

Deconstructing the pedagogies of Freinet, Malaguzzi, and the maker movement in an elementary school atelier

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ABSTRACT

In the following study we investigate the foundations of an elementary school music atelier grounded in the pedagogies of Célestin Freinet, the Reggio Emilia approach, and the maker movement. Through the construction processes of musical marble structures by Grade 1 and Grade 4 students, we examine the strengths and challenges of the pedagogies and practices that scaffold the variety of learning that unfolds in our music atelier—including hands-on, collaborative, experimental, and experiential learning. In doing so we uncover the historical underpinnings of the atelier and come to understand how this unique studio space evokes student-centered experiences that fosters character, agency, and autonomy to take responsibility for one's own learning. Moreover, we reveal how the elementary school music atelier can support a foundation for in-depth discovery and wonder that empowers children to develop sensitivities to design and artful ways of thinking and learning.

KEYWORDS

Studio learning; music education; Reggio Emilia approach; Freinet pedagogy; maker movement; design-based learning; inquiry

A PRELUDE TO OUR STUDIO

Eight years ago, disheartened with traditional elementary school music pedagogy, we sought guidance outside of traditional music education literature to transform the music program in Matt's classroom. At first, we were intrigued by the concept of the atelier, which is that of crafting something in an artful way and turned to the ateliers of the early childhood centers of Reggio Emilia, Italy (Gandini, Cadwell, Hill, & Schwall, 2005; Vecchi, 2010). We reflected on their philosophies and practices to successfully co-create a flexible learning environment that enables interaction with musical instruments and materials in an informal social setting (Gouzouasis &

Yanko, 2018).¹ The reformation of Matt's classroom into an atelier has enabled it to become an open space that supports exploratory music making with instruments, everyday objects, and natural materials. It is a place for students to recognize their autonomy and dwell in the wonder of their creations. Our atelier, and the learning that unfolds within it, continues to evolve immensely. Because of that, we perceive our atelier to be a living environment—a place where the space and materials are consistently re-arranged by the students to best meet the needs of the learning community in relation to the inquiry at hand.

Although the Reggio Emilia approach has provided a conceptual foundation for our atelier, the original approach is place-based in nature. From that perspective and in consideration of the diverse needs of Matt's students, we have sought to widen the potentials of our studio space by embracing the underpinnings of the ateliers of Célestin Freinet in France and the maker movement. Thus, our atelier has evolved to become more than a Reggio inspired atelier—it has transformed into a uniquely distinct, elementary school music atelier.

The use of ateliers in North American elementary schools is uncommon and having one that is specific to music is even more unconventional. Accordingly, a void in research exists concerning the design and construction of this space and the learning that unfolds in it. Therefore, we seek to examine the underpinnings of an atelier influenced by three perspectives—the pedagogies of Freinet, the Reggio Emilia approach, and the maker movement. To accomplish that, we explore and interpret the historical underpinnings of the atelier. From there, we shed light on the strengths and challenges of adapting the aforementioned pedagogies. It is our hope to inspire educators and researchers to rethink the concept of the music classroom, and to consider the atelier as an alternative space that provides opportunity for learners to cultivate their individual potentials, wonder, and love of music.

STORYING OUR ATELIER

Contemporary approaches that bring storytelling into the inquiry process illustrate new ways of writing that re-conceptualize the reflexive facets of teaching and learning. In the current inquiry, we employ an autoethnographic storytelling approach (Ellis, 2004; Bochner & Ellis, 2016) that empowers us to compose vignettes written in a creative non-fictional style based on empirical data—observations, notes, recollections, and artefacts from learning experiences in our atelier. Although the vignettes are written from the perspective of the teacher (Matt), endeavors in our atelier are learner focused and co-constructed, and because of that, these stories are composed in active interplay and dialogue with the students.²

As this study examines the adaptation of the abovementioned approaches, autoethnography permits us to unmask our biases, and encourages the acknowledgement and accommodation of positioning, experiences, and subjectivities (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Within the context

¹ Matt refers to the atelier as *our* atelier and not *his* because this change in the learning environment has, and continues to be, a co-constructivist endeavor between the teacher and learners. By definition, an atelier is a workshop or studio. Since the late 1970s, in Reggio schools it is considered an environment where creativity and knowledge are promoted. The space-place is conceived to generate evocations and provoke rich questioning.

