

2019 REsearch Conversations Network NSW Overview



To the extraordinary group of people who have been on the journey with Jessica and myself over the last three years, we hope you have had a wonderful start to 2020!

It is so important to acknowledge and celebrate our journey of continual transformation as a group and as professionals. The relationships we have with each other has brought such strength to our sharing, wondering and researching, and the process has been profound!

In the words of Loris Malaguzzi, we have created a space where there is “a willingness to question all our own abilities, our knowledge, to become humble. Only then will you be able to listen to the child and adult, and to set off on a common search, to ‘educate each other together’”.

Our focus for 2019 was **the Landscape of Transformation** and the following is a short summary that highlights the incredible journey we have been on together over 2019.

Term 1 – Unpacking REAIE Landscape of Transformation

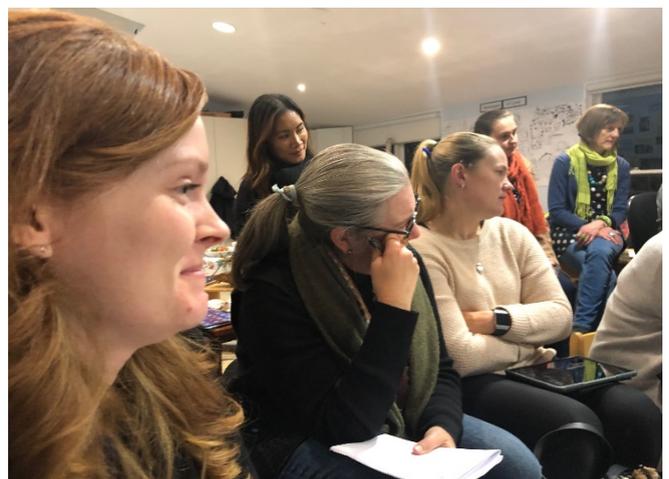
We began by acknowledging our learning and commitment as a group and how our meetings and conversations had influenced our practice over 2018, where we used the spiral as a metaphor for our commitment to researching together. Those that had attended the RE Study Tour in January 2019 shared their wonderings, inspirations and challenges that they had brought back. We also discussed the ‘Landscape of Transformation’ as being our focus for 2019.

Term 2 - "Do you consider your child as a thinker and a theory maker"

Following our focus of 'Transformation, Beryl from Abbotsleigh ELC, shared her research about parents' views on early childhood education by asking them to consider the following 'Do you consider your child as a thinker and a theory maker'

Beryl's provocations and questions were raised to transform parents and educators' lens of seeing, thinking and listening. She challenged her families and team to step inside and wonder with and through the child's eyes. It was not only an act of advocacy for the image of the child, but also for the image of educators and families, coming together in a relationship of thinking and learning together. This opened up a lens for parents and teachers to listen into children's wonder and learning.

Beryl sent a photo of each child to their families asking what they thought their child was wondering about to open up the dialogue. Parents were also given Harvard's Habits of the Mind that the team had been researching to ensure their families were as informed throughout the whole process.



Over time, with their families, they committed to creating a collective vision of building knowledge, skills and dispositions for lifelong learning. The ongoing discussions and collaboration between educators and families was extraordinary. The transformation in seeing, thinking, valuing and respecting the work and learning of very young children was tangible and created possibilities that didn't exist before.

We thank Beryl for being so open and generous in her sharing of the journey she has been on. Her impressive body of work was so inspiring and raised so many questions. This inspired us to take this question back to our own services as a shared form of research within our organisations, and our network

group as a collective whole.

Term 3 – ‘How do we challenge through education and advocacy the culture of early childhood education’?

In building connections from our previous discussions, we posed this provocation ‘How do we challenge through education and advocacy, the culture of early childhood education’? In the words of Tiziana Filippini she challenged us to “think broadly and have a big dream because we are the influencers of our young children”.

Term 4 – Transformation through our relationship with materials

Unlike all our other meetings where we have worked in collaboration with each other in sharing, collaborating, listening, challenging and hypothesising, we specifically chose this last meeting as a space to connect with ourselves. We created our own ‘space’ our own Atelier, a metaphor of experimentation, of listening to, of promoting and enhancing our own ways to research and learn. We explored our own relationship with something outside of ourselves and reflected on the potential materials have in transforming our ways of feeling, seeing, listening and knowing ourselves more deeply. We limited the focus and choice of materials to more fully understand the potential and importance of these relationships in building emotional connection, understanding and confidence and resilience in embracing uncertainty. It can take courage to express our ideas as adults to others, but through taking up the challenge we experience wonder and fulfillment in transforming our sense of self and realising our potential.

Every day we offer children the opportunity to engage with their one hundred languages as a vehicle to explore ‘subject’, and in experiencing this journey ourselves we are able to understand the value of this process and not limit children by our own limitations.



Our research and learning over 2019 evolved through the extraordinary contributions from everyone in the group and we thank you for your commitment and look forward to continuing the conversations in 2020!

REsearch Conversations Co- convenors, Paula West and Jessica Rix

