
the ploughshare brimming
through deep ground
everywhere in the field –
The sharp swallows
in their swerve
flaring and hesitating
hunting for the final curve
coming closer and closer—
The swallow heart
from wingbeat to wingbeat
counselling decision, decision:
thunderous examples.*

I place my feet with care in such a world (emphasis mine).

Phenomenological research is unlike any other research in that the link with the results cannot be broken, as Marcel (1950) explained, without loss of all reality to the results. And that is why, when you listen to a presentation of a phenomenological nature, you will listen in vain for the punch-line, the latest information, or the big news. As in poetry, it is inappropriate to ask for a conclusion or a summary of a phenomenological study. To summarize a poem in order to present the result would destroy the result because the poem itself is the result. The poem is the thing (van Manen, 1990, p. 13).

Still, in this study I have hoped to develop a rich portrayal that will resonate (in different ways, from different perspectives) with three audiences: with the actors who see themselves reflected in the story, with the readers who will see no reason to disbelieve it, and with myself, whose deep knowledge of the setting and personal experience allow me to see the “truth value” in this research work (Davis & Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997). The interpretations of protagonist and portraitist contribute to the co-construction of the story, but the final contributor is the reader – who brings yet another interpretation into the discourse. The reader is an active

force in the co-construction of story, applying personal experience to the elaboration of his or her interpretation of the narrative.

For Ann, Margie, and Sarah, their practice of pedagogical documentation has certainly had a dramatic effect in their teaching lives. In Malaguzzi's (1998) words:

This work has strongly informed – little by little – our way of being with the children. It has also, in a rather beautiful way, obliged us to refine our methods of observation and recording so that the process of children's learning becomes the basis of our dialogue with parents. Stand aside for a while and leave room for learning, observe carefully what children do, and then, if you have understood well, perhaps teaching will be different than before. (p. 82)

For Ann, Margie, and Sarah, teaching is, undeniably, different than before. They have understood well.

*Coda*²²

I have taken the opportunity to listen to the individual stories and experiences of Ann, Margie, and Sarah, three teachers who are working with the practice of pedagogical documentation in their teaching practice. By listening to their “voices” I have become more thoughtful and sensitive to their understandings of the world they live in. Phenomenology is described in a number of ways by experts in the field. van Manen (1990) explains “phenomenology as an attempt to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experiences the world pre-reflectively, without taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting it...Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences” (p. 9). Hopkins (1994) refers to phenomenology as “the study of the ‘life-world,’ of lived, everyday experience, of how consciousness takes in the givens of the experienced world” (p. 39). “Heidegger's phenomenology is...hermeneutic in that it takes understanding as primary and seeks to understand it, to interpret what (one) already knows” (Weinsheimer, 1985, p. 162). Anderson (1998) defines phenomenology as a

²² *Coda: the concluding passage of a movement or composition.*

method “aimed at understanding the meaning of experiences in our everyday lives” (p. 121). Each of these definitions seeks to understand the experiences of individuals in their daily lives.

The themes I gleaned from each teacher’s lived experience and the stories that developed from these experiences will not necessarily illuminate new findings or revelations. Within each qualitative study that is influenced by a phenomenological perspective, answers are not to be sought, rather evolving understanding and thoughtfulness are our mandate. “Phenomenology provides a deep perspective on the reality of others, but it does not do this necessarily by providing new information...[It] functions not to settle human questions, but to convert answers through reflection into new questions” (Hopkins, 1994, p. 42). The experiences and themes that emerged from Ann, Margie, and Sarah will stand on their own for interpretation. My task as a qualitative/phenomenological researcher and writer has been “to construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 41). This has involved re-writing again and again until I have, hopefully, written a picture of meaning.

My approach to interpreting the lived experiences of the teachers I conversed with throughout my research has been influenced by my evolving understanding of phenomenology. Orienting myself as a phenomenological researcher has helped me to understand how these teachers have experienced, in their bodies and their souls, the phenomena of pedagogical documentation. It has given me the opportunity to hear the “essence” of what they are saying and living as I have “attempted to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of [their] lived experiences” (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). It has been through this process of discovery that insight has surfaced.

As a phenomenologist, I must act with tact and become sensitive to the *lifeworld* of the other person. In this study, it is the understandings of the teachers I seek to reveal, not my own. I believe this study adds to the existing research on the Reggio Emilia approach. I also hope it will add a new dimension of understanding and sensitivity to the lived experiences of teachers attempting

to work with pedagogical documentation in their classrooms, in their shared lives with children and families.

Throughout out conversations, Ann, Margie, and Sarah often forced me to look beyond my own personal and professional understandings. At times I found myself thinking, “Yes, that’s it. I know what you mean!” and I gave the phenomenological nod. The interviews have changed me. The opportunity of gaining entrance into the frame of reference held by another person has opened my world. Maybe this is the gift phenomenology offers to me...the expansion of the space I’ve closed myself into. Max van Manen (1990) suggests that “phenomenological research is often itself a form of deep learning, leading to a transformation of consciousness, heightened perceptiveness, and increased thoughtfulness and tact” (p. 163). This no longer reads as a simple quote for me to glance over – it has become part of the fabric of my being. My colleagues have stretched me and their words confront and affirm the understandings I hold onto.

References

- Abbott, L., & Nutbrown, C. (Eds.) (2001). *Experiencing Reggio Emilia: Implications for preschool provision*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Abramson, S., Ankenman, K., & Robinson, R. (1995). Project work with diverse students: Adapting curriculum based on the Reggio Emilia approach. *Childhood Education (71)*, 197-202.
- Adler, A.A., & Adler, P. (1998). Observational techniques. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 79-109). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Alasburg, C., & Mezirow, J. (2000). Theory building and the search for common ground. In J. Mezirow & Associates, *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 329-358). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Allgood, E., & Kvalsund, R. (2001, September). *Persons-in-relation: Dialogue as transformative learning in counselling and education*. Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Transformative Learning, Toronto, ON.
- Anderson, G. (1998). *Fundamentals of educational research*. London: Falmer Press.
- Andrews, D. (1999). *School Change and Development: The Influence of a Reflective Individual*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Southern Queensland.
- Anzul, M., & Ely, M. (1988). Halls of mirrors: The introduction of the reflective mode. *Language Arts 65* (November), 685-687.
- Atkinson, & Hammersley. (1994). Ethnography and participant observation. In Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ayers, W. (1989). *The good preschool teacher*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ayers, W. (1993). *To teach: The journey of a teacher*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ayers, W. (2002). Creating the teacher and changing the world. In E. Mirochnik & D. Sherman (Eds.), *Passion and pedagogy: Relation, creation, and transformation in teaching*. New York: Peter Lang.

- Bai, H. (2002). Zen and the art of intrinsic perception: A case of Haiku. *Canadian Review of Art Education*, 28(1), 1-24.
- Bai, H. (2003). *On the edge of chaos: Complexity and ethics*. Proceedings of the 2003 Complexity Science and Educational Research Conference. 19-30. <http://www.complexityandeducation.ca>
- Barazonni, R. (1985). *Brick by brick: The history of "XXV Aprile" people's nursery school of Villa Cella*. Reggio Emilia, Italy; Reggio Children.
- Barthes, R. (1986). *The rustle of language*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barone, T. (1990). Using narrative text as an occasion for conspiracy. In W. Eisner and A. Peshkin (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate* (pp. 305-326). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bateson, G. (1979). *Mind and nature: A necessary unity*. London: Hampton Press.
- Bassey, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Bayes, C. (2006). Provocations of Te Whariki and Reggio Emilia. In A. Fleet, C. Patterson, & J. Robertson (Eds.), *Insights behind early childhood pedagogical documentation* (pp. 289-299). Castle Hill, NSW: Pademelon Press.
- Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N., and Tarule, J. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York: Basic Books.
- Belenky, M., & Stanton, A. (2000). Inequality, development, and connected knowing. In J. Mezirow & Associates, *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 71-102). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Beneke, S., Harris-Helm, J., & Steinheimer, K. (1998). *Windows on learning: Documenting young children's work*. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Benner, P. (1985). Quality of life: A phenomenological perspective on explanation, prediction and understanding in nursing science. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 8(1), 1-14.
- Berg, B. (1998). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

- Berger, P. L., & Luckman, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Bersani, C., & Jarjoura, D. (2002). In V. Fu, A. Stremmel, and L. Hill (Eds.), *Teaching and learning: Collaborative exploration of the Reggio Emilia approach*, (pp. 66-81). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Boaler, J. (2003). Studying and capturing the complexity of practice – The case of the ‘dance of agency.’ *Proceedings of the Joint Meeting of PME and PMENA (International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education)*, 13-18 July, 2003. Honolulu, HI. Volume 1
- Bogdan, R.C. & Biklen, S.K. (1982). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bogdan, R.C. & Biklen, S.K. (1998). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bohm, D. (1996). *On dialogue*. New York: Routledge.
- Bollnow, O.F. (1982). On silence – findings of philosophico-pedagogical anthropology. *Universitas* 18(1), 3-18.
- Borgia, E. (1991). *Impressions of Reggio Emilia* (Report No. 141). University of Illinois. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 338 386).
- Bowman, B. T., & Stott, F. M. (1994). Understanding development in a cultural context. In B. L. Mallory & R. S. New (Eds.), *Diversity and developmentally appropriate practices: Challenges for early childhood education* (pp. 119-133). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Boyd, R. (1989). Facilitating personal transformations in small groups. *Small Group Behaviour*, 20(4), 459-474.
- Boyd, R. (1991). *Personal transformations in small groups: A Jungian perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Bredenkamp, S. (1993). Reflections on Reggio Emilia. *Young Children* 49 (1), 13-17.
- Bredenkamp, S. & Copple, C. (Eds.) (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs* (revised edition). Washington, DC: NAEYC Publications.

- Bredenkamp, S., & Rosengrant, T. (Eds.). (1995). *Reaching potentials: Transforming early childhood curriculum and assessment* (Vol. 2). Washington, D.C.: NAEYC Publications.
- Britzman, D. (1991). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Brookfield, S. (1986). *Understanding and facilitating adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brookfield, S. (1987). Significant adult learning. In D. Boud & V. Griffen (Eds.). *Appreciating adults' learning* (pp. 64-75). New York: Kagan Page.
- Brookfield, S. (1994). Tales from the dark side: A phenomenography of adult critical reflection. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 13(3), 203-216.
- Brookfield, S. (2000). Transformative learning as ideology critique. In J. Mezirow & Associates, *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 125-150). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bromley, D. B. (1990). Academic contributions to psychological counselling: I. A philosophy of science for the study of individual cases. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 3(3), 299-307.
- Brown, R. (1991). *Toward a phenomenology of curriculum: The work of Max van Manen and T. Tetsuo Aoki*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University.
- Brown, R. (1992). Max van Manen and pedagogical human science research. In W. P. Pinar and W. M. Reynolds (Eds.), *Understanding curriculum as phenomenological and deconstructed text* (pp. 44-63). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Browning, P.C., & Hatch, J.A. (1995). Qualitative research in early childhood settings: A review. In J.A. Hatch (Ed.), *Qualitative research in early childhood settings* (pp. 99-114). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Buber, M. (1958). *I and Thou*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Burgess, R. G. (Ed.) (1982). *Field research: A source book and field manual*. London: Allen & Unwin.

- Burrington, B. (n.d.). Available online at:
<http://www.uvm.edu/pt3/casestudies/uvm/burrington.html>
(Accessed August 3, 2005).
- Cadwell, L. (2003). *Bringing learning to life*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Cadwell, L. (1997). *Bringing Reggio Emilia home*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Cadwell, L. (1996). *Making places, telling stories: An approach to early childhood education inspired by the preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Cincinnati, OH: The Union Institute.
- Cagliari, P., & Giudici, C. (2001). School as a place of group learning for parents. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 136-141). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl.
- Candy, P. (1987). Evolution, revolution, or devolution: Increasing learner control in the instructional setting. In D. Boud & V. Griffin (Eds.), *Appreciating adults learning: From the learner's perspective*. London: Kagan Page.
- Candy, P. (1991). *Self-direction for lifelong learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Canella, G. (1997). *Deconstructing early childhood education: Social justice and revolution*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Capra, F. (1996). *The web of life*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Carter, K. (1993). The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1), 2-14.
- Carter, M. (1998). Calling all inventors. *Child Care Information Exchange* (9/98), 39 - 42.
- Carter, M. (2006). Engaging our teachers. *Child Care Information Exchange* (9/98), 24-28.
- Carter, M. & Curtis, D. (1996). *Spreading the news: Sharing the stories of early childhood education*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Carter, M. & Curtis, D. (2003). *Designs for learning and living*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

- Ceppi, G. & Zini, M. (1998). (Eds.). *Children, spaces, relations: Metaproject for an environment for young children*. Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children.
- Chang, N. (1996). *The role of the teacher in children's acquisition of concepts based on Reggio principles and related theories*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Nashville, TN: Peabody College, Vanderbilt University.
- Chase, S. (2003). Learning to listen: Narrative principles in a qualitative research methods course. In R. Josselson, A. Lieblich, & D. McAdams (Eds.), *Up close and personal: The teaching and learning of narrative research* (pp. 79-99). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Checkley, K. (1997). The first seven...and the eighth: A conversation with Howard Gardner. *Educational Leadership*, 55 (1), 8-13.
- Cheek, J. (2000). *Postmodern and poststructural approaches to nursing research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing.
- Clandinin, D. (1986). *Classroom practice: Teacher images in action*. London: Falmer Press.
- Clandinin, D., & Connelly, M. (1987). Teachers' personal knowledge : What counts as "personal" in studies of the personal. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 19(1), 487-500.
- Clandinin, D., & Connelly, F.. (1994). Personal experience methods. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Clandinin, D., & Connelly, M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin, D., Davies, A., Hogan, P., & Kennard, B. (Eds.). (1993). *Learning to teach, teaching to learn: Stories of collaboration in teacher education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Clarke, A. (1995). Professional development in practicum settings: Reflective practice under scrutiny. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 11(3), 243-261.
- Clark, J.E. (1997). Of writing, imagination, and dialogue: A transformative experience. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice* (pp. 79-88). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clark, M.C., & Wilson, A. (1991). Context and rationality in Mezirow's theory of transformational learning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 41(2), 75-01.

- Clay, M. (1982). *Observing young readers: Selected papers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clyde, M., & Shepherd, W. (2006). Response to part two: Beginnings. In A. Fleet, C. Patterson, & J. Robertson (Eds.), *Insights behind early childhood documentation* (pp. 163-169). Castle Hill, N.S.W.: Pademelon Press.
- Cobb, E. (1977). *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*. Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.
- Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (Eds.). (1993). *Inside/outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Coffman, P. (1989). *Inclusive language as a means of resisting hegemony in theological education: A phenomenology of transformation and empowerment of persons in adult higher education*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, North Illinois University, IL.
- Cohen, D. L. (1992, November 20). Preschool in Italian town inspiration to U.S. educators. *Education Week* 12(1), 12-13.
- Collard, S., & Law, M. (1989). The limits of perspective transformation: A critique of Mezirow's theory. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 39(2), 99-107.
- Collins, M. (1983). Phenomenological perspectives: Some implications for adult education. In Merriam, S.B. (1984). *Selected writings on philosophy and adult education*. Florida: Robert E. Kreiger Publishing.
- Connelly, M. & Clandinin, J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Connelly, M., & Clandinin, D. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.
- Connelly, M., & Clandinin, D. (1995). Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes: Secret, sacred, and cover stories. *Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Cooper, C. (2002). *Constructivist leadership: It's evolving narrative*. In L. Lambert, D. Walker, D. Zimmerman, J. Cooper, M. Lambert, M. Gardner, et al. (Eds.). *The constructivist leader* (pp. 112-126). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Cornett, J., Chase, S., & Miller, P. (1990). *Researcher and Participant Views of Ethics: Is Trust Enough?* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA, April.

- Corsaro, W.A., & Emiliani, F. (1992). Child care, early education, and children's peer culture in Italy. In M. E. Lamb, K. J. Sternberg, C. P. Hwang, & A.G. Broberg (Eds.), *Child care in context*. Milan, Italy: Marzorati.
- Corsaro, W.A., & Molinari, L. (2005). *I compagni: Understanding children's transition from preschool to elementary school*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Courtney, B., Merriam, S., & Reeves, P. (1998). The centrality of meaning-making in transformational learning: How HIV-positive adults make sense of their lives. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 48(2), 65-84.
- Covert, G. (2000). *The role of learning assessment in selected Reggio Emilia-inspired kindergarten, first, and second-grade public school classrooms*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University.
- Cranton, P. (1994). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cranton, P. (1996). *Professional development as transformative learning: New perspectives for teachers of adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cranton, P. (2000). Individual differences and transformative learning. In J. Mezirow & Associates, *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 181-204). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage.
- Creswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. (2004). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Second Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Curtis, D., & Carter, M. (2000). *The art of awareness: How observation can transform your teaching*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Dahlberg, G., & Aasen, G. (1994). Evaluation and regulation: A question of empowerment. In P. Moss & A. Pence (Eds.), *Valuing quality in early childhood services*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. (1999). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Postmodern perspectives*. London: Falmer Press.

- Dahlberg, G., & Moss, Peter (2005). *Ethics and politics in early childhood education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Daloz, L. (2000). Transformative learning for the common good. In J. Mezirow (Ed.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 103-124). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Daloz, L., Keen, C., Keen, J., & Parks, S. (1996). *Common fire: Leading lives of commitment in a complex world*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Davis, B., & Sumara, D.J. (1997). Cognition, complexity, and teacher education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 67(1), 105-125.
- Davis, J. & Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (1997). *The art and science of portraiture*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Daws, J. (2001). *The Reggio Emilia experience Personal insights into co-learning and co-constructing*. Research proposal. Available online at <http://www.ed.sturt.flinders.edu.au/edweb/programs/eddprops/daws.pdf>. (Accessed November 11, 2003.)
- Denzin, N. (1989). *Interpretive interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1998). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (pp. 1-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *The handbook of qualitative research (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- De Sousa, R. (1991). *The rationality of emotion*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Dewane, C. (1993). *Self-help groups and adult learning*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, New Kensington, PA.
- Dewey, J. (1916/1971). *Democracy in education: An introduction into the philosophy of education*. New York: McMillan.
- Dey, I. (1993). *Qualitative data analysis: A friendly guide for social scientists*. London: Routledge.
- Dirkx, J. (1997). Nurturing soul in adult learning. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice* (pp. 79-88). New

Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 74. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dirkx, J. (2000). *Transformative learning and the journey of individuation*. Eric Digest No. 233. ED448305. Retrieved from the Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education, March 13, 2004.

Dissanayake, E. (1995). *Homo aestheticus: Where art comes from and why*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Doig, S. (1994). *The Placement of Teacher Voice in Educational Research*. Paper presented at Australian Association for Research in Education conference, Newcastle, Australia.

Drauker, C.B. (1999). The critique of Heideggerian hermeneutical nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 30(2), 360-373.

Duckworth, E. (1987). *The having of wonderful ideas and other essays on teaching and learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Edwards, A. (2004). Qualitative designs and analysis. In G. McNaughton, S. Rolfe., & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing early childhood education research: International perspectives on reflection and practice*. (pp. 117-135). Berkshire, U.K.: Open University Press.

Edwards, C. (1993). Partner, nurturer, and guide: The roles of the Reggio teacher in action. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education*. (pp. 151-169). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

Edwards, C. (1998). Partner, nurturer, and guide: The role of the teacher. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach – Advanced reflections*. (pp. 179-198). Greenwich, CT: Ablex Publishing.

Edwards, C. (2002). Three approaches from Europe: Waldorf, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia. *Early childhood research and practice*, 4(1). Accessed online at <http://ecrp.uic.edu/v4n1/edwards.html> (March 11, 2004).

Edwards, C., Forman, G., & Gandini, L. (Eds.) (1993). *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

Edwards, C., Forman, G., & Gandini, L. (Eds.) (1998). *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education - Advanced Reflections*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing

- Edwards, C., & Springate, K. (1993). Inviting children into project work. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, 40, pp. 9-12.
- Edwards, R. & Usher, R. (2001). Lifelong learning: A postmodern condition of education? *Adult Education Quarterly*, 51(4), 273-287.
- Edwards, S.D. (2001). *Philosophy of nursing*. New York: Palgrave.
- Eisner, E. (1979). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs*. New York: McMillan.
- Eisner, E. (1998). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Elbow, P. (1986). *Methodological doubting and believing: Contraries in inquiry*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Elliott, E. (2001). *Changing perspectives in early childhood education: Recasting the Reggio Emilia approach*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee.
- Ely, M., with Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D., & McCormack Steinmetz, A. (2001). *Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Emden, C. (1998). Theoretical perspectives on narrative inquiry. *Collegian*, 5(2), 30-35.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Entsminger, V. (1995). *Teachers' perceptions of a pedagogic innovation: Barriers and mechanisms for successful implementation*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. St. Louis, MO: Saint Louis University.
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Whittrock (Ed.). *Handbook of research on teaching*. Old Tappan, NJ: Macmillan.
- Erickson, F. (1998). Qualitative research methods for science education. In B. Fraser and K. Tobin (Eds.), *International handbook of science education* (pp. 1155-1173). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishing.
- Erlandson, D. A., Harris, E. L., Skipper, B. L., & Allen, S. D. (1993). *Doing naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Whittrock (Ed.). *Handbook of research on teaching*. Old Tappan, NJ: Macmillan.
- Evans, R. (1996). *The human side of school change: Reform, resistance, and the real-life problems of innovation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Feagin, J. R., Orum, A. M., & Sjoberg, G. (1991). *A case for case study*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Field, K. (1979). *Teacher development: A study of stages of development of teachers*. Brookline, MA: Teachers Centre.
- Filippini, T. (1993). The role of the pedagogista. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education*. (pp. 113-118). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Filippini, T. (2001). On the nature of organization. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 52-57). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl.
- Firlik, E., & Firlik, R. (1993, December). The role of display in the preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. *Holistic Education Review* (pp. 41-43).
- Firlik, R. (1995). *American early education: Adaptations and not adoptions from Reggio Emilia, Italy*. Urbana, IL: ERIC.
- Firlik, R. (1996). Can we adapt the philosophies and practices of Reggio Emilia, Italy, for use in American schools? *Early Childhood Education Journal* (23), 4, 217-220.
- Flanagan, P. (2001, September). *The concept of learning and loss as companions during the transitional phases of adult learning*. Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Transformative Learning, Toronto, ON.
- Fleener, M. Jayne (2002). *Curriculum Dynamics: Recreating Heart*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Fleet, A., Patterson, C., & Robertson, J. (2006). *Insights Behind Early Childhood Pedagogical Documentation*. Castle Hill, N.S.W.: Pademelon Press.
- Forman, E., Minick, N. & Stone, C. (1993). *Contexts for learning: Socio-cultural dynamics in children's development*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Forman, G. E. (1990). Helping children ask good questions. In B. Neugebauer (Ed.), *The wonder of it: Exploring how the world works*. (pp. 21-24). Redmond, WA: Exchange Press.
- Forman, G. E. (1992). The constructivist perspective to early education. In J. Roopmarine J. Johnson (Eds.), *Approaches to early childhood education* (2nd ed., pp. 137-154). New York: Merrill Publishing.
- Forman, G. (1994). Different media, different languages. In L. Katz, & B. Cesarone. (Eds.). *Reflections on the Reggio Emilia approach*. Urbana, IL: ERIC.
- Forman, G. (1996). A child constructs an understanding of a water wheel in five media. *Childhood Education* (75), 269-273.
- Forman, G. (1999). Instant video revisiting. *Early Childhood Research and Practice* (1), 2. ERIC.
- Forman, G. (1999b). Beyond the attentive eye: The importance of theory for the practice of documentation. *Canadian Children* (24)1, 4-8.
- Forman, G., & Fyfe, B. (1998). Negotiated learning through design, documentation, and discourse. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach - Advanced reflections*. (pp. 239-260). Norwich, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Forman, G., & Gandini, L. (1992). *Amusement park for the birds* (video). Amherst, MA: Performanetics.
- Franck, F. (1973). *The Zen of seeing: Seeing/drawing as meditation*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Fraser, S. (1999). *Authentic childhood: Experiencing Reggio Emilia in the Classroom*. Scarborough, ON: Nelson.
- Freeman, D. (1999). The use of language data in the study of teachers' knowledge. In I. Carlgren, G. Handal, and S. Vaage (Eds.), *Teachers' minds and actions: Research on teachers' thinking and practice*, (pp. 77-92). London: Falmer Press.
- Freedman, S., Jackson, J., & Boles, K. (1986). Teaching: an imperilled "profession." In L. Shulman & Syges, G. (Eds.), *Handbook of teaching and policy* (pp. 261-299). New York: Longman Publishers.
- Freire, P. (1970/1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (M. Ramas, Trans.). New York: Continuum.

- Fu, V., Stremmel, A., & Hill, L. (Eds.). *Teaching and learning: Collaborative exploration of the Reggio Emilia approach*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Fyfe, B., Cadwell, L., & Phillips, J. (1998). Adapting the Reggio Emilia approach: Becoming reference points for study and practice. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, and G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach – Advanced reflections*. (pp. 419-437). Greenwich, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Fyfe, B., Hovey, S., & Strange, J. (2004). Thinking with parents about learning. In J. Hendrick (Ed.), *Next steps toward teaching the Reggio way: Accepting the challenge to change*. (pp. 96-105). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Gadamer, H. (1975). *Truth and method* (G. Barden & J. Cumming, Trans.). New York: Seabury. (Original work published 1960).
- Gadamer, H.G. (1976). *Philosophical hermeneutics*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Gall, M. G., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Gallas, K. (1994). *The language of learning: How children talk, write, dance, draw, and sing their understanding of the world*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gallas, K. (1995). *Talking their way into science: Hearing children's questions and theories, responding with curricula*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gallas, K. (1998). "Sometimes I can be anything": Power, gender, and identity in a primary classroom. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gallas, K. (2003). *Imagination and Literacy: A Teacher's Search for the Heart of Learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gambetti, A. (2001). Conversation with a group of teachers. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 116-135). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl.
- Gandini, L. (1993). Fundamentals of the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. *Young Children*, 49 (1), 4-8.
- Gandini, L. (1994). Not just anywhere: Making child care centers into particular places. *Child Care Information Exchange*, (96), 48-51.

- Gandini, L. (1996a). The Reggio Emilia story: History and organization. In J. Hendrick (Ed.), *First steps toward teaching the Reggio way*, (pp. 3-13) Columbus, OH: Prentice Hall.
- Gandini, L. (1996b). Foundations of the Reggio Emilia approach. In J. Hendrick (Ed.), *First steps toward teaching the Reggio way*, (pp. 14-25). Columbus, OH: Prentice Hall.
- Gandini, L. (1998). Educational and caring spaces. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman, (Eds.) *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education - Advanced Reflections*. (pp. 161-178). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Gandini, L. (2002). The story and foundations of the Reggio Emilia approach. In V. Fu, A. Stremmel, and L. Hill (Eds.). *Teaching and learning: Collaborative exploration of the Reggio Emilia approach*, (pp. 13-21). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Gandini, L. & Edwards, C. (1988). *Early childhood integration of the visual arts*. *Gifted International*, 6 (2), 14-18.
- Gandini, L. & Edwards, C. (Eds.). (2001). *Bambini: The Italian approach to infant-toddler care*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gandini, L., & Goldhaber, J. (2001). Two reflections about documentation. In L. Gandini and C. P. Edwards (Eds.), *Bambini: The Italian approach to infant/toddler care*. (pp. 124-135). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gandini, L., Hill, L., Cadwell, L., & Schwall, C. (2005). *In the spirit of the studio: Learning from the Atelier of Reggio Emilia*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (1998). Foreword: Complementary perspectives on Reggio Emilia. In C. Edwards, G. Forman, L. Gandini, (Eds.) *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education - Advanced Reflections*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing
- Gardner, H. (2001). Introductions. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 25-27). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl.

- Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In C. Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures* (pp. 3-30). New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, C. (1998). *Works and lives: The anthropologist as author*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Giorgi, A. (1985). *Phenomenology and psychological research*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- Giorgi, A. (2000). The status of Husserlian phenomenology in caring research. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Science*, 14, 3-10.
- Giroux, H., & Simon, R. (1989). Popular culture and critical pedagogy: Everyday life as a basis for curriculum knowledge. In H. Giroux, and P. McLaren (Eds.), *Critical pedagogy, the state and cultural struggle* (pp. 235-252). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Giudici, C., Krechevsky, M., & Rinaldi, C., (Eds.) (2001). *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl.
- Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers – An introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Goffin, S. & Day, D. (1994). (Eds.). *New perspectives in early childhood teacher education: Bringing practitioners into the debate*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Goetz, J. P. & LeCompte, M. D. (1984). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. Orlando, FL.
- Goldhaber, J., Smith, D., & Sortino, S. (1997). Observing, recording and understanding: The role of documentation in early childhood teacher education. In J. Hendrick, (Ed.), *First steps toward teaching the Reggio way*. New Jersey: Merrill.
- Goldhaber, J. & Smith, D. (2001). The development of documentation strategies to support teacher reflection, inquiry, and collaboration. In V. Fu, A. Stremmel, and L. Hill (Eds.). *Teaching and learning: Collaborative exploration of the Reggio Emilia approach*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Goodson, I. (1992). Studying teachers' lives: Problems and possibilities. In I. Goodson (Ed.), *Studying teachers' lives* (pp. 234-249). New York: Teachers College Press.

- Goodwin, W. L., & Goodwin, L. D. (1996). *Understanding quantitative and qualitative research in early childhood education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gould, K., & Pohio, L. (2006). Stories from Aotearoa/New Zealand. In A. Fleet, C. Patterson, & J. Robertson (Eds.), *Insights behind early childhood documentation* (pp. 77-86). Castle Hill, N.S.W.: Pademelon Press.
- Graue, M., & Walsh, D. (1995). Children in context: Interpreting the here and now of children's lives. In J.A. Hatch (Ed.), *Qualitative research in early childhood settings* (pp. 135-155). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Greene, M. (1986). Reflection and passion in teaching. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 2(1), 68-81.
- Greene, M. (1988). *The dialectic of freedom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Greene, M. (2000). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Greenman, J. (1988). *Caring spaces, learning places: Children's environments that work*. Redmond, WA: Exchange Press.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1981). *Effective evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Guba, E. B., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1985). *Naturalist inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guba, E. B., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.
- Haroutunian-Gordon, S. (1995). Soul. In J.W. Garrison & A.G. Rud (Eds.), *The educational conversation; Closing the gap* (pp. 97-107). Albany, NY: SUNY.
- Hartman, J., & Eckerty, C. (1995). Projects in the early years. *Childhood Education*, 71(3), 141-148.
- Hart, M. (1990). Critical theory and beyond: Further perspectives on emancipatory education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 40(3), 125-138.
- Hatch, J. Amos. (1995). *Qualitative research in early childhood settings*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

- Hauser, M. E. (1995). Life history of a first grade teacher: A narrative of culturally sensitive teaching practice. In J. Amos Hatch, (Ed.), *Qualitative research in early childhood settings*. Westport, CT; Praeger Publishers.
- Healy, M. (2001). *Buddha meets Jung, Boyd, and Myers and Mezirow: Spiritual dimensions of the transformative learning process*. Paper presented at the 4th Annual Conference on Transformative Learning, Toronto, ON.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). New York: Harper and Row. (Original work published 1927).
- Hendrick, J. (Ed.) (1997). *First steps toward teaching the Reggio way*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Hendrick, J. (Ed.) (2004). *Next steps toward teaching the Reggio way: Accepting the challenge to change*. New Jersey: Pearson Educational.
- Heron, J. (1996). *Co-operative inquiry: Research into the human condition*. London: Sage Publications.
- Hill, L. (1999). *Teacherwork: A journey to recast the Reggio Emilia approach for a middle school within the context of power, politics, and personalities*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- Hoban, G. (2003). *Teacher learning for educational change*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Holloway, I. (1997). *Basic concepts for qualitative research*. Etobicoke, ON: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Houle, C. (1992). *The literature of adult education: A bibliographic essay*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hong, S. (1998). *Documentation panel making and revisiting using technology to enhance observation and instruction skills in student teachers*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts.
- Hopkins, R.L. (1994). *Narrative schooling: Experiential learning and the transformation of American education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hubbard, R.S., & Power, B.M. (1993). *The art of classroom inquiry: A handbook for teacher-researchers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Huberman, A., & Miles, M.B. (2001). Data management and analysis methods. In C. Conrad, G. Haworth, L. Lattuca, & J.L. Ratcliff (Eds.), *Qualitative perspectives in higher education* (2nd ed.) (pp. 553-571). Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Hurst, V. (1991). *Planning for early learning: Education in the years before five*. London, England: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Hurst, V., & Lally, M. (1992). Assessment and the nursery curriculum. In G. Blenkin & A. Kelly (Eds.), *Assessment in early childhood education* (pp. 46-92). London, England: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Imel, S. (1998). *Transformative learning in adulthood*. ERIC Digest No. 2000, ED423426. Retrieved March 24, 2004 from ERIC Digests.
- Jalongo, M. R. (1991). *The role of the teacher in the 21st century: An insider's view*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.
- Jalongo, M.R. & Isenberg, J.P. (1995). *Teachers' stories: From personal narrative to professional insight*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Janesick, V. (2000). The choreography of qualitative research design: Minuets, Improvisation, and Crystallization. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 379-399). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jaruszewicz, C. (1994). *Reggio Emilia: An in-depth view*. Eric Document Reproductions Services No. ED 376936.
- Jones, E., & Nimmo, J. (1994). *Emergent Curriculum*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Jones, M., & Veslind, E. (1996). Putting practice into theory: Changes in the organization of preservice teacher pedagogical knowledge. *American Educational Research Journal*, 33(1), 91-117.
- Josselson, R., & Lieblich, A. (1993). *The narrative study of lives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Josselson, R., Lieblich, A., & NcAdams, D. (Eds.). (2003). *Up close and personal: The teaching and learning of narrative research*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Jung, C. (1965). *Memories, dreams, reflections*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Kanpol, B. (1997). *Issues and trends in critical pedagogy*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

- Katz, L. (1990). Impressions of Reggio Emilia preschools. *Young children*, (45), 11-12.
- Katz, L. (1993a). *Dispositions as educational goals*. ERIC EDO-PS-93-10. Available online at: <http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/eeearchive/digests/1993/katzdi93.html> (Accessed September 12, 2008)
- Katz, L. (1993b). *Dispositions: Definitions and implications for early childhood practices*. Catalog No. 211. Perspectives from ERIC/EECE: Monograph series no. 4. Available online at: <http://ceep.crc.uluc.edu/eeearchive/books/disposit.html> (Accessed September 12, 2008).
- Katz, L. (1995). *Lessons from Reggio Emilia: An American perspective*. Paper presented at the Nostalgia del futuro, Milan, Italy. October, 1995. Eric Document Reproductions Service No. ED 388425
- Katz, L., & Cesarone, B. (Eds.). (1994). *Reflections on the Reggio Emilia Approach*. Champaign, IL: ERIC Digest. Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.
- Katz, L., & Chard, S. (1989). *Engaging children's minds: The project approach*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Katz, L. & Chard, S. (1996). *The contribution of documentation to the quality of early childhood education*. ERIC Digest. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. ED 393 608.
- Kegan, R. (2000). What "form" transforms? A constructive-developmental approach to transformative learning. In J. Mezirow & Associates, *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 35-70). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kelly, G. (1995). *The psychology of personal constructs*. (2 vols.), New York: Norton.
- Kerka, S. (2002). *Adult learning in and through the arts*. ERIC Digest no.236, Retrieved from ERIC Educational Resources Information Centre, March 24, 2004.
- Kersting, B. (1995). *The study of the change process in teachers through the implementation of the Reggio Emilia approach*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. St. Louis, MO: Saint Louis University.
- Kidd, R. J. (1973). *How adults learn*. New York: Association Press.

- Kilpatrick, W.H. (1918). The project method. *Teachers College Press Record*, 19, 319-335.
- Kincheloe, J.L. (2003). *Teachers as researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment (2nd ed.)*. London: Routledge Farmer.
- Kirby, S., & McKenna, K. (1989). *Experience, research, social change: Methods from the margins*. Toronto: Garamond Press.
- Knights, S. (1985). Reflection and learning: The importance of a listener. In D. Boud, R. Keogh, & D. Walker, (Eds.). *Turning experience into learning*. London: Kogan Page.
- Knowles, M. (1975). *Self-directed learning: A guide for learners and teachers*. New York: Association Press.
- Koch, T. (1995). Interpretive approaches in nursing research: The influence of Husserl and Heidegger. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 21(5), 827-836.
- Kocher, L. (1999). *Butterfly transformations: Using the documentation process modeled in the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy*. Unpublished master's thesis. Victoria, B.C.: University of Victoria.
- Kohak, E.V. (1978). *Idea and experience: Edmund Husserl's project of phenomenological ideas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Krechevsky, M. & Mardell, B. (2001). Four features of learning in groups. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 284-294). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl.
- Krechevsky, M. (2001). Form, function, and understanding in learning groups: Propositions from the Reggio classrooms. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 246-269). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Kvale, S. (1992). Postmodern psychology: A contradiction in terms? In S. Kvale (Ed.), *Psychology and postmodernism* (pp. 31-57). London: Sage Publishing.
- Langeveld, M. (1983). Reflections on phenomenology and pedagogy. *Phenomenology and Pedagogy*, 1 (1), 5-7.

- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with the postmodern*. New York: Routledge.
- Lauzon, A. (1998). In search of a future: Adult education and the psychology of the soul. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 17(5), 318-327.
- LeCompte, M. D., & Preissle, J. (1993). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research* (2nd edition). Orlando, FL.: Academic Press.
- LeeKeenan, D., & Edwards, C. (1992, May). Using the project approach with toddlers. *Young Children*, (pp. 31-35).
- LeeKeenan, D., & Nimmo, J. (1993). Project approach with 2- and 3-year olds. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education* (pp. 251-267). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Lenz Taguchi, H. (2006). Reconceptualizing early childhood education: Challenging taken-for-granted ideas. In J. Einarsdottir & J. Wagner, (Eds.,) *Nordic Childhoods and Early Childhood* (pp. 257-287). Information Age Publishing.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The savage mind* (G. Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd., Trans). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lieberman, A. (1995). *The work of restructuring schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lim, B.Y. (2000). *Aesthetic education for young children in three early childhood settings: Bank Street, Reggio Emilia, and Waldorf*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. NY: Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). *Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive inquiry*. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1, 275-289.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. (1984). *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Loughlin, K. (1994). Centred knowing and its influence in emancipatory learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 13(5), 349-360.
- Loughlin, K. (1996). Learning to change: New dimensions. *Australian Journal of Adult and Contemporary Education*, 36(1), 54-62.

- Lyotard, J. (1994). *The postmodern condition*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- McEwan, H. (2001). From curriculum to teaching: Narrative theory in education. University of Hawaii. Accessed online September 15, 2008, from http://tigersystem.net/aera2002/viewproposal_text.asp?properID=1831
- MacDonald, M. & Sanchez, A. (2008). Provoking dialogue: Using image and documentation to deepen our understanding of early learning. Paper presented at the Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education Conference, Victoria, B.C. June, 2008.
- McGough, D. (1997). The perspective interview: Facilitating meaning-making in one-to-one conversations. *The Journal of Experiential Education*, 20(2), 75-79.
- McMillan, J., & Schumacher, S. (1993). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction*. New York: Harper Collins.
- McWilliam, E., Lather, P., & Morgan, W. (1997). *Head work, field work, text work: A textshop in new feminist research*. Kelvin Grove, Queensland: Centre for Policy and Leadership Studies, Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Technology.
- Malaguzzi, L. (1993a). For an education based on relationships. *Young Children*, 49 (1), 9-17.
- Malaguzzi, L. (1993b). History, ideas, and basic philosophy. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education*. (pp. 41-89). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Malaguzzi, L. (1993c). No way. The hundred is there. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education*. (p. vi). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Malaguzzi, L. (1994a). Your image of the child: Where teaching begins. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 61.
- Malaguzzi, L. (1994b). A bill of three rights. *Innovations in Early Childhood Education: The International Reggio Exchange*, 2(1), 9.
- Malaguzzi, L. (1998). History, ideas, and basic philosophy: An interview with Lella Gandini. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman, (Eds.) *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early*

childhood education - Advanced Reflections. (pp. 49-97). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

- Mallory B., & New, R. (1994). Introduction: The ethic of inclusion. In B. Mallory & R. New (Eds.), *Diversity and developmentally appropriate practices: Challenges for early childhood education* (pp. 1-13). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Marcel, G. (1950). *Mystery of being*. South Bend, IN: Gateway Editions.
- Mardell, B. (2001). Moving across the Atlantic. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, C. Rinaldi, (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 278-283). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1989). *Designing qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publishers.
- Martin, S. (2002). Voice and structure: Reflections on teaching and learning. In E. Mirochink & D. Sherman (Eds.), *Passion and pedagogy: Relation, creation, and transformation in teaching* (pp. 301-315). New York: Peter Lang.
- Marton, F. (1996). Phenomenography. *The international encyclopaedia of education*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Maturana, H., & Varela, F. (1987). *Tree of knowledge*. Shambala
- Matthews, M. (2003). *The role of the pedagogista: Enquiry into early childhood teachers' practice*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education, Melbourne. January 22-24.
- Maxwell, J.A. (1998). Designing a qualitative study. In L. Bickman and D. J. Rog (Eds.). *Handbook of applied social research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Meloy, J. (1994). *Writing the qualitative dissertation: Understanding by doing*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *The phenomenology of perception*. New York: Routledge.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Merriam, S., & Clark, C. (1993). Learning from life experience: What makes it significant? *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 12(2), 129-138.
- Merriam, S. B. (1995). What can you tell from an N of 1? Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *PAACE Journal of LifeLong Learning*, 4, 51-60.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. (2001). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1975). *Education for perspective transformation: Women's re-entry programmes in community colleges*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Mezirow, J. (1978). Perspective transformation. *Adult Education*, 28(2), 100-110.
- Mezirow, J. (1981). A critical theory of adult learning and education. *Adult Education*, 32(1), 2-34.
- Mezirow, J. (1991a). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1991b). Transformation theory and cultural context: A reply to Clark and Wilson. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 41, 18-192.
- Mezirow, J. (1996a). Beyond Freire and Habermas: A response to Bruce Pietrykowski. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 46, 237-239.
- Mezirow, J. (1996b). Contemporary paradigms of learning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 46(3), 158-173.
- Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice*. (pp. 5-12). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (Ed.). (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In J. Mezirow & Associates, *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 3-33). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Millikan, J. (2001). Rejoicing in subjectivity: An overview based on a personal interpretation of the schools for young children in the city of Reggio Emilia. In *Unpacking Interpretation: De-constructions from Australia, America, and Reggio Emilia*. Conference proceedings, University of New South Wales, Sydney, July 2001.
- Millikan, J. (2003). *Reflections: Reggio Emilia principles within Australian contexts*. Castle Hill, New South Wales: Pademelon Press.
- Mirochink, E. (2002). The possibilities of passion. In E. Mirochink & D. Sherman (Eds.), *Passion and pedagogy: Relation, creation, and transformation in teaching* (pp. 7-36). New York: Peter Lang.
- Mishler, E. (1986). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mishler, E. (1995). Models of narrative analysis: A typology. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 5(2), 87-123.
- Moran, M. J. (1998a). The project approach framework for teacher education: A case for collaborative learning and reflective practice. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach - Advanced reflections*. Norwich, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Moran, M. J. (1998b). *Reconceptualizing early childhood pre-service teacher education: A Pedagogy of collaborative inquiry*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. NH: University of New Hampshire.
- Morin, D. (2005). *Edmund Husserl: Founder of phenomenology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage..
- Municipality of Reggio Emilia: Department of Education (1992, June). A *historical outline: Data and information*. Reggio Emilia, Italy: Center for Educational Research.
- Myers, M. (1997). *Information systems and qualitative research*. London: Chapman and Hall.
- Nadler, R. (1995). Edgework: Stretching boundaries and generalizing experiences. *The Journal of Experiential Education*, 19(1), 52-55.
- Nelson, A. (1994). Researching adult transformation as autobiography. *International Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 13(5), 389-403.

- Neugebauer, B. (1994). Unpacking my questions and images: Personal reflections on Reggio Emilia. *Child Care Information Exchange* (96), 67-70.
- New, R. (1989). *Early child care and education, Italian style: The Reggio Emilia daycare and preschool program*. Syracuse University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 319 483).
- New, R. (1990). Excellent early education: A city in Italy has it. *Young Children*, 45 (6), 4-10.
- New, R. (1991). Projects and provocations: Preschool curriculum ideas from Reggio Emilia. *Montessori Life*, 3(1), 26-28.
- New, R. (1992). The integrated early childhood curriculum: New interpretations based on research and practice. In C. Seefeldt (Ed.), *The early childhood curriculum: A review of current research* (pp. 286-322). New York: Teachers College Press.
- New, R. (1993a). Italy. In M. Cochran (Ed.), *International handbook of child care policies and programs*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press.
- New, R. (1993b). *Reggio Emilia: Some lessons for U.S. educators*. ERIC Digest. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. ED 354 988.
- New, R. (1994). Culture, child development, and developmentally appropriate practices: Teachers as collaborative researchers. In B. Mallory & R. New (Eds.), *Diversity and developmentally appropriate practices: Challenges for early childhood education* (pp. 65-83). New York: Teachers College Press.
- New, R. (1994b). Reggio Emilia: Its visions and its challenges for educators in the United States. In L. Katz and B. Cesarone (Eds.). *Reflections on the Reggio Emilia approach*. 33-40. ERIC: Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.
- New, R. (1998). Theory and praxis in Reggio Emilia: They know what they are doing and why. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach - Advanced reflections*. (pp. 239-260). Norwich, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- New, R. (1999). An integrated early childhood curriculum: Moving from the “what” and the “how” to the “why.” In C. Seefeldt (Ed.), *The early childhood curriculum: Current findings in theory and practice* (3rd ed., pp. 265-287). New York: Teachers College Press.

- New, R. (2000). *Reggio Emilia: Catalyst for change and conversation*. ERIC Digest. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. ED 447 971.
- Newsweek*. (1991, December 2). The best schools in the world. Pp. 60-64.
- Nimmo, J. (1998). The child in the community: Constraints from the early childhood lore. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach - Advanced reflections* (pp. 295-313). Norwich, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (1987). Fidelity in teaching, teacher education and research for teaching. In M. Okazawa-Rey, J. Anderson, and R. Traver, (Eds.), *Teachers, teaching, and teacher education* (pp. 384-400). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Review Reprint Series No. 19.
- O’dea, J. (1994). Pursuing truth in narrative research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 28, 161-170.
- Oken-Wright, P. (2001). Documentation: Both mirror and light. *Innovations in early education: The international Reggio Exchange*, 8(4), 5-15.
- Oken-Wright, P. (2003). Embracing snow: A story of negotiated learning. In J. Hendrick, (Ed.) *Next steps toward teaching the Reggio way: Accepting the challenge to change*. New Jersey: Pearson Educational.
- Oliver, P. (2004). *Writing your thesis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- O’Neill, E., Lipsett L., & O’Connor, M. (2001, September). *Arts based transformation: The eros of transformation*. Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Transformative Learning, Toronto, ON.
- O’Sullivan, E. (2003). Bringing a perspective of transformative learning to globalized consumption. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 27(4), 326-330.
- Ouellette, S. (2003). Painting lessons. In R. Josselson, A. Lieblich, & D. McAdams (Eds.), *Up close and personal: The teaching and learning of narrative research* (pp. 13-28). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Pacini-Ketchavaw, V. (2008). The politics of difference and diversity: From young children’s violence to creative power expressions. Paper presented at

the Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Conference. Victoria, B.C. June, 2008.

- Paley, J. (1997). Husserl, phenomenology, and nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* (26) 2, 187-193.
- Palestis, E. (1994). The Reggio way. *The American School Board Journal* (181), 32-35.
- Paprock, K. (1992). "Book Review." *Adult Education Quarterly* (42), 195-197.
- Pascoe, E. (1996). The value to nursing research of Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 24(6), 1309-1314.
- Patteson, A. (1999). *Singing a woman's life: How singing lessons transformed the lives of nine women*. Unpublished masters thesis. Faculty of Education, Queen's University, Kingston, ON.
- Patterson, C., & Thomas, D. (1993). *Teachers: The Missing Voice in Educational Research*. Paper presented at American Educational Research Association, Fremantle, WA, November.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. (1987). *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1987.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Peddigrew, B. (2001, September). *When ruins are all that's visible: Exploring the chaotic moment in transformative learning*. Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Transformative Learning, Toronto, ON.
- Pelo, A. (2002). From borders to bridges: Transforming our relationships with parents. *Child Care Information Exchange* (9/02), pp. 38-41.
- Pelo, A. (2006). At the crossroads. In A. Fleet, C. Patterson, & J. Robertson (Eds.), *Insights behind early childhood pedagogical documentation* (pp. 173-190). Castle Hill, NSW: Pademelon Press.
- Pelo, A., & Davidson, F. (2000). *That's not fair*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Phillips, C., & Bredekamp, S. (1998). Reconsidering early childhood education in the United States: Reflections from our encounters with Reggio Emilia. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of*

children: The Reggio Emilia approach - Advanced reflections (pp. 439-454). Norwich, CT: Ablex Publishing.

- Phillipson, M. (1972). *Phenomenological philosophy and sociology*. In P. Filmer, D. Phillipson, D. Silverman, & d. Walsh (Eds). *New Directions in sociological inquiry* (pp. 119-164). MIT press: Cambridge, MA.
- Pistillo, F. (1989). Pre-primary education and care in Italy. In P. Olmstead & D. Weikart (Eds.), *How nations serve young children: Profiles of child care and education in 14 countries*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.
- Plett, L. (2001, September). *Transformation through laughter, satire, irony, and burlesque in the Manitoba women's suffrage movement, 1912-1916*. Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Transformative Learning, Toronto, ON.
- Polkinghorne, D. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Albany: SUNY.
- Pope, M. (1991). Anticipating teacher thinking. In C. Day, J. Calderhead, & P. Denicolo (Eds.), *Research on teacher thinking: Understanding professional development* (pp. 19-33). London: Falmer Press.
- Pope, S.J. (1996). *Wanting to be something more: Transformations in ethnically-diverse working class women through the process of education*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Fielding Graduate Institute, Santa Barbara, CA.
- Rabitti, G. (1992). *Preschool at La Villetta, Reggio Emilia, Italy*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL.
- Radnor, H. (2001). *Researching your professional practice: Doing interpretive research*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Rankin, B. (1992). Inviting children's creativity: A story of Reggio Emilia, Italy. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 85, 30-35.
- Rankin, B. (1996). *Collaboration as the basis of early childhood curriculum: A case study from Reggio Emilia, Italy*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Boston, MA: University of Boston.
- Readings, B. (1997). *The university in ruins*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Reason, P. & Hawkins, P. (1988). Story telling as inquiry. In P. Reason (Ed.) *Human inquiry in action: developments in new paradigm research*. London: Sage.

- Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reggio Children, S.r.l. (1997). *Along the levee road: Our school turns 50 – from nursery school to municipal Centro Verde Preschool, 1945-1997*. Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children.
- Reggio Children, S.r.l. (1997). *Scarpa e metro (Shoe and meter)*. Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children.
- Reggio Children S.r.l. (1996). *The hundred languages of children - Narrative of the possible (Catalogue of the Exhibit)*. Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children.
- Reggio Emilia Municipality (1992). A historical outline. Reggio Emilia, Italy.
- Retherford, A. (2001, September). *Recognizing transformational learning and the emancipatory experience*. Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Transformative Learning, Toronto,
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N.K. Denzin and Y.A. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 923-948). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Richardson, L. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin and Y. A. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ricoeur, P. (1979). The metaphorical process as cognition, imagination, and feeling. In S. Sacks (Ed.), *On metaphor* (pp. 141-57). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Riessman, C. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications
- Rinaldi, C. (1993). The emergent curriculum and social constructivism. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education*. (pp. 101-111). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Rinaldi, C. (1994). Staff development in Reggio Emilia. In L. G. Katz & B. Cesarone (Eds.), *Reflections on the Reggio Emilia approach*. (pp. 55-59). Urbana, IL: ERIC/EECE.
- Rinaldi, C. (1996). A letter from Carlina Rinaldi. In P. Weissmen (Ed.), *Innovations*, 4 (3), 1.

- Rinaldi, C. (1998). Projected curriculum and documentation. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach - Advanced reflections* (pp. 113-125). Norwich, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Rinaldi, C. (1999, February). *The pedagogy of listening*. Paper presented at the Reggio Emilia Study Tour, Reggio Emilia, Italy.
- Rinaldi, C. (2001a). Infant toddler centers and preschools as places of culture. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, C. Rinaldi, (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 28-51). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl
- Rinaldi, C. (2001b). Reggio Emilia: The image of the child and the child's environment as a fundamental principle. In L. Gandini and C. P. Edwards (Eds.), *Bambini: The Italian approach to infant/toddler care*. (pp. 49-54). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Rinaldi, C. (2001c). The courage of utopia. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 148-151). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl
- Rinaldi, C. (2001d). Documentation and assessment: What is the relationship? In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 78-93). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl.
- Rinaldi, C. (2006). *In dialogue with Reggio Emilia: Listening, researching and learning*. Oxon, OX: Routledge.
- Rodriguez, A. (2002). Redefining our understanding of narrative. *The Qualitative Report*, 7(1). Available online at <http://www.nova.edu/ssw/QR/QR7/rodriguez.html> (Accessed March 1, 2004).
- Romano, R.M. (2002). A pedagogy that presupposes passion. In E. Mirochnik & D. Sherman (Eds.), *Passion and pedagogy: Relation, creation, and transformation in teaching*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Rosen, I. (1992). Reggio Emilia: A model in creativity. *Scholastic Pre-K Today*, 7(2), 81-84.
- Ross, H. (1982). Infants in Italy: An evaluation of other than mother care. *Early Child Development and Care* (9), 121-154.

- Rud, A.G. (1995). Learning in comfort: Developing an ethos of hospitality in education. In J.W. Garrison & A.G. Rud (Eds.), *The educational conversation: Closing the gap* (pp. 119-128). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Rubizzi, L. (2001). Documenting the documenter. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.), *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 94-114). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl.
- Sacks, S. (Ed.). (1979). *On metaphor*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Saltz, R. (1976). Infant day care Italian style. In M. L. Hanes, I. J. Gordon, & W. F. Breivogal (Eds.). *Update: The first ten years of life*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida.
- Sanjek, R. (Ed.) (1990). *Fieldnotes: The makings of anthropology*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Schatzman, L., & Strauss, A. L. (1973). *Field research: Strategies for a natural sociology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Schugurensky, D. (2001). *Transformative civic learning and local democracy*. Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Transformative Learning, Toronto, ON.
- Schwandt, T. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructivism. In N.K. Denzin and Y.A. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 189-213). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Scott, S. (1997). The grieving soul in the transformative process. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice*, 74 (pp. 41-50). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Seidel, S. (2001a). Understanding documentation starts at home. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.), *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 304-311). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl
- Seidel, S. (2001b). "The question cannot be satisfied with waiting." In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.), *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 330-334). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl

- Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline*. New York: Doubleday.
- Shafer, A. (2002). Ordinary moments: Extraordinary possibilities. In V. Fu, A. Stremmel, & L. Hill (Eds.), *Teaching and learning: Collaborative exploration of the Reggio Emilia approach* (pp. 183-95). New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Sherman, R. R., & Webb, R. B. (1988). Qualitative research in education: A focus. In R. R. Sherman and R. B. Webb (Eds.), *Qualitative research in education: Focus and methods*. Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.
- Smith, L. M. (1994). Biographical method. In N. K. Denzin and Y. A. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Smyth, J. (1992). Teachers' work and the politics of reflection. *American Educational Research Journal* 29 (2, Summer). 267-300.
- Smyth, J. (1994). The practical and political dimensions of teaching. *Education Links*, 43, pp. 4-8.
- Sokolowski, R. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spaggiari, S. (1997). Introduction. *Scarpe e metro/Shoe and meter*. Reggio Emilia, Italy; Reggio Children.
- Spaggiari, S. (1998). The community-teacher partnership in the governance of the schools: An interview with Lella Gandini. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education - Advanced Reflections*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Spindler, G. & Spindler, E. (Eds.). (1987). *Interpretive ethnography of education at home and abroad*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Spodek, B. (Ed.). (1993). *Handbook of research on the education of young children*. New York: McMillan.
- Spodek, B., Saracho, O., & Pellegrin, A. (Eds.). (1998). *Issues in early childhood education research*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Stacey, J. (1988). Can there be a feminist ethnography? *Women's Studies International Forum* (11), 21-27.

- Stake, R. E. (1978). *The case study method in social inquiry*. Educational Researcher, 7(2), 5-8.
- Stake, R. (1994). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stake, R. (2000). Case studies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research*. (pp. 435-454). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stewart, D., & Mickunas, A. (1990). *Exploring phenomenology (2nd Ed): A guide to the field and its literature*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Storr, A. (Ed.). (1993). *The essential Jung*. London: Fontana Press.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Strozzi, P. (2001). Daily life at school: Seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.), *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 58-77). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl
- Stremmel, A. (2002). Teacher education: Inquiry teaching and the possibilities for change. In V. Fu, A. Stremmel, and L. Hill (Eds.), *Teaching and learning: Collaborative exploration of the Reggio Emilia approach*. (pp. 132-145). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Stremmel, A., Fu, F., & Hill, L. (2002). The transformation of self in early childhood teacher education. Teacher education: Inquiry teaching and the possibilities for change. In V. Fu, A. Stremmel, and L. Hill (Eds.), *Teaching and learning: Collaborative exploration of the Reggio Emilia approach*. (pp. 132-145). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Stringer, E.T. (1999). *Action Research (2nd. Ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing.
- Sturman, A. (1994). Case study methods. In J.P. Keeves (ed.). *Education Research, Methodology, and Measurement: an International Handbook*, 2nd edition. (pp. 61-66). Oxford: Pergamon. Pp. 61-66.

- Swanson, D.R. (1978). Toward a psychology of metaphor. In S. Sacks (Ed.), *On metaphor* (pp. 161-4). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Sussna, A. (1995). *The educational impact on preschool teachers of an adaptation of the Reggio Emilia documentation process*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts.
- Tarini, E., & White, L. (1998). Looking in the mirror: A reflection of Reggio practice in Winnetka. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach – Advanced reflections*. (pp. 375-403). Greenwich, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Tang, Y. (1997, May). *Synergic inquiry (SI): An alternative framework for transformative learning*. Paper presented at the 34th Annual Adult Education Conference, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK.
- Taylor, E.W. (1994). Intercultural competency: A transformative learning process. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44, 154-174.
- Taylor, E.W. (1998). The theory and practice of transformative learning: A critical review. Information Series no. 374. Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Centre on Education and Training for Employment, College of Education, Ohio State University.
- Tegano, D. (2002). Passion and the art of teaching. In V. Fu, A. Stremmel, and L. Hill (Eds.), *Teaching and learning: Collaborative exploration of the Reggio Emilia approach*, (pp. 161-178). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Tellis, W. (1997). Application of case study methodology. *The qualitative report*. Available online at <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-3/tellis2.html> (accessed September 11, 2002).
- Tennant, M. (1998). Adult education as a technology of the self. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 17, 364-376.
- Tobin, K., & Tippins, D. (1993). Constructivism as a referent for teaching and learning. In K. Tobin (Ed.), *The practice of constructivism in science education* (pp. 3-21). Washington, DC: The American Association for the Advancement of Science.
- Tough, A. (1971). *The adult's learning process*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Tuinjman, A. (1995). *International Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

- Uptis, R. (2004). School architecture and complexity. *Complicity: International Journal on Complexity Science and Educational Research*, 1(1). Available online at:
http://www.complexityandeducation.ualberta.ca/COMPLICITY1/pdfs/Complicity11d_Uptis.pdf (Accessed December 28, 2006).
- Usher, R., Bryant, I., & Johnston, R. (1997). *Adult education and the postmodern challenge: Learning beyond the limits*. New York: Routledge.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- van Manen, M. (n.d.). Phenomenology Online. Accessed September 7, 2008 from <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/inquiry/1.html>
- van Manen, M. (1982). Edifying theory: Serving the good. *Theory Into Practice*, 21 (1), 4-49.
- van Manen, M. (1984a). Practicing phenomenological writing. *Phenomenology and pedagogy*, 2(1), 36-72.
- van Manen, M. (1984b). *Action research as theory of the unique: From pedagogic thoughtfulness to pedagogic tactfulness*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of American Education Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- van Manen, M. (1988a). The relation between research and pedagogy. In W.F. Pinar (Ed.), *Contemporary curriculum discourses* (pp. 437-452). Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick.
- van Manen, M. (1988b, October). On the tact of teaching. *Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies Newsletter*, pp. 2-9.
- van Manen, M. (1990/1997). *Researching lived experience: Human action for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, New York: SUNY Press.
- van Manen, M. (1991). Reflectivity and the pedagogical movement: The normativity of pedagogical thinking and acting. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 23(6), 507-536.
- van Manen, M. (2002). *The tact of teaching: The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*. London, ON: The Althouse Press.
- Vecchi, V. (1993). The role of the atelierista. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini, & G. Forman (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia*

approach to early childhood education (pp. 119-127). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

- Vecchi, V. (1998). What kind of space for living well in school? In G. Ceppi & M. Zini (Eds.), *Children, spaces, relations: Metaproject for an environment for young children* (pp. 128-135). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children.
- Vecchi, V. (2001). The curiosity to understand. In C. Giudici, M. Krechevsky, R. Rinaldi, (Eds.) *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. (pp. 158-213). Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl
- Vygotsky, L. (1962/1981). The genesis of higher mental functions. In J.V. Wertsch (Ed.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology* (pp. 144-88). Armonk, NY: Sharpe.
- Waldrop, M. (1992). *Complexity: The emerging science at the edge of order and chaos*. NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Walsh, D.J., Tobin, J., & Graue, M.E. (1993). The interpretive voice: Qualitative research in early childhood education. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the education of young children* (pp. 464-476). New York: Macmillan.
- Walton, J. (1992). Making the theoretical case. In C. Ragin & H. Becker (Eds.), *What is a case? Exploring the foundations of social inquiry* (pp. 121-137). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Webb C. (1992). The use of the first person in academic writing: objectivity, language and gatekeeping. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* (17), 747-752.
- Weinsheimer, J. (1985). *Gadamer's hermeneutics: A reading of truth and method*. London: Yale University.
- Weisberger, R. (1995). *Adult male learners in a community college setting: Possibilities of transformation*. Unpublished doctoral dissertations, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA.
- Welch, M. (1999). *Phenomenology and hermeneutics*. In Polifroni, C.E. & Welch, M. (1999). *Perspectives on philosophy of science nursing*. Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Wheatley, M. (1999). *Leadership and the new science: Discovering order in a chaotic world*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Wien, C.A. (1997). A Canadian in Reggio Emilia: The May 1997 study tour. *Canadian Children*, 22(2). 30-38.

- Wien, C.A. (2003). Scene for a reflection: Neruda School, Reggio Emilia. *Canadian Children*, 28(1). 44-45.
- Wilcox, S. (1998). *Educational development as self-directed learning*. Unpublished manuscript. Kingston, ON: Instructional Development Centre, Queen's University.
- Willis, P. (1999). Looking for what it is really like: Phenomenology in reflective practice. *Studies in Continuing Education*, Vol. 21, No. 1.
- Wilson, S. (1979). *Explorations of the usefulness of case study evaluations*. *Evaluation Review* (3), 446-459.
- Witherell, C. & Noddings, N. (1991). *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wolcott, H. (1995). *The art of field work*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Wright, S. (1997). Learning how to learn: The arts as core in an emergent curriculum. *Childhood Education*, (6) 361-365.
- Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods* (1st ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Yorks, L. & Marsick, V. (2000). Organizational learning and transformation. In J. Mezirow and Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 253 – 281). San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.
- Yorks, L. & Kasl, E. (2002). Toward a theory and practice for whole-person learning: Reconceptualizing experience and the role of affect. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 52(3), 176-192.
- Young, R.A., & Collin, A. (1992). (Eds). Constructing career through narrative and context: An interpretive perspective. In *Interpreting career: Hermeneutical studies of lives in context* (pp. 1-14). London: Praegar.

Every reasonable effort has been made to acknowledge the owners of copyright material. I would be pleased to hear from any copyright owner who has been omitted or incorrectly acknowledged.

Appendix A: Conversations with Ann

*Conversations with Ann (API)*²³

My first encounter with the work of Reggio Emilia: I remember it so clearly...I'd been at Hilltop a year, a couple of years ... and we were doing ... folk-tale webbing. Each month our director would choose a folk tale that she thought was rich or provocative or held some potential, and then each classroom was expected to do some sort of webbing out of that – and with the webbing being centred around High Scope/Key Experiences...

It wasn't really appealing to me, and I actually didn't really do it, because pretty early on I was being mentored by Margie about this idea of "Reggio." The ideas about growing curriculum from what children were immediately interested in pursuing, passionate about, what questions were they raising...So, I was doing some exploring of what that would feel like, what that would look like. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet).

Around that time ... Margie brought to a staff meeting "Portrait of a Lion"²⁴ ... I remember the room, I remember the smell...watching that video I wept through it, I cried, because what I was seeing was all my yearnings for how to be with children right there, in images and words, and being lived out, in this place that I now knew about ... "It's in Italy, it's called Reggio Emilia..." *Theme: Resonance (brown)

What was impacting for me was the profound respect for children and joy and delight in children ... I mean, the images with the shadow, when they projected the big images of the lion, and the kids sort of went after them, they had the chairs and were engaging in this incredible physical combat or interaction with the lions, and being out in the piazza drawing the lions, crawling on the lions, and...Experiencing the lions, in their bones, in their blood, in their selves. *Theme: Image of the Child (dark teal)

Seeing all that in the video was pretty life changing for me. It was an experience of seeing what I believed but hadn't maybe articulated to myself, certainly not to anyone else, but seeing it lived out ... Having that experience of now having images and ideas and words was, it was life changing, it set me on this journey that I'm still on. That's my memory of my first encounter with Reggio. *Theme: Resonance (brown)

What I was experiencing was this, the "heart" piece. Seeing people living with the kind of heart and spirit that I wanted to live with in my days with children, and had something to strive towards without really knowing what I was striving towards...So it was after that experience that I then started doing some of the reading and thinking and learning, the theoretical pieces or the pedagogy or

²³ API denotes "Ann 1," an abbreviation for referencing this interview.

²⁴ The video *Portrait of a Lion* depicts a long term project that takes place in a preschool in Reggio Emilia. Produced by Reggio Children, 1987.

some of those key principles. But that wasn't what hooked me ... I was hooked in my heart. That's the place that anchors my thinking about Reggio. *Theme: Resonance (brown)

There was a lot of being coached and supported by Margie.... Together we did some reading, we picked up The Hundred Languages book and read bits of articles. I did some of that, and Margie did a lot of that ...and would offer ideas to me to then try in the classroom. Or she would help me think about little 'nugget' moments that were happening in the classroom, and how I could fertilize and grow those moments...It was a lot of one-on-one coaching that I was receiving from her that really helped me deepen my thinking and my questioning about Reggio. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo)

At that time at Hilltop we taught in individual classrooms, alone, with small groups of children. I was with ten kids, and when my shift ended ... another teacher came in, but we didn't co-teach. Hilltop, at that time, was formally doing this folk-tale webbing, that was the curriculum plan in place at Hilltop. The director was giving her blessing to trying this other approach, but didn't commit the whole centre to it.... So it was in my classroom [that] some of the real fundamental, child-centered key principles from Reggio [were] happening.

Certainly, always what has been at the heart of Margie's work has been ideas about close observation of children, great delight and joy in children, and thinking about what can grow out of our observations, being reflective, and self-aware ... *Theme: Wonder and Delight (lavender). Those are the sorts of things that infused the training that the whole centre experienced. But not everyone felt really called to shift from this more traditional curriculum approach

I went to Reggio in 1996 for the week-long summer institute that was there...It's hard to even find words for it because it was such a heart-level experience...I'd been exploring ideas and practices from Reggio for several years and I had a really similar experience of... weeping both from being so deeply moved with this joy at what children and families and teachers were experiencing together, in Reggio, and weeping with this yearning for my own work, to continue to deepen in those sorts of ways of building relationships with children and families, and supporting children's thoughtful collaborations. Weeping out of the sense that I am so excited about it, and so overwhelmed by the 'bigness' of it. ... it's exactly what I want to be doing, and if I can't be doing that then I don't want to be doing this work. *Theme: Resonance (brown)

Those are all sort of ways of living out what this thing is that I want to do, which is just to live in deep and intimate and joyful relationships every moment with children and families, and that seems so at the heart of what this work is about for me. It's life, it's *life*, it's not just work. That relationship is infused with respect and with curiosity and with self-awareness and with awareness of these other folks.... those are the pieces that anchor the work that I'm doing, that

make me want to do the documentation piece or the representation piece or the “let’s grow this project” piece. Let’s be really intentional about the relationships we are cultivating with families and how we’re doing it. It’s because of that vision of it all being about relationships. *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).

I kept moving between being really impatient to get back to work, and feeling like I was going to have to quit and leave the field.... [I]t was definitely intensified by being there, by seeing it, by being in the physical spaces and in the classrooms - that just took my breath away. There were moments of just not being able to take any more in. *Theme: Environment and Space (lime)

I think one thing that was then and continues to be ... a struggle or challenge in this work, is this experience of doing it alone, especially initially at Hilltop. And then ... more in partnership with Sarah when she came to Hilltop... the two of us were doing it alone, in terms of the whole centre. And now ... it looks like me being further along on a journey about Reggio, than some of other teachers that I work with... not further along because I’m more of a sophisticated thinker or a better human being in the world or anything like that, it’s just the sheer lifetime lived encountering those ideas. So a different experience of loneliness, and yearning towards what collaboration on an authentic and profound level could be, and not experiencing that. ... That’s the thread that is woven through this journey also for me, for what that’s worth. *Theme: Collaboration (blue)
*Theme: Loneliness and Isolation (dark red)

...I went to Reggio in 1996...[Sarah] had been several years previously. She had gone on one of the study tours. She came to Hilltop, and we worked across from each other, so it looked pretty much the way it had always looked for me at Hilltop, except that there was now this person who was as deeply engaged on a heart and head level by these same ideas that I was...though we weren’t literally leaning into any formal collaboration then. *Theme: Collaboration (blue)

When I was in Reggio, I remember dividing the notebook that I was taking notes in into two sections. One section was notes from the lectures and what I was seeing and experiencing, and then this other section was ideas that were bubbling and boiling over about what that might all translate into at Hilltop...there were some specific things – move the furniture around this way, or, actually it wasn’t really much about furniture, there was a lot about how to start, how to change, mostly how Sarah and I were living in our two classrooms with our two groups of kids. *Theme: Environment and Space (lime)

When I got back I remember talking in the hallway ... Sarah and I and Margie, and me sort of bubbling over and weeping and talking and laughing, and saying, “well, what if we do this, and what if we make a studio, and what if we then make that be the classroom and we’ll put our groups together and we’ll have one big group.” ... [A]nd wishing as soon as I’d said it I could take the words

back because it was such a leap, it was so terrifying and exhilarating at the same time. It was the ultimate letting go of having my own space and all of that stuff that is part of our U.S. culture *Theme: Environment and Space (lime)...certainly part of what I'd been experiencing, even with its edges, wishing for cooperation but fearing this moment of truth...there was some aches and some things for me that were uprooted and it was exactly the right thing to do...*Theme: Collaboration (blue)

We really didn't know each other very well. I mean, it was a huge leap, embarking on this journey together, this leap of faith ... [W]e created an art studio out of my classroom,... so me and my eight, and combined with Sarah and her ten, so then we had a group of eighteen children, and we had a studio space and a classroom space, which was everything that wasn't studio, and then we spent that next year trying to figure out what all of that meant that we'd committed to...and by the end of the year we had done the height project²⁵.

Then we expanded from there, so the following year we were continuing to deepen our understanding of what good collaboration looked like, and also what collaborative curriculum planning looked like. In the height project we involved all the kids at one point or one way or another, and over those next few years that grew into the practice of small groups taking up project work, for example. The height project was a huge leap from September, and then a year later we had made another, we had made several huge changes...so it certainly was an undertaking and a journey. It wasn't like an initial decision which then led to really clear, set practices that we would then live for the next year ... It feels like a huge part of my life, because the learning was so intense. That's amazing. *Theme: Collaboration (blue)

That suite of rooms that I'm now in had been the location for a program for some kids that would be going to kindergarten ... It was a room with a group of teachers who were not very well respected by our director, or very well supported. They had incredible conflict and turmoil all the time, and all while that was happening, there was sort of this "Ann and Sarah" show - that's what Sarah and I now jokingly call it, lots of visitors coming to see our classroom, but no other classrooms; people asking us to lead workshops but no one else, so definitely there was this odd tension in our school. In the course of several months the whole teaching staff of that classroom quit, some in frustration at the lack of support, others for other reasons. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

I had worked hard and tried to advocate for ... Hilltop to actively, and intentionally, and deliberately, dismantle this unspoken but very solid hierarchy ... It was very important to me personally. Sarah and I were at the top of it, and everyone else was way below us ... and it could not continue any more. Part of

²⁵ The story of the height project is told in the video *Thinking Big: Extending Emergent Curriculum Projects*. Produced by Margie, 1999.

that dismantling meant breaking up our team, our classroom ... So, that's what I did, I made that decision to move. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

Doing peace and justice work with kids - that's sort of been my core, my spine to my work, that's been the sort of deepest anchor. That's what drew me to working with young children in the first place. It's painful to me to see in our field the deep divisions between camps, so that anti-bias diversity work is really separate from Reggio-inspired, child-centred work with kids ... I think that's insane because I think they fit together like hand in glove. If, in fact, we're paying such intimate and close attention to children and building deep relationships with them that deeply respect who they are individually and culturally, we can't help but do anti-bias and diversity work.... There's no way to do that work without paying close attention to children, and hearing from them what their passions and pursuits are, and meeting them in that place, and letting that be the curriculum that we live with children. So, for example, in working on That's Not Fair (Pelo & Davidson, 2000), Fran and I articulated a goal of bringing those two pieces together. That felt really important to us. *Theme: Social Justice (tan).

Fran worked in a parent co-op that was organized primarily and passionately around anti-bias and diversity work, and what Hilltop has taken up as its anchoring piece is Reggio-inspired, emergently grown, child-centred curriculum, whatever we call it. We are coming from these contexts that in some ways were so different, and yet could bring perspectives together, and could create this hopefully new fabric...That's a huge way in which I see other issues relating to Reggio in the field. *Theme: Social Justice (tan). *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet).

When I think about it, I think about two different "Reggios," ... The heart and soul piece, ... the pedagogy that grows out of the image of the child, the image of the teacher, the image of the family, is so deeply resonant for me...[T]here are certainly ideas that I can engage with and feel challenged by ... One being the thread of anti-bias/diversity, for example, or the role of pretend/imaginative play, and pre-conceptual play, and thinking explorations. All sorts of ideas that are pedagogical or theoretical...I wouldn't call them controversial, but they certainly are nuggets, chewy pieces for me. *Theme: Social Justice (tan).

But the Reggio that's the "hip new happening thing" in early childhood, and the little clique of the Reggio "in" group makes me crazy...That is challenging me, seeing the way in which, in the U.S., anyway ... formal collaborations with Reggio take place. I think it's, again, part of this U.S. culture of we have to take something up and claim it and make it our own, and be in-group and hip about it....

One thing that I'm interested in is the way the Swedish collaborations have been with Reggio ... as a way of contrasting with the U.S... I have this fantasy of doing some sort of internship there...

When I think of documentation, what I focus on or think of is making visible the every day moments that I experience with children, or see them experiencing with each other or alone. Doing that so that, for a range of purposes, for the children, making their learning and thinking visible to them in a way that it maybe otherwise wouldn't be ... [S]omething that I remind myself of every so often ... is that, in fact, children experience an encounter with an idea and an encounter with each other, taking up an in-depth exploration on any given day, is no less valuable if I don't document it! ... I tend to get so focused on documentation that I can forget that actually the experience they are having is lovely...***Theme: Documentation Overall (red).**

Definitely, that is an important piece to me, offering back to the children some way of understanding their work or seeing their work in a new way. It feels important for me to create windows for families into their children's lives, so that's another value that I bring to documentation. ***Theme: Environment and Space (lime).** Making children's experiences as transparent as possible is one way that I hope to strengthen the family relationships. Certainly what that also does is to invite families into the processes that are unfolding in the classroom...***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).**

So it's a way for families to feel involved in what's happening in the classroom. And at Hilltop there's this other layer of having so many visitors to our school that it feels important to communicate the life of the classroom and what we're about, or what we're trying to be about, with our documentation. ***Theme: Environment and Space (lime).**

And then there's the other goal or value that I hold for documentation, which is about growing curriculum in cooperation with other teachers ... That's a piece of the journey for me that I don't experience very often....I want to keep naming that as a goal and a value for myself. That's a really key piece of documentation for me. I get this image of us using this in our team meetings, pouring over transcriptions and photos and picking out the themes that are unfolding and doing some planning together about who is going to facilitate which piece of this, or what ideas come up, to do that kind of work together. ***Theme: Collaboration (blue).**

There's something implicit that I want to make explicit, too, and it's that the documentation piece for me, the practice of it, of sitting next to children at play or tape-recording a conversation I'm having with children, or taking some photos and listening carefully to what those photos are really about...what that's all about for me is the practice of staying intimately present to the children, present with delight and curiosity, and readiness to reflect on what they're doing

... In large part, the reason I know them intimately, I think, is because of this practice...If I'm paying that close attention to what they're doing then ... I'm learning who they are on many levels, some of which show up in the documentation and some of which are just in my heart. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).**

That's sort of the heart of the whole relationship piece, it's the whole heart of the beginning and sustaining piece for me of this work. Documentation is the practice that cultivates relationships, that reflects and cultivates relationships. Out of that I can turn to notes that I've taken or the transcriptions of conversations and be thoughtful about project work that could grow out of it, or a question I'd like to pursue with the kids the next day, or a prop that I could bring into the classroom. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).**

That's all great, it's "juicy" work for me, too, but the ... the intellectual engagement, I think, is a key value for doing documentation...Even if I didn't do any of that, if all that happened was that I paid close attention, took notes and photos about what I saw, and that was it in terms of my active doing as a teacher, it would still have profound meaning for me and the relationships that grow out of it. I would be sad not to be doing that other stuff, because I love that, the intellectual, reflective, planful [sic] work is fabulous. ***Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua).** You know, there's the theme for the day or the week or the month, or all right, I did this once with the kids and it was great so now I'll do it every year with kids. I mean, all of that can be wonderful and can come from a great heart for kids, but it doesn't have the intellectual engagement that is so nurturing. I love that being curious, wondering what are their theories about this...I love listening in on children's theories, and then coming up with my own theories about what they're thinking, and what that might be about, and what to do next. ***Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua)**

I've been really putting a fair amount of energy and work into fostering more collaborative engagement with colleagues, doing documentation together. ***Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).** ***Theme: Collaboration (blue).** I think there are a couple of factors for why it hasn't been happening. One of those factors is that people are really at different places in our journeys as teachers, generally, and also in relationship with ideas from Reggio... The dynamics of, "Oh, I don't know enough," or intimidation, or, "I can't be like her so I'm afraid to try," or, "I'm a first year teacher just barely managing to keep my head above water ..."

And time, the recurrent question. Time is a huge factor. ***Theme: Time Limits (gold).** And there not being a mentoring system, or a training/coaching system in place at Hilltop, or there hasn't been...When I think of addressing some of these issues, what I've been trying to cultivate at Hilltop, both in my teaching team and in coaching other teaching teams is to just, just do it. Sort of stupid, but true. ***Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green)**

We've done some in-service trainings around just practicing looking at a short transcription and talking about it with some very clear, guided questions. "What do you think the meaning of this play might be for children? Why do you think that?" "What strengths are the children drawing on in their play?" "What questions might the children be exploring in their play?" Offering very specific questions to reflect on in collaboration with each other, so there isn't that tone of "Well, I really don't know what to do with this." Just trying to bring a particular question to a team meeting... *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). *Theme: Collaboration (blue)

One thing in Sunlight recently - I felt so much satisfaction in my trainer role ... was that they did a collaborative brainstorming webbing sort of session about how to respond to this huge construction that's happening outside there, the elevator construction that has started. They just did it pretty informally, but they had people write down each on little index cards or sticky notes and then organized the sticky notes...Then they did some planning out if it...That was a ground-breaking moment at Hilltop. *Theme: Collaboration (blue)

In the Garden Room we've done ... some shared experiences where I've told a story of something that I saw kids doing, and after some of the discussions that we'd had in the big staff meeting ... the guided reflection questions ... we were practicing having those kinds of conversations together. Those are some of the ways, in my classroom teacher role and my administrative support role, to cultivate more experiences of collaboration around analytical and reflective thinking *Theme: Documentation Overall (red)...and to also cultivate some dispositions to get people hungry for it, to get other people yearning for it, and missing it when it doesn't happen, and start taking some leadership around making it happen... *Theme: Mentorship (indigo) *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

At our in-service in last June, we spent the first chunk of our day together having various experiences of water play, with the intent of reminding people, or re-awakening people to what summer is about, these playful encounters with the natural world. In summer we can be outside a lot more. We want to be more thoughtful about our summer program, as distinct from the school year program, in part because of that ability to be out and about...

And then we spent a good next chunk of the time creating documentation panels out of that. People weren't partnered with their usual teaching teams, they were partnered with the people they had been having the water experience with. So I gave people the photos I had been taking and the transcriptions and then we created these panels. Each panel was wildly different, and what happened immediately, and continues to happen, is that people started writing, even people who had never written anything for the documentation board. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

It can be so intimidating, that documentation has to look a certain way, and that when we do that, when we focus on that we're really paying attention to the display element rather than that documentation is this living, breathing experience, an encounter with those ideas. I think that as people begin to experience that ... "Oh, I know how to have an idea about the play I just saw," or "I know how to be excited about the block construction," or "I know how to tell a story because I do that all the time informally when families come to pick up their children..." *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

It's not going to look anything like what I do, or like what Sarah does. What Sarah and I do looks wildly, wildly different, in much of the language that we use, and the filters that we see through. My hope and my vision for Hilltop is that more and more voices will be folded into that mix.... so that it may look like sort of wild circles over every letter "i" in your handwriting, or your loopy handwriting style, and it goes next to the two page type-written with photos embedded in it documentation piece, which is next to a gigantic photo with a one line caption, which is next to a photocopy of a kid's work with a quick teacher's question about it. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

All of that becomes part of a culture of documentation, which then is, in fact, a way to do the diversity work. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green). If more voices are being heard in that arena, then ... more people, I think, will be willing to speak out...to know that their voice is celebrated and included and integral to what we're doing...It's not just that we're doing a certain way of being in the world that Hilltop's about, that in fact it's bigger and longer and deeper than that. And the documentation can be one way to achieve that goal. There's my lofty thinking about it. *Theme: Social Justice (tan).

It is so useful to remember that there is no, one right way. It shows up in some of the conversations on the listserv lately...[O]ne of the few times I've written, trying to make the point that this conversation is sounding like we need to figure out the way to do documentation, and I wanted to challenge that. That seems exactly the wrong way to approach it. My understanding of what the Italians keep saying is that, all along, we don't want it to start looking like "Reggio." Then Reggio would have this very formal, rigid look about it, but if your heart and your spirit are about paying close attention and doing something, some practice around that, whatever that practice looks like, then that's going to look a million different ways. It's going to look different for the eighteen-year old African American woman who was raised by her German grandmother who works at Hilltop than for me – and it should. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green). We can do some of that for aesthetic purposes, we can agree that this range of colours is what we'll use for panels or whatever is going to be the thread, because I think it's important to communicate on a visual level for families that walk into Hilltop, for example, that Rainbow, Sunlight, Garden, and Big Kids are all part of a thoughtful, organized, shared vision, and we're going to live into that in different ways. We can find subtle ways to

communicate the shared piece and subtle and not so subtle ways to communicate the really different ways of that happening. *Theme: Environment and Space (lime). *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

Conversations with Ann - continued (AP2²⁶)

I think of documentation as growing out of deep listening and close observation, so that's not anything that necessarily shows, it's not any tangible piece. I'd say that's a core piece of documentation, really being present to what the children are experiencing, doing, saying, playing about, arguing about, collaborating about, feeling about. That is a central component of documentation, that mindful presence. *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink). One thing that translates into, one practice that translates into, I guess, is careful, descriptive recording. The way I do it, the way I think of it, is note-taking, because that's mostly what I do. I do some tape-recording, but on a day-to-day basis I think of the note-taking, photo-taking, as really trying to capture, without a lot of interpretation, or adjectives, even, what's happening. So that you can walk away from an interaction with sort of a painting of it, a painting in words or a painting in images. A way to revisit the experience ... *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

That foundational piece gives rise, I would say, to this other key piece or aspect of documentation, which is this reflective, interpretive piece... That next layer is about... starting to get curious about what this experience has meant for children. Or, asking questions, either myself or collaboratively with other people, "What's important about this? What themes keep showing up? What questions are the kids trying to understand? What understandings or misunderstandings are they communicating about in this?" ... There is this reflective, collaborative, discursive, whatever, that piece that happens, and some note-taking then about that captures some of our adult reflections or questions ..." and I think that final layer, then, of documentation is that thing that is often referred to as documentation, the tangible thing out in the world to look at. But I think of that, really, as only the final step, and the documentation is all the other stuff as well. *Theme: Teacher as Researcher (turquoise)

The process or way of being in the world, is really... a way of understanding our work, or understanding our relationships with children and with each other that is about mindful presence and authentic engagement and curiosity and delight. *Theme: Wonder and Delight (lavender). How that all gets lived out or made tangible is the form of this thing we call documentation, this paper we put up on the wall, this document we send out to the web-page, whatever form it takes, but that in fact documentation is an expression of a way of being with children. *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).

²⁶ AP2 denotes "Ann 2," an abbreviation for referencing this interview.

... [M]y goal personally ... is that that public, tangible piece reflects all those other layers, so that it looks like concrete words, images, descriptions, of this moment that's being documented ... And then some reflection, the documenter getting at something, sharing, "This caught my attention because..." or, "This seemed important to me because..." ... So some sort of reflection about why, why did I stop and pay attention to this, why did I write this down, why did I take the photo that I took, make the effort to tell the story, so that a reader... is given a window into, not only the specific moment that is happening with children, but sort of the underlying ideas... And an invitation to the reader to help see and understand some of the meanings that it contains - and to be in relationship with that moment. There's something about, there's certainly great value in telling the story and letting the story have its moment and be just that, stopping there, but ... a hope that I have is that documentation engages a reader on many levels... some invitation to be engaged or to be in relationship with what happened. ***Theme: Documentation Overall (red).**

I'm realizing as I say all that that I'm thinking a lot about parents as the people reading and receiving the documentation.... I think we are very actively doing it for the children, and I think then it becomes less of a public thing, because we offer it to the children in the context of relationships. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).** "Oh, I want to read that back to you." Oh, this thing with the [dead] fish today - kids kept coming throughout the whole morning to that little table and spending time looking at the fish and talking about the fish and about what might have happened and drawing pictures and talking with each other, and at the end of the morning when we had our meeting I brought the drawings and my notes of what kids had said, and ... told the story of the morning, "Here's what happened...when we came we found a dead fish, we scooped it up and put it in the cup..." so...now their reflections had a bigger context, or they could be reflecting in relationship to what someone had said, or in relationship with something they had said earlier in the day ... So there's often that kind of mirroring back that happens....

One thing that is encouraging, or exciting to me at Hilltop is seeing the ways in which each staff person is finding their way into this place called documentation, this way of *being* called documentation. The ways in which, the range of voices that are being heard both communicates a range of ways of seeing things in the world, as well as a shared context in which we're living. Out of one classroom comes five distinct world views, yet those world views are deeply connected by a shared vision for the work that we're doing with children, a shared understanding of what it means to be in relationship with children. At the heart, that sort of shared understanding... I think certainly on every team there are five, or four, or three incredibly distinct perspectives. ***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).** ***Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).**

I think I move between feeling energized by the ways in which all of us are in really different places in this journey, and feeling a bit overwhelmed by it.

Sometimes discouraged...no, discouraged isn't quite the right word. Feeling it, seeing it as a really profound challenge, but I mostly feel energized by it. At Hilltop, some of the challenges around making space for, and expecting to hear from, a range of voices, grows out of ... patterns around the informal but very entrenched hierarchies of influence and importance and centralness [sic] to the program, and the more we're dismantling those hierarchies, the more room there is for movement. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green)

One thing in my, in this training role I'm in, I guess the main thing that that work is about, is somehow finding what it will be for each staff member that will engage and delight them in this work, and that's what will make them want to do this next piece, this documentation piece. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). Each person is phenomenal in his or her work in the classroom, in terms of presence with children and close observation. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green). And then there is this sticking point for some folks about sharing their awareness and reflections and understandings in public ways. Some of that is, I think, because folks who've been around for a while ... folks who are newer on, I think, feel less stuck around that...

I'm thinking of someone...who is used to their voice not being that important. I mean, hearing, "Oh, yeah, I've been wanting to do this work," but knowing that that wasn't really true. Programatically [sic], institutionally, there are a couple of voices that people wanted to hear from, and wanted to have represent Hilltop, and it wasn't their voices. And it probably wasn't their voice because...the way that they speak doesn't sound like white, middle-class, upper Queen Anne Hill. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green). And that there wasn't room for that at Hilltop, that we, without meaning it in any formal way, have this unspoken commitment to looking a certain way, a certain narrow way, and it included some ways that were visual, too. *Theme: Conflict (orange). You had to be pretty competent on computers, and you had to be pretty competent on digital cameras and computers, and you didn't write in big loopy hand-writing, or, if you did handwritten things it was in black Sharpie, it wasn't in purple. Or, if you did it on a page of eight and a half by eleven paper, it wasn't on some smaller bit of paper. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue). There were very clear parameters of what things should look like. And totally unspoken, completely.

If asked, everyone would have said, "No, no, no...we would just welcome, in fact, it would be so great if people would step up to the challenge, and why aren't people, and it's such a burden on us." At the same time, those voices are shutting out, in very subtle, sometimes very overt ways, are shutting the same people that there's this wish to have them involved. So, what I see in my work, one reason that I stepped into this other job, was to dismantle, bring that stuff to the surface and scrub it away. And that looks like asking folks who have felt silenced to...first it looks like, really looking the folks who have been in positions of privilege, and challenging that privilege, and it looks like asking the folks who have been silenced to trust the seriousness of the intention and to try again. And

then it looks like, making sure when they try again, that their voices are up there. Part of that asking, “No, seriously, we want to have your stories on the board, and we want to have the way you would tell about that interaction posted up there under physical learning,” there is an expectation that they will – we not only want you to try, but we expect you to do it. And if you’re not doing it, that means you’re not doing your job, which is this funny double-edged piece, or sort of tight-rope walking piece, of ‘please,’ and ‘you must.’ It all sounds sort of vague and meandering, but it’s what’s on the surface for me right now, in response to what the challenges are. So, some ways to make it concrete are: “Yes, purple pen is great.” “Yep, that little piece of paper you wrote that on does not fit that plastic sheet protector on the wall,” and while that may make me crazy every time I walk through the door and look at it, I’m not going to do a damn thing about it, and I’m going to look at it and think, “Thanks, look at that!” I’m actually going to go and read what it’s about, which I think is a big thing. Even an expectation that we are going to read each other’s writing is big. *Theme: Conflict (orange). *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

It looks like, saying over and over again at team meetings, “You know, we’ve got to step it up, I’m the only one who’s written anything this week – what’s that about? I want to hear what that’s about if it’s about something that I’m doing. And if it’s not about something I’m doing, then get something up on the board, because it’s a disservice to children and families if the one perspective is the only one they hear, or three out of five perspectives.” *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green). It looks like providing really specific training in response to the needs identified by people about what’s stopping them. “I don’t even know how to use the damn computers,” or, “I don’t really even have the time,” or, “I have my planning time, but I don’t know how to use it,” or, “I just don’t even know what to write about,” or, “When I saw this thing happen, I can tell you about but I don’t know that next piece about what to say, about this reflection piece that I’m supposed to be able to write.” *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

Some of the intent around that [the Rings development] was to name the range of experiences that teachers were having in the classroom so that we could start to address some of the themes that came with those experiences. If the experience of more teachers was, “I am doing all the work around here, and that feels like I’m carrying a lot of the responsibility for this programme, but also that’s not being seen or acknowledged, so I feel resentful, I feel like other people are letting me down all the time...” you know, whatever that scene was. *Theme: Roles, Responsibilities, and Rings (blue-grey). Looking at that experience, or, “You know what? I love being with kids, I’m fabulous at this work. I facilitate conflicts really, really well, I have this fun, playful relationship with parents, and that’s enough for me.” “I feel like I’m letting people down all the time because I’m not willing to show up for evening meetings, or I’m not willing to stick around for an hour after my shift to transcribe some big conversation or do whatever, but when I’m here I’m amazing. I don’t even feel seen for that, I feel like I’m letting staff down and failing. What I really want to do is be here for my

shift, be this amazing teacher, and then I want to go home, because I have this whole other life.” Or, “This is my love and my passion, and what’s hard for me is putting any boundaries around it at all. I could do this 24/7 because it feeds me, in fact. Not because I have to, but because this is joyful and delightful to me. Give me a little extra planning time and see what I can do. Stand back!”

***Theme: Documentation Overall (red).**

So, asking people to, helping people to identify what gets in their way, and meeting them there, and providing them with some specific training, so it’s not just saying, “Well, we’ve got to start doing it,” but, “That’s what you need? Let’s figure out how to get that for you.”...So trying to get all of us aware of the dynamics and starting stretch those dynamics... ***Theme: Roles, Responsibilities, and Rings (blue-grey).**

So, really trying to look at the experiences teachers were having and start identifying the responsibilities that are inherent in making a classroom run, and letting people name the level of responsibility that we each wanted. Certainly some of those responsibilities involve documentation, as well as curriculum planning and so forth. Some of the process of creating the Rings was needing to name what were the minimal expectations of every staff member, and then spell out, at Ring One, which is the custodian, which is everybody, you know, and then adding a few additional responsibilities, and that’s Ring Two, and that’s every teacher – you can’t be a less than Ring Two teacher at Hilltop. If you want a bit more responsibility, that’s Ring Three, and a bit more is Ring Four. I think, in terms of those layers or elements, everyone at Hilltop is expected to be present with children in a mindful, curious, delighted way. Ring Three teachers are expected to do some writing about that, and documenting, making the public piece around that. Ring Four teachers are expected to do that, but a bit more frequently... It was really helpful in that process to have that conversation about what the bottom line pieces are. ***Theme: Roles, Responsibilities, and Rings (blue-grey).** ***Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).**

We had that conversation, and asked, “Is it expected that every single teacher will, during the course of a week, write something that goes on the curriculum board?” We decided, really consciously, that no, we wouldn’t do that. And then, what we did was assign resources, planning time...a certain amount of planning time in relationship to what the expectations were. So, I, as a Ring Four teacher, have significantly more planning time than a Ring Two teacher, and actually, pretty significantly, more than a Ring Three teacher. What we really consciously did, also, was decide not to do anything about money in terms of salary, because “my” work isn’t more important than a Ring Three teacher’s work. That was another thing we were trying to dismantle in this Ring system, that some work was more important than other work, or that some staff were more valued than other staff. If you walked in the door and were right there present with children, you were doing exactly what was expected of you. If you want to take on some more tangible responsibilities, that’s great, and we need that to

happen, and we'll give you the time and the staff support, as much as we can, to get that done, but that doesn't mean you're a better teacher or that you're more important to us... *Theme: Roles, Responsibilities, and Rings (blue-grey).

*Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

The whole experience of being a documenter, or practicing the art of documentation, has had such an influence on me - professionally, personally - on how I live my days with kids. SO much. Not daily documentation in those first essential layers, but in the writing, the creating some product that goes up on the wall, some public statement. You know, today, actually, I was so aware of that for myself... This week I've slipped back into more daily documentation... [F]or several weeks I hadn't been doing that particularly, between technology *&^%-ups, oh, my God... between the computer not working very well, and it still isn't, and the camera wasn't working, and the chord wasn't working, and I was in the middle of conferences and getting ready for that... *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

So this week, stepping back into that... I feel the way it feeds me, it's energizing, I love the way in which I pay attention to children as I'm writing, as I'm taking a photo, I felt the contact of it... *Theme: Personal Engagement (grey)

So, now, feeling this great expansiveness, loving today, writing about the dead fish, and what the kids said... Just the energy, I felt energized by it, I love interactions that the public pieces spark with families, between parents and kids, between parents and me, as parents are reading what's on the board, and, "Oh, just look at this," or, "I just read about that," or, "Tell me more," or, "What a great moment - I wish I'd been here for it." *Theme: Environment and Space (lime).

Personally ... one way that I experience the power of ... documentation is finding myself invited to be nourished, to be challenged to be a close observer, and to be really present in the world. *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green). Not only between the hours of eight and three when I'm with children, but just how to be in the world. *Theme: Personal Engagement (grey). *Theme: Documentation Overall (red). To really sink into the experience, or a moment that I'm watching unfold, and to write about it. I mean, writing is something that I do anyways, so it's this way of being, that we call documentation, is a really great fit. It's my native language, really. So there's that personal piece for me, too, of feeling sustained by documentation, because it is going to this native language place. Feeling like it's a place where I really practice and deepen my writing skills, and become a better writer - that can only be a good thing. *Theme: Being a Writer (green).

Another professional piece ... has had huge personal and professional impact... [I]n my own documentation I feel my way of knowing individual children and groups of children deepens... I feel my own, my theoretical

understandings deepen, or my...theoretical is not quite the right word...I feel able to do more nuanced thinking about children and learning and able to dig deeply as well as to see broadly what's the heart and soul of learning and play. *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green). I think of re-reading or the act of transcribing a piece and having new awareness come to the surface during that process.... *Theme: Being a Writer (green)

I don't read as much professional writing as I sure could, books or journals, the way I did in graduate school. And, instead, what I'm spending my time on is the in-depth observation of, and writing about the children that I'm with every day. And I feel that the same levels of new awareness, of 'a-ha' or, "I want to learn more, I'm really curious about this aspect of children's learning." I learn more about it, and the way to learn more about it is through continuing to live this process of documentation. *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green), *Theme: Documentation Overall (red). So it's taken the place, in a very significant way, of that other way of learning about children, which is looking at anecdotes, at the research and the writing. It IS research and writing, and I'm living it all day every day. *Theme: Being a Writer (green); *Theme: Teacher as Researcher (turquoise)

When we were talking a few minutes ago about supporting everyone on staff in their journey into documentation, I think of the training plan that I'm slowly evolving for next year, being anchored by the question of what it is to be a researcher, and that, I think, is what we're going to take up as our guiding question for us in our training next year. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). That gets at all the pieces, the observation piece, the collaboration piece, the reflection piece, and in fact, our over-arching question for the year then, planning learning experiences and opportunities at our staff meetings and in-services that get at that, "what is it to be a researcher," so teachers at Hilltop all see ourselves as...a researcher, and as collaborative researchers....*Theme: Collaboration (blue) That seems to be a big idea, really naming that as at the heart and soul of what it is to be a teacher/researcher at Hilltop. *Theme: Teacher as Researcher (turquoise)

You're wondering if the pedagogical documentation process actually acts as a catalyst for change for teacher/researchers. Ah...I think that's exactly the right question to be asking... My own personal experience is that profoundly, YES. *Theme: Change (teal) I think about when I first began doing this work that we call documentation, I would often write down, or tape-record and transcribe, kid's conversations, I didn't have that much a sense of why I was doing it or what I could do with it, other than capture this dear moment and be able to share it, to broadcast it. I know that I'm in a really different place now, and part of how I'm in a different place is ... just by day after day being in that process of doing it, and having the expectation be that I'd write something. *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum).

I'm remembering back to ... a staff meeting with Margie in which we were trying to address one of the issues that parents often bring forward, which is when they ask their kids, "What did you do today?" and the response is, "Oh, nothing." ... I remember coming to an agreement at that meeting that we would generate one or two or three specific questions that parents could ask their kids, and that we would post those. So, we would say, "Today, ask your child about the dead fish and what her feelings were about the fish that died," or, "Have your child tell you about the block tower that reached all the way to the ceiling," or, "What does finger-paint feel like? Ask your child." *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum).

