

Reggio Documentation Panel-Making

The Reggio Documentation Panels seek to answer two central questions about the student learning experience in an arts- integrated classroom:

- 1) What just happened here? and
- 2) How did this happen?

A documentation panel makes the students' learning visible and breaks down the isolated classroom, showing the rest of the learning community (other teachers, students, administrators, parents, etc.) the thinking processes that are happening in the classroom. Documentation panels are an important part of a well-balanced arts-integration approach as knowledge is never verifiable through listening or observing alone. The panels help students revisit their ways of making meaning.

By documentation, we mean the practice of observing, recording, interpreting, and sharing the processes and products of learning through a variety of media in order to deepen and extend that learning. Documentation panels are not just retrospective, but also prospective. They shape the design of future contexts for learning. Documentation panels should be put up in the classroom to allow the students to view and respond to a highlighted learning experience. Teaching teams can listen to their students' reactions and responses, and develop instruction around what they hear their students expressing interest and curiosity in.

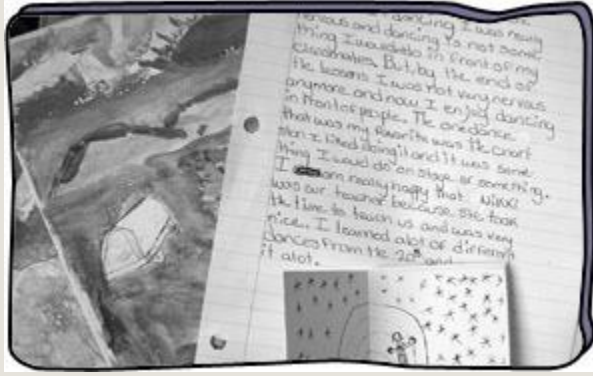
STEP 1



DEVELOP A HYPOTHESIS WITH A TEACHING TEAM

Identify with teaching team members an action research question for your panel, e.g., "How does drawing facilitate my students' understanding of story plot?" Develop a hypothesis for your investigation, e.g., "Students tend to see story plot sequencing more clearly when they can develop visual imagery for the arc of a story."

STEP 2



DOCUMENT STUDENT LEARNING

Take photos of students engaged in making their artwork. Look for moments of engagement, problem solving and critical thinking. It is important to have intention when taking photographs. A sequence of photos that shows the beginning, middle, and end of a process helps tell the story to a viewer later on. Photograph students' artwork, performances, designs and drawings, writings, rehearsals, group discussions, critique conversations, etc. Do not be intimidated with getting close to your subject. Close-up photographs of students working and of student work highlight details and provide insights that could be missed with large group shots.

Move through the room and collect student voices in the moment of art-making with a voice recording device. Leaving the recorder at a workstation can capture spontaneous conversations and student remarks.

Build in time to your lessons for individual reflections. Have students respond in their journals at the end of the day's events. Structure your reflection questions to capture the students' thoughts on their thinking processes (e.g, where did you get stuck in today's art-making and how did you solve this problem?). Student reflections can be captured through written responses or through their designs and drawings.

Multiple perspectives strengthen documentation. All of these materials will be utilized in the synthesis of a Reggio Documentation Panel.

STEP 3



REVISIT PHOTOS

Print out visually compelling photographs and identify several students who can sit down with you to review the photos of themselves. Ask the students questions about the art-making process: "What is going on in this photo? Can you tell me what you are doing? Why did you make that decision? How were you working together? What challenges did you face?" You want to keep the questioning process open-ended. This is a great opportunity for the teaching team to observe how students learn from each other.

As students look at the photos, they are re-visiting specific learning moments within the art-making process. You are inviting your students to seek or establish new meaning from these experiences. Students may be detached from the moment, but no less removed, when looking at photos. The process of revisiting allows students to begin to look for patterns to create meaning and for connections that were not obvious while they were a resident in the experience.

Students can write out their responses or you can take notes or use the voice recording device.

STEP 4



IDENTIFY A RICH LEARNING MOMENT

After your teaching team has reviewed students' thoughts, original artwork, drawings, designs, photos, and reflections, identify a specific learning moment within the unit that they want to highlight. This moment can be focused around one student or a group of students, with the implication that it is representative of the learning experienced by the whole class. By focusing on a particular moment, you are able to deeply investigate and highlight the rich experiences of your students' learning.

The teaching team comes together for this discourse and the creation of a Reggio Documentation Panel while the unit is still underway, at a mid-point reflection meeting, or during a regularly scheduled team meeting. You will need at least one hour completely dedicated to this process.

STEP 5



DEVELOP NARRATION

At the midway reflection meeting, you will begin to develop the teacher narration for the panel. With a rich learning moment identified, begin to develop your own narration, which is a synthesis and analysis of what is happening during the highlighted learning moment. In the role of the narrator you are a researcher. You are studying your students' behavior and making note of it.

You articulate through the narrative voice (in present tense using third person), speaking as a teaching team, e.g., "We notice Percy make a connection..." or "Percy suddenly recalls a drawing technique and struggles to use it in his work." Put forth statements and assertions. Do not be afraid to make a claim about what you are seeing.

STEP 6



PUTTING A DOCUMENTATION PANEL TOGETHER

Once you have collected all the design elements and developed narration, it is time to translate your study of the students into a documentation panel. On a foam core board, your teaching team lays out the documentation of the students' work and of the students working, along with your teaching team's narration. The viewer should be able to answer the two central questions:

- 1) What just happened here? and
- 2) How did this happen?

As the panels focus on the student voice and student work of a particular learning moment, it is important not to distract the viewer with unnecessary decorations, borders, or symbols. Less is more. The photographs should be large and inviting, and either student quotes or teacher narration should accompany the photos to clarify what is happening. Typing up student quotes, interviews, and teacher narrations provides a nice, clean design quality. The font should be large enough for the viewer to read from two or three feet away, but not so large as to take the viewer's attention away from the photographs. Including original student designs (drawings, diagrams, maps, etc.) is a great way to highlight student decision-making as well as the art-making process. When possible, it is great to include three-dimensional student work and designs as well.

When deciding where to place photos, narrations and other documentation on the panel, pay close attention to how the panel "reads." Be cognizant of how your layout captures the viewer's eye. The panel should read like a story with a clear path for the reader to follow. Be careful not to "bunch" similar photos together with no clear connection to other documentation presented on the panel.

The rigorous work you put into collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing student documentation and reflection will almost effortlessly guide the creation of a meaningful and attractive Reggio Documentation Panel for you to showcase to your class and the rest of your learning community.