

Why Document?

Exploring the benefits and audiences of Pedagogical Documentation

Susan Stacey, June 2019

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A little about me...

- Grew up in UK, where experiential learning was the norm
- Studied with the great Elizabeth (Betty) Jones at Pacific Oaks College: my influences stem from this learning, and from the practices of Reggio Emilia
- Have worked for 40 years in ECE (!!) as educator, director, practicum coach, instructor at NSCECE, as well as writer and presenter
- My work at the moment focuses on adult learners: coaching, supporting, collaborating

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Creating a shared vocabulary....

■ Display



■ Documentation



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Pedagogical Documentation: a thinking, learning and planning tool



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Thinking about the why and the how



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Poll: Why do you document?

- It's a way of following development and to assess
- I like thinking about children's thinking and ideas
- I enjoy the reflective aspect; thinking together with my team
- It provides meaningful communication with families
- All of the above

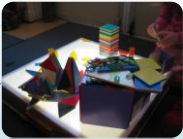
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Who are our audiences? What difference does it make?

- Our audience makes a difference to what we will say and how we will say it:
 - content differences (i.e. for the parent of one child? Or the work of a group, for several families?)
 - language/vocabulary differences (accessibility)
 - amount of text to photo (ratio)
 - drawing out reader's curiosity in different ways

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Language matters!



Cognitive development through hands-on exploration of manipulatives

Today, the children used Magna-tiles for the first time. These tiles contain small magnets, which means that they can be easily formed into 3D shapes such as pyramids or cubes. As the building becomes more complex, the children made connections between their previous knowledge of 2D shapes (e.g. squares) and the base of their 3D shape (e.g. pyramid). How can we draw upon this new knowledge? Stay tuned!!

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Families: the possibilities for formats

- Learning Stories: inspired by Margaret Carr
 - up close and personal
 - a particular format
 - can have multiple uses

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After a stormy night



JP, today you were excited to tell us about last night's big storm, and what you saw and heard. We invited you to paint what you had seen, and your painting was wild and free, just like the storm.

See the many shades of black and grey; you said the sky was very dark. But, we also see a little spot of yellow behind the clouds, and wonder if the sun is beginning to peek out today?

JP, you spent a long time on this painting, (30 mins), creating layer over layer. We can see that this event was important to you. Perhaps it was a little scary? You stood back from time to time, making sure it was 'just right.'

Mom and Dad, do you see JP using the language of art to express his feelings at home?

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Benefits for families:

- Understanding the potential of the materials we use in our setting
- How children learn through explorative play and artistic expression
- What they are learning or how they are expressing feelings

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Ordinary Moments in a Daily Log

- Small moments in the day that are important, puzzling, or simply interesting
- Can be done by hand 'on the spot,' or using an app
- Potential for documenting with children

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Benefits

- For the educator, easy to develop
- Can be taken back to any of the protagonists: Children, families, other teachers
- For families, quick to read, while still explaining the importance of the process
- Immediate; can be taken back to the children the next day

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For wider audiences: Panels

- Larger, ongoing documentation of play and investigations over time
- Suitable for reading in hallways, classroom entrances, or sharing with the community at large
- Often involves many children (but rarely all!)

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With thanks to Aya Saito, NS College of Early Childhood Education

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With thanks to the kindergarten educators in Sioux Lookout, Ontario

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Benefits

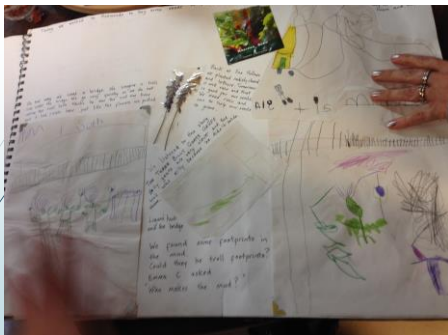
- Shows the development of children's ideas and strategies over time
- Attractive layout draws attention
- Ideal for sharing with whole staff for pd purposes
- Or with families at parent meetings
- Or with our communities of practice for reflection and discussion purposes

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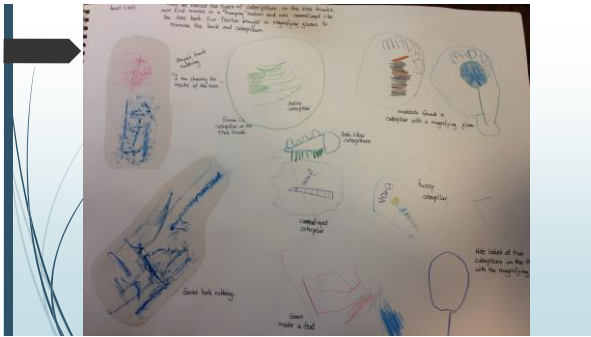
Floorbooks: for and with children

- Documentation with children
- Immediate, meaningful
- In the classroom; teachers do not need time away from children in order to assemble
- Children's thinking comes to the forefront
- Visit the work of Clare Warden....

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**Documentation for educators:
Sketch-notebooks**

- Rough notes by teachers, on the spot
- Allows for many 'languages,' i.e. writing, drawing, bullet points – whatever is comfortable for the people involved
- Provides data every day, to think about and put into whatever format the team chooses
- Quick, immediate
- A reflective planning tool

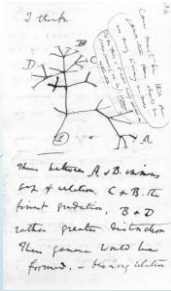
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**Sketch notebooks:
a tool to support
Inquiry**

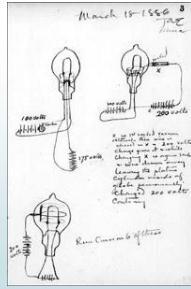
Sketch notebooks are not
new.....



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Charles Darwin
Tree of Life. 1837



Thomas Edison
Light Bulb 1886

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organization



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Whatever works for you....



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Benefits to educators

- These are for and about educators' thinking, ideas, **questions**
- Documentation for and about us as well as the children!
- Lead us to think about threads that are forming in children's play/inquiries
- 'holds in mind' what is happening, while we consider together as a team
- An archive that we can keep referring back to...
- A reflective planning tool

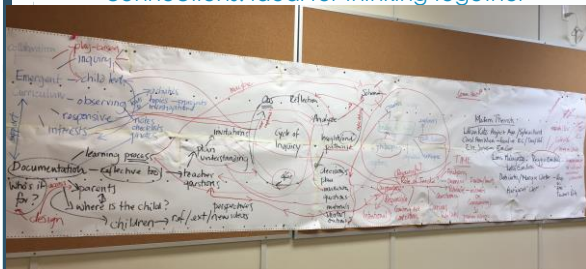
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In a similar vein....raw documentation

- Not all documentation needs to be 'presentable' in terms of sharing with others
- Some can be quite informal, a kind of thinking tool, that is for reflective purposes within the classroom

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Mapping your thinking, questions, & connections: ideal for thinking together



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Remember....

- With good tools that work for you....
- And a team that is in the habit of 'noticing' and recording, even in informal ways...
- Pedagogical documentation will be:
 - A powerful form of communication
 - An important reflection and planning tool
 - A way to move forward with decision-making around your curriculum

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