² All identifying characteristics of children have been removed, and pseudonyms have been put in place of actual student names to make their identities anonymous. That is a commonly used feature of autoethnographic stories. Consent has been provided for use of non-identifiable images and transcriptions. This research was conducted in accordance with research guidelines set by The University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Board (and autoethnographic works approved in provisos H13-01168, H13-03210, H16-01244 and H18-02451).

of elementary school music education, autoethnographic research has been used to illuminate the experiences of young learners and teachers (Gouzouasis & Ryu, 2015; Gouzouasis & Yanko, 2018; Yanko, 2019; Yanko & Gouzouasis, 2019; Yanko & Yap, 2020). The subsequent vignettes center on Matt and two of his classes and seek to illuminate the adapted pedagogies and practices that support the learning that unfolds in our atelier.

MARBLE MUSIC 1

The students in Ms. Smith's Grade 1 class have been exploring with marbles over the past few weeks, and today as they settle into our atelier, I present them with a provocation of a video of the Swedish Band *Wintergatan*'s musical marble machine.³ After the video we debrief and discuss their plans for today's session, and I notice that many children are inspired to create musical marble structures. The class set off to work and after a few minutes I make my way over to Pam and Jim.

"What are you drawing?"

Jim is fixated on his drawing, "It's a picture of our marble track."

"Can you explain how it works?"

He points to the top of his drawing with a green marker.

"You drop a marble up here." He traces the felt along the paper. "It rolls down here and makes a ding sound. Then it goes onto the see-saw that shoots it into the air and the marble lands in a bowl."

Pam points to the beginning of the drawing.

"I'll search for this part," she states, as she rummages through a shelf of cooking materials.

Jim begins to create a foundation by stacking two wooden stumps together.

As he continues to build, I notice Pam, seemingly overwhelmed with choices.

"What do you think you should start with to get the marble moving?"

"Something that can be like this, so it goes this way," she stretches out an arm and gliding her index finger from elbow to wrist.

"How about a flat or long object, like a tube or a metal sheet," I suggest.

She noisily digs through kitchen items, pulls out a baking sheet, and knocks on the metal surface.

"This will work."

She joins Jim and leans the sheet against the stacked-up stumps.

"I'll be the tester," he exclaims and rolls a marble down the baking sheet.

"That's strange. It doesn't make sound. When I knocked on it, it made a sound," Pam says with confusion. I observe her as she runs over to the shelf to retrieve a metal bowl and a paint tin and places them at the bottom of the baking sheet.

"Let's try it now."

Jim releases a marble and as it makes contact with the bowl it glides down the arc and shoots up into the air to land on the carpet.

"I have an idea," I say, and place the paint tin where the marble landed on the carpet.

Jim releases a marble, and it misses the tin by a few centimeters.

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IvUU8joBb1Q>

“Ohhh!” exclaims Pam in suspense. Jim quickly drops another marble, but it misses again. “We need more things,” Pam exclaims and begins constructing a wall of hand drums in front of the paint tin.

Jim alters his drawing with a purple marker to account for the changes. Once the wall is complete, he drops a marble. It strikes the tin and makes a metallic *plunk*.

“Yay,” they exclaim in unison.

Pam releases a marble, and this time it thuds on one of the drums.

“Woo-hoo,” shouts Jim.

I leave them to continue exploring and building their structure. I head across the room to check on the progress of Angela tinkering at a piano.

MARBLE MUSIC 2

Students in a grade four class have been working on constructing marble tracks as well. As they set out to industriously create and explore, I head over to a trio working on a marble structure. I pick up a piece of foam tubing and notice that they have glued the magnets so that the pieces can be fine-tuned with ease on the magnetic board.

“How is your project coming along?”

“Were on Test 27. Watch this,” Casey says, as he drops a marble from the top. It glides down the track but falls halfway down.

