

**A CASE STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION IN A SOUTH  
AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE**

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# ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of pedagogical documentation, one of the principles of the Reggio Emilia educational project in an Australian Early Childhood setting. The aim is to generate local understandings and examine how the theoretical concept is interpreted and put into practice in one site in South Australia. The study investigates the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool. The context of this phenomenological case study is a Reggio-inspired Early Learning Centre in Adelaide.

An Interpretivist theoretical perspective underlies the study design and this approach holds that knowledge can be gathered through peoples' interpretations and understanding of their individual context. A purposeful sampling technique was applied in selecting the participants for this research study. When using purposeful sampling, individuals and the site for the study were selected as they have demonstrated a commitment to the principles of the Reggio Emilia educational project. Data collection methods include: direct observation which is recorded through field-notes, artefacts such as children's portfolios and photographs of children's work, individual semi-structured interviews with four educators and a focus group interview with the Director and staff of the Early Learning Centre. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Vignettes of children's learning are utilised to juxtapose educators' voices, photographs, observation data and the literature to discuss research findings.

The case study is presented using three themes that emerged from data analysis and literature review namely: pedagogical documentation as an educational tool, pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice and pedagogical documentation leads to professional development. The study findings confirm pedagogical documentation is used as a multi-faceted tool in Early Childhood Education, by educators for reflective practice and professional development. In this Australian context, pedagogical documentation makes children's learning visible and gives a voice to children as co-constructors of knowledge. The rhizomatic characteristic of pedagogical documentation aptly describes the concept of pedagogical documentation as non-linear and following the interests of children. Pedagogical documentation is beneficial to parents as they can visualise children's learning and then in collaboration with the educator take children's learning to its next level. For policy makers, pedagogical documentation is a potential tool to assess children's learning.

The study highlights the importance of reflective practice and illustrates some pedagogical practices used by educators in documenting children's work, which contribute to this process. These practices include *progettazione* (flexible planning), 'provocation' during a project investigation, enacting a strong image of the child (and themselves as educators), intentional

teaching, using digital technology and the co-construction of knowledge. In this Australian context, these pedagogical practices provide opportunities for the educators' professional development.

This Australian study thus contributes to a better understanding of the key aspects of pedagogical documentation within a particular context. The research presented in the thesis provides deeper insights into how it can be used in Early Childhood Education to make children's learning visible and shareable with the community. The study of pedagogical documentation has the potential to raise issues and encourage dialogue with all stakeholders: educators, parents and policymakers about young children's learning.

## **DECLARATION**

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: Anita Ramchandran Menon

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education in Australia defined as ‘the education and care provision, of children from birth to eight years’ of age (Anning, Cullen & Fler, 2010, p.6) is the focus of much challenge and debate. The *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being and Becoming* (DEEWR, 2009) contributes to the vision that: ‘all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation’ (Council of Australian Governments (COAG), 2009). Different approaches to teaching young children are being developed and advocated. In this thesis, I examine the role of pedagogical documentation, as a fundamental element in Reggio Emilia pedagogy. This first chapter introduces aims of the research, including research questions and significance of the research. This chapter also provides the background information, theoretical influences and the principles of the Reggio Emilia educational project.

### 1.1 The Reggio Emilia Educational Project

Throughout the history of Early Childhood Education, particular educational philosophies have acquired immense recognition. Examples include Plato’s Academy, the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago presided over by John and Alice Dewey, contemporary schools inspired by the thinking of Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner and Jean Piaget. To this list, the Municipal Preschools and Infant-toddler Centres of Reggio Emilia can be added, inspired by the work of Loris Malaguzzi, continued for over twenty years by his colleagues (Gardner, as cited in Giudici, Rinaldi and Krechevsky, 2001, p.25). Early childhood educators from many countries have visited Reggio Emilia (see Picture 1:1) to observe first-hand, the Preschools and Infant-toddler centres developed there. A 1991 article in Newsweek (2<sup>nd</sup> Dec) referred to the Reggio Emilia educational project as ‘an example of a grass-roots project that has become an international role model’ and hailed it as one of the best preschool systems in the world.

The Municipality of Reggio Emilia administers the Preschools and Infant-toddler Centres. These municipal, state and mixed public-private early educational services cater for the 0 - 6 age range. The Infant-toddler Centres enroll children from three months to three years of age and Preschools enroll children from three to six years of age. In the spirit of the International Convention on the Rights of Children, the Preschools and Infant-toddler centres ‘endeavor to ensure that these centres along with the community are places where the rights to well-being and learning of both children and adults are put into practice’ (Morrow & Reggio Emilia. *Nidi e Scuole dell’Infanzia*, 2010, pp. 4-5).



**Picture 1:1: Reggio Emilia**

The first Reggio Emilia local government Preschool opened in 1963 and the first Infant-toddler centre for 0-3 year-olds began in 1970 (Millikan, 2003, p.4). The present network of early childhood educational services operated by the local government of Reggio Emilia constitutes 21 Preschools and 23 Infant-toddler centres. Five Primary School classes for children 6-11 years old have opened since 2009 on an experimental basis to examine the application of the Reggio Emilia principles in primary school (AR Menon, personal notes, January 23, 2015). The central concept in the Reggio Emilia educational project, as described by Malaguzzi (1993), views 'the child as rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and most of all connected to adults and children' (p.10).

The aim of this study is to illuminate one of the principles and practices of the Reggio Emilia educational project. The aim is to generate local understandings of the principle related to pedagogical documentation and to examine how the theoretical concept is interpreted and put into practice in one site in the Australian context. The Reggio Emilia inspired approach is appropriate only if Australian educators understand the context within which they work and examine some of the Reggio Emilia principles to create their own early childhood practice. The Reggio Emilia educational project does not provide us with a 'standard' or 'program' of Early Childhood Education for Australia. Moss (as cited in Abbott & Nutbrown, 2001) suggests that the Reggio Emilia educational project provides a different perspective through which educators can reflect and deconstruct their own work, make children's learning visible, question the taken for granted practices, act as a co-constructor in the processes of learning and adopt innovative techniques (p.145).

## 1.2 Theoretical Influences

According to Fraser and Gestwicki (2002), the Municipal Preschools in Reggio Emilia developed in a unique social system as since World War II, Reggio Emilia has had a socialist municipal government. These authors argue that the philosophy underlying the foundation of the Reggio Emilia educational project emerged from a socio-cultural perspective. Fraser and Gestwicki observe that the Reggio Emilia philosophy placed importance on 'the socio constructivist approach to education, community participation in preschools and emphasis on collaboration' among all stakeholders namely children, educators, parents and the wider community (p.8).

Educators in Reggio Emilia have drawn from many theoretical perspectives in building their philosophy. Fraser and Gestwicki (2002) were interested in Piaget's explanation of 'how the individual child understands his world by constructing knowledge' and Vygotsky's theory to understand 'how children co-construct knowledge in social situations' (p.9). These authors also observed that the ideas of John Dewey were adopted in the Reggio Emilia educational project. Dewey (1915, p.37) developed a child-centered approach and believed that a child should learn 'through and in relation to living'. He encouraged teachers to plan curriculum based on the child's interests and felt that children would be motivated to learn if teachers allowed them to construct their knowledge from their own investigations.

Fraser and Gestwicki (2002) believe this emphasis on children pursuing their own investigations was the beginning of the project method implemented by the Reggio Emilia educational approach. This emphasis embedded the Reggio Emilia educational project within the educational ideas of Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel. Fraser and Gestwicki suggest that the principles that have developed in the Preschools of Reggio Emilia have meaning for many other Early Childhood programs and this shared theoretical understanding makes the Reggio Emilia educational project relevant for educators all over the world (p.10).

## 1.3 Principles of the Reggio Emilia Educational Project

The Reggio Emilia educational project focuses on principles fundamental to their innovative approach. The following synthesis of the Reggio Emilia Principles is drawn from the book *Preschools and Infant-toddler Centres Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia*, 2010 presented briefly, as follows:

The first principle relates to the idea that children are active protagonists of their growth and development processes. The image of the child is one of the cornerstones of the Reggio Emilia educational project and this image is one where the child is viewed as rich in potential, strong and powerful. Children are seen as having rights rather than needs, and have potential for learning and change. This image of the 'competent child' is used by educators to develop the learning environment and create enriching experiences for young children (p.10).

Children have the ability to make sense of their world and express themselves in infinite ways in the form of verbal and non-verbal languages. Therefore the metaphor of 'the hundred languages' as expressed by Malaguzzi (1990) in his poem, 'No way. The Hundred is there' demonstrates children's capability to creatively construct knowledge. Providing children with different mediums and avenues for expression enhances their capacity to express themselves (p.10).

Participation is the value that plays an integral part in which children, educators and parents are stakeholders in the Reggio Emilia educational project. It is the educational approach that is fostered and lived on a daily basis through inter-personal relationships. Participation facilitates the 'hundred languages' expressed by children and instills a 'sense of belonging' in the community (p.10). An attitude of listening is a key element, which enables effective participation between children, educators and the wider community. It is also seen as a pre-requisite for dialogue and change, raising awareness towards different perspectives. Listening gives an opportunity for adults to hear children's theories and co-construct their learning (p.11).

The learning process makes use of the values of participation and the attitude of listening. Children learn individually and actively construct their learning as they interact with each other. The learning process is both at individual and group level, through exchange of ideas between peers, adults and the wider community (p.11). The Reggio Emilia educational project emphasises co-construction of knowledge between adults and children as they negotiate and converge on different perspectives. Educational research between children and educators leads to co-construction of knowledge and is made visible through the process of documentation.

Educational documentation is providing a verbal and visual trace of children's learning and giving opportunities to revisit, reflect and interpret, bringing different perspectives to children's learning (p.12). It also makes explicit individual and group learning and gives children an opportunity to express themselves through their 'hundred languages'.

The Reggio Emilia educational project focuses on co-construction of knowledge during an inquiry project which requires flexibility. *Progettazione*, this difficult to translate Italian word means 'flexible planning'. *Progettazione* is 'the process of planning and designing the teaching and learning activities and the environment, not by applying any predefined curriculum', but carried out by means of the processes of observation and documentation (p.12).

For promoting the values of participation, a sense of belonging and continuity for young children, the organisation of the work, space and time are an integral part of the values of the Reggio Emilia educational project (p.12). The environment, spaces and relations are designed and organised in a way that 'fosters interaction, autonomy, explorations, curiosity and communication and are offered as places for children and adults to research and live together' (p.13). The environment is prepared in a way that acts as a third teacher for young children.



An educator's professional development is given priority through the reflective practices of observation and documentation in the Reggio Emilia educational project. The professional development process aims to understand the teaching and learning strategies and promote the notion of a 'competent adult' (p.13).

Assessment is a vital process in the educational environment for ensuring continuous improvement. The assessment process includes children's learning, educator's professionalism and the organisation and quality of the service (p.14).

It is beyond the scope of this study to address all principles to the same extent. The research presented in this thesis focuses on the principle related to educational documentation.

*Documentation is an integral and structuring part of the educational theories and teaching practices, as it gives value to and makes explicit, visible and assessable the nature of the individual and group learning processes, which are identified by means of observation (Morrow & Reggio Emilia. Nidi e Scuole dell'Infanzia, 2010, p.12).*

The words 'documentation' and 'pedagogical documentation' are often used interchangeably in both the literature and in early childhood practice. The literature review examines these terms in detail. At this point, it is sufficient to acknowledge the term 'pedagogical documentation', was first used by Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999, p.144) to describe the work of educators in the Reggio Emilia educational project. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013) provide a greater elaboration about the processes that constitute pedagogical documentation.

*Pedagogical documentation refers to a process and an important content in that process. Pedagogical documentation as content is material, which records what the children are saying and doing, the work of the children and how the pedagogue relates to the children and their work. This process involves the use of that material as a means to reflect upon the pedagogical work and to do so in a very rigorous, methodical and democratic way (p.156).*

Rinaldi (2006, p.63) explains that materials are collected during the learning experience, but they are read and interpreted at the end of the learning experience. The reading and memory recall takes place after the actual experience. Rinaldi reiterates that the materials (audio and video recordings, written notes) are collected, sometimes catalogued during the experience and brought back for re-reading, revisiting and reenactment of the experience. That which took place earlier is reconstructed and interpreted by means of the materials, which confirm the learning that has occurred.

This study has potential to raise issues and encourage debate amongst Early Childhood Education stakeholders namely parents, educators and policymakers, regarding the role of pedagogical documentation in Early Childhood Education in the Australian context. It highlights the importance of reflective practice and professional development among early childhood educators. The study

also brings into focus, the child and the educator as they co-construct and research together towards a conceptual change in Early Childhood Education in Australia.

## **1.4 Policy Context**

In Australia, the *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being and Becoming* (EYLF) was introduced in 2009 for all early childhood settings. The Australian Curriculum, a national curriculum for school students was implemented from 2011 (Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett & Farmer, 2015, p.8). The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) has presented an image of children as 'active participants and decision-makers' who 'construct their own understandings and contribute to others learning' (p.9). This resonates with the Reggio Emilia principle regarding 'the image of the child as rich in potential, strong, powerful and competent' (Malaguzzi, 1993, p.10).

The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) encourages educators to 'utilise pedagogical practices that reflect holistic approaches to learning and teaching, assess and monitor children's learning in order to support children's achievement of learning outcomes' (p.14). Furthermore, one of the EYLF (p.17) aims states that 'assessment for children's learning refers to the process of gathering and analysing information as evidence about what children know, can do and understand. It is part of the ongoing cycle that includes planning, documenting and evaluating children's learning'. McLachlan, Fleer and Edwards (2013, p.106), note that the EYLF also clearly states that educators need to collect observations in order to assess children and make decisions on their pedagogical practices. This indicates the type of information policy makers would like educators to collect for the purpose of planning, curriculum, teaching and learning strategies.

Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2006, p.19) state that 'curriculum documents such as the *New South Wales Curriculum Framework* (2002) and the *South Australia Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework* (DETE, 2001) incorporate philosophies describing the benefits from pedagogical documentation' for children's learning. It is further observed that neither of these documents, the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) nor the Australian Curriculum use the term 'pedagogical documentation' but include the principles underlying pedagogical documentation.

Millikan and Giamminuti (2014) have linked the Reggio Emilia principles with the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009). These authors state that documentation supports the 'principles, practices, outcomes and pedagogy outlined in the EYLF' (p.2.). According to Millikan and Giamminuti (2014), pedagogical documentation can support 'belonging, being and becoming as it facilitates the development of relationships, identity, connections and communication' and thus assists the learning of both children and adults (p.6).

## **1.5 Significance of the Research**

The research builds on the growing body of Australian research on pedagogical documentation and its use in Early Childhood settings. Very few Australian research studies have been

undertaken regarding the relationship of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool and reflective practice. Australian scholar Giamminuti (2009) investigated the potential of pedagogical documentation to clarify values and build learning communities through an ethnographic case study in Reggio Emilia. Kocher (2008) conducted a qualitative case study to examine the personal qualities that enabled three teachers at an Early Learning Centre in Seattle, Washington to embrace the practice of pedagogical documentation. Daws (2005) focused on teachers and children as co-learners in South Australia. Miller (2014) examined the relationship between pedagogical documentation and racialisation in two urban Australian child-care centres. The Reggio Emilia educational project is effective because it was developed in the society in which it is implemented. In Australia and elsewhere, the learning context is different to that in Reggio Emilia. Therefore Australian programs utilising Reggio Emilia principles need to be adapted to reflect the context in which they are being implemented.

In Australia, the term 'Reggio Emilia-inspired centre' refers to early learning centres where some of the Reggio Emilia principles and best practices have been adopted in the development and delivery of curriculum. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of pedagogical documentation in an Australian Early Childhood setting. The research focuses on one Reggio Emilia-inspired centre in Adelaide. This research will help early childhood educators in the Reggio-inspired centres in Australia to better understand key aspects of pedagogical documentation and its role in Early Childhood Education.

In the Early Learning Centre in Adelaide, artefacts in the form of children's work and the project work that the children were involved in were documented in children's portfolios. Portfolios included children's hand written notes, drawings, artwork, photographs of the various inquiry projects and experiences and were placed on low shelves, so that children can access them easily. My observation revealed children selecting pictures for their portfolios, re-visiting their portfolios and re-living their experiences with friends and educators with pride. Children's portfolios were stepping stones for understanding whereas the Project portfolios were used for information sharing. The educators considered portfolios as a part of the process of pedagogical documentation as they could re-visit and reflect on children's learning.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

This research aims to provide deeper understanding about the Reggio Emilia educational project in the Australian context, through examining pedagogical documentation in practice.

The central research question is:

**What is the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool?**

The study is guided by the following specific questions:

1. How does pedagogical documentation contribute to reflective practice?

2. Why is it important to document children's work?
3. What are some of the pedagogical practices used by teachers in documenting children's work?
4. Who benefits from documenting children's work?

## **1.7 Thesis Organisation**

The thesis is organised in six chapters. Following this Chapter, Chapter 2 provides a brief review of the literature relevant to the research. Chapter 3 discusses and justifies the methodology that shaped design of the research including procedures for participant selection, methods of data collection and an awareness of ethical issues that may arise in the research. Chapter 4 presents and analyses research findings in the form of a narrative case study and discusses the context of a Reggio-inspired school in Adelaide. Chapter 5 further analyses research findings and discusses the role of pedagogical documentation. Chapter 6 provides conclusions and outcomes of the research and identifies recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims firstly to review the literature in order to better understand the principle of pedagogical documentation, secondly to examine key themes that emerge from the literature, thirdly to establish a niche for the research study and finally to formulate the research question which guides this research. The first section of this chapter establishes the different meanings, interpretations and functions of the central phenomenon, pedagogical documentation. In the second section, documenting children's learning in the Australian context is explored. The third section establishes the relationship between pedagogical documentation and child observation. The fourth section examines the literature regarding different aspects of the principle of pedagogical documentation related to reflective practice, accountability, assessment and politics. The final section provides a critique of the Reggio Emilia educational project.

### 2.1 Unpacking Pedagogical Documentation

The literature on pedagogical documentation can be categorised in many ways. Studies on pedagogical documentation have focused on different aspects of the process: child-focused learning; centre-focused quality improvement and community-focused participation.

In the Reggio Emilia environment, educators document children's learning 'as a visible trace and a procedure that supports learning and teaching, making them reciprocal because they are visible and shareable' (Rinaldi,2006,p.100). Rinaldi iterates that pedagogical documentation is not documentation of end products, but of processes and it enables reading and interpretation, re-visiting and assessing as children learn. The teacher is able to thus reflect on how the learning is proceeding and can base his/her teaching not on what he/she wants to teach, but on what the child wants to learn as they research together to co-construct knowledge (pp.100-101).

To elaborate on the points made by Rinaldi (2006), Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2006) assert that 'pedagogical documentation is not the folder, or the glimpses of work in progress, or the computer on which the information is held, but it is the process of collaboration and the momentum of experiences with children' (p.11). It is the process that is paramount, rather than the product. Fleet, Patterson and Robertson state that, pedagogical documentation is 'embedded in the actions, learning, research and collaboration' among a group of educators and children (p.6). According to Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (p.11), 'pedagogical documentation is a tool to aid reflection', during an inquiry project, a memory that can be revisited. Pedagogical documentation thus becomes a reflective diary for the educator and children. This provokes further reflection and it

becomes accessible to everyone. It is this aspect of pedagogical documentation as a tool to aid reflection that requires further investigation in the Australian context.

### **2.1.1 Functions of Pedagogical Documentation**

The function of pedagogical documentation is to tell stories that respond to questions such as: Why did the learning occur? Who was involved? What materials were introduced? According to Lewin-Benham (2011, p.38), pedagogical documentation narrates the stories of what has taken place in children's lives in the classroom or at home. For example, pedagogical documentation is not 'we dressed up for Halloween but we dressed up for Halloween because...' (p.38). Lewin-Benham states that pedagogical documentation allows the small group of children to revisit and reflect on their experience by studying the documentation with educators who start a conversation with them. When they reflect, children recollect the feelings that emerged as a result of the experience. 'Pedagogical documentation panels offer teachers many handles with which to spark children's minds' (Lewin-Benham, p.143). Pedagogical documentation panels refer to the display panels that include photographs, teachers' notes and artefacts that are carefully displayed to showcase children's learning. At the same time, they provide teachers with an understanding of the teaching/learning process.

Forman and Fyfe (2012) assert that pedagogical documentation is more focused on groups of children than on the individual child. Forman and Fyfe (p.254) also note that pedagogical documentation 'raises questions about children's thinking and teaching strategies' as opposed to 'marking the progress of each individual child'. The documentation of group learning is assumed to represent the learning each individual child would have gone through at different times. This illustrates that the pedagogical practices of the educator focuses on co-construction of knowledge.

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013, p.154) emphasise that pedagogical documentation facilitates the pedagogical practices of the educator and determines 'what the child is capable of without any predetermined framework of expectations and norms'. The process involves trying to see through the child's thinking what he/she can achieve without any set expectations. Lenz Taguchi (2010, p.73) states that pedagogical documentation is a 'resolute resistance against using observation and documentation as normalising and reductive strategies in early childhood practices'.

Pedagogical documentation can be a useful process for opening up multiple ways of interpreting children's learning. Lenz Taguchi (2008) reflected on the possibility of teachers and children 'having power over processes of learning and pedagogical practice' noting that teachers using pedagogical documentation questioned their interpretations of children's learning and tried to take multiple readings of children's learning. The children too were asked to interpret their own work, revisiting documentation, thus allowing children's participation in the learning processes and the learning group.

Lenz Taguchi's (2008) description introduces the concept of deconstructive talk, which is grounded in deconstruction theory as conceptualised in 1997 by the French philosopher Derrida. In the Early Childhood Education context, deconstruction is concerned with purposeful disruptions and challenges to taken-for granted notions. Deconstructive talk requires self-reflection as educators carefully examine what they ask children to do. MacNaughton(2005,p.78) stated that deconstruction could be a way in which language choices in Early Childhood may influence power relations. Lenz Taguchi (2010) further labels pedagogical documentation as a 'material-discursive apparatus based on Barad's (2007) thinking that a material used for observing something can be understood as taking part in discursive practices' (p.63). This, according to Lenz Taguchi (p.63) means that the apparatus of pedagogical documentation is 'an active agent in generating discursive practices' and for educators, pedagogical documentation is the process of constructing meaning about children's learning.

Pedagogical documentation can be seen as challenging the dominant discourses and producing knowledge in a process that can be understood by the metaphor of the rhizome (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.117). The rhizome, a concept introduced by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) relates to knowledge regarding non-linearity, shooting in all directions as opposed to the classic tree of knowledge, which is related to linearity. Malaguzzi describes the metaphor of knowledge as a 'tangle of spaghetti', a culinary image which can be coincidentally similar to the image of the rhizome (as cited in Dahlberg & Moss, p.117).

The main goal of pedagogical documentation is 'to give voice to the child as a co-constructor of culture and knowledge' and the second goal, was 'to use the method to further challenge children's processes of learning' (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p.72, see also Dahlberg et al., 2007; Reggio Children, 2001; Rinaldi,2006). This highlights an important difference between documentation and pedagogical documentation, where documentation is often considered a tool used more for assessment and learning. The analogy that can be used is that documentation is 'restricted within the boundaries defined by the box' versus 'working in an environment without any boundaries' in pedagogical documentation.

Pedagogical documentation as viewed by Jovanovic and Roder (2012) could be seen as an instrument of power in Early Childhood settings. Jovanovic and Roder agree with Olssen (2006) regarding the French philosopher Foucault's view that 'power and knowledge are interrelated and cannot be separated'. Jovanovic and Roder argue that when early childhood educators discuss children there are 'issues of power and identity formation', especially as their image of the child is socially constructed (p.124). Gandini (2008) articulates that a 'strong image of the child requires a strong teacher'. Gandini is supported in this premise by Rinaldi (2006, p.125) who agrees that a 'powerful' teacher is required for the 'powerful' child that we see in Early Childhood settings. Pedagogical documentation provides a structure, which allows early childhood educators to question their beliefs and practices, particularly when they reflect and interpret children's learning.

Cross and Swim (2006) conducted a study in a kindergarten classroom to investigate how documentation made for and by children could be used to facilitate learning. The pulley project, where children investigated how a pulley operated, was analysed from the 'rich child's' perspective. Cross and Swim (p.47) articulate that two competing perspectives of the child exist, one involving the child's needs and the other with a focus on the rights of a child, which result in different educational practices for children. The findings of the study revealed three aspects: how children use documentation designed by them to guide their own work, how teachers need to support children through different forms of provocation and the importance of having time to facilitate learning for all children.

Alcock (2000) conducted research and worked with four pre-service teachers in New Zealand over a six-month period. Alcock developed themes from the research regarding pedagogical documentation and focused on child observations, the use of photographs and inclusion of children in the documentation process. The study found that when teachers use pedagogical documentation, they research their own practice and children's experiences, plan meaningful curriculum for them and develop professionally.

Another study that focused on the personal and professional qualities of reflective practitioners was conducted by Kocher (2008). The study examined the personal qualities that enabled three teachers at an Early Learning Centre in Seattle, Washington to embrace the practice of pedagogical documentation. Working with pedagogical documentation appears to foster positive teacher dispositions and a relationship of reciprocity emerged as the teachers were drawn to the Reggio Emilia approach since it resonated with their ideas about documentation (Kocher, 2008). Kocher used Transformation Learning theory, as articulated by Mezirow (1991), to describe the processes that adults experience when they encounter and embrace life long learning. Kocher states the process of pedagogical documentation demands a high level of intellectual commitment and a passionate engagement with one's own teaching.

