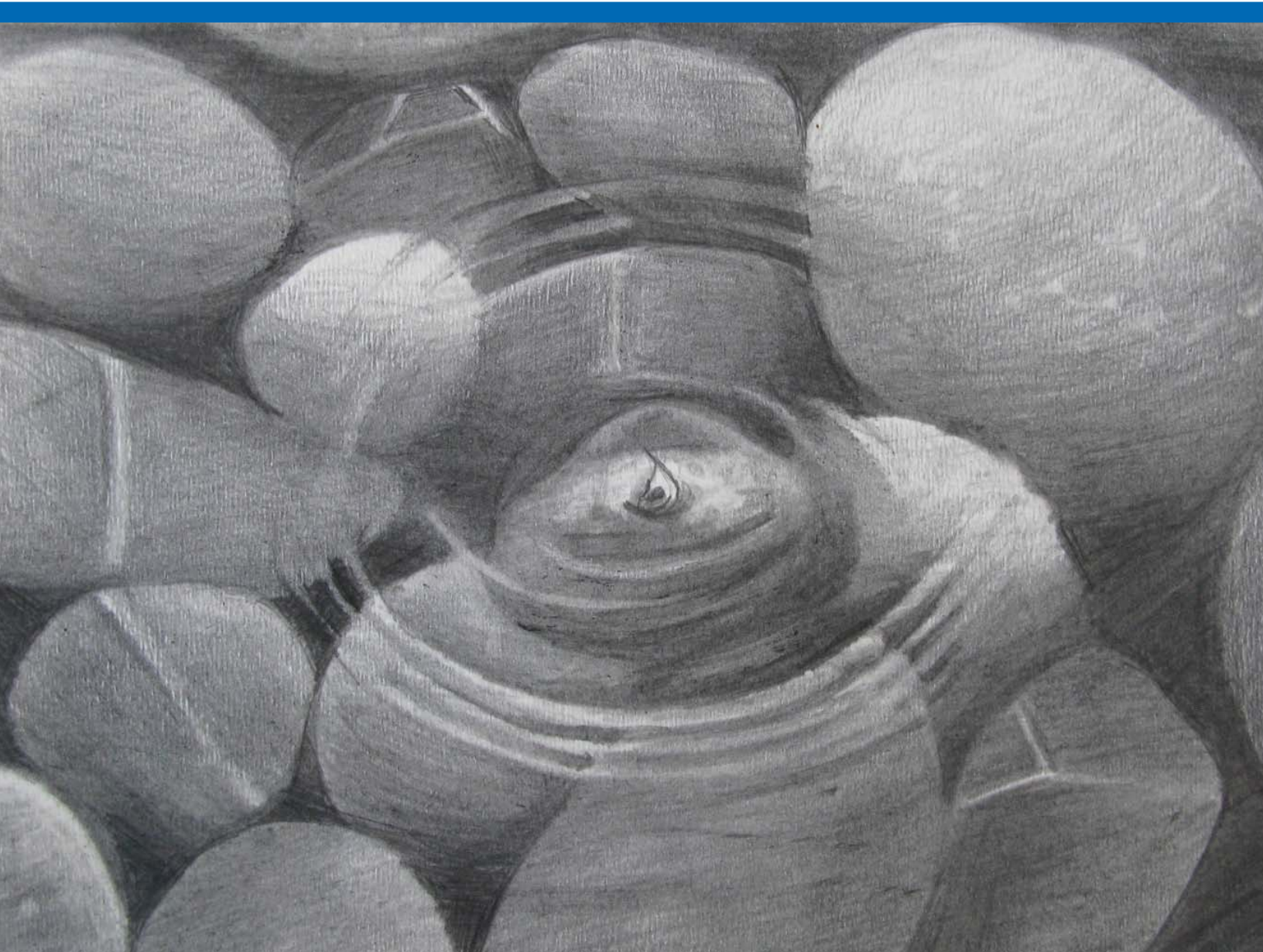


Pedagogical Leadership Resource Guide

Mount Royal University Alberta ELCC Curriculum Framework
– Alberta Education Project

October 2017



Pedagogical Leadership Resource Guide

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Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). Play, participation, and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta. Retrieved from www.childcareframework.com

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Introduction

This resource guide was created from the thoughtful work of the pedagogical leader, partners and pilot participants over the last two phases of the Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework project in Education settings.

Through ongoing dialogue provided by the pedagogical leader and partners during the Learning Community Sessions and during on-site visits, the participants began to recognize the framework as more than a “curriculum” or “project” – it is a philosophy and a way of understanding, living and working with young children.

Broad holistic views of children, childhood and early learning provoked the group members to think deeply about the Self of learners and teachers. Ultimately it moved them away from the “whats” and “hows” of traditional teaching and learning and pointed to the “whys” (philosophical understandings). It raised awareness about intentional and authentic integration of theories and practices. Rather than understanding learning as naming, repeating, and reproducing concepts, the participants lived the curriculum framework through more meaningful critical reflection and reflexive practices.

We view these explorations as a pebble dropped into pool of water. An idea, a concept, a way of thinking, a way of being has been dropped into the minds/ perspectives of individuals that has resulted in the creation of a series of ripples. When the concepts have been shared with program administrators, the ripples can be witnessed with their educators, in the day to day lives of the children and families. When the ideas have been shared with our pedagogical partners, the ripples in their perspectives and their practice have been noted.

We have seen the emergence of new, creative thoughts and practice that lives in child care programs. We have seen the ripple effects in educators who feel validated in their practice and find the true reason they entered child care to begin with. Every pebble dropped has created its own set of ripples. Each ripple represents the shift in practice - in routines, in transitions, in day to day experiences for children and the shift in which families see their child grow and develop.

In recognizing the CF as a way of living and learning alongside children, the participants asked different questions and envisioned new possibilities: How will our philosophical ideas and interpretations be reflected in the ways we teach, model and implement

CF concepts in the future? How can we provoke and support reflective and critical thinking around the CF within our communities of practice?

Ultimately the framework provided a sense of hope and a new way to view and work alongside children and their parents. It moved participants away from traditional, rote teaching and provided alternative ways to understand pedagogy and learning.

By implementing the curriculum concepts, the educators came to see and experience new possibilities and tested different pedagogical approaches and practices. They also recognized how responsive environments contribute to the well-being and happiness of children, families and educators.

This way of working with children is not a method—it's not a step-by-step guide. It is a philosophy—a way of living and being with children in the world. Our approaches to learning and understanding the CF concepts takes time, reflection, collaboration and ongoing dialogue.

This guide is not intended to be a 'how to guide'. The curriculum framework is complex and deep. It defies instruction and a simplistic, step by step approach to

implementation. Rather, the curriculum framework is best understood, piece by piece in practice. Simply reading will not provide the deep understanding needed to engage with the concepts in practice.

Educators must understand and live the concepts in their practice. This requires intentional learning and pedagogical support to see how each of the concepts fits and lives in the work we do every day with young children. It takes time and playing with ideas. It requires observation and thoughtful reflection based upon the embedded foundation of early learning that educators have. It takes open dialogue and critical thought to deeply understand as part of practice.

We have found that learners need to review the ideas and concepts over and over from different perspectives in order to integrate them in meaningful ways in their everyday practice.

Through this cycle of understanding, experiencing, reflecting, thinking and questioning, practice may be highlighted and shifted. It will require thought and persistence but it is hoped that the many ideas included in this resource guide will be the pebble that creates a ripple to change thinking in some way.

The Pedagogical Leader's Role

The pedagogical Leader plans and prepares the meeting agendas and facilitates the discussions/ meetings in the learning community each month. Their main role is to listen and based on the dialogue, topics of interest and challenges the participants face, provide resources and support.

In addition to the CF document, they should supply articles, media reports and on-line resources to answer specific questions and support learning. The Leader should be available to talk to the participants in between the monthly meetings; communicating via e-mail or telephone. The leader also works closely with the pedagogical partners regarding the site visits and monthly meetings.

Learning about the CF concepts requires time and are understood and implemented very differently by individuals within particular ECE contexts.

Many participants may need reassurance that implementation requires time, reflection, dialogue and patience. Teachers must collaborate and communicate with children, staff and parents in order to discover what concepts work and how to implement them within unique communities of practice.