James points to a flexible joint and demonstrates, “It hits this and bounces off.” He adjusts the xylophone bar and plastic tubes to account for the velocity of the marble.

“Is there a plan for today?”

“Today we are trying to make it more musical. Test 28.”

Casey drops another marble and it smoothly rolls past the area of concern, but suddenly gains speed, bounces off a xylophone bar, and crashes into a foam piece knocking it off of the magnetic board.

James goes to put the foam piece back on, but Susan stops him. “Wait, wait! I want to see what will happen if we don’t put that back.”

“Test 29,” Casey announces, as he releases another marble. It travels down the track all the way to bottom.

James examines the paper with the details of their design.

“It’s not as musical as our drawing. I think we need to put the xylophone piece back.”

Susan studies their blueprint and makes a suggestion, “I have an idea.”

She tinkers with a handful of finger cymbals and weaves a green shoelace through them.

“We can attach this up here where the marble drops through the hole.”

Casey staples some magnets to her new element and places it on the board.

“Test 30, stand by.”

He drops another marble. It rolls down the first part of the course and through the hole, hitting the string of cymbals to evoke a soft metallic *ding-ding-ding*. It continues down the track, speeds up, hits the xylophone bar, and falls to the ground.

“As it nears the middle of the track, it gains a lot of speed from the steep slope,” I comment. “I suggest you extend the track at that section by zig-zagging it more. That should slow down the marble.”

I observe for a few more minutes as they rebuild the bottom half and then head over to a group of students composing a ukulele song.

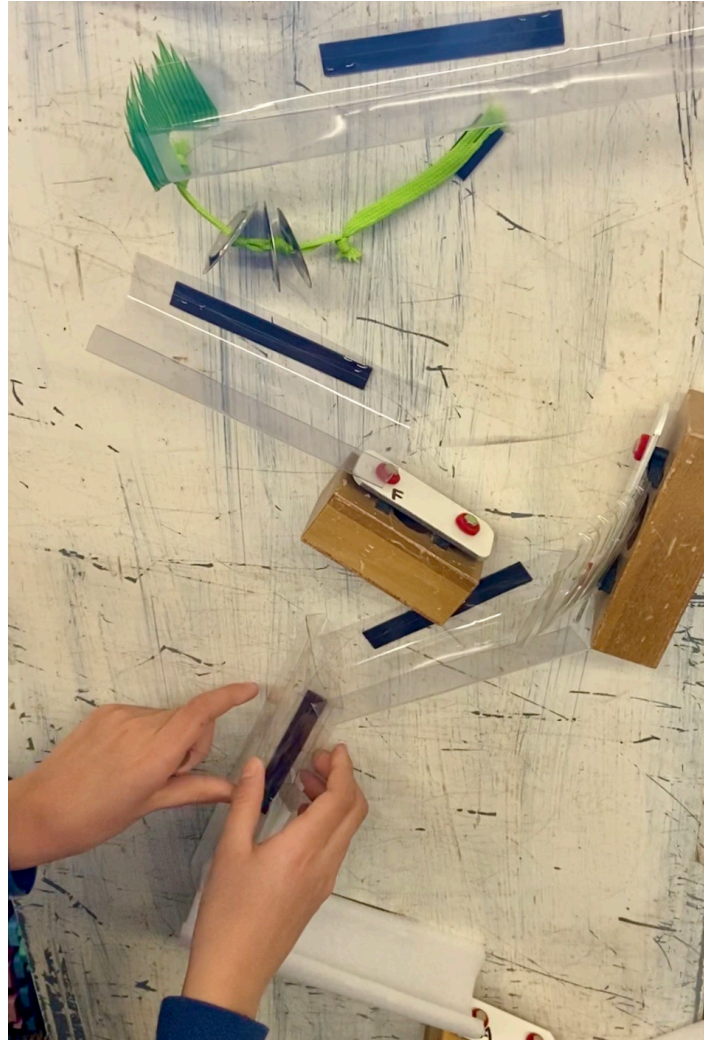


Image 1: Students adjusting the course of their musical marble track.

