

Building Relationships through Observation, Interaction, and Materials

Presented by:
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For the Educators of The Gan
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“..relationships and learning coincide within an active process of education. They come together through the expectations and skills of children, the professional competence of adults, and more generally the education process.”



-Loris Malaguzzi

The Hundred Languages of Children (1998)

Relationships within our Classrooms

- teacher & teacher
- teacher & child
- teacher & parent
- child & teacher
- child & parent
- child & child
- entire classroom community
- others: administrators, specialists, siblings,
- Who else?



What values serve as the foundation for relationships within your classroom?

Jewish? Reggio Emilia inspired? Personal?



What does *observation* mean within the context of our classrooms?

How does using *observation* as a tool allow us as educators to deepen our relationships with each other and our children, thus leading to deeper, more meaningful learning?



When your child asks, “Why is there a moon?”

Don't reply with a scientific answer.

Ask the child, “What do you think?” The child will understand what you are telling. “You have your own mind and your own interpretation and your ideas are important to me.” Then you and the child can look for answers, sharing the wonder, curiosity, pain, everything. **It is not the answers that are important it is the process-**that you and the child search together.

-Carlina Rinaldi,
Director, Reggio Children

Relationships and Investigations

How can investigations that are reoccurring, like those that emerge from the Jewish calendar be influenced by relationships?

How can documentation be used as a tool for building the relationships?



How do the relationships within your classroom, in combination with the natural interests and curiosities of your children, guide the learning of your classroom community?



Share a Scenario:

Reflecting back upon last school year share an interaction, conversation, exploration that you had with:

- a child, in which you used your relationship and the observations you had made to better understand and guide the child(ren) toward deeper learning

- a colleague, in which focusing on the values you identified as the foundation for relationships served you well

A relationship you may not have considered ...

The Relationship between Children and their Materials



“The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences. We must widen the range of topics and goals, the types of situations we offer and their degree of structure, the kinds and combinations of resources and materials, and the possible interactions with things, peers, and adults.”

-Loris Malaguzzi



Materials

- paints (acrylic, watercolor, bio)
- Brushes
- Pastels, crayons, colored pencils, charcoal
- Glue, scissors
- Flowers
- Sticks
- Shells
- Leaves
- Paper strips
- Small wood and metal items
- Wire
- Beads
- Nuts and bolts
- Rocks & pebbles
- Sticks & twigs
- Leaves
- Sea shells
- Sand
- Nuts & seeds
- Clay
- Wide array of paper—texture, sizes, color, etc.



What role do materials play in your classroom?



What is in your classroom studio?

How do your students interact with the materials presented to them?

What observations can be made once a child is fluent in the language of a specific material?

Materials Exploration

Watercolors

Carefully look at each part of the flower. Notice the colors, the details, the intricacies. Smell the flower, feel the flower. Put yourself in the place of the child—how would they choose to interpret this flower through the use of watercolors?

Materials Exploration

- Reflect upon your experience of interaction with the watercolors.
- What surprised you, frustrated you, or made you feel competent?
- How can this experience influence your teaching practice and the way you support children's interaction with materials in your classroom?

The Hundred Languages

by Loris Malaguzzi, translated by Leila Gandini

No way. The hundred is
there.

The child
is made of one hundred.
The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.

A hundred always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling, of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds
to discover
a hundred worlds
to invent
a hundred worlds
to dream.

The child has
a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.
They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and at Christmas.

They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.

They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things
that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.
The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.