

Reggio Emilia Australia

Information Exchange



The ethics of welcome

Why consider welcome?

"No matter where you come from, you are no stranger here" (Levi).

Defining welcome

What and whom are we welcoming?

What and whom is welcoming?

How?

Children

Parents

Team

Community

Place

Space

Moments of learning

Welcome as Reciprocal Relationships

"It is as if school were a large living organism whose parts relate to the whole, not only because they are included, but also, we hope, because of a bond that embodies a common sense of belonging, the construction of shared stories, and intertwined destinies.

...the aim of organisation is to create a bond of interdependence that can give each subject the meaning of his or her presence and of the presence of others." (Filippini, 2001, p.53).

Ethics of an encounter

Otherness occurs when one tries to grasp the Other and make them into the Same (Levinas).

Dahlberg and Moss remind us to 'treat[ing] the alterity (difference) of the other with respect, rather than trying to make the other the same' (2005).

"Early childhood settings are institutions and we need to ensure that they are places where the Other is not made into the Same, but places that embrace diversity, difference and otherness, for new possibilities and potentialities" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.2).

In practice....

"An 'ethics of care' and a 'pedagogy of listening' provide us with an ethical compass with which to navigate the tricky waters of our practice."

- Actions rather than rules achieved collaboratively
- Enactments of relationships, caring, responsibility, leadership, activism



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In practice.... (continued)

- Listening and responding to each child and family (Pacini- Ketchabaw, et al, 2015, p.173).

Difference as a value

"Being different is a value and a right". (Giamminuti, 2013 p.281)

"School as a place of differences, a dialogue among differences". (Rinaldi, 2006 p.208)

"Accepting, respecting and valuing the differences in others is a great ethical choice, which is possible for every modern person. Differences are not a problem that we annul or eliminate. They are a resource and an opportunity". Sergio Spaggiari (2004)

Perspective

"The most favourable situation for creativity seems to be interpersonal exchange, with negotiation of conflicts and comparison of ideas and actions being the decisive elements." (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 76).

Research as an Ethic of Welcome and Relationship

"Our goal is to build an amiable school, where children teachers and families feel at home . . . It must embody ways of getting along together, of intensifying relationships among the three central protagonists, of assuring fullness of attention to the problems of educating, and of activating participation and research" (Malaguzzi, cited in Edwards, 2012, p.43)

"Indeed, education without research or innovation is education without interest" (Malaguzzi, in Edwards, et al. 2012, p.49).

A way of listening

(Listening) "...means to be open to doubts and uncertainty. This listening means to be open to being in crisis. This listening accepts frustration.

It is not always bad to be in crisis. It means that you are changing. The problem is when you are not in crisis, because maybe you are not really listening to the life around you." (Rinaldi, 2006, p.3).

Continuous movement and circularity between listening and respect

"Malaguzzi always taught that schools must be in continuous motion, in constant evolution, with the ability to overstep their boundaries without betraying themselves, knowing how to grasp the challenges of society and of every new child at every moment. There is nothing more dignifying for a teacher than to feel like a student, and nothing more dignifying for children than to feel that they are being listened to and valued without being judged." (Hoyelous, 2013, p.329- 330)



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Documentation

"In the entryway of a school in Reggio Emilia, we are already aware of the value given to communication and openness of information. There is an intention to make the identity of the school visible" (Gandini, Edwards & Forman, 2012, p.318).

Environments that welcome

"Community in the sense of empathy, a closeness that creates bonds, that enables each group member to recognize the other and to recognize him/herself in the other. ...

Community is a form and a quality of space that fosters encounters, exchange, empathy, and reciprocity"(Ceppi, Zinni. 1998, p. 20.)

The semiotics of entering

"Social semiotics and the semiotics of the built environment are the analytical tools that help us identify the voices of places, to give meaning to places and spaces and the people who live and grow in them" (Giamminuti cited in Fleet, et al., 2012, p.192).

"An environment is welcoming when it can suggest questions". (Cinzia Incerti, 2019, REAIE conference, personal notes).

What it requires of us

The values and desires of the teacher as researcher:

- border crossing
- uncertainty
- subjectivity
- inclusionary democratic practice (Moss, 2006, p. 38).

Invisible borders

"To cross the border, see families with a lens that illuminates their humanity.

A simple, powerful active curiosity can carry us across the border: who are the people who live on the other side? Border crossing begins when we consider parents perspectives as human beings, complex and with wide ranging lives. How would parents like us to think of them? What do parents want us to understand about their lives, their strengths, their longings?"



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Invisible borders (continued)

Hilltop asked parents :

“What do you want our staff to know about your life?
What are your strengths as parents?”
(Anne Pelo, 2018, p. 142).

Welcome as a value

“Welcoming’ implies listening, openness, recognisability. A child, a parent, anyone who works at the school must feel the sense of well-being that comes from being awaited and welcomed with pleasure. The school is not a place for anonymous users, but for people who live a portion of their lives together” (Krechevsky, 2001, p. 64).

In conclusion:

Emmanuel Levinas.....insisted that being human is a face-to-face encounter, where the ethics of how we treat each other comes first and trumps everything else. Vincenzo Di Nicola (2018)

Questions to critically reflect on:

- Are we intentional, purposeful about the act and art of welcoming? What does that look like?
- What guides and influences the ‘welcomeness’ (Parker, 2018, p. 8) of our environment?
- Does everyone in the community feel/experience the same commitment/intent of welcome?
- How can ‘welcomeness’ be considered and committed to as part of daily life??



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