Learning Communities and Communities of Practice

The following resource guide provides a compilation of resources developed specifically for the teachers and educators in the learning community.

In the first phase, school administrators and selected teachers/educators were selected to participate.

Accordingly, in the first set of meetings outlined, there were two parts to the meeting – the first part of the meeting included the pedagogical leader, pedagogical partners and the school administrators only. This part of the meeting focused on pedagogical leadership and how it may be enhanced in school settings.

In the second part of the meeting, the teachers/educators chosen from each school district attended the meeting and the focus was on the curriculum framework concepts.

In the second phase, the learning community meetings included only the school administrators. Pedagogical leadership in the community of practice

with the teachers and educators was promoted through on-site visits and experiences. The teachers and educators were actively involved in the on-site pedagogical partner visits in both phases of the project.

The learning community was led by the pedagogical leader. In the first phase, the starting point for each learning community meeting was predetermined. The pedagogical leader provided information, resources and activities. The pedagogical partner then followed up with this concept in practice during on-site visits to the program. In the second phase, the focus of each meeting was determined by the administrators in consultation with their pedagogical partners.

Collaboratively they determined the concepts that would be discussed at each meeting. Accordingly, the resource guide will chronicle both types of learning community sessions.



Learning Community One

Orientation

What is a Curriculum Framework?

The primary focus of this session is to make introductions, invite administrators and teachers to share their initial thoughts and questions related to the CF, and to inform them about the Learning Community process. The leader provides historical context about national and international curriculum frameworks based on Rachel Langford's (2010) article, and the Alberta curriculum framework document.

Readings

Coughlin, A. M. & Baird, L. (2013). Pedagogical Leadership, Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/Baird_Coughlin.pdf

Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). Play, participation, and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta. Retrieved from www.childcareframework.com Section 1

Additional Resource

Langford, R. (2010). Innovations in Provincial Early Learning Curriculum Frameworks. Occasional

Paper #24. Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Retrieved from http://www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/op24_0.pdf

Tip

Refreshments could be served after the teachers arrived and a metaphor about building relationships and communities of practice is shared. This is a nice way to invite conversation. Coffee time provides a nice opportunity for participants to chat and get to know each other.

Tip

To become informed about current research regarding postmodern curricular concepts, two journals: Canadian Children (CAYC) and Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood (SAGE) are suggested:

- To use documentation as a tool to share children's work with parents, families, colleagues and members of the wider communities.
- To hold parent sessions, invite parents to information meetings
- To work on building relationships with staff, children and families

ADMINISTRATORS' SESSION (ONE HOUR)

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Practice Shifts

Introductory discussion about the current shift away from traditional thematic pedagogical practices may be required for the group, as some teachers may disclose that they always used themes in their classrooms and don't understand why this approach is now being questioned. An explanation could be that postmodern ECE practices are holistic – rather than moving away from and/or not using traditional pedagogical practices, educators are broadening the lens and considering alternative approaches. Rather than tossing ideas out, teachers can expand their pedagogical toolboxes. Even within the framework of curricular themes, there are opportunities for children to focus on specific interests – themes can spark ideas. An emphasis could be that educators should celebrate the work that they are already doing and implement curricular ideas in small steps according to their particular community of practice.

Another conversation that may be encouraged is to explain that the Alberta Curriculum can also be viewed as a curriculum framework. Some teachers may choose to follow it as a recipe – a checklist to complete. However, when children are given opportunities to make choices and guide their own learning, they more than 'cover' the curriculum. This requires a shift in thinking for teachers who were trained to think of curriculum as a predetermined

plan. The teachers and administrators are able to inform colleagues and families about this shift in thinking and practice becoming informed themselves about current research regarding postmodern curricular concepts. Noted in the CF document: The developers of [the curriculum] chose to adapt the principles of the Alberta Education Kindergarten Program Statement to build continuity between the early learning and child care field and formal schooling and families in Alberta (p. 31).

3. Pedagogical Leadership

- What is pedagogical leadership?
- What might pedagogical leadership look like in your program?
- How much time do leaders spend in this role/capacity?

4. Learning Communities and Communities of Practice

- What is a community of practice?
- How do you view your own community of practice?

ADMINISTRATORS' AND EDUCATORS' SESSION (TWO HOURS)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Refreshments

2. Curriculum/Curriculum Framework

- What is curriculum? What is a curriculum framework?
- How might this new way of understanding curriculum work or “live out” within your community of practice? What implications does it have in terms of your leadership/teaching role?

3. Taking the Curriculum Framework “Home”

- How will you begin to build a curriculum framework at your site?
- What will you explore with your staff /students/ families based on what we discussed today?

Key question

How will implementing the curriculum framework impact your community of practice and your role(s) as pedagogical leaders/educators?

4. Site Visits

Discuss and schedule site visits with pedagogical partners.

Learning Activity

Give each participant a small empty picture frame; inviting participants to consider how they will co-construct curriculum and what they might place within the curricular framework at their particular educational settings.





Learning Community Two

The Image of the Child

It's necessary that we believe that the child is very intelligent, that the child is strong and beautiful and has very ambitious desires and requests. This is the image of the child that we need to hold. Those who have the image of the child as fragile, incomplete, weak, made of glass gain something from this belief only for themselves. We don't need that as an image of the child. Instead of always giving children protection, we need to give them the recognition of their rights and of their strengths (Malaguzzi, 1994).

Readings

Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). Play, participation, and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta. Edmonton, AB: Government of Alberta. Retrieved from <http://childcareframework.com/>

The Image of the Child: A Mighty Learner and Citizen. Section 2.2 (pp 38-48)

Malaguzzi, L. (1994). Your image of the child: Where teaching begins. Exchange 3. Retrieved from <http://www.earlylearning.prn.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Your-image-of-the-child-L.Malaguzzi.pdf>

Sorin, R. (2005). Changing images of childhood-

Reconceptualising early childhood practice.

International Journal of Transitions in Childhood 1, 12-21. Retrieved from https://extranet.education.unimelb.edu.au/LED/tec/pdf/journal_sorin.pdf

Additional Resources

Eiss, H. (1994). Images of the child. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press.

Langford, R. (2010). Innovations in Provincial Early Learning Curriculum Frameworks. Occasional Paper #24. Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Retrieved from http://www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/op24_0.pdf

Vancouver daycare teaches toddlers about Indian residential schools.

Children as young as 3 and 4 learn about dark chapter in Canadian history Posted: Sep 25, 2015
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/vancouver-daycare-teaches-residential-schools-1.3243358>

Discussion Starter

Show the educators photos of children. These provocative visuals sparked interesting dialogue between the educators at both meetings.

ADMINISTRATORS' SESSION (ONE HOUR)

1. Welcome

- a. Announcements and reminders
- b. Review the agenda

2. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

How will implementing the Curriculum Framework (CF) impact your community of practice and your role(s) as pedagogical leaders?

- a. Sharing Pedagogical Leadership Practices (journal reflections)
- b. Conversations about supporting Communities of Practice

3. Introduce: Image of the Child

Current CBC Media Reports

Vancouver daycare teaches toddlers about Indian residential schools

Children as young as 3 and 4 learn about dark chapter in Canadian history Posted: Sep 25, 2015

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/vancouver-daycare-teaches-residential-schools-1.3243358>

Key Questions

- How do you define a “strong” and “capable” child? A “mighty learner”? Citizen?
- What is your role, as a pedagogical leader, in supporting an image of a strong and capable child?
- How will you introduce and enhance understanding about the Image of the Child in your program?
- What image of the child is reflected in your learning environment and program?

ADMINISTRATORS' AND EDUCATORS' SESSION (TWO HOURS)

1. Welcome

- a. Announcements and Reminders
- b. Review agenda

2. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

- How might this new way of understanding curriculum “live out” within your classrooms and community of practice?
- How will implementing the CF impact your role(s) as educators?

3. Making Learning Visible

- a. Questions and ideas from the CF document.
- b. Viewing the child through historical, cultural, theoretical and personal lenses
- c. Learning Activity

Key questions

- How do you define a “strong” and “capable” child? A “mighty learner”? Citizen?
- What is your image of the child? How does your image of the child influence your interactions with children?
- How do you notice and name each child as a mighty learner and citizen?
- How do you view children’s risk-taking ventures?
- Who listens to children’s theories? Will the children’s theories be heard as cute comments or potential possibilities for learning?