DEFINING AND HISTORICIZING OUR ATELIER

The central principle of the elementary school atelier, that of crafting something in an artful way, can be traced back to the fourth century BC in ancient Greece. For Aristotle, *poíesis* (ποίησις)⁴ included the not only the creation of poetry, but also other forms of art. Gouzouasis (2006, pp. 24-28) discusses *poíesis* through an Aristotelian lens as the action, or process, of artful production and making, and *práxis* (πράξις) considered as *doing*. Fundamentally, *práxis* is action, activity (Peters, 1967, p. 163) and, *doing* in the broadest sense; *poíesis* is the making (i.e., production) of art and other useful things (i.e., useful objects, productions, events). Making art is a *téchne* (τέχνη; see Gouzouasis, 2006a, 2006b) and art making is characterized by *poíesis* (ποίησις). Balaban (1986) distinguishes between the “doing” of *praxis* and the “making” of *poíesis* in the sense that “the first one *is* an end, the second is *subordinated* to an end” (p. 163). *Poíesis* is an action, and as Peters (1967) elaborates, “the *poietike technè* par excellence is poetics” (p. 162). Donnegan (p. 1015) translates *poíesis* as “the act of making, preparing, forming, composing, *or* doing” and distinguishes a *poietís* (ποιητής) as “a maker, constructor *or* composer ... a legislator;

⁴ Correctly pronounced “pée-ee-sees” with the accent being on the diphthong “oi” which is a long “e” sound.

an inventor; an author, *particularly in verse* ... a poet ... a writer of orations; a writer.” Thus, Aristotle’s triarchic model foreshadowed notions of the central role of the arts in learning that has been articulated in the new millennium (Deasy, 2002; Guhn, Emerson, & Gouzouasis, 2020).

To clarify, within the craft of statues and architecture in ancient Greece, builders did more than merely chisel limestone and marble: they artfully designed and carved them with hand forged iron tools—not unlike the designs and execution of the children’s marble structures. This concept of artful production has a rich history that expands from ancient Greece and becomes a defining aspect of our atelier. However, by examining the roots of the atelier through an etymological lens the term can be traced furthest back to the 6th century Latin word *hastula* (little spear) (Brachet, 1882, p. 40). The lineage of this word leads to the word *aestel*, which was a pointing device thought to aid scribes in preventing their fingers from soiling texts. The *aestel* can be linked to the 14th century word *astelier*—a carpenter’s workshop or woodpile (Hinton, 1974, p. 46). In early childhood and elementary school ateliers the use of wood is not uncommon, and there is value on learning to use one’s hands to develop fine motor skills like an artful carver in a 14th century workshop. Similar to the *astelier*, in such school contexts, the materials (like those employed by the children to create marble structures) are seen as static, but through interactions between the student-artist (technitís; τέχνητησ), the artistic materials (kalitechniká iliká; καλλιτεχνικά υλικά), and their creative processes (poíesis), a language develops. That language transforms the *astelier* into a conduit for children’s artistic expressions, communication, and aesthetic descriptions of their engagement, artistic processes, and artful products (see Yanko & Gouzouasis, 2019).

Although the transformation of the classroom into an atelier has enabled new opportunities for learning, there have been constraints. For instance, the time allocated to ensemble learning has been greatly reduced. Moreover, negotiated learning can be a challenge for many children, as they are just beginning to develop the skills to successfully navigate their subjectivities. That being said, our atelier is more than a space for learning through artistic media, it has become a way of music making that the children are always eager to engage in. Thus, the creation of products and processes of creation are equally important and symbiotically related. Their enthusiasm and attention to detail during their endeavours illuminate how it is a successful approach to further students’ understanding and passion for music. In the following sections, we examine the pedagogies and practices of Célestin Freinet, the maker movement, and the Reggio Emilia approach that have influenced the foundations of our atelier.