So we agreed we were going to come up with these specific questions, and from there, the next thing I remember is starting to do some descriptive writing... Some of ...that writing was like a single sheet of paper getting at some of those questions, those key moments during the day, so not, "Susie did this and Billy did that," but here are some pivotal moments that impacted all the kids one way or another *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink)... And then, we created the Sunlight Room studio. We had the same piece of paper with a line down the middle, and one side was the classroom and on the other side was the studio. We did that same sort noting of same key moments in both places.

Then, I remember ... saying to Sarah, "Man, I'm going on and on, and I'm only getting to talk about this one little experience, but I'm wanting to say all this stuff! ... That's when we went to the curriculum boards that we have now. We are hungry to tell these stories and do this reflection, and it started with getting deliberate about developing one or two or three questions.... I think that's a pretty cool little trajectory to know about... *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum).

The nature of those individual headings, what gets written up under those headings has really changed ... from anecdotal to ... telling the story from a specific perspective and naming that perspective and reflecting on it from that perspective, the child's perspective, or the teacher's perspective or whatever. And now the pages go on and on and on, you know, instead of a half a page ... sometimes it's ... four pages about this moment. *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum). That's because there is this hunger there to do the reflection... *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green), *Theme: Roles, Responsibilities, and Rings (blue-grey). And so when I look at other teachers at other places, I see maybe it's a half page with an anecdote, a year ago, but now it's looking like a full page, and there's more, "And another thing I want to tell you about..." or "What was exciting was..." So that's exciting to see. I don't know why I'm going on and on about that. *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum).

One parent said, at our first family meeting of the year ... that one thing that she treasures about Hilltop is how *transparent* it is... We really carefully

acknowledge that we are influenced by key values from Reggio Emilia...but that she used that word just blew me away...Parents ... stand there and read the curriculum board, they talk to their kids about it, they talk to other kids about it. We do talk to parents carefully about the board from the perspective of acknowledging that their kid won't be up there every day, and in fact, it may be a lot of days in between postings that involve their kid, and it doesn't mean anything, it doesn't mean that their kid is not experiencing what's happening. Wanting to help parents have a feel of a larger community, so it's not about, "This is about me and my kid, and I'm looking at or scanning the documentation to find my kid's name...My kid's part of this community, I'm part of this community, so I want to read this, whatever, this dead fish or this block tower or this finger paint, even if my kid wasn't even here on the day that any of those things happened. I need to know because we are all part of this community...and it's going to be helpful that we all know the story." Parents often lift their kids up and read out loud to them what's on the board. *Theme: Whose Stories Are Told? (pale blue).

When all five voices on the team are doing it, then there are at least those five moments up there. Not only five perspectives, but five moments...*Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green). In fact, there was a little bit of a conflict on our team earlier this year...One of the people on our team whose job it is to take attendance every day, you know, for the legal piece, paid attention...and charted which children appeared most frequently on the curriculum board, or just who was on the board and who wasn't. Whose stories were mostly being told, and whose stories were not being told. *Theme: Whose Stories Are Told? (pale blue).

He brought it up at a team meeting, and, it was big for me to hear...because I'm the person who does most of the documenting in our room. I often write two...a day... So, at this moment I got kind of defensive. "What's he saying? That I never write about E. or J.?" And then, actually, when I was able to let go of that and begin really listening, we had this great conversation about what was showing up on the curriculum board, and it was one way of ... noticing where I was spending my time, and who was getting up on the board. *Theme: Whose Stories Are Told? (pale blue). The people on the board were the most active, intense, often described by some of the teachers on our team as 'challenging' kids, and I was hanging out with them all the time. Partly because I'm just generally drawn to those kids, I have deep relationships with those kids. I love the kind of play they do, I love the big, loud, wild, build, jump, run, play kind of stuff. The other teachers actively avoid some of that kind of play....

It's about other people doing the documentation ... so a way into that piece was noticing what kids were being written about...Instead of saying, "Whoever is doing the documenting needs to write more about those kids," it was, "Wherever each of us is living our days, we need to tell those stories." *Theme: Whose Stories Are Told? (pale blue). And, in fact, knowing that we're living our days in these different sort of contexts, different kids are all going to get up there. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo) "R., you love hanging out in the middle of the room, playing

puzzles with kids, and the kids that love to do that are going to do that every day, and they are definitely not over in the building area...Those kids are never really going to cross paths. So, you've got to tell the story if it's going to be told..." Really clearly not going that route, of not saying, "Oh, Ann, you're the story teller, you've got to step it up to get these other kids up there," but instead saying we've got to all step it up, so that all the stories are being told. It was a really good moment, a really good conversation. **Theme: Whose Stories Are Told? (pale blue).*

I was so resistant when we got the digital camera...I laugh at that now because... I love what this technology makes possible for us...I'm afraid of the way it may create this division, who does the hand-written documentation and who does the computer documentation, and wanting to be really thoughtfully careful about one not being more valued than the other. **Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).* But that's more training and getting more comfortable with that piece...**Theme: Mentorship (indigo)*

There's making sure those voices get heard. I mean, there is some, "I don't get the technology, I've never done computers, I've never even gone to college, why would I start learning computers now." But I still want to tell my story, and I'll write it up here with loopy circles over the 'i's and stick it on the board, and if you give feedback that's positive about that, you just watch I can do." For other staff, about the computers it's just, "I try, and it's hard, and if I lose a photo it's so discouraging." So that's the vague, technology training sort of issue. Like, one person on my team is really dedicating a lot of time to figuring that out, and the more support we get her, the more she eats it up. And I love it, oh my God, personally, I had a lot more comfort with computers than maybe other folks, and I also feel like I hardly know anything. **Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).*

But to be able to do the written reflective piece, and have it there and then I'll copy the text and plop in the three photos I took of D. at different places in this, and then copy the text and plop in the three photos of H. So then each kid has a copy for his journal, I have a copy for myself. I can make a little CD and I've got the year on a CD...Publication coming out of that is so easy. **Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).*

And for doing the web-page, I hand the technology guy the CD of the three things I want to go on...It's amazing, and I love it, I love it. The turn-over time that I can do all that, in half an hour, as opposed to, you know, just push print and it all prints during nap, at the end of nap I pick it up. To take a photo, take the film at some far away time and drop it off for developing, you finally pick it up, you pay the money, you get reimbursed, you divide them up – "Okay, I took these three, but I don't know whose photos these are, you guys figure those out." Glue them in, write, write, write..." It's just so, oh my God, it's so great. How did we do it before? That's what I wonder. **Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue)*

And [it's] so easy to turn it right around with kids – I love that. “Here, I took the photo, I took six photos of you in these building stages, and come sit with me and we’ll watch it on the camera, I’ll play it back to you.” I mean, that’s incredible right there, to offer that. Or, like the other day we were making a book for J. as he was getting ready to leave... We took the photos, we had the camera right hooked up to the computer, we watched the pictures traveling through. “Oh, look, the pictures are on the screen. What words do you want to say to J.? Okay, now push this button and watch it come out the printer.” How exciting is that to a four year old? Often, if there’s a printed thing that’s going up on the board, I’ll alert the kids who were a part of whatever ... is ... being written about, “Oh, when your mom comes to pick you up... be sure to have her read the board!” I love that, they’ll ... drag them over and look. Talk about, “So, what did you do today?” “I don’t know, nothing,” versus THAT ... That’s huge, I think, that piece right there. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue)

[O]ne of the issues that surfaces from time to time on the Reggio listserv, the issue of how you get parents to read the stuff. I’m always a little puzzled...I wonder what’s not happening in those programs that parents aren’t that invested. Is it some sense of really not being part of the program, really on the periphery, really not welcome? What is it about? Because I don’t see how families would not be interested in... [T]hese rich, beautiful stories about the children, however they are told. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

I remember some of that conversation turning to how you have to make it look a certain way, and thinking, “Oh, no! I mean, go there if you want go there, but that seems really wrong to me!” It’s not about how it looks but about relationships with families, and what their relationships are with you and with the group. *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink). Then, how could they not linger? Or looking at their journals that I love. Parents take the journals home, often, from Hilltop. Take it home because you’re not going to sit at Hilltop, I mean, you are welcome to, and some families do, but take it home and make a pot of tea in the evening and really read it. Or, “Oh, you know, your grandparents are coming to town, great, bring your journal home.”

Continuing conversations with Ann (AP3)²⁷

Many particular documentation stories stand out for me. This one comes to mind...I’ll go back a couple of years...I had gathered a group of six kids together for an in-depth project exploration around age and life-cycles...[F]or each of these six kids there was something really pressing about what it is to be in a family and be in a certain birth order in a family, or being a twin, or having a baby, or having a grandparent die...

At our first meeting ... I said to them, “I gathered each of you here because each of you have something that you’re curious about.” And then I just named

²⁷ AP3 denotes “Ann 3,” an abbreviation for referencing this interview.

what it was individually, kid by kid ... and that it seemed like there were some things they could learn from each other, and teach each other. The kids talked ... and then started proposing, “Well, we should call this the age work team, because it’s about age...”

I taped that meeting and then did my usual practice of listening to it to transcribe it and felt then this sudden and dramatic deepening of my understanding of what can grow out of that kind of documentation *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green), *Theme: Documentation Overall (red) ... as I listened and transcribed, and then re-read what I was transcribing, question after question ... came to me in a way that hadn’t happened ... so effortlessly, before. And so I felt ... this moment...of recognition that this practice had become ... absorbed it into my bones, into my understanding, in an utterly powerful way....*Theme: Personal Engagement (grey), *Theme: Documentation Overall (red), *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green).

It was a constant process of meeting, and new questions coming, and then me bringing those specific questions to the kids, and having the next thing grow out of that....[I]n the past, ... I’d had more of a sense...of where we were headed, or where I wished for us to be headed or what I thought would be fruitful for us to explore...With this I really, absolutely, had no idea what we would possibly do, except that we needed to do something. And then to go from that to this really clear sense of the dance, of the movement between my role as receptive and active and ... for the kids, between generating ideas, and then having those ideas mirrored back to them. I really also, intentionally, would read back, so, “I was listening to our conversation, and here’s something that you all said,” and then I would read it and say, “Here’s a question I thought of.” Or, “I studied the drawings you made last time and here I want to remind you of those drawings. Let me show you, and here’s something I was thinking about as I looked at these drawings.” So we would take up both what their original work was and what my reflections were, and then they would create the next level of work. It was very powerful for me. Since then I’ve noticed for myself that that process now is... that experience in that project has shaped how I now understand my work in a really powerful way...I have an even deeper sense of trusting into this unfolding process. *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet)

Documentation gives us something to hold onto as we’re making this journey together into the unknown. *Theme: Being “Teacher-ly” (rose) Thinking of this real recent project of a few months ago around how airplanes fly, and that was very much my experience of that project, that I’m not really sure where we’re going to go, but I trust that once we have that first meeting, then, we’ll all have something to look towards to give us some direction, even if it only needs to be direction for the next time that we meet, and then that only needed to be direction for the next time after that. *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet)

Since then I've noticed for myself that that process now is, that that experience in that project has shaped how I now understand my work in a really powerful way ... I have an even deeper sense of ... this unfolding process. And to trusting the process or documentation to create a container for that unfolding, collaborative, investigation, exploration, wondering together. Documentation really creates ... a container. It gives us something to hold on to as we're making this journey together into the unknown... *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

When I was working on the book, That's Not Fair,²⁸ I was trying to describe that sense of only needing to know the next bit, and my editor wrote in a little quote ... about if you travel from New York to Chicago you don't have to see all the way to Chicago, you only have to see as far as your headlights are shining, and that by only being able to see that far you'll make the whole trip. [It was] H. L. Menken, or somebody like that. That's definitely stayed with me as an image now that, in an earlier way I don't think I really would have gotten or trusted to... *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet)

Just on a daily level, living documentation with kids, that process of showing up at eight in the morning, and sometimes really having no idea about the day...but really being able to trust to what will unfold. One way that I can step into what's unfolding is being a careful observer and documenter, and that then opens new doorways for the kids, and just trusting to that process all the time.... *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet), *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green)

Documentation has...It sure has been an anchor in, an anchor that's ... allowed me step into this very open-ended...way of being with children....[M]ost of the teacher scripts that we're taught, are really heavy on planning ... To let go of that way of teaching, and step into this other playful, intentional way that is looked at as much more open. I think documentation can be something to hold onto in that process. It's this "teacherly" thing to do, which is what I did it in the beginning, I mean, that's why I did it. *Theme: Being "Teacher-ly" (rose)

I think back to eight years ago, whenever that was, six, seven years ago, what that process meant for me is radically different than what it means for me now, and how I know myself as a teacher is radically different, because of just having lived these years of documentation in so many ways...That's what's been pivotal in my growth. *Theme: Change (teal)

A large part of what drew me into the program development/staff development role that I'm in was wanting to work with our staff in this intimate setting where these relationships are really strong, as opposed to ... some ... two hour workshop...But to really think about how this documentation piece, "How is it at the heart of our program? And how, with it at the heart of our program, does

²⁸ *That's Not Fair: A Teacher's Guide to Activism With Young Children*. Ann Pelo and Fran Davidson (1999). Redleaf Press.

it shape all of our practices?” I mean, there’s many things we could say if wonder and delight are at the heart of our program ...but those are sort of dispositional things. But if this practice is at the heart of our program, what grows out of that, and what dispositions lead into that and grow out of that...It can certainly be dispositional and it can be these practices...But if this practice is at the heart of our program.... I think that’s the very powerful piece. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green). *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green)

Last summer, at our June in-service, ... we took up the notion that... we’re really going to really attend to what summer is about, and how we are going to craft our program at Hilltop to be about summer and childhood. A part of that was a lot of play and learning as adults, with water and balloons, doing some theories, and I did a lot of documentation of the teachers as they did that, and then gave it back to them to create some panels and displays. When we debriefed ... person after person talked about, “It was so exciting to see myself in a photo,” or, “I watched that water game that was happening, and I had a really different idea than what the people who were in it described ...” Those sorts of comments about seeing themselves and seeing each other in the documentation, and then realizing what was possible in their own work as teachers doing documentation. Partly seeing what’s possible in terms of many ways documentation can look, and that ... forty five minutes with the Polaroid and a few quotes can become this full story right here, with this awareness behind it. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green)

So, taking some of the scariness of the actual practice out of it, but also seeing the power of it, and for people to experience that power first hand. *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum). Margie does those kind of experiences with her training a lot, mirroring back to them, “Here’s what I saw you do.” The power of that, and to think we can do that for children so easily, ... and with such a huge impact....All those mixed layers of training. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo)

Speaking of documentation specifically, it’s very easy for me now ... the process of observing, taking notes, taking photos, telling the story...Turn around is really easy, all those pieces are bedrock for me, so some places where I’m wanting to stay fresh in that...is to think really carefully about the story I’m trying to tell. I’ve really been paying attention to that. *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green)

I’m learning from Margie and Deb about their framework of, “Is it the child’s story, the teacher’s story, the growth and development and learning story.” Trying to be thoughtful about what story I’m wanting to tell and why, and trying to become more and more transparent with that in my writing. Sometimes actually knowing it for just myself, and telling the story from that perspective... *Theme: Documentation Overall (red). At least, to keep myself being intentional and aware. So, just as a daily practice, it’s not necessarily a long-term plan about

anything, but it's certainly a place where I'm trying to keep stretching and being fluid. *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green)

And then... a place where I'm wanting to invest some energy and time and thought is around creating what Margie and I keep calling "the little books" that have grown out of projects that have happened. And again, with those little books, building on the documentation that's already in place, the stories of what I've experienced with children, what children have experienced together. And then adding a level, a layer, of teacher reflection with a very specific focus. So, matching a project with a particular focus that would be helpful, hopefully, for teachers to take up.... *Theme: Research and Future Dreams (light grey)

In terms of other ways that that links into my growing edge, I feel really aware right now of being thoughtful about my role on my teaching team. There are five of us, and I have a lot of experience...and I have this acknowledged leadership role at Hilltop... *Theme: Research and Future Dreams (light grey)

I have this yearning for collaboration ...not coaching, mentoring. I mean, I'm certainly committed to and ready to do that work, but my yearning is for taking up an idea with someone and exploring it. *Theme: Collaboration (blue), *Theme: Loneliness and Isolation (dark red)

I'm also aware on this teaching team of each of us holding different starting places in how we think about children, or different habits about how we interpret children's behavior, and I've been consciously trying to challenge people to have my perspective... *Theme: Documentation Overall (red). To move from, to move to a place and stay really grounded in a place of wonder and delight and curiosity rather than judgment, or rolling our eyes, or seeing kids as challenges *Theme: Wonder and Delight (lavender)...Instead, getting curious about what those challenging behaviours might be, or how to find delight and wonder and have our fundamental understanding of each kid be about their strengths and delights and gifts that they bring to the world. *Theme: Wonder and Delight (lavender). So, documentation is one of doing it, and not in any formal way.

I don't bring power-point presentations to our team meetings, but I'll tell stories and share my perspective, and tell stories again. "Ah, I really want to tell you this thing that M. did today that was so moving to me," or, there may be a big conversation reminding people again the story of D.'s life, so thinking of that in a way is documentation, or archive, holding the history, holding the stories of the children, and telling those stories again and again... *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

There's my yearning for collaboration, how do we take up project work together. *Theme: Collaboration (blue). .. I see these little books...And this [research] could be another piece of that. A university could say, "We want, we're taking up this, we want to have some textbooks available, but we're not

going to go to textbooks, we want real stories.” So there could be these project stories, and there could be our collaborative book, and I think that could be amazing... *Theme: Research and Future Dreams (light grey).

For me...this tension piece that I feel, too, when I say, “That’s what it would take, time and money in order to do more writing,” yet I have a really hard time thinking about walking away from the classroom. That’s something I’ve wrestled with this professional development piece, “Let’s make it on top of my regular shift,” or, “Okay, I’ll take five hours out of my regular shift but that’s all.” *Theme: Mentorship (indigo) That just feeds me so deeply, and is for me the thing that gives meaning to any of this. *Theme: Personal Engagement (grey)

Why would I go write? It’s being in relationship with children and families, and that’s what it’s about for me...the deep and intimate and meaningful relationships that are there. *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink). Certainly I’m so engaged by the intellectual piece, and so engaged by the professional development *Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua) ... but ... the living, breathing meaning of it for me is being in relationship, being in community. *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).

There’s always that tension for me of how to do [it]... [E]ven the daily documentation piece, I do it during my break and during [the children’s] naptime *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green) ... so I already feel like I’m squeezing out the time ... so stepping out of the classroom for even the ongoing work that’s related to the classroom is challenging, much less the professional development piece, much less writing anything bigger. *Theme: Time Limits (gold). A journal article I can do over the weekend, but more than that, it’s oh, my gosh. And I’m just really wanting to protect all the other parts of my life that nourish me...

I’m just so anchored at Hilltop...how a project like a documentation centre that could infuse energy and heart and passion and skill into the work experiences of all the staff at Hilltop ...just having that way of shifting, or formalizing our thinking, our way of understanding ourselves. The power that that could have is tremendous. “I’m a researcher, yeah, that’s what I do, and I’m doing it while I’m rocking a child who is sad about leaving her mom”... *Theme: Research and Future Dreams (light grey).

I think of that both for the immediate impact it would have on our work, and on our lives as teachers and in child-care, when we’re not used to thinking of ourselves as particularly important...That’s really huge. What does it look like? What are my dreams about it? In terms of physical space, having some beautiful place to take up important work, and having the technology available to do that in. A place that’s set aside, that’s about taking up big ideas with each other, you know, staffed internally, or a class that’s part of the centre, or teachers coming from all over the region, however that looks, but that kind of study...I think about

that being connected somehow with the idea of sabbatical, or sabbatical projects, that could be an anchor point for that kind of work. I can dream on and on and on...the possibilities about being that intentional about this part of our work...it feels transformational. *Theme: Research and Future Dreams (light grey)

I think of the model of Reggio as powerful in many ways, and for us at Hilltop because of that, teachers showing up there, sort of fresh, new...We often wrestle over that quandary, with, "Who are we going to hire?" Seeing the potential, finding people with amazing hearts and dispositions that we hope for, and then knowing that the next piece is creating opportunities for them to do their reflection and learning, and getting the coaching and the mentoring, and all of those pieces in place to grow into the sort of teacher that we hope to have around us at Hilltop...That's a piece that Reggio has down, and that's the piece that we are at not even the beginning, we're at the beginning of the beginning...We in the United States don't have any models for, you know, you go away and get your teaching training, and you either find a place that matches that, or you unlearn it, or you do it despite the program you're in, or whatever. The fit is good or bad, or...*Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

So there's a need for research into that piece. I don't mean just hard, book-learning research, but lived research. This is what we live together with kids, let's think about it, talk about it, reflect on it, get curious about it, go back, do the next layer of study. I mean, that's the piece that's very engaging to me, much more so than to go out and find original sources and do that kind of research. That's not un-engaging, but the idea of living side by side with a group of teachers, living these moments together, and reflecting on them, doing research about them together, about their meaning that they hold for the children, about the meaning they hold around child development, the meaning they hold for our own development as teachers, that's being partners together, that's what I hope for in an intimate relationship. And to have the possibility there to do that, as my daily work, is breathtaking. *Theme: Research and Future Dreams (light grey)

It's sort of overwhelming to me, in a way, I mean, to think of Reggio as this culture, this city of people, committed to children and childhood. We don't live in that culture by any means, and so how we go about creating that culture in the community at Hilltop is a place that I think about a lot. I think of the families and staff at Reggio, I guess particularly around the issue of families, being curious not only about their own childhood, but about children. I think that is a piece that I've been trying to pay attention to in my work with parents. How to help cultivate that spirit in families here, where many cultural forces are, have taught us to not necessarily go to that place...I imagine we're kind of the best in the world at individualism, and I'm not saying that with any kind of pride. I feel that this work is, potentially, really radical and political work, and that's one way in which I understand it to be radical, political work. Shifting how we understand relationships, how we understand identity, how we understand community. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

When I think of the schools in Reggio, that's one real immediate piece that comes up, is that families there seem committed to the children in the community. Certainly with a particular investment in their own child or children, but that investment doesn't come with disregard for, or ignorance about, or disinterest in the rest of the community. And so, things like really tangible practices, our curriculum board and the way we communicate with families, being explicit that: "You're not going to see something about your child every day, but you'll see something every day about some element of this community that your child is a part of, and so coming to know that community is a way to come know your child." *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

I think of that as a part of this translating or this movement between Italy and the United States. I also continue to be challenged by ... what to do with people, what to do with teachers at Hilltop, their varying ranges of commitment to the field, or sense of identification with being teachers ... I haven't studied particularly at Reggio, but my impression is that there's a strong identification: "I am a teacher at the Diana school," or, "I'm the pedagoga." ... I think there's work for us to do there...It's something that I keep holding, mulling around as just an awareness of how do we craft the sort of learning communities that exist in Reggio, given this different sense of identity about being teachers. For many folks it's just a transitory sort of job, you just don't have the pay...

Those are the main pieces I'm thinking about right now. There are pieces around art, and art media, and food, and the culture, I mean, all these different things, but for me, those are the places where I find myself doing my thinking, my being curious and trying to do some reflection around work with families.

A personal metaphor that describes this journey into documentation... I think of this ... thing that's really important in my life... yoga. It's the daily practice. There was a teacher who was really important in my life. There's that sense of staying with a practice, even when it doesn't feel all that rewarding or all that meaningful or all that juicy, but staying with it because that's the commitment that I've made. I remember early on, when I was first studying, my teacher saying, "If you just show up on your mat everyday, then you're doing your practice." That's been really helpful for me ... just that commitment to showing up every day.

Also, the idea of yoga as a stretching and opening and focused, so there's opening and expanding in a way that makes it possible to really focus more intentionally, and ... mindfully, to really focus by opening and expanding. That feels really powerful to me when I think of this work of becoming more fluid and fluent and at ease with and soft around practices with children, and practices around documentation, in order, then, to be able to really focus my attention, and focus my intention, and focus my communication and my presence in powerful way. [A]nother layer of it is being this idea of stretch, too, there's a softening and opening, but there's a stretch, and always trying to pay attention to, "Where's my

edge? What next do I do? If my edge is here, how do I stretch into that place, how do I lean into it? So now I've got the technology down, what's the next stretch?"

And, yeah, revisiting old poses in new ways and trying new poses, even though I've been studying for a long time, there are way new poses to keep trying. New places in my body to discover, I mean, all of those places in yoga, and definitely all of those places in my teaching work, and my practice around documentation. That story we started out with, about the age work team, the powerful transformation that happened by doing this practice that I'd been doing since I first encountered the ideas of Reggio, years ago. All I did in that project is show up with the kids, and have the tape-recorder in front of us, and ask questions as they occurred to me, and listen carefully and transcribe it, and that's what I'd been doing since seven years earlier, and had different layers living it. Some sense of, "I've done 'downward facing dog' in yoga (it's this fundamental pose), I don't know how many times, five zillion times, and each time it can be a new pose, or a new experience of that pose, or a new encounter with that pose, and at the same time it's this familiar place to rest into." So, that's a powerful image for me, something that I hold all over in my life, of noticing the familiar and holding onto that, and letting that be a launching pad into exploring that moment in a new way, or with that moment's awareness, and everything that's present in that moment. Whether it's documentation with kids, or whatever is happening.

I can turn around a piece of documentation for the daily curriculum board in half an hour, forty minutes, so now adding the next layer of being really intentional about what the story is that I'm telling. That idea of paying attention and continuing to stretch.... In fact, the practice of yoga, and the practice of documentation, for me, is constant self-awareness, and mindfulness, and aliveness. *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green)

I'm feeling really aware of the relationship piece, and knowing that I talked about it in our first session, but just realizing as I was referring to it a few minutes ago, how fundamental that is for me, and how that's what this is all about for me, about relationship, and how I want to be in the world with, to be present and aware and mindful and curious – all of that stuff. And documentation, the practice of documentation provides this medium for that way of being in the world to be expressed and lived, both a medium and a challenge, an invitation, I guess, to be in the world in that way. So... it's deeper and more expansive than just my work with children, but certainly it is in the context of my work with children, the way that my hope or intent for my life gets expressed...I just feel really grateful to have encountered this way of teaching that holds this golden nugget at the heart, and that I get to step into that place and live there. It's pretty remarkable, and a real blessing. *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).

It's powerful to me to be in this place ... I think, "How could I even not be at Hilltop? How could I not be in this community?"



Ann

Appendix B: Conversations with Margie

Conversations with Margie (MC1)²⁹

My role at Hilltop has changed over time. I started out being what's labelled as 'staff trainer'...In the endeavour to not have a two-tiered quality childcare system, the city of Seattle structured this program, which I think is really ingenious, where if you agree to take subsidized kids, low income kids, and you get a contract with the city to do that, you get a trainer for x number of hours a week, and you get access to a public health nurse for consultation, and a few other goodies. You get some free workshops that you can go to, and so forth. So, probably ten years ago I started at Hilltop under that program. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

It's...a wonderful model that I haven't seen duplicated anywhere. I describe it a little bit in my chapter in *Growing Teachers*,³⁰ Betty Jones' book. The city contracts with a local community college to provide the training, so we're actually employees of the community college. I started there about ten years ago...They had been kind of, semi wanting to be a Montessori program. When I came, I had just finished to be the High-Scope trainer, and I...thought, philosophically, it's a great program, and the way they do training of trainers is very hands on and active, so I really liked that. My job was to be there three hours a week, and to set some goals with the director...I started without naming it "High-Scope," but I started sort of introducing some of the ideas as a way to structure what they were doing. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

...At some point, I can't remember the chronology, I'm really bad about that, at some point I got exposed to Reggio, and I took the "Lion"³¹ video to a staff meeting there...So I started introducing some of those ideas... *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

What happens in this position, usually, is that you're sort of given directions by the director that you should go "fix" all the teachers who are bad, and in every program there are some teachers who need some help, and directors typically don't have much experience or time for doing staff development. And so, the director would always be steering me towards these people who were needing a lot of corrective action in some ways, just not interacting well with children at all, and that kind of thing. I was coming to the conclusion in my work in all these centers that this was a bad idea...So it occurred to me that...we should really work on strengthening the teachers who really like the work, want to do it, are eager to get help, as opposed to trying to remediate the ones who wish you would be out of their face anyways. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

²⁹ MC1 denotes "Margie 1," an abbreviation for referencing this interview.

³⁰ *Growing Teachers: Partnerships in Staff Development*. Elizabeth Jones, editor, 1993. NAEYC.

³¹ 'To Make a Portrait of a Lion,' a video of a Reggio project produced by Reggio Children.

I was getting pretty good at this “remediation” process. I had gotten launched through this High-Scope training in learning how to do really good observation feedback, and sit down and have a very productive discussion, set goals and come back. I’d videotape people...In fact, I started teaching workshops on how to do that, and I was eventually asked to teach a “Training the Trainer” class for all the people doing this job... [M]y own thinking started to change. So, I just said, “Who’s interested in seeing this video, this interesting video, ‘The Lion,’ and who’s interested in these ideas?” Shifts and changes started happening...So, then it was like, “Well, feed these people.” They were hungry, and they were feeding me on the job... *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

In childcare, there are a lot of crises all the time, and a lot of problems, and so, it often feels like a luxury to be able to focus on the kinds of discussions...And I hadn’t been to Reggio, and I wasn’t even calling our work “Reggio focused” really. It was partly finding my own way of how to do staff development, and really trying to get people focused on play, on socio-dramatic play, and on hands-on learning, and on learning when to get out of the kids’ faces and observe. At that point, I didn’t even know that much about documentation, in terms of the way Reggio thinks about it. But again, it was like this big “aha” for me. I was like, this is what I want them to be doing, to be focusing on the kids and observing the kids. I’d come to that conclusion before I’d had much exposure to Reggio, actually... *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). *Theme: Resonance (brown).

So this whole High-Scope, give good observation feedback to the teachers - as a staff development tool - started to play less of a part in my work at Hilltop, and it was much more going in and writing up little stories about things I saw the kids doing. Sometimes I didn’t even have time to talk to anybody, I would just plop them up on the teacher notebooks so they could see them. It’s contagious. Even at other programs where there wasn’t the level of growing expertise that there was at Hilltop, that particular strategy just demonstrated itself as a real effective strategy for staff development. You were modeling what you wanted them to do, and you also had a lot less threatening role...

Ann and Sarah started teaching together...I think it was the summer that Ann came back from Reggio. They were each teaching in separate rooms, and Ann really liked having her own little room...because she was getting more and more clear about how she wanted to teach, and who she wanted to teach with, and what kind of environment she wanted, and there weren’t too many other people there that were similar in that way. *Theme: Environment and Space (lime)

I don’t really know all the details of what led them to decide to teach together and rearrange their rooms...I learned they were making this move, and I said, “Oh, my gosh. You know...a lot people there kind of complained how inadequate the space was, and ‘I wish we could knock this wall down,’ and you figured out how to knock the wall down in your minds, that’s what you’ve figured out how to do, and this is going to be an incredible journey.” *Theme:

Environment and Space (lime). I actually suggested that they document it...That's the first sort of documentation display that they did for parents about changing their space. This is before this whole documentation was so central to what either one of them were doing...

I kind of straddled trying to help at the administrative level, help them get some better leadership and better systems in place, and...for a while, I spent a lot of my time in Ann and Sarah's room, mostly just sharing in their delight, but I still spent time in other peoples' rooms, and regularly led staff meeting workshops and that kind of thing. The director at that time was pretty inspired by ideas of Reggio. She didn't do much reading, she didn't get into it too deeply, but she loved it, she sort of had a generic spiritual disposition towards it...She did a lot of visionary things...and she gave a lot of freedom to the staff to do what they wanted to do. And so it got to a point where they officially stopped calling what they did "High-Scope"...High-Scope helped them to begin to think about some things in terms of child-centeredness. It's a great bridge for people who are very didactic and teacher-directed and rigid. It kind of opens things up and gets things child-centered and helps you sort of give some structure to your day, and it's got this kind of codified, child development focus, with observations as an assessment tool long, before that was all the hot topic today...I find that a really good structure for teachers who either don't have a clue how to structure anything, or who are way too rigid and overly structured. But it began very obviously to be holding them back. I mean, because there's some sort of artificial routines that you do, and really nothing focused on the "image of the child." I eventually started recruiting them to co-lead or assist me in leading workshops. The rest is history. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo)

I'm not officially at Hilltop any more, actually, under this program, but I'm there as much as I can, whenever I can be. There was a period last year or the year before when they actually got a donation from a parent on the board who is very wealthy to fund the idea of a *pedagogista*, to the extent they understood the idea of a *pedagogista*, for ten hours a week. It was [for] six months...So they called me and said, "Could you do this *pedagogista* work"? I said, "That's my heart's dream, I wish I could, but I have all these commitments, there's no way I would be here ten hours a week, nor every week or anything like that. Because it was this really short-term initial thing, I said, "We have a couple of choices here. We can find someone else to do it, and try to coach them into it, or take whatever I can give you." And they voted on the latter. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

We had some all-staff meetings generating ideas about how they would like to see my time focused, and a lot of it was, "Help us evaluate our environment and whether it's working for kids." It was, all around, "Help us think through things, we're so isolated, and then help us to be better observers and better documenters," wherever they were developmentally. They have the big picture, a lot of them, so helping them with documentation and that kind of thing. You

know, it was just an opportunity I couldn't take advantage of, and they couldn't take advantage of me...I've fantasized...I would consider giving up this other life and going and doing that, because it's *so* rich. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

Basically, the way I describe the role of the *pedagogista* is somebody to help you think about the learning and teaching process. That was sort of how I defined it. So I went, whenever I could, I would go hang out in the classrooms, observe kids, talk to them, I went to the staff meetings, tried to get us focused on discussing observations and stuff like that. But, you know, it's so pitiful the amount of time that they have. They have one hour a week, which really works out to about forty five minutes...by the time they all get there because they've been relieved by the people who are relieving them, and then thirty minutes of that is taken up by, "Who's feeding the fish?" and administrative kinds of things...So then we pressed really hard to get an hour and half, to carve that time out. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green). *Theme: Time Limits (gold).

So, there's been...part of my role again has been working with the structure that is going to support this stuff...prior to this pedagogista role, the decision was made to have Ann and Sarah start teaching in other rooms so they could be mentoring others, so they could build on some other strengths and that kind of thing. That became a whole other big issue, of helping them, how to build this team, and starting a whole new classroom. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

I did a lot of behind the scenes work there, and in the meantime helped write...we got the idea of the Institute launched, and I did a lot of work around that with them. I also helped the board members write a grant, and Ann and Sarah were pretty involved in that, to fund the Institute for a year, which included getting all that technology, getting the cameras and the laptops. That's something that just wasn't on the horizon to ask for. I would just name these things and they would go, "Oh, my God. That would be incredible if we could do it." So, one of my jobs in recent years has been listening and watching and seeing where, at the structure level, where are the gaps. What is holding them back that we could take some mini little steps to solve? *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

One big issue was that Ann and Sarah were the stars who were doing all the documentation, and set the bar really, really high for everyone else. So you have these other teachers who aren't there, not only about documentation, but they're still sort of grasping these ideas and what to do...The original idea was to get them all involved and participating in documentation, but they were just horrifically intimidated by the process. There wasn't a structure in place to support them in terms of time to do it, and the resources and that kind of thing. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

The idea, originally, about the technology, is that it would help level the playing field a bit, because there were people there who were computer-phobic,

and technology-phobic, even about using digital cameras. I just pushed and pushed them to go digital with the cameras. And that's been a stretch...[W]e discovered as we went that it didn't level the playing field because there was this whole sort of phobia around the technology. So, then we had to get some support and training available for everybody, even on using the digital camera and these laptops. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue)

...[T]hat was almost a year's worth of work, and that didn't level the playing field, the way that Ann and Sarah hoped. They were declining being made leaders in their rooms. They really wanted to be like everyone else. Then the next effort...was to create some other models for documentation, that it didn't have to look like Ann's and Sarah's. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

...I do a fair amount of traveling around the country, and working with programs on the elementary ideas, because documentation is such a "sexy" idea now. People don't have any other foundation, and they want to hire me for big bucks to come teach their staff to do documentation. [I]t's a real ethical issue for me. Part of me feels like I don't want anything to do with this...It's painful to see how they're conceiving about it.

I spend a lot of time trying to talk about, "How does this fit into your overall program, and what are you doing?" and that kind of thing. I probably decline five jobs for every ten that I get asked to do, because I don't have any faith that they're really going anywhere with it...And then the others ones...it's like, "Oh, this new Reggio thing, or this new documentation thing, we should be doing that." That's sort of the level that they're at. But the ones I do decide to do, I work on a really rudimentary level of "image of the child," and observing to get to know who the child is, the "teacher as researcher," in a very preliminary way, and teach very sound byte approaches to observing and documenting, because most of these programs don't have any paid planning time. *Theme: Time Limits (gold)

I said at Hilltop... "I'm traveling all around the country showing a much more, what I would call, elementary or less sophisticated way, to enter this documentation process, and I think that's what we need to do at Hilltop. It's problematic because you already have this whole sophisticated system by two of your teachers, but it has put the bar so high and intimidated other people, and made them think, 'Oh, I could never do that.' And so, we have to kind of bust this thing open if you want really want it to be something other than the 'Ann and Sarah' show." *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

[T]his is maybe the third year into this busting it open process...Some of the things in the *Art of Awareness* book (Curtis & Carter, 2000), where it's pretty basic but it's playful, with some writing exercises where you're not intimidated by the actual writing process, and looking for the different stories that are embedded in these observations that you can build on when you're doing your

observations, that kind of thing. And then some playful, fun ways to even display this documentation. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

[W]hat I said to Ann and Sarah, was, “I think what this is going to look like, in some ways, is a set-back over all, how’s it’s visually going to appear in the center.” All this documentation isn’t as sophisticated as it used to be, because a lot more people are going to be doing it, and they don’t have that level of sophistication. But if our goal is to have a lot more people doing it, then, that’s a developmental process, that’s how we have to do it. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green). If I were here more, and had the time, I think we would continue plodding away at improving that.

All of that has just been little seeds, I have a sense now, if I were there, how I could keep developing and cultivating that, but my role now is pretty tangential, I think except in the fact that I’m like a “community elder.” *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

Thinking about fostering a culture of documentation - first of all, creating the disposition to notice and delight and be curious about what you’re seeing. I think it is, first of all, creating the disposition to notice and delight and be curious about what you’re seeing. *Theme: Wonder and Delight (lavender). And so, modeling that, sometimes even before writing it down, I mean, these are things I’ve done at Hilltop or do at other programs. When I was there more consistently, just even standing side by side and narrating what I’m seeing, or the questions that are raised for me... *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). Then you keep taking a step back. They have to have the environment in place to stand back and observe, so you kind of have to assess if there is...enough in place for the kids to get really engaged in some play of their own interests, that doesn’t need a lot of teacher’s involvement to keep from falling apart, and if not, then you have to back up and spend a lot of time getting that in place.

...[O]bviously before Reggio I didn’t have the language of “the image of the child,” but I did have the insight about how are they thinking about who children are. I’ve always talked in terms of childhood, what this time of life is all about, what childhood is really about...I think it’s one way I’ve come at it...with a lot of compatibility to Reggio ideas, but my language and my way of thinking about what is this time of life about...I think the Italians would say, “What’s your image of the child?” I think there’s a lot of overlap in what we’re meaning by that.

*Theme: Image of the Child (dark teal)

I often find...I’m simultaneously helping them get the disposition to just be curious and to notice and see, and getting an environment in place, just some sort of basic routines, and interesting things for the kids to do... *Theme: Wonder and Delight (lavender). *Theme: Mentorship (indigo)

Now I sort of have a little checklist in the back of my head...about what has to be in place before you can actually observe and document. I'm trying to figure out in my own mind where the notion of self-reflection comes in there.

I don't think this is a sequential process, so I often just go after different entry points as I get to know different individuals, but I have an idea that - this is the conversation I had at another center today - "Do you see yourself consciously having a set of values, a clear set of values and ideas about children that shapes everything that you do, so that you don't just have knee-jerk reactions to things, and you don't just go to an activity book to do things, or imitate what you've seen someone else do." Those are the sorts of things I try to structure training around. Sometimes it's informal, it's a combination - and this is what I did at Hilltop, and would continue to do - it's a combination of side-by-side being in the classroom...having developed the kind of relationship where they know I'm really not there to evaluate them, that's not what we're about. We're about figuring out what this teaching and learning process is about, what is this time of life, this childhood, about. And, "Who are you? What are you bringing to the equation in terms of what your own interests and passions are, what are the kinds of things you'd really like to share with children, what kinds of things bug you about kids, what kinds of things delight you about kids, what kinds of things do you feel insecure about, what kinds of things do you feel confident about?" So, you know, trying to figure out a plan with them that is based around all those considerations, and keep raising questions related to values...**Theme: Mentorship (indigo)*

A turning point I've had with a number of teachers at Hilltop is, when...people [are]...either complaining about kids' behaviours or wanting some techniques to handle some things, is to ask them, I say, "Let's just stop for a minute, and let's hear from you, what are you curious about in this child's behaviour?" That notion is so alien, so foreign for them...

It's a total paradigm shift in the way we think of the role of the teacher. And sometimes, I think, one of the things we're plagued with in childcare, as a result of this deplorable wage situation, and bad working conditions, and so forth, is that people want to do 'teacher-ly' kinds of things to make their own self-esteem feel better, because they so much don't want to be viewed as the "babysitter." And they so much want to be respected by the parents, and...doing...these traditional teacher kind of behaviors seems to be what would make them feel better. **Theme: Being "Teacher-ly" (rose) ...*

When we sent it [Reflecting Children's Lives³²] to the publisher we called it "Guardian of Childhood"... [If you're a guardian of childhood, you're behaving really differently than if you're a teacher, and it's probably one of the most valuable things you could be doing in our culture...]

³² *Reflecting Children's Lives: A Handbook for Planning Child-Centered Curriculum.* Deb Curtis and Margie Carter, 1996. Redleaf Press.

...[T]he early U.S. definition of developmentally appropriate practice is that the teacher really stays in the background...which Reggio has really, I think, challenged. Sue Bredekamp's article in the last issue of *Innovations*...was a really good assessment about how Reggio has jarred so much of how, at least for the U.S., early childhood package has been put together around definitions of developmentally appropriate practice, and the role teachers should be playing with kids, or not playing...

A lot of what I try to do is help people become self-aware, and eager to pay attention to kids...the classic thing is, the kids aren't needing close adult attention, I can go clean the paint brushes, and take care of all these tasks that I never have time to take care of...Reggio influenced schools in the U.S., which are part-time programs with a number of hours for teachers to do things away from kids, that are paid for...just don't exist in childcare. My hope is to try to carve out some new paradigms, some new ways we can begin to make this work in childcare, because that's where the majority of children are...It's what engages my interest, it's where my commitment lies...and it's the most challenging, in part because the resources aren't there, the support is not there, even in a place like Hilltop, which has a relatively wealthy parent population. **Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).*

Each step at Hilltop has been a major victory along the way, to have paid planning time, to have paid staff meetings once a month, to have a day off once a quarter [for professional development] – each year we've added a little piece...Last year we went for getting the days between Christmas and New Year off, paid holidays...Next year we're also going for the week before school starts in the fall being off. **Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).*

We had a vision planning meeting about where the next boundaries that we can push out are...there's always this, "Oh, you can't do that to parents, they need childcare," so, you have these fairly well-to-do, professional parents, mostly two parent families at Hilltop, and then you have MLK (Martin Luther King Childcare Centre), and this consortium of low income, mostly families in crisis in the south part of the city...and they, a couple of years ago, closed for a week before, and I said, "If they can do it, we can do it!"...**Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).*

... [T]he staff in the public schools are screaming for more collaboration time...Their days off are all filled with conferences, paper work, so they've started this new thing of, like, adding twenty minutes on to the day...and then they take the first Friday of the month off, or something like that. They're carving out time by adding it here and there. What it's wreaking havoc with is that it isn't a district wide plan...so if you're a family trying to arrange childcare with one kid in one school, and another kid in another school, it's like a nightmare. Eventually they'll have to systematize it. It's the same everywhere. Teachers don't have enough time to talk about their teaching process. All they

have to talk about are these other “adminisitrivia” business things. *Theme: Time Limits (gold). *Theme: Collaboration (blue).

My work, and my vision, is that we have to chip away at a number of things simultaneously, and we have to chip away at the paradigm shifts for teachers and the way staff development is done. We have to chip away at getting some systems and structures in place, to give more, make more available, and we have to chip away at these budgets and compensation issues, and, obviously, parent awareness, public awareness, that kind of thing. You can’t do one to the exclusion of the others. You may have to take turns, you can’t necessarily do them all simultaneously, but in terms of childcare, they just have to be chipped away steadily, and you just have to keep pushing the boundary out, pushing the barrier a little further away from you, so you can get some breathing space. *Theme: Advocacy (yellow)... *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

Conversations with Margie (MC2)³³

[A] therapist gave me this quote...that says, “People are not made of atoms, they’re made of stories, and our stories have to be big enough to live in.” I’ve been using that a lot as a focus for training. Think about your role as a teacher, it’s really about creating a story big enough for kids to live in. *Theme: Image of the Child (dark teal).

...[T]his friend of mine [has] her approach as a therapist to working with a lot of people to help them see, “Well, you just grew up with particular things shaping your story about who you are.” That’s a whole other paradigm to think about the work in, but it sure dovetails with observation stories...

And we do that with environments. I show pictures of a bunch of non-related childcare or early childhood programs, bank lobbies and prison yards and gorgeous landscaped gardens and whatever, and say, “In each of these, if this is where you spent the bulk of your waking hours, what story would this shape about who you are?” It’s very powerful, it’s so simple, really...So, rather than give a lecture on the elements of a Reggio environment or something, for me, it’s much more important to stir up in people this notion that you should be having a concept in your mind of what you’re trying to do, what you’re trying to offer children in the way of their identity... *Theme: Environment and Space (lime)

In the early years of reading Gardner’s work, D. and I...often did activities where we set up, you know, the different kinds of intelligences stations, and we’d have an assignment at that station ...to...express your understanding about the social emotional development of infants and toddlers with musical knowledge, or whatever. It was amazing what they would come up with. It’s an oversimplification of what these concepts are really about, but it would get them thinking about it...

³³ MC2 denotes “Margie 2,” an abbreviation for referencing this interview.

...To give them back their history all the time, that's the other thing that's key...although we've started a more formal process where Ann's been writing up some of the history (*see Appendix x), which we started collectively at last fall's staff retreat...

We rolled out this long piece of paper, and collectively, there were people there who had been there as long as, well, M. and Ann and Sarah...and some really new people, and some people who've been there maybe four or five years. We constructed the history together. We said, "On this timeline, who remembers the very first thing, the very first exposure they had to Reggio?" or, "What led us to be able to be where we are today?" We created this history of the influences that have started to shift the program structure, and everybody learned from everybody else. M. learned from people, and she's been there twenty five years...*Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

I think my history has been useful. At that meeting where we rolled up the long thing, I went in my garage and I got out this one piece, this display board that Ann and Sarah had done, about them redoing their rooms, things that people didn't know a thing about ...So, that actually launched a pretty good commitment to have a centralized place for our history together, more collected. And...at the "Hands" staff retreat, that was the first time I hadn't led the retreat, and so, there could be a full-time documenter...It was a real eye-opener, I was mortified to discover that...I'd been so focused on trying to visually capture for people what was happening, because it was so rich, that I didn't record much dialogue...*Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

There have still been things...S. has been there as director now for two years...[S]he'll get a new board member who'll come up with what sounds like a great idea fund-raising idea, and she'll send out this e-mail, and I'll be the one, the only one with some history to say, "Let me give you some information about ideas like this that have been tried before," or, "Our history with this particular funder that you might want to know is..." There's been no...collective memory on a lot of the administrative things. There's definitely collective memory about a lot the teaching stuff, lodged in Ann's head or M.'s head, or Sarah's head, because they've been there so long. But on the administrative piece, I was more in touch with that during a certain period of time...*Theme: Mentorship (indigo).
*Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

I'm trying to pass that on, but sometimes you don't even know you have it until something provokes it...[T]he article I wrote when I came back from Reggio, in that I concluded that one of the most important things that you could do was get a *pedagogista* on your staff. And I've learned so much more since I wrote that article...Just in terms of trying to think...whether it's even overtly related to Reggio or not, what would begin to uplift the experiences of what's going on in these programs...out of mediocrity, basically. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo)

I think expanding the *pedagogista* role would enable this work at Hilltop to be taken further. Definitely. And then the structure of time, time for teachers to meet together and collaborate. *Theme: Time Limits (gold). If you think about it in terms of full-time childcare...there was a point at which Sarah had the idea that Hilltop should go to a school day model, like a nine to three model, and Ann was not in favor of that because it was an elitist model, thinking that we serve the parents who need full-time childcare. But, there was a time in Hilltop's history when having a lead teacher, or a "Ring Four" teacher idea was totally foreign, we won't do that... *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

Ann has been doing a phenomenal job this year of taking over staff meetings. That's another role I've been playing...before Ann took on the staff development role, with J. or S., they would always call me and talk over, "I want to have a staff meeting about this, what do you think is a good way or a good idea to approach it?" either a discussion or training about such and such, and now Ann has a pretty good idea, well, like the "Hands" idea...We first talked about trying to create an experience together for people around some representational work, and some of the stages that might go through, but no, we didn't have the focus for it yet. She went off and thought of the "Hands" idea, it came from Chicago Commons and our exposure to that project, and then she came back and said, "I'm thinking about this, but I'm kind of stuck about where to do this," so...I just said, "I knew this is going to be incredibly powerful. How about if I just come and document it?" And of course, this came right on top of 9/11³⁴, which nobody anticipated. So it had this whole other poignancy about it. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

She's been doing...incredible things, and I don't know all of them because she touches base with me at different junctions, but I often don't hear the exact stories of what happened afterwards. We touch base about the plan, and then she works on it and comes back. She's gotten very skillful at that. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). And again, the staff has just really risen to the occasion...We've really focused this last period on what's getting in the way of collaboration, apart from the structure issues, and it has to do with our ability to challenge each other, and our fears of conflict...[I]t was really clear that even when we could carve out these little blocks of time, people couldn't use them to sort out differences very well...I sort of approached it by saying, "People have focused a lot, and have gotten really good at helping kids work through conflicts, and understanding that it isn't a bad thing, your job is not to go stop the conflict, and we need to be doing that among ourselves a little better, and drawing on what we were good at to help us in this area where we're not so good." *Theme: Conflict (orange).