Taylor and Cranton (2012, p.5) noted that Mezirow's Transformation Learning theory is based on the constructivist approach to adult learning and the concept that meaning is constructed through experience and our perception of those experiences. According to Mezirow (2012, p.83), children and adults interpret experience and construct knowledge within the two frames of reference provided by a habit of mind and points of view. During childhood our frames of reference (meaning perspective) are the result of cultural influences and influences of caregivers. Mezirow (p.83) defines 'a habit of mind as a set of assumptions - broad, generalised, that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of the experience'. Habits of mind are foundational and deeply ingrained in the adult psyche and the psychological function of habits of mind is to act as boundary structures on experience. Mezirow (p.83) states that a habit of mind becomes expressed as a point of view. A point of view includes 'clusters of meaning schemes; beliefs, feelings, attitudes and judgments that tacitly direct and shape a specific interpretation and determine how we judge and typify objects'



(pp.83-84). Mezirow (p.84) iterates that points of view are changed easily, as they are influenced by the acquisition of new skills or information.

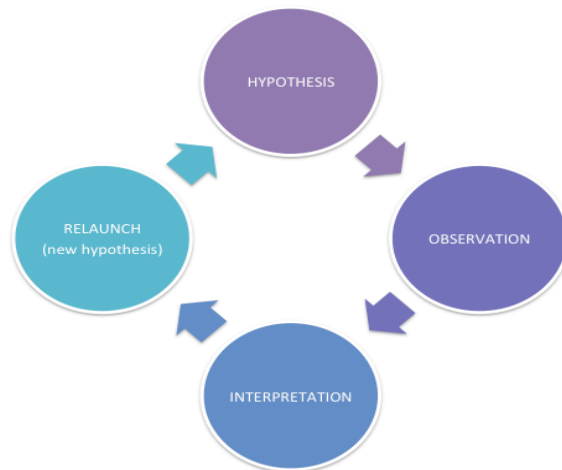
The potential of pedagogical documentation to clarify values and build learning communities is evident in the research study by Giamminuti (2009). Giamminuti investigated how infant-toddler centres and schools become places of culture and develop relationships with the surrounding culture. From this perspective, quality is viewed as a process of 'meaning-making' in mutual communities of learners and pedagogical documentation is considered a tool for meaning-making and a process for making learning visible. The context of Giamminuti's ethnographic research case study was in Reggio Emilia, Italy. The study developed ten theoretical propositions conceptualised as connective values and connected them with the emerging themes. The research study developed a theory, which described quality as interaction between local and connective values and thus contributed to the development of quality in Early Childhood settings.

Pedagogical documentation plays an important role in curriculum development. The view expressed by Lewin-Benham (2011) affirms my observation that when early childhood educators develop curriculum based on children's interests rather than prescribed learning outcomes, children's learning becomes easy to recognise and describe (p.14). Lewin-Benham articulates that pedagogical documentation drives curriculum and observed that 'when reflection on documentation panels drives curriculum, a significant change occurs in Early Childhood practice' (p.146).

The relationship between pedagogical documentation and progettazione has been examined to understand children's learning. Progettazione, one of the principles of the Reggio Emilia approach as described by Morrow and Reggio Emilia (2010, p.12) addresses the concept of flexible planning.

*Progettazione is a strategy of thought and action that is respectful and supportive of the learning processes of the children and the adults; it accepts doubt, uncertainty and error as resources, and is capable of being modified in relation to the evolution of the contexts. It is carried out by means of the processes of observation, documentation, and interpretation in a recursive relationship, and through a close synergy between the organization of the work and the educational research.*

According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015), *progettazione* features non-linearity, inter-disciplinarily and inter-dependence. It is non-linear in order to follow the children's learning process. Filippini (personal communication, 2015) notes that a co-emergence exists between *progettazione* and pedagogical documentation. The strategies for *progettazione* and pedagogical documentation are based on some fundamental methodological steps. The steps of *progettazione* / pedagogical documentation are hypothesis, observation, interpretation and re-launch or a new hypothesis (Figure 2:1).



**Figure 2:1 Steps of *Progettazione***

**Source: T. Filippini, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015**

During the process of *progettazione* / pedagogical documentation, educators can borrow ideas from one another; the steps are circular or spiral, and the educator can move ahead with his / her ideas. According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015) pedagogical documentation, when used with *progettazione* can be a means for reflection.

Pedagogical documentation helps to make explicit the value of play. McLellan (2010, p.99) investigated the potential of using pedagogical documentation as a research tool in British Columbia, Canada where she explored children's authentic representation of mathematical knowledge. Six children were interviewed in pairs, while playing, and invited to share their math experiences. The findings revealed that children spontaneously expressed the same math concept in several ways and if given time and space to do so, children explored meaningful links between mathematical ideas through play. McLellan concluded that pedagogical documentation was a productive method of data gathering for young children's mathematical thinking with potential to address a number of issues in mathematics educational research.

A study by Daws (2005) conducted in South Australia focused on the role of pedagogical documentation. Daws noted that teachers recorded and documented each project that children completed using photographs, recorded dialogue, drawings and notes on behaviour and

interactions and shared these with colleagues and parents (p.110). The findings revealed that when teachers view children as strong and capable learners, acknowledge a child's potential, provide an environment conducive to learning and in turn create a community that fosters the many languages of children, it benefits the child. This resonates with the views expressed by Edwards, Gandini and Forman (2012, p.12) who described these functions of pedagogical documentation. Using pedagogical documentation gives children a 'concrete and visible memory' of their learning. It sets the stage for their next level in learning, and gives educators 'a tool for research and a key to continuous improvement and renewal' and allows parents and the community to see children's learning in Early Childhood centres, thereby ensuring development of a home-school partnership.

Examining the role of the educator in pedagogical documentation was the aim of a study by Wong (2010), which focused on pedagogical documentation in teacher-learning groups in two Reggio-inspired childcare centres in Toronto and Ontario, Canada. The early childhood educators formed two teacher-learning groups to participate in the research process. Portraiture research was used as the method of data collection. In portraiture research, the portraitist focuses on listening to the stories in the lives of ordinary people (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), which develop a convincing and authentic portrait of the subject being studied (Wong, 2010, p.42). The main outcomes of the study described the participant's experiences, which included deconstructing barriers to the practice of pedagogical documentation and developing new documentation skills. Critical self-reflection upon teacher practice and emergent curriculum planning generated two rich portraits of teacher learning and development (Wong, 2010, p. iii).

In summary, studies on pedagogical documentation focus on different aspects of the process: child-focused learning; centre-focused quality improvement; and community-focused participation. There was a substantial emphasis on the functions of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool. Research scholars including Rinaldi (2006), Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2006), Lewin-Benham (2011), Lenz Taguchi (2010), Forman and Fyfe (2012), Cross and Swim (2006), Daws (2005) and Mclellan (2010) have identified different aspects of pedagogical documentation and used descriptions such as: 'documentation of processes', 'a tool to aid reflection' 'facilitates children's learning', 'challenges children's learning', 'focuses on the competent child' to elaborate on child-focused learning.

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013), Alcock (2000), Jovanovic and Roder (2012), Kocher (2008), Wong (2010) and Filippini (personal communication, 2015) have described pedagogical documentation such as: 'challenges the dominant discourses', 'plan meaningful curriculum', 'an instrument of power', 'foster teacher dispositions to document' and 'relates *progettazione* to pedagogical documentation'. These descriptions add another dimension in that, this emphasise centre-focused quality improvement and highlight the role of the educator in pedagogical documentation.

Giamminuti (2009), Edwards, Gandini and Forman (2012) have explained the concept of pedagogical documentation with their own individual frames of reference. Giamminuti (2009) examines the potential of pedagogical documentation for 'clarifying values and building learning communities' and Edwards, Gandini and Forman (2012) describe the functions of pedagogical documentation with respect to children, educators, parents and the wider community and focus on community-focused participation.

In the next section, the literature on documenting children's learning in the Australian context is explored.

## **2.2 Documenting Children's Learning in the Australian Context**

Millikan (2003) states that many aspects in the Reggio Emilia documentation process, 'such as leading an inquiry forward, being a tool for children's own reflections, enabling parents to view and contribute to the process of children's learning, for teachers' professional development and as an advocacy for children', can be overwhelming for some educators (p.102).

Robertson (2006, p.39) asserts that the challenges for Australian early childhood educators in the future will require them 'to reassess the influences on our imagery, articulate our image of the child and define the way it drives our educational experience and theories'. Robertson states that in addressing these challenges many questions will need to be asked of early childhood educators such as:

*Do we have an image of children endowed with rights? Are our educational philosophies, theories and practices predicated on an image of what children are able to do? Do we see children as researchers, testing hypotheses and co-constructing knowledge and meaning? Does our image of children require us to make their thinking visible to others?* (Robertson, 2006, pp.39 - 40)

According to Millikan (2003, p.38), the child's strength and abilities are not recognised or promoted by Australian society and educators tend to have an image of the child based on what they are unable to achieve, rather than their capabilities. Millikan (p.39) states that, in Australian preschools, the concept of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) based on the ages and stages of a child's development has had a huge influence on the construction of the image of the child and educators accepting this premise has shaped the ways of working with children. This image based on developmental, age based stages presents a child locked into predictable patterns of development and has educators teaching to children's anticipated needs, rather than strengths.

In summary, these are some of the concerns expressed by scholars including Millikan (2003) and Robertson (2006) regarding the value and purpose of documentation in the Australian context and how this is shaped by the prevailing image of the child. Early childhood educators need support and professional learning opportunities to enable them to engage with and better understand the

purpose of documentation, to reflect and question their practices. As discussed earlier, this resonates with the principles, practices, learning outcomes and pedagogy as outlined in the EYLF (DEEWR,2009). Millikan and Giamminuti (2014) have linked the Reggio Emilia principles with the EYLF (DEEWR,2009). These authors state that pedagogical documentation can support 'belonging, being and becoming as it facilitates the development of relationships, identity, connections and communication' and thus assist the learning of both children and adults (p.6).

### **2.3 Child Observation and Pedagogical Documentation**

In Early Childhood Education, documentation has been a practice used to record observations or children's development in order to plan learning experiences for children. MacNaughton and Williams (2009, p.296) defined documentation 'as a teaching technique related to gathering and organising information to provide a written or pictorial record of children's learning'. According to Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett and Farmer (2015, p.258), 'pedagogical documentation provides a record of children's experiences and learning that facilitates discussion among children, families and educators and analysis of children's learning from diverse perspectives'. There are differences between the definitions of documentation (child observation) and pedagogical documentation as defined by these authors, the main difference being that pedagogical documentation facilitates dialogue among children, parents and educators and children's learning is observed from varied perspectives.

Existing literature on documentation in Australia includes references to pedagogical documentation. The term pedagogical documentation appears to be used interchangeably with documentation throughout the literature. Therefore, difficulties arise in interpreting whether these terms are describing the same processes or not. The term 'documentation' used by Arthur et al. (2012) has now been replaced with 'pedagogical documentation' in their recent publication (Arthur et al., 2015). They state:

Pedagogical documentation is a process that helps educators, families, children and communities to understand and value children's learning. It helps to make children's learning processes visible and therefore accessible to children, families, educators and other stakeholders. When documentation is accessible to children, they are able to visit and reflect on their own learning, which deepens their understandings and develops metacognitive awareness (Arthur et al., 2015, p.258).

Leading scholars in the field of Early Childhood Education who have studied documentation including Lewin-Benham (2011), Millikan (2007), Arthur et al. (2015), Rinaldi (2006), Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2012) and Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013) have clearly defined the differences between child observation and pedagogical documentation. This section summarises their views and understanding regarding these two concepts.

Lewin-Benham (2011) states that 'documentation is not the drawings on the bulletin board or high quality pictures on the wall with colourful backgrounds or all work done by every child in the class mounted in a group' (p.36). According to Lewin-Benham, documentation is not photographs of children at work and play, even when the photographs are lovely or have good captions and long descriptions. She reiterates that children's art becomes pedagogical documentation only when there is an 'explanation of why the art was done, children's comments or questions that provoked the art or information about the context in which the art was done or how it reflects a larger experience' (Lewin-Benham, p.37).

In contrast to the description above, some early childhood educators assert what Lewin-Benham describes above is how documentation in Australian Early Childhood environments is applied. According to Millikan (2003, p.96), the documentation process in many Early Childhood Centres consists of 'recording children's progress and skill development'. The observations conducted are often not observations of children, but observations of skills they have mastered. Documentation may include photographs showing a finished product, rather than the process of learning. Millikan (p.97) noted that early childhood educators observed children in the 'traditional way by looking only at developmental stages' and that this type of observation was a clinical analysis of the exterior of the child and certainly not how the child learns.

Elaborating on a further difference between child observation and pedagogical documentation, Arthur et al. (2015, p.260), argue that traditionally Early Childhood observation and documentation 'focused on recording children's individual development, categorising behavior according to developmental stages' and domains of child development - physical, intellectual, language, emotional, social and spiritual. There has been an emphasis on recording observations objectively and scientifically. This form of observation divides the child's learning and development into separate developmental domains and encourages educators to take a 'language observation' or a 'fine motor observation', thereby not creating a holistic view of the child. Educators often use checklists to record what children can do and what they cannot do. Arthur et al. (p.260) note that educators often use observations 'to find a gap in a child's development in order to target domains that are not developing as per 'normative' standards'. This approach results in 'deficit' programming. Arthur et al. state that 'many educators are confused as to how to program for a child who does not have any perceived needs' (p.260).

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013) elaborate on the points made by Arthur et al. (2015). Dahlberg, Moss and Pence state that child observation and subsequent documentation is used to assess children's development in relation to 'pre-determined norms taken from developmental psychology which state what the normal child should be doing at a particular age' (p.154). According to Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, the focus in these observations is not children's learning processes, but on classifying and categorising children according to developmental levels and stages (p.154). Early childhood educators observe children's development listing the domains, according to norms

established by child development theories. Millikan (2003,p.100) observed that the need to provide a checklist for each child's development and learning was a requirement in some schools, but educators who have been introduced to the concept of pedagogical documentation felt that they were going far beyond the checklist stage and were moving towards being accountable for children's learning.

The purpose of pedagogical documentation appears to differ from those associated with traditional observation methods. Rinaldi (2006, p.64) noted that in the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia, children are encouraged to search for a meaning. This is in accordance with Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2012, p.4) who contend that pedagogical documentation moves from a 'deficit view of the child to one who is searching for meaning'. There is the 'pedagogy of listening' and observing children with different lenses. In contrast, observative documentation often focuses on skill-based, checklist information about children to assist with understanding the gaps in their development. In pedagogical documentation, early childhood educators observe, listen and reflect to facilitate children's holistic development. This appears to be one of the critical differences between documentation and pedagogical documentation.

A major difference between approaches which shaped child observation and pedagogical documentation, was observed by Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013). Child observation they describe as being based on Piaget's Cognitive Development Constructivism theory, which constructs the child as an active scientist who creates his/her own understanding of the environment. In contrast, pedagogical documentation is based on Social Constructivism theory that encourages children to think and create alternate understandings 'before encountering scientifically accepted constructions' (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, p.59).

Another difference between child observation and pedagogical documentation regarding the concept of 'objectivity' is explained by Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013). In describing the subtleties between these approaches, Dahlberg, Moss and Pence state that child observation and documentation 'assumes an objective, external truth that can be recorded and accurately represented' (p.154.) When using observations and documentations the early childhood educator records children's behavior, depicting what children say and do in Early Childhood settings. According to Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (p.155) 'pedagogical documentation does not claim that what is documented is a direct representation of what children say and do'. Flerer and Richardson (2010, p.121) contend that there is a strong belief or 'desire to be objective' about the observations of children's learning and hence 'details of the observer or others involved who may influence the behaviour' of the child being observed are not recorded. It was noted by Millikan (2003) that some early childhood educators are beginning to feel that 'the notion of objectivity is slowly disappearing, with recognition that observations are always subjective' (p.98). Thus, child observation focuses on 'objectivity,' whereas the focus in pedagogical documentation is 'subjectivity'.

In summary, it is clear that there are differences between the concepts of child observation and pedagogical documentation. Lewin-Benham (2011) explains the difference being a display of children's art versus an explanation of why the art was done. Millikan (2003) clarifies that child observation focuses on the finished product whereas pedagogical documentation captures the processes of learning. According to Arthur et.al (2015) and Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013), child observation focuses on skill based checklist information to understand the gaps whereas pedagogical documentation focuses on holistic development. Rinaldi (2006) and Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2012) contend that pedagogical documentation encourages children to search for a meaning rather than focusing on children's development. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence point out another difference being that child observation is based on Piaget's Cognitive Development theory whereas pedagogical documentation is based on Social Constructivism theory. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence further state that child observation is focused on objectivity, whereas pedagogical documentation does not make such claims.

In the next section, I explore in more depth, the contribution of pedagogical documentation to reflective practice.

## **2.4 Contribution of Pedagogical Documentation to Reflective Practice**

As discussed earlier, documentation as commonly practiced in Early Childhood settings focuses on objective observation whereas pedagogical documentation relies on the observer to draw insights from their observation of children's learning. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013), state that pedagogical documentation 'lays stress on the responsibility of the observer for the observations, descriptions, interpretations and explanations' (p.155). According to Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, a reflective practitioner along with his/her colleagues can create a space for a critical and important discussion about pedagogical practice. Pedagogical documentation can be used as a tool for reflecting on pedagogical practice and for the creation of a 'reflective and democratic pedagogical practice' (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, p.153).

Taking this concept further, Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013, p.155) observed that 'pedagogical documentation is a process of visualisation' as what is documented is a social construction where educators select what they want to document and become participative co-constructors. Meaning is derived not from observing alone, but is constructed and interpreted. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (p.155) state that pedagogical documentation describes how educators have constructed the child as well as themselves. Educators can see themselves, read and understand their practice and it becomes researchable and open for discussion and change. This means that through pedagogical documentation educators can see how to relate to the child in a different way. From this perspective, Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (p.156) state that pedagogical documentation can be seen to 'contribute to self-reflexivity through which self-definition is constructed'. Thus pedagogical documentation fosters reflective practice.



Building on this concept, Forman and Fyfe (2012,p.247) contend that pedagogical documentation builds on a reflective practice of teaching and is supported by the Co-Constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1986). This theory states that knowledge is gradually constructed by taking a reflective stance toward each other's constructs and understanding different perspectives. Forman and Fyfe further state that 'knowledge is never verifiable through listening or by observation but it gains clarity through a negotiated analysis of the communication process' (p.247).

Reflective practice enables educators to negotiate, clarify and communicate ideas about children's learning. According to Paige-Smith & Craft (2007), reflective practice is a vital element of continuous professional development and enables deeper understanding of learning activities undertaken in Early Childhood centres. Paige-Smith and Craft (2007) observe that reflective practice 'supports planning and improving future pedagogical work. This blurs the borders between theory, practice and research' (p.xv). Clark and Moss (2011) use the term 'reflexive practice' and describe it as listening to children's voices and understanding practice (p.9).

Schon (1987,p.26) has distinguished between 'reflection in action' that means thinking on your feet and 'reflection on action' meaning thinking after the event or retrospective thinking. Early childhood educators use both reflection types in their practice. According to Paige-Smith and Craft (2007, p.16), in Early Childhood settings, when educators reflect in and on their practice, it leads to change and development of new practices.

van Manen's (1977) theory regarding four levels of reflection helps educators to shift their reflection from everyday thinking to different levels that involve critical thinking related to theory and practice. According to van Manen, the first level of reflection focuses on everyday thinking followed by the second level that emphasizes limited reflection of our practical experience. The third level of reflection moves to critical thinking that is related to theory and practice and at the final level of reflection the focus is on the worth and application of knowledge.

Reflective practice is also linked to professional development. Bolton (2005) states that engaging in reflective practice promotes a better understanding of practice, leading to an improvement in professional practice. Pedagogical documentation helps early childhood educators to question their practice and gain an insight into their capabilities, theories, beliefs and values that underpin professional practice (Goodfellow,2004). Goodfellow documented professional practice in Australia through the use of a professional portfolio and stated that it is 'the fusion of process and product within a professional development portfolio' that allows the practitioner to examine, reflect and develop their own professional practice (p.63).

Collaborative dialogue together with pedagogical documentation can be used as tools of inquiry. Bowne, Cutler, DeBates, Gilkerson and Stremmel (2012,p.48) conducted an exploratory narrative study to examine how using pedagogical documentation and collaborative dialogue served as tools of inquiry for a group of pre-service Early Childhood Education students at a mid-western university in the United States. The study utilised a reflective inquiry approach that systematically collected

and interpreted data on a periodic basis to uncover several potential themes. The research examined the relationships that occurred with collaborative dialogue and pedagogical documentation and how these enabled the pre-service teachers to understand the learning process better.

In summary, the work of Dahlberg (2013), Forman and Fyfe (2012), Paige-Smith and Craft (2007), Schon (1987), van Manen (1977), Goodfellow (2004) and Bowne et al. (2012) provoke thinking about how early childhood educators can practice a reflective and communicative pedagogy. Pedagogical documentation is considered as a tool for reflecting on pedagogical practices and is a vital element for professional development.

The next section discusses the literature regarding pedagogical documentation as an alternative to accountability and assessment.

## **2.5 Pedagogical Documentation as an Alternative to Accountability and Assessment**

This section discusses the literature regarding the relationship between pedagogical documentation and the issues of standards and accountability in Australia. This is followed by a discussion regarding the role of pedagogical documentation and assessment.

The common purpose for using both of these processes: child observation and pedagogical documentation is to address the aspect of accountability and assessment (Grieshaber & Hatch, 2003). Grieshaber and Hatch (p.89) observe that pedagogical documentation was developed and taken up widely as a result of globalisation and note that 'the importation of Reggio Emilia principles can be seen as a viable alternative to the standards and accountability movement, the availability of the global locally and the accessibility of patterns of consumption and desire'. Grieshaber and Hatch (p.93) observe that the uses of child observation are changing due to external assessment pressures linked to globalisation and neoliberalism and this market-focused approach has a focus on standards and outcomes. Grieshaber and Hatch (p.95) further state that pedagogical documentation can 'serve purposes of assessment and that this has further appeal for parents and teachers because of its availability to satisfy the consumer and the system'. Thus, pedagogical documentation in the Reggio Emilia educational project presents an alternative to cope with demands over accountability.

The strength of pedagogical documentation as an alternative to the use of standardised tests in kindergarten classrooms was revealed in a study conducted by MacDonald (2007, p.232). Here, the researcher studied teachers using pedagogical documentation in five kindergarten classrooms in British Columbia, Canada to investigate its potential as a means of formative assessment in literacy instruction and to communicate the learning experience to children and their families. Data collection included interviews with parents and teachers. Grounded theory methodology was used to determine common responses and patterns in perspectives articulated by participants.

According to MacDonald (p.241), pedagogical documentation 'allowed teachers and parents to develop a deeper understanding regarding children's interests and strengths beyond what is traditionally assessed'.

To understand the relationship between pedagogical documentation and accountability, Rinaldi (2006) stated that pedagogical documentation is a 'method for assessment and evaluation and considers it as a strong 'antibody' to the existing assessment/evaluation tools that seem to be unspecific and decontextualised' (p.16). Rinaldi states that assessment is an intrinsic part of pedagogical documentation and of the Reggio Emilia principle '*progettazione*' (flexible planning). According to Rinaldi, 'assessment is a procedure that is nurtured by the elements of value that emerge from the process itself' (p.72). Rinaldi notes that pedagogical documentation is valuable to children as they see their work in the form of a narration and observe the teacher interpreting their work. To the children this is a demonstration that what they have done has value and has meaning.

Rinaldi (2006) further observes that 'rating scales and similar normative tools evaluate against a set of criteria that represent one 'language of evaluation'- the language of quality and excellence' (p.16). Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013), state that the 'language of quality' or 'language of evaluation' comes from a modern paradigm, 'quality being a measurement of the extent to which services or practices conform to these norms' (p.xv). Thus, the language of meaning making comes from a postmodern paradigm having certain values and assumptions. According to Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, these two languages work differently. Quality relies on predefined norms and setting out criteria for their measurement. Rating scales, checklists, standardised procedures and detailed systems of inspection are the methods and tools of quality. 'Meaning making takes a different approach and works with pedagogical documentation through reflection and listening' (Dahlberg et al., p. xv).

Pedagogical documentation can be used as a tool for assessment. Carr (2009) agrees with Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013), noting that the 'documentation of learning in Reggio Emilia' (pedagogical documentation) provides an example of assessment that reflects a learning community' (p.90). An example is the 'An Amusement Park for Birds' project which was documented in detail in a video where the children aged three to five years old designed and built an amusement park for birds. The activities the children participated in and which were documented included observing, drawing, modeling and constructing water wheels and fountains. The teachers documented the process with wall charts, videos and photos. Carr stated that 'the project, participation and the individual were not separated out. Assessment of the learners and evaluation of the project were the same process' (p.90). Carr states that assessment protects and enhances the Early Childhood setting as a learning community (p.90).