A THEME AND VARIATIONS ON THE REGGIO ATELIER

In the 1960’s, Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia approach, began incorporating ateliers into his early childhood centers. This space blends qualities of an art studio with that of a laboratory, and is a place for children to explore, create, and express themselves using diverse artistic media, including pencils, markers, and clay (Gandini, Cadwell, Hill, & Schwall, 2005). For instance, the vignettes not only illuminate the use of music, but also science through the terminology (e.g., test 27, test 28...) used by the children and their compensation for the distance and speed of the marble as it rolled down the track. As young learners interact with materials in the atelier, they are encouraged to explore the communicative possibilities of their creations, whereby they represent their plans, ideas, and understandings using one or more modes of expression. We draw from this approach the way in that the arts offer students a means to interpret and understand their world by engaging with expressive, non-symbolic, and symbolic modes of thinking, understanding, knowing, and communicating ideas (Yanko, 2019). Intrigued

as to why Malaguzzi used a French word and not an Italian term, an N-gram analysis of online databases was conducted. We found that the term *atelier* was rarely used in Italian literature until the 1980's, and most of the texts that contain the word are French translations. That reflects a preference in Italy to use the vernacular terms *laboratorio* or *studio dell'arte*. The term *laboratorio* can be traced back to the 17th century Latin word *laboratorium*—a laborer or worker in a workshop, and *studio dell'arte* dates back to the Middle Ages and focuses on the apprenticeship of artists (Cennini, 1899). We believe Malaguzzi was inspired by Célestin Freinet's *atelier* as a model for this space, as it provided the freedom to merge the *laboratorio* and *studio dell'arte* together, and not be confined to one or the other.

The socio-cultural aspects of Reggio Emilia are unique to this region and cannot be duplicated, and because of that we modified four pedagogical underpinnings of this approach for our atelier: (1) the child as a capable being who constructs knowledge with a research perspective through social interaction, play, and guided inquiry; (2) the teacher as a partner, facilitator, and researcher who co-constructs knowledge with the children through discourse in a spiraling pattern of learning; (3) the learning environment where the teacher and child co-construct knowledge; and (4) *progettazione*, which entails distinct philosophies and practices that evoke emergent, project-based learning (Rinaldi, 2006; Gouzouasis & Yanko, 2018). Each underpinning plays an important role in the learning that unfolds in our studio space. For instance, Matt does not take control of the children's inquiry with marbles, but mindfully co-learns and supports his students' cognitive capacities, and empowers them to be protagonists of their own discoveries and understandings—as illustrated in the autoethnographic vignettes. Such support takes great care, and in the past, he has had to reflect on relinquishing control to be more open to co-learning with his students. When children explore and create in the music atelier, the abstract nature of music—particularly music that emerges from sonic exploration and soundscapes (Schafer, 1969) encourages them to represent their understandings in a manner that significantly differs from the conventional methods available to them. They engage in a language of the soundscape, a new language of music (Yanko, 2019) and develop descriptive language that reveals nascent facets of aesthetic understandings (Yanko & Gouzouasis, 2019). The vignettes we share illuminate how the adaptation of these pedagogies encourage and support dynamic meaning making in our studio. Children work with one another to explore multiple ways of imagining, expressing, demonstrating, and interpreting their understandings through the aural soundscape.

ATTUNING TO FREINET'S PEDAGOGIES

Célestin Freinet (1896-1966) understood how the learning environment influences behavior and learning patterns and placed a great deal of importance on the physical arrangement of the classroom. Long before Loris Malaguzzi sought to develop a school of mini-ateliers, Freinet dreamed of a school designed with little *ateliers* arranged around a central room (Freinet, 1990). He metaphorically viewed the layout of the school as a mini-village designed to facilitate the activities of a viable social group, whereby the main room is similar to the main square and the mini-workshops represent the different areas within the village (Freinet, 1993). We take from this space the ways in which desks are movable and arranged in various groupings (or placed aside altogether), and how diverse materials and tools are clearly visible and easily accessible by the children (see Image 2 below).



Image 2: The organization of materials and tools in accordance to the needs of students.