And so we did. The whole first session was just around self-awareness, and beginning to recognize the different places each person comes from in their own personal history, and ideas about conflict, what their own experiences have been,

³⁴ September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in New York

and that kind of thing...***Theme: Conflict (orange)** Sometimes it was just a spontaneous thing at the end, not spontaneous, but a short, quick thing at the end. Sometimes it was more an assignment ahead of time, “Come and bring an object that represents what you feel you have to give the collaborative process.” [Ann] created an “altar” for these things to be placed on, without even discussing them first, they were just assembled and people who brought them put them there. There was just silence with music, for people to just sit and look at these representations that people brought. ***Theme: Collaboration (blue)**.

... [T]hey did some body sculpturing, some stuff from Gustav Wall’s work that I’ve kind of introduced them to, you know, it’s like creating human sculptures of emotions, that kind of thing. Again, trying, increasingly, in every staff meeting, to have some sort of representational experience. And also not have it just focused on visual art, because kids are doing representational work in many other ways, in their social dramatic play, in the block area. We need to be thinking about how they’re representing in these other arenas, so we are going to do that more in staff meetings, too. ***Theme: Mentorship (indigo)**.

So that piece, I think, created a different way to come at this collaboration/conflict issue. We kept coming at it from different angles of what gets in the way of collaboration when you have a different point of view from someone else. It’s partly fear, it’s partly this notion that somebody’s idea is better or not better, worthy or not worthy, it’s partly for fear that people might not like you. So we created activities where we acknowledged, without naming who had those feelings, this might be some of the reasons that are true. ***Theme: Collaboration (blue)**. ***Theme: Conflict (orange)**.

We developed a really neat activity - I don’t know all of the ones that Ann used, but some of them are referred to in this article - and then she would, each time, do some representational piece in there too, following up on having had this fall “Hands” project. Sometimes it was just a spontaneous thing at the end, not spontaneous, but a short, quick thing at the end. I came in and did one of these staff meetings somewhere in the midst of this flow of the ones that Ann and I were planning. I can’t remember why she asked me to do it - maybe she just wanted to participate. We created places to go stand and talk to somebody, or go tell a story about a time you feared how your differences with someone was going to turn out and it turned out great... The thing that started happening - which is what our hope was, but you never know - was that they began to develop this whole new appreciation for each other. “That thing that you do that drives me so crazy, I now have a whole different insight into why you do that, and it will shift my whole relationship to you.” And they started saying that to each other. It was incredible, and so liberating. They could have spent thousands of dollars on therapy for this. It was incredible. ***Theme: Mentorship (indigo)**

Ann would always read a piece of transcript or notes from the last meeting, or bring something, some recalling of what we did last time on this

issue. It was leading up to creating a set of principles that they all wanted to adhere to...how they were going to approach their relationships. This is all sort of the precursor of collaboration, really...**Theme: Collaboration (blue).* **Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink)*

What, I think, what kind of led to a cathartic thing around this was when they had this budget crisis last year and they had to eliminate some staff positions, it was just a horrific thing. A whole study of Hilltop is their crises that go beyond the ordinary childcare crises. Just a little taste of them – they had a couple of kids from their program who died in the Alaska airplane crash; the school that their kids go off to for elementary school burned down; they had a parent that they had just had a baby shower for - the baby was born dead; they had a parent die of cancer; they had an earthquake - it's just been stunning what people have had to deal with. And each one of them just brought them closer and made them stronger...The first year they became a union, somehow they didn't create the budget formula right, or something around that, I don't remember the details, but it created a crisis, and by November or December they had a fifty thousand dollar deficit...

It's a pretty wealthy parent population, but...S., God, she was amazing. She did all this working on the stuff with the staff, and then she went to the board and to the parents, and said, "Just to keep you real about what's going on, we're not only going to ask you for a tuition raise, but we're also going to ask you for a donation, and I want you to know, first of all, what the staff is donating. First of all, they're only working for this amount of money an hour. They just, after being able to unionize, which is a huge victory, and getting paid time off between Christmas and New Year, they're going to give that up. They had these serious needs, and weren't willing to give up anything that would impact the quality of care for your kids, and they're willing to sacrifice some of their hard earned things." It was just incredible how S. handled that.

This last meeting that they were going to have...Ann and I were on the floor at 11:30 at night, and over the week we'd been giving ideas back and forth, and we were saying, "Okay, what's the representational piece for what's going to happen at this meeting? Could we end with some kind of representational piece? Nobody knows how to do that, how could we do that?" Then one of us said, "T. [a new staff member] is an artist, he would be a perfect person to ask." We ... called him like at 11:30 at night, ... and it was perfect.... He had made a wonderful contribution to the meeting, and it integrated him beautifully. It kept the representational piece going, that kind of thing... **Theme: Mentorship (indigo).* All the dynamics of a family or whatever has always been there on the staff, no matter what the workplace is...**Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).*

One of the messages I give to people all the time about is why...it's really worth giving yourself over to learning about human development, and thinking in terms of values, and being intentional in what you're doing, because it will serve

you so well in your entire life, in every relationship that you form. If you're having trouble with your family, anything, it will serve you so well, you will learn so much that will be so valuable for you in your life, totally apart from what these children will offer you. *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).

I've heard little bits and pieces of stories that have really worked, so I think the stage is now set for going after this collaboration piece. They've got a set of principles they've agreed upon, but again, it's not what we immediately think about when we think about collaboration. It's more of an agreement about we're going to relate to each other, and sort of the foundation for going on. Stuff that might be presumed in Italian culture, stuff that maybe is different than Italian culture ... *Theme: Collaboration (blue).

Yeah, it's about Hilltop culture... Carolyn Edwards is the first person who turned me on to this in a little paper she wrote years ago that John Nimmo gave me about the value of documenting. She did it with her students, what her students were doing and showing at that time, and D. and I have started doing that in our emergent curriculum class. We document all the time. The next class we come to, we bring it back for them to reflect on. The same process we want to do with kids. I've been trying to build that in, more and more, to these adult education programs, so that you can build this reflection process into this. Not only because you want them to do that with the kids, but just that you get them to construct their understanding about what it means to be a reflective person, and the role that documentation can play in helping you to do that. If, in fact, somebody is documenting what you have done, you get an immediate experience of what that is, or somebody representing back a group experience that you've been part of. It's a pretty visceral experience. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

...The whole idea of making learning visible, "Somebody gets what I'm doing, so well, that they can hold a mirror up to me about it." It's just so powerful, and it's honoured and respected. ...

I've tried doing it... T.D. invented this really neat little activity that D. and I have embellished upon and used in training, that involves having people, adults, choose an object and try to theorize about how it works, and then draw your theories, and stuff like that. And then he videotapes certain groups, and as part of the debriefing discussion, shows the videotape of them doing this process... *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

Anyways, we've been doing a version of that activity periodically, and at Hilltop it was incredibly valuable. We did it at one of our staff retreats, that very activity. I had the tape-recorder, and I had the video-camera, and I had the still camera. For some of them, we just played a little bit of the audio-tape and they could hear themselves, for some we looked at video of what they were doing, and for some we showed still photos, then we talked about each of those forms of

documentation and how they impact you, and how they lend themselves, some better than others. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green). In these day long seminars, when I've done this, the thing that strikes me is there are always a couple of people...who like, can't get over the initial, "How does my hair look, I have a blemish on my face"...That is so telling to me...about the kind of people that get attracted into the early childhood field, who have so much of their self-esteem hidden, they can't see below this picture of themselves there...Now when I do it, more than not, I try to focus on peoples' hands, and their representations, and other things, unless I've been working with a group enough to have a sense of whether that would be okay.... *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

*Conversations with Margie (MC3)*³⁵

I think there are some people who are uniquely gifted, as an artist, as a teacher...and then there are other people...who just become highly skilled and masterful. It's because they cultivate it in themselves. Obviously a range of things go to influence how you to cultivate that in yourself, from your own upbringing, your own education, the things that have or have not influenced you to be self-reflective. You may have "love for children" and have wanted to work with children, but if that doesn't go side by side with something influencing you to be self-reflective, I don't think you'll get to where we're talking about...

I first experienced Sarah as a graduate student in one of my classes, so I had a sense of her as a writer and as a thinker, even before I ever saw her with children. I first experienced Ann as a classroom teacher, who just...really adored kids and had a lot of respect for them, but no experience to draw on. I laugh at the things that I saw her do, that were totally out of inexperience...But what she did have was, like, a hunger to know and to get better, and one of the rare people that when I walked in the room wasn't even threatened by me. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

...[W]hen I was at MLK yesterday, A., this Latino woman, said, "I used to be so fearful when you walked in the room. You never did anything to make me feel fearful, you were always friendly, but I always thought, 'she's here to judge me,' whatever." ...[B]ut in contrast ...Ann ...was like, "Oh, I'm looking for someone to teach me how to do this!" *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

I think one of the things that has given them (Ann and Sarah) little tastes of nourishment has been seeing progress. Seeing changes happening in the program, both administrative support and little incremental changes in planning time...better processes of interviewing and getting new co-workers, who at least seem to have a sense that they care about this enough, even though they might not have the experience and the know how, they care about it enough that we can be on this journey together...You need this combination of being a big picture vision

³⁵ MC3 denotes "Margie 3," an abbreviation for referencing this interview.

thinker, and a systems thinker, and then incredible attention to detail... *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

I think that the role that I've helped play at Hilltop is to help keep those dreams alive, to be tangible and supportive. And that's what the big message of *The Visionary Director* book is. First of all, the whole notion that you need to be working with a vision, not a rule-book. It's a radical concept for a lot of people. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

Research has to, it seems to me, be actively engaged with what's going on in the trenches. What happens to lab schools is...they just get removed from the real world of what being in a real classroom of kids and all of what that means, and it's rarified and removed...Eleanor Duckworth does, on the east coast of the U.S., does a teacher collaborative thing. There's a book that came out of their teacher's collaborative. They came together once a month or something. And there's Karen Gallas and her work.

I think it's contagious for a lot of people. I don't think we'll get everybody there, and I think a lot of it is what they come with already, and what they get surrounded by, that cultivates growth. But I think you always find enough people to keep it moving, and to keep growing people. At Hilltop, M. is wonderful, she's really on board, she's a really good thinker. What she wrote in Sarah's peer evaluation was... all the things she's learned from Sarah, and...she talks about her relationship with children and her vision and so forth...and she said, "Sarah has set up an organizational system that has allowed me to thrive and bring out skills that I, in fact, can contribute, that I could never contribute before... She's created a system that I could never myself have envisioned or created, but I totally benefited from it, and it enabled me to make a contribution I didn't even know I could."...*Theme: Collaboration (blue). *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

My thinking is that you have to keep having some little sense of progress, and you have to keep having, in a very concrete way, the kind of support in whatever form it comes in, that keeps challenging you to push for the next thing. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green). With Sarah, one of my roles over the years has been is to try to get her to really look as hard and carefully at her co-workers for their strengths and whatever as she does in children. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). Even though they do it very differently...I mean, in my own personal history I've gone through this where I always had a lot more energy than the people around me, and somebody around me would come up with an idea and I'd say "Let's go!" By tomorrow I'd done ten of the things that needed to be done. I intimidated and overwhelmed and alienated so many people that way.

I've been thinking in terms of our conversations about the role of the Institute at Hilltop. Of course, its stated intent is to make a contribution to the wider early childhood community by offering classes and training and so forth,

but all along my vision about it is that it would also be an internal staff development process, in that, whenever you have to teach someone else what you know, your own learning deepens. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo) ... I talked about it, but the way most of our meetings and planning and focus around developing the Institute was around what it could do for other people, as well as the revenue it could bring, and those kinds of things. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

Constantly, in my own mind, I kept trying to think about who else on the staff was ready to come into this arena because of their own development...at a place where they're ready to consolidate their learning and understanding, and jump to a new level *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).... It's something that I would say, in a general way, and in fact, Ann actively practices this with kids - I don't know whether Sarah does - but when they draw a project to a close, Ann always builds in an element of how they're going to teach what they've learned to someone else. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red). Sometimes it's that they'll make a book about it, sometimes...the whole project around balance and the Kapla blocks, it was specifically focused on that idea that we're going to figure out how we've learned to build with these Kapla blocks and teach it to other people, but really her underlying thing was that it was a mechanism to consolidate their learning, to sort of scaffold them to the next place. *Theme: Teacher as Researcher (turquoise).

And so that's something that I've been operating with, just in terms of the role of the Institute and teaching for the staff...I'm not as conversant about that as I am about the other areas, just because I don't want people to be terribly self-conscious. It's not like I'm trying to hide it, but I'll just say, "You're ready to do this, and when you do, you'll find that it not only will make you a better workshop leader, but it's going to make you a better teacher with the kids." So I'll say things like that, but I think that's been another factor that's contributed to the staff development...the reflection process even of designing, of having to look at...that's the process I took them through...Can you identify some milestones in terms of ideas that have begun to shift your thinking about things? Is there any common sequence among the five of us at this table? *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

We found ourselves asking, "Now, how would we sequence those into classes, and what learning strategies would support people, not just telling them the ideas, but how could we create a little taste of that same experience for people in the workshop?" That's what I think - when you have to teach someone else something, at the adult level...it's true at the kid level. If you're sophisticated...you have to do tremendous self reflection if you're really trying to do it in a constructivist way, trying to figure out what...would help provide something equivalent for this person that I've gone through...

Part of this thing I try to do is to get people to identify just where they are in their instinctive responses to things, to fill out a scenario and say, “Which of these four ways would you instinctively respond to ___,” and then examine, “Are you pleased with that? Is that something you like? Is that something you want to continue to cultivate and make more intentional, or is it something you don’t like and you don’t think it’s actually very useful and you want to counter it?” See it and name it. I think that’s a really important piece of what we all have to do, certainly with teaching, but you have to do it in your life, it seems...to recognize, “What’s my instinct, or intuition, or my urge in this given situation?” You have to have the motivation to want to know about it, so in teaching, it’s if things are not going well, and you’re trying to figure out what would make them go better. Or...if you’re in a relationship, if you’re seriously trying, instead of just blaming the other person, if you’re really trying to find out “What’s my role in this situation?” *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

I do believe that people really want to live a life that is in relationship, and making a contribution, and self-worth, and I think there’s so little in our overall culture and supports, there are so many things that take you away from that, and destroy your sense of self about all of that so quickly. *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink). I’m reminded of thoughts like one I heard from a Mexican American man, who said, “When my parents came to this country from Mexico, they came, and the work that they did was not for their children, but for their grandchildren.” That’s what they had their eye on. And there are other proverbs that you hear, like the Japanese one about, “Thinking a thousand years from now,” and the First Nations one about, “Seven generations from now, thinking about the implications of what I’m doing for seven generations ahead.”

More and more I’m going outside of the early childhood profession to find ideas that are going to help us with staff development. I think we’re way too stuck and focused on teaching teachers, “dumbing” them down, teaching teachers how to follow the rules, how to do these simplistic things. Certainly, there is an articulated principle about showing what’s best, and building from people’s strengths, and all that kind of thing, but I think there’s no bigger vision about this work that is articulated constantly. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

It would be neat to have a side-by-side look at Italian culture and school systems that isn’t shaped by some of the things, some of the political values and experiences and ideals that Reggio is. I mean, Reggio sprang out of a particular context, and was pretty condemning and dissatisfied with the overall Italian education system. There’s likely a really common thread about family life, about valuing children, and all of that, but then, how that gets translated into what the schools look like, and that kind of thing...or doesn’t get translated. That would be an interesting study. We’re continually trying to compare ourselves to Reggio, and the Italians, and making generalizations about ‘the Italians,’ and I keep trying to correct myself and say, “the Italians of Reggio Emilia....”

One of the questions you've asked is how I was first exposed to Reggio, or how I thought about it. For me, it's a powerful cultural critique of where we are in the U.S...And also, it's a powerful model for what a determined, inspired, thoughtful group of people can do. I mean, apart from any of the particulars, those bigger ideas about the things they hold as values, and the way they have set political support for that, is an incredible critique of what we don't do in this country. It's so valuable to say there is another way...[W]hat's that word...ethnocentric? The idea that we think we're just the best in the world and we don't have anything to learn from anybody. It's not "other" aware. You still think you're better than and superior than anyone else, because you're the most developed country in the world...

I think that's what brought me to tears. Some place is doing all these things that I dream about and they're not just doing it in some alternative, backwards place. They're not just doing it by removing themselves from the world, they're out in 'the marketplace.' That's just such a beacon of hope...***Theme: Resonance (brown)**

I think we're so contradictory in so many ways. On the one hand, we have this superior arrogance, and on the other hand, there's a mentality of hopelessness and helplessness, and, "They won't let me," or, "It can't be done." It's kind of interesting how those two intersect. It's a big generalization, I don't mean to be over generalizing...interesting the cultural mentality that, you know, this is the "can do" nation, it's done everything, and destroyed everything in the past that's been in its way, and yet it's crippled a lot of our mentality about things...

...I don't know that much about Italian culture, but I have the impression that there's a vitality there that people aren't 'numbed' out due to despair or whatever, as they are here, even though they've been through incredible Fascism and war and things that we haven't been through in this country. D. was asking somebody we were working with recently in Ohio if she thought it was worth it to go back to Reggio a second time. She said, "Did you learn things a second time?" She said, "Oh, I learned entirely different things, and I'm ready to go again next time." I'm stunned to hear that people are on their sixth and eighth trip. Wow. Part of me is like, "Go to Chicago Commons instead." How about studying in as much detail the U.S. effort to translate these ideas?

Conversations with Margie (MC4)³⁶

We thought if we got the technology for everybody at Hilltop...we could level the playing field a little bit. It didn't pan out that way. I think for people who are eager to learn technology, and are at ease with that, it's a fabulous tool. I haven't yet figured out yet how to do the technology with recording and voice recognition software, and stuff like that. But even the preliminary things, like moving from a regular camera to a digital camera, is a huge leap, because the

³⁶ MC4 denotes "Margie 4," an abbreviation for referencing this interview.

typical childcare program doesn't have the budget for all the film. I was helping people get creative ideas for how to do that, like, when you enroll your child, you bring three rolls of film. We were trying to get some systems like that, but then you need a system for getting them developed in a timely way. You know how that goes, one out of five photos is really useful, and to get decent quality pictures you have to pay a lot more for a camera, and so forth. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

I think digital cameras are fabulous. Laptops are fabulous, particularly in childcare, because people can sit in the nap room and still supervise, and more and more they can use it with the kids being right there. That's cool, with kids watching and being part of the process. And then scanners, so you can scan kids' work in. To me, I would go for those three pieces, the digital camera, the scanner, and the computer with a printer, before I would go for a video camera. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

I think it feels daunting to people, especially if they feel like they have to do transcription. Really, the way I talk about using a tape-recorder is learning when it would be really good to have a tape-recorder as a back up tool that you're using, not with the intent of transcribing it, but with the intent of hearing it as you revisit your notes to see if, in fact, there are things that you missed or things that you didn't understand. That sort of takes the overwhelming feel about transcribing away. So that helps. I still don't know too many people who do use the tape-recorder for even that purpose, because just finding the time to do all that is hard. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red). *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue). *Theme: Time Limits (gold).

I've been moving back and forth between helping people learn how to get enough even anecdotal notes to go with the pictures, the relationship between the picture and your notes, and how neither are a substitute for the other. You have to learn to see things more visually. It's been really a learning process for me, to learn to see what's happening simultaneously, to see it without anything else, almost like you're deaf, but then to also hear all the other parts, and sort of getting the rhythm of how you do that, and then how you get it recorded somehow. I spend time with people just working on the mechanics of that before we even get to any other technology, other than the camera. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red). *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum).

Then there's a whole other category of people who take lots of pictures, they take lots of notes, but then they haven't a clue what to do with them. Ann even talks about that for herself in the early stages. "I gathered lots of documentation because I knew that's what you were supposed to do, but I really didn't know how to make use of it. It was interesting, and I liked posting it and sharing it, but I didn't know what to do with it beyond..." *Theme: Documentation Overall (red). *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum).

I do talk with people about the difference between captions and a story, how the story is in the details. There's a lot of all of that in our book, Art of Awareness (Curtis & Carter, 2000). And then, how to use the combination, we do little writing exercises which are also in Art of Awareness, some combination of getting the verbal description with the picture, and how to increasingly find the story in both that you want to tell, in what you want to point out. People are just at all different levels. So now, the dilemma is, do you try help them figure out how to lay this out in a Word [processing] document, in a little paper form, or do you try to help them do a panel display out of it? For different ones, different ways feel daunting, or a little easier. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red). *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

I get the value of getting documentation on e-mail to a parent, and I know some parents wish we did that. However, I don't think it builds community. Really, it's more work for the individual teachers, and it doesn't build community. I think it would be nice to occasionally send some things on e-mail, but I really think that, and Ann's been, in a growing way, training her parents to read about other kids that aren't just theirs. To learn about childcare and learn about the friends your child has and so forth. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

Videotaping is a whole other piece of this documentation process that is about as daunting...daunting isn't quite the word I mean, but it's about as complex to figure out how to use it as transcribing from the tape recorder, in the sense of you can videotape for a half hour, and you can get all sorts of strategies to do that, you can put the camera on a tripod and point it, you're not going to get very good footage that way, you can try to use it like you do a still camera, but then you have to go back and find those little snippets. I've come to think that maybe the best use for a video camera for a classroom teacher is for using it back with the kids, rather than, or for analyzing something on the spot. You see, I use it for staff development, but it probably took me four or five years to get good at knowing what was worth videotaping. ... *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

I got a letter from E.H., announcing that their program was now going to be open for study tours. What I cracked up about was that in their description of the staff, they had a "*technological-ista*." ...I went to a couple of people who'd been to Reggio recently and asked, "Are the Italians now using this term? Do they have this position? Did she just "Italianize" the term?" How fabulous to have that, and it's definitely a role that we need, because there's always going to be something that goes wrong, and there's always going to be new technology coming out that'll be useful for you, and there's always going to be a desire to do something with this technology..That kind of position could be shared by a number of programs, like the position of *atelierista* or *pedagogista* could be shared by a number of programs... *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

I was at Chicago Commons one time, and the *pedagogista* and two classroom teachers ... were in the studio sitting around this small, child-sized table, with a bunch of photographs, and they had some empty display boards and they had some text, and they were sitting there talking about it together. And I thought, gee, isn't this exactly what you want to have happen? How fabulous. The director is showing me around there, and the director stopped and asked them to tell about it...[T]hey were trying to analyse the documentation and figure out what the primary message that they want to communicate out of it is. Having to talk to the director for a minute about it clarified some thoughts...So that added that perspective of somebody who doesn't know anything about this. And then, this kid running down the hall, sees her adult friends in the studio, and says, "What are you doing?" and they involve her in it. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

I thought, I wished, "I could be videotaping this." This is like your dream of what you would hope would happen, but in fact it was somewhat serendipitous that the different pieces came together the way that they did. They were trying to choose which pictures...they had a lot more pictures than would make sense to use, so that one of their discussions was, "Which of these pictures best tells the story?" So, the question was, "Should the picture be a further illustration of what you're describing in the text? Or, should the picture, in fact, tell other things about the story that isn't in the text, and if you really value the visual arts, you don't have to back them up with text, they tell their own story." *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green). [T]hey showed the child these three pictures and said, "What do you think is happening here?" It was a brilliant way to get some more information about what the picture was and the story for someone else. *Theme: Collaboration (blue).

I think technology can be a valuable tool, but again, as with all of this, it takes some forethought and planning. I mean, when we got these laptops and cameras for Hilltop, the first thing we had to do was build a system that would get them, the batteries, charged in some regular way, and would keep them locked up and safe, because things walk away on the weekends there a lot. We had to create a procedure that they are always locked up, put back in the cabinet and put on the charger before you go home. They lost some cell phones, and things like that. A lot of programs do, without having those systems in place, just sort of assuming people had common sense around it. Here, you've got a bunch of kids you're taking care of, and if something comes up, and it slips your mind, and there isn't really a system, you just sort of think, "I really should get this back to the office." So that was really a big deal. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

We tried having some parent volunteers train the staff on how to use the stuff, and that didn't go too well. That was sort of orientation on using the stuff, the tools. They tried doing a group orientation on how to use the cameras. Some of the teachers already had a knack with it themselves, and they helped to show other people. When we got to the laptops, they really had to hire somebody, and

they asked everybody to sign up with the trainer, so there had to be a budget for that. That's part of the training that you need. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue). And then somebody to trouble shoot. Hilltop has an affluent "dot.com" parent population that they can turn to. Even then, finding time to draw on their expertise was tricky. *Theme: Time Limits (gold)

I love now going in there and seeing people have the laptops and are using them - more than only Ann and Sarah - using them during nap time, or in fact, taking them downstairs during their break or during their planning time, and actually using them ...Certainly you see people taking the pictures and that kind of thing. That's a huge step. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue). The next step is, yeah, you can get some of that out there in the plastic sleeves (on the documentation/curriculum board), but be sure you bring it to your team meeting and talk about it. Pick and choose one or two to share. *Theme: Collaboration (blue). Getting a system whereby it's clear that every kid is having some experience of being documented in a regular way. That's a whole system to figure out in and of itself. That's the kind of stuff that Sarah is just brilliant at figuring out. She makes graphs and charts, she's just phenomenal at how she figures that stuff out. *Theme: Whose Stories Are Told? (pale blue). *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

I was trained as an elementary school teacher, so I have a B.Sc. in elementary education with a major in child psychology...I taught for a total of about seven years, mostly kindergarten and first grade, one year I taught second grade. I had a baby and was horrified by the state of childcare...Even when I was in kindergarten, I felt like I wanted to be with kids younger. By the time they were in kindergarten they were already feeling bad about themselves, and not seeing themselves as learners. So, I was interested in early childhood, anyway, and as a result of having a child and not finding childcare that I felt I would conscientiously leave my son in, I started a parent co-op, which went on to be a pretty big model in our town at the time. That, again, was all sort of volunteer work.

I had lived in Asia for three years, just before having this baby. It was at the tail end of the Vietnam War. What I was doing professionally was working on a project at the University of Michigan...We had a political agenda, but it was a federally funded...community education project. The goal was to countertype these stereotypes that were being fed to people through the Vietnam War effort.

I had been through the years as an elementary school teacher on all those committees where you write curriculum, or assess this or that, and the pressure...was not nearly what it is today around all those issues. So I had experience working with curriculum development and stuff. I worked on that simultaneously for three or four years while developing this parent co-op. I was really into what I was doing for my job, but my heart was really in this early

childhood piece, and my job wasn't focusing on early childhood, it was focusing on elementary, [Grades] K-12, basically.

Then I just burned out on everything. There were personal things happening...we lost the funding for this project, so I cleaned houses for two years. That was wonderful, because I could really focus on this childcare co-op full time, and still have enough money to get by. In those days you didn't need a lot of money to live, and I was living in a group household, doing a lot of political work, and wasn't really caring about a career.

When I moved out here (to Seattle), I right away got a job as a childcare director, and I did that for seven years. At that point I really got involved with a lot of the sort of professional things going on, like accreditation. NAEYC accreditation as it was being developed, and stuff like that. I helped co-found a childcare directors association. And then my next job was as a training coordinator at a resource and referral center.

I started getting my master's from Pacific Oaks. In there I started with the High Scope training of trainers, too, that I talked about earlier. That, I think, is what made me decide that I wanted to do more specific adult education around early childhood, as opposed to administering programs. It wasn't nearly as hard when I was doing it as it is now. The staffing crisis hadn't quite hit the same way, it was just creeping up there...At the time I was just clarifying my focus and what I wanted to do. It cost so much money to go to Pacific Oaks and get your master's. I felt I needed to be pretty clear in my mind what I wanted to do if I was going to make that investment.

Still, I've never been a career-oriented person or had career aspirations. It's mostly been where is my heart taking me, and where I see a place where I could be useful, as opposed to what's my next career step kind of thing. I am just a really privileged person, things just sort of fall in my lap. When I left that childcare job...I was just so burned out, and I hadn't a clue what I was going to do next, and it was really scary to leave that, and the income. I think I didn't really have my boxes unloaded from the car before I started getting offered jobs, so I'm just so fortunate.

We started this program...I got this other part-time job. It was this program that was at one of our technical colleges or community colleges, part of this system that's unique to Seattle, where you go and be an onsite trainer or field instructor, so I started doing that. Then this huge city grant hired lots more people to do that. A lot of people got quickly hired to do that work, and none of us knew what we were doing. It wasn't like college field supervision, it wasn't like directing a childcare program, you were in a different role...I just started saying, "We've got to talk about how to do this." We were all sort of floundering around in our thoughts.

I met D. somewhere in there, and she was doing this work, too. She and I would just sort of say, “We’re going to meet for breakfast Tuesday morning, who wants to come and talk about this with us?” And we started going to Pacific Oaks together. Betty Jones was still teaching at the time, with her focus on teaching adults. That just fueled us, and we just had the good fortune to catch her in her last years of teaching, and really were stirred up about all of this.

So then I got asked to teach a class, a college credit bearing class for all these instructors who were going to be these on-site trainers...When we sent out a flyer about this class, forty five people signed up, some of them people who weren’t even part of this program, who wanted to learn about teaching adults and doing on-site training. I recruited D., who wanted to learn about it, to co-teach it with me, and we started doing that.

[In] the early, early years of Childcare Information Exchange...I was so grateful for their publication when it was in its earlier, almost mimeographed state. I called them up and thanked them, on the phone, and said, “I’d be drowning if it wasn’t for these really good articles.” They were a little “mom and pop” business at the time. Through that connection they then recruited me to write a regular column, and I spent one year where I’d meet with them regularly to strategize about what was going to be in the magazine, and stuff like that. Totally serendipitously, because I happened to call them and thank them for the magazine.

That job of writing for Childcare Information Exchange, and then, co-teaching this class with Deb...Betty Jones actually extracted a piece of my thesis in that chapter in *Growing Teachers* (Jones, 1993). That gave me a little bit of visibility. Redleaf came to me. I never had this idea of writing a book or anything like that. I kept getting asked to do things, you know, like, “Would you write a manual for the trainers,” and I produced that video for High Scope...I would come up with, “Well, what’s really needed here?” and the response was, “Well, why don’t you do that? We’d fund you to do that,” or “We’ve come up with this idea, and people suggested you do it.”

I’ve been just so fortunate. Redleaf asked me if I’d be interested in doing this book. I was finished my master’s thesis a year before Deb, and they asked me if I’d be interested in writing this book. They asked, “Do you belong to Exchange? Are you on a contract?” and I said, “No.” “We’re just starting to publish our own books and our editorial staff met, and the first book that we want to publish is about adult education and everybody wanted you to do it.” I was like, well, how do they know who I am? I felt very insecure about it. *Theme: *Being a Writer* (green).

So I, again, recruited Deb, and I said, “Deb, you’re about to write your thesis – why don’t we make you grow your thesis into part of this, because you know I’m going to pick your brain the whole time about this book, anyways.”

That really started our partnership. For her thesis, she had a big fight with Betty Jones, who said, “Your thesis can’t be written with someone else. You have to write it by yourself.” And we responded, “Well, that’s kind of counter to what Pacific Oaks stands for. You talk about collaboration. We have very clear roles. We can’t identify whose ideas are what very clearly,” and that kind of thing. So what we ended up doing was...Deb submitted our Training Teachers (Curtis & Carter, 1994) as her thesis, but it had to have an addendum describing our collaborative process of writing a book...I didn’t have anything to do with it. She just showed it to me at the end...

I think the work of writing for Childcare Information Exchange was really useful for me, to force me every month to be thinking through issues, the idea of “consolidating your thinking and being ready to teach it to somebody else.” In some ways, that’s how each of Deb’s and my books has proceeded. It’s like, we’ve been doing training, we’ve been teaching a class on observing now for about five years, and doing a lot of workshops on that. We’ve learned a lot. If we take time to stop and write a book about it, we’ll figure out some more things.

*Theme: Being a Writer (green).

Spreading the News (Carter & Curtis, 1996) was the exception. It was hastily done and put out because everywhere we traveled and took display panels, people took pictures, which was fine, but it just alerted us to the fact that people need this resource, so we quickly put it out. We actually had to spend our own money to do the color in that book. Redleaf wasn’t doing that at the time, but it felt worth it. Except for that book, all of our other books are really the result of having been teaching in some setting or another, and thinking and talking for a number of years, and working with people on these ideas to the point where we feel this would make a good book, we’re getting enough feedback on it that it would make a good book. Simultaneously, our thinking now needs to go to a new level. If we take the time to write a book, it will. And every time we submit a book proposal, an outline of what the book would be about, the final product is significantly different because our thinking starts growing and changing in the process of writing it...*Theme: Being a Writer (green).

I’d say almost all the aspects of my work feed me, since getting away from the administrative piece. I’m a good administrator, and I’m good at a lot of those pieces. I can raise money and I know how to do administration, I’m organized and that kind of thing. Whenever you’re that way, even if you go sit on a community committee, they very quickly give you the administrative tasks.

It was a big decision not to do that, and to just focus on the teaching part. Now I’m not doing many college classes any more, I maybe do two a year, three a year at the most, because my travel schedule is just so wicked. There are some really less than satisfying things about the travel, because you don’t have ongoing relationships with people. We have a few contracts where we go back over the course of a few years and that kind of thing, but you don’t have ongoing

relationships, you don't see the fruits of what you're doing, really. *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink). But the benefits of it are that you get out of your own little corner of the world, and you really see what's going on in different places, and you try out whether these ideas are sort of culturally bound or more universally appealing. And it gives me hope to keep meeting fabulous people who are working their butts off on behalf of children and families. Some of them continue to do things that I've done in my past, that I don't have the energy or drive to do any more, and I'm so grateful that they're willing to do it, whether it's work on policy issues and drive them with legislators or lobbyists or whether it's staff a childcare program or any of those things. Trying to invent a new system for funding the childcare system, a new proposal for that. My energy is in raising hell about it right now...

The combination of raising the issue of worthy wages and compensation and working conditions for teachers every where, no matter what people ask us to do, that's integrated in what we talk about. No matter what people ask us to do, we integrate an anti-bias perspective about it. It's interesting. In some ways, we're not like, specialists in anything, we're pretty general in a lot of ways. One time I got this call...from this project in Minnesota, in the days when U.S. government was funding projects related to violence...and they said, "You know, we've got this big federal grant and we're wanting to do this two year teacher education project on violence, on children and violence, and we'd like to involve you in this." I said, "Oh, you've got the wrong person, that's not my area of expertise at all. You want to call Dianne Levin." And they said, "We actually had a research team spend two months doing a literature review, and all this kind of thing, and three out of the four people came back with your name." And I'm like, "How could that be? I've like, maybe, written in Childcare Information Exchange, maybe two articles, but generically talked about this topic." But what their committee said was, the particular approach I took to it was much more holistic, it wasn't just about teaching conflict resolution skills to children, helping children use their words. I talked about creating life-affirming environments as part of our non-violent curriculum, and you know, those kinds of things. *Theme: Social Justice (tan).

Being this generalist makes me feel like sometimes like I'm not a scholar, I'm not an academic, and I'm not highly disciplined in a particular field...In no way do I have a background that has me specialize in infants and toddlers. I have the same philosophy and approach to them that I do to anything else, whether it's children or adults, and I know generally about their development. I mean, I'm generally aware of even all the brain research thing, although I haven't delved in and done a lot of study, I know the big picture about it all, and some of the particulars.

And yet, I ended up, serendipitously making this video about toddlers...I was consulting with a program, I was the trainer, and then...they didn't have enough low-income kids, so they hired me as their ongoing consultant. This is a

program that's not too far from Hilltop. It's a similar parent population of white middle class. They have infants through preschool, and in their toddler room they had just terrific turnover all the time, so the director was always hiring me to come back. She didn't know much about toddlers, her background wasn't in infants and toddlers. She was always hiring me to come back and orient the staff, and coach, "Would you work for two months with this teacher," or, "I have this teacher I might have to let go, can I pay you to do that?"

At one point she had a mom who was a television producer, a single mom. She had just split up from her husband and got a divorce, and she came to her in tears saying, "I'm going to have to, I'm not going to be able to pay for my childcare, and I don't know what I'm going to do, I'm going to be a single mom." And the director said, "How about if we do a trade? I'll give you three free months of childcare while you get on your feet, if you'll work with Margie and make a training video for our staff on toddlers. Then I won't have to keep hiring her, and we'll have this video."

This mom had a toddler in the toddler room, and she was kind of keen on this whole idea, because she wanted to see things improve in that room. I met with her...for twenty minutes, and I gave her a list of things to try to film the toddlers doing and the caregivers doing. I gave her a couple of articles, and I said, "When you're ready to edit and put it all together and you want my any more of my help, call me." About a month later she called and said, "I've got all the footage and more of the kids doing this, but I haven't been able getting much of the caregivers doing it. They're just not doing it those things." Well, that's why we need the video. So she said, "How about next time you come in, I just follow you around and we just have you do it?" Oh, okay, there's no plan, there's no script, there's no anything. She follows me around for, I don't know, an hour and a half, two hours, while I'm there.

Then the kids are going outside, when they're outside it's kind of quiet in the room, and she says, "Could I just interview you?" She puts the microphone in my face and says, "Talk to me about toddlers." There was no specific focus, specific questions, so I just sort of talked about things that happened that day. I don't see this woman for another month, and then she calls me up and says, "I've finished the video, I'd like you to have a look at it." I was blown out of the water. She's like a television producer, and she made this phenomenal video that, had it been planned and scripted, it wouldn't have turned out so good, except maybe I would have been more articulate about particular things, but it was totally off the cuff...

I asked the director if she would be willing to let me use it outside of her program, and she said, "Oh, sure, no big deal." At first I shopped it around locally to the trainer group, and the public health nurses, and the people who focus on infants and toddlers, because I said, "Is there anything I'm missing here? This is not my area of expertise." And they were all, like, "Where can I get a

copy?” So I sent it to Jim Greenman and to Pacific Oaks. I was trying to get Magda Gerber to look at it, I mean, I was trying to get some input because I was little insecure. I didn’t want this thing out there in the world as a training tool if a big piece is missing, or if there are things that should be done differently. So Jim calls me up and says, “I’ve made my own video about toddlers, and I’m throwing it out, we’re going to use this one. We need to get this nationally distributed right away.”

And I’m just sort of baffled by all of this. It’s just not my level of expertise. We had to go back...she had just moonlighted all the music and everything...we had to go back and pay the copyright royalties and all that kind of stuff, write up a legal agreement. It was going to be this little in-house kind of thing, and now it’s used in colleges all over the country, and several other countries, and it just blows my mind. And so now I’m called all the time to do key-notes on infants and toddlers, and I keep saying, “I’m not an expert in this field!”..I mean, I can talk generically about it, but it’s not something I’ve really studied.

I am a big picture person. I think I try to integrate...I try to put everything in a context for where we’ve been, for the vision I have, or the vision I hope you have...I try to be “Janie Appleseed” and bring stories that I’ve either seen or witnessed or people have told me that are pertinent examples...I’m really passionate about what I do, and willing to take risks, and criticize things that I don’t agree with, even though they’re the trend...

I stay very connected to the real world of childcare. I am in childcare programs all the time, every week. Not just visiting, but trying to coach teachers and work with teachers, and work with directors and administrators. Hilltop is one that I have a really long history with, but there are others that I’m in and out of over time, either on a short term basis, like the place I made the toddler video...I’m not off in some academic place, removed from this, I’m not like this idealist about Reggio and everybody should be doing Reggio. I’m sort of like in the trenches with people...

So when I go sit on a state committee about some new scheme they’re come up with, STARS training or some new thing that they think is going to improve quality childcare, I’m often the only person...who’s there speaking from that voice, “Let me tell what the teachers’ perspective on that is.”...[P]olicy makers are so far removed from the real life of what it’s about.

I wrestle all the time with how to use this privilege ethically. I mean, how to use it in terms of bringing the voices of people who aren’t privileged to get there, either because they’re teachers, or because of the color of their skin, or whatever. Also, with how to share my privilege to get them there, how to make...I don’t know if the word is requirements, but stipulations, that I’ll sit on this committee if I can bring a teacher to be a part of the committee, and you’ll pay for her substitute teacher if I come.

That's why Deb and I donate all this money to the Worthy Wage campaign from selling our books, or take fourteen people to Chicago Commons with us. It's like, somebody is paying us a thousand dollars on this day to do training, and the teachers we're training are making six or seven bucks an hour. That's totally unethical. I really wrestle with it. I feel like, in some ways, that it's unethical that they're even spending that much money for one day on a trainer. For a long time, Deb and I wrestled with what to charge and how to charge, and how dare they allot their budget that way, why don't they just give their teachers a raise? ...I'm trying to walk an ethical line about it all the time, and not ever fool myself about it. That's tricky, because you can get to...when people think you're an expert about something, you can - I've watched people do that - you can get a distorted perspective on yourself, on what your work is and what you should be doing. I think staying in programs all the time really keeps me ethical, keeps me grounded, keeps me learning all the time.

I studied Paolo Freire for political reasons. As a community organizer I was interested in his work. I was in study groups, never in a formal educational setting, but I formed study groups, because his books are stiff reading, to try to discuss and read and talk and visit and let's do it again next year, and just keep coming back, which I see as very compatible with the Reggio process. I actually went up and asked, when I was in Reggio, "Did you all work with Paolo Freire before he died? There's a lot that you talk about and say that is so much like my study."

But it's also very similar, with a whole different professional discourse, to constructivism, to what I understand about constructivism. But the focus is empowerment, sort of political and cultural, community empowerment that, in a way, isn't how constructivists are talking about it, but it is about constructing your own knowledge and then taking action on it...

Of course, people are using Freire for empowerment purposes. But it is really this idea of trying to change the power structure and the system, and again, how do you use your...middle class and your white privilege in a way that is not just in behalf of people, but, in fact, moves things aside and makes room for those people to be there. I think that has given me a way of thinking about things a lot, both from the social change point of view and empowerment of view, but also from the constructionist point of view. *Theme: Social Justice (tan).

When I'm seeing a problem unfolding in a classroom with teachers, or I'm working in a seminar, or I'm working with directors, one of the strengths that I offer is an ability to reframe what they're saying, another way of thinking about it, or connecting it to a set of ideas and values and understandings that I have, and offering it back out. So...that's what I learned from Freire. I actually just last year read a critique of his work from a woman...One of this woman's criticisms of Freire was that he said, "people don't know how to reflect on their own experience, and that's your job to reframe it in a way, they don't know how to

analyze an experience,” and she thought that was really elitist and arrogant. She’s working in adult literacy, in community projects...that’s just really untrue, that they do know how to talk about it. It’s that we’re academic and we don’t understand what they’re saying.

I found it very provocative. I think some of what she’s saying is true. The other thing ... that I did a lot of soul searching about ... is that she says, “You know, Freire has this concept that the teacher is the learner and the learner is the teacher. I went around for a period of time asking teachers, ‘What have you learned from your students?’ and the only answers they gave me were what they learned *about* their students, about who their students were and what their experiences were, but they never talked in terms about how their students had changed their own thinking and influenced their own thinking.”... Yeah, we have to learn about our students, but if you say, “The student is the teacher, and the teacher is the student,” that really means that they are helping to shape your thinking...

It’s been that and some of the other anti-bias, cultural relevance work that I’ve done that has been my growing edge in recent years, just in terms of recognizing where you get blind spots, or where you think you know this and you think you’ve got this figured out, and then, there’s an incredible...collision with reality...But in general, I think that is a strength: I know how to reframe these things, or at least, put it back out for thinking about, reframe what someone has said, or feed it back to them...**Theme: Social Justice (tan).*

You pick up little seeds here and there, like, the concept of curiosity has definitely been one of the strong ones for me...It’s not only helped me offer that concept to other people, and been useful to them, but it’s really helped me keep learning and growing. ...

I think the other thing that comes into the documentation process is making choices and focusing, because in the documentation process you can’t capture all the pieces and tell the story of the whole big picture, that’s too much, that’s a thesis or something. So, the other discipline in there is figuring out what’s important here to focus on, and it’s been a really good challenge for me...**Theme: Documentation Overall (red).*

I studied some of the Reggio things to learn more about making that choice, and my thinking has begun to shift around it. I used to think you make those choices based on what you really think is going on for that person, and try to make that visible. That’s still at the heart of what I try to do, but starting to see your role, your passion, your interests, and just name it, to start to own up to your own curiosity, and make that okay as being something that helps you make choices about the documentation process...**Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum).*

I started to challenge Ann and Sarah a couple of years ago: “Your voice is missing in this documentation. What’s it making you think about, and where is it leading you? Think out loud, make your process visible.” It was a huge turning point and change in their documentation, and it’s a piece that we tried to include in The Art of Awareness (Curtis & Carter, 2000). *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum). I’m continually trying to be self aware and articulate that for myself, and own up to why, when I’m looking, when I’m doing an observation of Ann or Sarah or D. or whoever, why I chose to document the way that I did, both in terms of the text that I wrote and the particular photos that I got, and that kind of thing. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

...My bias is always to document ordinary things that...I think need to be seen for how extraordinary they are, whether it’s something a teacher’s doing or something a child’s doing... I have a display panel, a little one about a child, a toddler, standing at the door, waving goodbye to his father. It’s just a little one page Word document that I mounted on a black piece of board... It was just this story about when his dad left and he hugged him at the door, how he ran to the window and stood up on this little platform that they have in the window, and searched for his dad’s car, looked back and forth, and the beam that comes over his face when he sees his dad’s car come out of the parking lot waving goodbye. I just think that is extraordinary for an eighteen month old, what that tells you about cognition and development and awareness...and the role of ritual. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

We talked about needing to have an environment in place, and your disposition to think of your job being observing children and capturing these unfolding stories, and the structure that you need to support all that. I think it’s really important to stress that documentation is a process, not just a noun, it’s a verb, not just a noun. It’s a way of thinking that’s backed up, it’s a way of thinking and seeing and hearing that is backed up by a set of tools to help you do that. It’s helpful to have a particular curiosity or question in mind, in a lot of cases, the teacher as researcher kind of idea... *Theme: Documentation Overall (red)

I think when people are first learning to observe and document, they tend to fall into a couple of pitfalls. They think their job is to make sure that they write down things that this kid does every day...It’s not with any bigger picture in mind. And most often it’s about assessing them...I try to cultivate for people the idea that documentation is to help you discover things you don’t know, and to help you get better at believing that childhood is a profound time of life that has to be preserved, and to get better at articulating why that is...So that’s often how I come in, as a starting point, because right now, the trend is so much about documentation to assess, that I feel that I have to unseat that before I can proceed with anything else. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

I've just started reading that chapter on documentation as assessment in Making Learning Visible (Giudici, Krechevsky, & Rinaldi, 2001). I'm thinking that Carlina Rinaldi probably has used that language now because of the Americans. You know how they say, "Ah, the American question."...

The other thing that is somewhat popular...is how to use your observations to do emergent curriculum. *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet). So again, it's the idea of how do you use your observations...and I say, "Well, there's a lot of ways you can use your observations, and there's a lot of talking that we can do about that, but there's some stuff that comes way before that." Why are we even doing it, what's our role, and all of that. That's always the bigger piece that I try to focus on. And then, what are the tools, and then what are the uses of it. I think sometimes people are...disappointed...that they didn't get more "how tos," they didn't get a better recipe for how to do it. So, I'm trying to be more explicit that: "I'm going to first, try to work on your disposition and your sense of what this is really all about, no matter what your school district or your program requires you to do..." That's sort of one of the unpopular stands that I feel like I'm taking now.

I think being an observant, mindful, aware person, noticing details, taking time to notice details and to be in the moment, which is really hard to do...so whether it's that they're an artist and they're working on details, or whether they're picking yoga and they're working on it in that arena...It's why in book, The Art of Awareness (Curtis & Carter, 2000) we have all these activities to focus on things that aren't about kids, that you're cultivating it in your life.

I think there are some people who are teachers who come either more intuitively, or out of some kind of discipline or practice in their life to cultivate that work. Being aware and being able to notice the details and being able to shift perspectives is another really big one, so they're not only seeing it from their own perspective, they're able to seek and find the child's perspective or the conflict between the children's perspectives, both their perspectives about what they're trying to accomplish and do, and the way they're thinking about it, and a lot of the things that are yet unnamed and probably unconscious in young children.

Sarah told me a story. One of the parents that she asked to contribute to her evaluation asked her child, "What do you think Sarah's good at?"... You know, there's nothing in our culture that tells us to seek the child's perspective about anything. Being able to shift perspectives and take the child's perspective is definitely something.

Self-reflection...I think a disposition to take apart and unravel and identify the different layers or the different elements that come together...Both things need to happen, picking it apart and putting it together. It's part of the reflection process...*Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua).

I'm trying to think what I would say about this business of collaboration. It's part of taking another's perspective, this wanting to know how other adults also see this situation, and what they would bring to it. To think in terms of values a lot, to be moving through the world, consciously, trying to think in terms of the values you want to live with and be promoting. I just don't hear us talking about that in the early childhood field, and I think it shapes a lot of things, but it's a huge reason why we document, you know, I think. And it shapes the choices we make around documentation, and what you do with the documentation.
*Theme: Collaboration (blue). *Theme: Values (dark green).

I was talking with A. yesterday. She's got a good visual eye, and I was talking with her about this documentation display that she had put up. I said to her, "You know, you've got so much here, it's just amazing what you were able to figure out how to put on this display board without having it look cluttered and whatever. But what I'm missing is the details that you told me when you told me about this before it went on display..." I raised the question of, "What's most valuable to you here? What value is guiding you in your decision about whether you want to show the big picture of what happened, or whether you want to highlight the values, or whether you want to highlight the details?" *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum). *Theme: Mentorship (indigo). *Theme: Values (dark green). She was saying, "I don't want anybody to feel left out. I have these not quite three year olds, they always look for their own pictures, they're still kind of "me" centered, so I don't think, in this display, I don't want to leave anybody out." I said, "That is fine, you've got a very clear reason and a very clear value, and if you're using that documentation for those toddlers and for what you've just described, it makes perfect sense. ... I think you've really aligned your values and your purpose really well." *Theme: Whose Stories Are Told? (pale blue) *Theme: Values (dark green).

So, again, sort of, if you're thinking in terms of values, I think it helps you make choices about what you're doing and about what you're choosing to document, and what you're choosing to feature in the documentation. I think you, ideally, are documenting far more than you ever will display. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

I think Windows on Learning (Beneke, Harris-Helm, & Steinheimer, 1998) is an invaluable big picture look at a particular spin on how to do documentation, but John and I tried using it two years in a row in our Emergent Curriculum class, and most people didn't respond very positively to that book...It was just way too detailed and comprehensive around the particular way that they wanted it done.
*Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

Does pedagogical documentation act as a catalyst for change? Oh, I think so, definitely I think so...[T]he process of putting it together yourself, looking it over, provokes new thinking. I think showing it to other people is another thing that provokes new thinking, for yourself and for the person you're showing it to.