In summary, pedagogical documentation as a process has been successful as it provides an alternative to educators to address the issues of accountability and standards. This accounts for the huge interest and appeal for educators, as it allows them to understand children's learning and

share it with parents and the assessors. Pedagogical documentation can be used as a means for assessment as it gives meaning to children's learning.

## **2.6 Pedagogical Documentation and its Relationship with Politics**

The processes of pedagogical documentation have social and political implications. According to Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013), 'production of knowledge brings about power and as Foucault (1970) argued, these exert political and theoretical significance' (p.164). In Early Childhood Education, for example, educators exercise power in the manner of disciplining children and controlling them or in pedagogy and implementation through the establishment of the timetable or routines. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (p.167) contend that if we see the Early Childhood institution as a forum where the child is seen as a citizen and part of the community we must have participatory relationships in which the stakeholders - children, parents, educators and politicians are all involved. Pedagogical documentation offers an important starting point for the dialogue, building trust in the community and making visible the work of these institutions. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence observe that due to pedagogical documentation, each child, educator and institution can have a public voice and identity and what is documented becomes a 'narrative of the institution's contribution to society and development of democracy' (p.167). Rinaldi (2006) argued that pedagogical documentation can offer children and adults real moments of democracy brought about by dialogue and this 'exchange is possible by the visibility and the recognition of differences and subjectivity' (p.130).

According to Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p.156), preschools in Reggio Emilia offer a good example of how major and minor politics work together. Dahlberg and Moss state that 'major politics takes place at the local authority level and provide space for 'minor politics' in individual preschools' (p.156). 'Minor politics' is a concept created by Deleuze and Guattari (as cited in Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.137) and can take different forms. Rose (1999) states that 'minor politics is a matter of introducing a critical attitude to our present experience' (p.20). Dahlberg and Moss (p.157) contend that pedagogical documentation becomes a process for practicing these politics when critical thinking is appreciated, conflict and difference of opinion is welcomed and learning is made visible, subject to interpretation, critique and disagreements. Dahlberg and Moss (p.157) state that pedagogical documentation can challenge dominate discourses thereby children and adults are being governed less, resulting in new ways of learning.

The use of pedagogical documentation and learning stories as 'participatory tools' to illicit children's perspectives for research were studied by Waller and Bitou (2011, p.5) adopting a socio-cultural perspective. A specific learning story is considered as an example to discuss and critically examine the three main challenges for participatory research. The first challenge was whether the tools of pedagogical documentation and learning stories automatically enable participation. The second challenge was that by adopting this approach there were serious concerns about ethics

and power considering that the interpretation of children's perspectives were made by adults. The third challenge related to the issue of participatory research as empowering children and giving them a voice. Waller and Bitou (2011) identify several practical implications such as 'children's spaces' advocated by Moss and Petrie (2002), for researchers who attempt to elicit children's perspectives and engage them in the research process.

Pedagogical documentation contributes to a critique of unjust practices in an Early Childhood setting through the use of reflective practice. Pacini-Ketchabaw and Nxumalo (2012, p.260) state that pedagogical documentation enables early childhood educators to adopt a critical, reflective and nomadic approach that incorporate equitable practices. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) used the 'term 'nomadic' to refer to the creation of spaces and new ways of thinking, resisting the codified or normalised way of thinking'. This would mean not following guidelines that constitute good practice, but creating new ways of confronting practice. Early childhood educators should critically evaluate and act on unjust practices and understand that practices involve social and political choices.

Drawing on the theories of Deleuze and Guattari, Pacini-Ketchabaw and Nxumalo (2012,p.260) also noted that 'pedagogical documentation is considered as a nomadic act and this approach can help unpack the complex and messy processes of racialisation'. This could mean that it opens up new spaces for educators to reflect on what could be termed as 'anti-racist' pedagogies. Elaborating on this point, Miller (2014) examined the idea of pedagogical documentation as a means of making educators' thinking and experiences visible regarding racialising practices. A research study was conducted incorporating Indigenous perspectives in Early Childhood curriculum in two Australian urban childcare centres. The aim was to see how documentation took place and to find out whether documentation concealed any racialising practices despite good intentions of the staff. Miller states that documentation unintentionally served to mask racialising discourses and practices and is prioritised and censored even before it is written.

In summary, the processes of pedagogical documentation have social and political implications. Pedagogical documentation helps foster relationships with all the stakeholders namely children, educators, parents and the wider community. Pedagogical documentation also exercises political nuances and contributes to a critique of unjust practices such as power, 'minor politics' as described by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and racialising practices.

## **2.7 Critique of Pedagogical Documentation**

The leading scholars who support the principles of the Reggio Emilia educational project hail pedagogical documentation as an important tool. Despite the many positive aspects written about this principle and approach, there are some critics of the Reggio Emilia educational project, whose concerns need to be explored.

According to Soler and Miller (2003, p.65) the critics of the Reggio Emilia educational project state that in the 'absence of a written curriculum there is a lack of accountability to the wider society'.

The advocates of the Reggio Emilia educational project argue there is a 'detailed recording of the curriculum process hence it opens their practice to criticism and scrutiny'. Soler and Miller (p.65) argue that this form of accountability to the external inspection process is different when compared to other curriculum approaches. Soler and Miller (p.66) further state that the Reggio Emilia curriculum offers this alternative approach 'as it regards a centralised, prescriptive approach as stunting the potential of children by formulating their learning in advance'. In the Reggio Emilia curriculum, educators 'outline flexible, general educational objectives, but do not formulate pre-specified goals' (Soler & Miller, p.66).

There are concerns from educators that pedagogical documentation can be interpreted as more extensive surveillance of children. Grieshaber and Hatch (2003) suggest that Australian early childhood educators need to critically analyse documentation and be vigilant about notions of surveillance and observation (p.95). Patterson, Robertson and Fleet (2012) express concerns about surveillance and empowerment and asks this very important question: 'at what point does observation and recording children's thinking cross the line and become surveillance and an unwarranted invasion of privacy'? (p.275). Patterson, Robertson and Fleet state that when children and teachers observe and document together, the observations and interpretations can be re-examined and re-visited later.

Not all of the literature and studies are convinced of the equal power sharing and contribution by both child and educator in the pedagogical documentation process. Emilson and Samuelsson (2014) challenge the positive generalisations concerning pedagogical documentation in a recent study in Sweden. They explored the communication between children and educators and analysed video clips of teachers documenting the activities of 1-3 year old children. According to Emilson and Samuelsson, they observed that while documenting, teachers use strategic action, which is goal-directed. Children's achievements are documented and the tasks teachers introduce are very abstract. Emilson and Samuelsson (p.185) conclude that it is important to reflect on what teachers document especially when 'the idea behind pedagogical documentation emphasises relational aspects and children's shared learning'.

Various scholars have debated issues of ethics in pedagogical documentation. Vecchi (2010, p.151) raises concern about the positioning of children in pedagogical documentation stating that we must be wary of 'transforming them into laboratory experiments'. According to Robertson and Cheseman (2006), 'children's consent to participate is a dilemma of children's rights' (p.191). Robertson and Cheseman question about a child's right and capacity to give consent to participate in pedagogical documentation. These authors further state that pedagogical documentation allows educators to reflect on their practices and children's reluctance to have their thinking or work used often becomes very apparent. Patterson, Robertson and Fleet (2012, p.275) further elaborate and state that 'by including children in the process of writing, collating material and photographing' educators are considering children's consent in pedagogical documentation,

thereby eliminating 'simplistic solutions such as forbidding all photographs or omitting their names from visual records'.

In summary, the critics of pedagogical documentation have expressed a genuine concern about contemporary issues such as 'accountability' and 'surveillance and empowerment' that are prevalent in the Reggio Emilia educational project. Emilson and Samuelsson (2014) challenge the positive generalisations regarding the principle of pedagogical documentation. The ethical issues of positioning children in documentation and children's consent in pedagogical documentation need a lot of reflection on the part of early childhood educators regarding how to address these concerns without losing the many valuable opportunities it provides for children and the educators.

## **2.8 Summary**

Throughout the literature, the terms pedagogical documentation is used interchangeably with that of documentation. This was clarified with (Professor Carla Rinaldi, personal communication, January 23, 2015) at Reggio Emilia during the January 2015 Intensive Study Tour. Carla Rinaldi confirmed that the term 'pedagogical documentation' as first coined by Gunilla Dahlberg is the term to be used for the Reggio Emilia educational project (Personal Notes - AR Menon, 2015). As discussed earlier, the literature must be studied carefully to elicit exactly what the author is describing when using these terms, as there are some differences between these approaches in the learning process.

The research studies described above had different approaches to the use of documentation and have contributed to a better understanding of the complex phenomenon of pedagogical documentation. Most studies utilised observation, field-notes, photographs and video recording to document children's learning. Recent research studies and theories revealed a keen interest to better understand this Reggio Emilia principle and covered different purposes for using it such as 'pedagogical documentation and assessment' and 'pedagogical documentation as a tool for children's learning'.

One aspect that emerged clearly from the literature was that sources covered the theoretical and practical aspects of pedagogical documentation. This research, a case study in Adelaide, provides an example of this principle in an Australian context. The key question being researched concerns the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool.

## 3

# METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used to examine the role of pedagogical documentation in a Reggio-inspired school in Adelaide, South Australia. The research approach selected is consistent with the aim of the study and uses phenomenological research in the form of a narrative case study. One Early Learning Centre (ELC) is the focus of inquiry regarding the use of pedagogical documentation and inferences are drawn about the centre in a specific context. This chapter is divided into sections. The first section addresses research design. This is followed by the context of the case study site, the recruitment of the participants and instruments and procedures used in data collection. The final section addresses ethical considerations of the research.

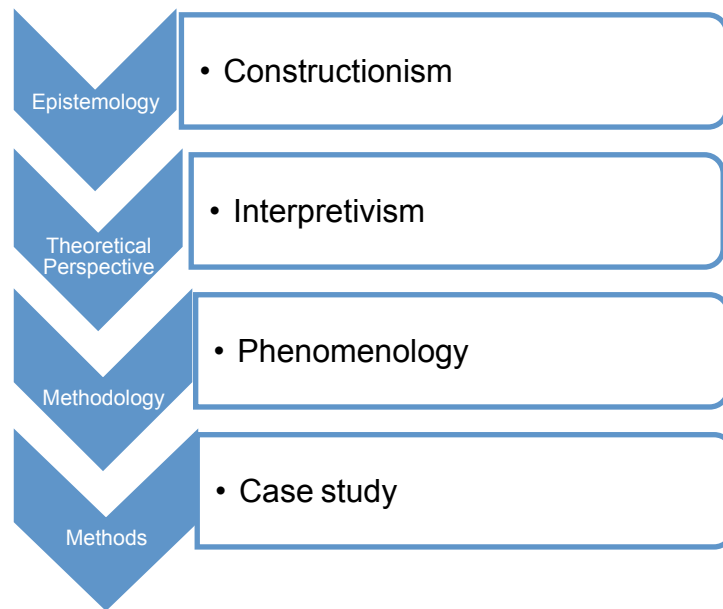
### 3.1 Research Design

There needs to be an understanding of the paradigm and methodological approach that underpins research. According to Hughes (2010,p.36), paradigms are frames of theoretical and methodological ideas having three elements; firstly, a belief about the nature of knowledge, secondly, has a methodology and thirdly, a criterion of validity that relates to an authentic account of participants' voices.

According to Crotty (1998,p.10), 'ontology is the study of being' and is concerned with the nature of existence and structure of reality. Ontology sits alongside epistemology informing the theoretical perspective. An idealist ontological assumption is applied in this research. Blaikie (2009, p.93) defined an idealist ontological assumption as where 'reality consists of representations that are the creation of the human mind. Social reality is made up of shared interpretations that social actors produce as they go about their everyday lives'. Social reality in this study which examines the way educators use and enact pedagogical documentation in an ELC includes the shared interpretations that educators produce as they teach, plan and reflect on their daily work.

Crotty (1998, p.3) states there are four elements of the research process: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods (Figure 3:1). Firstly, epistemology that is the theory of knowledge is rooted in the theoretical perspective and in methodology. Secondly, theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance informing methodology, providing a framework for the research process and supporting its logic and criteria. Methodology is the strategy behind the selection and use of particular methods that links methods to research outcomes. The final element of the research process relates to the methods or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to the research question.





**Figure 3:1: Elements of the Research Process**

**Adapted from: Crotty (1998, p.4)**

Constructionism is the epistemological stance that shaped this research study. Crotty (1998, p.42) defines constructionism as:

*The view that all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.*

Crotty (1998) stressed the fact that meaning is not discovered, but constructed. Truth or meaning 'comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world' (Crotty, p.8). Constructionism emerged as an appropriate epistemology for researching the concept of pedagogical documentation in a South Australian Early Learning Centre (ELC). Constructionism mirrors the concept of intentionality; meaning in this research the researcher intentionally constructed an understanding of elements that inform the process of pedagogical documentation used by educators. In this study, the meaning of pedagogical documentation is examined in a local context (Crotty, p.79).

According to Blaikie (2007, pp.22-23), 'the notion of constructionism can be applied to social actors socially constructing their reality by conceptualising and inferring their own actions, experiences, the actions of others and social situations'. Crotty (1998, p.10) stated that 'epistemological and ontological issues tend to emerge together'. This means that in the processes of discussing the role and purpose of pedagogical documentation and observing its use, a constructionist approach shapes shared understandings, which emerge from these experiences.

Constructionism has two branches: constructivism that refers to 'the meaning-making activity of an individual mind' whereas the focus of social constructionism is 'the collective generation and transmission of meaning' shaped by the social and cultural lens that is brought to the issue

(Crotty,1998, p.58). This study is termed 'social constructionist' and the focus is on constructing meaning based on what the educators understand about the concept of pedagogical documentation.

Interpretivism is the theoretical perspective underlying the design of this research study. The interpretivist approach holds that knowledge can be gathered through people's interpretations and understanding (Crotty,1998, p.66). The main focus of this approach is how the social world and social phenomena are interpreted. The researcher and participants co-construct and interpret meaning through dialogue and deep reflection to make meaning more visible.

In this research, by adopting an interpretivist approach, the emphasis was on gaining a detailed insight into the practice of pedagogical documentation. The researcher examined the context and used an interpretivist approach by observing and recording how participants continually negotiated the meaning of pedagogical documentation and how their interpretations influenced their behavior (MacNaughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2010, p.41). Interpretivists use qualitative methodology where the focus is on words and meanings, rather than numbers (Mukherji & Albon, 2015, p.7).

Phenomenology is the methodology used in this study. According to van Manen (1990, p.9), 'phenomenological research is the study of lived experience' which aims at gaining an insight or meaning of our daily experiences. Furthermore, van Manen (p.10) states that 'phenomenological research is the study of essences' which are core-meaning structures, mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. Crotty (1998, pp.44-45) noted that 'intentionality' or reaching out brings an interaction between the subject and object and this interplay leads to the construction of meaning. According to Crotty (p.83), phenomenology has two characteristics. First, phenomenology has objectivity, as it is more concerned about objects of experience rather than describing the experiencing subject. Secondly, there is an element of critique and questioning taken-for granted meanings of experience. In this phenomenological study, the focus was on interpretation and analysis of pedagogical documentation, the question being 'what is the nature, meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this group of people?' (van Manen, p.10).

Abductive logic is the research strategy used in this research where social scientific concepts are being studied. Blaikie (2009, p.105) defines abductive strategy as one that produces understanding based on 'thick descriptions and social scientific concepts that have been derived from everyday concepts and accounts'. According to Blaikie (p.95), an abductive research study is most likely to be used with a combination of an idealist ontological assumption and epistemology of constructionism. In this study of pedagogical documentation, the educator's everyday implementation of conceptualisations and understanding of the Reggio Emilia principle was investigated. The 'starting point is the social world' of the educators, their tacit knowledge and their way of conceptualising and giving meaning to pedagogical documentation (Blaikie, p.19).

Table 3:1 describes the abductive research strategy used in this research with a combination of idealist ontological assumption and epistemology of constructionism.

**Table 3:1 Research Strategy Source: Blaikie (2009, p.84)**

Table 3:1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

An abductive research approach can answer the 'what' and 'why' research questions regarding how pedagogical documentation is defined and used in an Early Childhood Centre in South Australia. The approach can generate an understanding rather than an explanation of pedagogical documentation by providing reason behind the practice of pedagogical documentation (Blaikie, 2009, p.89). The abductivist researcher generates concepts in a 'hermeneutic bottom up' manner. According to Blaikie (pp.119-120), the 'hermeneutic' tradition refers to where one tries to describe and understand a social phenomenon in the everyday language of social actors. In this research, the researcher worked from the 'bottom up' by adopting the position of the learner, rather than the expert. Using this approach the researcher was reflexive, allowing observations and discussions with educators about their approach to pedagogical documentation 'to evolve through a process of re-examination and reflection' (p.120).

In summary, according to Blaikie (2009), an idealistic ontological assumption is applied in this research. Hughes (2010) and Crotty (1998) take a similar stance with relation to epistemology. Hughes (p.36) describes one of the elements of a paradigm being 'a belief about the nature of knowledge' and Crotty (p.3) describes epistemology as one of the four elements of the research process that relates to the 'theory of knowledge'. Constructionism is the epistemological stance that is common to Crotty and Blaikie. This study is 'social constructionist' and the focus is on constructing meaning based on what the educators understand about pedagogical documentation. According to Crotty, Interpretivism is the theoretical perspective underlying the study and this approach holds that knowledge can be gathered through people's interpretations and understanding of their individual context. Phenomenology is the methodology that relates to strategy and is a common element to Hughes and Crotty. This phenomenological research focuses on the 'meaning, structure, essence of the lived phenomenon' (pedagogical documentation) for this group of educators (van Manen, 1990, p.10). According to Crotty, case study is the method chosen to collect and analyse data that is related to the research question. Abductive logic, the strategy stated by Blaikie is used to generate an understanding regarding the principle of pedagogical documentation.

### **3.2 Narrative Case Study**

Data collected in this study, conducted at one ELC in Adelaide, South Australia, is presented as a case study. Yin (2012, p.4) defined 'a case study as an empirical enquiry about a contemporary phenomenon, set within its real-world context especially when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'. Creswell (2012, p.465) points out that 'a case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g. activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection'. In this research, the 'case' describes pedagogical documentation implemented by educators. The study is bounded as the case is selected 'for research in terms of time and place' (Creswell, p.465). In this research, the case is bounded by time frame and the focus is one specific issue, pedagogical documentation in an ELC in Adelaide.

The researcher seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of the case that is of intrinsic interest. The focus is on one case, understanding the interactions and meanings held by participants about pedagogical documentation (Edwards, 2010, p.165). Stake (1995, p.3) states that intrinsic case studies aim to get 'insight into the question' by recognising what is unique and specific about the case and is not used for generalisations, the emphasis being on interpretation.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p.62) state that the best metaphor to explain case studies is simple, a funnel. The start of the study is the wide end of the funnel and from broad beginnings they work to a focus. Then the study moves to more directed data collection and analysis and this is how the metaphor of the funnel operates. In this study, the case study findings will focus on the interpretation of pedagogical documentation in one site in Adelaide.

### **3.3 Context of the Case Study Site**

Data was collected from one ELC in Adelaide that uses the Reggio Emilia inspired approach over a period of six weeks from September to October 2014. The researcher visited the ELC three times each week for three hours during that period. The ELC selected for the case study is an independent centre in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide catering to children aged from two to six years. The ELC is situated on part of a larger school campus and follows a Reggio Emilia inspired approach specifically designed to allow children to explore, learn and connect with the community. The educational and curriculum structure is based on the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (PYP) and supported by the Reggio Emilia philosophy. The ELC uses the *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being and Becoming* (EYLF) for curriculum guidance (DEEWR, 2009).

As shown in Table 3:2, the ELC teaching team is led by the Director Kylie (pseudonym) who has overall responsibility of the centre. Krystal (pseudonym) is the educational leader for the 4 year-old learning program and Anne (pseudonym) is responsible for the 3 year-old learning program,

Amelia and Linda (pseudonyms) work alongside the room leaders as co-educators. There are 24 children in each age group and they come from middle to higher socio-economic strata.

**Table 3:2 Participant Profile**

Name of Participants	Age	Qualification	Experience at ELC	Total Experience
Kylie	50-55	Master in Early Childhood Education	10 Years	30 Years
Krystal	30-35	Bachelor in Early Childhood Education	3 Years	3 Years
Amelia	25-30	Master in Early Childhood Education	3 Years	3 Years
Anne	35-45	Bachelor in Early Childhood Education	3 Years	12 Years
Linda	25-30	Master in Early Childhood Education	4 Years	4 Years

As shown in Table 3:2, both the 3-year and 4-year old room educators have a degree in Early Childhood Education and the co-educators and Director are postgraduates with a Masters degree in Early Childhood Education. The Director has approximately 30 years experience in the field and Anne is a very experienced early childhood educator with over 10 years of experience. There are two main classrooms, Jacaranda Room (pseudonym) for the 3-year-old program and Kookaburra Room (pseudonym) for the 4-year-old program.

### 3.4 Recruitment of Participants

A purposeful sampling technique was applied in selecting the site for this research. Thus, individuals and the site for the research was selected for the potential to purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and the central phenomenon of pedagogical documentation observed in the study (Creswell, 2012, p.206). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), purposeful sampling is a technique of selecting participants for qualitative research. The researcher attempts to select 'groups, settings and individuals where (and for whom) the processes being studied are most likely to occur' (p.378).

The facilitator of the Making Learning Visible - Reggio Emilia Professional Learning Program (run in association with the 2012 - 2013 Adelaide Thinker in Residence, Professor Carla Rinaldi) in South Australia assisted the researcher to identify the school for the case study.

Permission was sought from the Director of the Reggio Emilia inspired school prior to commencement of the research. The researcher sent a Letter of Introduction to the ELC Director (Appendix 1). The researcher contacted the Director of the ELC via telephone and sought an

appointment to discuss the research project. At a face-to-face meeting the researcher presented the details of the project. During this meeting, the researcher sought permission from the Director regarding participation in focus groups, for the researcher to undertake observations at the site and for the researcher to invite staff to participate in interviews (Appendices 3 and 4).

The staff members were introduced to the research at a staff meeting where the researcher indicated the nature and purpose of the research. The staff members were provided the Information Sheet (Appendix 2), which explained aspects of their involvement should they agree to participate. Interested teachers were invited to participate and those that agreed to participate were asked to sign a Consent Form (Appendix 7). Parents were informed of the research via the centre's newsletter (Appendix 5). Parental Consent Form (Appendix 6) was sent to parents to request permission for the researcher to observe the child's portfolio. Signed parental consent forms were collected by the educators.

### **3.5 Data Collection: Instruments and Procedures**

Direct observation, field-notes, artefacts including children's portfolios and photographs of children's activities were used in this research. The data presented a detailed view of events naturally occurring at a particular place and time.

The methods of data collection used are described below.

#### **3.5.1 Direct Observation**

This focuses on rich description of the data and is used to understand daily interactions or examine a concept, in this case pedagogical documentation. According to Rolfe and Emmett, (2010,p.309) 'direct observation is an appraisal of the social and physical environment based on our direct perceptions'. Direct observation enhances observational skills and helps 'to focus on research interests and personal data, rather than using measuring tools' (Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel, 2013,p.92). The primary research interest was the role of pedagogical documentation as it happens on a daily basis and how it informs a teacher's work. The participants (teachers) were asked to continue with their daily activities while the researcher was observing and making field-notes regarding their activity and interaction with the children. Observations of teachers took place in the classroom.

#### **3.5.2 Artefacts**

Artefacts in the form of children's work and the project work they are involved in were documented in their portfolios. Photographs, as examples of the ongoing project work were obtained from the children's portfolios. The photographs were used for analysis of the project and demonstrated evidence of pedagogical documentation. Educators shared portfolios and photographs of children's work to depict their understanding of children's learning.

### **3.5.3 Interviews**

Interviews are complementary to direct observation data. According to MacNaughton, Rolfe and Siraj-Blatchford (2010), 'interviews allow case study researchers to explore the meanings that lie behind observed behaviours or documentary evidence' (p.169). The knowledge generated is about the individual's perspective. Semi-structured interviews can be a mixture of both open and closed questions. Mukherji and Albon (2015) point out that formulating the questions requires careful consideration (p.154).

Four early childhood educators were interviewed individually at the ELC, during their free time, in a place identified by the teachers as private and comfortable. The researcher ensured there was visual and auditory privacy and mitigated against the risk of being overheard or observed by others. Teachers were interviewed regarding their practice in using pedagogical documentation by sharing children's work and were invited to use records they had made that documented children's learning. The questions used in individual interviews with teachers are attached as Appendix 8. Each interview was of 30 minutes duration and the teachers discussed background information regarding pedagogical documentation, shared artefacts and children's portfolios where parents had given consent and discussed the role of pedagogical documentation in the centre. As they reflected on their different perceptions and interests, their comments provided a framework that related to the observation of pedagogical documentation and therefore provided a basis for its interpretation (MacNaughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2010,p.333).

### **3.5.4 Focus Group Interviews**

Focus group interviews with practitioners have the potential to inform Early Childhood policy and practices and were used as another source of data. According to Morgan (1997,p.8), the focus group interview is structured around a series of questions to obtain participants' views on a particular topic. Furthermore data collected from a focus group interview is based on group interactions. Patton (2002,p.236) explains that focus groups obtain participants' thoughts and experiences about an issue through the use of a semi-structured open-ended interview format. Krueger and Casey (2009,p.15) noted that focus groups collect data from people with similar backgrounds in a group situation through intensive discussions.