4. Final Reflections and Questions

Learning Activity

In small groups, participants look at visual images of children and decided how they represent developmental, socio-cultural or post foundational perspectives/lenses. Afterwards, invite the teachers to write their personal reflections about the Image of the Child in learning journals. In a large group discussion, ask everyone to explain their image of the child as a “mighty learner.”

Some examples may include: Fearless, willing to participate, problem solvers, creative, independent, curious, strong personalities with specific likes.

Closure

Young children are powerful, active, competent protagonists of their own growth: actors in their shared history, participants in society and culture, with the right (and obligation) to speak from their own perspective, and to act with others on the basis of their own particular experience and level of consciousness.

All children seek identity, individuality, completion, and satisfaction through dialogue, interaction, and negotiation with others. Their contexts for action are the ceaselessly changing intersecting world of classroom, community, and culture, with adults nearby to serve as partners, resources, and guides (Edwards et al., 1998, p. 180).





Learning Community Three

Making Teaching Visible – A Practice of Relationships

We need to define the role of the adult, not as a transmitter but as a creator of relationships...not only between people but also between things, between thoughts, with the environment...We [educators] must see ourselves as researchers, able to think, and to produce a true curriculum, a curriculum produced from all of the children. (Malaguzzi, 1994)

Readings

Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). Play, participation, and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta. Edmonton, AB: Government of Alberta. Retrieved from <http://childcareframework.com/>

A Practice of Relationships: Your Role as an Early Learning and Child Care Educator. Section 2.2

Additional Resources

Harbin, J. & Miller, D. (1991) Violent play behavior and language of four-year old boys: The significance of teacher mediation, *Early Child Development and Care*, 75:1, 79-86

Rinaldi, C. (2001). The pedagogy of listening: Listening perspectives from Reggio Emilia. *The International*

Reggio Exchange 8 (4). Retrieved from http://reggioalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Rinaldi-Pedagogy-of-listening.Innov_.8.4.pdf

Rinaldi, C. (2003). The teacher as researcher. *Innovations in Early Education. The International Reggio Exchange* 10(2). Retrieved from <http://www.reggioalliance.org/downloads/researcher:rinaldi.pdf>

Stacey, S. (2015). Pedagogical documentation in early childhood: Sharing children's learning and teachers' thinking. St. Paul, MN: Red Leaf Press

Vivian Paley's texts—stories children told her in the kindergarten classroom:

Paley, V. (1981). *Wally's stories. Conversations in the kindergarten*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Paley, V. (2004). *A child's work. The importance of fantasy play*. Chicago IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Paley, V. (2009). The importance of fantasy, fairness, and friendship in children's play. An interview with Vivian Gussin Paley. *American*

Journal of Play. Retrieved from <http://www.journalofplay.org/sites/www.journalofplay.org/files/pdf-articles/2-2-interview-paley-fantasy-fairness-friendship.pdf>

Discussion Starter

Invite the administrators to share ideas about their site visits and explain how they are introducing ideas about the Image of the Child at their schools.

Tip

Posting working documentation in classrooms is a valuable way to increase interest within the wider school community — other teachers in the school may comment about the working panels and conversations may begin outside the classrooms. Parents and children from other classes may also be invited to comment.

Tip

To support pedagogical leadership, administrators may ask teachers questions to provoke critical thinking (e.g. what are the children's interests? How do you see them as "capable"?)

Tip

Share photos with therapists and support staff - inviting them to participate in the documentation process. Ensure that panels are organized with clear intentions and results as some might not see the purpose of "messy" working documentation panels. Perhaps have the children explain the photographs (mounted on the doc panels) to the therapists, as a way to open conversations. This might increase the

therapists' interest, encourage them to add their ideas, and the children's, to the working panel, and help them to see the reasons and value in using working doc. It will also provide excellent language practice for the children.

ADMINISTRATORS' SESSION (ONE HOUR)

1. Welcome

- a. Announcements
- b. Review agenda

2. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

- What is your role, as a pedagogical leader, in supporting an image of a strong and capable child—a mighty learner?
- How will you introduce and enhance understanding about the Image of the Child in your program?
 - a. Pedagogical Leadership Practices (journal reflections)
 - b. Conversations about supporting Communities of Practice
 - c. Connections to Alberta Ed Curriculum

3. Introduce: Image of the Educator

Traditional versus alternative images

Activity: Give the administrators a list of traditional and alternative roles of the educators and ask them to write specific examples of their own teacher roles and practices. Encourage this self-reflection exercise to spark ideas for their journal-writing.

Key Questions

- How will you introduce the changing role(s) of the educator and the concept of making teaching visible to educators?
- How do staff understand relationships and the role(s) of the educator and how is this currently portrayed in the program? How is this understanding linked to their image of the child?
- How can you facilitate and continue your staff's understanding and practice of the multiple roles of educators?
- How will knowledge about relationships and the role(s) of the educator be used in the program?

ADMINISTRATORS' AND EDUCATORS' SESSION (TWO HOURS)

1. Welcome

- a. Announcements and Reminders
- b. Review agenda

2. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

- How does your image of the child influence your interactions with children?
- How do you notice and name each child as a mighty learner and citizen?

3. Making Teaching Visible

A Practice of Relationships – The Image of the Educator

- a. Discuss questions and ideas from the CF Document
- b. Learning Activity

Key questions

- What do you love about your work? What keeps you going?
- How do you understand relationships and your role(s) as an educator?
- How does understanding relationships influence your image of the child and your practice?
- How do you envision your roles might shift in implementing the curriculum framework?

4. Additional Reflections and Questions

Learning Activity

In groups, draw visual metaphors representing their Image of the Educator. Ask the participants to write an artists' statement and consider presenting this visual work to their colleagues or at a final showcase of their learning.





Learning Community Four

Documentation and Getting to Know the Child

Documentation, therefore, is seen as visible listening, as the construction of traces (through notes, slides, videos, and so on) that not only testify to the children's learning paths and processes, but also make them possible because they are visible. For us this means making visible, and thus possible, the relationships that are the building blocks of knowledge.

Rinaldi, C. (2001). Documentation and assessment: What is the relationship? In C. Giudici & C. Rinaldi (Eds.) *Making learning visible*, (pp. 78-89). Reggio Emilia, IT: Reggio Children

Readings

Atkinson, K. (2012). Pedagogical narration: What's it all about? An introduction to the process of using pedagogical narration in practice. *The Early Childhood Educator*. Retrieved from http://www.ecebc.ca/resources/journal/2012_fall/Pedagogical_Narration.pdf

Tarr, P. (2011). Reflections and shadows: Ethical issues in pedagogical documentation. *Canadian Children* 36 (2), 11-16. Retrieved from https://eccdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ethical_issues_pedagogical.pdf

Wein, C. with Guyevskey, V. & Berdoussis, N. (2011). Learning to document in Reggio-inspired education. *ECRP* 13(2). Retrieved from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v13n2/wien.html>

Articles

Oken-Wright, P. Documentation: Both mirror and light. Retrieved from <http://reggioalliance.org/downloads/documentation:okenwright.pdf>

Seitz, H. (2008). The power of documentation in the early childhood classroom. *NAEYC Young Children*. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/files/tyc/file/Seitz.pdf>

Tarr, P., Bjartveit, C., Kostiuk, L. & McCowan, D. (2009). Supporting imagination in play through pedagogical documentation: Haunted houses; Fairies and goblins; Pirates and islands. *Canadian Children*, 34(1). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=Supporting+imagination+in+play+through+pedagogical+documentation%3A+Haunted+houses%3B+Fairies+and+goblins%3B+Pirates+and+islands>

Wein, C., Making learning visible through pedagogical documentation. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/Wien.pdf>

Wein, C. with Guyevskey, V. & Berdoussis, N. (2011). Learning to document in Reggio-inspired education. ECRP 13(2). Retrieved from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v13n2/wien.html>

Online Resources

Making Learning Visible website. <http://www.makinglearningvisibleresources.org/>

Documentation Videos – Dr. Carol Ann Wein. <http://edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/document.html>

Ontario Ministry of Education, Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from research about young children. Pedagogical documentation. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/document.html>

Books

Carr, M., & Lee, W. (2012). Learning stories. Constructing learner identities in early education. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage

Giudici, C. & Rinaldi, C. (2001). Making learning visible. Children as individual and group learners. Reggio Emilia, IT: Reggio Children

Helm, J. H., Beneke, S. & Steinheimer, K. (2007). Windows on learning. Documenting young children's work (2nd ed). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Kinney, L. & Wharton, P. (2008). An encounter with Reggio Emilia. Children's early learning made visible. New York, NY: Routledge

Krechevsky, M., Mardell, B., Rivard, M., & Wilson, D. (2013). Visible learners: Promoting Reggio-inspired approaches in all schools. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Stacey, S. (2015). Pedagogical documentation in early childhood: Sharing children's learning and teachers' thinking. St. Paul, MN: Red Leaf Press

ADMINISTRATORS' SESSION (ONE HOUR)

[T]eachers must be allowed to be beginners at documentation, to take time with the first aspects of the progression, and to approach the process in ways that connect to their own practices. They can begin only at their own beginning points, tolerating them and understanding that these first steps take them toward something that they don't yet know how to do but lead to their own knowing.