I think it produces a growing sense of competency for children, when they see documentation. *Theme: Change (teal).

When I think about it, like documenting adult work, it ... had a powerful impact [on Sarah]. It's not that it gave her more confidence or anything like that, but I don't even know how to describe what it did for her... What it did for M. was really different than that. It's taken in, depending on where people are in their own journey, it has a different meaning for people... But like anything, that word is going to be used to mean very different things.

That chapter in Growing Teachers (Jones, 1993), which is extracted from my thesis, is basically a self-reflection of how I tried to do this onsite training work. It wasn't a more rigorous academic work, it was more my own personal reflections, but in there, I was already, initially, getting the idea about documenting from Betty Jones, when she talks about creating 'master player' bulletin boards. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green). We had a really active correspondence at the time, and she came to Seattle off and on, and we'd always meet. She'd bring these little stories, like in The Play's the Thing (Jones & Reynolds, 1992) and Master Players (Reynolds & Jones, 1996), she'd bring these things and we'd talk about them, and then I started experimenting with writing them up and leaving them. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

This was long before I waded into Reggio, so this idea about making visible what children were doing, and particularly, their masterful play, was a track I was already on before ever really delving into anything about Reggio. I talk about, in that chapter, how that practice of doing staff documentation, of shifting from observing the teacher and giving her feedback to observing children and making that visible...

So Reggio was a nice fit around that for me, and it seemed, I mean, when I saw the *100 Languages of Children* exhibit before going to Reggio, I just cried, it was so stunning and so beautiful. It confirmed in me that this little, tiny thing I was trying to do had a whole other theoretical foundation... *Theme: Resonance (brown). Even though I was just sort of feeling my way with it, it was the right track to be on, in terms of what I thought was an expression of the values that I work with, as well as a powerful tool to use. You know, because I'm straddling a bunch of different worlds, advocacy being a big one, it took me a while to find a good balance between documenting for advocacy purposes. I mean, other people were documenting for professional purposes, which I think is somewhat what the Italians would say they're doing... *Theme: Advocacy (yellow).

But to keep doing something for the sake of doing it, not just for the influence it might have on other people, I think, is the challenge. Of course, we do want to have an influence on people, and that helps guide our choices and decisions, but it's sort of the Buddhist idea of doing it for itself. It's another way,

to me, in early childhood, we use this term, “the process is more important than the product,” for children, and it’s what we should be emphasizing all the time. I had to be careful that my focus, in learning to document or starting to use documentation, wasn’t on the product or the display, that it was this idea of the process that was so important. *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum). I had to have some actual experience, for myself and watching other people I was working with, have that experience of how powerful it is to just get that finally cemented center stage in my work.

Essentially, documentation is about describing a process, describing an unfolding and a process and...what’s the word? George [Forman] talks about how you move something to a learning encounter...and it may be only when you describe it that it becomes the encounter. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

To keep getting those different parts of the process visible, I think, is what’s important, getting the “what” visible, and then the “so what,” the reflections, the meaning that you’re making of it...Of course people make their own meaning, but I think it’s really useful for them to read the meaning that you’ve made of it as part of your documentation. And then there’s the “now what?” piece. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

Did you read the panel about baby Jesse and his eating? That’s actually my grandson. You know, the story about him is that he’s in the failure to thrive category for not eating and so forth, which hadn’t been quite officially diagnosed or labeled by his pediatrician until after that incident, but I’ve used that on overheads, just the sequence of the pictures and the story, and asked, not using the ‘What, so what, now what?’ format, but basically taking people through the process of, “What do you see happening here? What meaning are you making of it? What would you do next?”...It isn’t a scene from childcare, but I try to present it in seminars as a thing you come upon with a baby...“What’s happening here? So what? And the now what?”

As I said, I cried when I saw the *100 Languages* exhibit *Theme: Resonance (brown) and I think it’s sort of a North American thing of when you see something wonderful you want to take it and run with it, go with it. There’s...an element of some good things about that, you know, being motivated and excited and willing to put some energy into it, but there’s also the American instinct to appropriate everything, and all that kind of thing that I don’t want to be doing because I really want to be thoughtful about it...

When I think about elements of Reggio that are controversial, there are two areas where I’ve always been unsatisfied by the response that I’ve gotten, and other people have gotten, who have heard from the Reggio folks. That’s maybe the controversial piece that I want to talk about. One is about how much they actually just value play. I was in Reggio, when Deb and I were in Reggio, Gretchen Reynolds was there, and we spent many an hour ruminating on that question...

Most of the documentation that we saw was of projects, though certainly not exclusively, and it's just sort of assumed that there is a deep respect and value for play, because of their image of the child and philosophy and stuff, but I don't think it's given visibility in the documentation process the way that, say, Gretchen does in her work with her stories. That's not visual documentation, but about detailed descriptions, and transcriptions of conversations and stuff. I probed that question, Gretchen probed that question... It seems to be more cognitively focused, their documentation focus. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

At first I thought, "Well, there's more to childhood than cognitive development," and then obviously as you get deeper and deeper into it you see that there are layers and layers and layers of how they're making their image of the child visible. Certainly play is one of them, but I think that my intuitive interest, and having that reinforced by going to Pacific Oaks and associating with people like Betty [Jones] and Gretchen [Reynolds], and Vivian Paley's work, all make me long to see play valued, in their documentation process... *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

I tried to have a conversation with Vivian Paley when she was here keynoting our statewide conference. I volunteered to transport her around so I could pick her brains, and then we had a bit of a correspondence after that. She...didn't talk about it in terms of play, I think she talked about it more in terms of ...the children's stories and documentation ... *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

Not that there's a right or wrong or anything, I'm just curious about people whose work has influenced me, and who I really respect and value...So, that's one element...

The valuing of play was long an emphasis that we worked on, long before Reggio came on our horizon...I've worked to keep it alive, especially in the pressure cooker of focusing on readiness and academics and such. So that's one piece, and I can certainly find exceptions myself...I just saw the exhibit in Columbus, Ohio, before we went to Australia, and I saw one example that I thought, "You could read this documentation about play. It isn't how I would first interpret it, but I'm still going for it."

Something else that may fall in the controversial category, that I ask questions constantly about, over the years at NAEYC, those big Reggio seminar sessions, and when I was at Reggio, is about teacher education, and how you do teacher education. I have found their answers really unsatisfying. It's more about, "We throw them in there and they just learn how to do it, it's a way of life."

I certainly get the impression, from how they conduct their study tours and the seminars that I've seen them do at NAEYC, and at the Boulder institute that I've been to...that they don't approach adult pedagogy in the same way, at all, and yet they have these fantastic programs with profound teachers. I asked these questions

when I was at Pistoia (another city in Northern Italy) as well, because I just feel like I must have so much to learn from them about teacher education...I haven't been able to get anybody to articulate anything. And, my own experience of how they conduct the study tours, I find really disappointing and I find an amazing disconnect between what they do with the adults and what they're saying happens in their programs and that they believe in for the kids.

So, for instance, if I were to run the study tour, I would have an art studio during the study tour for the adults, or at least some art supplies, and I would have part of the time where we're using these materials to represent what we're understanding, or something about our experience. You know, something that is parallel, for the adults. I'm not just saying familiarize yourself with clay and learn how to use the principles of clay...but I'm just saying, pedagogically, to have the entire study tour focused on lectures and slides and the verbal linguistic stuff...I just find that an enormous contradiction....

I don't have the sense that they even wish they could do it differently. That's what I mean, to be able to say, "What we'd really like to do is this..." ...I just don't see it, I've never experienced it, I've never heard anybody talk about it.

We were on the study tour that was after the one that Carol Anne Wien was on...Evidently that one had been very controversial, and there had been a lot of discontent...Carol Anne ended up writing an incredibly thoughtful letter to Amelia and Carlina ...about what she thought were some of the roots of the discontent, and acknowledging that yes, you can be irritated and mad at these North Americans, they always ask stupid questions...but she offered some suggestions about what she thought some of the roots of the discontent were that ...could be addressed without any hardship on the part of the Italians. I don't know how often people try to give them feedback, or how often they take feedback seriously...but...in fact, they were doing some things differently on our study tour as a result of discussion they had about this letter.

I have great appreciation for how they're inundated and what it takes, and all that, and why they might want to be drawing some boundaries. But there's some ways in which I think they're just disrespectful. This other thought might fall under the other category of the controversial, is that this way of interacting and disrespect...the other thing that I just found incredibly disturbing, really disturbing, was that when I went to Boulder, I think it was two years ago, we took a Hilltop group, there was like a little clique, like the Italians and their 'groupies.' Their attitude, you know, I just found it appalling. I found it so elitist and in-groupish and cliquish. Just kind of dismissive of anything else...They spent one whole session, under the guise of talking about the history of the growing relationship between the Italians and the Americans around these ideas, sharing stories about their personal relationships...I just felt that it was really inappropriate...

I can get their point of view about a lot of it, but there's no excuse, from my point of view, about some of the elitist, in-group, rude behaviour and attitude that they have. And, to me, it reinforces this notion of them not thinking about adult pedagogy...

Is it that they don't yet know how to articulate it? Is it that they want to keep the reins on, and the focus on themselves? I don't know, I don't put a lot of time and energy into it, but it is definitely a controversial thing. I don't really go to those sessions any more at NAEYC, and I don't know that I could ever go back to Colorado...

I wanted to say one more thing about this multi-cultural piece, which is in the controversial category. I had a really interesting experience the first year I went to Italy. Deb and I were working in Germany, for the U.S. Army, for a couple of years with their child development programs...In that first year, I...took the train from Milan to Frankfurt to meet Deb, and we were going to do our work with the army...Who should I end up rooming with but a German woman who is going back to Germany who is studying to be an architect, who is the first German woman to ever do an internship at Reggio. Can you believe that? At first she kind of begged off, she didn't speak English – her English was fabulous – and we were up all night talking.

She was really, really cool, and it was only about three in the morning that she started expressing some of her concerns with how she felt like they weren't willing to look at some of the changes that were afoot in their own community that were going to change how things were. New immigrants, now, this is four or five years ago, the year before we actually went, some beginning signs of disintegration of the family structures, and there were several incidences where nobody came to pick up the kid at the end of the day, and...things that were just sort of unheard of. She kept trying to raise these issues, and ...they just dismissed her. She wasn't even raising it as a criticism, she was just saying, "Look at what's happening? How's this going to change things? What's this going to mean?" And they just brushed her off.

The place where she did have debates, and she wasn't taken seriously, she felt like she had, she felt like one of the shortcomings in their program was a lack of...attention to physical experiences, movement, physical education, that sort of thing. She thought it...just wasn't on their screen at all. She ... had a fair amount of knowledge about Waldorf schools, and was familiar with them from having had friends with children in the schools, and would, from time to time, raise things that she would see that she thought were really compatible with Steiner's work, ...and they would hotly debate her...She just thought that they had no interest in learning anything from her...

Lella Gandini actually requested to talk to Deb and me when K. had been telling her that she was getting to know us, and that we were going to be at the first study tour that they did at Chicago Commons...Lella was expressing some concerns

about our work to K., and so she said, “Why don’t we try to get you all together?”...The main thing that Lella had to say was, “You aren’t acknowledging the influence of Reggio in your work, you’re not giving us credit.”

This is before the Thinking Big video was made. I said to her, “The place where we’ve made the video (Hilltop Children’s Centre), along with the Chicago Commons program, is one of the most Reggio-inspired U.S. programs I’ve seen, one of the most vibrant interpretations that I’ve seen, that I know really well, that I think you’d feel really good about, and I’d love for you to be there, but they would never, *never* call themselves a Reggio program, never, that would be so presumptuous. Two of their teachers have been to Reggio, once. They’re very respectful of how, in order to even use that label, they would say, they would first need an affiliation with you, and a dialogue with you, and an ongoing relationship with you...”

And she said, “Well, I think the language that would be good to use...” I said, “Well, we’re in the process of making this new video. If you look through our work, you’ll see we often talk about, Deb and I in our work, often talk about inspiration from the teachers of Reggio Emilia, and there’s a couple of references in Setting Sail³⁷, and we’re making a new video. From your point of view, what would you like said?” She said, “Oh, I would just like it said up front that they take inspiration from Reggio.” I said, “I don’t think there would be any problems with that.” So that was curious. ...

Really at the heart of what I would say publicly, is just sort of, “What does teacher education look like?” and how their own conducting of study tours and so forth doesn’t have any of the elements for the adults that they’re promoting and trying to convey. It has only one “language,” and has some ethics of disrespect in it.



Margie

³⁷ *Setting Sail: An Emergent Curriculum Project*. Video produced by Margie. Filmed at Hilltop Children’s Center.

Appendix C: Conversations with Sarah

*Conversations with Sarah (SF1)*³⁸

I first learned about Reggio as an undergraduate in college...Seeing that [video] “Portrait of a Lion” video was my first exposure, as I’m sure it is for a lot of people. I had done some reading of articles about Reggio...[but] The Hundred Languages of Children book hadn’t been published yet.

In 1991 and 1992 I was still working in California, at Bing Nursery School, which is a lab school for Stanford University. I was working in the preschool in the morning, and with undergraduate students in the afternoon, as a teaching assistant for a child psychology class. I was there for four years, and I think my first or second year there, Rebecca New came to visit and show us some slides from Reggio ... and to talk about Reggio. This was around the time she published... “Particular Places...” That was a pretty early publication that sort of got the word out. I was just fascinated, completely sold by what she showed and had to say....

My co-teacher from that school and I, in the summer of ’93, went on a study tour to Reggio, funded by the school. They paid most of our way, or at least the registration fee for us, anyway. Going with a colleague was terrific, because we were able to be there together and then come back and have a shared understanding of what we’d seen, and what we wanted to focus on. On our return we chose to really get more conscious of documentation of what we were doing. That was a good ten years ago now. Wow.

That was my first introduction to Reggio. I was working at the time with a teacher for whom the emergent curriculum piece was natural. It was not for me, and we struggled tremendously...She really had an instinct to go with the flow of what kids were doing, and in spur of the moment ways, follow up with the teachable moment type interests, and in larger ways...And that was not comfortable for me at that time. I loved, I mean, I still love, structure and clarity, it felt crazy, it felt out of control...**Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet). *Theme: Being “Teacher-ly” (rose).*

Yeah, it actually felt scary. I was young, and didn’t feel very confident, and there were these moments where she would say, “I’ve got to take these five kids out of the room to go do some thing,” and I was panicky, you know, “You can’t just leave.” ...So that’s sort of how I found and clung on to documentation, because I was this sort of person who loved structure and order and clarity, but I kind of wanted to step into this world of uncertainty in following kids where they go, and adventuring with children, and documentation seemed to be maybe the major route...you can follow the kids where they’re going, and as long as you keep track of it, it gave me the veneer of control. “Okay, I’m writing down what we did, and then I can read it

³⁸ SF1 denotes “Sarah 1,” an abbreviation for referencing this interview.

later, and I can show families that we did this thing, and so I'm not just, you know, running around flying by the seat of my pants." *Theme: Being "Teacher-ly" (rose)

It was like evidence that okay, things were happening, even if the moment felt almost more spontaneous than I could handle...And, so, I think I've grown into the idea that the spontaneous happening transpires, you record it, and that record actually gives you some information towards what the next happening might be...But, then the next loop of the spiral feels much richer, you know you're going to take a strong teacher role again, but you know you're basing it on what you saw, so you're not as worried that you're grabbing control away from kids again. *Theme: Being "Teacher-ly" (rose).

It's still easy to fall into thinking of the documentation as the end point... I still breathe a sigh of relief every time I complete a document. Not just the project history books. Even the thing I was typing up today in the office, today's "piece." This thing happened, and it's partly this relief that this moment is at least captured to some degree, so it's not lost...it's in the history. Partly it's the sense of, "I've something to show for what we've been doing." That's still a huge reassurance, for me, and my biggest defence against anybody who might say, "What do you do here all day? You don't do anything, you don't have a lesson plan." And I can say, "Well, no, but I can show you what we did every day this week, and how rich it was." So that looks like money in the bank, knowing that those stories are there. *Theme: Being "Teacher-ly" (rose).

I hope that it's all in service to the children. At some stage or level, I think that's my primary responsibility, and, second, in service to families, that they have that bit of the stories to see. But there's also that personal component. That may not be true for everybody, but I know that's true for me. It's as if I'm defending against real or imagined external critics who say, "You just play all day, you're not doing anything." I like having evidence, or...traces, that's a nice word, of real things, real thinking, kids are doing real thinking. *Theme: Being "Teacher-ly" (rose).

About once a month, we have what we call "spicy work plans." Work plans are an idea that kids are very familiar with, that's what we do at morning meeting each day.... Work plans look like a child deciding, "I'm going to work with clay," or "I'm going to the drawing table," or whatever. It's sort of code for "What are you doing right now?" It's an invitation to be deliberate.

Spicy work plans are a lot like our regular work plans, only "spicier," because the teacher will tell you who to play with, and you have to make a plan that everybody in your group says "yes" to. We deliberately put the kids into groups, and we group we them with kids they don't normally play with, partly to see if there are new possibilities for interaction, but more to sort of shift them from their usual patterns...and give them that chance...to actively practice negotiation. So, we'll take three kids and say, "You have the whole building space, the whole construction area, but before you get started you need to agree which things you're going to use to build

with – the wooden blocks, the cardboard, the logs. You have to have a plan that everybody says “yes” to before you start building. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).**

We send half the group outside, usually, and do this with just half the group at a time, so... there’s usually two teachers to three groups of kids. We’re saying things like, “Oh, so H.’s idea is to build with cardboard. Check and see if P. and J. agree.” “Try saying, ‘how about...’ or try saying, ‘my idea is...’ and giving them actual snippets of phrases to use, and just really direct coaching.

I think there’s a place for that, for helping them to develop those skills, and it’s only for half an hour about once a month...But, that seems to be enough time, and pretty soon you start to hear some of those skills leak into their play with their friends that they usually play with. You hear them get stuck, and you hear them try some of those strategies, like “I don’t agree with this, “ or “How about if we do this, and then do that.” ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).**

I tell parents at the beginning of each year that I don’t know...I can’t tell you what we’re going to study this year...and to be honest, I don’t actually care that much, but I know it will be rich, I know it will be great, ***Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet)** and my main job is to help these kids be in the world with other people. ***Theme: Social Justice (tan).** I have other wishes and dreams for these kids, and I foster critical thinking and I’m wanting to introduce them to many different art media and languages, and I try and stay in touch with their physical development and so forth, but I think learning how to be in the world with other people is what they’re here for. So often that ends up being the curriculum they find. So, that’s what spicy work is, a chance to practice all that. ***Theme: Social Justice (tan).**

We do exactly the same kind of thing, the same kind of coaching, on the fly, all the time. “Oh, whoa, it looks like he grabbed that shovel from you. Let’s figure out what’s going on. Are you still using it? Tell him you’re still using it. Maybe you have an idea.” And I’ll use the same language. “Well, I don’t think the problem is solved until everyone says ‘yes’.” And it doesn’t have to be rational, it just has to be something that works for everybody! But Hilltop kids learn that there are negotiated solutions to things, and that’s what they want. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).** ***Theme: Conflict (orange).**

I think documentation is another piece that’s grown over time, too. Earlier, the main documentation we were offering was just the ‘question of the day.’ It was along the lines of a question that parents could ask their kids that prompted them to tell a story of what had happened that day and that sort of grew into a quick one page write-up of some of the things that happened today. I tried to mention most of the kids and give parents a sense of, “see what my kid did today.” ***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).**

And then when we first created an art studio space...we worked for a while with a system that had two sides of the page, what happened in the classroom and what happened in the studio, and we tended to push ourselves to keep track of how we were using that space *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum) because we were basically learning how to use it. It was totally new to us having that space. *Theme: Environment and Space (lime)

And then after doing that for maybe a year, making the switch, I learned, through the Reggio listserv, about a woman who was using a curriculum board. So that was a switch to... not being committed to writing up the story of the day, each day, but sort of looking at the six or eight types, it varied at the time, but some level of broader categories, and trying to keep fairly current write ups in each one...Now we're sort of scratching our heads about that one again... *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum).

After...looking at the simple, 'here's what happened today write-ups' that were going on at Neruda school (one of the preschools in Reggio Emilia), I'm kind of thinking, "Oh gosh, ... a week could go by or longer with parents really not knowing what their kids are doing."

When we were just doing a quick write up of the day, it really was just a simple story telling of what had happened, and, without the layer, the extra layer of "Here's what I, the teacher, was thinking, here's what I think about it afterwards" - the sort of transparency of teacher process and how those decisions get made. That's what I'm trying to put more of into those write-ups when I get time to do it more - a larger write-up about one incident rather than a snapshot of each day. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

When I was initially exposed to Reggio, I think the physical environments were the first hook for me. That's true for a lot of people, and it certainly was for me, probably because we're so visual...a picture is worth a thousand words. You can see these images and see in them that the kids are treasured and valued, and that really shows in the environment, the amount of care, and the aesthetic quality. I'm very tuned into the physical environment, and arranging and caring for the physical environment. That's one of my favourite past-times. *Theme: Environment and Space (lime) So, that was a big hook for me, what the physical environment says about the "image of the child." *Theme: Image of the Child (dark teal)

It was to the point that, when I came back from Italy, I was stuck with reproducing this one particular thing that I'd seen, little glass jars, with cloth covers, filled with little, tiny, beautiful seeds and beads and things like that. I got back and I was just intent upon creating that. I found a place in the classroom and I found little glass jars and I found things to put in them and I made little cloth covers for them and it had no relevance to anything I know or care about, anything kids know or care about. It was against school policy to have glass jars within kids' reach. It was barely used or noticed by kids, but I had to do it. I couldn't believe it, that that was

there, and this was in one of the *nidos*, one of the toddler rooms. This whole shelf full of beautiful jars with beautiful things and I couldn't escape that image, somehow.

***Theme: Environment and Space (lime)**

It seemed like a 'doable' thing, and it so didn't change the rest of the environment, or collectively how we approached curriculum, or the relationships we built with families...I mean, it didn't get at any of those core pieces, but I needed to do it! And, now I do sort of look down my nose at folks who see things in the physical things in the environment of Reggio and latch onto that...well, if "I could just get me a light table, then I'd be 'doing' Reggio." I... am sort of scornful of that, but I really have no right to be if I look back to that... that was my first response, too, when I got home. ***Theme: Environment and Space (lime)**

Yeah, it is a big hook...and I discovered that it didn't, children didn't suddenly start speaking Italian and saying profound things and illustrating their points with line drawings, things didn't magically occur. I basically had to unpack it back to what do I believe about kids, how do I involve families in the process of creating a school, what do I do to support the big ideas that kids have and help them follow through...that's the real work of it. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).**

It's helpful for me to start with remembering that documentation is a process and a product, it's both things...sometimes I write about practicing *active* documentation, to highlight the idea that...documentation doesn't just mean something on the wall, that it's a conscious practice. I think that's true of the way someone, for example, practices Buddhism. There are times of day or week where you are actively giving it all of your focus, and the rest of the time you're sort of living in relation to it, you're living it the rest of the time even if you're not giving it a hundred percent of your focus to it. That's not an analogy I've thought of before, but I think it fits. I have this image of, it sounds too grand, to maybe align to documentation to a religious practice...about mindful awareness or something.

***Theme: Documentation Overall (red).** ***Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green).**

It's a whole set of instincts and inclinations, actions, that follow you around, so that you carry it around with you...So when you see something happening that rings that bell for you, you grab the camera and take a picture of it, or grab a scrap of paper and scribble it down...[S]o then you've got your photo, your piece of artwork that you've saved, or something you've scribbled down, and you do the next thing with it. You look at it again, or you quite simply offer it back to the child, or put it into the child's journal or put it in a place for the child's family to find it, or you share it with a co-worker and think about it together, or you use it for the next step – the next step would be that you use it to think about what comes next, or what does it mean that this kid did or said. And all that is sort of the active part, and then at the end of all that comes the compiling of whatever those pieces are into a document. ***Theme: Documentation Overall (red).**

As I was describing all that I was thinking...I spend all day with kids, quite literally, I'm there living with them eight hours of my life every day, and eight hours of their life every day. It doesn't make sense for me to see it differently than that. We're all there, we truly live together each day, and then there are these moments where you've got to capture that, jot it down, take a picture of it, remember it somehow, and that's where maybe the instinct part grows. You could tape record from seven in the morning until six at night, or you could run videotape, multiple videotapes, all day long, and capture everything. ***Theme: Documentation Overall (red)**. That doesn't give you anything.

It's worth acknowledging that I'm a very particular filter for what gets saved. The things that trigger me that I jot down, photograph, hang onto, have everything to do with who I am, I think. But, you know, instinct is maybe too simple a word for it. It's very much to do with experience and a sense of, "I have a theory of where this might go," or "I want to hang onto this because..." or "I need to remember this because..." It's rather hard to grasp. ***Theme: Documentation Overall (red)**.

Partly it is a self-perpetuating cycle, it's a feed-back loop where you try capturing something. You try documenting, and it feeds back to you in a positive way...You take a picture and write down something a kid said and it opens up a new line of theorizing - that sort of simple and positive reinforcement. For me, having pretty lofty models to look at was a powerful influence. The first set of documentation panels I put together, I was trying to make something look as snazzy as possible, with as many elements and as much similarity to what I'd seen in Reggio as possible, and that was a big stretch for me at that time. I really didn't start small, I didn't say, "Well, I'll just do a little hand-written thing with a picture - that's good, that's documentation." All I knew was that documentation looked like these completed panels that I saw on the walls in Reggio, and that was the model that I had, and so I tried really hard to do it. ***Theme: Documentation Overall (red)**.

It wasn't a bad starting place. It was a little backwards, but I had an image in my head of the product I wanted to come out with. When I talk to people about documentation, that's not at all what I advise them to do. But it was a powerful motivator for me, and because I had that image in mind, I sort of thought, "Well, I'm going to have to write down something that kids say, because I know that's part of it, and I've got a few things so I feel good about that, and I'm going to need some actual artwork that kids have done..." I think this was a panel, maybe it was two panels, about kites, telling the story of this collection of kite work that I'd been doing with kids. And so, "Next time I see M. make one of his many, many kites, I'll save one and glue that on, that'll be cool, that'll look right." I sort of went from the product backwards that first time around, because that was the model I had to look at. ***Theme: Documentation Overall (red)**.

I was pretty much doing it on my own - I'm trying to remember if this was before or after I actually went to Reggio. ***Theme: Loneliness and Isolation (dark red)**. I think it was before I went. But there was at least one, if not two other teachers

in the actual classroom with me who were pretty deeply dedicated to emergent curriculum, and one other who was ready to try documenting... It helped a lot that I was, that I am, a really organized person, and that holding onto things and keeping track of them comes naturally for me. I think that could easily get in your way. Even starting with the basic idea of, you know, you see something going on around this topic, make one place where you start saving those things, because then you'll have them to look at, to pull together...***Theme: Documentation Overall (red).**

So that first round of documentation had no cycle to it, it was really just my collecting and displaying what we'd been doing. I wasn't trying to learn from that, using that to plan the next step. But, I was really conscious that gathering things together like that made me feel like... this is something I could call a project, even though it wasn't designed that way, we hadn't even necessarily been thinking that way, it was just sort of a series of isolated, kite related events, but sort of pulling them together it felt like we had been doing what I could call a project about this, and I didn't feel that until I put it together visually...***Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet)**

I can say...that we have struggled tremendously with how to foster a culture or practice of documentation. I think that's partly been true because ... (pause)...there's a sense out there that there's a "Hilltop way" of documenting, and if you're not doing it that way, then you're not doing it right. ***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).**

The reality is that Ann and I have some similar influences coming in, and have worked closely together here and developed a way of working together, a way of documenting that has a sort of look and feel. Already I think you could look at a document without a name on it and guess if it was hers or mine, but for a lot of years we were the only people doing it at all, or doing it in that fashion.... And so my sense is that for folks coming in to Hilltop, or at Hilltop but new to documentation, that's fairly off-putting, or the sense that to even step in, you wouldn't even put your foot in the water because it's not going to look like what Ann and Sarah are producing every other day. ***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).**

I don't think we've found any great ways around that. There are definitely teachers here who have leapt in, a few, some with their own style. There are different layers of documentation here at Hilltop, too. There's the curriculum board, we're trying to get as many people as possible to contribute to. There's also this layer of ongoing, in-depth project work, there's that documentation, if you talk about documentation, how that documentation is collected and used and displayed. Ann and I have done a lot of that, and other folks have not done that. We're the folks that have taken primary responsibility for nearly all of the project work that's happened, and documented the process of that. ***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).**

The “Rings” organization grew directly out of requests from Ann and myself to clarify who is supposed to do what at this school, because before those were in place we really had all the same job description, but were all doing very different amounts and kinds of things. We just sort of wanted it spelled out and made clear, to demystify this idea that everybody should show up at Hilltop from day one and be doing work that looks like Sarah’s and Ann’s. What we arrived at was this idea that folks could choose, you know, “this is who I am right now, this is where I am in my process of becoming a teacher,” or, you know, “in my busy life right now this is what I want to take on.” We worked as a staff to clarify, to say, “Alright, everybody does this much, if you’re going to be a teacher at Hilltop you do these things.” And if you choose, you can layer on this next ring of things. In return you’ll get an amount of planning time each week to do documentation or whatever. Later on, if you want, you can layer on yet more onto that, and you’ll get more planning time. So, there are meant to be no distinctions in value, or leadership, even, although the lived reality is that folks with more planning time tend to have a bigger influence on culture and what will happen. So, we’re still in the process of figuring out that relationship.
*Theme: Roles, Responsibilities, and Rings (blue-grey).

One of the things that got spelled out is that Ring 2 teachers are not required to take on any in-depth project work, Ring 3 teachers are supposed to facilitate one in-depth project each year, and Ring 4 teachers are supposed to facilitate two in-depth projects each year. We’ll get to the end of the year and we’ll see, but right now it doesn’t look like it’s going to play out that way. On Sunlight team right now it looks like I’m holding the primary responsibility for three, and those will be the three in-depth projects, that get... clearly identified and seem to have come to some sort of conclusion. I don’t know how that’s going in Garden Room. Why would it be any different, because we don’t have a network in place to grow folks into doing that?
*Theme: Roles, Responsibilities, and Rings (blue-grey). There’s not a lot of training or support or mentoring from folks who are already doing it, and I’m spending most of my time doing it, and not finding a whole lot of time to teach each other folks how to do it. That’s where we’re stuck. *Theme: Time Limits (gold). *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

The really sticky piece is that, in order for me to have more time to help other people, I have less time with kids, and that’s a tug at me constantly. This is relevant to this documentation story...it really does require time away from kids to do it, and right now I have six and a half hours a week away from kids to do that, and I’m just about keeping up, but if I had eight or ten hours a week I’d be caught up with the other things. A few more hours would make a huge difference, but eight hours a week, that’s a whole day a week that I’m not with kids. So it’s this direct, sort of inverse relationship between time actually with kids, living, living the stuff, and then time spent telling the story of it. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green). *Theme: Time Limits (gold). *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

Six and half hours a week certainly doesn’t all go to documentation. There are lots of other school-wide projects that I’m involved in and phone calls to families and talks with other teachers, that’s where lots of those hours go. But, I don’t know, I

sure love the sound of what J. was describing (at a recent workshop) where the *Neruda*³⁹ school teachers are salaried, and their amount of hours with kids stays the same, and they just have this pool of two hundred hours a year that they use to do the rest of the work. Right now that sounds appealing. I could work twenty more hours a week if I wanted to, and do all this stuff, but I wouldn't get paid for it, that's not a choice. *Theme: Time Limits (gold). I love this work, obviously, so I'm not actually...well, yeah....At the moment I would make the trade, I would, yeah, I'd work six hours a day and have the last two for doing the rest of the job, even if it meant being away from kids, I think. That's part of what was appealing to me as J. was describing a daily schedule where that doesn't feel like you're missing huge pieces of the day...That sounds pretty good to me right now. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

I'm describing a school day that's set up where most kids come from nine to four, or nine to three, she said at noon the school day is basically over, with lunch and whatever, nap and snack. It's not this day that goes from seven in the morning until six at night...I would love it if I could be with kids for their whole day, and then you know, more or less, they would go off to other things, and I would go off and write my stories about it, and then we'd come together the next day. That's just how I feel right now. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

But you know, that's part of what's so unique about Hilltop, is that is really full-time child-care for working families, and kids really are living here together. It's a huge piece of our identity, I think.

*Conversations with Sarah (SF2)*⁴⁰

In my master's thesis I wrote about the *disposition* of the documenter. I feel that I should say that this disposition idea I borrowed, I think, from Lillian Katz. I can't remember her exact framework, but...it's something more than just a skill set, or personal traits.

It helps me a lot to be a naturally organized person...If you looked in my bathroom and my pantry, you'd see that, just as if you looked in my classroom, or my hard drive or my stack of papers. I think that's helped a lot in terms of collecting samples of kids' work, saving little notes and stuff that I've jotted down. It's easy for me, that helps. I imagine that that's a stumbling block for folks who don't have that naturally in place, that they've got to invent some sort of system to do that. Working alongside M. for the past couple of years has been a great exercise in that she really doesn't come with those natural instincts the way I do, and she's had to invent systems for herself. She's found tools that work for her. And for me, that part was easy.

³⁹ Neruda is one of the preschools located in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

⁴⁰ SF2 denotes "Sarah 2," an abbreviation for referencing this interview.

It helps a lot that I write easily, and that comes from being the kid of two college professors, that comes from being a good writing student in high school and in college, and going to a college that emphasized writing. That's shaped the form, that shapes what my documentation looks like...And, for sure it's not the only way for documentation to look, in fact, I think it would be a great challenge to myself to sort of say, "How few words can you use to tell this story?" I don't provoke myself with that challenge very often! It's easier for me to tell it in a lot of words. You might have noticed that about me. Yeah, I get teased about that. *Theme: Being a Writer (green).

At the conference in Boulder that I went to, some educators from one of the schools in St. Louis, from the College School, I think, were sharing some documentation that Amelia Gambetti had worked with them very hard on, worked very hard on one panel, and it had almost no words. It was just telling a story in pictures. I was quite struck by that. I think if I had any experience as a photographer I might lean in that direction. That would be a great skill to have. That's one of the things, you know...the documentation we see coming out of Reggio Emilia, my understanding is that a lot of it is put together in collaboration with the *atelierista*, who may be a photographer, by training, or a graphic artist, by training, I'm none of those things. I'm married to a graphic designer - that might help a little, just having his influence around. I'm someone that likes playing with the layout of a page or a panel, so in terms of the display end of things, that's helpful. I think the fact that I'm a good writer pushes me towards documentation that looks like a lot of writing, with a picture or two pictures, and I'm actually quite happy, pleased with myself, when I have enough pictures that I don't have to write as much. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

You could look through...there's not a document that I've produced, especially since we've started using digital photography - and can... insert each photo into the text, enlarge them, fit the text around the photos - there's not a blank space on the page. I'm compulsive about that, because what I have in my head is this binder format that you've seen, that works fine. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

It's been a while since I've designed a large panel. I'm doing a version of that right now with the construction project that's happening. I'm at the stage I described in my thesis of everything that comes in, tacking it up on bulletin boards chronologically so that the story is right there on the wall. And then, when the whole thing feels done, I'll pull all that down and compile it, probably into a binder rather than into a panel. I think that's where Reggio educators would automatically turn that into some kind of panel. They would cull just a few key pieces and narrow it down to an eye-catching display panel. We've been using the binders in part because we don't have archival storage for documentation. For the training that we've done for other teachers, it makes it so easy to just bring it in a binder to show people, it makes that portable. *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum). I'd love to have more space, a bigger facility. I'd love to have a huge work table, and materials

to put big documentation panels together, and then a way to display them, and a way to archive them after a while. We don't really have that now.

So, what other personal qualities... We talked about organization, writing, and in terms of the display part, there's some comfort with a sense of design. Mine looks like a full page, but other peoples' might look different. ***Theme: Documentation Overall (red)**. ***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green)**

You know, I've seen people who have ways, who have notebooks tucked into their pockets or things like that, but I've never done that. I feel like I'm not all that good at capturing those little comments on the fly, but I can remember things sometimes and then I grab a sticky note and jot them down. I guess I feel I remember to do it more often when I know I'm going to invite a conversation with a group of kids. I'll bring a clipboard and a pen, or if I'm planning a conversation with a small group that I'm hoping to record and transcribe... some of that has been very rich to have, to be able to go back to. So there's capturing the words, there's grabbing the camera and snapping a couple of pictures, there's asking kids if you can hold onto a piece of artwork, or copy and give it back to them, collecting things in that way. Those are the main activities. ***Theme: Documentation Overall (red)**.

This whole process of pedagogical documentation is definitely a catalyst for change... it definitely is for me. I was re-reading over our notes from last time, and I was wondering whether that story of that first documentation panel I put together, the knowledge that I was headed toward a finished product, a panel, reminded me to try to jot down something the kids said, to try to save a piece of artwork, to try to take a few photos of kids working, it sort of had that influence. One of the things I discovered writing my thesis was that documentation is, in the biggest sense of the term, a really close description of what teaching an emergent curriculum looks like. It's the main activity, if you take documentation in its biggest description that includes the reflective part, and the use of what you've collected to be thoughtful and playful about what you might want to do next. ***Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet)**

This is a question I put forward in my thesis: "What would it look like if you tried, if your intention was to train teachers in an emergent or child-centred way of teaching, and you decided to go at that through teaching them documentation skills and practices, how would that work?" ***Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet)**. I'm very curious about that. And in a way that's how we've structured the cycle of the Hilltop Training Institute classes that we offer. There's a class on the physical environment, and thinking about the space for kids, and time. And then there's a class about observation, which I would already be including in the big definition of documentation, and using your observations to plan. And there's a class about extending project work, and doing representation and re-representation, and I think you could fold that under the umbrella of documentation, too. And then there's a class about documentation, specifically. That cycle is what we like most folks to go through. ***Theme: Mentorship (indigo)**. We've just this year added into that a class

about valuing children and childhood, and a class about working with families. Those two things, in connection with designing the physical environment are just laying the groundwork for emergent curriculum. Then what the emergent curriculum looks like is this cycle of observation, planning, representation, documentation.
*Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

It would be great to try designing an introductory course in early childhood education through the lens of documentation. Those would be the first things you would try and have students do, rather than, “Try your hand at creating a lesson plan,” or, “Try your hand at designing centres.” But instead, “Try your hand at close observation, “ then “Play around with that observation – what you suppose you would want to offer kids next? Why do you think that play is happening? What’s going on underneath it? What other evidence do you have that might support that hypothesis? What could you do to test that hypothesis? What have you gathered to tell the story of that? What does what you’ve gathered tell you? What would you try next based on that? How will you pull together these things that you’ve gathered?” That could be the structure for a class, and all through that documentation process that, I think, would naturally lead to a more emergent way of teaching. *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet). *Theme: Research and Future Dreams (light grey). *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

There’s an early story of documentation that I can tell of, a really early one, from before I was at Hilltop, when I was at Bing Nursery School at Stanford University. It might have even been before the kite panel that I was telling you about...[O]ne boy started out making a wood factory, and my co-teacher at the time, D., took a couple...photos of it. He was working with big blocks, the hollow blocks, and sliding these large planks through the blocks. He had it all set up and he called it his “wood factory.” A couple of other boys, M. and C. and J., got in on it with him. One was washing the wood with a scrub-brush and another one was stacking up the wood, and then they decided they needed a sand factory near the wood factory, and they started hauling barrels full of sand from the sand box, mixing it with water and making this huge slurpy mess which they were spreading on the wood to be this cement – I guess it was a cement factory.

C. was a kid who had extreme hyper-activity issues, and ... was tough to handle. This was one of his good days, but he had had a big episode, loss of control. So, my co-teacher D. captured a series of perhaps... fifteen snapshots, and she had them developed that night and just pasted them into a stapled together construction paper book. She had the boys dictate some words to go with the pictures, and read it the next morning at our group meeting. That was powerful in itself, just reflecting back what they’d done, shining a spotlight on these boys who had done this really collaborative and productive play. Then we disassembled the book and made a small panel out of it, just photos and typed-up their comments under each photo, which was the first time we’d typed anything for that class. *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum)... We stuck it up in this sort of an atrium space out by the door of the classroom. It was up there for probably a couple of weeks.

At the end of one day, C., the troubled boy, was on his way home, and his mom was trying to help him separate from school and head towards home, and he was just losing it. He was screaming and visibly out of control. He started to hit his head on the pavement, and J., one of the little boys who had been part of the activity, came up to him and just touched him on the shoulder, pointed at the wall where the panel was hanging, and said, “C., do you remember the wood factory?” And he just stopped, and looked at it, and pulled himself back together. One of the most powerful moments...

I can't begin to guess what that moment was for him. I'd like to think that the fact that that documentation was there, honouring him, was a reminder to him of that good time and an easy reconnection for him and J., who were not usual playmates, and a way for J. to try and help him. At that moment, anyway, it seemed like a very present thing, it was right there, the only piece of documentation we had up anywhere, at that time... Another kid was able to just tap him on the shoulder and point to it and he knew that he was going to see it there, he knew what it was about, ... and just looking at it somehow brought him back into... the reminder that “You're an okay kid.” *Theme: Awareness and Infinite Attention (sea green)

One other, sort of a bigger scale story, but very gratifying [is]... about when our rabbit, when Rikki Tikki got away. That was one of the first times we practiced taking a bulletin board and putting it aside as a place where we would tack up all the pictures that kids made, all the signs that kids wrote, and it was just the gathering place for all the things we jotted down. All the photos, all the collected artefacts and pieces of documentation about Rikki Tikki went in this one place. Since we didn't think the rabbit was coming back, the kids were using it actively, they were modeling that idea that you use documentation to plan what you do next... They were using it as their main source of information to keep looking for the rabbit. It's interesting that when the rabbit suddenly reappeared, the first inkling they had when they first found out about this rabbit was to go get some of these pictures and compare their drawings with this rabbit to see if it was him. And lo and behold, it *was* him. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

There is also this layer of, “I'm being the memory keeper, documenting this,” letting kids keep on doing it, that sort of cosmic intervention.

I put on a presentation with a group of teachers who were with me during the wood factory project, and the rabbit story, and the kite story... We put together a workshop for a California AYE convention called “Come Fly With Me.”... [W]e sort of generated this idea of flight as an image for what emergent curriculum feels like. The shaky take-off, the uncertainty, the fear, and also the maneuverability once you're in the air, the perspective that you get once you're in the air. Malaguzzi uses the word the *reconnaissance*, the job that teachers have. I like this idea, that from up in the air teachers do this reconnaissance of what's going on, and all of that is very different than what it looks like to be driving on the ground and sticking to a planned series of, “You can all go down this road and turn left or turn right,” but when you're

in the air, left, down, up, right, they're all more fluid. That's actually a helpful metaphor for me to think about what emergent curriculum is like. *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet)

I don't know what documentation would be inside that metaphor - maybe it would be the safety instructions in the seat back pocket. To me, documentation is that something to hang onto in the turbulence and the uncertainty of flight, the anchoring structure in a very organic curriculum. I don't know if that's a great metaphor for documentation, but definitely it's how I think about emergent curriculum. Ann talks about it as leaping off a cliff, not being sure where you're going to land. *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet)

A great metaphor from Malaguzzi - I don't know if he's written about it anywhere but he talked about this with us when I was visiting there in 1993 - he said it's as if the children and the teachers are together in the basket of a hot air balloon, and the children know, and the teachers know that they'll have the most fun, and see the most things, and have the most experience of the world together if the hot air balloon is allowed to lift off the ground and rise up, untie the ropes, drop the sandbags and let it go. Parents and the other adults standing around on the ground... licensors, administrators, policy-makers, it doesn't feel safe to them, they want the balloon to stick firmly on the ground, where they can keep an eye on it and they know everybody is going to be safe and okay and everything is comprehensible and understandable. And so he says that our job as educators is to convince those people that we're skilled pilots of hot air balloons. So that could be an image for documentation. These are your credentials, "Look, I know how to fly this hot air balloon. I've had all these safe hot air balloon journeys, they've all started and ended safely, with lots of wonderful stuff in between, and that's what's going to happen for this group of kids." *Theme: Being "Teacher-ly" (rose).

My technology for about ten years was the glue stick as my major tool. I'd take photos and, eventually, get them developed, and then hang onto them. I tended to hang on to the photos until the end, until I felt that mostly the work of a project was at an end, and then I would try to write up some of the story of it and glue these photos in...so that meant that the sharing stage of the documentation all happened after the fact. That's been the main change with the digital photography that I'm using now, that I'm putting together words and pictures almost immediately, and getting it to families almost immediately, and showing it to the kids the next time that we meet. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

I might be meeting with a certain group over time about a particular thing, and doing it as we go, and then the next time we get together I have the pictures and the words from the last time right there to show them. That's always been my intention to include them in that part of the loop, to say, "Do you remember when you were cutting out the fabric, and isn't our next plan to do the sewing part of it?" "Oh, yeah," they say, looking at the pictures, "that's right. When we were cutting, I was

thinking of sewing a..." That collective documentation becomes more of a process for the kids, more part of the cycle for the kids.

I guess one major impact on families with the digital photography that we're doing more of now is that I'm able to print copies of documents that have photos and text for every family to keep, and that wasn't true before. I'd usually just make one set of photos, that's all we could afford, and they'd sort of go in the book that told the whole story, that would be available for the all families to see, and maybe one of the written pieces I could make black and white copies and put it in the children's journals, or maybe I'd have an extra photo or two, here and there, that I'd attach, but now I'm really giving the whole, as much of the story as I have of the project, to each family of each kid that's involved. So that's a pretty huge change....*Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

I think the intention is that some of the work that we're doing can go right on the web-page that's just been developed, and families, and others, can get to it that way. Already I've put a few things up there. I wonder if, given the community of families that's here at this school, if that might be an easier, more fun way for them to get at it. I have this image of them showing it to their colleagues at work, or hunkering around the computer at home with their kids. Kids getting to say, "Look, that's one of my paintings!" or, "That's when we were dancing, or..." I think that would be fun. Incredible possibilities. I'm curious as to what Reggio Emilia kids and teachers are doing with that, what they've figured out. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

Ann and M. and I did some training a couple of years ago with some teachers from [a graphics company] in Portland. They have an on-site childcare for the employees of the company, and because everybody in the company is on computers all day long, they send a lot of stuff back and forth by e-mail. That's something we haven't been doing, really, but there are certainly easy ways. Something we've just started to dive into is getting all school announcements out to families that way. It's interesting to think about what the curriculum classroom uses of that might be. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).

I don't want it to be the only way, because I think the point of documentation is that what the kids see reflected on the walls around them is their work, their words. The Reggio educators talk about documentation as the 'second skin' on the walls of the school. It's important that that be part of the visual environment because of all the messages that sends to kids, and to everyone who walks into the building, "This is what we value, this is what we put on the walls." *Theme: Environment and Space (lime) I wouldn't want to see it disappear completely for that reason.

There's the interactive element, too. Someone sitting at home looking at it on a home computer isn't necessarily going to give immediate feedback. I like that there's the whole time spent [with families] lingering in the hallways, reading these stories about these kids at play. It has to do with thinking of schools as places for families to

be, a sort of central place of community. *Theme: Environment and Space (lime). *Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink). But honestly, I think, a lot more parents would spend time looking at and reading documentation if it came easily to them on their computer. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue)

The best support I've had here, and it's been true since the first day I walked in the door, is total freedom to do it how I want to do it...I've certainly worked in contexts with administrators who say, "This is exactly how curriculum should look here," and I'm incredibly fortunate here to have the professional autonomy, and kind of understanding that a big part of making this kind of curriculum go is the documentation...When I first came I had forty-five minutes a week, not very much, and right now I have six and a half hours a week – and I could use more time if there was more. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

That's another commitment that this school strives for, is real time for teachers to meet together. Teachers within a teaching team meet together for an hour a week, which isn't nearly enough, and the whole staff of the school meets for two hours once a month, which is not enough, but just carving out time for those meetings is hugely expensive. Getting coverage for all of those teachers at one time, so that they can all be together, or it means closing the whole school for two hours a month, so that we can have a meeting, and that puts a huge strain on families. So, it's a big commitment to do even what we're doing. It's critical, and I'd love to have more of it. We're in a constant pull and tug in that the one hour that we have, the two hours that we have, between just the nuts and bolts and business, trying to get those pieces taken care of while we're all in the same place at the same time. *Theme: Time Limits (gold). *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

And then there's spending time doing the active work of documentation as a group, "Here's what the kids said, here are some photos, here's what she drew, what do you think I should do next?" I think we're really thirsty for more of those kinds of conversations together, and rarely find time for them. I've just recently made a plan with the teachers on my team that we would set aside ten minutes of our team meeting just to talk about the construction project that's happening now...It's not enough time, ten minutes is nothing, but it is time set aside to do exactly that, to sort of say, "Well, here's what kids said," and, "Here's some paths that I see this heading towards - what do you all think?" *Theme: Time Limits (gold). *Theme: Collaboration (blue).

At a recent meeting we spent time just brainstorming. As Malaguzzi says, "You think of a thousand possibilities so that when kids come up with the thousand and first, you're not surprised." And so, we just practice thinking of a hundred ways this could go, not with the intention of covering all of the possibilities, but being prepared for any one of them to be what possesses us for two months. *Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet)

It's an idea that came with Margie... "Boy, I've grown some skills around this, and not a lot of the other folks I teach with have practiced this - how can I do this work in a way that's helpful to them, and not just go off by myself and do it?" So we came up with the idea of doing it publicly or transparently at these meetings so that what I'm trying to do is bring my process to those meetings and just do it out loud with them, as a way of modeling it. It's my hope to involve them in it, getting their input, so that growth is something that we all participate in. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

I'm guessing that it's been easier for other folks to 'get' what I'm pushing ahead on. I think I feel it's been some sort of nudge towards discerning kid's theories towards construction. I made the offer of, "Hey, I'm great at collecting little bits of paper and typing things up - why don't I just do that part of it. Whenever you hear kids say something related, just jot it down, it doesn't matter how scribbly [sic] it is, just get it to me, and if they draw something, just get it to me and I'll gather it. I'll do that part, that part's easy for me. But I'd love it if you'd all be involved in listening for these little bits and responding to them with kids and let me do the gathering and sticking it up on the board piece." *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

I'm really happy with how quickly the board is filling up since we've started to gather things. The story is suddenly unfolding on our walls, and I'm really pleased with that. This whole thing [the church's elevator construction project], which could have been a disaster, is just unfolding into this lively, engaging thing for the kids. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

Conversations with Sarah (SF3)⁴¹

I started working with kids when I was 16, when my little brother was born... I'd been volunteering at his child-care centre, and then I got a job during summer and vacations during high school, working mostly as an on-site substitute type person. That was in a parent co-op setting, so that was my first sort of introduction.