The group interaction created through a focus group interview produces data that might not be available through individual interviews. The Director and staff of the centre were invited to a focus group interview in a place identified by the Director in the centre. There were five educators in the focus group and is considered an optimum number. The presence of the Director influenced the nature of discussion. The interviews with individual educators were completed earlier before the focus group interview. The focus group interview with Director/staff was around 90 minutes in order to elicit participant views on pedagogical documentation as a tool in the Reggio Emilia approach.

The focus group interview being a group interview allowed the participants to express their own perspectives and hear the views expressed by the group. The questions asked during the focus group interview are attached as Appendix 9.

### **3.6 Triangulation**

The qualitative research utilised 'data triangulation' as described by Denzin (1989) as a process where multiple data sets are obtained in order to extend the range of data available for a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005,p.722). Kasunic (2005,p.15) describes 'the purpose of triangulation as being able to obtain confirmation of findings through convergence of different perspectives. The point at which the perspectives converge is seen to represent reality'. In this research, data triangulation was achieved through observations, individual interviews and focus group interviews as three sources of data. This helps to clarify the meaning of the data collected through various sources by reinforcing or questioning it. The researcher identified alternative meanings regarding the principle of pedagogical documentation that provided a better understanding of the case study (MacNaughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2010,p.338).

### **3.7 Ethical Issues**

Ethics, as defined by Aubrey, David, Godfrey and Thompson (2000,p.156), is 'the moral philosophy or set of moral principles underpinning a project'. The researcher was committed to a range of responsibilities prior to undertaking the research study. Ethics approval was sought through the Flinders University Social and Behavioral Research Ethics Committee prior to conducting this research, ensuring that the research aligns with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. The researcher has engaged in ethical practices in all steps of the research as described below.

Informed consent is a major ethical issue in social research. The researcher has 'shown respect by gaining permission before entering the site, by not disturbing the site as far as possible during the study and by viewing herself as a 'guest' at the place of study' (Creswell, 2012,p.23). Study participants had full information about the research project including the rationale and why they were invited to participate. The researcher did not coerce participants into signing consent forms and respected the norms of the relevant school culture (Creswell,p.24).

Confidentiality and anonymity is also another ethical issue in social research. The information provided has been safeguarded and the identity of people and institution is protected. As a case study researcher, the aim was to use 'low-intrusion data collection methods so they can do justice to the story the case is telling' (Edwards, 2010,p.167). The researcher has ensured that data is stored in a de-identified form. The data was reported 'honestly, without changing or altering the findings to satisfy certain predictions' (Creswell, 2012, p.24).



The researcher intends to publish research findings and share them with the wider Early Childhood education community. The researcher addressed issues of equity such as detecting bias in the observation and being self-reflexive in analysing the data. Reflexivity involves reflection by the researcher on 'the social processes that impinge upon and influence data' (Brewer, 2000,p.191).

### **3.8 Summary**

The researcher applied a phenomenological approach in the form of a case study to gather data regarding the use of pedagogical documentation in an Early Childhood setting. In the next chapter, approaches to data analysis are discussed. The research findings are presented through detailed accounts of the pedagogical documentation process using vignettes and snippets of interview data.

## 4

# DATA ANALYSIS

This research examined the role of pedagogical documentation in a Reggio Emilia - inspired centre in Adelaide. This chapter discusses the triangulation of the different sets of data collected. The first section illustrates approaches to data analysis. The second section describes the research context. This is followed by presentation of research findings using the themes that emerged from data analysis and literature review. Each theme begins with a vignette of children's learning based on observation followed by researcher's gaze and educators' voices (interviews/focus group data). Vignettes are used to sharpen analysis and identify key research findings. Vignettes of children's learning are utilised to juxtapose educators' voices, photographs, observation data and the literature to discuss research findings.

### 4.1 Approaches to Data Analysis

The discussion during interviews and focus group interview was digitally recorded in order to create the transcripts in a form that was useable to the researcher. Data analysis of individual interviews and focus group interview was undertaken using NVivo 10, computer software designed to analyse qualitative data (QSR International, 2010). My analytical strategy was to use Abductive logic along with NVivo10 to investigate the educators' everyday conceptualisation and implementation of the Reggio Emilia principle of pedagogical documentation.

Coding and analysis was important in order to have a detailed methodical approach to data analysis. Bernard (2011, p.338) noted that 'analysis is the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place'. According to Saldana (2013), a code in qualitative research is a word or a short phrase that 'assumes a summative attribute for a portion of language-based data' (p.3). When codes are applied to qualitative data, the data gets grouped and re-grouped to form patterns that can lead to categories. Saldana (2013) noted that coding is a method that enables you to arrange data in a systematic manner and group data into categories that share some common characteristics (p.9).

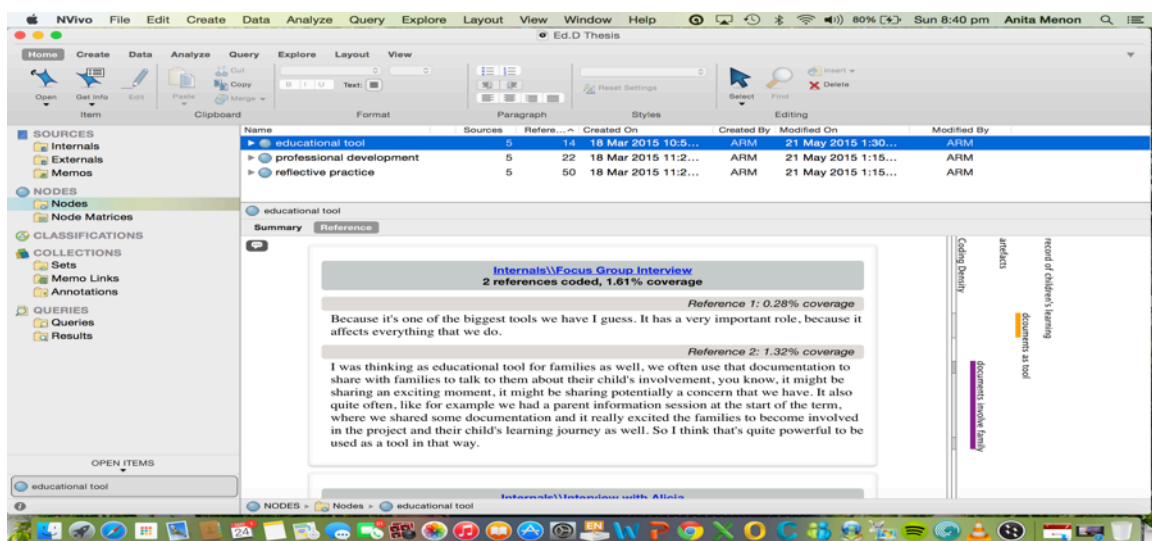
The researcher began analysing the data with deduction, establishing links with the literature regarding the concept of pedagogical documentation as described by early childhood educators. Thematic responses were identified to begin the data driven analysis. The researcher examined links between the data and the literature that informed the research questions to develop research findings that addressed research aims. Vignettes according to Graue and Walsh (1998, p.208) 'are a way to sharpen analysis and to crystalize issues deemed important by the researcher for the reader'. Examples of short dialogues, vignettes and fragments of interviews as part of the research evidence are provided in sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5.

Data collected was reviewed at regular intervals and this contributed to valid conclusions about categories that developed regarding the concept of pedagogical documentation. To ensure that the research met validity criteria for an interpretivist research, the researcher collected authentic data in the form of interviews and focus group interviews. According to Hughes (2010, p.42), 'knowledge is valid if it is authentic, that is, it is the true voice of the participants in their research'. As mentioned earlier, in this research, data triangulation was achieved through a comparison of observations, individual interviews and focus group interviews as three sources of data. This helps to clarify the meaning of the data collected through various sources by reinforcing or questioning it, thus improving the validity of the information gathered.

Rolfe and Emmett (2010, p.317) defined reliability as 'the consistency of observations, across time and between observers'. To establish intra-observer reliability that is, recording the same behaviour if observed on separate occasions in the same way, the researcher examined the data collected through direct observation and portfolios to verify the information obtained by interviews and focus group interviews.

According to Saldana (2013, p.58), first cycle coding methods refer to processes that happen during initial coding. The researcher established 10 topic codes during the first cycle of coding. The codes developed in data analysis were 'record of children's learning', 'documenting children's hundred languages', 'listening to the child', 'provocation', 'image of the child', 'competent adult', 'intentional teaching', 'co-construction of knowledge', 'assessment' and 'critical thinking'. These codes were developed based on the frequency the word appeared, for example 'image of the child', in the interview/focus group data and in the interview/focus group questions.

**Figure 4:1 A Screenshot of the Coding from NVivo 10 (QSR, International)**

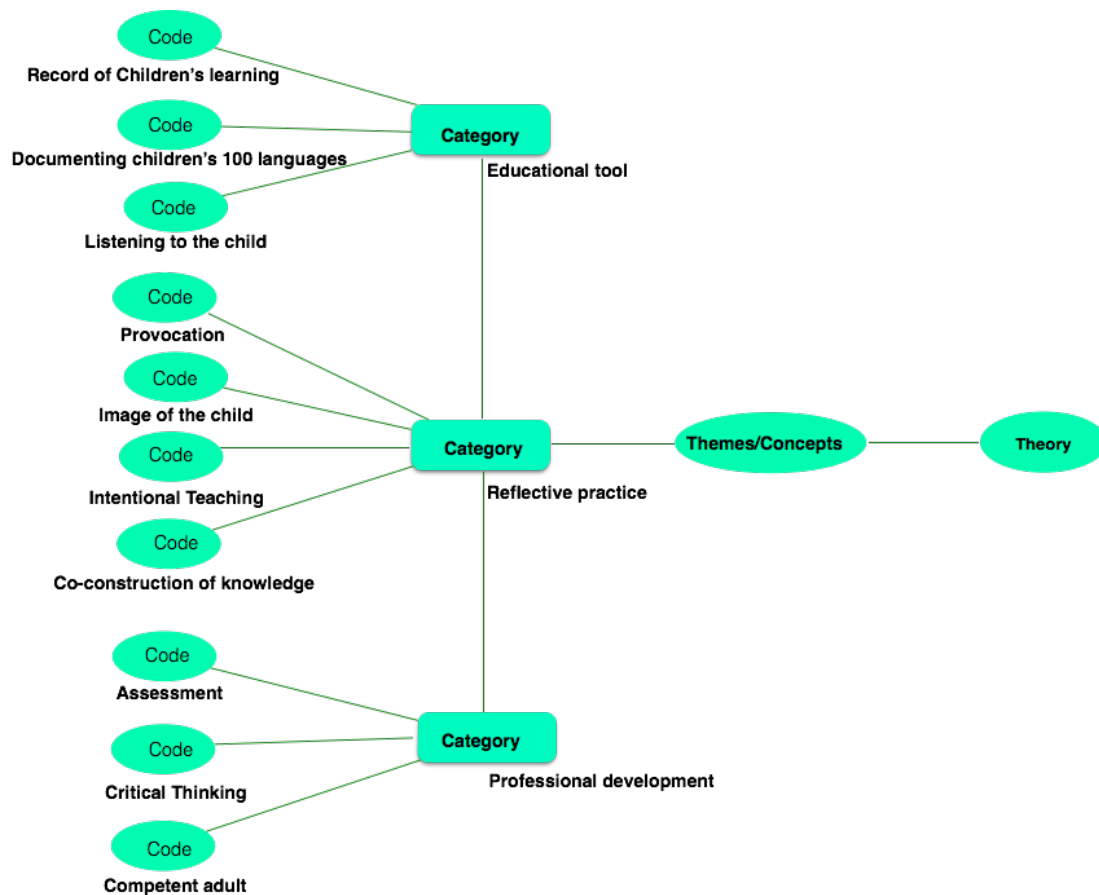


Second cycle coding was undertaken to refine codes into three categories according to the frequency an item was discussed during individual/focus group interviews and identified in the

literature review (Figure 4:1). Saldana (2013, p.58) noted that second cycle coding methods are more challenging due to the requirement of analytical skills. By being reflexive, it became obvious that the questions that I had asked were often reflected on the data and contained in the responses that influenced the frequency an item was discussed. Using abductive logic strategy, the researcher observed a pattern developing from the data, paid meticulous attention to language and reflected deeply on the emergent categories being developed.

**Figure 4:2 A Code to Theory Model of the Phenomenological Case Study Research.**

**Adapted from: Saldana (2013, p.13)**



The three categories that emerged during second cycle analysis were educational tool, reflective practice and professional development (Figure 4:2). According to Saldana (2013), 'a theme is an outcome of coding, categorisation and analytic reflection' (p.14). The data was initially coded leading to secondary coding to discern and label its content and meaning according to the research question. The emphasis was on uniqueness and understanding the case study and the data gathered had 'thick description'. The evidence becomes more robust through data saturation in the form of multiple data sets and comparison with the literature. Thematic analysis was a strategic choice as part of the research design.

## 4.2 The Research Context: Early Learning Centre

The Early Learning Centre (ELC) examined in this research is situated in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide. As you enter the ELC you step into a large outdoor area. The outdoor area has a sandpit and a cubby house designed by the children to their own specifications. It is springtime and various pots are filled with flowers and plants; the bright toadstool seats for children to sit on and wind chimes blowing in the wind bring in colour and vibrancy to the environment. In one corner of this space there is a vegetable garden where children grow herbs and vegetables such as cabbage, purple carrots, potatoes and lettuce. The children have also planted two apple trees in the garden and are observing the changes as the trees grow.

There are two main classrooms, the Jacaranda Room for the 3-year old group and the Kookaburra Room for the 4-year old group. Both rooms are spacious and airy, with open spaces in the centre for morning meetings and nooks with different materials in a range of locations.

In the Jacaranda Room, children's photographs are placed on a shelf showing the enrolled children with their families. The permanent tent set up in a corner invites children for role-play. The Jacaranda Room has a display area called 'The Wonder Wall' where children's thoughts and ideas on different projects and concepts are accommodated. An inquiry 'Watching Our ELC Grow' was the project under investigation in the Jacaranda room during the observation period.

Alongside The Wonder Wall is a Smart Board for viewing different materials, such as a story or a rhyme or a power-point presentation of children's learning. Technology including a computer screen is used in both rooms to enhance learning experiences. The educators use cameras and iPads to create video recordings in the form of iMovies to illustrate children's learning.

In the Kookaburra Room, there is a block corner with a standing mirror placed alongside the wall. This provides an opportunity for the children to play with blocks and observe their constructions. A display of natural elements, such as plants placed on different tables around the room, adds to the aesthetic value in the room. Similar to the Jacaranda Room, a display area called 'The Wonder Wall' documents children's questions and wonderings about different concepts. At the time of this research, 'Frogs and Tadpoles' were the focus of children's enquiries.

A sandbox is placed on one table, a nature display with small wooden logs and plastic animals on another and a table with shells, pebbles, corks and wooden flowers complement the natural elements in the room. There is a doll's corner with a dollhouse and furniture in one corner. Books on the current project under investigation, 'Frogs and Tadpoles', are placed on a long shelf. Some mirrors are also placed on a table, bringing in the element of differing perspectives into the classroom.

The Kookaburra room leads to a small kitchen with cooking smells wafting from it. Morning fruit time is around 10 am each day, a time when educators and children come together for a shared experience. The children are encouraged to bring some fruit daily. Children have fruit time

responsibilities; they help to wash the fruit, cut it up and divide it between platters. They lay down the mats for each platter, along with one scrap bowl on each mat and two pair of tongs for each platter. The educators use this time as an opportunity to encourage healthy eating through role modelling and conversations.

The ELC has a Specialist Visual Art Room where art materials, such as paints, cellophane paper and an easel board, are displayed. It also has a light table with a big mirror placed alongside in a corner. The centre places importance on aesthetics. Children's portfolios are placed on low shelves, so that children can access them freely. I have observed children re-visiting their portfolios and commenting on the inquiry projects with pride, as they serve as a memory of their learning experiences.

In the outdoor area, there is a large patio known as the Activity Room where tables and chairs are placed for children to have their lunch or do some activity outdoors. Plastic insects and blocks placed on shelves and a reading rack containing storybooks with an armchair beside it gives ambience to the patio. Children could be seen picking up their favourite books to read. The patio has a cooking corner with cookery utensils placed for children's role-play.

At the time of this research, children in both classrooms were investigating the building process during construction of the new ELC. Ongoing documentation, as shown in Picture 4:1, 'Watching Our ELC Grow' was placed near the foyer between both rooms. The children were trying to understand the processes involved in the construction of a new building.



**Picture 4:1 The Wonder Wall (Foyer): Watching Our ELC Grow**

The following sections of this chapter use vignettes to explore themes that emerged from initial data analysis. The first of these themes relates to pedagogical documentation as an educational tool.

### 4.3 Pedagogical Documentation as An Educational Tool

#### A Vignette: Change Is All Around Us (Portfolio Data: 4-year old group)

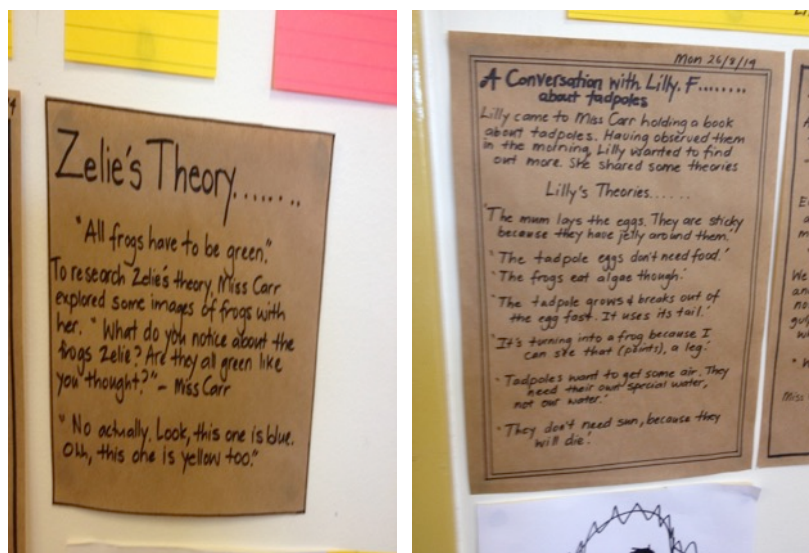
This vignette focuses on an inquiry project related to the concept 'Change is All Around Us'. During the observation period, the Kookaburra Room inquiry project focused on 'Frogs and Tadpoles'. The educator reflected that to complement their learning about 'change' and linking to the previous 'Chicken and Egg' project, Kookaburra Room children have begun to lead another inquiry about frogs and tadpoles.

Amelia, one of the co-educators in the room engaged some interested children in discussion to discover their prior knowledge about tadpoles in small group time. As the discussion progressed, the children asked questions and supported or challenged each other's theories. Their theories were recorded on the Wonder Wall. Referring to Picture 4:2, some tadpole theories included the children's hypotheses about how and if tadpoles sleep, eat and grow.

*'I don't think they sleep', 'Wait, they might sleep on the green stuff'. - Amy*

*'Why are there rocks in there?' 'I think it is their bed'. - Natasha*

*'Why are they not eating?' - Tom 'They might not be very hungry'. - Zelig*



Picture 4:2: Tadpole Theories

*'Some are little because they are kids'. - Zelig*

*'The big one is big because he ate too much'. - Amy*

*'They swim slowly, maybe they stop when they are tired'. - Amy*



*'If we take them out of the water, they might die'. - Lily*

After sharing children's prior knowledge about tadpoles on 'The Wonder Wall' (Picture 4:3), it was time for observation. Amelia sourced some local spotted marsh tadpoles and encouraged the children to develop theories as they observed the tadpoles in the frog pond the educators set up in the Kookaburra Room.



**Picture 4:3: The 'Tadpole Wonder Wall' - Tadpole Theories**

The 'Tadpole Wonder Wall', as shown in Picture 4:3, documented and guided children's theorisation. Amelia reflected that *'the best aspect of inquiry-based projects is that they can be ongoing and can extend beyond the initial inquiry. The tadpoles may take months to fully develop and hence the children's inquiries will continue well into next term'*. According to my observation, the tadpole inquiry project lasted the whole term.

To support the children's interest in sourcing more information, during group time Amelia encouraged some children to engage with a storybook that outlined the life cycle of a frog. As the story progressed the children observed the pictures and developed new theories that built upon their current knowledge.

*'Why do tadpoles need to be underwater, but frogs can go on land?' - Amy*

Most of the children agreed that because tadpoles 'are babies' and they do not have legs they cannot come above the water or 'they will die'. Some children were determined to find out more about tadpole eggs. To encourage their interest, Amelia explored a non-fiction book with the children who later decided they wanted to document the progress of the eggs. The children began demonstrating and sharing their knowledge about tadpoles.

*'I think tadpoles lay eggs'. 'I'm going to look in this book'. -Tom*

*'Like the chicken (pointing to the poster), the tadpole egg comes out from under the mummy'. - Lily*



The children were playing with plastic figurines and Amelia observed their dramatic play. The educator reflected that as children play with materials they are also constructing and building upon the knowledge they already have.

*'Tom, tell me why you have ordered the figurines this way? How do you know you have the order right?' - Amelia*

*'I know it's right because it goes from smallest to biggest. After it is a tadpole, this one (points to froglet) is next because it has feet. The tail is disappearing as it gets older'. - Tom*

Some children decided to support their theories and document their findings by taking some pictures with the iPad. Mia and Amelia sat down to observe the tadpoles. Mia wanted to take a picture of the tadpoles while they are breathing (Picture 4:4).



**Picture 4:4: Mia's Photograph of Tadpoles taken on the iPad**

*'There are one, two, three, four... seven tadpoles here'. - Mia*

*'This one has whiskers (laughs), I don't know why?' - Amy*

*'Maybe the tadpoles will grow into frogs, but first they get legs'. - Tom*

Most of the children investigated and became aware that the tadpoles will eventually turn into frogs. Amelia decided to engage some interested children in watching a video clip showing the change of a frog from frogspawn to adulthood. The children were researching the changes and bringing their knowledge together.

*'I think the tadpole tail drops off'. - Amy*

*'These are tadpole eggs. They stick together and have jelly around them. They are called frogspawn'. - Lily*

After discussing and engaging with the resource book on frogs, Amelia wanted to see if the children could correctly identify the changing stages of the developing frog. Using a life cycle puzzle, the children grouped with a partner and worked together to solve the puzzle. When the groups completed their separate puzzles Amelia asked them to identify the first stage of a frog, followed by the second, third and fourth. For each stage, a group took turns to add their puzzle to the board and repeated the stages over and over. By the end of the activity the children were

beginning to use new vocabulary in their discussions: for example, *'frogspawn, lifecycle and froglet'*.

In summary, in the vignette 'Change is All Around Us', the educators initially listened to children's prior knowledge regarding tadpoles and frogs. This led them to source some local spotted marsh tadpoles and set up a frog pond for children to further observe and develop their theories. The 'Tadpole Wonder Wall' documented and guided children's theories. To support children's theories, the educator encouraged them to engage with a storybook outlining the life cycle of a frog. Later, some children wanted to find out more about tadpole eggs and so the educator explored a non-fiction book to document the progress of the tadpole eggs. They were then encouraged to play with figurines so that children could construct and build upon the knowledge they already have. Some children decided to support their theories and document their findings with the iPad. Their theories led the educator to show them a video clip showing the change of a frog from frogspawn to adulthood. This was followed, by using a life cycle puzzle to identify the changing stages of the frog. Thus, it can be seen that children's theories influenced the decision made by the educator in this inquiry project.

This vignette 'Change is All Around Us' provides evidence of pedagogical documentation being used as an educational tool particularly regarding non-linear learning, *progettazione* (flexible planning) and being a process used to communicate children's learning, as discussed next.

### **Researcher's Gaze:**

The first finding is related to pedagogical documentation as an educational tool. According to the educators consulted in this research, pedagogical documentation is not a linear process, but non-linear where they observe what the children are saying or doing, ask provocative questions and then take children to the next level of learning. This is similar to the metaphor of the rhizome described by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) showing growth of the rhizome as not linear but shooting in all directions. For example, during the inquiry project 'Change is All Around Us' the educators placed children's theories on 'The Wonder Wall', then read resource books on 'Frogs and Tadpoles' with the children, documented their learning with the children taking photographs, observed children's role-play, negotiated and checked understanding of the life-cycle stages using a life-cycle puzzle on 'Frogs and Tadpoles'. In this inquiry project, children's logic is demonstrated by the questions and thoughts on the Wonder Wall (for example, *'Why do tadpoles need to be underwater, but frogs can go on land?'*) that took the project in directions that had not been preconceived by the educators that are consistent with topic-based teaching. Thus it was observed that learning about 'Frogs and Tadpoles' was non-linear.

The second finding is regarding *'progettazione'* (making flexible plans while investigating children's learning) in terms of interpretation at this centre. The educators discussed how pedagogical documentation is linked with observing children's learning, going deeper and planning their

activities (*progettazione*) as they take children to the next level of learning. For example, the educators made flexible plans during the investigation of the project 'Frogs and Tadpoles' based on children's interest. They documented children's theories on frogs and tadpoles, sourced frogs to keep the children's interest live, read resource books to answer queries, observed role-play and watched them solving puzzles on the life-cycle of a frog. This is an affirmation that educators in this site are able to frame their professional practices in these ways.