Wein, C. with Guyevskey, V. & Berdoussis, N. (2011). Learning to document in Reggio-inspired education. ECRP 13(2). Retrieved from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v13n2/wien.html>

1. Welcome and Announcements

2. What is pedagogical documentation?

- A research "story" created by teachers, children, and other members of the community of practice

- Interpretations about the learners' (both children and adults) understanding of a particular topic, curriculum moment, object etc.
- A tool that makes children's theories and learning visible
- Visible listening
- A reflection of teacher practices
- An assessment tool
- A tool in guiding curriculum

3. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

- a. The purpose of the curriculum pilot project
 - b. Sharing pedagogical leadership practices (journal reflections): Learning, successes and struggles.
- How have you introduced/facilitated your staff's understanding of the multi-faceted roles of educators?

4. Conversations

Conversations about pedagogical leadership and supporting documentation practices

- Determining the entry points and facilitating first steps toward documenting

Key questions

- How are the teachers currently documenting children's learning in the classroom(s)?
- How will documenting be continued and supported through your pedagogical leadership?

Five steps:

Five steps toward educators' understanding and uses of pedagogical documentation in teacher research and designs for learning:

1. Developing habits of documenting – using tools and collecting “data”
2. Becoming comfortable with recounting classroom activities and “going public”
3. Developing visual literacy skills – learning “how the human eye reads images”
4. Conceptualizing a purpose of documentation as making learning visible
5. Sharing visible theories with others for interpretation and further design curriculum – engaging in ongoing dialogue

Learning Activity

Refer to the Wein et al. (2011) article, “Learning to document in Reggio-inspired education”— pointing out 5 steps toward educators' understanding and uses of pedagogical documentation.

Ask the administrators to consider what steps the teachers have already taken (documenting) and how they might support them to take next steps. (Give examples)

How will you support and encourage the teachers to take further step(s)? Document the teachers' experiences.

How will you continue the teachers' understanding and implementation of documentation?

ADMINISTRATORS' AND EDUCATORS' SESSION (TWO HOURS)

1. Welcome and Refreshments

2. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

- a. Conversations about learning, successes and issues (journal reflections)
 - How do you understand relationships and your role(s) as an educator?
 - How do you envision your pedagogical role(s) will shift in implementing the Curriculum Framework?
- b. Questions

3. Making Learning Visible: Documentation and Getting to Know the Child

- a. Sharing ideas and questions from readings:
Group discussions
- b. Learning Activity

Key questions

- What questions do I have about children in my program? What do I want to investigate further?
- What view of the child is portrayed in my current documentation practices?
- What else can I document beyond children's developmental skills?
- How can others contribute to my interpretations and expand on the story my documentation tells?

4. Confidentiality/consent

Confidentiality and consent to document (photographs, audio/digital recording, video) (Tarr, 2011).

Learning Activity

Share various examples/forms of documentation— Learning Stories (CF), panels and books. Read and reflect upon the following passage by Bronwyn Davis (2014):

[I]n order to keep the walls alive, to make a commitment to life as mobility itself, in which the not-yet-known of the children's thoughts has space to emerge, the photos and paintings, along with quotes from what the children say, are posted on the wall in an informal way that invites the passer-by, both child and adult, to stop and contemplate what it is that is emergent there.

It invites them to be affected by it, and to wonder how they might become involved in it, how they might add to it or respond to it. Such informal displays invite not only additions and extensions, but shifts of consciousness that open up thought in those who view them. (p. 25)

Davis' (2014) idea of living walls—alive with possibilities, questions, and ideas— may spark interest and discussion. Asked the teachers: How do you keep the walls alive in your classrooms? Then go into discussion groups with their administrators and to make preliminary plans to create a piece of documentation to bring to the next meeting.

Learning Activity

Provide each teacher with a basket containing various supplies for documenting—pen, Post-it notes, clip board, tape, note book. The basket will be a visible reminder to document. Discuss the following strategies (to begin documenting) and make plans to create and share one piece of documentation at the next meeting.

1. Choose and become accustomed to using one or two documentation tool(s) – camera, video, audio recorder, Post-it notes and pen.
2. Collect “data” (photos, videos, notes, dialogue, and artwork) - Listen, observe and record ordinary moments of learning in the coming weeks.
3. Interpret, create and share documentation -
Choose one moment from your collected “data” and create a “more polished documentation... [t]ry naming the learning yourself by giving it a title... [l]ay out what you think is happening as simply as possible....Share the documentation with several colleagues and invite them into a dialogue....See how the discussion opens up surprises and new possibilities.”





Learning Community Five

Mighty Learners - Children's Learning Dispositions: Play and Playfulness / Participating / Persisting / Seeking / Caring

Readings

Da Ros-Voseles, D. & Fowler-Haughey, S. (2007). Why Children's Dispositions Should Matter to All Teachers. Beyond the Journal. Young Children on the Web. <https://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200709/DaRos-Voseles.pdf>

Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). Play, participation, and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta. Edmonton, AB: Government of Alberta. Retrieved from [http://childcareframework.com/Children's Dispositions to Learn. Section 3.2](http://childcareframework.com/Children's%20Dispositions%20to%20Learn.%20Section%203.2)

ADMINISTRATORS' SESSION (ONE HOUR)

1. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

- a. Share pedagogical leadership practices (journal reflections): Learning, successes and struggles.
 - How have you introduced and facilitated the teachers' understanding and implementation of pedagogical documentation?
 - How will you support and encourage the teachers to take further step(s)?

- b. Share documentation (of the teachers' experiences/documentation practices)

2. Conversations

Conversations about pedagogical leadership and nurturing children's dispositions to learn

- Discuss ideas from the readings and video

Key questions

- How will I introduce the concept of dispositions to educators and in practice?
- How might knowledge about children's dispositions help educators to further understand the image of the child?
- How can the concept of dispositions continue and be supported through my pedagogical leadership?

ADMINISTRATORS' AND EDUCATORS' SESSION (TWO HOURS)

1. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

- a. Conversations about learning, successes and issues (journal reflections)
 - What image of the child is portrayed in my current documentation practices?
 - What can I document beyond children's

developmental skills?

- How can others contribute to my interpretations and expand on the story my documentation tells?

b. Share documentation

c. Confidentiality/consent to document
(photographs, audio/digital recording, video)
(Tarr, 2011).

2. Mighty Learners: Children's Learning Dispositions

- Learning Activity: Small group discussions

Key questions

- How are learning dispositions currently recognized/observed in the classroom?
- How can I strengthen, nurture or diminish these dispositions through my interactions and pedagogical practices?
- How can my knowledge about learning dispositions be used in the program?