I went from there to college, and ended up studying psychology with an emphasis in child development - this was at Yale University in Connecticut. I connected with a pre-school that was a lab school of the university while I was there, but it was very much a self-contained school that just had a few university students at a time.

I found a sort of a mentor in the director of that school...and she introduced me to Reggio Emilia. She showed me the "Portrait of a Lion" video, which was my first introduction to Reggio...I remember where I was sitting, watching, with tears streaming down my face. I was alone. She had just said, "Take this back to your dorm and watch it." *Theme: Resonance (brown)

⁴¹ SF3 denotes "Sarah 3," an abbreviation for referencing this interview.

It was a great small pre-school and kindergarten in New Haven, and I ended up getting a job there the summer after I graduated. I sort of did a series of first observation and then participant observation there...then finally just got a job there the summer after I finished college. That school and its director, this mentor, were the main influences, definitely.

It was the only job that I'd had through high school, working in childcare, and, so I hadn't considered other things, although I went to college intending, thinking I'd major in music, or English, and my first semester took English and music and psychology and just fell for the psychology...In this particular school, I ended up doing pretty much independent study one-on-one with the director of the school...Read a lot of John Dewey, Vygotsky, and a lot of open classroom type of things...I'd say awareness of Reggio was just sort of starting to happen in the U.S. It was pretty new, it was new to me and pretty new to this school. They were very much project approach, pretty much by the book, John Dewey, into Lillian Katz...and they were just beginning to explore Reggio Emilia. That was a pretty strong influence, and I was totally convinced by what I saw there. I was pretty sure that was how I wanted things, how I would want to teach. *Theme: Resonance (brown).

Leaving there I was really only looking for jobs in early childhood, and ended up back in my hometown in California, on the Stanford campus, and ended up working for four years there at Bing Nursery School, which is a lab school for Stanford - very different from the school in New Haven, very different from Hilltop. Huge school, part day program, very sort of consciously a "nursery" school, not child-care, not full-day care...and in some ways that was a great luxury, because there was a lot more time for meetings between teachers, for planning and setting up the environment...but it wasn't the same sort of intense living with children and families that I saw at this school in New Haven and that I'm doing here at Hilltop...*Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

I had a dual role there. I was working with kids in the morning and then I was a teaching assistant for the undergraduate psychology classes in the afternoon, so I was helping the undergraduates: some of them were observers, and some were participant observers, and I was supervising them, basically, and helping to co-teach the lecture, the seminar. I did that combination of things for four years, and while I was there I started at Pacific Oaks College getting a master's in human development. Part way through my time at Pacific Oaks I moved from California to here, and finished the master's in human development up here, with a specialization in Leadership in Education, specifically administration and supervision.

That all still grew out of this time in New Haven. I really, really admired the director of that school so much. Partly her way of thinking about kids, but also I remember sitting in her office looking at her and thinking, "I want to be you." I want to be in a school like this and be the director and have kids in and out all the time, but have this kind of level of organizational responsibility, and so I was pretty certain for

a while that I was heading for being the director of a school just like that, that was my dream...it's not now...

I came to Hilltop and found it much closer to the feel of the school in New Haven, similar size and a full day program, than where I'd been working in California. I was here for a couple of years and then we had a big leadership change, there was a turnover of our director, and I was offered the position, and ... realized, "No, I don't want to do that – that's the hardest job there is!"

I'd lived here a couple of years by that point, and realized it doesn't make sense to me to be here and not be, really be with the kids every day, especially with this growing awareness of partnering with families...that's some of the richest part of the work now, and the idea of trading that part out for trying to hire people and manage money and all those sorts of things just doesn't hold appeal any more, or right now.
***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).**

My exposure to Reggio has had a huge impact on my work in early childhood education. The biggest answer is that I think it's why I'm still in the field. I think it's what's sort of grabbed me hard enough to keep doing this work...not that I felt myself drifting away necessarily, but once I sort of learned about it, I haven't been on the search for other things ever since. ***Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua).** Once I visited, I felt like, okay, this is the clearest model or example of the principles I'm trying to work with, and so, I just haven't had a lot of question marks since then...I don't mean to say, "Oh, now I know exactly how to do it, and I'll just follow that blueprint," because I haven't and I couldn't, but ...I've yet to learn anything about the schools or from the folks at the schools that rubs me the wrong way. Every time I have a new encounter at a workshop or read a new book or meet somebody or have a conversation with somebody, I get just another piece of, "Yep, this is still a fit, there's still more for me to learn from this model, and everything I hear about it just re-engages me in the work." Every time I've ...some kind of little dose of inspiration from Reggio, I'm refilled to keep doing the work – which is huge, which is huge because the work is so draining. ***Theme: Resonance (brown).** ***Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua).**

Going to the summer institute in Boulder with other staff from Hilltop...That was a huge shot in the arm, and brought a lot of us back into Hilltop with, "Yeah, we're actually energized to do this work." Each workshop with J. W. has given me a little of that, and each time I see a new book or get a new book put out by Reggio Children I go, "Yeah, there's something, there's so much more juice there." Just saying that sounds totally opportunistic, or like I'm leaching off of something. Fortunately, it's not even like, "Oh, here's this other thing to copy," it really is like, "wow, there's inspirational work happening out there that makes me want to do some, and makes me want to keep refining my practice and put new energy into this and value it." That's been the hugest influence on my work, just the constant...reassurance, or re-commitment that I get when I have contact with anything out of Reggio Emilia. ***Theme: Resonance (brown)**

A big piece for me has been the intellectual engagement part of it. That's a message that that belongs in the work. I'm smart, and I'm a thinker, and a writer, and... it's not what's perceived as what's needed for this work. It's not the expectation of most people when they come to this work, and I think that's partly why I think I was so attracted, initially, to these lab schools that were connected to universities, because it felt like, "Oh, well, the work with children isn't, you know, intellectually stimulating, but I could be working with undergraduates or doing research, or working with these researchers, or..." I was trying to be the intellectual part of myself in that way, and that's kind of what changed in the living it full days here at Hilltop, was just realizing that it's all here. I'm really smart, I'm really well educated, and I use every ounce of it every day. *Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua)

Sure, there are moments...of living with kids that aren't, sort of, intellectually rewarding or fulfilling, except that, if you really come at, "Who is this kid?" with curiosity...If you take in the message that you can be really curious about everything that happens, then yeah...it's totally, completely, completely intellectually fulfilling work, which so many people just don't get. *Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua)

So, is documentation the key, or a key, to the intellectual engagement? Is the documentation what keeps you intellectually linked in to this daily work? That's where my mind goes, anyways. How big a component is that? All of what we've just said, here we are, smart, thinking, intellectually curious people who are attracted to work with young children, and is documentation part of what lets you be both of those things at the same time...? A big piece for me has been the intellectual engagement part of it...*Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua)

When I was with last year's group of kids, I found that...more of my work was actually taking notes of what they were actually doing and taking pictures of their work, and compiling those notes and pictures into presentable documents that these kids take with them, that these families take with them, that are displayed in the school.

The chemical mix of this year's group is really different. A lot more of my time is about really direct contact interaction with kids, and really direct contact interaction with families, and a little bit less about that stepping back, being reflective, "let me write about this or photograph this"...but the disposition carries over, I think...*Theme: Documentation Overall (red). I actually feel more emotionally connected and tuned in to kids and families than I ever have, and I think it is a by product of that willingness or openness to a curious approach, or investigative or 'researchy' [sic] way of coming at the work, instead of just fire-fighting and trouble shooting.

Curiosity and ... and research as tools of deep caring, not as sort of clinical, check list-y, "How is this child's development," but as in trying to really know this kid and his family, and what it means that he's screaming today. I think those are

tools that get exercised when you're sort of actively practicing documentation. I mean, they're there for you. *Theme: Teacher as Researcher (turquoise). I have a lot less paperwork to show for it this year, but some really deep connections with kids and families. That's the reassuring part of this documentation, because you look at these binders full of work, and it's nice to look at them and remember them...It's okay, it'll happen!

There are elements of the Reggio approach that I find...well, maybe not controversial, but there are definitely things I've come across and I'm learning to just sort of go, well, I guess I just have to take their word for it. No, I know it wouldn't work for me. I know I couldn't do that, I couldn't live that practice in my setting, but they way they do it, it works for them. I admire it, but ...I'm not setting that as a goal.

It's amazing to me that, two teachers and twenty-five kids live peacefully and engage in ongoing, in-depth project work. I think I've come to understand a lot of the "why" behind that, and a lot of that has to do with these groups of kids, many of them, having been together since three months of age, and ... all of them since three years of age, so some of the most breathtaking work we see with these projects undertaken by five and six year old classes who just know each other, and know how to live together, and know how to live in that school so well...I'm sort of willing to believe that it works for them to do that....*Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

You know, we've never really tried to replicate those schools, we don't have an *atelierista*, and I don't think we ever will, and that's fine. It's a different kind of thing we're doing, but for me it means that I'm the facilitator of the in-depth projects that I'm connected to, rather than having an *atelierista* take the lead in that, or share the lead in that, so I value that. But yeah, there are other things that I sort of look at and think, "That's great for them, but not here." Mostly I really admire what I see, and recognize some of it as, so, so culturally and institutionally engrained that it works for them in a way that [is] unlikely ... to work for me, here....*Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

We live in Seattle, which in the American context, is a pretty liberal city, and it sort of fits with what I experience of the adult culture here that peace activism and anti-bias activism are woven into our work with kids. That's not a thing we've borrowed from Reggio, it's something that, I think, comes out of the fact that the families and teachers who make up this school, bring that wisdom...that is an example of us doing our thing. There are probably others. *Theme: Social Justice (tan).

I've talked with you about noticing that it's still pretty much the two folks at Hilltop that have been to Italy, been to Reggio Emilia, who are doing the most active documentation. A couple of other folks who went with us to the summer intensive institute in Boulder, led by Reggio Children, a couple of years ago, who are doing

some documentation, and that's about it in this school. So, it's a little bit of chicken and egg question: okay, those are the people who chase these experiences down because they already have that drive or disposition, or you could say, well, as a result of having those experiences, going to Reggio Emilia, or going to this summer institute at Boulder, helps get some "juice" or some models or some drive to start doing more documentation. I don't know exactly which it is... *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

As an example, right now, there's a teacher who is pretty new to the field, and new to documentation. He has been here for almost a year ...and...has gotten some good practice capturing sort of passing moments, charming moments, conversations with kids, and has either been jotting notes about that or taking photographs about that, and turning those notes and photographs into something those kids can keep in their own journals that go to their families. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green). He's interested in facilitating an in-depth project, and he has an idea for an in-depth project he wants to facilitate.

I've decided I'm going to step a little beyond my expected role as co-teacher and say, "Let me help you, let me be your ally in this, just because I've lived it five or six or seven cycles of that, here at Hilltop, and other experiences before I came here, and it isn't easy." This is the first time I've ever sort of consciously said, "Let me shepherd you, a new teacher through this process, of facilitating an in-depth project." You know me well enough to know that to me, facilitating an in-depth project equals documentation with a capital D, or documentation as an active practice and a product. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

So, the pointers I've found myself giving him are all about things that fit under my big umbrella of documentation, from the basics of, "Well, before we have this first meeting with them, find the tape recorder, make sure it's working, make sure you have a blank tape, we're going to record it, and we're going to transcribe it. That'll give us something to go on for the next meeting." Really reining him back from his five ideas ... about the concrete projects around the topic this group would do...I said, "...[F]or starters, write all those ideas down, we're documenting your thoughts process, too, we're going to keep notes about that, but those might not be what happens. We need to step back enough to figure out what's grabbing these kids, why is it that these six, seven kids keep coming back to this topic of mazes." *Theme: Documentation Overall (red). *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

I think there's great possibility for richness there, and it's a great group of kids, I think it's fertile, but I think this is where being a practiced...being someone who facilitates through documentation will take you a completely different path than being someone who facilitates through providing pre-structured activities. Completely different. And you'll get a completely different result. And so this is my first try at trying to figure out how...if we use active documentation as...what we let our job be, it will go a completely different way than if we let our job be designing...a list of

these discrete experiences for this group to have. ***Theme: Documentation Overall (red).**

We haven't had our first meeting yet, with the kids, but this teacher and I have met to try to take it back to, "What are the questions you want to ask this group of kids at the first meeting? What are we trying to find out from them? What are we curious about learning about from them that's going to guide where we go?" instead of, "What's the first sort of activity we're going to have them do?" ***Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet).** ***Theme: Mentorship (indigo)**...I felt good about him, I felt like we were able, together, to step back a few steps to that place of research and curiosity, and I'm hoping that, starting from that place, we can have an initial meeting with that group of kids that feels like, okay, here's something to build on, what's the next step...to sort of begin that tossing the ball back and forth. ***Theme: Emergent Curriculum (violet).** ***Theme: Mentorship (indigo)**

Just as a little side note, I've started bringing in some of my books that tell the stories of some of the other projects that I've done for this teacher to look at, which I hadn't foreseen as a use for these documents... [N]ot like this is the way to do it, because I didn't know how, and I still don't know how, but here's some examples of conversations that worked or didn't work, and maybe notice a little bit about the kinds of questions that I'm asking, or the ways in which I do or don't pick up on the things kids say. One of the things that I've noticed a lot, reading back over these conversations, is that I put myself as a player, I try to place myself as a member of the group, no more, no less. Both of those are important. No more, in terms of, "It's nice that you guys have these ideas, but I'm going to veto all of you," but no less in that I'm not just sitting there going, "Uh huh, uh huh," but saying, "Oh, that makes me think of this!" And it's fine for me to do that because I'm sitting at the table as one of them. ***Theme: Mentorship (indigo).** ***Theme: Documentation Overall (red).**

And I can also offer resources, or chase down resources that we have as we need them, or bring information that I have that they don't, especially if I'm willing to believe that they have information that I don't have, or perspectives that I don't have. I'm not perfect about that, and I'm the one whose job it is to know that it's almost lunchtime and so we have to find a way to bring this meeting to a close, and that there isn't enough money to buy a bridge, or whatever it is. Sometimes I have to be that voice of adult reality, so I'm going to try to stay aware of what my power is. I'm hoping that the fact that those stories...have been told could be helpful to someone like him... ***Theme: Mentorship (indigo).**

This makes me want to say, about how...I think here at Hilltop, anyway, certainly if you looked at the stories from Reggio Emilia, you get the feeling that the 'holy grail' of this work, the thing that we're really going for the documentation of, is long term, in-depth projects. Yeah, you can do all this other stuff, but if you can do one of those in-depth projects, you've arrived, you count... It is some of the 'juiciest' stuff for me, some of my most satisfying times, really, have been when I've been in

one of those groups of kids, and those have been some of their most satisfying times, too, I think. *Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua).

When I think of a documentation centre, I can imagine a place... similar to an archive, or a place for research and interchange, research and exchange. I don't see it as a place that teachers would go and work on their documentation. Right now I'm feeling like it doesn't make sense to take that part of it out of the school building somehow. And I don't know how the documentation centre in Reggio functions in that way. My fantasy is a place within the school that has the technology and tools and space and quiet for teachers to work alone or together on... either reading about, reading in process, reflecting and planning, and creating displays, whatever those panels or pages, whatever format they take. The space for that inside a school would be great, and what I can imagine outside the school is more a place where some of the products of documentation could come together, although...if that magically existed, right now, would I be using it? It's hard to imagine, because the time is so filled right here...but, maybe it would be a resource for training teachers, or for professional development in some way. *Theme: Research and Future Dreams (light grey).

I think if it was going to be a place like that in, say, Seattle, it would need to go along with some kind of a consortium of schools, since we don't have the central organization, we're not connected by the municipality or anything. So you'd want to have a consortium of schools that were contributing to and using this documentation centre so that there was a chance for this professional development initiative that all the teachers from the consortium would be a part of. I've never experienced that here, so I don't know if it's possible. I mean, in a way, just trying to learn to do that between classrooms within our school, taking baby steps that aren't quite working yet... *Theme: Research and Future Dreams (light grey)

And having enough time, time, time! And, for me, personally, there are still habits that I'd love to build into my practice that I haven't been able to...I'm still not great at just jotting down things as they happen. *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green). *Theme: Time Limits (gold).

... [M]y sort of most successful experiences have been knowing that I'm going to meet with a group of kids and tape recording or taking notes in that meeting, or you know, these experiences where I've met week after week with a small group or on a particular topic. I'm great at remembering everything that goes down in those meetings and taking notes about it and writing it up...but I still don't have the skills that I'd like to about just catching sweet interchanges between kids that I want to remember and report to their families or save for their journals or add to a collection of documentation. *Theme: Documentation Overall (red).

I've been describing about trying to support somebody else in building the skills, and the disposition. That's very new, and feels tricky but could be a pretty revolutionary step, from just deciding that, you know...documentation looks like *me*

doing it, versus trying to actually support a newer teacher to take some of that on, and to do it in her way, or his way. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

In this specific example, he did a great job identifying this rich interest, this possibility, and so it would have been totally inappropriate for me to say, “That’s great, okay, I’ll start meeting with those kids, and we’ll do...” He actually had some enthusiasm about doing that, but I really wanted to see that succeed...I mean, I guess, honestly, I wanted to see that happen in a particular way, because of success that I’ve had. I wanted that opportunity for those kids. So, it’s as much on their behalf as it is on mine, or his. Just sort of like, I want these kids to get well supported in this investigation. I’ve just got to step in and see if I can help build some tools for this other teacher. *Theme: Mentorship (indigo).

But there’s also, yeah, just a history of recognizing that, despite really good intentions, the only in-depth stories that I’ve felt have lived a full cycle and had the whole story told have been facilitated by Ann or myself. There have been other tries, by other staff members, or pieces of involvement by other staff members, but I still think that’s just objectively true at our school, that the only stories that have really had that full cycle of back and forth between kids and teachers, and using documentation as the tool for fleshing out the project, it just hasn’t actually been done by anyone besides Ann and myself - unless we want to decide that that’s just the reality of our school, and find some way to get other folks into the cycle. *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum). *Theme: Loneliness and Isolation (dark red)

I should say that M. in the Rainbow Room has definitely has done really rich projects with kids and told the story of them. Her story telling is different, which is fine, which there should be room for. But I think partly because of the age of the kids that she’s working with, and her own style, those stories tend to be stories where the whole group sort of lives a topic together. They’re very rich and the stories are well told, there’s maybe not quite the same sense of negotiated curriculum. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

[H]e was hired right at the time that we went through the restructuring process, with the Rings. That was the first time...that was the first person that we hired where it was kind of spelled out, “You will facilitate projects like this, and you will do this kind of documentation.” Not just, “We’ll give you some planning time,” but “documentation is a part of what it looks like to be a teacher in your position, it’s part of your job description.” So... that could be a really helpful ingredient, to kind of say, “Oh, so you want to be at teacher at Hilltop. Well, here’s what that looks like.” *Theme: Organizational Climate (leaf green).

What if you made the hypothesis that anybody could be a documenter? It’s not about who you are, it’s about some other environmental ingredient, and what would that be? What would it be that would get somebody actually started doing that, and is it as simple as going to have one of these “light bulb” experiences at a summer

institute or a visit to Reggio or something like that? ... [O]r do you actually have to live some experience hands-on with kids and have it be satisfying in some way... or is just seeing what other people have done enough, or does it only work if you start out small and add on pieces?

I don't know what's making me want to say this now, but... I'm quite conscious right now of how incredibly precious, to me, these books of documentation I've created are. Not just sort of as a treasured item, but as this really solid evidence...that I've got something to show for what I do here every day. It's huge. I mean, I've been at this school eight years and teaching another ten years off and on before that, and ... I think I might be just insanely demoralized if I didn't have a shelf full of those books in my home, and here in my school, because the pay is lousy, it's really hard work, it's deeply misunderstood by a lot of people, and... if there was a fire, I would go for those so fast. Part of it's because of the heart and the work that's gone into them, but partly just because...they're pretty huge...

It feels exhausting to sort of say, "Oh, I've been at the same school doing the same work for eight years. The kids come and the kids go." And it doesn't feel that way at all, because there are these really neat, these particular stories, these really rich stories that I've lived each year with specific groups of kids...I remember *that* group, I remember they were passionate about basket ball and that was the year...and it just completely changes the way of looking back on years of work.

... There's something about the concreteness of that and the process of documentation takes this organic, experiential, fluid curriculum, life, and ... groups it into meaningful stories in some way...or the stories give you little pieces to hold on to that can represent that time lived...I'm not saying it the way I want to. I don't know why I'm conscious of that right now, but if I was sitting here and I had none of that documentation, I would feel like, what have I been doing with myself? And I don't have that question at all. I'm really confident that I've been doing rich, important work here. And I think there are lots of people who work with young children who don't feel like they can say that, because they get the messages so strongly from all around them that it's just passing time, it's just, baby-sitting, it's just whatever...**Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua).*

And so by the same token, I can't imagine doing the work without that, without that opportunity still to live the stories and tell the stories. That's huge in that way...[I]n some ways it's the opposite end from ... documentation as a training tool, or bringing teachers into the work, but isn't that amazing, that the same tool can bring teachers in and then keep teachers there. ...**Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua).*



Sarah

Appendix D: Conversation with Alice

Conversation with Alice

Laurie: First off, tell me about your experience of Hilltop as a parent...

Alice: I just love Hilltop. I want to go there! I think every parent says that. It's really hard because it's been so phenomenal. How to break it down...hmmmm. I think, I mean, it's been great for Caleb. We feel particularly blessed that Ann is Caleb's primary teacher. He's been there for about two years, and Ann is a real stable force in his life. I think the stuff they do around building community is phenomenal. The way they do the room events, and they draw the parents in, and they help parents get to know each other, it's really built a community around Hilltop that's had a profound effect on my whole family. We spend a lot of time with Hilltop families. We went in with, I guess, four solid, five solid friendships with other families that were also choosing to go there, so we had a good basis, but it just really nurtures it for the whole community, meeting new people, staying involved. It's definitely like a family place. Knowing that you're sending your kid to a great educational experience...it's very community oriented. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink)**

Laurie: How much of that is because of the effort on the part of staff at Hilltop, and how much do you think has grown out of connections that families have made with one another?

Alice: I think it has been very deliberate on the part of the staff. I mean, they have some things that they do, now that we've been there for two years, I can understand it more clearly, but the fall meeting that they do with the parents where we, they have us make gifts for your child, and you work with the other parents on some type of collective project that you give to the room. So, we drew...I missed it last year, so I also, it was really hard, I was really bummed, I was out of town. This year we drew a picture of our neighborhood, we made a neighborhood of our homes, and we each drew a picture of our homes, but made it like it was one big neighborhood, and made a big mural that we left for the kids, and then they can go and see their parents' art, you know. And it was like, you just never asked to do that kind of stuff. It was fun, the parents had a blast, and so that kind of launching is really about setting the tone for parents, for communicating and working together. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink)**. You don't have so much of the teacher/parent combination, but you have the parent/parent combination happening, so whenever there is some problem solving around room issues, we've found that the parents have been really active in communicating with each other and dealing with this whole team of adults working to make things better for the kids. I think there's cliques of us in the room, and some lesser degrees of that happening, but, definitely it's been to the benefit of the whole school. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink)**. Especially last year when they were having financial troubles.

Laurie: I get the sense that relationships are very one of the more highly valued components of life at Hilltop.

Alice: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. Just really spending some time and getting to know people...it's a good, it's just been a really good reminder that having a commitment to community pays off, and it's really rewarding on a personal level, and then also on a very broad level, too. This way you can feel like everyone is getting something out of it. Yeah, it's a real strong little force! ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink)**

Laurie: Could you talk to me a little about the various forms of documentation that Hilltop staff participate in?

Alice: I was thinking about this. I'm a **huge** fan of documentation, I mean, of the documentation the last two years of what I call Ann's "report card," but her annual report that she writes for parents. I don't know if you've seen one of those, you can ask her to have Caleb's, both of them. I've even had her e-mail them to me so I can send them out to my family, you know, pictures and all ***Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue)** because they're so...they're her reflections and summations, and they clearly have this form that they go through of things they're supposed to talk about, the different developmental things and for the ages that they are. But the way that Ann does it is just brilliant, and I've sent them out to my family both times, and said, "You'll know your grandson (your nephew, whatever), better after reading this than anything." It's so amazing how she describes Caleb, and what he's good at and how he sees the world, and giving people a little insight into his kind of take on life, and what he struggles with, and what he's really good at. It's just amazing. So, that's one piece that just feels like such a gift, and I don't feel like we'll ever get it to such a degree from any other teacher forever. If we do, I'll be happy, but my expectations are just like, well, we'll just never get it. The first time I went to go and visit Hilltop was right about a month after the Alaska Airlines flight went down, that had some of the previous Hilltop graduates on it, they said, "Go ahead and walk around, feel free to pick up journals." I just picked up a journal on the shelf, it was a Sunlight Room journal, and they had the whole documentation of the work that they had done with the kids the day after the crash, and I just wept. And I was like, "Oh, my God, my kid has to go here." I thought, I would not have known, as a parent, how to process stuff like that with a kid. I just learned so much from that, and that was my, you know, amazing introduction to documentation for such a heavy topic. I love it. I tend to be more of a sporadic reader, so I tend to take Caleb's journal home every once in a while and sit down and really study it, as opposed to standing in front of the walls and reading it. I like that it's up on the walls, but I regret that I don't take very much time to read it. I'm definitely selfish, I focus on the ones that have my kid in them, or the ones with the kids that I know better. ***Theme: Whose Stories Are Told? (pale blue)**. It just feels like such a gift. You know, one thing that I think about is that one I leave I get to take that journal, or when Caleb leaves in September, he gets to take that journal home, and it will be ours forever and ever. I have these visions of Caleb being eighteen years old, sitting and reading that through journal and looking at pictures of himself, and just how much he'll know this piece of his life so well as a result of that. It'll probably save lots of therapy! It's just amazing to see

the creativity that comes out of there all the time. It's going to be interesting to watch Caleb and see how he transitions into school where...Caleb has a very long attention span, and he can work on Legos for two hours solid, and be off doing and thinking about something, so we'll see.

Laurie: You mention sort of scanning and looking for Caleb's work, for his journal, and I'm wondering...I'm not sure how to ask this, but...you talked about relationships and community and the importance of family and that kind of thing initially. I'm wondering if, for you, the documentation paints a broader picture life, how children are living their days?

Alice: Right, yeah. Every time I take the journal home and read it, I think, I wish I was reading this on more of a daily basis, because if I did it more regularly I could use the information more to plug in at home and make connections to what they're learning. One thing that I've been thinking about raising with Ann is the idea of e-mailing them out, because for me, like, it would be a huge distraction at work, on one level, but for me, just to get the quick e-mails, either sitting at my desk where I can take two minutes and read them, as opposed to when I'm racing in to pick up my kids and trying to get home...it would be a really nice, I mean, since it's already there in writing, to have them just kind of pop up. You could choose to be on the list-serv or whatever, or not if the parents felt they didn't want to be bothered, but that would be such a treat for me to do that, to have that come in and to connect with my child that way during the day. If it was just posted on the website, well, I'm just the type of person that I won't take the time, I need it to kind of pounce (?) and go "Oh, it's the latest from Ann. I'll read that!" As opposed to thinking, "Oh, I wonder if there's anything new up on the web-site," having to be very deliberate about going to look for it. I need some kind of prompting. **Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue)*. It's new in the last six months or so at Hilltop that the teachers are beginning to e-mail, and the director is beginning to e-mail more to parents, and that's been really driven by the board president, and it's been great to just be able to shoot off a little e-mail or whatever – that's been great.

Laurie: What do think that's about? Is it a convenience issue?

Alice: Oh, he's a techno-guy. I think he's just tapping in and been able to give Hilltop some of the technology support they need to just tap into life, now.

Laurie: That's also reflective of this community, though, and the fact that most people have internet access.

Alice: Right, right, it's not always the case, but my hunch is that at Hilltop it would be a rare exception that a family didn't have access to e-mail. It was more that the office computers were old and stuff, but they've done a lot of work on updating those. Even though we had these great lap-tops and digital cameras [funded through a grant], they weren't the office computers. They've been making changes, in my understanding.

Laurie: Are there ways that we could support this work, specifically documentation, more effectively?

Alice: I think technology is probably the best example of using this to be able to...I don't know how much other parents have done it, but being able to forward...since it's already been written, it's such a luxury for me. I could see something coming across via e-mail and my deciding to send it out to like, the two grandparents, and say, "Check out what Caleb's up to." In terms of supporting it, enhancing the community support, it would pay off fund-raising wise, too. *Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue). We were one of the families that reached out and Eric's parents (Caleb's grandparents) made a very significant contribution, well, it all depends on what your opinion is, but relative to parents, they made a big contribution to the fund drive last year, but it was because they had been to Hilltop, they'd picked up Caleb. They don't live in town, but they'd heard us talk about it, and they were like, "Hilltop's having trouble?" They wrote a cheque right away. As a fund-raising committee we were struggling how to get out to those next rings, and obviously the more you have a personal connection, knowing a child there, the more likely you are to give money, based on wanting it to be there and wanting it to be a quality facility. I think we have a huge untapped resource that we haven't really figured out how to get into yet, effectively. We had a few parents, or extended family, donate, but a lot of parents aren't thinking about asking. But if you were getting documentation...it seems right now that it has just one audience, the parents, or primary care people, and I think it could be broader.

Laurie: Can you tell me about what you particularly value or appreciate about this educational experience for your child?

Alice: I think a lot of it really is, well, it's a combination of the education of the teachers, what they have to draw from, and then the community that both the teachers have, and the broader community of the school. We have on several occasions gone to Ann when we, as parents, have been struggling with a developmental phase, and just sort of said, "Hey, what do you think about this? Do you have any suggestions?" We really view her as being a really important source of information, not only because she spends a lot of time with Caleb, so it would be like going to, you know, an aunt or an uncle that spends a lot of time and just has a good 'read' on a kid. That backed up with her, like, "You know, traditionally with kids, before they make a big developmental step, they'll take a couple of steps back." You know, just some of that, more, just purely intellectual, educational background in early childhood is really rich to draw from. So, not only knowing that she, and the other teachers, are drawing from it in everything that they do, but then that you can actually go in on some strategic questions and say, "What's your take on this?" She's recommended books and all sorts of things.

Laurie: You probably realize that most of the staff there are very much more qualified, on paper, than is typical.

Alice: Oh, right, absolutely. Yeah, I recognize that. Because we've been consumers at five different centers now, between our two kids, you know, between starting in daycare, birth through five...both of kids started when they were like, four months old.

Laurie: So this is not your only experience of childcare.

Alice: No, no, and we've always done centers, we've never done in-home care. So we can really see the difference and know it. That's why we made the transition. Caleb was downtown in a school that goes from birth to five, and we consciously pulled him out and put him in Hilltop as soon as he was able, old enough to get in. I think the documentation is great. What I've mostly heard from other parents is that there is a parent recognition amongst the more savvy parents that there is a difference in the documentation, depending on who does it at the school, and in the Garden Room, anyways, Ann is considered to be the 'master,' and there is parent envy amongst parents that don't have Ann as their primary teacher. The same with the report cards, or whatever they call them, but it's like a book, this report card that comes out once a year. The parents, just sharing stories, there's a recognition that there's a real difference in the teachers. When you have Ann for your teacher, you feel much, I feel it, is a gift, in addition to just a technique or a requirement. There's definitely a big piece of Ann's heart that goes into each of those, too. ***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).**

Laurie: Part of my big question relates to what we can do to grow or foster that disposition, how we can support it, do we value it?

Alice: And some of it would be how much you make hiring decisions based on whether people have it or not. I think about just hiring people here [referring to her workplace]. There are good writers and there's not good writers, and some of it is about how much is writing really a key component of that job. You screen for it as much as you can if it's a really important component, that's the other piece of it, I would suspect ***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).** They might be really consciously looking to balance out a room and say, "So-and-so is not a great writer, but he or she will lay down on the ground and comfortably wrestle with the kids, and we need a wrestler on the staff. We need a hugger on the staff, we need a..." You know, I mean, they all do pieces of it. That's one thing that I love about the Garden Room, is there is a nice diversity amongst the teachers in terms of there's the more intellectual, teachers that are more comfortable engaging intellectually with the kids, and others that are much more physically comfortable with the kids, just a little more playful, and some that are more one-on-one, others that are better with the bigger groups. There's such a nice mix of that that the kids get a nice balance that way. If everybody was just like Ann, it wouldn't be as great a room.

Appendix E: Conversation with Kendall

Conversation with Kendall

Laurie: Tell me about your experience of Hilltop as a parent.

Kendall: We started at Hilltop just about a year ago. We moved to Seattle from California, and our kids had been in a Montessori school there, so it's been very interesting for me to have two schools with very distinct, and very different, approaches. I will confess quite honestly, we didn't go out looking for a Reggio Emilia school. We moved on fairly short notice and were looking for good childcare. I've learned these ropes before, and knew how to network and find out about what the good schools are. My husband came and toured Hilltop, because we'd heard it was a very good school. He said, "Yeah, Kendall, I think you're really going to be into this, they talk a lot about documentation and stuff – it's kind of interesting, I think you're going to like it." It was the first of the really good schools that they got into, and it was very close, and we were very pleased. Kelsey started first, she started in June, and then my daughter Abby started in September. It's interesting in that, the Montessori program is very individually focused, in a lot of ways it's very structured. They have all the "jobs," they have a very defined plan of the different skills the kids are learning, and the time during the day while they're given sort of free activities is still much more structured in terms of, "this is job time, this is circle time." During job time you're supposed to do certain things, they get to select, and then, this was a sort of modified Montessori school, so our kids, Kelsey, who at that point was actually expected to start Kindergarten in the fall, because she's a September birthday and in California she would have started Kindergarten, they had been working with her on some basic sort of writing and ABCs and numbers and things like this. So she was doing some of the beginning Kindergarten curriculum for the Montessori school. What we immediately saw for Kelsey at Hilltop was that she was going to get some different things from this approach that the Montessori approach didn't offer. The Montessori approach is very individualistic, and the only time they really do things together is outside at recess time. We certainly saw that when Kelsey was given a lot of unstructured time, interacting with other kids, we saw how many skills she needed to learn, in terms of interacting in groups. She really hadn't actually had much chance to do that. And so, I was very intrigued with the idea of the projects the kids do in the Reggio Emilia stuff, looking at what the kids are interested in. I should probably mention that I did have friends in California who had had their kids in this kind of preschool, some of our neighbours. It was a part-time parent co-op, so it wasn't appropriate for us, but I was intrigued with what they said, although it was really hard for them to fully explain what it means. I think that's one of the challenges of Reggio Emilia, it's very hard to communicate to parents what you get out of it. So I was, when I went and toured the school I really noticed the effort to make things look beautiful, and look homey, and it was very different from our other school, which was in a business park. *Theme: Environment and Space (lime) It was highly professional, sort of "top flight" facilities, and excellent teachers, sort of the same caliber of teachers that they have at Hilltop in terms of most of them having Master's degrees, but it was definitely sort of much more corporate, professionalized,

or, you know, they were providing a service. It was an excellent educational service for your kids, but there was not much sense of community and I was sort of stunned when, last summer, at how quickly we were invited to pot-lucks, get-togethers with the other families, after school activities, and how friendly everyone was. I guess, to me, what really blew me away was that they had a bonfire on the beach, and a swim party on the weekend, that the parents organized, and the teachers showed up. That sort of level of integration of the teachers into the community I think is incredibly valuable, and I don't know, quite honestly, how much of that is Hilltop, and how much of that is the Reggio Emilia philosophy, but that strong sense of community is really one of the strengths of Hilltop. They have this sense that the other parents and all the other teachers, and the teachers in the other rooms, were sort of all there for them, and the director, too. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink)**. The fact that the teachers do integrate into the kids' non-school lives helps kids feel not so alien when they go. This fall, for the parent conference, Kelsey's teacher Sarah offered to come here for dinner for her conference, which blew my mind. Of course, to Kelsey, this was like, the treat of the world, to have your teacher come to dinner. One of the other things that really impressed me when I toured Hilltop was in Myrna's classroom, they had the pictures of all the kids going to all of the other kids' houses, and finding out about that, and I thought, "Gosh, this is just so wonderful, the way to make the kids feel so warm and nurtured, and they tend to sort of remove that, I don't know if they , so they had some positive examples of what it meant to work together, but it is making them more interwoven, which I think is a more natural way for children to see things, that they see that as an extension of their community, and not as a place that they just go to and come back. ***Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink)**. In the old school, in California, it was in a business park and everyone brought their kids from wherever they came from, but you almost never saw the kids they spent all day with outside of the school day. There were two kids from our little town who went to the school, so we saw lots of them, but there wasn't any sense of the preschool community other than things that ended at six o'clock. I know one of the things that's been sort of a challenge and a benefit to my oldest daughter, to Kelsey...I said that she hadn't had a lot of experience to work at social interactions. I could see how hard the teachers worked at teaching the kids the social skills to get along in the world, and all the efforts about how to do negotiations, and that's turned out to be an incredible benefit for Kelsey, who is very intense, very strong-minded, and has sort of a hard time with cooperating. We realized that while she was in the Montessori program, she had never had to try to cooperate. It quickly became obvious that this was an area that she was challenged in sort of genetically, and so, therefore, having some place that would spend a year with her, really consciously working on those skills, was fabulous. We actually debated sending her on to Kindergarten next year (I mean, last fall), we had her tested, she was tested to go in, but socially and emotionally she was sort of on the borderline. I mean, she was already doing some beginning reading, but we concluded that we had just moved, she had already just had that disruption, and Hilltop seemed like a great place, and, in particular, like they would really spend a year focusing on the areas Kelsey was sort of challenged in, and hadn't had a lot of experience in, which was the social skills to get along with each other. Once she got into elementary school, no one was ever going to spend any time with helping her, I mean, her parents would help her think

through that, but the educational system doesn't do any of that. It teaches them academic knowledge, but not the social skills to get along. I guess I am a believer that there are skills that you can learn, and that are very important to learn, and much of people's happiness and success depends on their skills at getting along with other people. It maybe that it's something that I'm particularly good at, and my parents were very good at teaching them to me, and I'm a pretty naturally outgoing, group oriented sort of person, but my younger sister is not, she's much more of an introvert. I sort of had those skills naturally, but I could see in my parents them working really hard to teach her, in the intellectual sense, how to be nice to your neighbor, how you're more likely to get what want if you offer to let your friend go first. In some ways, you know, literally, in a very mechanical way.

Laurie: But just maybe that awareness level that just isn't there, intrinsically.

Kendall: Right. I think for many people, for me, actually, it is fairly intrinsic. I've learned a lot of skills as well, but I realize for how many people it isn't, my sister being one of them. Also, seeing how hard my parents worked. She's now a very well adjusted adult, gets along very well other people, because she learned very discrete skills at a very young age. When I look at my eldest daughter who has some challenges getting along in groups, her natural instinct is not to be naturally empathetic, she has a hard time sharing, she's very persistent – when she's set on a track, she has a hard time changing. So learning distinct skills about how to get along with other kids has been extremely valuable. It's been interesting in a lot of ways, because that very unstructured setting with a lot of free time to figure out what to do with a bunch of kids, is a situation which makes her uncomfortable. She'd probably be happier in a more structured program, where there rules about how you act, and there's a lot of predictability. We've had some interesting challenges this year because when the group of older kids left to go off to Kindergarten, and Kelsey was left as the oldest in the class. There were five older girls, and five is an inherently unstable number, so there was always one girl getting left out. It became incredibly stressful for all five of these girls, who were all very bright, very intense, and they all reacted in different ways. They all became, suddenly, very insecure, and each day they'd wonder who was going to get left out because of shifting alliances. Kelsey's reaction, actually, was to figure, "Alright, if someone's going to get left out, I'd better make sure that I leave someone else out before I get left out," so she started to become aggressive, socially aggressive. The parents sat down and talked with the teachers, and said, "You know, we're really concerned. Our kids don't want to go to school, you can see how insecure they are, and there have to be ways to deal with this." In some sense, the down side of the unstructured program is that I think the teachers let this go on for a fair amount of time, of just encouraging the kids to figure out how to work it out, and I sort of likened it to the kinds of comments I would hear from the girls about, "Who's my friend, and who isn't," and the kinds of conversations I was having in third or fourth grade about groups and cliques. I think that's probably because when I was in Kindergarten or first grade, I didn't have that much unstructured time in large groups of kids. The parents sort of all debated about whether it is good for these kids to kind of have these experiences early and learn these skills early, so that hopefully they're better skilled when those things come up

for most kids in second or third grade. The down side is that they also are emotionally more delicate, and they don't have the maturity that I did in third grade to deal with some of these things. So, I think, it was interesting to see, I would go to the classroom and I would see the teachers talking and two kids would be playing, and my daughter would go up and ask to play with them, and a typical reaction was, "No, this is a two person game," or, "No, we don't want to," and I guess I was brought up that you're not allowed to say someone can't play in a group situation like that. You don't have to go seek them out, but if someone asks to play, you have to say "yes."

Laurie: Do you know the book by Vivian Gussin Paley, "You Can't Say You Can't Play"?

Kendall: I've heard the Hilltop teachers talk about this one, and I know it's sort of an interesting controversy. I could see some of this reaction, that it's sort of hard to force someone to play. What I alternatively saw was, "Well, we'll play together for ten minutes, and then we'll come get you." I think there's a balance between you can't force kids to play together, but you also have to set some standards to say that you have to work hard not to exclude people. Sometimes I think there was a sense of trying to leave it so open to the kids, and the kids didn't have all the negotiation skills and the emotional maturity to deal with some of this with these very strong-minded girls. There were a lot of hurt feelings that happened before the teachers eventually, we basically asked them to come in and provide a little more structure and help, because the kids' self-esteem was really going down because of it. So they started something called the Friendship Work Team. In some ways I think it was a real challenge for Sarah because this was not a child generated idea, this was a parent generated idea of: our kids need some help learning how to get along, and they need some guidance, and before they can do it in a completely unstructured activity, they need some help doing it in a more structured, safe setting, where feelings are not going to get so hurt that they lose the lesson. So, Sarah tried to figure out, she took the five girls that both sort of loved each other and had real challenges getting along, and then we added in a sixth girl so the numbers would be even. She agreed to meet with them every Wednesday to have some sort of group time to help them work together. At first the other parents were sort of concerned that this was a little unstructured, but she tried to come up with activities... Sometimes they talked about friends and friendship, and sometimes that was already so painful and emotional that we encouraged them, the teachers, to help them to do an activity together, so they had some positive examples of what it meant to work together well.

Laurie: A focus?

Kendall: A focus, and rather than focusing on how they're getting along, they're focusing on baking a cake, and then they have the track record of getting along to do that that they can carry into doing something else. You'll see some combinations of both of those in the journals. Actually, this is a case where the documentation was incredibly valuable, because the teachers would give detailed documentation, and you could easily see, in the first transcript, the tension, the shifting alliances between

these little girls. I mean, it's like a six page transcript of the kinds of conversations that a parent would never get to be a part of, otherwise. That was incredibly valuable. It was a little scary, to actually see what was happening, but I really appreciated the time the teachers took to do that. And then, getting the report each week about what they did, and how the kids were getting along, and then, by the documentation of the [Friendship] Work Team at the end of the year, you could see how much better all these kids were doing. They were better at doing group activities, there were less, as Sarah often put it, tactical alliances. It was a really great way to actually sort of see the progress as it went along, particularly comparing a transcript from the end of the year with the kids trying to solve a problem in the beginning of the year. You could see some of the skills that they'd learned, how much confidence they'd gained.

***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).**

Laurie: So it was pretty tangible, this evidence, in a way.

Kendall: Yes. In our old school, we got notes home every day. When our kids were infants, up until about two, when the teacher ratio was pretty low, they were reasonably substantive about what my child had done that day, but by the time they were in a classroom with three teachers and twenty five kids, the notes were pretty perfunctory, although we got one every day. I find this kind of documentation much more valuable in terms of helping me understand what's going, what some of the issues are, than those standard notes home every day. At first I was, particularly over the summer where they don't do as much documentation, because they're off on field trips and things, I felt a little out of touch with what was going on, because my daughter is not the kind who, she comes home and you ask her, "What did you do at school today?" and she says, "Nothing," as so many children do. So that was a little hard, but once that started up in the fall, it was a much more meaningful way to keep up with what was happening, and get a real sense of what was going on. I always look for it up on the board, I check my child's journal. It was interesting, I asked Kelsey last night, in preparation for talking with you today, I told her, "I'm going to talk with someone about what your teachers do in your journal, and documenting, and tell me, what do you think about this?" And she said, "Well, because when I go into Kindergarten and other grades I will always be able to remember what I did at preschool." That was her take on it. She looks at it all the time, and you can see that she's decorated it, and always comes to show me when there is a new page in it. In that way, it is a much more meaningful sort of documentation of experience and parent communication, although I do wonder, in my case because Kelsey has had some challenges this year, I've had a lot of communication with the teachers. Kelsey is a pretty vocal child. I wonder what it would be like for parents who had a more shy child, or one who was not quite so engaged. Kelsey is usually doing things that are sort of interesting for teachers to document, and I wonder what it would be like for parents who had a child that was not quite so interesting, if they would get as much. I wonder if they gravitate towards what are the interesting projects, rather than making sure that every child has information.

Laurie: A concern that I've had is for the child who is quiet, who is not naturally particularly verbal.

Kendall: Right. It definitely is a challenge. I talked to another parent who was much less happy with the documentation because they were assigned to a teacher who was not as good at it, and felt like there was not much in there. I think the way it's done, right now, the challenge is that it's very interesting for the teachers to do it like this, but it isn't systematically meeting parents' needs, because it isn't, how much my child gets documented depends on the randomness of the teacher and what their interest is. *Theme: Whose Stories Are Told? (pale blue). There isn't like, a guarantee that once a week they'll go write an update about what my child has done, if that makes sense. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green).

Laurie: Talk some more about that. It fits in line with something that I wanted to ask you, which is if there are ways that this work can be better supported.

Kendall: I know that in one of the other schools that we considered, they are not as Reggio Emilia as this one, but they've clearly taken some of the principles. Each child has a journal, and the teacher did say that they make an effort to go into each child's journal once or twice a week to write something. So, there is more a specific focus on what your child is doing, whereas the way Hilltop is doing it, they tend to document activities, rather than children. There is a lot of stuff about my child because she is involved with a lot of activities, but it doesn't necessarily accurately track her. I would personally appreciate it if there was more of an effort to make sure that at least once a week, or twice a week, there was something, some effort to be made on a regular basis to ensure that every child has something written about what they did in their journal. *Theme: Whose Stories Are Told? (pale blue). A little more focused and deliberate, particularly for a child who is quiet *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green). One of my friends came up last summer, and when she went to visit the preschool, she looked at all the stuff on the bulletin boards, and it was very interesting what her comment was, which was, "Boy, who is that girl R., she must be the alpha wolf in the class because she's in all the documentation." She could see very clearly, the documentation is an accurate reflection of classroom dynamics, in that sense, but from a parent communication point of view, you got a lot of information if you were R.'s parents, but if you were A.'s parents, who is quite quiet, you don't see nearly as much of what is happening with A. I think the teachers individually, from my sense, work with the kids a lot individually, while they focus a lot on the group as a whole, they do have a sense of working with each kid, but that effort they do, and their thinking and that, only comes out in the twice a year conferences. *Theme: Evolution of Documentation Styles (plum). I had another interesting experience with the teacher conferences. I've generally felt unsatisfied with teacher conferences over the years because I don't want to go and just hear, "Oh, your child is doing wonderfully." I mean, I like to hear that, too, but I also want to hear what are some things we should work on, what are some of the challenges she's having. Not surprisingly, teachers are pretty hesitant to say those kinds of things, because they don't know how parents are going to react. I'm the kind of person who thrives on constructive criticism, so I always ask. Occasionally I got some information, but often it was kind of going through the checklist. This winter, or this spring, when we had our teacher conference with Kelsey, we got about an eight page, detailed report on Kelsey, where the teacher, Sarah, worked really hard to describe

what makes Kelsey tick and what are some of the challenges she's having, and interestingly I felt like I got the opposite of what I've had before. Incredible focus on really accurately describing my daughter and her challenges and why she's challenged and how she's handled that, and a portrait of her, and almost none of what the progress she has made is. I really admired the effort and thinking it took for the teacher to give me this sort of detailed document on my daughter. I could make a copy for you, I think it's an interesting context for her. I could see how much effort and thinking had gone into this, but I felt like suddenly....I mean, she did a really amazing job of capturing my daughter and her dynamics, but because there was none of that how far have we come kind of thing, it was like, "Oh boy, you really got what you asked for, didn't you." And I'll say, for the first twenty-four hours or so I was really upset. I was looking at this thing thinking, "Oh my God, my daughter...do I have to go find a psychologist for her?" I got a call a day later from [a parent of] one of Kelsey's good friends, who is also a very intense child, has also had a lot of the challenges of the social group this year, in tears, saying that she was really upset because Sarah went on and on about the challenges this child is having, how they're trying to help her. I told her I did too, and twenty-four hours later, I was feeling a little bit better. Eventually I asked my husband to read this, and he said, "Well, it's a pretty good description of our daughter." He didn't take it nearly as hard as I did, and in the case of the other mother, her husband also said, "It's just accurately describing our daughter." But I guess I wanted the accurate description. I found that valuable, but I also wanted some sense from the teacher of what kind of, not just describing who she is and what the challenges are, but you know, having made some progress. Ironically, it came at a time when I felt like Kelsey was finally able to apply the social skills she had learned, and she was getting along with much better with the other kids, so I was feeling better about things because I was looking at the progress, even though she continues to be very intense, challenging child. I don't want to overplay being challenging, but I think you'll see in here (referring to the journal) she definitely has some, she's very bright, very intense, and definitely has some challenges getting along with other kids. So that was kind of an interesting experience of that. And then, in the documentation of my younger daughter, she's with M. (Rainbow Room teacher), she's a very different personality, she's very easy-going, happy, the kind of kid that every teacher just wants to cuddle up to and take home, she's bright and sunny. So, she's featured in a lot of the documentation in the classroom because she's often doing interesting things, and she's smiling in every picture. It was interesting in the teacher conference, we actually, the teacher conference for her was actually much more typical in terms of what she's done, and so it didn't really tell me anything I didn't already know. The documentation in the Rainbow Room has been, they've had one really fabulous teacher, Myrna, who does everything, and so she definitely documents for the class as a whole. The other teachers don't add very much. Again, the documentation I get is what the class is doing, and my daughter may or may not happen to be featured, rather than, and I hear other parents saying this, too, they like hearing about the classroom activities, but what they really want to know about is their kid. I think with the documentation there is a challenge of how you balance that. *Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green)

Laurie: It's helpful for me to hear these parent perspectives - they provide an interesting take on things for me. One of the things that I'm looking at is if there are particular things that we can do to foster this climate of documentation.