My observations confirmed that pedagogical documentation is used as a process to communicate children's learning with stakeholders, namely parents, children, educators and assessors. For example, children's tadpole theories on 'The Wonder Wall' made children's learning visible to parents, children, educators and assessors who had visited the ELC for accreditation purposes. The educators reflected that pedagogical documentation is shared with parents through newsletters, children's portfolio, 'The Wonder Wall' and Power Point presentations. My observations and seeing children's portfolios confirm that the educators see pedagogical documentation as an educational tool to record children's learning. For example, for the end-of-year celebration, the educators created a Power Point presentation of pedagogical documentation of each child's learning with the aim of respecting the child and his/her achievements and sharing this with families.

### **Educators' Voices:**

Participant reflections on pedagogical documentation corroborated that observation is an element of pedagogical documentation and is used as an educational tool. Kylie's explanation provides evidence:

*When educators observe what children are doing, thinking and learning and use these observations to unpack it and plan, the process becomes pedagogical documentation. Your documentation allows you to go deeper than the observations to inform what comes next.*

Educators described that children's phases of research are represented through pedagogical documentation whereas 'traditional' observational recordings of what children are doing was described as flat and without depth. Krystal agreed with Kylie and remarked:

*It gives depth to observations as you go deeper into your theories, research and makes you think where would you go next with that observation. How do I expand on the children's knowledge or understandings? It might mean that the documentation is used to create a smaller, almost like sub-groups of investigations with the children and we normally find our project groups amongst, maybe a bigger group.*

Krystal's comment indicates that children's theories, knowledge and understanding influenced their decisions. Amelia considered traditional documentation as very structured and later, as she began the process of pedagogical documentation, she realised the potential for aspects of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool. She reflected:

*Originally when I was a student, we had a specific template for documentation, it was very structured, meant for my assessors and would be placed into my folder and none of the children would see it. So that's how I saw it first, and then as I grew, it changed for me and I began to see it more as an educational tool for everyone.*

Linda and Anne reiterated this point, saying that they see pedagogical documentation as having a structure and developing different levels, which enable the educator to take children's learning to the next phase. The educators used the phrases '*deeper than the observations*', '*depth to observations*', '*go deeper into your theories*' when they discussed about pedagogical documentation and compared it with 'traditional observational recordings'. The educators used the term 'deeper' to highlight and describe their reflection regarding pedagogical documentation. They also talked about observations leading to flexible planning of their activities.

The communicative possibilities of pedagogical documentation become obvious in the interviews. When asked about the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool, Kylie remarked:

*Pedagogical documentation is one of the biggest educational tools we have. It has a very important role, because it affects everything that we do. I was thinking as educational tool for families as well, we often use that documentation to share with families, to talk to them about their child's involvement. It might be sharing an exciting moment or it might be sharing potentially a concern that we have.*

Amelia agreed with Kylie and stated that pedagogical documentation is a useful educational tool for communicating about children's learning to families. She remarked:

*It is a very good educational tool for parents to see what their child is doing, for the children to connect and their learning is visible and for educators an evidence of documenting children's learning.*

Krystal reflected about taking children to their next level of learning and how this communicated children's learning to the assessors who visited the ELC. She observed:

*Pedagogical documentation is something that I use to inform my practice. My role as an educator is to highlight the learning and the depth of what's actually going on. It's the documentation that I then use to well, what next? Where do I go next with the children? The assessors who came in for the Primary Years Program (PYP) accreditation commented 'it's oozing, it's oozing off the walls and oozing from the rooms'.*

The assessors commented about the learning that is oozing off the walls; in other words, learning is made visible through pedagogical documentation. Linda agreed and considers pedagogical documentation a multi-faceted educational tool; giving voice to the child and valuing his/her learning. Thus, pedagogical documentation is an educational tool for communicating with children. Linda remarked:

*I define pedagogical documentation as exploring children's understanding, thinking, ideas and delving into different levels of those ideas. I see the role of it as an educational tool for both, multifaceted as it is used for various reasons; primarily that the child's voice is heard and that they can see we're really valuing what they are doing and later expanding on that learning. I think it makes their thinking and learning visible.*

Anne agreed with her colleagues and described pedagogical documentation as a means of communication with colleagues about children's learning. She mentioned:

*A tool that I use to find out more about the children, to observe what they are doing in terms of what their interests are, what their knowledge is, what their concepts and skills are and where to take them next. To me the real important part is to really take value for what the children have said or done. So when using the Wonder Wall, it helps educators to get those layers and use those observations for reflection with the children and with us. We communicate with each other, trying to unpack it and take it to the next level.*

### **View from the Literature**

The educators' way of defining 'documenting children's work' is similar to definitions put forth by Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013), Rinaldi (2006), Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2006) and Millikan (2003) regarding pedagogical documentation. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013, p.156) state that pedagogical documentation 'refers to a process', i.e. use of material in a reflective and democratic way and 'content', i.e. material records what the children are saying and doing in that process. Rinaldi (2006, p.100) states that pedagogical documentation is 'a procedure that supports learning and teaching because they are visible and shareable', not the documentation of end products, but the processes of learning, subject to observation, interpretation, re-visiting and assessing as children learn. Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2006, p.11) note that pedagogical documentation is 'the process of collaboration' and 'embedded in the actions, learning and research among a group of educators and children' (Fleet, Patterson & Robertson, p.6). Educators in the ELC consider pedagogical documentation an exceptional educational tool and Millikan (2003, p.87) also considers pedagogical documentation as a 'powerful educational tool'. ELC staff comments reflect the many ways they use pedagogical documentation to support children's learning.

The vignette also illustrated the Reggio Emilia principle of *progettazione*. The educators used *progettazione* 'the Italian term that defines the approach to curriculum, pedagogy and daily encounters shared by adults and children' (Millikan & Giamminuti, 2014, p.55). According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015), *progettazione* is 'the way of designing the learning activities not by a pre-defined curriculum but having a flexible strategy for further investigation of the inquiry project or the learning activity.' *Progettazione* features non-linearity and follows the process of learning in children.

In summary, the main findings to emerge from the vignette 'Change is All Around Us' are that pedagogical documentation empowers educators in this site to deepen their analysis of children's learning and represents children's phases of research. The ELC educators in this case study acknowledge pedagogical documentation, as an effective educational tool. A metaphor that is useful to describe the process is that pedagogical documentation is similar to a rhizome. Pedagogical documentation as demonstrated in this vignette is also linked with *progettazione* (flexible planning) and expressed through different mediums, such as photographs, children's drawing, video recording and snippets of conversations on 'The Wonder Wall' to make children's learning visible. In this site, pedagogical documentation is considered a useful educational tool that communicates children's learning to stakeholders, including parents, children, educators, policymakers and the wider community. The next vignette examines the second theme that emerged from the data and relates to the role of pedagogical documentation in building reflective practice.

#### **4.4 Pedagogical Documentation Builds Reflective Practice**

##### **A Vignette: Watching Our ELC Grow (Portfolio Data: 3-year old group)**

The ELC extension construction was underway during this research and the Jacaranda Room children (3-year-old group) had been observing and documenting changes happening on the construction site. Documentation on 'The Wonder Wall' was in three stages.

Stage 1: What can we see? Carefully focused observations.

The educators and the children make the following observations:

We have seen the ELC grow from the ground up.

We have also seen heavy machinery and workmen.

We have heard lots of banging and rumbling.

We have felt the building shake.

What changes will we see this term?

Picture 4:5 presents some theories on construction activity for the ELC extension, as described in children's voices:

*'Look! He is moving backwards and forwards', 'Why are they moving the dirt?'*- Ben

*'The man is fixing, getting all the dirt and puts it there'.* - Ruby

*'They are just making a big mountain'.* - Ralph

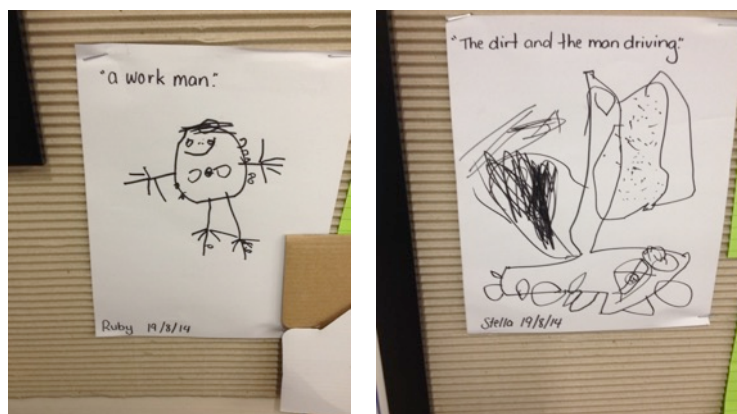


**Picture 4:5: Construction of the ELC Extension: Children's Theories**

Stage 2 - What do we think we will see? Predicting, hypothesising, using books to help us.

The Jacaranda Room children were very interested in watching the framework of the building going up. They observed wood shavings on the floor and wondered what wood is for, as they do not see wood in a house or building because walls cover the frame. So the educators discussed and hypothesised how wood could be used. The children came up with their own ideas and the educators were interested to see children create their own framework.

The first opportunity the educators gave the children was to use play dough as an adhesive to see whether they could create their own framework with pop sticks and match sticks. The children were given a variety of wooden objects and some play dough and asked, 'look out of the window, what can you see? Can you make your own framework?' So the children went outside and had a really good look, some of the children drew what they could see and took photos as shown in Picture 4:6.



**Picture 4:6 Children's Drawing of their Observations**



*'I can see a pipe, it has water in it'. - Tabitha*

*'I can see some mud puddles and some dirt and some bark chips'. - Andy*

*'A bulldozer will push big rocks'. - Annabelle*

Although these comments do not directly relate to the wooden framework, they illustrate children making sense of the construction process.

The educators gave the children some more materials and the children then tried to put a roof on, balance and join up, but the weight of the pop sticks was a bit too much for the play dough as shown in Picture 4:7. So they were very engaged and challenged, but the educators could see some children getting a little frustrated as well.



**Picture 4:7: Constructing Ideas on Pop Sticks**

Stage 3: What can we see now? Were our predictions correct? What might we see next?

The educators asked, 'How else could you join your sticks of wood?' The children came up with the idea of a sticky tape and started to display what they had created with the sticky tape. At the time of this research, the educators displayed what the children had created with play dough and pop sticks. Some could be displayed because some children had worked in 2D by sticking their construction flat onto paper, whereas other children created a 3D structure. The educators collected photos and videos of children's work and snippets of the conversations they were having, thus collating their thought processes and discussions on the construction process.

In summary, in the vignette 'Watching our ELC Grow', the 3-year-old group children were observing and documenting the changes happening on the construction site. Their observations, predictions and hypothesis regarding the building construction led the educators to explore with the children, how wood could be used in the building framework. The educators reflected and gave children some play dough to use as an adhesive to build a framework with pop sticks and match sticks. The children tried balancing the pop sticks and added more materials to have a roof on. The next stage was to test their predictions and the children were given sticky tape to create a 2D or a



3D structure. Thus, it can be seen that children's theories regarding the construction influenced the educators' decision to delve 'deeper into their theories'.

This vignette, 'Watching our ELC Grow', demonstrates an example of reflective practice and highlights the process, which describes how documentation of children's work provides opportunities for reflective practice. The vignette makes explicit four concepts of the Reggio Emilia approach that are important in reflective practice: the '**image of the child**' held by the educators at the ELC, the educators beginning pedagogical documentation with a '**provocation**', leading to '**intentional teaching**' and '**co-construction of knowledge**'.

### **Researcher's Gaze:**

This vignette illustrates the educators' perspective that 'documenting children's work builds reflective practice' and complements professional experience. When educators critically reflect on their practice, it leads to an understanding of their role as an educator, thus building professional development. The educators reflected that during the process of pedagogical documentation the focus is on the process of learning, rather than the end product. They also discussed raw samples, meaning 'work in progress', rather than the finished product. My observation confirmed the process of educators reflecting on what children said during the learning process and adding it to 'The Wonder Wall' for children to see. I also observed the children involved in adding their theories to 'The Wonder Wall' along with educators.

The educators also used artefacts (children's portfolios) with the 4-year old group for reflection and to demonstrate the different ways children think. My reading of children's portfolios revealed different projects and activities that were documented. I observed some children going through their portfolios and reflecting on their learning with other children and educators. Project portfolios were placed on shelves for teacher reflection. Parents were observed going through the portfolios and reading about the current project under investigation during arrival/ departure sessions. This provoked discussion regarding the inquiry project with the children and educators at the ELC.

An example of reflective practice was narrated by Linda, who had an inquiry project to explore on the endless possibilities of a table with a group of children. Another inquiry project on exploring the vegetable garden was being undertaken by Krystal at the same time. Linda had placed various items around the empty table. Some of the children were bringing these items to the table and that was an initial provocation. The collaboration between the two educators led to the merger of both these projects into one. Krystal focused on cooking and preparing food for the children. Linda focused on the ritual of laying a table, sitting around together and sharing a meal. Both the educators reflected on the ongoing project and discussed table etiquette with the children. This highlights the importance of reflective practice.

## Educators' Voices:

Kylie and her team of educators understand that pedagogical documentation contributes to reflective practice. The ELC initiated the concept of pedagogical documentation when Kylie shared her experiences after visiting Reggio Emilia. Kylie recalls:

*I saw a massive shift in the level of documentation in the centre and it was not just one educator making that shift, it was more a team orientation. We challenged ourselves to reflect about what the thinking and learning was within the experience, discussed about making learning and thinking visible and this year we have refined the concept.*

According to the ELC educators, pedagogical documentation should complement what the children are doing. Reflective practice was seen as benefitting children, parents and educators. Amelia remarked:

*Reflective practice meant for parents to be able to connect with what their children are learning, for children their interests are respected and they enjoy learning and for educators it helped them in their professional development and shows the child's voice and their achievements.*

The benefits of reflective practice for all stakeholders namely children, parents and educators, are evident in interviews. Krystal reflected on documentation and mentioned 'raw data' (work in progress) and the different ways of capturing children's learning. She commented:

*I do collect a lot of documentation, and it's quite raw, mixed with written-up documentation as well. I use the iPad in numerous different ways: photographs, take videos of children's learning, use iMovie to capture documentation of children's learning. For example, the Friendship Garden project was one of them. I had numerous methods of collecting that documentation, so had a folder with raw samples in it that then turned into a beautifully published book with the documentation in it. The children could see at the end of the project, it was extremely valued and they had it displayed as 'Friendship Quilt' at the annual Art Exhibition at the ELC (See Picture 4:8, below).*



**Picture 4:8: Friendship Quilt**

Anne reflected on children's portfolios, considering them a memory that can be re-visited again focusing on the process rather than end product. She remarked:

*It is a beautiful record of where the children are at this particular point in time and for them to take home, but it is a lot more than that because we focus so much on the process rather than the end product. We don't always document their final creation, sometimes it is more about how they are manipulating the play dough, what tools are being used, what they're talking about when they were doing the activity rather than actually what they created at the end.*

Kylie reflected on the advantages of pedagogical documentation for reflective practice. She noted:

*One of the advantages of documenting is to reflect in many ways. I feel that it is so important to have that communication with the team and observe everyone's perspective. I use it very much as looking at each individual staff member's journey, so that is a point of reflection. I also reflect about the practice of Wonder Wall and encourage other staff to have a go at using that, invite visitors to look at what they have done, what they are doing and reflecting. For the educators to be able to articulate as clearly as they can about why they document, and what they document conveys that they feel passionate about it and it's part of their everyday practice. They are all aware that they are all at different stages and that's okay.*

The ELC Director, while reflecting on the advantages of pedagogical documentation understands that team members are at different stages of professional development. Amelia stated that documenting children's practice has contributed to her educational practice. She remarked:

*Reflecting has helped me to become a better educator, especially when you have that time to step away and then reflect upon what happened before. I value the learning that is taking place, it complements the planning and leads me in my professional experience. The documentation folders are accessible to children, families and the educators and make their learning visible.*

Reflective practice helped educators plan activities based on children's interests. Krystal reflected that pedagogical documentation provides the basis for increased depth to reflective practice.

*Arts, literacy and numeracy activities are documented as I feel that it is so important to document children's many languages. We incorporate different avenues and methods for children to express their ideas and thoughts because everyone is different. We use our observations, the arts and the curriculum areas, the ICT to reflect on children's learning.*

Linda agreed with Krystal that pedagogical documentation assists reflective practice and described a process used by the team during staff meetings to elaborate:

*During staff meetings, we are given 10 minutes to reflect around the room, look at an image or ponder over some quotes or some of the things that the children have said. I believe that*

*pedagogical documentation makes children's thinking and learning visible, helps to set them up for success, they can engage within the space how they want, how best suits them.*

Reflective practice helps educators to put thoughts into perspective and pedagogical documentation complements their thinking. Anne agreed with other educators and emphasised the importance of documenting children's work:

*It is important to document their work as the educator can reflect on their work and know where to go next with them. It also gives children's work value, gives them a purpose as to what they are doing and then the potential to learn from each other.*

Educators stated that reflective practice helps the educator to take stock of children's learning and decide the next course of action regarding their learning.

### **View from the Literature**

The views on reflective practice expressed by educators resonate with the view from the literature on pedagogical documentation of Rinaldi (2006), Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2006) and Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013). Rinaldi (2006, p.100) states that pedagogical documentation is a tool for reflective practice and is a 'documentation of processes, not the end product'. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013, p.156) consider pedagogical documentation an important tool for 'reflective and democratic practice that contributes to self-reflexivity'. Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2006, p.11) state that 'pedagogical documentation is a tool to aid reflection' during an investigation of learning on what has happened by 'providing a memory' that can be re-visited.

#### **4.4.1 Image of the child**

##### **Researcher's Gaze:**

The first finding regarding the theme 'pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice' concerns the 'image of the child', a term used commonly by the Reggio Emilia educational project. Australian educators have strongly held ideas about the 'image of the child' and the environment designed in the ELC under study is centred on the strong, competent child. The educators supported this 'strong, competent child' and observed his/her learning through the process of pedagogical documentation.

During the ELC extension, the Kookaburra room children (4-year-old group) had been observing and documenting their theories. The provocative question that was put up was: Why would we want a 2-year-old room? My observation was of the Director showing the children the plans of the ELC extension and taking their ideas seriously. Some children wanted the 2-year-old room to enable their little brother/sister to join the ELC along with them. Some children wanted the 2-year old room to have '*long windows, so they could see outside*'. It was observed that educators took children's ideas to the architects designing the extension of the ELC. This indicates the rich 'image

of the child' held by the educators where they value the ability of a child to be capable of providing feedback on issues that are important and affect them.

### **Educators' voices:**

When asked about their ideas regarding the image of the child, Kylie reflected that:

*During a project, pedagogical documentation provides an incredible opportunity for children to re-visit and reflect which launches them into that next phase of thinking. It shows the level of learning and thinking that is going on in terms of participation by individual children as well as the whole group. And the questions, it's their voice, so pedagogical documentation actually allows the child's voice to be authentic and not the teacher's voice coming over the top of the child's voice. Thus, pedagogical documentation gives them the chance to go back and have a look at what their theory was, then put it to the test, and then come back and see whether they still hold the same view.*

Pedagogical documentation gives voice to the child, to express his/her point of view and test their theories and ideas during an inquiry project; thus, expressing their learning. As Amelia shared her image of the child she re-iterated a view of the child as competent. She remarked:

*My image of the child has been influenced by research and discussions from other educators. I am influenced by Carla Rinaldi, really see her as the voice of children and am inspired by how she uses specific words like seeing the child as resilient, as being very competent, as... not just seeing the child as a sponge, but seeing them as being very capable to make up their own theories and questions.*

Krystal supported Amelia's view that children have rights and responsibilities. She noted:

*I'm not looking down on the children because they're four; I think that they're very able. They've got the most amazing questions, just like you and I have great questions, and they need to be valued. I see myself as a learner with my students and consider them as citizens of today; they have rights and responsibilities, just like I do.*

The above statement demonstrates the different perspectives held by the educators. Krystal values the questions asked by children and sees herself co-constructing knowledge with them. Linda described her image of the incoming 2 year-old group as:

*I see the children as being completely capable and competent and that is a question that has been posed to me by various people now, the fact that I will be the key teacher with the two-year olds next year. So, for me I see, as all children being extremely capable and competent, just as I do the two-year olds. So, I've been quite shocked when people have said, 'What will you do?' And I said, 'What won't we do?' To me, we just continue with the learning that we do now. It is with a different age range but for me the learning still occurs.*

Anne's remarks were different to the other educators. She challenged the idea of the competent child by saying it sounds a bit 'average'. She stated that instead of using the common language associated with the image of the child, she prefers to view the child as rich in potential and full of possibilities. She remarked:

*At the moment, there seems to be a bit of a buzz phrase around the child being capable and competent and that is something that I do believe that the child is very capable. I do have a bit of a worry sometimes about the word competent, and to me it almost sounds a bit average, whereas I think I probably prefer to see the child as rich in potential and full of possibilities.*

So, the emphasis in Linda and Anne's comment demonstrates the richer 'image of the child' as opposed to the developmental perspective and relying on age related milestones.

### **View from the Literature**

Rinaldi (2006) and Gandini (2008) reiterate Malaguzzi's words that the child is strong, competent and full of potential. In the literature, many Australian scholars including Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2012), Millikan and Giamminuti (2014) have argued that in the Australian context, early childhood educators need to move their 'view of the child' from a purely developmental image to a more positive image of the child so that they can design programs that cater to that 'strong competent child'.

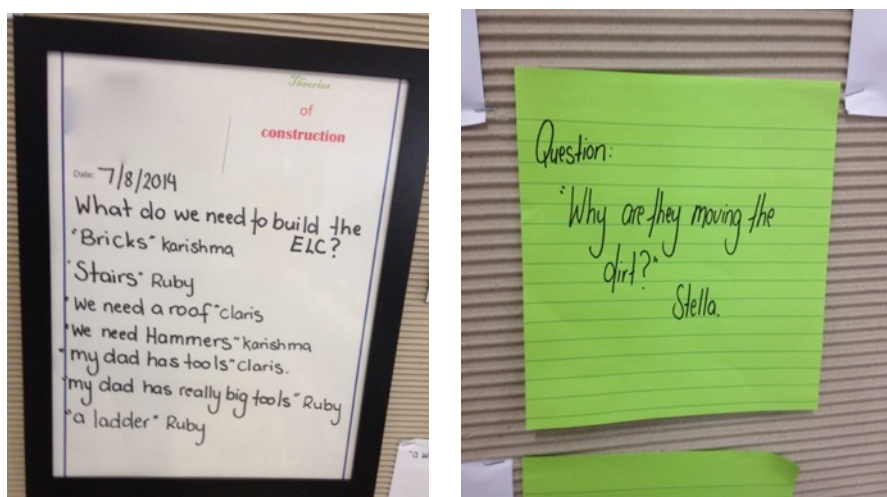
In support of this move, Millikan and Giamminuti (2014) noted that 'the view that children are active protagonists of their growth and development is endorsed in the EYLF' (DEEWR, 2009) as it allows educators to go beyond their pre-conceived notions of the child's capabilities (p.10).

#### **4.4.2 Provocation**

##### **Researcher's Gaze:**

The second finding around the theme 'pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice' relates to the concept and practice of 'provocation'. Provocation can be considered as a spark or an invitation or a starting point for pedagogical documentation and is one of the terms used by the Reggio Emilia educational project. For example, a question can be considered provocation not for getting the right answer, but depicting the educator's interest in observing children's theories. An educational setting can also be a provocation if the setting provides different and varied experiences. My observation revealed that pedagogical documentation offered different exposures and provocations on an almost daily basis. I observed provocative questions being placed on 'The Wonder Wall' and on Smart Boards early in the morning for the children to ponder and reflect upon, often based on the concepts that they were learning about. Then the educators built upon these and used digital technology to further document children's learning.

The educators used artefacts, such as children's portfolios and work samples, for provocations. For example the provocative question shown in Picture 4:9 was: 'What do we need to build the ELC?' This was placed on 'The Wonder Wall' in the Kookaburra Room (4-year-old group) to invoke children's interests and wonderings regarding construction activities at the ELC. The children came up with answers such as 'Bricks', 'Stairs', 'We need a roof', 'We need hammers'. ELC educators discussed the questions between themselves that they would be asking children during the project. Then, based on children's answers, ELC educators framed different provocative questions observing children's theories and ideas regarding different concepts. For example, the next provocative questions leading children's interest were: 'Why would we want a 2-year-old-room?' and 'Why are they moving the dirt?' This is also an example of how the educators used the process for reflective practice.