Learning Activity:

Ask the participants if they had questions or comments regarding the readings about learning dispositions. Distribute a handout with the following questions related to dispositions and invite everyone to work in small groups and respond to the questions.
CF Learning Dispositions: Play and Playfulness / Participating / Persisting / Seeking / Caring

1. What are/define dispositions?

- Habits of the mind / innate behaviors
- Characteristics ways of responding
- Relationship based
- Nurtured by the environment
- Sometimes positive, sometimes negative
- Not skills and not learned

2. Give examples of dispositions

- Caring, co-operation, imaginative, problem solver, wonder, creativity, persistence, playfulness, resilience, resourcefulness

3. Why is it important to nurture children's dispositions?

- Can be more important than acquiring skills
- Skills and knowledge can support dispositions
- If not nurtured, dispositions may not be visible
- Dispositions facilitate deeper learning

4. What facilitates dispositions?

- Wonder, curiosity
- Curriculum based on children's interests
- Educator who model dispositions
- Time to experience
- Environments environments saturated with learning dispositions

5. How will you nurture children's dispositions in your classroom?



Learning Community Six

Making Teaching Visible: Curriculum Connections

Readings

Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). Play, participation, and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta. Edmonton, AB: Government of Alberta. Retrieved from <http://childcareframework.com/>

Holistic Play-Based Goals for Children's Responsive Care, Play, Learning, and Development (Section 3.1)

Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). Play, participation, and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta. Edmonton, AB: Government of Alberta. Retrieved from <http://childcareframework.com/> (Section 2.4)

Rose, S., & Whitty, P. (2010). "Where do we find the time to do this?" Struggling Against the Tyranny of Time. *Alberta Journal Of Educational Research*, 56(3). Retrieved from <http://ajer.synergiesprairies.ca/ajer/index.php/ajer/article/view/822/787>

ADMINISTRATORS' SESSION (ONE HOUR)

1. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

Share pedagogical leadership practices (journal reflections): Learning, successes and struggles.

- How have you introduced the concept of dispositions to teachers?
- How might knowledge about children's dispositions help teachers to further understand the image of the child?
- How can dispositions be supported through documentation practices?

2. Conversations

Conversations about pedagogical leadership and holistic play-based goals.

- Discuss ideas from the readings

Key questions

- How will you facilitate the teachers' understanding of curriculum goals/connections at your school(s)?
- How will the concept of curriculum connections be continued through your pedagogical leadership?

ADMINISTRATORS' AND EDUCATORS' SESSIONS (Two Hours)

1. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

Conversations about learning, successes and struggles
(journal reflections)

- How are dispositions currently recognized/
observed in the classroom?
- How can I strengthen, nurture or diminish
these dispositions through my interactions and
pedagogical practices?

2. Mighty Learners: Holistic Play Based Goals

- Learning Activity: Dialogue about play-based goals
- Well-Being; Play and Playfulness; Communication
and Literacies; Diversity and Social Responsibility

Key questions

- How will I introduce and facilitate Curriculum
Connections in the classroom?
- How will the concept of Curriculum Connections
continue through my documentation practices?

Learning activity

Organize small groups and distributed handouts
with the CF curriculum goals. Ask the participants
to go through the lists and record questions and
suggestions regarding the terms and goals. Facilitate

discussion about the goals and any additional
suggestions from the participants. Encourage the
teachers to add the play-based goals (labels) to
their documentation panels and make curriculum
connections.

1. Well-Being

Emotional Health and Positive Identities

Children develop a sense of self:

- Developing recognition of self and emotions
- Co-constructing their identities
- Persevering and persisting (how is this defined?)

Physical Health

Children learn about food and nutrition:

- Exploring a range of cultural practices of eating
and sharing food (or stories)
- Respect for where food comes from beyond
grocery store – nature connection

Children explore body and movement

- Releasing and restoring energy in outdoor places
and indoor places

Belonging

Children develop a sense of place:

- Identifying, creating and using personal
landmarks
- Becoming familiar with the sights, sounds,
rhythms and routines of new situations within
and without the centre

Children build respectful, and responsive relationships:

- Participating in group initiative (ones that are generated by children and adults).

2. Play and Playfulness

Imagination and Creativity

Children develop their dispositions for flexible and fluid thinking:

- Seeing people, places and things in new ways (materials, toys)

Children invent symbols and develop systems of representation:

- Making up their own words, marks, and movements
- Taking up and reshaping cultural experiences (expressing, providing and opportunity, engaging in...)
- Developing awareness of the imagined and ordinary worlds they move between as they play (and honouring that movement into imaginary worlds).

Children create imaginary scenarios in which they explore new....

- Creating social spaces and shared narratives
- Creating alternative systems of power

Playful Exploration and Problem Solving

Children learn about the properties of objects

- Developing a vocabulary to describe and engage

with similarities and differences, patterns and relationships.

Children learn to negotiate the complexities of joint understandings

Dizzy Play

Children take pleasure in being on the edge (taking risks?)

3. Communication and Literacies

Communicative Practices

Children form relationships through communicative practices:

- Initiating and responding to gestural and visual languages
- Children learn the conventions of their languages
- Growing in their implicit understanding of the conventions of language
- Experiencing and developing diverse linguistic repertoires

Multimodal Meaning Making

Children explore a variety of sign systems

- Becoming familiar with the sign systems of language, music, art and drama (100 languages? This seems limited – seems more like breaking it into traditional disciplines)

Literate Identities With/In Communities

Children use the literacy tools of digital technologies (I'm not sure of the value of this on child use level – recent research)

4. Diversity and Social Responsibility

Democratic Practices

Children practice democratic decision-making, making choices in matters that affect them

- Questioning, co-constructing and reworking rules and procedures

- 3) Introduce the holistic play-based goals through photographic images and then ask staff how does this activity (photograph) may match the CF goals? You may also wish to place goals (labels) on the bulletin boards as a teaching/coaching practice.

Tips

How might you engage staff in the CF tenants?

One example is:

- 1) Focus first on the language in the framework—familiarizing staff with the terms and concepts through continuous dialogue/meetings and activities.
- 2) Begin documentation in various forms of documentation (celebration/kudos boards, bulletin boards, and binders). The documentation provokes reflexive thinking and allows educators and support staff to consider next steps in curriculum planning.



Learning Community Seven

Responsive Environments: Time, Space, Materials, and Participation

Readings

Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). Play, participation, and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta. Edmonton, AB: Government of Alberta. Retrieved from <http://childcareframework.com/> (Section 2.4)

Rose, S., & Whitty, P. (2010). "Where do we find the time to do this?" Struggling Against the Tyranny of Time. Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 56(3). Retrieved from <http://ajer.synergiesprairies.ca/ajer/index.php/ajer/article/view/822/787>

Additional Resources

Video: Reggio Schools: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bChxefnk4L0>

ADMINISTRATORS' SESSIONS (ONE HOUR)

1. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

Share pedagogical leadership practices (journal reflections): Learning, successes and struggles.

- How have you facilitated the teachers' understanding of curriculum goals/connections?

- How will the concept of curriculum connections be continued through your pedagogical leadership?

2. Conversations about Responsive Environments

Discuss ideas from the readings and video

Key question

How will you support and encourage the teachers to explore space, time, and materials in the context of responsiveness and the image of the child?

ADMINISTRATORS' AND EDUCATORS' SESSIONS (TWO HOURS)

1. Reflections from the Last Meeting and Site Visits

Conversations about learning, successes and struggles (journal reflections)

- How have you introduced and facilitated Curriculum Connections in the classroom?
- How will the concept of Curriculum Connections continue through your documentation practices?

2. Responsive Environments: Time, Space, Materials, and Participation

- Learning Activity

Key questions

- How does the environment, time (including routines), space and materials make teaching visible and invite learning in my classroom?
- How can the concept of time, space and materials continue through my pedagogical practice and documentation?

Learning activity

Invite the participants to create and share a video showing their learning environment. Working in small groups, share and discuss the videos and considered the questions:

- How does the environment, time (including routines), space and materials make teaching visible and invite learning in my classroom?
- How can the concept of time, space and materials continue through my pedagogical practice and documentation?



Learning Community Eight

A Synthesis of Learning and Next Steps

ADMINISTRATORS' SESSION (ONE HOUR)

1. Conversations and reflections from our last meeting and recent site visits
 - How will you support and encourage teachers to explore space, time, and materials in the context of responsiveness and the image of the child?
2. Synthesis of learning and next steps
 - How will you continue to support educators to implement the curriculum framework concepts?
 - How will you facilitate critical reflection and intentional planning on an ongoing basis?
 - What will you focus on (with the teachers) to build the momentum you have started?

ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS' SESSION (TWO HOURS)

1. Responsive Environments

Continuation of Responsive Environments: Time, Space, Materials, and Participation

- How do the environment, time (including routines), space and materials make teaching visible and invite learning in your classroom?
- How can these concepts continue through your pedagogical practice and documentation?