Kendall: It may be intimidating for different staff members when some people have particular strengths in this area. I hadn't thought about the competition aspect. ***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green)**. As an interesting example of this, when Kelsey was having a lot of these social challenges, and I was trying to get information out of her, I found that Sarah, her primary teacher that does all the documentation, is, as some parents have said, the kind that finds something good in every child. I think she was less quick to look at the challenges and dynamics among these girls, and what it was doing to their self-esteem, because she kind of thought they'd all get through it. I ended up in long conversations with M., one of the other teachers there that is seen as a support teacher, who I'd actually heard some other parents criticize as being not quite "with it," but interestingly in terms of the challenges and social dynamics that the kids were having, and being able to accurately describe them, I actually got more information verbally from M., more unfiltered information, than I did from Sarah. What I mean by unfiltered is...maybe I should say more detailed on exactly what was happening, more detailed observation, sort of more quantity of information, because she was clearly looking at it, and clearly understood what was happening and was able to describe it. But because she is not as good a writer, probably, they were not able to capture that. I ended up really valuing that kind of information, and went to talk to her more because I was getting things from her that I wasn't getting from the other teachers. So, trying to figure out some ways, maybe in this situation of the people that are really good at documenting doing some interviewing of the other teachers, and write down some of the things for them, because M. could really talk about this quite well, but she doesn't have the writing skills to be able to put it down. So that was kind of an interesting challenge. The other thing, I think, is that sometimes they feel like they don't want to document things until they can write up a whole big page, and a lot of times I'm really happy to get two or three sentences of something interesting that happened. Like when I talked about, I'd almost rather from a parent communication point of view, make sure I get at least a little something, three lines once a week of, "This week Kelsey was really enjoying playing with the blocks," and things like this. ***Theme: Various Styles of Documenting (bright green)**. A progress report gives me some examples of things to talk about with her, and sometimes I feel they don't want to write about them unless it's really intellectually stimulating. From the parents' point of view, though, sometimes parents just want facts, you know, what's happening. ***Theme: Intellectual Engagement (aqua)**

Laurie: This is a good piece for me to hear. Sometimes I can be quite verbose in my own documentation, and you wonder what is actually getting into the hands of the reader, whether they sort of scan it, whether they just don't have the time to read it...

Kendall: I would love to have anybody e-mail me anything. That's the best way to get in touch with me. I love reading the stuff on the bulletin boards, but unfortunately I find when I'm picking up or dropping off my kids, I have two of

them, and it is chaos, trying to, it's like herding cats to get the two of them in and out the door. So I don't have very much time to read it on the bulletin board, I have to sneak in before I pick them up to try and read it, and hope they don't see me. Then I feel badly that I have to go pick up my kids, or if I've already picked them up, they're asking me to do things. So that's not a very good way...I try to remember to pick up her journal, but I often only remember to take the journal home every other month. It's like, the times that I have to look and think about this is usually after my kids go to bed, so if there was some way to get some of that into my hands earlier, or a website has interesting possibilities. That would work very well for me. I'm on the computer all the time, although it does sort of make it even more public, and you have some sense that the documentation, that there's some things in my child's journal that aren't up on the...**Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).*

Laurie: That aren't up for public consumption?

Kendall: Right. So maybe doing some of the documentation on the website, stuff that's the main class activities, would actually get it into more people's hands. I mean, I think generally, with parents you have to give them the information in a lot of different mediums, and hope one of them hits. **Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).*

Laurie: You have to consider your population, of course. Literacy, if people have online access...

Kendall: For Hilltop parents that would be pretty easy. I've noticed since they've started using e-mail to communicate with parents, the director e-mails communication to parents, there's suddenly a lot more information getting out to parents. I mean, I would love it if the teachers were directly on e-mail and we could e-mail them with questions, because sometimes trying to talk to them before, you know, when you're doing drop-off or pick-up is really challenging. Hilltop has created group e-mail addresses for each of the classrooms, and I would adore to have Sunlight Room teachers e-mail us some of the classroom wide documentation, because then, ultimately, it makes it easy to forward on to friends and relatives. **Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue)*

Laurie: At your discretion.

Kendall: Right, at my discretion. Most of them are produced digitally, anyways.

Laurie: For some of the teachers who are technologically comfortable it would be fine, but there might be a few challenges for some others for whom the technology is still new.

Kendall: Right. It almost strikes me that in order to support documentation, you need a tech person around to help let the teachers focus on what they do, and have someone else taking care of the technical side of things. **Theme: Tools of Technology (light blue).*

Laurie: Hilltop is quite unique in terms of the creative way they have carved time out their budget to free teachers up to do this kind of documentation work, obviously at some sacrifice, but that doesn't happen in a lot of places.

Kendall: In terms of really understanding what's happening with my daughter, this form of communication is far more valuable than anything I've had at other schools. I think there are a lot of ways to make it go more. One of the things I've really noticed at the different schools we've been involved in, my sense is that the ability to do this kind of documentation and observation attracts a different quality of people into teaching than you would find elsewhere, because, from what I've noticed from being at Hilltop, it turns it from a childcare job like a service business into an intellectual endeavour, and I very much value that. Obviously I'm a highly intellectual person, myself, and the extent to which you can make this intellectual you draw in higher calibre people. I know there is some sense at Hilltop, among parents that I've heard various times, that the teachers' intellectual priorities take precedence over the need to communicate with parents. The documentation is serving the teachers' intellectual needs much more than it is the parent need for communication. There's a pretty strong vein, I've heard a pretty strong vein of people talking about that, particularly from parents whose children are quieter, or not as dynamic.

Laurie: Or not as visible.

Kendall: Right, less visible. A lot of them don't quite understand what documentation is, and don't quite understand its value. Hilltop has not been very good, actually, at communicating the purpose of documentation, and how it fits into the overall program. I mean, I definitely noticed in the, we started last summer, so we didn't get the standard orientation, and then so in the fall I thought, "Great, I'm really going to hear them describe what the emergent curriculum philosophy is, and how documentation fits in," and I actually didn't hear a really good description. I think, in some ways, parents would be more supportive if it was better explained to them.

Laurie: So that feels like there is a gap.

Kendall: Definitely. Definitely. To communicate to parents what's the purpose in this, how does it...and, quite honestly, what parents care about is, "How does this benefit my child's educational needs?" I'm very cognizant of how does it fit into the larger issues of creating a strong center and maintaining, retaining good teachers, but for most parents whose kids are there for two years and out, if you can find time to sit them down and talk about that they understand it, but in the short run, you know, it's "What is my kid doing?" So, I think the documentation movement needs to figure out how to do a better job of bridging that gap with parents, because if you can turn parents into supporters, they will want to do more of that, but to turn parents into supporters, it has to do a better job serving parents, more equally serving parents. I mean, the interesting perspective on this is that Kelsey's former teacher, the one in California that we went back to visit in November, because she's very close to this teacher, and we talked to her about Hilltop and how fabulous it is, and she said, "Oh

yes, before I came to H. school I did all Reggio Emilia stuff, and I did my Master's program on it." I now realize that she told us when we moved up here to look for a school with this, I didn't know what the name was, something Italian, something as a good alternative for Kelsey if Kelsey was going to stay in preschool for another year, and she was absolutely right on. This woman, I can easily see why she was attracted to Reggio Emilia. She's Turkish, she has a Master's in Art History, she's highly intellectual and that's why I liked her, that's why she liked my daughter because she could see how intellectual my daughter was. But I wonder what's it like to go in...I think she liked the intellectual aspect of the Montessori program, because there is a real strong theory behind all the activities. She's the kind of teacher who would have loved documentation, and I wonder what it's like not to be able to do that. This other school gives the head teachers two hours of planning time a day, they have lots of planning time, that she's using in different ways, so that's kind of interesting to think about. I have to say that, for my older daughter, I'm actually thrilled that she got the experience of both. I think Reggio Emilia has some really strong things, but when my husband and I were talking about this last night, we were looking at our younger daughter, Abby, who is three and a half, and realizing she doesn't know her ABCs, that she doesn't, she was playing with a bunch of different coloured erasers yesterday, some shaped like guinea pigs and hearts and things, and I said, "Well, Abby, let's sort them," and Abby said, "What's sorting?" I realized that in the Montessori approach, by this age they would have spent hours sorting teeny tiny things. Kelsey was very lucky to have both sets of skills, because I think they both have some real strengths, but I think each of them also have some distinctive misses (?). I sort of wonder about my daughter Abby that's going to go mostly through the Reggio Emilia stuff, and in her case she'll be the youngest in her grade when she starts Kindergarten because she's an August birthday, and will she be behind because she hasn't had some of that basic, academic training?

Laurie: Which is quite unique to Montessori. The approach is much more skills focused than a lot of preschools.

Kendall: But even, I'm talking about basic ABCs and counting and things like that where, such as Hilltop...I can understand them not doing the full skill thing, it's kind of fun, but you know, basic ABCs and numbers and sort of patterns and sorting and things, in the simple sense, I'm not seeing any of that. A good indication is Kelsey's comment when we talked about going to Hilltop. One day she said, I forget how it came up, she said, "You don't learn anything at Hilltop. At H. school I learned lots of things. At Hilltop you just play." So, interesting to hear a five year old's perspective on that. In my point of view, now actually I asked her...that came up last winter. I asked her this spring, "What have you learned at Hilltop?" She said, "I have learned how to be a friend." I said, "You have, and you have worked hard at that, and I am really proud of hard you've worked at it." She got all teary (?) and said, "Thank you, Mommy, thank you so much." It has been hard work for her, so it was interesting to see that she could articulate by the end of the year what she had learned. But she definitely had a very different sense of things. I think so much of Reggio Emilia is so dependent on the teachers, just much more so...I happened to notice yesterday when I went into the classroom, Kelsey was down with one of the

less experienced, less dynamic teachers who had five or six kids, they were all running around and she was sort of spacing out and that unstructured environment works really well when you have an active, engaged teacher, but without that, it can degenerate into just play, and not doing a whole lot, a free-for-all. If you're going to do this approach, which I think has some real benefits, you have to pay teachers more because you need a higher quality of teacher to make it happen.

Laurie: Which is a challenge for preschool, and childcare, universally, of course.

Kendall: Absolutely. That's why I work on fund-raising for Hilltop. I feel really strongly that we need to find out ways to raise the pay for teachers.

Laurie: What do value or appreciate most about this educational experience for your children?

Kendall: I think the teaching of really concrete skills about how to get along in the world, and that this is one of the few places that sees that as skills that can be taught and nurtured. **Theme: Primacy of Relationships (pink).*

Laurie: Obviously relationships are highly valued here.

Appendix F: Books and Videos Involving Hilltop Staff

Books

- Carter, M. & Curtis, D. (1994). *Training Teachers: A Harvest of Theory and Practice*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Carter, M. & Curtis, D. (1996). *Reflecting Children's Lives: A Handbook for Planning Child Centred Curriculum*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Carter, M. & Curtis, D. (1996). *Spreading the News: Sharing the Stories of Early Childhood Education*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Carter, M. & Curtis, D. (1998). *The Visionary Director: A Handbook for Dreaming, Organizing, and Improvising in Your Center*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Carter, M. & Curtis, D. (2000). *The Art of Awareness: How Observation Can Change Your Teaching*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Carter, M. & Curtis, D. (2003). *Designs for Learning and Living*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Fleet, A., Patterson, C., & Robertson, J. (2006). *Insights Behind Early Childhood Pedagogical Documentation*. Castle Hill, N.S.W.: Pademelon Press.
- Pelo, A. (2000). *That's Not Fair: A Teacher's Guide to Activism with Young Children*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Videos

- Building Bridges Between Teachers and Families
- Children at the Center: Reflective Teachers at Work
- New Voices, New Leaders
- Setting Sail: An Emergent Curriculum Project
- Side by Side: Mentoring Teachers for Reflective Practice
- Time with Toddlers: Training for Caregivers
- Thinking Big: Extending Emergent Curriculum Projects
- To See Takes Time: Growing Curriculum from Children's Theories

CDs/DVDs

- A Study of Early Childhood Program Environments
- Giving Children More Languages
- Leave No Child Inside: Outdoor ECE Program Environments
- Take Time to See Through Children's Eyes
- Visionary Infant and Toddler Program Environments

Appendix G

A Day In the Life of a Preschooler at Hilltop

The goals we have for children's experiences and the Hilltop teaching philosophy guide the day's flow and emphasis.

Children's days at Hilltop are full of open time for play, exploration, and collaboration. We don't pay much attention to the clock or to teacher-driven schedules, but aim to be responsive to the work and play in which the children are engaged. Our commitment is to be a place in which childhood can unfold with joy, wonder, and delight.

Arrival (after 7 am)

As children arrive in the morning, they make their first plans for their play and then leap in! We use "planning boards" at Hilltop, boards with photos and drawings (often made by the children) representing the play spaces in a classroom; children slip their symbol onto a photo or drawing to indicate their plan for their play. The planning boards invite children into the classrooms and art spaces, helping children step into their day with intention and excitement.

Morning

In our classrooms, children have opportunities to engage in sensory exploration, drama play, block building, game playing, puzzle work, writing and drawing, and reading. You'll see children playing with their peers or alone, building with blocks, dressing up, immersed in constructing with Lego or Kapla blocks, up to their elbows in blubber or play-dough, reading books, sorting tiny objects, or writing books and drawing pictures. You'll see teachers watching and listening to kids, documenting their play with photos and notes, offering resources to support and extend their play, and playing alongside kids. You'll seldom (if ever) see us involved in didactic teaching with the children, or leading a formalized group learning activity. We believe that children learn as they pursue their passions and questions; our job, we believe, is to deepen and extend that learning.

Our art spaces invite children to use a range of media to explore their ideas and represent their understandings. They are spaces both for spontaneous exploration and for focused project work. In our art spaces, you'll see children engaged in exploratory work, sensory discovery, and detailed, intricate work with varied art and construction media. You'll see adults working closely with children, facilitating their use of materials, asking questions, or offering materials that provoke children to stretch their thinking. We watch and listen to the children closely as they work, taking photos and making notes about the children's work. Our documentation in the classrooms and in the studio guides our planning. Children often revisit their studio work, adding to it, revising it, reflecting on it.

Children are welcome to move from one plan to another at any time. We usually see kids become immersed in a project, an idea, or a game, and staying immersed for long stretches of time.

Lunchtime (noon)

As lunch approaches, we turn our attention to finishing the projects and play that have filled our morning. Children and teachers work together to put away the materials from the morning or to make plans for saving work in progress. Once the space is mostly neatened up, children and teachers gather for a meeting, sharing songs, stories about the morning's work and play, or talking together about issues important to the group.

Children and teachers eat lunch together, often in small groups. Lunch time leads to nap time in the preschool classrooms. Each classroom group has created its own rhythms and routines aimed at nurturing a sense of coziness and the warm intimacy of a family as we eat and sleep together.

Naptime (about 2 pm, earlier in Rainbow)

Naptime lasts about an hour in our preschool classrooms. We don't expect that all the children will sleep; after about thirty minutes, we offer the children who are still awake a "nap bag" full of intriguing, quirky toys or several books. We want nap time to be a nourishing, soothing time of day for all the children, not something to be endured by children whose nap days are behind them!

Afternoon

As nap comes to an end, children put away their nap things, put on their shoes, and make their way to the snack table. Once kids have eaten snack, they are invited to make a plan for their afternoon work time. We offer choices at this time which we hope will keep the classrooms calm and peaceful as children wake up from their naps. Once all the kids are up and moving, the classrooms become a noisy hub of activity again. We nearly always offer kids the choice of time outside at Coe Park or in the front yard for a good chunk of the afternoon.

Pickup Time (before 6 pm)

At 5:00, the kids who have been playing outside head back indoors, and the kids who have been inside clean up the classrooms. We offer children a simple snack of crackers, water, and some fruit. The last part of our days are cozy and sweet; children and teachers often curl up together for a story, or play board games, or write books and draw, or build and build with Legos. We aim to end the day gently, helping children move from the fullness of their days at Hilltop to the embrace of their families for the evening.

Appendix H

Hilltop Hoops

“I know!” exclaimed Julia one morning after a fierce game of basketball. “How about we play basketball and Ann is the coach and somebody makes a movie of us? If she makes copies, then every kid who doesn’t know how to play basketball can have one of those movies and they can learn!”

That’s just what happened during the six-month project in which a small group of children explored the intricacies of teaching basketball to other children. These six children were drawn together by their passion for basketball, a passion which grew from their developmental interest in rule-making and teamwork. To deepen the children’s thinking about basketball and to support their learning about these developmental themes, I asked them to teach other children about the game; this challenged them to work together to communicate their understandings.

The kids spent several months preparing to make a teaching film. They painted team jerseys and poster-sized mascots. They drew pictures to illustrate rules, exercises, and game strategies. We visited a Husky women’s basketball team practice to hone our basketball skills. The kids worked with a film-maker to develop a plan for the movie. They decided to blend footage of the kids playing basketball with interviews in which they would elaborate on important ideas and demonstrate exercises; they planned to balance this live footage with close-up images of their drawings about rules.

The filming took several days. The children were both excited and nervous, eager to realize their plan on film and self-conscious about the camera. They encouraged each other through the challenges, though; they had become a close-knit team, quick to offer a kind or supportive word.

After the filming was complete, the children planned a party to celebrate their hard work. They designed an elaborate cake—a model of a basketball court—and sent invitations to their families: “we’re going to have cake, and there’s going to be a video about basketball that you get to see. We’ll eat pizza while we watch the video.” Kids made a program for their families, drawing self-portraits and writing their biographies.

When the party finally took place, it surpassed children’s giddiest hopes. The children watched their teaching video with shy pride. Their families gave them a rousing ovation, the pizza was plentiful, and the cake was satisfyingly fancy. These children had experienced the challenges and rewards of collaboration, of careful planning, and of thoughtful communication, learning about much more than basketball as they worked together to create a teaching video for other children.

Appendix I

A Practical Guide to Helping Children Resolve Conflicts

Children's passionate emotions and intensity stand as challenges to adults working with children to resolve conflicts. We are often tempted to leap in, separate the children, impose a solution, and congratulate ourselves on "stopping the fight." And, indeed, we probably have stopped the fight—but we've also put a halt to play and missed an opportunity for important learning.

At Hilltop, we see conflicts as opportunities for nurturing self-awareness, practicing problem-solving skills, and strengthening friendships. Our primary focus during a conflict (after assuring that the children are safe) is helping children practice and master the process of negotiating solutions to their conflicts.

Our goals for children during conflicts lead to some goals for ourselves as we help children resolve conflicts:

Our goals for children are that they:

1. calm themselves enough to negotiate
2. find words for their feelings, needs, and wants
3. listen to others' feelings, needs, and wants
4. agree to a mutually satisfying solution
5. continue to play together and feel friendly or understanding

And our goals for adults are that they:

1. use calm voices, move to children's eye level, model deep breathing and other calming techniques
2. describe kids' feelings, paraphrase their needs, wants, and hopes
3. coach children in active listening techniques
4. allow enough time for a solution to be found. Resist leaping in with solutions or suggestions, allow silence and debate to happen. Check with each child: "Do you agree to this solution?" Continue the negotiations until each person agrees.
5. describe the children's success at solving their conflict

Goal 1: Adults use calm voices, move to children's eye level, and model calming techniques to help children calm themselves so that they can negotiate.

When you approach a conflict between children, kneel or sit with the children at their eye level. Let them know that you are there to support and help them as they work to solve the problem. It's helpful to keep your voice low and calm, rather than trying to yell over the conflict. Phrases which communicate your readiness to be a resource include:

- "I heard you yelling at each other and came to see if you have a problem that you need help solving."
- "Stella's crying and her face looks angry. I think you have a problem that you need to solve together before you can keep playing."
- "I'm worried that you are so angry that you are going to hurt each other. Let me help you slow down; when you're able to be safe with each other, we can work together to solve your problem."

It's also helpful to model some deep breathing and other calming techniques for the children:

- "Let's take a few slow breaths together . . . in and out, in and out."
- "Let's all close our eyes while I count to six."
- "Let's move away from this work place to a place where we won't be distracted by these toys. You can come back here when the problem is solved." (Make sure that other children don't begin playing in the space you're temporarily leaving).

Goal 2: To help children find appropriate words to express their feelings and ideas, adults describe children's feelings and paraphrase their needs, wants, and hopes.

Make an agreement with the children about how they will take turns talking and listening. You might say: "First, Luke will tell us about the problem and Rita will listen. Then, we'll switch and Rita will tell us her ideas and Luke will listen." Another way to focus your conversation on problem-solving is to ask the children: "What have you already done to solve the problem?" Some strategies you can use to guide negotiations include:

repeating and restating a child's comments

- "So, Junco, you were playing with the blubber and Harry took the tools you wanted?"
- "Let me see if I understand what you're saying: Lila, you've been waiting a long time and you want to have your turn now. Is that right?"

coaching children by suggesting appropriate ways to phrase their ideas

- “Tell him: ‘I’m using it now. You can have a turn when I’m done.’”
- “Say: ‘I feel impatient. I want a turn soon. When can it be my turn?’”
- “When Rex knocks over your block tower, how do you feel?”
- “Instead of saying ‘You can’t come to my house,’ a more clear and honest message would be ‘I’m angry right now and don’t feel like playing with you.’”
- “I won’t allow you to use your hands for hurting. Some strong words you can use instead are: ‘I’m furious right now!’”

asking a child directly

- “What do you think the problem is?”
- “How are you part of this problem?”
- “What would help solve this problem?”

Goal 3: Adults help children listen to their friends’ feelings, needs, and wants by coaching children in active listening techniques.

One way to encourage active and attentive listening is to hold your negotiations in a part of the room away from the scene of the conflict. It’s also helpful to encourage children to keep their bodies still while they listen, reminding them that, for example, “We’re not going to hold any toys in our hands while we work on solving this problem.” Some teachers have had success using a Talking Stick, a special stick used only during conflict resolution. Children and adults take turns holding the stick; only the person holding the stick is allowed to talk (this also applies to you, the adult!). Some phrases that support active listening include:

- “Look right at Annie’s eyes while you’re telling her your idea.”
- “Will you tell Ian what you heard him say?”
- “Ian, did Annie understand your message?”

Goal 4: Adults help children agree to a mutually satisfying solution by allowing enough time for a solution to be found.

It is crucial for adults to resist the urge to leap into the resolution process with solutions or suggestions, and, instead, to allow both debate and silence to happen. If you feel the urge to say something, try repeating or restating the problem, solutions that the children have suggested, or reasons that children have rejected proposed solutions—then stop talking. Don’t be afraid of silence. When children have enough time and feel enough trust in you and each other, they will find solutions to their problems.

Throughout the negotiation process, continue to check with each child about ideas they want to add to the process and about their suggestions for solutions. You might ask questions that help children think in more detail about their solutions. Continue the negotiations until each person agrees to a solution.

- "You sound like you're stuck right now. I know that you'll get unstuck and find a solution."
- "You can take as much time as you need to think about other solutions that might work."
- "Sam's idea is that you each use one truck and put the third truck away for now. Do you agree to that idea, Martha?"
- "Martha doesn't agree. Martha, please tell Sam why you don't agree."
- "Bert suggests that you take turns with the elephant. How might that work? Who would take the first turn? How will you know when your turn is done?"
- "We need to find a solution that each person feels happy about and agrees to. We'll keep working together until you all agree."

Goal 5: To help children continue to play together and feel confident in their relationships with each other, adults describe children's success at solving their conflict.

Once the children have found a solution that they all agree to, you can affirm the children's work and success by describing the process they used to solve their conflict. When you tell the story of their negotiations, you help "set" the process in their minds, and they can draw on that again in later conflicts. Here's an example of what this sounds like:

- "You had a big problem to solve. You both wanted to be first with the water table. Neither one of you wanted to wait. First, Louise suggested that she could have the first turn and Max could have a turn after her. But Max didn't agree to that. Then, Max suggested that he could go first and Louise could go after him. But Louise didn't agree to that. Then, Max suggested that he could take a short turn and Louise could have a long turn after him. Louise still didn't agree. Then, Louise had the idea that we get a tub and fill it up with water so both of you could have turn with water right away, without waiting. Max said he agreed. Louise said she agreed. You solved the problem together! Let's go get a tub for water."

Appendix J

Conference Report for student at Hilltop Children's Center

(The original report given to parents is beautifully put together as a booklet on textured paper, complete with photos. The following is the text component of this report.)

Caleb's⁴²: conference

Caleb is grounded in quiet thoughtfulness, eager curiosity, and a playful, ironic sense of humor. He enjoys a rich internal life, and a deep sense of trust in the world around him. He's a gift to us all.

This book offers a developmental snapshot of Caleb in six learning areas at this mid-year point, grounded in my daily observations of him at work and at play. These are observations in the context of his life at Hilltop, as he pursues learning through play, through wrestling with problems, through living in a community of children and adults.

Ann

Initiative

Caleb sinks into play, immersing himself in elaborate Lego construction, shaping clay into dramatically erupting volcanoes, stacking Kapla planks higher and higher, or assembling puzzles slowly and with deliberation. He brings his whole self to his work, absorbed by the projects he takes on; he appreciates long stretches of time during which he can play without interruption, focused intently on his work. Caleb weaves playfulness, humor, and cheerful patience into his focused determination; his work holds both resolve and lightness. An example: Yesterday, Caleb and I settled in with a basket of dominoes and some stairs and bridges. I arranged one set of stairs leading up to the bridge and another set leading back down on the other side of the bridge. "Let's make the dominoes go up the stairs and across the bridge!" Caleb exclaimed. We set to work, placing a domino on each step, then slowly forming a row of dominoes across the bridge – when a slight bump set them all clattering down. Caleb laughed and laughed, then scooped the fallen dominoes into a pile and began again, carefully placing them on the stairs; he hadn't gotten far up the stairs when they fell again. More laughter – and another beginning. Caleb and I worked on this project for about an hour, aiming to get those dominoes up the stairs, across the bridge, and down the second set of stairs. We made it all the way a handful of times; mostly, though, they came tumbling down part-way through the process. Caleb's determination never wavered and his humor didn't fail. He was committed to his goal and relaxed with the process of achieving it.

Caleb approaches technical problems with cheerful resolve, sticking with them with tenacity and good humor. For example, in a recent drama game with his good buddies D., L., and L., Caleb constructed a house made of cardboard and fabric clipped together. As the kids piled into their house, the fabric began to sag and the cardboard became wobblier and wobblier, until, finally, the whole house caved in. Caleb crawled out from the pile of fabric and cardboard, laughing at being caught in the collapse, and set to work rebuilding the house. He evaluated the original structure, trying to understand why it fell, and attempted to remedy the original design flaws, placing the cardboard in new positions and clipping the fabric firmly in place with a lot of clothespins. His friend's initial dismay at the collapse of

⁴² "Caleb" is a pseudonym.

their house turned to playfulness as they joined Caleb in the rebuilding; Caleb's cheerful confidence that they'd fix the problem was contagious. When the house caved in a second time, all the kids emerged laughing, ready to rebuild again. This willingness to take on a problem and stick with it until it's fixed is typical of Caleb; he seems undaunted by technical challenges – and often seems to relish them!

Caleb is attuned to details. He notices subtleties and complexities, and pays close attention to the relationships between ideas, people, objects, or events. Caleb seeks out knowledge, eager to investigate new ideas. I often hear him use phrases like "I wonder why" and "I'm discovering . . ." He wants to understand the world in technical rather than whimsical or fanciful ways, explaining that, "A sewer is how water comes into sinks and bathtubs. The water first comes from lakes and rivers." "A dump is where you put garbage. It's a big hole in the ground." "My clay is getting hard and dry because I'm patting it so much and that makes it dry because the patting is hard and fast." Caleb is eager to extend and deepen his work. I often invite him to create directions for structures he's created and Caleb willingly agrees, crafting step-by-step directions for making Zoob snowmobiles and blueprints for parquetry designs. Caleb embraces these opportunities to shift and deepen his thinking, eager to solidify and expand his knowledge of the world, to explore complex ideas, to enrich his understanding.

In his recent work with the "airplane work team," Caleb has been gobbling up opportunities to extend and deepen his understandings of how airplanes work. The work team is a group of six children who have come together around their shared passion for folding and flying paper airplanes; my focus with the work team is on creating opportunities for the children to articulate and reflect on their theories about why airplanes stay in the air. Caleb listens carefully to other kids' theories and offers his own: "Wings make sure an airplane doesn't get so high that a plane crash happens. When the wings go pointing out they keep it from just crashing." "The airplane stays up because of the wings. It pushes the air over the wings and under the wings and the wind makes the airplane go high in the sky and go very slowly down."

Caleb takes in all that's happening and reflects on it deeply. He is open to the world and to other people, confident in himself and in his ability to encounter new ideas, sure and steady as he moves through the world. Caleb seeks out a range of experiences; he is at home in the world of Legos, certainly, but is eager to explore painting, drawing, clay, play dough . . . Caleb ventures away from his home territory with confident curiosity.

Social Learning

Caleb has formed solid, playful friendships with children in our group. He's generous and relaxed with people, tolerant of their foibles and quirks. Caleb is at ease with other children, welcoming them into his play. He seems as comfortable working with a handful of good buddies as he is in a large group of friends, or alone. Caleb pays attention to kids' likes and dislikes, their habits and hopes; he commented to Z. that "When you come to my house, I'll show you the horses in the Lego catalogue. I saw your Lego structure with lots of horses and I know you like them."

Caleb is quick to acknowledge children's strengths and challenges: "S. makes really good dinosaurs with clay." "M. is a good drawer about princesses." "M. gets sad every day when she says goodbye to her mom." He doesn't give his observations the weight of judgments, though: S. is not a better gal because of her mastery with clay and M. is not to be scorned because she cries when she says goodbye to her mom. Similarly, Caleb doesn't judge himself in light of his friends' abilities and struggles: he's doesn't see himself as a slacker compared to S., or as a better person than M. Caleb seems to understand that he's growing and learning, that he's good at some things and not particularly good at others, and is usually able to acknowledge that about others.

Caleb, L., and L. spend long stretches of time together; their shared friendship continues to be an anchor for each of them. Caleb's most passionate conflicts take place with these long-time friends; their friendship is a safe place for each of them. Caleb has developed solid friendships with other children, as well. He builds and builds and builds with L., D., and I., and often seeks out S., O. S., and R for quiet, focused work like Zoob construction and book-making.

Caleb enjoys a rich internal life; he often becomes absorbed in work towards an inner vision and the world around him fades away. Sometimes, this gives rise to conflicts with other kids—often over Legos. Caleb may be lying on the ground near a big pile of Legos, carefully arranging and rearranging pieces on his Lego structure, seemingly unaware of the children working with Legos around him, when he lets out a wail: "I need that piece and you took it!" Startled, the other Lego builders stop and stare at Caleb: "It was in the pile of Legos! You weren't using that piece!" Caleb responds, "But I need it for my structure. I was going to use it!" At times like this, I intervene to call attention to the conflict between Caleb's internal world and the experiences of children outside that world: "Caleb, you have an idea about where that Lego piece could fit on your structure: you have a clear picture in your mind that shows that piece on your ship. But that piece was in the pile that all the Lego builders are using; it was up for grabs for any kid to use. The other kids don't know the idea in your mind—they can't see the picture of your structure that's in your mind. They just see the Lego piece in the pile."

As children move from the parallel play of two- and three-year-olds into the interactive play of four- and five-year-olds, two of their developmental tasks are to become conscious of their own thinking and to learn to navigate multiple perspectives. These are challenging tasks, and often are at the heart of conflicts between children; for Caleb, with his vibrant and engaging internal life, they can become even harder. He knows which Lego pieces he's going to need for his structure, or where the head lights and steering wheel ought to go in the fire truck he's building with a couple friends, or how the players in the chasing game will take turns—he sees his ideas clearly in his mind. His work these days is to communicate those internal scenarios, so that his companions understand his ideas. I coach Caleb about ways to make his ideas visible to his friends. I suggest, "Your friends don't know your ideas yet, because your ideas are in your mind. Tell them your ideas for this game." "Tell your friends what you want to build; when they understand your idea, it'll be easier for them to build with you." And I remind Caleb that other children have ideas to communicate: "I bet your friend has an idea for this construction project. I wonder how he wants the fire truck to look?" "Let's ask your friends about their ideas for this game. You might have the same ideas, or you might have different ideas."

Creative Representation

Children represent their experiences, understandings, perceptions, and feelings in many ways. Pretending, building, drawing, painting, sculpting, and dancing are some of the "languages" that children use to explore and communicate about their world. Caleb is fluent in many of these languages.

Caleb is a master of three-dimensional representation. Legos, of course, are his forté; when kids ask me for help with Legos, I usually refer them to Caleb, who cheerfully offers them guidance and support.

In his big construction work with blocks and cardboard, Caleb often dons a hard hat, goggles, and a tool belt; he blurs the line between drama play and reality as he takes on the persona of a construction worker, a welder, a brick-layer. Caleb knows that he's a master builder and grounds himself in that identity.

Caleb's pretend play usually involves tools of some sort: he may be a rescue worker with an ambulance full of sophisticated medical machinery, or a boat captain setting out with

large ice-breaking tools, or a fire fighter ready to employ the “jaws of life.” Caleb steers clear of drama games full of wild adventures, though; his games seem less about whimsy and more about being a purposeful adult in the world. The rhythms of daily life are woven into Caleb’s pretend games, as are family relationships and the joys of household repairs.

Caleb revels in the sensory aspects of paint, exploring the nuances and the drama of color, the slick smoothness of paint, the intriguing shapes that bristles and brushes make on paper. His paintings use bold color to emphasize energy and movement.

Similarly, Caleb enjoys the sensuality of clay, less concerned with using it for representational sculptures than with smoothing it, squishing, wetting, patting, rolling, and stretching it.

Caleb’s drawings are more like live-action films than like still photography: “I drew somebody welding. See that hot stuff? That’s the welding torch on the iron beams. Flames are coming out.” Caleb sometimes struggles with forming shapes on paper: lines are wobbly, the corners of squares are out of alignment, circles get away from him. He isn’t put off by the struggle, though, and seems wholly comfortable with the process of mastering a pen. I appreciate Caleb’s willingness to keep at it, not getting drawn into frustration or worries that his drawing doesn’t look the way he intends it to look or a sense that he’s inadequate. Caleb simply keeps doing the work, and his fingers will soon become as masterful with drawing and writing as they are with those tiny Lego pieces.

Physical and Sensory Learning

Oh, those skillful little fingers! Caleb’s fine motor skills have received a tremendous boost from the millions of Legos he’s finessed into place over the last couple years. He is fine-tuning his manual coordination as he expands his construction work to include materials like Kapla planks and Zoobs, and as he explores drawing and writing.

Caleb is growing into his body. He runs and climbs and leaps with exuberance. He often initiates physical contact with other kids, throwing his arms around a buddy in a full-body hug, rolling around on the floor with a friend, arms and legs locked around each other. When another child initiates the contact, though, Caleb is less relaxed, often pulling away or tensing his body; I’ve begun to offer Caleb phrases to use in these situations: “I’m not ready for that game!” “I need you to ask me before you start to wrestle with me.” “I don’t want to play this game right now!” Caleb seems increasingly at ease taking physical risks, leaping from the climber at Coe Park, taking part in balancing games and obstacle courses, hurrying eagerly to dance class.

Language and Emerging Literacy

Caleb is intrigued by language, by the sounds and meanings of words. When he comes across a word that sounds funny to him, he repeats it over and over, laughing to himself as he says it. He explores patterns of sound and the rhythm of language, repeating phrases like “cardboard box” and “a police boat really floats.” Caleb’s attention to detail is reflected in his use of language; here’s a conversation Caleb and I had recently:

Caleb: “My family has that white stuff that you put on waffles. It’s powdery. I don’t remember what it’s called.”

Ann: “Can you tell me more about it?”

Caleb: “You can eat it not on waffles, too.”

Ann: “Is it sweet?”

Caleb: “It’s kind of tender and kind of sweet.”

Ann: “Ah! You’re describing powdered sugar.”

Caleb: "Yeah! That's what it's called – powdered sugar. Because it's sweet like sugar and it's powdery."

Caleb asks about unfamiliar words, eager to understand their meaning and to master their use. He enjoys plays on words and puns; with his attention to the specific meanings of words, he understands jokes that use a word in several ways, or that use a word in a silly, unexpected way. Caleb appreciates the flow of narrative, listening carefully to stories, thinking out loud about the plot, and wondering about characters' feelings and motivations. He lingers over books, telling a story from a book's illustrations.

Caleb clearly understands the connection between spoken and printed language. He recognizes that printed words stay the same from one reading to the next, and that letters are symbols that encode ideas, feelings, and experiences. He knows that letters have names, and that they fit together in particular ways to form particular words. At lunch a few weeks ago, Caleb ate his alphabet soup one letter at a time; he scooped up a letter in his spoon, studied it a moment, then called out a word that uses that letter: "Hey, letters from my name: 'C,' 'R,' 'A.'" "'B' is for my baby brother." "I found 'A' for me and for L." "'C' is for my mom and my dad and B. and me."

Caleb isn't particularly interested in the world of formal literacy right now; reading and writing aren't his pursuits these days. He is building a foundation for literacy, though, with his enjoyment of books, his interest in the rhythms of language and the meanings of words, and his awareness of the uses of written English to encode ideas, feelings, experiences, and information.

Logic and Math Learning

Caleb's play reflects his understandings of logic and math concepts. Some examples:

- Coaching another child with her Lego construction, Caleb explained that, at home, "We don't put two sirens and flashing lights together except to make a medium-sized rocket." Caleb's comment speaks to his ease with the language of math.
- Glancing out the window, Caleb noticed the moon, pale in the sky. "The moon looks very small. But the moon is bigger than Zoobs. It looks small because it's far away, but if you went close, it would be big. Bigger than a house or a skyscraper." Caleb's comments demonstrate his understanding of spatial relationships and of the principles of perspective.
- After building a car with blocks on top of a building platform, Caleb took out a tape measure: "We gotta measure this whole car so we know how to build it right. It's 20-40 pounds! We better make lots of power in the engine to make this big car go." His play demonstrates his understandings that the size and weight of objects can be measured, that we use numbers to represent height, size, and weight, and that bigger numbers mean "more" and smaller numbers mean "less." Caleb's comments also reflect his awareness of the correlation between weight and power – more weight means more power is needed to propel it forward.
- Legos, Legos, and more Legos! Caleb spends long stretches of time every day constructing with Legos, creating cars, space ships, boats, and fire trucks that are detailed, symmetrical, and balanced. He brings this attention to symmetry and balance to his block constructions, as well. This building work, on the small scale of Legos or the bigger scale of hollow blocks, provides opportunities for Caleb to deepen his understanding of spatial relationships and to practice the sorting and seriation that are the foundation for formal math work.

Caleb Reflects . . .

I'm really good at putting caulking in my house; me and my dad, when I was a three-year-old, we would put new caulking in and use screwdrivers to dig out the old caulking. The thing I'm really good at is Legos – at make-suring they don't fall apart. I want to learn about how do people fish with spears and nets. I'm good as a friend but sometimes I don't visit my friends. I don't like when my friends wrestle with me; I just like doing calm things together. I'm a good friend when they don't be so tough. My family used to go hiking before B. was born, like on Mt. Rainier that was covered with dirt, no snow; we used our feet and hands to climb up, not ropes or chains. We can't go hiking now because B. can't walk very high when we hike through tall grass. I like to have a brother because there's always someone to play with who is always at my house.

Caleb: conference

I'm good at building big block structures. The way I make them steady is by putting little blocks to steady the big blocks. That's one way.

The idea I have about the control panel I made for the big blocks is we could put the control panel on top of the highest step of the stepladder and put blocks all the way around it and you have to climb up the blocks to get to the control panel.

I'm good at Legos, of course.

I guess I'm good at most building things, actually.

The thing I like to do with Lukas is Harry Potter games, like in the big castle of Hogwarts. The thing I don't like with Lukas is he often wants to play roughhousing games and I don't like those. I like gentle games.

My mom I love, and I love my dad. I love pretty much my whole family. I hope I get the Lego C3P0.

In his work and play, Caleb weaves together his gifts of clear thinking and insightfulness with his enjoyment of detailed work on projects that draw on his understanding of the physical world. He brings together abstract thinking and concrete work, relishing the challenges and rewards of each. And to all his work and play, Caleb brings an ironic, playful sense of humor and a deep, compassionate heart.

Photo: sunflower drawing

Caleb brings curiosity and thoughtfulness to his encounters with people, ideas, elements of the natural world, interesting events, and intriguing objects. He delves deeply into ideas and explorations, eager to make meaning, to uncover connections, and to expand his understandings. Caleb savors ideas, reflecting on questions, understandings, and discoveries internally for a long while, tucking his reflections away to draw on later, when they can inform, expand, or clarify an experience or an encounter.

Caleb brings a steady focus and great patience to his work. He allows himself to dive fully into an idea or a project, not rushing himself or slipping past on the surface. His thinking is graceful and his work is unhurried and deliberate. Caleb brings this grace and patient focus to all that he undertakes – Lego constructions, sketches of sunflowers, mixing cornstarch and water. He also loves a good joke, and dives into goofy, slapstick humor with delight – and underneath his belly laughter and hilarious antics is a steadiness that grounds and guides him.

Photo: building no-ends helicopter, following O.'s directions

Caleb's persistence—his devotion to a project, to realizing his vision or plan for his work—is striking. An example: A few weeks ago, Caleb, L., and E. decided to make Hogwarts Express with our big wooden blocks on one of the platforms in our room. They pulled blocks off the shelf and began arranging them along the edges of the platform, creating an enclosed space like a railroad car. They talked as they worked: "It needs a smokestack to be a steam engine," Caleb explained, setting a long rectangular block on end at the front of the platform. L. took the block down, protesting that "It will fall over and hit our heads!" E. agreed: "We don't need a smokestack; it's too hard to make one stay up. We can just use a small block for a smokestack." Caleb was determined: "It has to be tall," he said, and set the tall, thin block back in place. L. and E. tried to dissuade Caleb, but with no success. Caleb reiterated his vision for the steam engine that carried Harry Potter to Hogwarts, and set to work on creating a smokestack that wouldn't topple over. He created supports around the tall block, steadying the tall block with a short block on each side. He just got his buttressing system in place—and the long rectangular block fell over, knocking the smaller blocks onto the floor as it fell. Caleb sighed deeply, collected the fallen blocks, and rebuilt. Again, just as he stepped away from the finished smokestack, it fell over. This happened four or five times, and each time Caleb gathered the fallen pieces and began again—even as E. and L. began to play Quidditch around him, racing past on broomsticks, calling out to him, "Come on, Caleb, it's time for Quidditch practice!" Caleb shook his head at their invitations, turning his back on the engaging game swirling around him, determined to build a steam engine with a smokestack sturdily in place. Only when the tall, thin block was solidly anchored did Caleb turn his attention to the drama of Harry Potter unfolding around him.

This focused and stubborn determination is typical of Caleb. He launches his work with a clear plan in place and patiently, methodically, moves step-by-step toward accomplishing his goals. Technical problems don't deter him; in fact, he often seems to relish them as challenges to solve, bringing his characteristic patience and persistence to understanding and overcoming them.

photo: building the block tower on a step ladder with a hard hat

Caleb is passionate about construction. The world of big blocks and small blocks, Legos, Kapla planks, and pieces of wood, cardboard, and foam core is where Caleb spends most of his time. He dives into construction work with relish, using the physical work to explore and experiment with the physics of symmetry, balance, and the relationship between height, length, weight, and sturdiness. Much of his enjoyment of construction work seems to come from this intersection of the physical and the intellectual work.

Caleb's construction work typically involves all sorts of tools—tools from our woodworking bench as well as tools specially crafted with paper and wood by Caleb to fit his needs for a particular game. All these tools are a link to the real world of construction, and a reflection of Caleb's eagerness to engage in meaningful work using real tools, as well as his deep enjoyment of the construction and home maintenance projects in which he participates at home.

photo: painting the Hogwarts poster with E.

Caleb is a solid, steady companion, a loyal friend, generous, kind, and patient. He brings an understated, yet pivotal leadership to our group, typically anchoring the play that he's involved in, guiding the other players through conflicts, carrying a big idea through the distractions and challenges that threaten to derail it. Caleb's focus and enthusiasm are contagious: he encourages other kids to keep on keeping on when their energy flags or their

focus wavers – often simply by keeping on himself. Caleb has become masterful at communicating his ideas about a game and listening to other children’s ideas, negotiating the shape of a game or the plan for a construction project in collaboration with his companions.

Caleb’s particular buddies are kids who share his passion for construction: H., M., D., L., and L. He’s also developed sweet friendships with E., H., and H. around the intrigues of Harry Potter, playing long, complex drama games with them about the adventures of Harry, Ron, and Hermione at Hogwarts.

Caleb doesn’t limit himself to his closest friends, though. He’s willing to make room for a wide range of children in his work and play – as long as they respect the work they undertake together. He expands his construction of a house to include H.’s princess, or M.’s dragon, or D.’s firefighter, cheerfully incorporating these kids and their play scripts into his game with only a few parameters: “Don’t knock down the roof that I made,” perhaps, or “You can’t get too wild in the house because I don’t want it to get broken.”

When a conflict arises during his play, Caleb often confidently steps into the role of negotiator and mediator. For example, during a Harry-Potter-at-Hogwarts game, Caleb and H. arranged the dishes on a shelf to represent the Great Hall during a holiday feast. M. and E. were busy with their own game about a kitty family on the other side of the room when the dishes caught their attention and they hurried over to the shelf in the Great Hall to scoop up some plates and cups for the kitty family to use. Caleb called out to them, “Hey, you guys! We’re using that stuff! Meeting time, meeting time! Come to a meeting about drama dishes, H., M., and E.” He cleared fabric and cardboard off the floor to make a space for the meeting that he’d called, and the four children sat in a circle to offer their ideas for solving the problem. Caleb took a leadership role during the meeting, explaining to M. and E. that he and H. wanted dishes for a feast in the Great Hall, listening to M. and E. describe their ideas about using the dishes in their kitty family game, and offering suggestions about possible solutions: “We could split the dishes in half.” “We could take turns with the dishes: when we’re done, we’ll give them to you.” “We could use the dishes for five minutes, then you could use the dishes for five minutes.” With Caleb’s leadership and guidance, the children agreed to divide the dishes between the two games; they ended their meeting by counting out equal numbers of plates, bowls, and cups for Hogwarts and for the kitty family. Caleb moved through this conflict with calm patience, committed to the process of talking and listening that brings resolution to conflict.

Some conflicts, though, hook Caleb in ways that challenge his patience and calm. Conflicts about fairness, equity, and respect provoke anger and grief in Caleb: Are some kids being left out of a game? Did someone’s turn get skipped? Are people failing to listen to each other’s ideas in responsive, attentive ways? Is someone ignoring another person’s work or changing someone’s construction without first getting permission from the builder? Caleb cares deeply about fairness, equity, and respect and is shaken when these principles are disregarded by his companions. During the conflicts that grow from these moments, Caleb usually cries angry, dismayed tears, choking out his concerns through his tears; my sense is that Caleb feels these conflicts both as personal anguish and as affronts to our collective values and commitments. After a few minutes of hot, passionate tears, Caleb swallows hard, wipes his eyes, and steps into the hard work of negotiating through the conflict to an agreement that feels fair and respectful. Often during these negotiations, Caleb moves between naming his own experience of the injustice (“I don’t want you to change the train into a castle; I want it to still be a train and I didn’t even say ‘yes’ to a castle!”) and calling on larger principles of equity and fairness (“All the builders have to say ‘yes’ before you change a structure – that’s what’s fair to everyone.”). Even during these heated conflicts, Caleb provides leadership in our group, helping kids attend to values and principles that form the framework for our daily life together at Hilltop.

photo: writing Hogwarts house names on poster

Caleb is joyfully, eagerly leaping into the world of formal literacy these days, seeking out and relishing opportunities to read and write. He's weaving reading and writing into just about all his work and play; books are scattered among block, and clipboards and writing pens have become as precious as hammers and drills. Some glimpses into Caleb's passion for reading and writing:

- The Big Book of Cool is ever-present in Caleb's play (the Big Book of Cool is a much-cherished illustrated encyclopedia): "Ann, we need that big book to read about high speed trains and hockey." "Hey, guys, don't you think that when we're done with breakfast, we should look at the Big Book of Cool and find the page about rockets?" "We have to look in the Big Book of Cool to find out how to make a race car and a camping-mobile." Caleb frequently turns to the Big Book of Cool as a guide for structures he plans to build, studying the illustrations, and then trying to replicate the details of a race car, steam engine, camper, or speed boat with construction materials like blocks, foam core, and cardboard.
- During Harry Potter games, Caleb brings armloads of books to Hogwarts: "We have to read about spells." He flips through the books, "reading" the pages as he looks for particular spells: "Let's see How to make a rat . . . How to make fierce creatures fall asleep Here it is: Polyjuice Potion!" As Professor Snape, he directs the students to open their books: "Now, students, page 42, please." Caleb's Hogwarts adventures often involve writing, as well as reading: "We need to write to Professor McGonnagal and tell her about Professor Snape!" "Send Sirius Black a letter by owl!" "We have to do our homework now. Get your clipboards."
- Caleb often leaves notes on his work, alerting other kids to his plans for his constructions. For example: "I made this, but you can take it apart without asking me, if you need the pieces, if you want to. From Caleb." "I want to keep this. Don't break it. From Caleb."
- Hand-in-hand with Caleb's eagerness to read and write comes a passion for graphic representation. He draws and draws and draws these days – Harry Potter in a Quidditch match, a castle peopled with royalty and servants, plans for block constructions. Caleb is using graphic representation as another language for communicating his passions and plans.