**Picture 4:9: Provocative Questions**

### **Educators' voices:**

For Kylie and her team pedagogical documentation often begins with a provocation. This could include artefacts, such as children's work samples in the portfolio, their theories about a concept or snippets of conversation. Amelia considers 'The Wonder Wall' itself as a provocation and stated that:

*The Wonder Wall is a great provocation because they see it all the time and it is the most visible and powerful example of pedagogical documentation's contribution to reflective practice.*

Krystal explained the beginnings of a provocation:

*It might start with a question or a wondering or might be something from home. It might have stemmed from a unit of inquiry or it could be a question posed by educators that has gone in numerous ways. Children's work is on display in the centre for some time and then it becomes a provocation for future learning. It is very important that educators ask provocative*

*questions during an inquiry project as it allows children to think and test their theories regarding different concepts.*

The educators understand the importance of asking provocative questions during an inquiry project to sustain children's interest. Linda proposed that pedagogical documentation begins with a provocation and provocative questions to children must be asked carefully:

*Pedagogical documentation is expanding on the initial provocations and getting into the layers, spending time and engaging with children and listening to what they are saying. Sometimes it may be a provocation from our observations, so we have noticed something going-on and then they provide the provocations, so then it is a two-way process.*

Thus, pedagogical documentation begins with a provocation leading children's interests. The educators reflected on the purpose of 'provocation' and focused on providing varied provocations for children's learning.

### **View from the Literature**

That the ELC educators discussed pedagogical documentation beginning with a provocation from the child or the environment resonates with the view from the literature. According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015), educators must place great emphasis on the use of open-ended provocative questions to begin the process of pedagogical documentation. According to Millikan and Giamminuti (2014, p.69), 'the terms 'provocation' and 'possibilities' are linked to the image of the child as a constructor of knowledge and creator of culture'. These authors noted that providing an environment that suggests creative ideas to children is both 'a provocation and a promise of possibility'.

According to Quinti, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015), educators need to identify the concepts that can emerge from a provocation and reflect on those that interests children. Quinti (personal communication, 2015) notes that discussion with colleagues should bring on 'hooks' between each other's vision and this way of working with adults is important, so ideas and difficulties as a group also emerge. Quinti (personal communication, 2015) stated that it is also important for educators to formulate questions during the learning experience. So the focus is on the process, not the product or outcomes of the moment. The questions we ask as adults are very important and help us to formulate the questions used with children. For example, 'Which group of children are you going to work with? How are we going to document photos/videos/conversations?'

### **4.4.3 Intentional Teaching**

#### **Researcher's Gaze:**

The third finding regarding the theme 'pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice' relates to the practice of intentional teaching. Intentional teaching is a pedagogical practice that 'involves



educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and action' (EYLF, DEEWR, 2009, p.15). Intentional teaching is different from teaching by rote and other traditional methods. It involves creating learning environments that are conducive to children's holistic development. The team of educators at the ELC was very candid when they expressed their views about intentional teaching. For example, during construction of the ELC extension, the educators intentionally listened to children's ideas, thoughts and concepts regarding constructing a new building. This was a demonstration of social construction of knowledge in both classrooms with 3-year olds and 4-year olds expressing their understanding of the construction process. This also brings into focus 'the image of the child', that this team of educators have - as strong and competent.

My observation of the teaching process was that the educators were intentional regarding several aspects of teaching practice. I observed them grouping children based on a common interest, skill or a concept that they wanted to develop in these children. They allowed for spontaneity. The key educator would sit down with the team and group the children, sometimes they were looking at friendships or individual needs. It was observed that the educators were also intentional about children building relationships with the educators, so children were at other times grouped to promote relationship building. The educators were intentional about including parents in the pedagogical journey, as they understand that pedagogical documentation can begin from home and good home-school relations benefit the child.

### **Educators' Voices:**

Kylie and her team of educators have discussions among themselves and listen attentively to each child. They reflected on the aspect of intentional teaching and noted:

*We also ensure not to miss a child in our project work and include them based on the child's interests. So we are intentional about including all children and that information gets transferred onto the profiles, which the teachers have on every child, with the learning goals they have constructed. So nothing is missed because there is one for every child.*

The educators have a process to include all children in inquiry projects. Anne reflected on intentional teaching remarking:

*Our observations are very planned and intentional, and then sometimes we're just capturing that magic moment that's happened that we document. That's really when it's coming from the children, so we have to go in with a plan, but I really prefer when it does end up coming from the children.*

The educators discussed that while they are intentional about teaching, at times they go with the spontaneity expressed by children. Krystal reflected on strategies involved during intentional teaching:

*During transition we are making sure the children that are staying are working to build their relationships with the educators, so making sure Amelia's taking a group that involves some of those children to support them in building stronger relationships.*

Amelia explained that the educators intentionally link children's learning and pedagogical documentation to the teaching-learning relationship:

*You wouldn't just do an experience just for numeracy unless you were really intentional in that. For example, if it's a group experience and they are singing a number song, we are intentionally teaching them numbers. They're also learning how to be part of a group, learning listening skills, practising their language. So we might link their documentation often to the Early Years Learning Framework.*

Thus, the educators consider intentional teaching as an important pedagogical practice.

### **View from the Literature**

According to Millikan and Giamminuti (2014, p.5), the relationship between intentional teaching and pedagogical documentation is 'evident in Rinaldi's emphasis on the teaching-learning relationship and the potential of pedagogical documentation to modify this relationship'. These authors state that the practice of intentional teaching ensures that children's learning experiences, the environment and the materials are rich and they allow for social construction of knowledge for all age groups. Millikan and Giamminuti (p.75) noted that 'the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) includes intentional teaching as an important pedagogical practice' and within the practice of intentional teaching, educators 'document and monitor children's learning' (p.15).

#### **4.4.4 Co-construction of Knowledge**

##### **Researcher's Gaze:**

The fourth finding regarding the theme 'pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice' relates to co-construction of knowledge. Co-construction of knowledge takes place when children learn together with adults, peers or the environment.

'The Wonder Wall' provides an example of the co-construction of knowledge as it represents the multiple theories and different ways that children think and their learning becomes visible and shareable. Co-construction of knowledge occurs when children build their theories with the educators. For example, during the inquiry project 'Watching Our ELC grow', the 3-year-old group children were observing and documenting the changes happening on the construction site. Their observations, predictions and hypothesis regarding the building construction led the educators to explore with children, how wood could be used in the building framework. The educators listened to children's hypothesis of observing wood shavings on the floor and encouraged them to come up with their own ideas. Later they gave children some play dough to use as an adhesive to build a framework with pop sticks and match sticks. The children tried balancing the pop sticks and added

more materials to have a roof on. The next stage was to test their predictions and the children were given sticky tape to create 2D or a 3D structure. Thus, it was observed that co-construction of knowledge took place as educators and children tried to understand the construction of a new building through their observations and interpretations.

### **Educators' Voices:**

Kylie and her team of educators stated that when they work with children co-construction of knowledge occurs:

*One of the biggest things that have helped us is realising and recognising that children learn side by side, so co-construction of knowledge takes place.*

When the educators observe that children learn 'side by side' they mean that children learn from and with each other. This signifies the importance of learning in a group. Amelia, describing her image of the child, feels that they are active researchers together. She remarked:

*I see the children as active researchers along with the teacher, not just us giving them (the children) information; we're finding out together.*

There was reference to co-construction where children are seen as active researchers and one can observe again the strong 'image of the child' as perceived by the educator. Krystal agreed with Amelia on co-construction of knowledge and remarked:

*When I come into the environment I always think of myself as an adult, then (sic) children and see everyone learning together. Yes, my role is to manage the duty of care and support, but at the same time we're all here together. I believe that co-constructing helps, so we might have a child that is very adept at something that we know the other children will learn from or similarly we might have some children who are so quiet, we will put them together so they actually have a chance to have their voice.*

Co-construction of knowledge helps the child to have a voice and express his/her opinion in the company of other children. Anne reflected on the use of co-construction as a purpose of pedagogical documentation:

*One of the purposes of pedagogical documentation is letting the children see their learning and referring back to it again and again and then co-constructing knowledge from that.*

Thus, pedagogical documentation contributes to co-construction of knowledge.

### **View from the Literature**

Pedagogical documentation allows educators and children to observe, interpret children's learning either in a group or individually. According to Millikan and Giamminuti (2014, p.12), 'children learn in social and cultural contexts, they learn from and with others and actively construct their learning as they interact with their environment'. These authors noted that learning constructed by the

group can be made visible through documentation tools (photos, audio-recording, video recording) and requires educators to see children as individuals in a group. The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) also encourages educators to 'see learning as a social activity and value collaborative learning and community participation' (p.14). Millikan and Giamminuti (p.13) further state that learning as a social activity can take place when there is a 'shift from individually focused observation and assessment to documentation of how learning occurs in groups'. Educators need to focus not on 'the skills of an individual child, but on documenting and interpreting the learning that takes place from children negotiating different points of view and theories about the world' (p.13), which is an example of how co-construction can occur.

In summary, the vignette and analysis of data highlights pedagogical documentation's contribution to reflective practice and included the educator's transition from traditional observation to pedagogical documentation. The educators reflected on the commonly used Reggio Emilia terms: provocation, image of the child, intentional teaching and co-construction of knowledge. The next vignette examines the third theme that emerged from the data, the role of pedagogical documentation in relation to professional development.

## **4.5 Pedagogical Documentation Leads to Professional Development**

### **A Vignette: The ELC Cubby House**

A cubby house was being installed in the outdoor play space of the ELC. Motivated by the news that they were to build a cubby house, many children were eager to share some of their ideas and begin designing the potential cubby house. The Kookaburra Room children created some designs for George (Roma's grandfather) to use during construction. The educators recorded their ideas on paper and presented them to George so he could consider and include them in the building process.

*'It will need a ding dong bell'- Ryan*

*'What about a flag on the roof?'- Chris*

*'And a window?'- Charlotte*

*'A Veggie patch next to it too'- Roma*

After showing the children the area where George would build the cubby house, Chris brought some large building blocks to the empty space. As Chris started building, Roma curiously joined his construction and offered her help by handing him the blocks. They began making a square shape for the walls.

*'We have to have a door and a window'- Roma*

*'It needs more blocks to be higher'- Chris*

*'Maybe it needs a kitchen'- Roma*

Chris and Roma thought that a rug would make a great roof. However, on discovering that it was not long enough, they placed heavy blocks on the corners to stop it from falling down. Picture 4:10 presents children's block construction of the cubby house.



**Picture 4:10: Children's Block Construction of the Cubby House**

*'Ding Dong, can I come in'? – Ash*

Soon other children began to enter the construction space adding little items to the cubby house. Ash brought some toys. After Chris designed the shape of the house, Roma decided she wanted 'a chimney with smoke coming out'. Roma drew a vegetable garden with pumpkins. The educators asked the children what they could put inside the cubby house. Lily wanted to design a table with 'lots of legs' in the corner of the room. Chris was interested in designing the structure and added some stairs and a fireman's pole 'to go down'. Later, he added some fans in case it gets hot inside and a flag to go on the roof.

Over a few days the children designed their individual cubby houses and offered some unique ideas. The educators gathered some children and presented them a provocation. Could we design a group cubby house to cater for all our ideas? Would it work? Provocative questions included:

What shape could our cubby house be? What does it need?

What could be put/built inside our cubby house?

What could be put/built on the outside of our cubby house?

The next step was a discussion about their ideas and what the children would like as a group. Amelia showed the children a selection of cubby house images and asked them to discuss what they like or did not like about them. Then the educators challenged the children to think about what a cubby house should look like. After showing the children some interestingly shaped cubby houses as shown in Picture 4:11, the children wanted to record their new ideas on paper.



**Picture 4:11: Cubby House Images**

Amelia decided that the children should transform their designs into 3D form using a new medium, fine moulding clay. To refresh their memory, Amelia showed the children the documentation folder containing their designs. Inspired, the children first began experimenting with the clay by getting used to the feel and texture. The children were provided some sculpting tools to sculpt with and Amelia encouraged them to use their hands for the majority of the design process.

Roma designed her '*chimney with smoke coming out of it*'. She also recreated her vegetable garden design. Ash wanted to re-create her previous cubby design exactly how she designed it, by sculpting a chimney and a ladder. Annabel enjoyed making her clay 'slippery' by adding lots of water. This made her clay easier to mould so she could make a '*tunnel house*' with lots of corridors. The educators reflected that clay is the perfect art material to encourage creativity in children as they are given the opportunity to think with their hands and to express freely. Picture 4:12 presents children's ideas of a cubby house using different mediums such as paper and moulding clay.



**Picture 4:12: Children's Ideas of a Cubby House Using Paper and Clay**

In summary, in the vignette 'The ELC Cubby House', the children shared their ideas and began designing the cubby house. The educators recorded children's ideas on paper and presented them to use for construction. The educators showed the children the area where they would build the

cubby house and the children decided to bring some blocks and construct their ideas with blocks. The children next designed their individual cubby houses and the educators presented them with a provocation regarding designing a group cubby house. The educators showed them a selection of cubby house images and challenged them to design a cubby house. The educators reflected on their ideas on paper and gave them some clay to transform their ideas into 3D form. It was further observed that the designs made by the children were implemented in the cubby house. Thus, children's ideas actually influenced the ELC cubby house.

The vignette 'The ELC Cubby House' presented the educators working as a team and reflecting on children's learning, which leads to professional development. The educators as a team discussed and reflected on the inquiry project and introduced different mediums, such as blocks, paper and pens and clay to explore the hundred ways that children express themselves. The finding of the theme 'pedagogical documentation leads to professional development' relates to the concept of 'the competent adult'.

### **Researcher's Gaze:**

The theme 'pedagogical documentation leads to professional development' was derived from the NVivo analysis. This was also the major message from the January 2015 Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour.

My observation was of the Director driving the concept of pedagogical documentation and inspiring the team to move forward and explore new ways of working with the concept of pedagogical documentation. In the team meeting at the start of the term, the educators discussed potential projects and everyone is aware that they will take responsibility for a project. The educators and co-educators discuss the different perspectives of pedagogical documentation, undertake supportive mentoring and work in partnership over a project.

The use of digital technology in documenting children's learning is gaining momentum and the educators used the technology innovatively for pedagogical documentation. The educators used iPads, videos of children's learning, photos of artwork and different Apps in their work.

The educators reflected that portfolios have always challenged them and their thinking, coupled with the pressure from parents in understanding what they are used for. My observation of the portfolios revealed that they provide an authentic means of displaying information for student profiles. The educators reflected that at times, it is challenging to make decisions about what to document in the portfolio. The educators are also aware that pedagogical documentation is someone's interpretation of a learning situation, so to ensure that it represents multiple points of view, the child needs to be seen from different perspectives.

## **Educators' Voices:**

Kylie and her educators articulated how pedagogical documentation leads to professional development of Early Childhood educators. Kylie reflected:

*When the National Quality Assessment assessed us in 2012, we were very influenced by policy and regulations. The criteria had to be evident, so if it wasn't evident then the assessor would ask the question, so we tried very hard to make sure that everything was evident without having to be asked. We began to rethink that the Assessors shouldn't have to ask us, it should be visible and they should be able to walk around and look at our documentation, which is in the portfolios, on the walls, in photographs, and say that we are meeting the National Quality Standards and should reflect the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Later when we were accredited by the Primary Years Program (PYP) accreditation, the assessors came in and we were very prepared with our documentation. The assessors that came around actually weren't keen to look at what we had put in the folders because their comment was 'it's oozing, it's oozing off the walls and oozing from the rooms'. That comment made us feel really good to have adhered to the national standards.*

The above comment is an example of the team working together to achieve a shared goal in having the centre accredited which led increased opportunities for the educator's professional development. The comment by the assessors 'it's oozing off the walls and the rooms' signifies that pedagogical documentation makes children's learning visible. Kylie expanded and presented another perspective:

*The vision for us is to keep on doing what we are doing at the moment, because we think that we are at a really strong stage with pedagogical documentation, and we need to ensure that. We believe that since pedagogical documentation of children's work is a critical aspect, the way to ensure its longevity and its future growth is to have the leadership structures in place. The direction we're going, and I think with the team we have, it's really exciting and dynamic and we're wanting to always explore and broaden our thinking and our understanding, working with like-minded colleagues, challenging ideas and the way we do things. So our vision is to educate our parents and our families to understand the direction we're taking.*

The Director and her team of educators have a strategy regarding how pedagogical documentation can be shared with parents. The team were asked how the roles are negotiated amongst educators and co-educators and they replied that:

*At the moment, it differs from term to term and year to year. We have small group work around an inquiry project, so we pool our documentation and put all the videos and photos together. The team meetings set up the opportunity for us to say what we would like to participate in terms of the documentation, where our skillset is and we help each other. We challenge each other, giving support and feedback and share our moments of triumph.*



The educator and co-educator work as a pair, supporting one another as well as having diverse views, an aspect really important in pedagogical documentation. When asked how educators manage the workload in terms of time, they replied that:

*We are trying to be savvy about what we are doing. When Krystal started doing the Veggie Patch project about growing vegetables we decided to put the photographs of the Wonder Wall in children's portfolios, rather than taking all the individual pictures down, scanning the images and typing the quotes. So though there is a massive workload, it is about being clever about using that and focussing on what is really valued by children and their families.*

The educators discussed being 'savvy' or in other words being smart about documenting children's learning. Amelia cited time, as a constraint regarding pedagogical documentation saying:

*I don't think we have time to say every single thing we're seeing. It is really one person's perspective so if there were more educators looking at something, they might see something you have missed. I think that pedagogical documentation benefits educators; we are always looking for ways to reflect on our practice and how we can improve, it is respecting our journey too and seeing 'Yeah, I used to do it that way; that way didn't work, this way was really good', I might use it again or I might change it up, so that reflects our purpose in what we do.*

Krystal reflected on her professional development and remarked:

*My first exposure was the traditional learning stories and when I went for a professional development seminar, I reflected on the question 'as your role as a teacher, what is happening?' That according to me was a bit of a light bulb moment and made me reflect 'what next?' I take the deep provocations brought about by Kylie after her Reggio Emilia visits very seriously. I have gone to the Reggio conferences and shared documentation stories with my colleagues.*

*The in-house professional development also is important to me and Kylie has given the team enough opportunity to share their experiences. I also get a lot of information on social media about pedagogical documentation. I feel that it is important to have pedagogical documentation to be visible, not just within the centre but to have it in the community and empower it. For example, I won't worry so much on what the children are drawing, that's not what's necessarily important to me; I want to hear what they talk to each other about when they're drawing', so I just make sure that if I think 'oh I really missed that', the next time I take them I'll be more focussed.*

Linda reflected on the camaraderie between colleagues:

*I consider using pedagogical documentation within the realms of professional development very helpful as it helps me to expand and then take it into a different direction that one might*

*not have thought of. There is a lot of dialogue with colleagues and we use each other to develop our skills and understanding.*

Anne has attended professional development seminars and been highly motivated by Kylie who shares books and readings about pedagogical documentation with staff and challenges them to do their best. Anne remarked:

*I have a system in my classroom on observational record of weekly observations. It has every child listed for the week and I see to it that every child's learning is observed once during the week. I consider time as a gap in pedagogical documentation and individual documentation might give way for group documentation. I believe that one of the challenges that we have is to understand, how children co-construct their knowledge.*

The educators reflected on the constraints, for example, the time factor identified in pedagogical documentation and decided to document inquiry projects in a group and leading to the educators' changed practice and professional development.

### **View from the Literature**

The educators' comments resonate with many views from the literature on the theme 'pedagogical documentation leads to professional development'. According to Paige-Smith and Craft (2007, p.163), 'professional development may involve the practitioner going beyond a demonstration of technical competence and being expected to engage in critical reflection'. This involves studying their own practice and the practice of other educators and critically examining the way educators respond to teamwork, leadership and working with children. Millikan and Giamminuti (2014) have also studied the relationship between documentation and the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009), bringing an awareness of documentation in an Australian context, thus leading to professional development of the educator.

### **The Competent Adult:**

#### **Researcher's Gaze:**

The finding from the theme 'pedagogical documentation leads to professional development' highlights the concept of the competent adult. The educators and Director are on a journey, each one in a different stage of understanding the opportunities that emerge from using pedagogical documentation. They are confident in themselves at the professional level and my observation revealed their vision of reaching out to parents and explaining the concept of pedagogical documentation and its purpose. They invited visitors to the ELC, to come and look at children's work or at how the educators have reflected on children's learning. There were many affirmations from visitors regarding the educators supporting children's 'hundred languages' of expressing themselves. During the project 'The ELC Cubby House', the educators were seen as competent adults presenting varied provocations to the children and asking questions while taking them

through their pedagogical journey. As competent educators, they listened to children and sustained their interest, reflecting about taking children's learning to a new level.

### **Educators' Voices:**

Kylie and her team of educators consider themselves a team of competent adults supporting the 'strong, competent child's' learning.

Amelia remarked that they are active researchers together:

*We learn off each other and we're there to support the children's interest. I think we are very intentional with some experiences, some activities for specific children and most of our experiences are created so they're very open-ended so that we're not staggering (sic) creativity in that sense. I see the adults being very confident and supportive of children's learning.*

Krystal supported Amelia's view and sees herself as a learner:

*I see myself as a learner along with the children and at times see myself as a facilitator. I believe that I have got some different resources and skills that I can offer, just as much as the children can offer.*

The educators see themselves as learners along with children depicting the strong 'image of the child' and of themselves. Linda sees herself as a lifelong learner and sees her role as growing and evolving, testing the theories put forth by children and reflected:

*I see we learn alongside with them, sometimes they're the expert. I am a capable adult person, but sometimes I'm not and I think that's okay. And sometimes you need to take that step back and we let the children guide us and allow the child to take over and we can sit back and watch them be the capable and competent person.*

Anne supports the view held by her colleagues that she is a competent educator:

*I have a lot of knowledge and I think I have a lot of skills and expertise in the area of education. I think I am definitely competent, but I'm also on a journey, which I'll be on forever, so I don't have all of the answers or all of the knowledge yet.*

The educator's comments provide evidence that they are a team of competent educators supporting the strong competent child.

### **View from the Literature**

Rinaldi (2006) and Gandini (2008) have discussed the concept of the 'strong competent adult' being required to work alongside the strong competent child. According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015), the competence of the child is directly related to the competence of the educator. The more power you give to the children, the more power you must give to the educator and the educator must support 'the hundred languages

of children'. Filippini (personal communication, 2015) further states that pedagogical documentation is a powerful tool for the educators to discover children's learning and 'helps educators to understand their role as an educator, to be a better educator'.

In summary, in this Australian site, pedagogical documentation leads to professional development of the educator. This finding focused on leadership driving the concept of pedagogical documentation that inspired the team and the use of digital technology to be more strategic regarding innovative ways of implementing pedagogical documentation. This requires the leader and educators to work in a collegial atmosphere and share their professional journey with parents and the wider community.

#### **4.6 Summary**

In this chapter, case study data was presented with a detailed account of pedagogical documentation in the ELC. The findings were triangulated using the three sets of data: vignettes of children are learning, interviews with the Director and the team of educators and observational data. The data was analysed drawing from the literature, using the three key themes: pedagogical documentation as an 'educational tool', for 'reflective practice' and in 'professional development' that emerged from the research. In the next chapter, these themes and research findings are discussed more fully.

## 5

# DISCUSSION

This research examined the role of pedagogical documentation in a Reggio Emilia-inspired Early Learning Centre (ELC) in Adelaide. In this chapter, the case study is discussed using the research questions as a frame. The chapter begins by considering the findings in relation to the central research question ‘What is the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool?’ This is followed by discussion regarding four more specific research questions:

1. How does pedagogical documentation contribute to reflective practice?
2. Why is it important to document children’s work?
3. What are some of the pedagogical practices used by teachers in documenting children’s work?
4. Who benefits from documenting children’s work?

The findings of this research study revealed that pedagogical documentation is an educational tool that builds reflective practice and leads to the educator’s professional development.

### **5.1 What is the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool?**

Pedagogical documentation, as practiced by educators in the ELC examined in this research, follows a social constructionist approach. The ELC educators are constructing meaning of children’s learning in a collective manner displaying a shared understanding. This is very similar with what I previously described with the Constructionist epistemology as my research on pedagogical documentation follows a social constructionist approach. According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015), a social Constructivist approach as defined by Vygotsky (1986) and Bruner (1996) views ‘knowledge as an interactive process that takes place in a particular context, which determines the quality of the process and is seen as a continuation of ideas’. Viewed from this perspective, Filippini (personal communication, 2015) states that pedagogical documentation helps educators ‘synergise the relationship between teaching and learning’.

Pedagogical documentation can be considered an educational tool that promotes the meaning-making competencies of children. In the ELC, it was observed that during an inquiry project the educators encouraged children to find meaning in their learning experiences. For example, in the vignette ‘Change is All Around Us’, the educators encouraged children to test their theories about frogs and tadpoles and helped them understand the life-cycle of a frog. According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015), ‘the central role of the adults is to activate, especially indirectly the meaning-making competencies of children as a basis for all learning’. Filippini (personal communication, 2015) states that this concept is very

similar to 'Bruner's theory, which states that the child tries to make meaning of the context and the place where he lives'.

The first finding regarding 'pedagogical documentation as an educational tool' relates to pedagogical documentation challenging the dominant discourses and being likened to rhizomatic thought, a Deleuze and Guattari (1987) concept where there is a 'multiplicity of interconnected thoughts in all directions' (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.117). In the ELC, it was observed that learning was not linear, but followed interests of the children. For example, this aspect was evident in all the vignettes 'Change is All Around Us', 'Watching Our ELC Grow' and 'The ELC Cubby House', presented in the research. Elaborating on this concept, pedagogical documentation offers the possibility of resisting common pedagogical practices and thinking of new ways to approach teaching and learning. It allows educators to teach according to child's interests rather than a prescribed curriculum.