2. Synthesis of Learning and Next Steps

a. Learning Activity

Share visual metaphors and explain your successes, struggles and next steps in implementing the curriculum framework concepts

- What concepts and practices are working well?
- What concepts do you continue to struggle with?
- What are your next steps in implementing the curriculum framework concepts in my classroom?

b. Building and continuing our community of practice

Learning Activity

Synthesis of Learning

Invite the administrators and teachers to share an object/artifact and explain how it represents their learning throughout the pilot project. Encourage the participants to talk about their successes and struggles, providing an opportunity for reflexive and critical thinking about the learning.

Examples:

1. A ball of yarn

Explaining the mess and tangle of sorting out new ideas around the curriculum, indicating that the concepts were not simple to unravel.

2. A sand dollar

Explaining the many stages of change (e.g. the colours change before they are bleached by the sun and the many layers/stories) before we collect them on the beach. It is a circle shape and therefore no beginning or end —it is a universal journey as co-researchers.

3. An optical illusion/image

When you look at a picture one way you see a young women (the CF) and when you look at it another way you see an old women (traditional views). While working through the CF document, you may discover that you are more traditional in your thinking, ideas and approaches.

4. A group photo

Describing the process of becoming a leader within the team. The collective nature and discussions in the learning community were very

meaningful experiences and strengthened her pedagogical leadership.

5. Images of ocean waves

Compared to CF concepts. They swoop you up, you ride it (begin to understand), it drops you (sometimes the concepts are difficult to grasp), but increases your knowledge. There's the wave, then the questions. Each drop of information adds to the whole.

6. A photo of the sculpture, *The Thinker* (originally named *The Poet*) by the French artist Rodin
Reflecting upon the importance of reflexive thinking and taking time to think about and discuss working documentation. Listening, observing, recording are important - however making time to think and discuss the children's words and actions are crucial in the meaning-making process.



Learning Community Nine

Pedagogical Leaders - Continuing Exploration

1. Introduction

A sample of the Self-Assessment and Leadership Learning Plan can be seen in Appendix A.

SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

This tool will help identify your understanding and knowledge about the Alberta Early Learning Curriculum Framework concepts and practices. The tool is to be used to help guide your Learning Plan goals and activities. The full version of the Framework Document; Play, Participation and Possibilities should also be considered when completing this tool as well as conversations with your pedagogical partners, leader and learning community members.

LEADERSHIP LEARNING PLAN

This tool will assist the learner in identifying and organizing a framework for their professional learning and growth plans. Learning goals will be created and then complemented by learning activities and actions

2. More Information

Responsive Information Request provides further information about:

- Modeling documentation process and next steps
- How to interpret stories – what are “good” questions to ask?

Additional Resources:

Helping Children Ask Good Questions by George Forman https://www.davincischools.org/pdfs/IA/Helping_Children_Ask_Good_Questions.pdf
Egan, K. (1986). Teaching as storytelling. An alternative approach to teaching and curriculum in the elementary schools. The University of Chicago Press.
A Conversation with Vivian Gussin Paley: <http://www.naeyc.org/content/conversation-vivian-gussin-paley>





Learning Community Ten

Pedagogical Leaders- Continuing Exploration: Reflections and Sharing

1. Review tools and plans from last session:

- Self-Assessment and Leadership Learning Plan
- Classroom visits

LEARNING PLAN GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

Examples:

1. Facilitate a discussion with the teaching team
2. Engage teachers in conversations; asking questions to provoke critical thinking about intentional practices and ways to effectively implement the CF concepts.
3. Build relationships between school administrators and pre-k teachers. (Principals may not be aware that they have learning leadership responsibilities in the Early Years classrooms because the teachers are not certified.)
4. Share documentation with the licensing inspector on an ongoing basis -to inform them of the children's work
5. Visit classroom in other districts or Boards that are working with implementation of the framework concepts
6. Ask questions to provoke educators critical thinking about their practices.
7. Document the children's activities/play during their classroom visits and model the process to the teachers

2. Interpretation

Interpreting pedagogical documentation means

- asking “good” questions
- discussion

READINGS

Helping Children Ask Good Questions by George Forman https://www.davincischools.org/pdfs/IA/Helping_Children_Ask_Good_Questions.pdf

Frampton, A. (2016). Provocation to reflect: an educator's exploration of engaging students through documentation. *Journal of Childhood Studies*, 41(3), pp. 47-53. <https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/jcs/article/view/16306/6954>

A Conversation with Vivian Gussin Paley: <http://www.naeyc.org/content/conversation-vivian-gussin-paley>

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Show a clip from a George Foreman video, “Amusement Park for the Birds” – about children looking at and drawing fountains in a park in Reggio Emilia. Ask participants to note their questions and what they observed about the fountain.

Then show another clip of the same film— where the educators asks children how the water flows up and out the top of the fountain. The children explained their theories through drawings and conversations. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChrVfA8gQyA>

The video, as well as the resources (listed above) provide examples of good questions to ask children while they are exploring ideas and theories.

3. Pedagogical Partner/Administrator Small Goup Meetings

Groups meet to make plans for subsequent site visits to work on Learning Plans.

Additional Resources

Bork, P., Harwood, D., & Bennett, S. (2014). Using play as a key to unlocking the silence for children with selective mutism. *Canadian Children*, 39 (3), 24-33.

Gilman, S. (2007). Including the child with special needs: Learning from Reggio Emilia. *Theory into Practice* 46(1), 23-31.

Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., Kind, S., Kocher, L (2016) *Encounters with Materials in Early Childhood Education*, New York, NY: Routledge.

Capilano University Studio Art Gallery March 1 – 19, 2014. Curated by Sylvia Kind. <http://commonworlds.net/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/MaterialEncounterscatalogue.pdf>

Showcase and Learning Circles

A showcase and learning circle provides a great opportunity to share the participants' work within the wider community and field. The administrators and teachers could be invited to speak about their experiences during the learning community. Displays may include examples of working documentation, learning stories, artifacts/objects and children's work.

A showcase provides opportunity for the participants to highlight some of the key concepts of the AB Curriculum Framework in practice in their classrooms.

A Learning Circle provides opportunities for further reflection and discussion about the key learnings and the process followed by the administrators and teachers. Participants reported that this reflective process helped them become more intentional in their practice with other teachers, the children and the families.



Pedagogical Partner's Role

The pedagogical partner's role is to meet regularly with administrators and teachers – on-site – in the classroom. Prior to the meetings the partner should discuss with the teachers which CF concepts and topics they wish to discuss and create a meeting outline.

Conversations include the participant's successes, struggles and also next steps in moving forward. Part of the time at the school may be spent in the classrooms observing the working documentation boards, children's activities and spaces/environments. Based on the observations, suggestions may be made regarding documentation—making learning visible—and implementing specific CF concepts.

Some partners then meet with the teachers and administrators during their lunch hour to talk about their journal entries and questions related to curriculum topics. Emails are frequently exchanged in-between visits, while the partner continues to coach and share ideas and resources on an ongoing basis. This may include additional articles and texts to supplement and support the participants' understanding of the CF document as well as recycled and found materials to support the children's classroom project work.

The pedagogical partner supports shifts in practice, such as reducing the number of transitions and

increasing the minutes of uninterrupted free play, fostering the use of working documentation in making children's learning visible, planning and assessment and changes to the physical and human environment. Much of this work begins with observation, documentation and dialogue.

A main focus when working with the CF is to create and reflect on documentation—working documentation. Participants' main question may be: What do we do with all this information/data (photographs, notes, examples of children's artwork)?

The “messy” bulletin boards—layers of stories—are complex and overwhelming, particularly when it comes time to sorting through and making sense and meaning from the documents. Through ongoing teaching, coaching and modeling, the educators and support staff come to understand the uses and value of working documentation.

Work with the teachers to try out/test ways to use the working documentation and understand how to further support the children's learning and interests. They will come to recognize the value of creating “living” walls and inviting families, children and staff to contribute to the documentation boards.

Using tools such as audio recording devices, cameras, videos allow educators to record classroom activities and continue to participate with the children.

Anecdotal records—teachers can jot down quick notes (Post-it notes) about the play experience in the moment and record the details later.