Caleb's delight in language continues deep and strong. He often asks about words, rolling words around on his tongue, intrigued by their sounds, their meanings, their relationships to other words: "Why is it called racquetball? Because you make a big noise when you play it?" In our current nap time book, I read a sentence about "Boston, which was famous for its Cabots, its Lodges, its baked beans." Caleb laughed out loud: "Baked beans! That's an unusual thing to be famous for!" Caleb's playful engagement with language is a joy.

photo: wrestling in dinosaur game

Caleb is alive and at home in his body, increasingly at ease with physical play as he's grown into his height and strength. He is confident in his construction work, balancing on stepladders, wrestling gigantic pieces of cardboard into place, maneuvering blocks and tools and hard hats with fluid ease. He plays Quidditch nearly every day, running madly around the front yard on a broomstick. He's helped develop and move through obstacle courses in our room during this rainy winter, taking up the physical challenges with alacrity rather.

And though his sense of himself is that he doesn't like "roughhousing games," he participates with enthusiasm in tumbling, wrestling, and chasing games, often initiating physical play with other kids. He's most comfortable with these games when he's in control of the intensity of the play, understandably – and in the last months, he's become more comfortable with increasingly intense physical play. Caleb seems to trust his body more and more, taking more risks, playing with more abandon, pushing himself into new physical arenas.

Photo: painting the sunflower

Caleb is a gift in my life. His humor, his compassion, his self-awareness, and his reflective engagement with the world touch me deeply. My life is richer because of Caleb.

Ann

What is lovely about children is that they can make such a production, such a big deal out of everything or nothing . . . I never want to be where I cannot see it. All that energy and foolishness, all that curiosity, all those questions, talk, fierce passions, inconsolable sorrows, and immoderate joys are a national asset, a treasure beyond price. ~John Holt

Appendix K

Moving Staff Through Difficult Issues

Margie with Ann

As I travel the country, there are some common themes that come up in most of the seminars I facilitate for directors: What do you do about teachers who seem unmotivated to see themselves as professionals or take any initiative to improve aspects of their room or the program as a whole? Why is so much of my time spent with conflicts among our teachers? How can I keep my dedicated teachers from becoming so discouraged by the staff turnover we have to face every year? These are weighty issues, not likely to be solved by some one-minute manager technique. I think they are fundamentally tied to the kind of leadership that exists in a program and the organizational climate that is created and maintained.

I'd like to share some examples of how one program I've worked with over a number of years has worked through some of these difficult questions. The staff at Hilltop Children's Center in Seattle, Washington, would be the first to tell you there is no such thing as resolving these issues once and for all. Instead, what is needed is an understanding of the dynamics at play, the context from which these issues typically emerge, and a steady disposition and process to continually move through them. Consciously mentoring an expanding leadership team is another important ingredient that has helped Hilltop get through the reoccurring difficulties that seem to come with the child-care territory.

The examples below come from attention to these ingredients, with Ann, a long time teacher in the program, stepping forward to assist the director and assume a more active leadership role beyond her classroom. She developed some of these strategies in consultation with me, but refined and carried them out with remarkable skill and results. I'm encouraging Ann to do further writing so that others can benefit from these Hilltop stories. For now, here are some sound bytes of their experiences which might get your own creative juices flowing.

Staff with Differing Levels of Commitment

Hilltop is a small, non-profit, accredited full time child care program serving about 75 three to nine year olds with a teaching staff of 16. A core of teachers

has been there between five and twenty five years, while others come and go with each year. Over the years they have held firm to the notion of having all staff designated as “co-teachers” working with a shared vision and sense of purpose for the program, with no hierarchy in teacher titles or job descriptions. This strongly held value continually bumped up against the reality of some staff taking on more responsibilities than others, with some viewing this work as a life long commitment, while others limiting their involvement for a variety of reasons. Expanding paid planning time for teachers was a significant accomplishment for Hilltop, but it brought these contradictions to a head as some teachers used this time, and many more unpaid hours, to plan, work with documentation, and partner with families, while others did little of this type of work. The myth that everyone was carrying equal responsibilities was exposed, with the acknowledgement that it was fermenting (fomenting?) a mixture of resentment and guilt. The question became urgent: how to rectify this situation while continuing to value and celebrate the contribution of each staff member even as those contributions look quite different?

Strategy: Getting clear about what the vision involves

Steady discussion about the need for a change in structure led to an all staff retreat held one Saturday. It began with each staff person getting a large paper with a picture of the human heart. Each was asked to write on one side what breaks their hearts or makes their hearts ache, and on the other side, what lifts their hearts up and makes them soar. The discussion flowing from this got the frustrations and the joys on the table and set the stage for an amiable restructuring process.

Next the staff worked in small groups to create a list of all the work involved in making a classroom work well. This included everything from watering plants to meeting with families and co-workers, to daily observations and documentation for curriculum planning. For some, this was an eye-opening staff-development process as they discovered all the invisible, behind the scenes work of being a teacher. As a group they then coded the list to designate which tasks needed to be done by everyone and which could be done by just some people. Three small groups then fleshed out a different possible structure which could incorporate all the responsibilities and allow for differing levels of commitment and allocations of paid time away from the children. The one that was ultimately embraced by everyone was a concentric ring model with a core of responsibilities that everyone would assume in the

center, and additional responsibilities for each ring further out from the center.

Strategy: Finding your place in the circle

In the next few months Ann and her director worked to refine the model and developed a self-assessment tool for each staff member to use to determine where they saw themselves on the circle of concentric rings. These self-assessments became the focus of individual meetings with the director to choose a ring that fit their goals, strengths, and commitments. Then, each room team met to review everyone on that team's decision to determine if all responsibilities were covered for that room, and assignments were then formalized. Teachers on Ring 4 became the leadership team with more release time for their responsibilities and meeting together with the director. In the succeeding months, people eased into the new structure with fewer tensions and more clarity about responsibilities and leadership.

Staff Communications and Conflicts

You can usually get a quick weather report on a program's organizational climate by taking a look at staff communications and how conflicts are handled. Does it feel mostly sunny, partly cloudy, or always stormy? At Hilltop, with its articulated vision of being a caring, learning community, people were reluctant to bring up disagreements or engage in conflicts. No one wanted to hurt anyone's feelings or make them feel isolated or left out. Neither did they want to challenge co-worker behaviors, even though some undermined the collective good.

Fortunately, nearly all of the Hilltop staff is skilled at building strong relationships with the children and helping them work through conflicts. This is a strength Ann and I felt could be built on to help staff develop more authentic relationships with each other. Ann facilitated a series of meetings which brought the staff closer together and resulted in a written set of agreements entitled "Strengthening our Relationships: A Statement of Values and Principles for Navigating Conflict and Challenge"

Strategy: Knowing what's true about you

With the aim of being playful and reflective at the first meeting on this topic, the staff was first asked to introduce themselves as a childhood message about conflict. Described more fully in *Training Teachers. A Harvest of Theory and Practice* (Carter and Curtis, 1994, Redleaf Press), this activity involves asking people to get up and walk around the room introducing themselves

by repeating to each other their name and a phrase that captures what they learned as a child about how to view conflict. The debriefing discussion led to new self-insights and awareness of the “whys” behind their differing approaches to conflict.

This discussion was followed by a four-corners activity, also described in *Training Teachers*, in which people were given 4 choices of possible ways they might be approaching conflicts and asked to discuss those with others. For instance, when it comes to handling conflict now in my life I am like a German shepherd, an ostrich, a giraffe, a parrot. When there’s a conflict I react most negatively to, I _____; With practice, I hope to handle conflict like _____.

During this meeting people were able to light-heartedly look at themselves and each other’s relationship to conflict and find themselves intrigued, rather than fearful, eager, rather than evasive or defensive. Examples of what came up during this meeting were playfully referred to in the following weeks, along with some deeper thinking. Teachers were eager to read the handout given to them, “Collaboration, Conflict, and Change: Thoughts on Education as Provocation”. (Jones and Nimmo, *Young Children*, January 1999). A meeting the following month went further with these activities to explore family of origin theories with regard to how we approach conflict. The discussion points from the activities began to form the initial ideas for a statement of values and principles.

Strategy: Representing ourselves with symbols

Because Hilltop values all learning styles and symbolic languages, not just those that are verbal linguistic, Ann used part of one meeting to have all staff members create a symbol for themselves about what they were discovering or affirming about their relationship to conflict. There were a variety of art materials available, soft music and lighting to work with. The symbolic representations were brought to a candle lit table creating a powerful collective picture. There were more activities, a discussion of the handout from the previous month, and finally, some work on a collective statement about how they wanted to navigate conflict together. The group did their evaluations of the meeting while listening to Bela Fleck’s song, “Communication is the only way, start saying what you mean today.

The Impact of Turnover

After such an important year of drawing closer together, successfully restructuring staff positions, and working on written agreements about communications and navigating conflict, it was particularly devastating for the staff to learn about two resignations among their ranks. It was tempting to want to just cheerlead and brush this news aside with best wishes for the departing staff, but Ann and her director recognized this staff turnover had the potential to demoralize everyone and undermine much of what they had accomplished over the year. Because this news came just four weeks before Worthy Wage Day, they seized the moment and Ann designed some strategies for them to acknowledge their feelings and fuel their desire to re-engage with the Worthy Wage Campaign.

Strategy: Pass the basket

Ann gave each staff person a pen and multiple pieces of paper. They were asked to identify the specific ways in which the child care staffing crisis was impacting them, writing each on a separate piece of paper and putting it in the basket provided. The basket was then passed around and one by one, people read each of the papers with staff statements. This created a powerful picture of what they were experiencing and brought these feelings out of isolation and into collective action.

Strategy: Collaborate with parents in advocacy efforts

Sharing the sadness and setbacks of staff turnover with Hilltop families felt important so they could use this opportunity to fuel some collaborative activism. In the face of continual news of budget cuts and the economic mandate of fighting terrorism, parents and teachers alike are feeling an even greater pinch. At their “pass the basket” staff meeting focused on the staffing crisis, Hilltop teachers decided to set aside three afternoons, from 4:30-6:30, leading up to Worthy Wage day, to invite families to join them in creating a collaborative mural which would express their understandings of the problem and their proposals for public policy action. They would invite the local media to attend and give them press packets about the crisis developed by the Center for the Child Care Work Force (CCW) for Worthy Wage Day. Documentation of this mural making and written materials about the staffing crisis will now be woven into orientation packets for new families, educating and inviting them to become ongoing Worthy Wage activists until the child care staffing crisis is resolved.

Difficult issues abound in child care programs. But when the director expands her leadership team toward a bigger vision, and the organizational climate keeps staff learning and growing closer, these issues don't hold the program back. In fact, many programs grow stronger when they discover they can move through even the toughest of times.

Appendix L

Role of the Pedagogista at Hilltop

Hilltop Children's Center Pedagogista Job Description

Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education, child development, school-age care, elementary education, or related field. Master's degree preferred.
- Five years of experience working with children and youth ages 3-10.
- At least five years of experience mentoring and coaching early childhood and school-age teachers.
- Deep knowledge and experience with emergent curriculum and the approaches used in the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy.
- Advanced skills in observation and documentation of children's activities.
- Expertise in facilitating collaborative thinking and analysis.
- Expertise in cultural relevancy and anti-bias practices.

General Responsibilities

- Offer leadership, guidance, and support to teachers in the development and execution of emergent curriculum, drawing upon observations and documentation of children's conversations and activities.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities

- Support teachers in continually seeing and valuing children's play and seeking to understand their meaning-making process.
- Regularly assess the classroom environment, offer ideas and suggestions to teachers as to how to better reflect and promote the value of childhood and Hilltop's vision in the learning environment.
- Cultivate refined observation and documentation skills across the teaching staff, doing individual mentoring as needed.

- Explore with teachers possible “provocations” for children’s pursuits and learning – nudge, spark ideas for them to consider. Support teachers in coming up with “next steps.” Assist in identifying useful resources.
- Support teachers in collaborative discussions to recognize emerging ideas in children’s play and conversations, and the potential this suggests for work teams or in-depth project work.
- Guide teachers through the process of in-depth project work, supporting them in the specific, daily practices of using documentation with children, their families, and the teaching team to uncover and co-create curriculum; as needed, offer guidance for work team formation and studio work.
- Attend regular team meetings as needed.
- Work closely with the Program Director and Executive Director, sharing ideas and efforts, and keeping each other up to date.
- Share information and training topics at monthly all-staff meetings.
- Create visual documentation of Pedagogista work with teachers to help create visibility of the behind the scenes thinking of our teachers.
- Participate in the development of Institute classes, new instructors, and refinement of pedagogy used in teaching adults.

Appendix M Documentation as a Verb

Documentation means a way of being with children—a habit of paying attention, watching and listening closely, reflecting together about what we see, planning from our reflections and understandings, and telling the stories in ways that enrich our communities. Gunilla Dahlberg, a leading thinker in our field, describes this as “*pedagogical documentation*.”

This word, “documentation,” holds many elements. It could be replaced with more descriptive and specific words:

- observing closely and making notes, taking photos, and creating sketches that help us remember our observations;
- studying our observation notes to guide our discussion, meaning-making, and planning (this happens individually, during planning time, informally with co-teachers or the mentor teacher, and collaboratively during team meetings);
- telling the story: creating written documentation for journals, curriculum boards, display panels, project notebooks, etc.

“Documentation is the interpretation of close, keen observation and attentive listening, gathered with a variety of tools by educators aware of contributing their different points of views . . . [Often, educators] place most attention on the final steps of documentation, such as the preparation of panels, portfolios, and other forms of communication and display. [Our] intent is to focus instead on the reflective process of flexible planning that documentation makes possible and that, in turn, give the documentation process meaning.”

What is this process? What are the key steps in “pedagogical documentation?”

Step 1: Observing and Recording

“By observing and listening to children with care and attention, we can discover a way of truly seeing and getting to know them . . . To be able to examine and reflect, we have to record what we saw and heard.”

This includes: taking notes as we observe; making audiotapes of children’s conversations with each other and with us; taking photographs; making videotapes; collecting children’s work.

These “traces” of our observations provide the raw material for our sharing, reflecting, and planning. In their raw form, however, they are less helpful than they are when we knead them into form: *“Notes need to be carefully read and organized, recordings need to be transcribed and the transcript read and highlighted,*

photographs need to be selected . . . In doing these preparatory tasks we are beginning to reflect on what we have observed.”

Teachers take time to review observations, transcribe audiotapes, and organize photos. This work actively engages us—it is done to help us plan ways to sustain, extend, and deepen children’s play and learning. The end goal of this work is NOT to create a static piece of written documentation to be posted on a curriculum board and forgotten, but to inform our thinking and our teaching, to help us know the children more fully and, in turn, to enable us to be intentional in our planning and provisioning for children’s play, investigation, and learning.

Step 2: Sharing, Reflecting, and Planning

“In a curriculum that is not set in advance, we can use documentation to construct our understanding of the children’s actions and thoughts . . . By examining our observations together, we can make predictions and develop hypotheses about the children’s and our own interests, questions, and understandings. We can examine the directions in which the children seem interested in going and how, or if, we think we can assist them.”

We bring our notes, photographs, and transcriptions to our co-teachers and to children’s families. Working in collaboration with these colleagues and companions, we review our observations, reflect together about what they tell us about children’s pursuits and questions, and plan ways to extend children’s play, investigation, and learning.

Jeanne Goldhaber, from Campus Children’s Center at the University of Vermont, writes that: *“We finally adopted the format of a graduate course for our staff meeting time in order to discuss teachers’ and children’s investigations . . . We have found that the benefits of spending an hour and a half a week thinking out loud and together about our and the children’s theories and questions far outweigh whatever is lost in terms of a typical staff meeting agenda.”*

Step 3: Telling the Story

Our notes, photographs, transcriptions, and children’s work *“become tools for communication when we, as teachers, select, organize, arrange, and identify them so as to give meaning to the experience that first produced them.”* We use the traces of our observations to create written documentation that tells the story the children’s explorations and play, our reflections and interpretations, and our thoughts about how we aim to extend the children’s play and learning. This written documentation can take many forms: narratives for bulletin board postings about curriculum, journals and/or portfolios for individual children which tell the story of their time in our programs; documentation panels and bulletin board displays; handmade books; installations; and other works.

This written documentation is not a final, stale product. It is a lively tool for communication, for new learning, and for advocacy. We use written communication in a range of ways:

- We share written documentation with children. *“Looking again at documentation with children allows us to help them become aware of their own learning . . . Also, when children revisit documentation together, they tend to remind each other of their ideas.”*

When children revisit their experiences by looking at written documentation, they often decide to take up a project again, from a new perspective, or to invite other children into an extension of their earlier play. They reconsider their theories and explore new understandings.

- We share written documentation with families. *“When parents enter the preschool where their child spends many hours every day, they feel welcome when they see documentation that describes the part of the children’s day that they usually do not witness. Without documentation, the life of a child in the center and the life of the child at home run a parallel, silent course.”*

A primary goal for our work is to deepen and strengthen the relationships between families and children during their days apart. One key way that we do that is by telling the stories of children’s days here, so that families come to know their children more fully in this context.

In addition, we hope to involve families in meaningful, intimate ways in the daily life of our classrooms. This can only happen if we create many windows through which they can observe their children’s days in our programs.

- We use written documentation as a tool for social change. The stories that we tell of children’s investigations and play have the potential for changing how people understand and value childhood. *“We can give strength to the voice of the children and teachers by communicating what we have understood and heard . . . We can be advocates for care and education of young children based on deep respect and commitment.”*
- We use written documentation to create a history for ourselves and for the children and families in our programs now and in the future. Participation in an unfolding story is a cornerstone for creating community. Our documentation *“will provide invaluable memories for the people that live here many hours of their lives, for the people who pass through it during the cycles of growth of their children, and for the people who have worked hard to make it a good place . . . With documentation, we [create] an identity that will mirror the people who have been involved here and offer to the ones who enter a sense of continuity.”*

In these ways, pedagogical documentation allows us to co-construct the curriculum, weaving together the theories, insights, and experiences of the children, families, and other teachers. Documentation is a verb, not a finished product to be written and filed away or forgotten. It is a way of being in relationship, a disposition to pay close attention and to engage our minds and our hearts during our days with the children in our care.

Quotes are from “Two Reflections about Documentation,” by Lella Gandini and Jeanne Goldhaber, in Bambini: The Italian Approach to Infant/Toddler Care. New York: Teachers College Press, 2001.

© Ann, 2004

Appendix N

Ann's Letter of Introduction to Families at Hilltop

Hello!

I love this time of year, when the air sharpens and smells smoky and cool, the sunlight pales, and colors shift from greens to golds and browns. There's a vitality to fall, an intensity that invites us to be fully awake and present. It is, I think, a good time for beginnings and for introductions, as we make our way from the expansiveness of summer to the cozy and intimate landscape of our shared life at Hilltop this fall and winter.

I grew up in Spokane. Both my parents are teachers, and two of the three of us kids have become teachers. But I didn't set out to be a teacher! I did my undergraduate work at Whitman College in Walla Walla and majored in literature. While at Whitman, I became involved with issues of justice and social change, involvement that continues for me today. My commitment to peace and justice work was my doorway into work with young children. I was drawn to early childhood, where attitudes form and become cemented. I wanted to help shape children's understandings of themselves and the community in which they live. I was young and eager and passionate—and often clumsy, I think, in my excitement about helping children flourish as compassionate, generous people. But my vision for my work provided me with a foundation for my teaching, a beginning place for learning about how young children think and grow and communicate, a motivation to be curious about and attentive to the children.

I've been teaching young children now for twelve years, and have a master's degree in child development from Purdue University. My teaching has deepened and expanded as I've built on that early foundation of curiosity and wonder. I continue to be excited about and committed to supporting children's developing values about themselves and community and relationships. I believe that children are rich in resources, competent in dialogue and communication, curious, ready to wonder and be amazed, eager to establish relationships, able to form and investigate hypotheses, alive to their bodies, and compassionate.

My teaching is anchored in my values for children. I want children to laugh hard, dance and leap, make messes, and snuggle up for stories. I want children to take themselves seriously, to honor their feelings and their ideas,

to be reflective and self-aware. I want them to explore many perspectives, to listen to many points of view, to work collaboratively with other children. I want children to see themselves as members of a community and to take responsibility as members for the shape of that community. I want them to delight in their shared experiences, to make up jokes and repeat them over and over with great hilarity until they become part of our community culture. I want children to identify unfairness and know that they are powerful to comment on it and to act to change it. And for myself? I want to put children and childhood at the heart of my work, to enter the world of children with respect and joy.

When I'm not at Hilltop, what might you find me doing? I study yoga and practice meditation. I hike and bike and backpack, and occasionally row with Greenlake Crew. I'm an avid reader, and I love live music, especially world music and jazz. I'm involved in the Childcare Guild of SEIU Local 925 and with feminist organizations. I'm usually working on some sort of writing project about kids and early childhood education; my first book, *That's Not Fair: A Teacher's Guide to Activism with Young Children*, was published last summer by Redleaf Press. I enjoy conversations with friends over a pot of tea. I live on Capitol Hill near Volunteer Park with my sleek black cat, Stella.

I look forward to our year together, and know that we will all be enriched by our shared experiences in the Garden Group.

"A child enters our school with a story, a life in her family. If we keep the child at the center of our work, we must consider her family, or we have an incomplete child."

~ Mara Davoli, educator in the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy

Appendix O: Restructuring Effort - The “Rings” Staff Responsibilities

Ring 1	Ring 2	Ring 3	Ring 4
<p>(this includes absolutely everyone on staff at Hilltop)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attend to physical safety • develop relationships with families • be with children joyfully • maintain your own and shared physical spaces • attend to daily communication • identify your professional path • participate in self-evaluation and center evaluation process • stay current with required first aid (and other) trainings • create a bio board • attend staff meetings* • participate in Worthy Wage Day* • attend in-service days* • attend the staff retreat* 	<p>(this includes all permanent teaching staff, including the on-site substitute)</p> <p>To Ring 1 responsibilities, add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay close attention to children’s play, engage in reflection and discussion about children’s growth and learning, be responsive to children’s play themes and developmental themes • read children’s files • attend to classroom management: flow of the day, group dynamics, and conflict negotiations • lead studio activities • take groups outside • support and facilitate children’s play • care for classroom environment and aesthetics (includes “walk its ass back” or WIAB) • communicate with families about health and safety issues • maintain current substitute notes • attend to daily communication with other team members • attend weekly team meetings • attend the first parent meeting of the school year (the 	<p>To Ring 1 and 2 responsibilities, add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan curriculum based on observation and reflection • provision the classroom with provocations and appropriate play and learning materials • starting to document children’s play and learning; includes curriculum board, photos and notes for journals, classroom displays • facilitate and document one in-depth project annually • act as a primary teacher for two to four children, with support from another team member, if wanted: includes journals, conferences, primary contact with parents about child development • attend three classroom meetings each year (including the first meeting of the year) • assist with basic technical maintenance (training, use, proficiency) • pursue ongoing professional development in 	<p>To Ring 1, 2, and 3 responsibilities, add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitate at least two in-depth projects each year • maintain timely documentation (includes curriculum board and displays) • act as a primary teacher for six to ten children • provide support for Ring 3 teachers in their work as primary teachers • prepare classroom-wide communication with families • organize and facilitate family meetings and other family events • orient new families • prepare for new children and for departures • order classroom materials • act as liaison with other teams and with administration
<p>* this is not a requirement for the custodian, bookkeeper, office assistant, and substitutes</p>			

- orientation meeting) consultation with
stay current with program director
required trainings,
including STARS

We'd like to see the following roles and responsibilities included in our staffing: act as a mentor across teaching teams or school-wide; participate in long-term planning committees; serve as a guide for visitors to Hilltop; interview, orient, and mentor new staff. Teachers might take on these responsibilities, or they may fall to a program director. However, we don't yet know where the resources of time and money to support these responsibilities will come from.

Reflections, challenges, issues to address

Our goal is to have new job descriptions in place by mid-August, so that we begin the new school year with the new system. We anticipate that each member of the teaching staff will participate in a self-evaluation process, with support from folks like K., J., S., and Margie, to determine her or his level of responsibility (ie Ring 1, 2, 3, or 4).

Each ring represents basic job requirements, not limitations to taking on more responsibility.

How will each teaching team be configured? Does each team need a minimal level of Ring 3 and 4 teachers? Our working assumption is that current teaching team configurations will work just fine.

Although some of the specific responsibilities of Ring 3 and 4 may be changed, the basic framework of this model applies to the Big Kids program.

It seems useful to acknowledge formally that Ring 4 teachers will have a leadership role on each teaching team. This acknowledgment ought to come from other members of a teaching team as well as from the administration and families. Questions that come up in relation to this leadership role include:

- How will we insure that we stay true to our vision of valuing all teachers equally, not considering teachers who take less responsibility as less valuable or integral to the life of the school?
- What is the relationship between team leadership and team “supervision” or accountability?

Support and mentoring ought to be available to all teachers, including Ring 4 teachers. We imagine this happening in several ways:

- Individual training and support from K., J., Margie, S., and/or other trainers.
- Support within teaching teams: for example, a Ring 4 teacher offers support for a Ring 3 teacher around her or his “primary” children, or with an in-depth project.
- Mentoring across teaching teams.
- School-wide mentoring: for example, a teacher may take on the role of “technical guru” for the whole school, and be available for training on how to use the digital cameras and laptop computers.
- Weekly or bi-weekly meetings of teachers at the same ring of responsibility to share information and resources and to collaborate on projects. This would probably be available to Ring 3 and 4 teachers.

Resources will need to be allocated according to responsibility. For example, Ring 3 and Ring 4 teachers will need time for curriculum planning, documentation, and communication with families. It is important to us, however, to balance this time away from the classroom with consistent time with the children in the classroom; we don’t want to see teachers at Ring 4, particularly, compromise their relationships with children, families, and co-teachers.

We recognize that we won’t be able to link increased wages with increased responsibility in the near future—and that, as a staff, we may not want to create that link. We’d like to consider an annual stipend, however, for teachers who take on a high level of responsibility.

It is essential to have a clear system of accountability. What will this look like? Who will take on this supervisory role?

How will teachers move from one ring to another? Will this happen on an annual basis? Who will be involved as support staff for teachers as they assess the level of responsibility they want to take on? How formal or informal will this process be?

Notes on the Restructuring Effort

At the restructuring meeting on April 28th at Margie's house, a committee was formed to redefine staff roles and responsibilities. That committee is M., R., Sarah, S., D., and Ann. We've met three times since April, focusing on developing clarity for the responsibilities of the teaching staff. We've worked with the visual model that the people at the April meeting decided to adopt at Hilltop: a series of concentric circles. We don't have a name for this model, or for the levels; in these notes, I numbered each ring for convenience in communicating our thinking. As a staff, we can come up with more descriptive names, if that feels important.

Here's the visual model we've been using. The following pages describe the responsibilities that accompany each ring, and the questions that we're still working on.

Please read this before our staff meeting on Friday. We'll spend most of our meeting discussing these suggestions for the organization of our staff at Hilltop

I urge you to be teachers so that you can join with children as the co-collaborators in a plot to build a little place of ecstasy and poetry and gentle joy.
~ Jonathan Kozol

Dear friends,

During the next month, we will take up a process of self-reflection and group discussion as we begin to make the transition into our new staff roles and responsibilities at Hilltop. This process will hold opportunities for each of us to reflect on our personal and professional journeys, to develop goals for ourselves, and to commit to the level of responsibility we feel prepared to take on at Hilltop during the coming school year.

The process of reflection and discussion will follow this time-line:

- During the coming week, each staff member will complete the attached self-assessment.
- After completing the self-assessment, each staff member will meet individually with S. or J. to talk together about her or his self-assessment and to determine which level of responsibility (Ring 2, 3, or 4) is the best fit. These meetings will take place during the weeks of June 30 and August 6; S. and J. will schedule these meetings with staff members, aiming to have them fall during folks' planning time.
- At classroom team meetings during the week of August 13, teachers will share their decisions about the level of responsibility to which they've committed, and teaching teams will discuss together how their team's configuration will work. S. will participate in these discussions to help teams work through any sticky places.
- By August 27, S. will confirm each staff member's decision and each teaching team's configuration, so that we're ready to begin the in-service days with our new roles in place.
- In January, S. or J. will meet with staff members individually and with teaching teams to evaluate how the new roles are working. If there are any adjustments to make, this'll be the time we make them.

A couple issues to consider as we move into this process:

Each ring represents minimal expectations for a staff member's daily work at Hilltop, not limitations to taking on more responsibility. Committing to a particular ring means committing to the full list of responsibilities included in that ring, both the satisfying, juicy aspects and the duller, less flashy aspects. There may be one or two particular elements of a ring that leave you feeling anxious, aware that you need some support or training to accomplish well; it'll be important to talk about those issues during your individual meeting with S. or J., so that together you can decide how best to navigate these challenges.

Planning time will be allocated in new ways beginning in September when we step into these new roles. Teachers who take on more responsibilities will receive more planning time, while teachers taking on fewer responsibilities will receive less planning time. One proposal is that Ring 4 teachers receive eight hours of planning time weekly, Ring 3 teachers receive three hours of planning time weekly, and Ring 2 teachers receive one hour of planning time weekly. This may mean that you'll have less planning time next school year than you have currently. This change is not a punitive measure, but an effort to give people enough time to accomplish the tasks that they commit to doing at each Ring.

There will be no change to any teacher's hourly wage as we move into these new roles and responsibilities. And there will be no change to any teacher's total hours: if you work 40 hours a week now, you'll work 40 hours a week in the fall, if you work 20 hours a week now, you'll work 20 hours a week in the fall—no matter what Ring you step into. (We do expect that only full-time [40 hours a week] teachers are available to take on Ring 4 responsibilities).

If you have any questions, concerns, or uncertainties about any of this, please talk to S. or to me. Our hope for this process is that it nourishes us all and brings us greater clarity, ease, and joy in our work together.

Ann, Staff Development Coordinator

Where are you on your professional journey?

A self-assessment for the restructuring effort

What led you to working with children? What keeps you here now?

What nourishes you in your work with children and families? Why do you think this is nourishing to you?

What do you find draining? Why do you think this is draining for you?

What are your strengths and the areas you feel really good about in your work with children and families?

What do you find most difficult or challenging in your work with children and families?

What do you feel hungry for in your work? Is there an aspect of working with children and families that you're eager to try? What has kept you from taking this step? What would help you take this step?

What are your limits around work? How much is "enough" for you?

Where do you see yourself in a year? Five years? What are your professional goals?

Look at the four "rings" of staff responsibility. As you reflect on the questions above, which ring best reflects your current strengths and growing edges?

Please bring this completed self-assessment to your meeting with S. or J.

Appendix P
USQ Ethics Application

Please submit this application to the *Postgraduate & Research Officer*, Office of Research and Higher Degrees.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND
ETHICS COMMITTEE APPLICATION FOR
ETHICS CLEARANCE FOR INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING
HUMAN RESEARCH
Psychological and Sociological Research

1. Attach your research proposal to the Application for Ethics Clearance and forward to the **Postgraduate & Research Officer - Office of Research and Higher Degrees**
2. A copy of any questionnaires, information sheets and consent forms to be used, must be included with your application
3. If a section is inappropriate, write N/A in the section
4. Typed applications are preferred but if this is not possible, please print legibly
5. Please note that on the electronic version of this application proforma, the questions are presented in a **bold** font. **DO NOT USE A BOLD FONT FOR YOUR ANSWERS.** Length of answers and spacing between questions is at your discretion.

Name of Chief Researcher:

Laurie Kocher

Title of Project:

The Disposition to Document: A Qualitative Case Study of Teachers
Implementing Pedagogical Documentation as Inspired by the Schools of Reggio
Emilia, Italy

Funding Body:

N/A

Other Principal Investigators:

N/A

Is this a postgraduate research project?

Yes

If 'yes' name Supervisor:

Supervisor: Dr. Noel Geoghegan; Associate Supervisor: Dr. Nerida Ellerton

1. Give a brief explanation of the study and the importance of the study.

I am seeking to learn more about the personal qualities that enable teachers to embrace pedagogical documentation with enthusiasm, and the evolution of pedagogical practice that arises out of reflecting upon a process of documenting children's learning that was developed in the pre-primary schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. My intention is to explore what it is that fosters this disposition to document – what is it about the process that captures our imaginations, informs us, provokes us to personal growth?

Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (1999, p.148) use the term “pedagogical documentation” to refer to material which records what the children are saying and doing, the work of the children, and how the pedagogue (teacher) relates to the children and their work. This material may take many forms, such as hand-written notes of what is said and done, audio and video recordings, still photographs, children's work itself. This material makes the pedagogical work concrete and visible, and as such it is an important ingredient for the process of pedagogical documentation. Pedagogues, either alone or in relationship with others, use this documented material as a means to reflect upon the pedagogical work in a rigorous and methodical way. This reflection may be done by the pedagogue alone or in relationship with others.

Intellectual vitality, achieved through dialogue, reflection, and revisiting ideas, is one thread that emerges as educators seek to recast the Reggio approach to inform practice within their own local contexts (Tegano, 2001). Enhancing self-reflectivity has an important part to play in pedagogical practice. Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (1999) suggest that by so doing, we can expand our social horizon and construct another relationship to life, work and creativity.

Practicing a reflective and communicative pedagogy presupposes a reflective practitioner who, together with his or her colleagues, can create a space for a vivid and critical discussion about pedagogical practice and the conditions it needs. It also requires certain tools. With inspiration from the early childhood institutions in Reggio Emilia, in northern Italy, many pedagogues around the world have begun to use pedagogical documentation as a tool for reflecting on pedagogical practice (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999, p.144 - 145).

Site and Participants

The proposed site of research is a private preschool/day-care programme which serves children of approximately eighty 3-6 years old. Hilltop Children's Centre,

located in Seattle, Washington, has been existence in its present facility for 23 years. Two teachers in particular at Hilltop have been incorporating elements of the Reggio Emilia approach into their teaching practice for eight years. During that time, they have adapted a method of pedagogical documentation which is culturally relevant to their own community. In my observations at the school, and in conversations with these teachers, it occurs to me that there has been an evolution of change in the way they think about children's capabilities. Both teachers are "master" documenters. During their eight years of documenting children's work, they have amassed a collection of projects. These collections of photographs, transcribed conversations, and teacher reflections are compiled in three ring binders. On display throughout the center are also artifacts in the form of completed projects (such as clay work, three dimensional sculpture, paintings, photographs) which testify to a shared history. It is my intention to be a participant observer within the school environment, collecting field notes. I also intend to interview the two teachers mentioned, seeking responses to open-ended questions such as "How is the disposition to be a documenter fostered?" and "How does pedagogical documentation inform your work with children?" These interviews will be audio-taped, with the transcripts offered back to the participants for their reflection and input. Additionally, the archives of collected documented stories will likely provide rich data for examining the process of teacher change.

2. Describe the study's stages, processes and instruments.

Design of the Study

Determining a method of inquiry and a technique for documentation of this story requires a commitment to "capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of the human experience" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997). I am proposing that my role be that of a participant observer, in a qualitative study that will employ elements of both ethnographic and case study methodologies.

Case Study refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant or small group, frequently including the accounts of subjects themselves. A form of qualitative descriptive research, the case study looks intensely at an individual or small participant pool, drawing conclusions only about that participant or group and only in that specific context. Researchers do not focus on the discovery of a universal, generalizable truth, nor do they typically look for cause-effect relationships; instead, emphasis is placed on exploration and description.

Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) offer an illuminating description of ethnographic study. They see it as a method with a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of a particular social phenomena. Rather than setting out to test a hypothesis about them, the ethnographer tends to work with "unstructured" data that has not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories. Typically, investigations are of a small number of cases, perhaps just one case in detail. Analysis involves the interpretation of the meaning and processes of human actions and takes a descriptive and explanatory form.

Data Collection

Data collection in ethnographic and case studies is typically multi-method, usually involving observing, interviewing, and analyzing documents. By using a

combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check findings (Patton, 1990). The investigator collects descriptions of behaviour through observations, interviewing, documents, and artifacts (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

Initially, I will spend four to six sessions visiting Hilltop Children's Centre, primarily as a participant observer, in order for the staff and the children to become familiar with my presence. During this time I will take field notes of my observations, of conversations I overhear, and of incidental conversations with children, parents, and teachers regarding their interactions with the documentation. I also expect to take photographs. Although participant observation ideally continues throughout the period of data collection, it is particularly important in the beginning stages because of its role in informing us about appropriate areas of investigation and in developing a sound researcher-other relationship (Glesne & Peshkin, p. 40).

Interviews will be conducted with each of the participating teachers. While interviews take several forms, ethnographic studies most often use unstructured, free-flowing formats. Thus, a "grand tour" question and a set of subquestions might serve as interview starting points, with each interview soon taking on its own character. Further, some subjects might be interviewed in depth several times, especially key informants. These interviews will be audio-taped, and the transcripts will be offered back to the participants for any further clarification or elaboration.

The staff at Hilltop have made available to me their archive of many years' worth of documented projects. These collections consist principally of photographs of children, of children's work (paintings, drawings, pottery, constructions), transcribed conversations between children and between teachers and children, and the reflective consideration of the teachers themselves. I will be searching these documents and artifacts for various themes and patterns.

Data Analysis

The analytic procedures I anticipate using in this study are similar to those outlined by Dey (1993). The analytic procedures will include: finding a focus, managing data, reading and annotating data, categorizing data, and connecting categories and corroborating evidence. Essentially, these analytic procedures involve classification and then making connections, although not necessarily in linear fashion. This classification is a form of practical reasoning involving breaking up the data and then assigning categories, after which the categories are used to bring the data back together in different ways to create a conceptual framework. One looks for patterns which offer fresh perspectives on the data, makes inferences, and, after checking the data, provides an explanation. Software for qualitative data analysis, such as NUD*IST, may be considered after data collection has begun.

Results

Writing the results of this qualitative research project will involve determining a balance of description and interpretation and use of a style which integrates them in an interesting and informative narrative (Merriam, 1998). Erickson (1986) recommends inclusion of three components, particular

description, general description, and interpretative commentary. Particular description consists of quotes from interviews and field notes and narrative vignettes; general description tells the reader whether the quotes and vignettes are typical of the data as a whole and relates the parts to the whole; and interpretative commentary provides a framework for understanding both forms of description.

3. Specify any psychological and other risks to the participants.

There are no known risks to participants, psychological or otherwise.

Justify the study in terms of the risk to, and imposition on, the participants.

The only anticipated imposition on the participants will be the time they give to participate in interviews with the researcher.

What steps will be taken to ensure protection of the participants' physical, social and psychological welfare?

N/A

6. Does the study involve deception? If so, explain why it is necessary and justify.

This study does not involve deception.

7. How will the study benefit the participants?

The teachers participating in this study are involved in teaching others about pedagogical documentation through presenting various workshops. They are also active in writing journal articles and book chapters. The results of this study will provide data for use in their own professional work, as well as helping them to understand their own professional growth.

8. Will the aims of the study be communicated effectively to the participants? How will this be done?

The documentation panels and books will be available for observation and reflection by children and their parents within the school setting. An executive summary of the research project will be offered to parents and the teachers involved in this study.

9. What steps will be taken to ensure informed consent of the participants/guardians?

A letter will be sent to the parents/guardians of each child registered in the class of a teacher participating in this study. Families will be invited to attend a

meeting to meet with me to discuss the research project and to ask any questions. The parents and/or legal guardians of each child will be asked to give written consent for their child to participate. Also, signed consent will be obtained from each participating teacher.

10. Will the participants be assured that they may withdraw from the study at any time without any fear of the consequences?

Yes

If the answer is NO, please explain.

11. What steps will be taken to:

(a) provide feedback to subjects?

and

(b) debrief participants?

Research field-notes will available, upon request, to all participants. Transcripts of interviews will be offered back to participants for their comments, clarification, and elaboration. An executive summary of this research will be made available, at the conclusion of the study, as well as a bound copy of the final thesis.

Describe the measures which will be taken to ensure the anonymity of the participants. If anonymity is not ensured, justify.

All names used will be pseudonyms unless requested otherwise by participants.

13. Explain how you intend to store and protect the confidentiality of the data.

Data will be stored in a locked cupboard in my home. In writing up the final PhD thesis, pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants and specific children will not be named. All raw data (i.e. audiotapes, videotapes) will be retained by myself as principal investigator for a period of two years following the conclusion of the project. After that time it will be disposed of by incineration. The project history books and documentation binders compiled by the staff of Hilltop Children's Centre are the property of the school and will remain in the school archives.

Do you certify that the persons undertaking the administration of the study are suitably qualified?

Yes

If NO, explain.

Do you certify that you will administer the project with due regard to recognised principles for the ethical conduct of research?

Yes

15. **Date by which it is anticipated that the research project will be completed**

August 31, 2003

After this date you will be requested to report to the Committee certifying that the research was conducted in accordance with the approval granted by the Ethics Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Please add information (if necessary)

Please submit this application to the *Postgraduate & Research Officer*, Office of Research and Higher Degrees.

Appendix Q

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

USQ ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH
INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MONITORING RESEARCH PROJECTS
WHICH HAVE RECEIVED PRIOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Ethics Approval Reference No: H01STU179

Principal Researcher: Laurie Kocher

Name of Project: The Disposition to Document: Pedagogical Documentation as a
Catalyst for Dispositional Change in Teachers of Young Children – A Case Study

1. Is this report an annual report or as a result of completion of the project?

Annual Report

Completion of Project

2. Please advise of the current status of the project (eg. currently progressing,
completed, delayed progress, will not proceed, etc.)

Currently progressing

Completed

Delayed progress

Will not proceed

Other

If “Other”, please elaborate:

**If the project has been completed, this report will be regarded as the
acquittal of the above ethics approval number. Another application for**

ethics approval should be considered for any further work on this or any other associated projects.

Please turn over

3. Was/is the project in compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation?

Yes

No

If "No", please explain:

4. Were there any special conditions outlined in your letter of approval which were stated as a condition of ethical clearance?

Yes

No

If "Yes", please outline the means of compliance.

5. Are there any interventions in your research project proving to cause either detrimental effects on subjects or unequivocal benefits to subjects such that continuation of the project would be unethical?

Yes

No

If "Yes", please explain:

6. Please confirm the security of the data collected and the conditions governing access to this data.

All data was kept in a locked cupboard in my home. Only my supervisor(s) and myself have had access to the data. Interview transcripts were made available to the study participants as the study was underway.

7. Are there any other issues in relation to this project, which you believe are necessary, to bring to the attention of the Committee?

no

I acknowledge my responsibility to notify or have notified the Committee immediately of any proposed changes in the protocol and/or any other matter that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

Laurie L.M. Kocher

Signature of Researcher

March 6, 2008

Date

Appendix R

Information Letter to Parents of Children at Hilltop Children's Centre

Laurie Kocher
2646 St. Gallen Way
Abbotsford, BC
Canada
V3G 1C3
Telephone: 604.859.4416
Email: bramasole@home.com

Dear Hilltop Families,

I am presently enrolled as a PhD student at the University of Southern Queensland. As a requirement for graduation, I am conducting a research project. The focus of my research is the documentation of children's learning developed in Reggio Emilia, Italy. The early childhood education programmes of that community have received much international acclaim in recent years. One of the key features of this educational programme is its use of documentation to record the learning that takes place within the school setting.

The usefulness of documentation was brought home to me after viewing the Hundred Languages of Children exhibition, a series of photographs and transcribed conversations that portray the learning experiences of young children in Reggio Emilia. I was impressed by the children's work and by the respect for children's thinking that was displayed, and began further exploration into what has become known as the "Reggio Emilia Approach."

As you already know, the staff at Hilltop Children's Center have been using photography and recorded conversations in this fashion for many years to document children's thinking. I intend to study how the teachers at Hilltop use documentation to foster children's learning, and also how it fosters their own professional development. I will be using a combination of current documentation and Hilltop's archive of past documented projects.

Only those children for whom parents or guardians have given permission can be included in this study. I would like to request your permission to include your child. This means that your child may be photographed working at school, and conversations related to the curriculum may be tape-recorded. Participation of your child is completely voluntary. At any time a parent/guardian and/or child may withdraw from the study, without explanation and without prejudice. All data gathered will remain confidential; interview results and field notes will be kept in a locked cupboard and will be destroyed upon the completion of the project.

Pseudonyms will be used in place of each participant's name to protect his or her anonymity for this study; however, please be aware that, as photographs may be taken and publicly displayed as part of Hilltop's documentation, it is possible that your child may be recognized in those photos.

At the conclusion of this research project, a meeting will be held for all interested parents to share what I have learned. An executive summary of my research study will also be made available.

Should you have any questions, or be interested in discussing this research, I would welcome you to contact me. My supervisors at the University of Southern Queensland are also available to discuss this project. Dr. Noel Geoghegan can be reached at +61 7 4631 1418, or at geoghega@usq.edu.au. Dr. Nerida Ellerton can be reached at +61 7 4631 2317, or at ellerton@usq.edu.au.

Thank you for your consideration. If you are willing to have your child participate, please complete the attached permission form and return it to the school.

Sincerely yours,

Laurie Kocher

Appendix S
Consent form for Participation in the Study (Child)

The Disposition to Document: A Qualitative Case Study of Teachers
Implementing
Pedagogical Documentation as Inspired by the Schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy

I hereby give permission for my child _____
(name) to be included in the research study being conducted by Laurie Kocher at Hilltop Children's Centre, and in the subsequent reporting of this study in Laurie Kocher's Ph.D. project.

I understand that this research project involves observing children participating in the daily activities that take place at Hilltop Children's Centre, and may include individual, small group, and whole group activities. Photography, videotaping, and audiotaping may be used to document the learning experiences of children and teachers. I understand that all effort will be made to protect the anonymity of each participant; however, I also recognize that, as photographs of my child may be displayed in public through documentation, it is possible that he or she will be recognized in the photos by someone who knows him or her.

I also understand that my child's participation is completely voluntary, and that at any time and without prejudice, I may request that my child be withdrawn from this study. Any data gathered to that point will be destroyed immediately.

I understand that data collected in this study will remain confidential; field notes and interview transcripts will be kept in a locked cupboard and destroyed upon completion of the study.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print):

Researcher:

Date:

Appendix T
Consent form for Participation in the Study (Adult)

The Disposition to Document: A Qualitative Case Study of Teachers
Implementing
Pedagogical Documentation as Inspired by the Schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy

Parent	()
Teacher	()
Administrator	()
Community Resource Person	()

I hereby give permission for all or part of the transcript of my interview conversation with Laurie Kocher to be included either verbatim or in summary in the above research study and in the subsequent reporting of this study in Laurie Kocher's Ph.D. project.

I understand that this research project involves observing children participating in the daily activities that take place at Hilltop Children's Centre, and may include individual, small group, and whole group activities. Photography, videotaping, and audiotaping may be used to document the learning experiences of children and teachers. I agree to participating in a tape recorded interview that will form part of the data collection. I also understand that my participation is completely voluntary, and that at any time and without prejudice, I may request to be withdrawn from this study, and any data gathered to that point will be destroyed immediately.

I understand that data collected in this study will remain confidential; field notes and interview transcripts will be kept in a locked cupboard and destroyed upon completion of the study.

Signature of
Participant:

Name of
Participant:
(please print)

Researcher:

Date:

Appendix U
Request for Permission to Conduct Study – School Administration

Laurie Kocher
2646 St. Gallen Way
Abbotsford, BC
Canada
V3G 1C3
Telephone: 604.859.4416
Email: bramasole@home.com

Hilltop Children's Centre
School Director

Dear _____,

I am presently enrolled as a PhD student at the University of Southern Queensland. As a requirement for graduation, I am conducting a research project. The focus of my research is the documentation of children's learning developed in Reggio Emilia, Italy. The early childhood education programmes of that community have received much international acclaim in recent years. One of the key features of this educational programme is its use of documentation to record the learning that takes place within the school setting.

The usefulness of documentation was brought home to me after viewing the Hundred Languages of Children exhibition, a series of photographs and transcribed conversations that portray the learning experiences of young children in Reggio Emilia. I was impressed by the children's work and by the respect for children's thinking that was displayed, and began further exploration into what has become known as the "Reggio Emilia Approach."

Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (1999, p.148) use the term "pedagogical documentation" to refer to material which records what the children are saying and doing, the work of the children, and how the pedagogue (teacher) relates to the children and their work. This material may take many forms, such as hand-written notes of what is said and done, audio and video recordings, still photographs, children's work itself. This material makes the pedagogical work concrete and visible, and as such it is an important ingredient for the process of pedagogical documentation. Teachers, either alone or in relationship with others, use this documented material as a means to reflect upon the pedagogical work in a rigorous and methodical way.

In particular, I am seeking to learn more about the personal qualities that enable teachers to embrace pedagogical documentation with enthusiasm, and the evolution of pedagogical practice that arises out of reflecting upon a process of documenting children's learning that was developed in the pre-primary schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. My intention is to explore what it is that fosters this

disposition to document – what is it about the process that captures our imaginations, informs us, provokes us to personal growth?

As you already know, the staff at Hilltop Children’s Center have been using photography and recorded conversations in this fashion for many years to document children’s thinking. I intend to study how the teachers at Hilltop use documentation to foster children’s learning, and also how it fosters their own professional development. I will be using a combination of current documentation and Hilltop’s archive of past documented projects. A significant part of the data collection will involve interviewing teachers about their individual documentation experiences.

At the conclusion of this research project, a meeting will be held for all those interested to share what I have learned. An executive summary of my research study will also be made available.

Should you have any questions, or be interested in discussing this research, I would welcome you to contact me. My supervisors at the University of Southern Queensland are also available to discuss this project. Dr. Noel Geoghegan can be reached at +61 7 4631 1418, or at geoghega@usq.edu.au. Dr. Nerida Ellerton can be reached at +61 7 4631 2317, or at ellerton@usq.edu.au.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Laurie Kocher

Consent form for Participation in the Study (Adult)

*The Disposition to Document: A Qualitative Case Study of Teachers
Implementing
Pedagogical Documentation as Inspired by the Schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy*

Parent ()
Teacher ()
Administrator (✓)
Community Resource Person ()

I hereby give permission for all or part of the transcript of my interview conversation with Laurie Kocher to be included either verbatim or in summary in the above research study and in the subsequent reporting of this study in Laurie Kocher's Ph.D. project.

I understand that this research project involves observing children participating in the daily activities that take place at Hilltop Children's Centre, and may include individual, small group, and whole group activities. Photography, videotaping, and audiotaping may be used to document the learning experiences of children and teachers. I agree to participating in a tape recorded interview that will form part of the data collection. I also understand that my participation is completely voluntary, and that at any time and without prejudice, I may request to be withdrawn from this study, and any data gathered to that point will be destroyed immediately.

I understand that data collected in this study will remain confidential; field notes and interview transcripts will be kept in a locked cupboard and destroyed upon completion of the study.

Signature of Participant: 

Name of Participant: 
(please print)

Researcher: 

Date: 