In this study of pedagogical documentation, the role of *progettazione* (flexible planning) was evidenced. The case study revealed that the educators used *progettazione*, one of the principles of the Reggio Emilia educational project as described in (Morrow & Reggio Emilia. Nidi e Scuole dell'Infanzia, 2010, p.12). The vignettes showed that educators made flexible plans during the course of an inquiry project. For example, in the vignette 'The ELC Cubby House', the educators encouraged children based on their interest to first share their ideas on paper regarding a potential cubby house, facilitated children's block construction of the cubby house, offered provocation for children to design a group cubby house and challenged children's thinking regarding designing the cubby house on paper and clay. Educators in the ELC observed, documented and interpreted children's learning, taking children's learning to a new level.

The third finding regarding 'pedagogical documentation as an educational tool' is that in this site, pedagogical documentation is a tool to communicate with children, parents and the wider community. This concept is linked with another Reggio Emilia principle: 'Listening', which is a critical part of the communication process. ELC educators observed the Reggio Emilia principle of listening in their day-to-day work. For example, in the vignette 'Watching Our ELC Grow', the educators listened to children's hypothesis of observing wood shavings on the floor and how wood could be used and encouraged them to come up with their own ideas. The ELC educators listened to children's theories and concepts of their projects and encouraged children with ongoing dialogue and reflection. During the process of pedagogical documentation it is vital that educators actively listen to children, as supported by Rinaldi (2006), Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013), Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2012) and Millikan and Giamminuti (2014). This brings about communicating children's learning and sustaining interest in children's activities.

The case study revealed a relationship with another Reggio Emilia principle: 'The hundred languages'. ELC educators hold the perspective that the children possess 'a hundred languages', a metaphor Malaguzzi (1990) used to describe how children express themselves. This expression

was documented in all vignettes. At times children at the ELC became documenters themselves, expressing their learning in different ways. For example, in the vignette 'Frogs and Tadpoles', children documented their theories and findings by taking some pictures on the iPad. Communication and visibility is promoted when children express their learning through different mediums and avenues.

The issues that Alcock (2000) raised are evident in the research presented in this thesis. In relation to 'pedagogical documentation as an educational tool' the issue of the multiple audiences for pedagogical documentation became evident. Alcock asks the question 'who is the documentation for?' 'Is it the children, the educators, parents or the wider community'? My understanding of pedagogical documentation (children's theories, drawings, artefacts) is that it is presented democratically to all stakeholders, however different stakeholders interpret children's learning based on their own perspectives. Early childhood educators must reflect and question the accessibility of pedagogical documentation for multiple audiences.

The status of photographs and visual documentation raised by Alcock also arose in my research. In this research, photos and the educator's analysis/reflection were used to depict children's learning in place of the written observation reports raising questions about the role of visual documentation. My question is: Are photographs meant only for parents and the child? Educators rely on written observations to inform their planning and assessment. Could photographs of children's learning be used to inform planning? Photographs could be used to document children's learning, thereby fulfilling these and other purposes such as the Accreditation Assessor's criteria for documentation.

The issue of including children, as raised by Alcock, in the process of pedagogical documentation is a highly debatable one. My query is: Are children really included in the process of pedagogical documentation? When educators include children in the process of pedagogical documentation, it has a great impact on children's learning, thinking and behaviour. Children become aware of the process of pedagogical documentation by observing how educators use it to develop their learning. For example, by including children in selecting pictures for 'The Wonder Wall', the ELC educators created an opportunity to co-construct their learning.

The issue of including portfolios in the daily program raised by Alcock needs educators to reflect on their practices. From reading research, which describes this process, it appears that portfolios are usually compiled by the educator collating all the material an individual child has produced. Pedagogical documentation occurs when portfolios are compiled with children, rather than for children. Together educators and children select pictures and children's work for the portfolio, which include children's thoughts. This process saves time for educators and for children it serves as a memory of their learning experience.

In summary, case study findings revealed that pedagogical documentation is a rhizomatic educational tool giving voice to children's learning and provides an opportunity for co-constructing

their knowledge. Pedagogical documentation along with *progettazione* helps educators follow children's interests and scaffold their learning. Pedagogical documentation is linked with other Reggio Emilia principles: 'Listening' and 'The hundred languages' as it helps in the process of communication. The following section of the chapter responds to four specific research questions.

## **5.2 How does pedagogical documentation contribute to reflective practice?**

Case study participants indicated that pedagogical documentation contributes to reflective practice and benefits all stakeholders: children, parents, educators, policymakers and the wider community. This section analyses pedagogical documentation's contribution to reflective practice.

Reflective practice is considered a vital aspect of Early Childhood Education. The concept of reflective practice involves making meaning of children's theories and understandings of a concept, testing them through dialogue and listening, then re-constructing those theories. When early childhood educators reflect on their teaching practices, it leads to their professional development and enhances children's learning. In the ELC, it was observed that the educators challenged themselves to reflect on the teaching and learning taking place, creating opportunities to make learning visible for all the stakeholders: children, parents, the wider community, policymakers and themselves. For example, in the vignette 'Watching Our ELC Grow', the educators reflected on children's theories regarding the ELC extension, challenged children to create their own framework using play dough and pop sticks and provided opportunities for them to display their understanding of the construction process. Pedagogical documentation thus relies on the observer's insights, interpretations and explanations behind children's learning, promotes professional development and is a vital tool for reflective practice.

The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) acknowledges the importance of reflective practice. Millikan and Giamminuti (2014) linked the EYLF with pedagogical documentation intending that educators understand the concept behind 'belonging, being and becoming'. Pedagogical documentation is used to support relationships, develop the sense of identity and extends opportunities for children to transform themselves.

According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015) 'pedagogical documentation is a result of reflexivity and a testimonial to children's learning'. When pedagogical documentation is available to the child, he/she can question the educator. Filippini (personal communication, 2015) states as educators, one can identify the Vygotskian concept regarding the 'proximal zone of development' of the child. While working on an inquiry project, if the proximal zone is the same as the child's, this allows testing of whether children are challenged effectively. Filippini (personal communication, 2015) further iterates that theory and practice go hand in hand and reflection brought about by practice can change theory. When early childhood educators reflect, they bring different perspectives to the discussion.



It was observed in the ELC that when educators are working together, there are valuable opportunities 'to share perspectives and to compare interpretations' of children's learning (Paige-Smith & Craft, 2007, p.16). By reflecting in and on pedagogical practices, educators are 'opening up the possibility to direct their engagement and a commitment to development and change' (Paige-Smith & Craft, pp.16-17). Thus, pedagogical documentation gives educators an opportunity to form 'a community of practice' as defined by Lave and Wenger (1991) where they can share ideas, seek solutions and build good pedagogical practices. For example, the ELC educators and co-educators formed a 'community of practice' while reflecting on the gaps in pedagogical documentation such as time factor and how they could mitigate those gaps. This was evident in the interviews with the ELC educators within the case study context and a critical element that provided opportunities for professional development.

The educators were competent, curious, critical, subjective and listened to children, always concerned about taking children's learning to the next level, qualities essential for a reflective practitioner. Educators need to think about different perspectives while observing children's learning. Reflective practice gives educators an opportunity to share these perspectives with colleagues and parents. Another vital element required for reflective practice is 'relationships that support dialogue with other practitioners, children, parents and the wider community' (Moss, as cited in Paige-Smith & Craft, 2007, p. xv). Educators at the ELC have forged strong relationships with all the stakeholders and this was beneficial to everyone. For example, celebrations such as Father's/Mother's Day and Grandparents Day were held at the ELC, fostering the value of relationships.

Educators at the ELC shifted from 'everyday thinking to other levels that involve critical insight, theoretical knowledge or a deeper understanding' of different materials used in the environment (Paige-Smith & Craft, 2007, p.28). For example, this aspect of educator reflection was observed in all the vignettes where the ELC educators reflected on children's learning on a daily basis and the materials used in the environment. This is in accordance with van Manen's (1977) four levels of reflection where the shift in focus was from the literal/immediate to the abstract/conceptual reflection. Educator reflection on pedagogical practice facilitates their understanding of practice and along with pedagogical documentation can develop and improve practice. Pedagogical documentation can help educators plan activities based on children's interests and assess children's learning in terms of meaning making.

Pedagogical documentation can be a useful process for opening up multiple ways of interpreting children's learning. Educators at the ELC had different perspectives and multiple readings regarding pedagogical documentation. This resonates with Derrida's deconstruction theory (1997) and the notion of deconstructive talk. Derrida (p.37) explains the meaning and aim of deconstruction is to show that 'things, texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs and practices do not have definable meanings, each time you try to stabilise the meaning it slips away'.

MacNaughton (2005, p.78) noted that deconstruction could be a way to examine how our language choices in Early Childhood can impact power relations. At the ELC, the educators challenged their own thinking and through reflective practice, transformed their pedagogical practices. For example, the ELC educators' ideas on pedagogical documentation evolved as they reflected on this concept. During staff meetings, the ELC educators are given an opportunity to deconstruct their beliefs and pedagogical practices regarding children's learning as part of their reflective practice.

Pedagogical documentation is a process for examining the minor politics of pedagogical work (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.156). The idea of 'minor politics' is a concept created by Deleuze and Guattari (as cited in Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.137). According to Dahlberg and Moss (p.156) major politics takes place at the local authority level and provides space for minor politics in individual preschools. Educators at the ELC practiced pedagogical documentation as an 'exercise in critical thinking where conflict and disagreements are welcomed', thereby becoming a process for practicing minor politics (Dahlberg & Moss, p.157). Thus, pedagogical documentation makes learning visible, but from the political perspective it makes learning visible to 'interpretation, critique and argumentation' (Dahlberg & Moss, p.157). For example, the educators at the ELC reflected that the child has to be observed from various viewpoints; so critical thinking was welcomed as a part of their reflective practice.

The first finding regarding 'pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice' relates to Reggio Emilia principle of the 'image of the child', the cornerstone of the Reggio Emilia approach. This principle asserts that children are active protagonists in their growth and development process. The ELC educators reflected on the 'image of the child' and how this was supported by positive relationships shared between the staff, children and parents. The ELC educators had a positive image of the child as strong, competent, inventive and full of potential and the inquiry projects designed by the educators reflected this image. The vignettes 'Change is All Around Us', 'Watching Our ELC Grow' and 'The ELC Cubby House' reflected the educators' image of the child, shaping the environment and learning activities available for the competent child. This demonstrates the positive image of the child held by the educators, as opposed to a developmental image, and allows educators to go beyond pre-conceived notions of children's capabilities.

The second finding regarding 'pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice' is concerned with 'provocation'. For the ELC educators, pedagogical documentation began with a provocation and offered different provocations to children on a daily basis. This is linked with the strong image of the child as held by the educators. During an inquiry project, provocative questions offer an invitation to children to begin their enquiries regarding a concept or to test their theories. The focus of provocation was on the process of learning and not the end product. Provocation also brings about intentional teaching when educators introduce many possibilities for children to express their learning.

The third finding regarding 'pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice' relates to the importance of 'intentional teaching'. The ELC educators practiced intentional teaching to group children according to their needs or develop relationships with the educators. Educators intentionally involved parents in their pedagogical journey. This demonstrates the potential of pedagogical documentation to transform the teaching-learning relationship when parents and educators collaborate to foster children's learning. Pedagogical documentation gives opportunities for extending children's learning experiences, setting up a rich environment and building relationships. The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) endorses the practice of intentional teaching which leads to children co-constructing knowledge.

The fourth finding regarding how 'pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice' concerns the co-construction of knowledge. This finding is related to the Reggio Emilia principle: Learning as a process of individual and group construction. The importance of co-construction of knowledge and how working together in a social environment can further understandings and skills were highlighted in the vignettes. The ELC educators stressed the importance of co-construction of knowledge and gave children ample opportunities to learn together as a group. Pedagogical documentation gives opportunities to observe children's learning individually or in a group. The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) also recognises children's co-construction of knowledge as an important element in the learning process. MacNaughton (2005, p.130) documents the potential dangers of giving voice to young children as it raises questions about relative power between children and between children and adults. Early childhood educators must be sensitive to providing opportunities for all children to interact and learn. This includes being reflective about incorporating equitable practices in the centre.

The issues that Alcock (2000) raised are relevant in the research presented in the thesis. In relation to 'pedagogical documentation as contributing to reflective practice', the role of individual documentation versus group interactive learning is evident. It was observed in this research that ELC educators faced a dilemma regarding individual documentation in a child's portfolio especially when they work on a group inquiry project. This is due to parental expectations of seeing their child's work in children's portfolios as opposed to seeing the group's learning. The educators at the ELC focused on group interactions, the co-construction of knowledge and examined their role in the learning process.

The issue of legitimising unwritten observations raised by Alcock requires educators to reflect on their practices. From research conducted for this study, I have observed that pedagogical documentation provides a basis for dialogue and reflection, inviting ELC educators to express their unwritten observations and educator talk as pedagogical conversations. These pedagogical conversations can function as an important aspect of educators reflecting on their 'everyday practices'.

The issue of pedagogical documentation creating different images for different audiences raised by Alcock, is an issue that needs attention from the educator. My understanding is that educator awareness of the different messages their documentation may convey to different audiences, for example the stakeholders: parents, children and the community is important. Different stakeholders will interpret the meaning conveyed by the documentation differently. Pedagogical documentation brings into focus the different elements such as the educator's image of the child and how co-construction of knowledge takes place.

In summary, case study findings revealed that 'pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice' and benefits all stakeholders. This finding makes explicit the four concepts of the Reggio Emilia approach that are vital to reflective practice: '**image of the child**', '**provocation**', '**intentional teaching**' and '**co-construction of knowledge**' (Morrow & Reggio Emilia. Nidi e Scoule dell'Infanzia, 2010). Findings from this research revealed that pedagogical documentation complements children's learning, when educators have a strong image of the child. Pedagogical documentation begins with a provocation that offers possibilities for expanding children's learning. Educators use intentional teaching to scaffold children's learning to a new level leading to co-construction of knowledge. Pedagogical documentation is linked with other Reggio Emilia principles: 'Children are active protagonists of their growth and development processes' and 'Learning as a process of individual and group construction'. The next section focuses on the three specific questions formulated for this research that frame the finding: pedagogical documentation leads to the educator's professional development.

### **5.3 Why is it important to document children's work?**

Pedagogical documentation practiced in the ELC benefitted all the stakeholders: children, educators, parents, policy makers and the wider community. The importance of documenting children's work is dependent on the function it provides for each stakeholder group.

Pedagogical documentation was beneficial to children in the ELC as it allowed children to re-visit their learning and gave them a voice in co-constructing knowledge with the educator. It helped educators to scaffold children's learning during an inquiry project. The ELC educators practiced intentional teaching to allow children's learning to occur at their own pace while fostering relationships with educators and other children. Thus, the pedagogical documentation process helps educators challenge children's learning, thereby facilitating children's holistic development.

According to ELC educators, it was very important to document children's learning. They reflected that pedagogical documentation helped educators observe children's interests and take learning to its next level. The educators observed that learning should take place both individually and in groups. The three data sets: vignettes, observation, interviews/ focus group interview showed that the educators allowed concepts of 'co-construction', 'participation' and 'reflective practice' to permeate their pedagogical practices. Pedagogical documentation can be a valuable advocacy tool

when educators depict children's learning, thus raising awareness for the Early Childhood profession.

In the ELC, pedagogical documentation helped make children's learning visible and shareable to parents and the wider community, thereby maintaining collaboration with parents. For example, through the display of materials in the centre, project portfolios, 'The Wonder Wall' and communication between the centre and home, parents and the wider community were aware of the learning process. This resulted in a shared understanding between educators and parents regarding children's learning. Pedagogical documentation helps parents to comprehend the meanings that children discover in their daily life.

Pedagogical documentation showcases children's learning to policy makers and assessors in Early Childhood Education. It was observed in the ELC, that when learning is visible in the form of 'The Wonder Wall' or children's portfolios, terms such as learning outcomes and accountability become authentic. Pedagogical documentation shifts the focus from learning outcomes to meaning making competencies of children, thus providing different measures of assessment.

According to Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013,p.161), using pedagogical documentation educators can identify and visualise the 'dominant discourses' and regimes, which exercise power. Pedagogical documentation is seen as a 'tool for opening up a critical and reflective practice' (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence,p.160). It allows the educator to see his/her practices as socially constructed and gives the opportunity to challenge the dominant discourses and be self-reflexive. That means the educator takes control over his/her thinking and practices and is 'being governed less by disciplinary power' (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence,p.161). For example, in the ELC, it was observed that educators were self-reflexive, critically reflecting on their practices and had control over their thinking. This gave them the opportunity to try innovative ways such as using technology to document children's learning.

In summary, pedagogical documentation is a multi-faceted tool, beneficial to all the stakeholders: children, educators, parents, policymakers and the wider community.

#### **5.4 What are the some of the pedagogical practices used by teachers in documenting children's work?**

Educators at the ELC have implemented some key pedagogical practices that provide a structure for learning and by documenting children's work in many ways they are able to use this process for professional development. The pedagogical practices include *progettazione* (flexible planning), 'provocation' during project investigation, having a strong image of the child and of themselves as educators, 'intentional teaching' and 'co-construction of knowledge'.

The ELC educators have also used digital technology in the form of cameras, video cameras and various Apps to document children's learning. Forman (2012,p.353) states that 'the

democratisation of documentation through digital video will accelerate the construction of good practice even as that practice is adapted to other cultures’.

‘Pedagogical documentation leads to professional development’ is the third finding that has emerged from this phenomenological research study. Professional development is one of the Reggio Emilia principles linked with pedagogical documentation, as described in (Morrow & Reggio Emilia. *Nidi e Scuole dell’Infanzia*, 2010,p.13).

*Professional development is characterized as a process aimed at building understanding and awareness of the meanings and methods of education, the central qualifying points of the educational project, and the specific competencies of the various professional roles.*

Pedagogical documentation allows early childhood educators to reflect on their practices and construct meaning through their experiences, thus building professional development. Educators at the ELC conceptualised pedagogical documentation as a tool for reflective analysis of children’s learning. It allowed them to view their own practice and see different perspectives of children’s learning. It gave them the answer to ‘How do I take this learning to the next level?’ This research found that the participants actively recorded what they viewed as important reflections of their practice via a personal notebook or notes on an iPad. They were motivated to implement innovative pedagogical practices. The opportunities for educators to engage with diverse pedagogical practices enhanced their professional development.

In this study, co-educators extended the idea of ‘journaling’ their best practices as a part of professional development. According to Reed (2007,p.165), the concept of journaling began from maintaining a diary used by philosophers to enhance their creativity and professional practice. Cooper and Stevens (2005) suggest that journals can be used to discuss about work and life experiences, to organise their work experience, to update journal-keeping practices and to review and reflect on career goals. The educators see journaling as life-long learning, vital to professional and reflective practice. For example, the educators at the ELC have a project book or a folder where they jot down information regarding their documentation and the iPads are used to take a video or a photo to support their documentation.

When exploring the idea that ‘pedagogical documentation leads to professional development’, it also makes the ‘image of the adult’ explicit. The educators at the ELC stated that pedagogical documentation helped them reflect on the premises of how they worked. The ELC educators reflected about the proximal zones of development for each child, researched what to observe and the types of documentation that they would like to create. The educators re-formulated their questions as an inquiry project progressed, finding different strategies with an intentional objective regarding children’s learning.

According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015) pedagogical documentation is considered professional development if it fulfils three criteria:

firstly, being an important tool for professional development, secondly being an instrument to work and a way to design the project and thirdly as a process to communicate. Educators at the ELC considered pedagogical documentation as an educational tool, reflected on pedagogical documentation as a manner of researching with children and communicated children's learning with other children, parents and the wider community. For example, the centre hosted 'professional development sessions' and several information sessions for parents to showcase and communicate their pedagogical journey with other educators and the community.

The educators had been teaching in the Early Childhood sector for considerable time before they joined the ELC. Kylie, the Director, had been to Reggio Emilia, Italy and was inspired by the preschools there. Kylie's drive and provocation led the educators to join her on this pedagogical journey. The ELC educators were approaching documentation differently prior to their professional learning about pedagogical documentation. When the ELC educators started following some of the Reggio Emilia principles, their perceptions changed regarding documentation and they tried innovative ways of documenting children's learning. This resonates with Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory (as cited in Taylor & Cranton, 2012,p.5). The Transformative Learning theory articulates the transformative power of pedagogy, in this case the Reggio Emilia educational project and 'how adults learn, transform and develop'. This theory is used to explain how the ELC educators changed their pedagogical practices regarding pedagogical documentation.

Mezirow (p.84) states that 'learning occurs in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, learning new frames of reference, transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind'. For change to be made to practice, the adult needs to move from formative outer-determined learning to inner-directed transformative learning. Pedagogical documentation helps early childhood educators become aware of the process of documentation, change their pedagogical practices and transform their thinking. Thus the educator critically reflects on their assumptions and this leads to the educator's professional development.

In summary, the key practices used by ELC educators, such as *progettazione*, intentional teaching and use of digital technology, promoted educator's professional development. The educators had a positive image of the child and of themselves facilitating co-construction of knowledge. Pedagogical documentation complemented the key practices used by educators to make children's learning visible and shareable to all stakeholders. Filippini (personal communication, 2015) discusses about the competent teacher and the theories of Mezirow (1991) were examined to understand professional development of the educator.

## **5.5 Who benefits from documenting children's work?**

Documenting children's work benefits all stakeholders: children, parents, educators, policymakers and the wider community, but it is the child who benefits most. In the ELC, it was observed that pedagogical documentation, as practiced by educators, was beneficial to children by, scaffolding

their learning. There was no pre-determined developmental checklist of children's learning categorised into different domains of learning, such as physical or social, prevalent in many contemporary Early Childhood Education centres. At the ELC, educators could discover children's interests in the various inquiry projects they had designed and proceed from there. Thus, pedagogical documentation allowed educators to reflect in and on their pedagogy and take children's learning to its next level.

According to Alcock (2000) the Reggio Emilia principle of pedagogical documentation is not a new concept. Alcock noted that Bateson, Isaacs and Dewey also promoted similar ways of documentation prior its promotion and use in the Reggio Emilia approach. My understanding is that early childhood educators need to be aware that it is not a new fad of the 90s, but is sound educational practice, which has been researched and practiced for many years.

A further concern is that educators taught how to observe traditionally in universities face a dilemma when they encounter pedagogical documentation. Thus, it is recommended that policy makers and academics consider introducing a course component on pedagogical documentation in Early Childhood teaching programs to ensure that students are made aware of this enriched approach. For some early childhood educators, there can be a tension between a focus on objective observation versus subjective observation amid much debate about the relative merits of each. From research conducted for this study, it was evident that pedagogical documentation teaches educators that observations are never objective, rather observations are subjective and bring about the observer's theories, beliefs and attitudes.

Children's consent to participate in research is a highly contested and debated issue. Throughout this research project I have thought about whether children can or should give consent for research or for participating in an inquiry project? Robertson and Chessemann (2006) question about a child's right and give capacity to give consent to participate in pedagogical documentation. Educators need to think deeply and be reflective about children agreeing to participate in a research project. Issues of privacy and using pseudonyms for the centre and children are considerations that need careful contemplation in Early Childhood Education research.

The finding that 'pedagogical documentation leads to professional development' is also related to another Reggio Emilia principle: 'Organisation'. Documentation materials such as photographs, children's portfolios and thoughts regarding concepts of the inquiry project put up on 'The Wonder Wall', assume an identity of their own. Lenz Taguchi (2010, p.65) states that based on Barad's thinking, an observer and the apparatus for observation form a relationship that is intra-active. Viewed from this perspective, pedagogical documentation is a tool for observation and is thus seen as an intra-active pedagogy. Lenz Taguchi (p.90) notes that the tool of pedagogical documentation 'has two different methodological movements: circular and horizontal in relation to non-linear or progressive ways of understanding time'. The circular movement signifies slowing down the speed of the learning process whereas the horizontal movement signifies speeding up and each operates



almost at the same time (Lenz Taguchi, p.99). In the ELC, it was observed that educators slowed down the learning process or at times created spaces for innovative ideas.

In summary, documenting children's work benefits all stakeholders: children, parents, educators, policymakers and the wider community. The concept of pedagogical documentation is simple: 'making learning visible, subject to research, dialogue, reflection and interpretation, but its application is anything but simple. It acknowledges and welcomes subjectivity, diversity of position and multiple perspectives and thus values plurality' (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. xiii). As Lenz Taguchi notes, 'it produces different kinds of knowledge depending on the ontological and/or epistemological perspectives we bring with us in our usage of it' (p. xiii).

## **5.6 Summary**

This case study of a Reggio Emilia-inspired centre in South Australia aimed to examine the principle of pedagogical documentation practiced in a local context. Contemporary researchers and thinkers in the field of Early Childhood Education, such as Rinaldi (2006), Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013), Millikan and Giamminuti (2014), Fleet, Patterson and Robertson (2012), and Lenz Taguchi (2010), have contributed to understanding this Reggio Emilia principle. The works of theorists and philosophers, such as Derrida (1997), Deleuze and Guattari (1987), van Manen (1977) and Mezirow (1991) were studied to acquire a deeper understanding of pedagogical documentation. This principle of the Reggio Emilia educational project, pedagogical documentation, is inter-related with other Reggio Emilia principles as revealed in the case study. Research findings revealed that pedagogical documentation is considered an educational tool that contributes to reflective practice and leads to professional development of educators in this Australian early childhood setting.

