

Learning as a Relational Field

part 2 Ingela Elfström

Reggio Emilia inspiration in
Swedish Preschool

Pedagogical documentation in explorative
and project oriented working approaches

The beginning of Reggio Emilia inspiration in Swedish Preschool

- Contact with Reggio Emilia began in the 1980 's, when the great exhibition visited the Stockholm Modern museum in 1981 and 1986
- Great interest among Swedish preschool teachers who started travelling on field trips
- Stockholm Project 1993-1996 in cooperation between professor Gunilla Dahlberg's Research Group, a municipal in Stockholm and the Reggio Emilia Institute of Stockholm and their national and local network

Similarities and differences in Sweden and Reggio Emilia in the 1990's

Similarities:

- Democratic ethos and respect for the child
- Transdisciplinarity (cross-cutting) theme/project-orientated approach
- Creative and aesthetic expression as key features

New for Swedish preschool teachers:

- The use of pedagogical documentation to ensure the visibility of the children's thoughts, questions and hypotheses as well as a tool for learning and change that gave the opportunity for a more advanced peer discussions among the preschool teachers

The Stockholm Project

- Start using pedagogical documentation together with project-orientated approach
- Put more emphasis on aesthetic expression that opportunities for children to communicate their thoughts, questions, hypotheses, dreams....
- Change the environment in preschool from more "homey" to more "workshop like" environment

Pedagogical documentation

When teachers began to "listen" more carefully and responsive to what the children did and said they realized that children's own issues and questions were more complex than they previously noted.

Science with 2-3-year old's

"it is the
real
flower
just
infront
and
behind"

"I can see a foot,
so it can go to
the park"

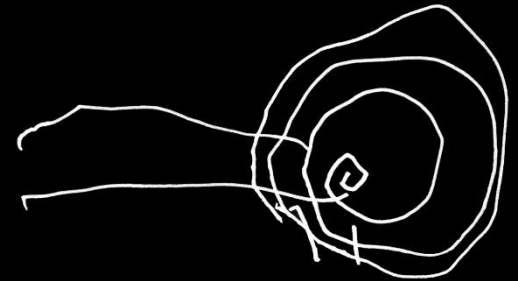
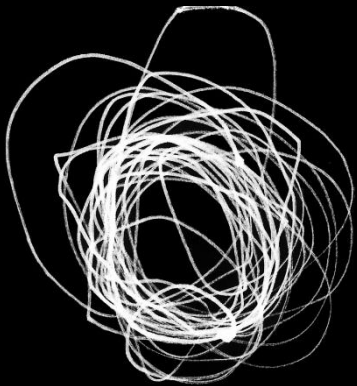
"What dreams do a sunflower have at
night?"

"They dream of yellow apricots
and the yellow sun"

2-3-year-olds ask themselves:

- What dreams do a sunflower have at night?
- What eats a garden snail? Where does it live in wintertime?

They notes: "They greet each other with the antennas".



4-5-year-olds ask:

- How can the tree soak up water from the roots?
- Has the tree a heart or a lift that pulls up water?

- How will “the seeing” come into the eye?
- I think that the light bounces from the eye to something and then bouncing it back into the eye.

The teachers also saw that children exploring everyday phenomena and events in many varied ways.

The preschool teachers began to see the children in a new way that meant that they began to set up teaching in a more open and exploratory way.

From the Stockholm Project:

A movement which spread over several parts in Sweden and also influenced the work with Sweden's first curriculum for the preschool.

The Swedish curriculum states:

When teachers plan, they shall take into account:

- take advantage of the various children's resources
- start from the children's experiences, interests, needs and opinions
- take advantage of the flow of thoughts to create diversity in learning
- allow the children to develop the skills and knowledge in the areas mentioned in the curriculum, so that they develop an understanding of themselves and the world around them

Using pedagogical documentation

Write notes, photographing, filming, audio recording,
the children's own creations.....

.....and give back to the children

Beginning in the children's own questions:

- Why grow my muffins in the oven?
- It is the warm air that makes it.
- But how will it come into the oven?

- How many minutes does it take until they have grown enough?

Use the documentation to:

- Discuss, reflect and analyze together between teachers in the team
- Discuss, reflect together with children
- Find a continuation of the project
- Give parents the opportunity to become involved in their children's learning

Barnen gör

Vi tänker

Gå vidare, idéer

tekniska
lösn.



mönstret p.
däcket

kombinerar symbol
m. iakttagelse

flera lösningar? fråga

2 tjocklekar p. penna

ritar o kom-
menterar osynlig
trampa

lösning av 3-dimen-
sionalitet

modell, profil, andra
saker m. dolda delar,
lera

berättande / innehåll

dekorationer 

för trist m. barn
cykel?

blomcykel
blomstudier, måleri
fråga barnen hur

cykla fort

lära sig cykla utan
stödhjul

egna viktiga
erfarenheter

cykelhistorier från
föräldrar, teckningar
p. f-möte

berättande bilder →
cykelbok.

Documentation to:

- Challenge and give children the chance to develop their awareness, their language and their concepts (hypotheses and theories)
- Create new connections
- Catch sight of their common knowledge

How will the heat come
into the muffin?

Can you draw how it
works?

The children compare bread that has been in the oven with the chocolate ball that has not been inside the oven.

”I see something inside the bread, messy. It is dots, something circle around. Lots of holes, a little black. Small white dots, cracks and holes.”

They compare with chocolate ball.

”You see, in fact, no holes in this”.

The children discuss their new findings with each other and with the teacher

Learning as a relational field

Children, preschool teachers, working methods, communication, ways of expression, content, time, location, material interact, affect and change in a relational field of events

Pedagogical dokumentation – is a part of the relational field