Working in twos—in the Northern Italian Reggio Emilia schools, teachers work in teams. One educator documents and the other instructs. Perhaps support staff and teachers can do some team work—take turns working with the children and documenting.

Possible Questions and Responses:

What are different ways to document learning stories and why document in the form of learning stories?

The form of documentation you choose should align with the story itself. Think about the narrative you are telling. What is the best way to communicate the story? The audience (particularly the children) who you are sharing the story with should also be considered.

There are many form of documentation: working documentation, panels, books, electronic, learning stories, posters, artifacts. In one of my post-secondary classes this semester, a student created documentation to share with infants and made a cube with photographs of the babies on each side; the documentation was like a toy—a block—that the child could turn and toss and look at the photographs.

This is a great example of an effective form of documentation. The CF focuses on Learning Stories. It is important to remember that stories are not all written or told in the same way. There is no ‘template’ or one-size-fits-all way to create documentation. It is a creative process—an art form. Key questions to remember:

- What form of documentation fits this particular story?
- What is the most effective form to share the story with my audience?

Feel pressure of documenting and feels like so much is going on all at once? How do we go deeper with children’s learning without taking our focus away when documenting?

You cannot document everything. You might choose one moment or experience in a day to record.

Documentation is a process that requires patience and practice—take it in baby-steps. Adults never stop learning how to document. The teacher’s focus should always be on the children first. Observing and listening to the children are the foundation of documenting.

As you practice documenting, you will become accustomed to using the tools and find methods that work best for you. Practice is the key!

Would like to discuss the “why” behind documenting so that the whole team has a better understanding of documenting and their role within it.

Documentation is like a mirror (metaphor) that reflects the child (interests, self/culture, development, skills, dispositions, etc.) and the educator (interests, self/culture, practice, philosophy of teaching, image of the child). Why?

- 1) To share the children's experiences and work with families, within the school and wider communities (advocacy and rights-based education).
- 2) To advocate for children's capabilities—a strong image of the child, “mighty learner and citizen.”
- 3) To make the children's learning visible, to make listening visible, to make teacher practices visible

Teachers have reported how valuable the partner's visits are and how their “strength based perspective” is very motivating. The photographs that the partners take are meaningful and are crucial to have as modeling for the documentation processes.

Documentation Example:

The partner and the teacher discussed class plans based on recent documentation and the children's interest in playing with cardboard tubes. The teacher's original intent was to bring tubes into the classroom for the children to build a home for dinosaurs (a continuation of their animal habitat project last month), but the children have different ideas and are using the tubes for other purposes—talking through them, climbing into them etc. The teacher is observing and documenting the children's words and activities and will plan accordingly.

Examples of Pedagogical Support in Documentation

The educator is listening and observing the children's activities during free play time. She records what the children say and their gestures on scrap paper and Post-it notes. Her next steps are to plan activities with the children about “the beach” and “shopping” based on their conversations and information on the documentation board. She might create a Learning Story but at this point is gathering documents and mainly focusing on observing and listening.

The administrator points out the value of working documentation in planning and assessment. The educator and administrator plan to take the working panels to school staff meetings and continue discussions about the children's work outside of the classroom. The pedagogical partner suggested that terms describing the Image of the Child, dispositions and goals can be added (as labels) to the working documentation panel, as this makes a direct (visual) link to the CF.

One educator said she didn't know how to begin writing Learning Stories and got “stuck”—which made her not want to do anything. One teacher said her role as an educator is shifting from feeling “on the fly all the time to now trying to join the team.” Another teacher also used the phrase “on the fly.”

She said there is so much work involved in getting the documentation done and up. She is passionate

about the work but sometimes finds it a challenge to complete. Another educator said she finds the process of documenting, transcribing and displaying rather daunting. Recently, she looked at photos and wondered what to do with them—it seemed like too much work. However, the articles/readings provided helped to break down the process into smaller steps and the pedagogical partner's advice to "start where you are at" was also helpful, as she worked with each teacher on an individual basis.

A Partner's Visit

My main strategy is to model documentation processes when I visit the two classrooms. On Monday, I recorded a lengthy play script that branched in unexpected directions; children's play with race tracks and building ramps expanded into a story about dinosaurs. I collected information and created a Learning Story that included photographs, the children's dialogue and artwork as well as connections to the CF.

I have sent the documentation to the educator and hope it will provoke further questions and ideas about the children's play and learning. To continue the dialogue and support her understanding of documentation processes and curriculum concepts, I have invited her to interpret the Learning Story and make her own connections to the CF.

At the end of the day, I asked the educator what CF concepts she wants to focus on in the coming month. She is interested in pedagogical documentation and

wants to learn more about interpreting the children's narratives. She wonders how to effectively record and interpret children's experiences—particularly those of non-verbal children. During my next visit, I plan to look at the Post-it notes on the classroom walls and interpret some of the working documentation with her.

Possible Questions and Responses

How might we look more deeply into how to interpret play and the theories children are testing.

Play and children's theories are interpreted through multiple perspectives (teacher, child(ren), support staff, parents, other educators).

Interpretation is not a solo act. The teacher tries to make meaning of children's words and actions but might have a different perspective after revisiting the documentation with the child(ren). It is most important to revisit documentation with the child(ren).

Reggio educators talk to children about their ideas and will often ask them to draw their ideas. Through a process of drawing and dialogue, teachers come to understand what the children know and what they want to know about a topic of interest.

What is the difference between dispositions and holistic play based goals? What does it look like to think about these while teaching? Why do we label these things?

Dispositions are the innate characteristics of children that teachers nurture to support learning. Dispositions can be nurtured to reach learning goals. For example, if a child is very curious and inquisitive, how can the teacher nurture this seeking disposition to support goals such as communication and literacies or social responsibilities?

The purpose of dispositions is to make the learning potential visible to children, families and ourselves – How do we make this visible in language that families and children can understand? In order for teachers to be invested, they need to understand the “why”. We want to understand “why” and become so inspired that we cannot wait to try it out. Dispositions are verbs—action words.

If we think about the rights of the child to be active citizens within the class, school and wider community, we want to nurture dispositions of seeking, persistence, participation. This relates to rights-based education.

How do you take terms like “seeking” and put them into words that our children with special needs can understand?

How you make terms understandable will be different for each child and learning community. The curriculum (including terminology) is contextual and relational.

In coming to know the child(ren)—you will understand how to make-meaning together. How do we label dispositions with children who are at a 6-month-old level?

Teachers must be multilingual—interpret the many languages of children (visual, graphic, symbolic, embodied etc.). This is a disciplined practice and requires listening, observing and collaboration/ dialogue with others. In building relationships with children and understanding what/how they are communicating, we come to recognize their dispositions.

It is important for teachers to share pedagogical philosophies and practices with the therapists and specialists working in the schools. Another consideration is how the CF will work in inclusive schools that use a pull-out model of instruction. This is challenging when the framework concepts are based on group work and collaborative learning.

A Partner's Observation About the Responsive Environment:

During my recent school visits, I have noticed that making “pretty” and “natural” spaces (e.g. filling baskets with pine cones and creating attractive displays) is often the focus of early childhood educators. As much as adults like children to play and learn in beautiful spaces, we are referring to more than aesthetics when we speak about environments. Thoughtful and consideration of educational spaces requires attention to how spaces are utilized and set up in relation to the interests and experiences of the children and teacher. In other words, it involves far more than filling wicker baskets with natural materials.

Educators might ask: What is the purpose of placing a basket of pine cones on this shelf? What will children do with the pine cones? How will these natural materials provoke thinking and learning? ECEs need to critically consider why and how they are designing environments in purposeful/intentional ways before deciding what objects/materials to place in spaces. Also consider the importance of bringing children's voices into the dialogue about creating spaces.

Questions on the Classroom Wall – Ideas to Revisit

The Partner discusses Role of the Educator:

When we had an opportunity to talk, the teacher explained to me that she understands the CF concepts and is implementing them in her classroom. I wonder how many educators ‘think’ they understand the concepts but clearly do not, based on their practices and environment. At our last meeting, we discussed how educators may say one thing yet their actions do not match their words/beliefs.

I hope that through collaborating with the teacher and giving her ownership of the curriculum concepts (e.g. documentation), she will come to recognize the value and benefits of implementing the CF. I will expand on the work that she has already done (celebrate that work!) and move forward according to her ideas and questions—using an emergent approach.