## 6

# CONCLUSION

This research examined the Reggio Emilia principle of pedagogical documentation through a case study of an Early Learning Centre in Adelaide. The thesis examined pedagogical documentation using an interpretivist approach. Research outcomes provided evidence that pedagogical documentation is a multi-faceted educational tool used in one site in South Australia. In this chapter, the first section addresses the purpose of the research followed by a summary of the final analysis. In the second section, research outcomes are examined in relation to pedagogical documentation. The final section includes limitations of the research followed by recommendations for further research.

### 6.1 Revisiting the Research Purpose

This case study research investigated the role of pedagogical documentation in one site in an Australian Early Childhood setting. The research builds on the literature regarding the Reggio Emilia principle of pedagogical documentation in that it provides an example of its use in South Australia.

The central question underpinning this research is:

#### **What is the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool?**

The study was guided by the following specific questions:

1. How does pedagogical documentation contribute to reflective practice?
2. Why is it important to document children's work?
3. What are some of the pedagogical practices used by teachers in documenting children's work?
4. Who benefits from documenting children's work?

In order to obtain the answers to these questions, a phenomenological methodology was implemented. Direct observation, artefacts, interviews with four early childhood educators and a focus group interview with the Director and staff were the methods of data collection. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data using NVivo 10 (QSR International). Consequently, research findings were presented according to themes that emerged from data analysis.

## 6.2 Summarising the Research Findings

Data analysis resulted in a number of emergent themes related to pedagogical documentation. The structure of the themes are based on NVivo coding. The emergent themes are:

1. Pedagogical documentation as an educational tool
2. Pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice
3. Pedagogical documentation leads to professional development

### Theme 1- Pedagogical documentation as an educational tool

Pedagogical documentation as practiced in the ELC is considered an educational tool as it highlights three key relationships. The first relationship relates to pedagogical documentation challenging the dominant discourses and being likened to rhizomatic thought, a Deleuze and Guattari (1987) concept where there is a 'multiplicity of interconnected thoughts in all directions' (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.117). Pedagogical documentation offers the possibility of resisting common pedagogical practices and thinking of new ways of approaching teaching and learning. It allows educators to teach according to the child's interest rather than a prescribed curriculum.

The second relationship that can be affirmed at this site in South Australia is related to *progettazione*, which emerged as an important aspect of pedagogical documentation in the study. According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour, January 2015), *progettazione* refers to the process of planning and designing learning activities and the environment by making flexible plans for investigation of children's ideas and interpreting these ideas in collaboration with the children, parents and community. The relationship between *progettazione* and pedagogical documentation is based on some methodological steps, namely hypothesis, observation, interpretation and re-launch (new hypothesis). This process is circular and not linear, so the process of investigation can continue whilst the children's interest is sustained.

The third relationship that is conveyed is that pedagogical documentation is 'a tool used as a process to communicate' that allows educators to communicate with all stakeholders: children, parents, policy makers and the community. The aspect of communication is central to the work in Reggio Emilia and its interpretation in this site is being shared. Communication involves the Reggio Emilia principles of 'Listening' and 'The hundred languages' that are utilised by educators in the process of pedagogical documentation. When educators listen to children's theories and concepts, they ask provocative questions and take them to their next level of learning. Pedagogical documentation allows children to express their learning through 'The hundred languages', the metaphor used by Malaguzzi (1990) to explain how children express themselves using visual,

verbal and kinaesthetic senses. Thus, pedagogical documentation gives voice to children and challenges their learning by spreading learning opportunities through a range of processes.

In summary, the words of Malaguzzi (1990) remind us:

### **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 marvelling, 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.

### **Theme 2- Pedagogical documentation builds reflective practice**

Pedagogical documentation contributes to reflective practice. This finding makes explicit four elements of the Reggio Emilia approach that are important in reflective practice: 1) the image of the child held by ELC educators, the educators beginning pedagogical documentation with a 2) provocation, leading to 3) intentional teaching and the 4) co-construction of knowledge (Morrow &

Reggio Emilia. *Nidi e Scuole dell'Infanzia*, 2010). This finding thus illustrates two other Reggio Emilia principles: Children are active protagonists of their growth and development process and Learning as a process of individual and group construction.

The first element relates to the 'image of the child'. The image of the child as perceived by ELC educators is 'positive: strong, competent and full of potential', as described by Malaguzzi (1993, p.10) and is reflected in the projects and activities designed for the children. This allows educators to go beyond pre-conceived notions of children's capabilities.

The second element relates to the use of 'provocation'. Pedagogical documentation at the ELC begins with a provocation that comes from the child, educator or environment. The educators reflected and identified the concepts that emerged from a provocation. According to Filippini, (personal communication, Reggio Emilia Study Tour, January 2015), the discussion with colleagues on framing questions during the learning experience is important. The questions that educators ask are important to formulate provocative questions for children.

The third element is the use of 'intentional teaching'. The ELC educators practiced intentional teaching such as grouping children for different activities based on their interests, individual needs or to establish a relationship with educators. This brings about a change in the teaching-learning relationship and leads to educators facilitating children's learning and allows for co-construction of knowledge.

The fourth element relates to the 'co-construction of knowledge'. Pedagogical documentation helped ELC educators reflect on children's learning. There is co-construction of knowledge when educators and children reflected on different issues while working on an inquiry project.

When ELC educators reflected on their pedagogical practices, they challenged themselves to reflect on the teaching and learning taking place, creating opportunities to make learning visible for all the stakeholders: children, parents, the wider community and themselves. Pedagogical documentation thus relies on observer insights, interpretations and meanings to make children's learning visible and is a vital tool for reflective practice. Educators at the ELC reflected on children's learning on a daily basis, shifting their everyday thinking to critical thinking. This is in accordance with van Manen's (1977) four levels of reflection that focuses from 'literal/immediate to the abstract/conceptual reflection'. Educator reflection on pedagogical practices enabled them to enhance their understanding and build on them.

Pedagogical documentation as observed in this case study is also seen as a process for opening up multiple ways of interpreting children's learning. At the ELC, educators challenged their thinking and through reflective practice, changed their pedagogical practices. This resonates with Derrida's Deconstruction Theory (1997) and the notion of deconstructive talk, based on the idea that

practices and beliefs do not have definable meanings and that meaning is arbitrary rather than fixed.

Educators at the ELC practiced pedagogical documentation and reflected that the child had to be observed from various perspectives. Critical thinking was welcomed as a part of their reflective practice and this became a process for practicing 'minor politics', a concept introduced by Deleuze and Guattari (as cited in Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.137). It can then challenge dominant discourses and policy frameworks. Thus, pedagogical documentation builds the educator's reflective practice.

### **Theme 3 - Pedagogical documentation leads to professional development**

The theme 'pedagogical documentation leads to professional development' was the major message from the January 2015 Reggio Emilia Intensive Study Tour.

Pedagogical documentation is a tool to increase professional development. When educators reflect on the process of pedagogical documentation, they interpret children's learning and share their understanding with colleagues. This provides the educators an opportunity for their professional development. This finding makes explicit the element that relates to the 'image of the adult'. ELC educators consider themselves as competent adults, listen to children, sustain children's interest in different inquiry projects and take children's learning to its next level. They place emphasis on relationships and use technology in their pedagogical practices.

The ELC educators were documenting differently prior to implementation of pedagogical documentation. The changes that occurred can in part be explained by Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (Taylor & Cranton, 2012, p.5), which articulates the transformative power of pedagogy. Mezirow's theory is based on the constructivist approach to adult learning. Within Transformative Learning Theory, there are two frames of reference provided by a 'habit of mind' and 'points of view'. According to Mezirow (2012, p.83), 'habit of mind is a set of assumptions that are broad, generalized and act as a filter for interpreting experience'. A 'point of view is a cluster of meaning schemes, a set of specific beliefs, feelings, attitudes and judgment' that are changed easily, as they are influenced by the acquisition of new skills or information (Mezirow, p.84). Pedagogical documentation can be seen from a perspective where the educators were learning an innovative way of documenting children's learning. They may be learning in one of four ways: elaborating existing frames of reference, learning new frames of reference, transforming points of view or transforming habits of mind.

This finding also illustrates two other Reggio Emilia principles: 'Organisation' and 'Environment, spaces and relations'. According to Lenz Taguchi (2010, p.65), 'pedagogical documentation is seen as an intra-active pedagogy'. This draws from Barad's thinking that an observer and apparatus for observation form a relationship that is intra-active. Documentation material including

photographs, notes and video recording assume its own identity and interact with other materials, such as children and concepts. Lenz Taguchi (p.90) further iterates that the tool of pedagogical documentation 'has two different methodological movements: circular and horizontal in relation to non-linear or progressive way of understanding time'. The circular movement signifies slowing down, whereas the horizontal movement signifies speeding up and both operate almost at the same time (Lenz Taguchi, p.99) Pedagogical documentation allows the educator to slow down the learning process or speed up creating spaces for innovative ideas.

Based on the research findings, the premise of this thesis is:

Pedagogical documentation is a multi-faceted educational tool in Early Childhood Education, used by educators in this South Australian site for reflective practice and professional development. In the ELC, pedagogical documentation makes children's learning visible, transparent, giving a voice to children as co-constructors of knowledge. The case study provides evidence that pedagogical documentation offers the possibility of resisting common pedagogical practices and thinking of new ways to approach teaching and learning. It has been evident that the rhizomatic characteristic of pedagogical documentation is very similar to the 'tangle of spaghetti' metaphor coined by Malaguzzi to describe his idea of knowledge. The rhizome is a metaphor that aptly describes the concept of pedagogical documentation as non-linear and following the interests of children. In this study, pedagogical documentation was beneficial to parents as they visualised children's learning and in collaboration with the educators could take children's learning to its next level. The study provides evidence that for policy makers, pedagogical documentation could be a tool to assess children's learning.

### **6.3 Research Outcomes**

This section outlines the research outcomes. This research has the potential to assist early childhood educators in Australia understand one of the key aspects of pedagogical documentation. The focus of the research is that 'documentation of children's work builds reflective practice' and its role in Early Childhood Education. In the context of the ELC, the research has answered the main research question: What is the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool? It has also addressed the specific questions regarding pedagogical documentation's contribution to reflective practice, the importance of documenting children's work and the key practices used by educators in documenting children's work.

Research results reveal that in this South Australian site, pedagogical documentation was a multi-faceted tool, it contributed to reflective practice and to professional development. The findings of this study add to the literature regarding pedagogical documentation conducted in that it provides a detailed Australian case study conducted in a Reggio-inspired setting. This study has the potential

to raise issues and encourage dialogue with all stakeholders: educators, policymakers and parents, about pedagogical documentation.

For early childhood educators, this research has the potential to guide and inspire them to use pedagogical documentation to make children's learning visible and shareable. This research combines theoretical and practical aspects of pedagogical documentation, thereby creating a reference point for pre-service teachers. Pedagogical documentation allows educators to challenge the dominant discourses and reflect on their practices. The educator builds a positive image of the child that is further reflected in designing the environment that acts as a third teacher.

For policymakers, this research offers an opportunity to examine the role of pedagogical documentation in one Australian context. This research study can influence policy makers who are grappling with the issues associated with standardised assessment. It is argued that pedagogical documentation allows policy makers to visualise children's learning, thereby serving the purpose of assessment. When children's learning is visible and shareable with the community, there is potentially less pressure on standards and accountability, as currently emphasised.

For parents, this research study assists them to make sense of their children's learning. Pedagogical documentation has the potential to assist parents to visualise and understand their children's learning. When children use 'the hundred languages' to express their learning, parents are better able to understand and value it. Thus, parents can work collaboratively with educators to understand children's learning.

For children, this research study highlights the goal of pedagogical documentation: giving value to children's work and recognizing that children co-construct knowledge along with educators. Pedagogical documentation offers a verbal and visual trace of their learning and opportunities for children to re-visit, reflect and interpret their own learning.

#### **6.4 Limitations of the Research**

As a phenomenological case study, this research focused on a small sample, one ELC in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide. Pedagogical documentation was examined only in this specific centre, so research results cannot be generalised. The findings of this study are applicable to this ELC, however the concept of pedagogical documentation can be used in all Early Childhood settings. Another limitation of case study research according to Thomas (2011, p.216) is that it 'produces knowledge that is provisional; in other words, good only until we find out something else which explains things better'. The localised nature of this case study research with informed participants provided valuable insights and analysis of pedagogical documentation.



## **6.5 Recommendations for Further Research**

This section describes the recommendations from the thesis and its application for further research. The outcomes of the research generate a number of additional research questions:

- What is the role of assessment and pedagogical documentation?
- How does the environment relate to pedagogical documentation?
- What are the critical practices used by educational leaders to promote pedagogical documentation?
- What are the long-term effects of pedagogical documentation?

It is recommended that future research investigate the relationship between assessment and pedagogical documentation, the relationship between the environment, arts and curriculum to pedagogical documentation. Another area where future research can be focussed is leadership and pedagogical documentation. Comparative longitudinal research could also be undertaken to understand the long-term effects of using pedagogical documentation for the three years from 2-5 years of an individual child.

## **6.6 Summary**

Pedagogical documentation, the Reggio Emilia principle, was studied intensively in this phenomenological case study research in an Australian context. This research explores the concept of pedagogical documentation practiced in an ELC in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide. It is hoped this research will spark debate and dialogue with early childhood educators, policymakers and researchers about the power of pedagogical documentation and how it can be used in Early Childhood settings to make children's learning visible and shareable with the community.

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## APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



Assoc. Prof. Susan Krieg  
School of Education  
GPO Box 2100  
Adelaide SA 5001  
Tel: 08 8201 2301  
Email: [susan.krieg@flinders.edu.au](mailto:susan.krieg@flinders.edu.au)  
Web: [www.flinders.edu.au](http://www.flinders.edu.au)

Dear Director/Head of ECE Program,

This letter is to introduce Anita Ramchandran Menon who is a Doctoral student in the School of Education at Flinders University. She will produce her student card, which carries a photograph, as proof of identity.

As part of her Doctorate studies, Anita is required to complete a significant piece of research. Anita has chosen to research 'A Case Study of Pedagogical Documentation in a South Australian Early Childhood Centre'. This research will examine pedagogical documentation in an Australian context. The findings of this study are expected to be of interest to the field of Early Childhood Education and more specifically, the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD), in that they may help inform policy and practice.

We would be very grateful if you would be willing to assist Anita in her research by granting her permission to carry out her study in your school. This includes spending three days a week for 2 hours over a period of six weeks for observations of the teacher's documentation practices, interviewing two teachers and conducting a Focus group interview with the Director and staff.

If you agree to permit Anita to conduct the research, be assured that any information provided or data collected will be treated in the strictest confidence and none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis or other publications. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time during the research process.

Since Anita intends to make a digital recording of the interviews, she will seek your consent, on the attached form, to record the interview, to use the recording or a transcription in preparing the thesis or other publications, on condition that your name or identity is not revealed. It may be necessary to make the recording available to a transcription service for transcription, in which case you may be assured that such persons will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement which outlines the requirement that your name or identity not be revealed and that the confidentiality of the material is respected and maintained.

Dr Felicity Ann Lewis and I are supervising this research. We are both lecturers in the School Of Education. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me via phone or email. Anita Menon can be contacted via phone on 08 8384 4689 or email: [anita.menon@flinders.edu.au](mailto:anita.menon@flinders.edu.au)

Thank you for considering this request.

Yours sincerely

Associate Professor Susan Krieg

School of Education

Flinders University

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project number 6583). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)*



## APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION SHEET

**Title:** A Case Study of Pedagogical Documentation in a South Australian Early Childhood Centre

**Investigators:**

Mrs Anita Ramchandran Menon  
Doctoral Student  
School Of Education  
Flinders University  
Ph. 08 8384 4689  
Email: [anita.menon@flinders.edu.au](mailto:anita.menon@flinders.edu.au)

**Supervisor(s):**

Assoc. Prof Susan Krieg	Dr Felicity Ann Lewis
School of Education	School of Education
Flinders University	Flinders University
Email: <a href="mailto:susan.krieg@flinders.edu.au">susan.krieg@flinders.edu.au</a>	Email: <a href="mailto:felicity.lewis@flinders.edu.au">felicity.lewis@flinders.edu.au</a>

**Description of the study:**

This study will examine the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool in a Reggio inspired school of Adelaide. The rationale behind the study is to add to existing knowledge regarding early childhood pedagogy. The researcher will gather data based on the perspectives, experiences and understandings of the participants. The researcher will work collaboratively with the centre thrice a week for six weeks. This research is supported by School of Education, Flinders University.

**Purpose of the study:**

This project aims:

- To explore the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool in Australian early childhood settings.
- To identify the critical practices used by Australian early childhood educators in documenting children's work.
- To examine the key aspect of pedagogical documentation-'documentation of children's work to build reflective practice' and its role in Early Childhood Education.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

The researcher will observe teachers who are participating in the study, in their daily activities for several hours each week. They are invited to attend one interview with the researcher, which will take about 30 minutes. The staff along with the Leadership team is also invited to a Focus group Interview, which will take about 90 minutes. Both the interviews will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. Once recorded, the interviews will be transcribed and stored as a computer file and then destroyed once the results have been finalised.

### **What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?**

The sharing of your experiences will improve the planning and delivery of future programs.

### **Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?**

Your participation will be kept anonymous at all stages of the research process. Once the interview has been transcribed and saved as a file, the voice file will then be destroyed. Any identifying information will be removed and the transcription file stored on a password-protected computer that only the Researcher (Mrs Anita Ramchandran Menon) and her supervisors will have access to.

### **Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?**

The investigator anticipates no risks to you from your involvement in this study. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with the researcher. You are able to withdraw from the research at any stage.

### **How do I agree to participate?**

Participation is voluntary. You may answer 'no comment' or refuse to answer any questions and you are free to withdraw from the research at any time without effect or consequences. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. If you agree to participate please read and sign the form and send it back to me at (name of school).

### **How will I receive feedback?**

The Researcher will summarise the major findings of the research. Any publications by the investigator will be available if you would like to see them.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.**

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 6583). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)*



## **APPENDIX 3: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH**

Anita Ramchandran Menon  
School of Education  
Flinders University  
GPO Box 2100  
Adelaide SA 5001  
Tel # (8) 8384 4689  
Email: Anita.Menon@flinders.edu.au

Dear Director/ Head of Program,

I would like to request permission to undertake the following research project 'A Case Study of Pedagogical Documentation in a South Australian Early Childhood Centre'.

The research project is in partial fulfilment towards a Doctor of Education, which I am completing at Flinders University. The project will commence with full Ethics approval from the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Ethics Committee. My supervisors for this project are Assoc. Prof. Susan Krieg and Dr Felicity Ann Lewis. The research project aims to examine the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool in the Reggio inspired school in Adelaide.

The research will invite two teachers for an interview, a focus group interview with the Leadership team and the staff, followed by observation of children's portfolio/artefacts and teacher documentation processes. Parental consent will be sought, prior to observing children's portfolio/artefacts.

Please find attached a copy of a Letter of Introduction, which includes contact details of my supervisors and a copy of the Information Sheet for participants.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Anita Ramchandran Menon



## **APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM FOR OBSERVATION OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY**

I hereby give my consent to Mrs Anita Ramchandran Menon, a research student in the School of Education at Flinders University, whose signature appears below, to observe and record pedagogical documentation activities as part of her study.

I give permission for the use of the data, and any other information that I have agreed may be obtained or requested, in the writing up of the study.

My permission is given on the condition that my participation in this study is voluntary, and I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any stage of the research process.

### ***SIGNATURES***

**Participant.....Date.....**

**Researcher.....Date.....**

## APPENDIX 5: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS



Dear Parents/Caregivers,

I would like to introduce myself to the school community. I am a Doctoral student in the School of Education at Flinders University. I am happy to have the opportunity of working in your school for six weeks and I am looking forward to it. The School of Education, Flinders University supports this research.

The research I will be completing will lead to the production of a thesis. The study aims to develop an understanding of the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool in the school. As part of this process, I will be examining children's portfolios.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on 08 8384 4689 or e-mail [anita.menon@flinders.edu.au](mailto:anita.menon@flinders.edu.au)

I look forward to working in your school.

Yours sincerely

Anita Ramchandran Menon

## **APPENDIX 6: PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

### **A Case Study of Pedagogical Documentation in a South Australian Early Childhood Centre**

(For examining Children's Portfolio/Artefacts)

I .....being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to observing my child .....s Portfolio/Artefacts being accessed for the research project on Pedagogical documentation as an educational tool in the Reggio Emilia inspired school in Adelaide.

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to photographs being taken of my child's Portfolio and artefacts.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:
  - My child may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
  - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, my child will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.

**Participant's signature.....Date.....**

I certify that I have explained the study to the parent and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to using the child's Portfolio and artefacts.

**Researcher's name.....**

**Researcher's signature..... Date.....**

6. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read a transcript of my participation and agree to its use by the researcher as explained.

**Participant's signature..... Date.....**

7. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read the researcher's report and agree to the publication of my information as reported.

**Participant's signature..... Date.....**



# APPENDIX 7: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

## (Interviews and Focus Group Interview)

I .....

being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested, in the interviews and Focus group interviews for the research project on Pedagogical documentation as an educational tool in the Reggio Emilia inspired school in Adelaide.

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.
4. I am aware that I am recommended to retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:
  - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
  - I am free to withdraw from the project during the 'cooling off period of one week' and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
  - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
  - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on any treatment or service that is being provided to me.
  - I understand that I will be asked whether I am happy for interviews to be audio recorded, and that I can decline to have them audio recorded.
6. I have had the opportunity to discuss taking part in this research with a family member or friends.

**Participant's signature.....Date.....**

7. I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

**Researcher's name.....**

**Researcher's signature.....Date.....**

8. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read a transcript of my participation and agree to its use by the researcher as explained.

**Participant's signature.....Date.....**

9. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read the researcher's report and agree to the publication of my information as reported.

**Participant's signature.....Date.....**

## **APPENDIX 8: TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING INTERVIEWS**

Information gathered from participants (educators) using narrative interviews. These are semi-structured in that areas for discussion are introduced to the participant, however participants are given choice as to how they then interpret and direct the discussion within the guidelines given. Participants are asked to reflect on the key aspects of pedagogical documentation.

The following summarises the topics discussed with participants with some examples of the kinds of questions that are used as prompts.

Good Afternoon,

Thank you for agreeing to be on this interview and spending your valuable time answering my queries on pedagogical documentation.

### **Background information:**

Information about the Reggio Emilia Principle of pedagogical documentation-

How do teachers define pedagogical documentation?

What is the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool?

How did they begin the journey of pedagogical documentation?

What professional development was done to understand and implement the principle of pedagogical documentation?

What is the image of the child as perceived by the teachers?

What is the role of the adult? Do you perceive yourself as 'the competent adult'?

Prompts: Teachers are invited to share stories/vignettes of children's learning experiences.

### **Pedagogical Documentation:**

Information about the contribution of pedagogical documentation to reflective practice-

Who is involved during pedagogical documentation?

What is documented- arts/literacy/numeracy?

How does pedagogical documentation contribute to reflective practice and why?

Why is it important to document children's work?

What are the critical practices used by teachers in documenting children's work?

Who benefits from documenting children's work?

Who initiates the process of pedagogical documentation?

Is digital technology used to pedagogically document children's work?

How is pedagogical documentation shared with parents?

Prompts: Can you give me some examples of pedagogical documentation's contribution to reflective practice?

**Artefacts/ Portfolio:**

Information about artefacts/portfolio and documenting children's learning.

How do teachers document children's learning?

What are the benefits of documenting children's learning?

What are the gaps in 'pedagogical documentation' noticed while documenting children's learning?

How do artefacts/portfolio benefit parents, children and teachers?

Prompts: Can you provide examples of artefacts/portfolio and how you document children's learning?

Thank you, so much for sharing your understanding about pedagogical documentation.

## **APPENDIX 9: TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

Information gathered using focus group interview with the Director and the staff.

The following summarises the areas of information that were raised with participants in order to achieve the research outcomes, with some examples of the kinds of questions that were used as prompts.

Good Afternoon,

Thank you, all for participating in this focus group interview. I really appreciate you all spending some valuable time in answering my queries on pedagogical documentation.

### **Background Information:**

Information about the Reggio Principle of pedagogical documentation-

What is pedagogical documentation and how is it different from child observation?

When did the centre initiate the principle of pedagogical documentation?

How is it related to policy?

What is the role of pedagogical documentation as an educational tool?

Prompts: Participant's views on pedagogical documentation are encouraged.

### **Pedagogical Documentation:**

Participants are asked to reflect on the key aspects of pedagogical documentation.

How does documenting children's work build reflective practice?

What are the benefits of reflective practice?

What vision does the centre have?

How will the leadership team achieve this vision for long-term plans?

How are the roles amongst educators negotiated?

Describe the process of the Wonder Wall.

How do you manage the workload in terms of time?

**Artefacts/ Portfolio:**

Information about artefacts/ portfolio and children's learning.

How does artefacts/portfolios contribute to children's learning?

What are the strengths/advantages in maintaining children's portfolio?

What are the weaknesses/disadvantages in maintaining children's portfolio?

How do you obtain data on each child?

What is the system of grouping children?

Thank you all for answering my queries on pedagogical documentation. It has been wonderful listening to you all.