Freinet's mini ateliers are rooted in a co-operative, democratic pedagogy, whereby teachers respect their students' integrity and empower them to take control of their actions and education. His *Complexe d'intérêt* (Centers of interest; 1979) pedagogy illustrates the need to draw on children's interests and curiosity. We are inspired by his belief that a child's interest in life beyond the classroom is the very material that should be sought by teachers—that which does not emerge from textbooks, but rather the students themselves. Although the vignettes focused on the students designing and constructing marble tracks, the students were pursuing their own musical interests. For instance, Susan negotiating her ideas with Casey and James as they altered their structure. Preparing students as valued democratic citizens is a key concept of Freinet that we take to heart. We believe that by restricting children to limited opportunities to convey meaning making, we hinder them from being able to charge of their lives in the world outside of the classroom. With that in mind, we also turn to his *Méthode naturelle* (Natural method; 1990), in which learning is based on an inductive, global approach. To Freinet, learning is subjective and contextual, and is influenced by the natural world and the social and political aspects of contemporary life (1979). When children walk through the door of our atelier, they bring with them everything they experience on the outside world, and we draw from this pedagogy to foster respect for each student by mindfully weaving the curriculum into students inquires. For example, if a student creates a drum set from varied materials in our atelier, Matt interactively discusses with the child how to incorporate rhythm patterns, musical dynamics, and other curricular concepts (see Image 3 below). Doing so not only reinforces curriculum, but also opens a window to expand beyond what is known and accepted, and provokes new thoughts, images, meanings, and novel understandings.



Image 3: Turning to Freinet's *Méthode naturelle* to scaffold curricular concepts in students' ingenious drum set.

Freinet's *Tâtonnement expérimental* (Inquiry-based learning; 1968) supports the ways in which we engage in inquiry, whereby students are able to learn through personal experiences in real-life situations based on exploring solutions for real-world problems, experimentally, through trial and error, empirical group work. That pedagogy emerges in the students' desire for knowledge that is motivated by confronting problems during the design, construction, and testing of their structures. The students came across challenges along the way, but it was by feeling their way—trying one approach then exploring many others, that they began to achieve real learning. That is illustrated in the many tests performed by the children in the second vignette. Moreover, this pedagogy supports 'scientific reasoning' that emerges during inquiries in our atelier, like the inference to Newton's Laws of Motion by the children in both stories. We reflect on Freinet's *Travail coopératif* (Co-operative learning; 1990) pedagogy to augment co-constructivist learning experiences through a co-operative lens. A co-operative class or school is a way of organizing school life for its members. However, it is also a mechanism for enabling enhanced learning experiences based on visits, projects, or productions outside of the studio space. Freinet would regularly explore the natural world and community with children, and they would return to the school and use the mini ateliers as a means to further their meaning making about those

experiences. Similarly, our students often investigate and observe the sonic elements of forests, streams, parks, and their city, and then return to our atelier to further explore, make meaning, and representations of our sonic experiences (Gouzouasis & Yanko, 2018; Yanko, 2019; Yanko & Yap, 2020). Co-operative learning that occurs in the community in which we live enables curiosity to be sparked by the outside world. When that happens, young learners ask questions about their environment and feel a need to understand. They want to know how different parts of their surroundings interrelate, and when they return to the atelier, they formulate hypotheses and develop generalizations from their learning.

AMPLIFICATION THROUGH THE MAKER MOVEMENT

Similar to the ateliers of Reggio Emilia and Freinet, a maker space incorporates diverse tools and materials that are visible and readily available for use. There are many parallels between the maker movement and the other adapted pedagogies and practices from which we draw, but also differences that compliment it. For example, in the maker movement there is an emphasis on design and the development of agency and character (Lang, 2013). Character building supports children in the development of a sense of self that enables them to build competence and foster confidence. When students move from baseline competency to more complex levels of skills, they develop an increased sense of confidence in their abilities (Clapp, Ross, Ryan, & Tishman, 2017). Alongside that, empathy—an important character skill to develop—is the ability to understand, identify with, and experience the feelings of others. Each student has their own ideas about the design, building materials, and sonic composition in mind. They have to determine the best ways of negotiating amongst their peers to harmonize the ideas of their working groups (Yanko, 2019). Although there were no concerns with character development and empathy in the two vignettes, this does occur often when children negotiate subjectivities within group learning experiences (Yanko, 2019; Yanko & Yap, 2020). In consideration, students need to learn how see and interpret the perspectives of others.