Partner LEARNING STORY SAMPLE 1: Co-imagining Possibilities through the Stories Children Telling

“Co-imagining possibilities involves imagining, creating, and inventing what you hope for and want to see. Through [the educator’s] own participation and inviting the participation of children...the potential for creating ...places of vitality becomes possible.” (Makovichuk, Hewes, Lirette & Thomas, 2014, p. 59)

In the construction area, Aidan and Michael were building ramps and racing toy cars along the track. They carefully linked pieces of track together and tested how much force was required to push cars up and down the ramp. Aidan was happy to explain when I asked him: “How do you build a ramp?”

Aidan: First do this (he placed the plastic ramp inside a cardboard trough). Then do this (elevating the other end of the ramp with three wooden blocks).

Aidan and Michael demonstrated how easy it was to push cars off the tall stack of blocks and down the track. They discovered that more force was required to push cars half way up the ramp from the lower end of the track.

Carolyn: How can you make a double ramp?
Interpreting what I meant by “double” as increasing the height of the ramp, Aidan added more blocks and propped the ramp even higher.

Michael: It’s too high!

Belle joined the boys and the group continued to build the ramp and test how the cars would move from top to bottom and vice versa. But while the children were removing blocks and adjusting the height of the ramp, Aidan found a plastic dinosaur and began to growl and loudly stomp his feet.

The Story Plot Thickened...

Aidan’s terrifying dinosaur tossed its head and smashed into the ramp, destroying the tracks and tossing cars in every direction! Belle and Michael joined the play script too. Growling and stomping, they grabbed toy dinosaurs and crashed apart the ramp and tracks. I was surprised that the play theme changed so quickly from cars to dinosaurs, yet the children collaborated and added their ideas to the emerging storyline.

I asked Belle: What does a dinosaur look like?

I invited Belle to draw a picture of a dinosaur and she eagerly accepted and described the details.

Belle: (pointing to her drawing). That’s his eye. That’s his tummy.

Belle also added food for the dinosaur—a “nanna” (banana) and “apple”.

Later at Circle Time...

Belle smiled proudly when teacher Heather showed her dinosaur drawing to the children. When Heather asked the children where dinosaurs live, they responded:

“In a zoo”

“In the jungle”

“No! They live in a house”

Heather: Maybe we should make a home for the dinosaurs! “They like to live in the forest because they can eat trees.”

Heather: Aidan, where would your dinosaur live?

Aidan: In the snow!

Belle: No! It would be cold. He needs mittens!

Drawing from the children’s ideas, Heather created a new story....

Heather: Once upon a time a dinosaur put on his snow pants and gloves and he went out into the snow. He found a stick and hit a tree....

“We need a BIG plant forest!” (the children stood on their tiptoes with hands held high above their heads).

Heather: Maybe we can make a home for the dinosaurs. Hmmmm, what will we need?

It was fascinating to watch the children connect one story to the next—building ramps and race tracks moved into a fantastical dinosaur adventure.

Through this experience, I have come to recognize how children transform and lengthen their play

scripts—like they are adding chapters to a storybook. If play time is brief and teachers take fleeting glimpses of play, they will not see the masterful ways that children craft long and complex narrative scripts.

I watched how one idea fueled the next and provoked new questions and problems which the children addressed. Heather came to understand the children’s interests by observing and listening to their play scripts and made meaningful connections to their earlier work on animal habitats.

I wonder how these ideas will expand in the coming weeks as the children and their teacher co-imagine possibilities and discuss “homes” for dinosaurs. Heather asked the children questions to prompt further learning and added to the storytelling experience by weaving the children’s ideas into a new story about a dinosaur in the snow.

The children moved effortlessly between fantasy and imaginary worlds, tested scientific theories about gravity and speed (the race track) and through embodied, verbal and graphic languages, created an imaginative dinosaur story.

Gianni Rodari (1996) stressed that “[children] must be encouraged to ...reproduce their own language and meanings through stories that will enable them to narrate their own lives.... [T]he imagination has rules of its own that must be respected if children are to respond and seek more knowledge about language and imagination” (p. xix).

Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). Play, participation, and possibilities: An early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta. Retrieved from www.childcareframework.com

Rodari, G. (1996). *The grammar of fantasy. An introduction to the art of inventing stories*. New York, NY: Teachers and Writers Collaborative.



Partner LEARNING STORY SAMPLE 2: Ava's Purple World

“When you value children’s seeking dispositions, you provide the experiences that engage children’s wondering, questions, and theory-building potential. Early learning is an active process and, therefore, planning and provisions that strengthen children’s inquisitiveness involve experiences that engage all of their senses and whole body in exploration” (Makovichuk, Hewes, Lirette & Thomas, 2014, p. 123)

At the end of story time, teacher Tracey asked Ava to play at the paint centre. Ava ran quickly to the table and dipped her brush into the water cup and then into the fuchsia paint. While swirling paint on the page and watching it puddle, I asked Ava what she was painting.

Ava: it’s a house. A big house.

Carolyn: I’m drawing a house too!

As I painted a blue box (the main part of my house) on my sheet of paper, Ava filled her brush with blue paint and added details to the painting—a door, roof and a window.

A Work in Progress

Ava also painted a large dome over the house. I wonder what this shape represents. Perhaps it is a rainbow—an idea sparked by an art project that the children have recently completed and is displayed on the classroom wall.

When I asked Ava if she wanted to add different colours to the house, she shook her head “no.” She only wanted to use fuchsia and blue.

Carolyn: But I want to paint the sun in the sky above the house.

As I dipped my brush into the yellow paint, Ava shook her head “NO” (emphatically), and pointed to fuchsia and blue. She made it clear that I should not add any other colours. Ava showed me how to paint in the white spaces around the house, being careful to fill the spots that I had missed.

After studying the photograph of Ava’s artwork (above), I recognize that painting a “house” was not her primary interest. Puddles of fuchsia and blue paint blended together to create a bright purple hue. Ava was exploring colour mixing! She didn’t want me to add yellow paint because it would ruin her experiment.

It is a good lesson for me as an educator, not to make quick assumptions about children’s words and actions. Rather, it is important to listen and take time to “see” (perceive) and reflect on the deeper meaning of children’s work and play. Perhaps her quick response to my initial question “what are you painting?” was her attempt to politely satisfy the intrusive visitor so

that she could continue her exploration of colours and pursue her own interests.

Through this experience, I have come to see Ava as an “agentic and active learner” (Makovichuk, Hewes, Lirette & Thomas, 2014, p. 118) with a seeking disposition. She was confident, guided her own learning and demonstrated curiosity and inquisitiveness. Despite my intrusion and her strong desire to continue colour mixing, she worked alongside me and painted a house. The final art piece reminds me of Sheree Fitch’s (2010) children’s book, “Mable Murple” about a girl who loves the colour purple and lives in a beautiful purple world.

*Mabel Murple’s house was purple
So was Mabel’s hair
Mabel Murple’s cat was purple
Purple everywhere.
Mabel Murple’s bike was purple
So were Mabel’s ears
And when Mabel Murple cried
She cried terrible purple tears.*

Fitch, S. (2010). Mable Murple. Toronto, CA: Nimbus.
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Conclusion

This resource guide is a result of the lived experiences of a group of teachers and educators committed to learning about the Alberta Early Learning Curriculum Framework. The pedagogical leader engaged the participants from a diverse range of early learning programs from four Alberta school districts in a learning circle to focus on the key elements of the framework. The learning community provides an opportunity to learn, to share, to dialogue and critically examine practices. The activities and questions are provided to provoke thought and discussion. On-site pedagogical partners follow up with each administrator or consultant to determine how aspects of the curriculum framework will live in their unique and individual programs.

These external pedagogical supports provided the guidance and mentoring for the administrators to become pedagogical leaders in their respective programs. The ideas shared in this guide are not meant to be a 'how to' manual but rather a starting point for possible conversations and reflections that can be practiced by teachers and educators in the presence of pedagogical supports. It is our hope that this approach of dropping a 'pebble' (a concept, an ideal, a practice) and watching the 'ripple' effect it has for the children, the families, the teachers/educators and the overall program will resonate within the early learning education community.

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