



Journal of Childhoods and Pedagogies
Centre for Childhood Studies
2nd Special Edition 2023



EDITORIAL

Being In-the-making of Pedagogical Narrations

An Atelierista's Perspective

Dr. Sylvia Kind

Capilano University, North Vancouver, Canada

E-mail: skind@capilanou.ca



In the early childhood studio, pedagogical narration is a processual, notational, creative-creating, *material* practice. Panels of notational documentation fill the studio, creating an ethos of attention where we are surrounded by ideas in their formation and the space is alive with processes, images, and tentative speculations. Things are attended to as they unfold, provoke, and lead, and the space is cared for and curated so that it speaks in lively ways, and the embryonic ideas, images, notations, and traces of experimentations become a propositional force. Rather than becoming a descriptive or retrospectively generated interpretive process, the concern is for how the work *works* and what it does, produces, and sets in motion (Konturri, 2018). This is not about sharing or showing processes or telling a story of what happened and later creating carefully composed narrations. Rather, the focus is on activating and *working with* the “projectability” (Cristina Delgado Vintimilla, personal communication, Dec. 8, 2022) and potentiality of what is coming into being and being *in-the-making* (Manning & Massumi, 2014).

Engaging in documentation and acts of attention as processes of way-finding and curriculum-making (Vintimilla & Kind, 2021) produces a mutual obligation to design *and* document projects so that something new is set in motion. This means I orient a project in such a way that insights, understandings,

and pathways to pursue are texturally and materially *made*, composed, and constructed together with others and documented in such a way that the traces produce something previously unrealized, so we are “provoked into thinking” (Savransky & Stengers, 2018, p. 131). Thus, an ordinary question from a child such as “How do I draw a flower?” becomes a proposition for a collective project. I resist directly addressing or answering the question, rather I create conditions and situations for close, sensitive, and responsive attention to the rich variances and complexities of flowers and their subtle yet continuous alterations. The diverse and divergent modes of attention are noted so that over the weeks and months the project reverberates with children’s investigations into drawing, smelling, tasting, examining, magnifying, enacting, storying, and measuring their inventive play with language, rhymes, and humour, and their fascinations with surprises, risks, dramas, seeds, prickles, poison, decay, death, and whom you could become through these deliberations.

Specific instances and germinating ideas are documented in notational ways on various papers that are moveable and can be recombined, recomposed and brought into relation with other events and ideas. Over time, the images and notations are loosely reorganized into emerging concepts and thematic groupings. I do this together with educators as we work collaboratively in the studio. Like loose threads, fraying fabric strands undoing and tangling with other threads, we weave propositions, ideas, and processes together. In an effort to *work the ideas* while creating conditions to listen and respond together with the children, we foster rituals of gathering and engaging through entangled movements of perception and action. This is a slow process of lingering, dwelling, and inhabiting the ideas. As Ingold (2018) proposes, to inhabit is to be drawn in and captivated by the processes while opening up to them in responsive movements. In this way documented traces, notations, images, drawings, and photographs don’t just hold meaning or act as memory rather animate and activate as we engage with them, consider their propositions, and follow their lead (Kind, 2022). We move in participation-with what is provisionally coming into view as the gathered traces demand a response; a kind of response that is not repetitive or explanatory but allows for something slightly new and different to come into being.

As the notations fill the documentation panels, we select and intensify specific lines of thought by composing more detailed study booklets so we can see more clearly the particularities of what is beginning to take shape and dwell for a time in their intrigue. We do this to cultivate, for ourselves and the children, increasingly acute sensitivities and attunements to the subtleties, intimacies, and singularities of the gestures, movements, and ideas in formation. Strands are selected, such as how measuring tapes collide with the children’s drawings and investigations and generate experimental and relational ways of measuring



while creating new relations with the flowers. Particularities of children's aesthetic sensibilities come into view such as their design strategies as they invent ways of measuring. The booklets give value to the evolution and formation of specific ideas and will eventually lead to creating more comprehensive pedagogical narrations.

This is a process of becoming increasingly attentive, noticing more nuance and detail, and expanding one's ability to respond with improvisational fluency. Each line of thought is a textile, textural, malleable line that will be expanded and intensified and then woven together with others to give dimension, shape and form to a living curriculum in-the-making. This is not so much about interpreting individual instances, as the process is continuous rather than episodic, and each encounter and event is in relation to what has emerged and what is yet to come. It is a process in continuous recursive and rhizomatic movement and always in-the-making. Thus, as we, educators, children and myself, in concert with evolving pedagogical narration practices, move, create, make, and compose together, this becomes a process of making sense, creating a path, learning from children's ways, cultivating sensitive attunements, and forming an artful, vibrant, and living curriculum.



References

- Kind, S. (2022). Drawing and being drawn by the hand: a dance of animacy. In L. Trafi-Prats and C. Schulte (Eds), *New Images of Thought in the Study of Childhood Drawing*. Springer
- Kontturi, K. (2018). *Ways of following: Art, materiality, collaboration*. London: Open Humanities Press
- Ingold, T. (2018). *Anthropology and/as education*. New York: Routledge.
- Manning, E., & Massumi, B. (2014). *Thought in the act: Passages in the ecology of experience*. University of Minnesota Press
- Savransky, M. & Stengers, I. (2018). Relearning the Art of Paying Attention: A Conversation. *SubStance* 47(1), 130-145. Johns Hopkins University Press. Retrieved August 12, 2018, from Project MUSE database. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/689019>
- Vintimilla, C. D & Kind, S. (2021). Choreographies of practice: mutualities and sympoetic becomings in early childhood teacher education. In H. Park & C. Schulte (Eds) *Visual Arts with Young Children: Practice, Pedagogy, Learning*. Routledge.