We turn to the maker movement to provide opportunity for agency, which is the capacity to make choices about *how* to act, not just the capacity to act (Clapp, Ross, Ryan, & Tishman, 2017). When our students act with a sense of agency, they are cognizant of what they are doing and understand that they have choices in the course of their actions and processes of exploration. For instance, learners solidify their newly acquired and often fragile knowledge of an artistic skill or technique by teaching what they have just learned from, or taught to, someone else. Over the years, we have observed that students are eager to share their new skills with other students who may struggle with finding solutions to similar problems.

With those principles in mind, we turn to the maker movement to enable students to develop sensibilities and sensitivities to design. That allows them to become attuned to the designed dimension of objects and systems (Clapp, Ross, Ryan, & Tishman, 2017). For instance, in the first vignette the two children adapt their design and structure according to the scope of materials in our atelier. Also, the second vignette illuminates how a sensitivity to design requires students to understand how things are made—how the parts and pieces of a marble structure fit together, and how to respond and alter plans each time a marble goes astray. As learners develop a sensitivity to design in the atelier, they begin to use their senses to meticulously observe with patience and care—they look again and again to notice each intricacy, each nuance, and each detail. Aesthetic sensitivity to design also enables children to develop an understanding of important minute details in music, such as describing differentiating polyphonic voicings, hearing overtones, experimenting with dynamics and tempo, and discerning the subtleties of timbre.

Furthermore, being attuned to design makes it possible to see opportunity to effect change, and as students ascertain a sensitivity to design, they also come to understand that the designed world is malleable (Clapp, Ross, Ryan, & Tishman, 2017). This occurred in both vignettes, as the children had to adapt their designs, accordingly, illustrating that it is important to be aware that it is possible for designs to be reimagined or repurposed.

CODA: CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Susan Langer (1953) posits, “The human environment, which is the counterpart of any human life, holds the imprint of a functional pattern; it is the complementary organic form. Therefore any...place articulated by the imprint of human life, must seem organic” (p. 99). To us, our atelier is a living studio that is in a continuous state of flux, as it changes in relation to the learning experience and needs of the students. It is not a static space where students engage with provided materials to replicate the instruments and sounds of the world around them, but a space that provokes them go beyond what is known to explore anew and make important and valued discoveries. The livingness within our atelier evokes a process that draws from the living aspect of living inquiry (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Gouzouasis, 2006b), and cogitates knowledge as a state of being, and becoming, with one’s self and community.

Developing underpinnings from the adapted approaches has supported students to develop the tools and mindsets needed to participate, learn, and be successful in their endeavors. We believe aspects of these approaches—like the hands-on, collaborative/co-operative, experimental, experiential learning—provide a rich and diverse foundation for in-depth creative discovery and wonder. That has enabled our studio space to afford new opportunities to develop thinking dispositions such as divergent thinking, critical thinking, close observation, and aesthetic sensitivity. Also, we have found that the adapted pedagogies that respect the rights of each individual learner and foster character, empathy, agency, and sensitivity to design, evoke a student-centered environment that not only develops identity, but also autonomy to take responsibility for one’s own education.

Maxine Greene (1995) posits, “When students choose to view themselves in the midst of things and have the imagination to envision new things emerging, more and more beginnings seem possible” (p. 22). Our atelier is a unique space that empowers children to develop ways of engaging in artful thinking and learning, whereby they learn how to imagine new ideas, test boundaries, experiment with alternatives, develop the language of critical descriptions to demonstrate basic aesthetic understandings, elaborate using rich descriptive language, and generate new ideas based on experiences. Similar to the place-based nature of the Reggio Emilia approach, our atelier should not be replicated, but should inspire other educators to design and co-construct their own studio spaces that empower children to explore, create, tinker, and begin to imagine and envision the possibilities of their wonders.

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