



Environment as The Third Teacher

Exploration and practice of Reggio Emilia education at Whittle ELC

by Joshua Barr

**“There are three teachers of children: adults, other children and their physical environment.”
-Loris Malaguzzi (Creator of the Reggio Emilia Approach)**

Here at Whittle School & Studios we follow the Reggio Emilia Approach in our Early Learning Center. Reggio-inspired learning environments are thoughtfully designed and organized in a way that engages and develops students beyond the direction a teacher provides. The objective is to create an environment that nurtures respect for children’s work, creative exploration, communication, and relationships.

First, we design our classroom and school spaces to be places of wonder and curiosity by creating varied areas of interest and possibility for children to explore. As time goes on our classrooms adapt and change to follow the interests of the children because we see the environment “as a living organism, a place of shared relationships among the children, the teachers, and the parents and a feeling of belonging in a world that is alive,



welcoming and authentic” -Loris Malaguzzi (Creator of the Reggio Emilia Approach).

We follow some key principles when designing our classroom environments, influenced by beliefs in the Reggio Emilia Approach. Natural materials and light are highlights of our spaces. Each classroom glimpses into another vital environment to learn from, our city/community. As our students show interest in certain areas as our classroom adapts to challenge their view of the world and allow for exploration in these areas. Take a look at some of our classrooms and you will see that each is unique and highlights different areas of exploration.

In Pre-K 2 the classroom developed into a fire station and a place for students to explore the role of a firefighter and how they do their job. This developed from a project on trains that led into exploring a city and in turn led to questions about what places

| Classroom developed into a 'fire station'



should we find in a city. The children said that a city should have fire station. The teachers then provided materials to allow students create a fire truck for the fire station.

In Pre-K5 the children became fascinated by wind by observing feathers floating over the air purifier in the classroom. Now the classroom has an airplane to further this exploration of how things travel through wind.

The environment is not just the classroom but all areas of our school and community. Here is a Kindergarten class exploring and researching trees in our wonder woods. When children are able to use all their senses they are more capable of engaging into a topic.

“The environment is not only the 3rd teacher but a visual representation of their work and thinking. During our exploration of dinosaurs, the children were interested in creating a forest and river for their dinosaurs. They shared their ideas of how to make it and worked collaboratively to create their forest and river.” -Elaine Eastwood (Pre-K 4 Teacher)

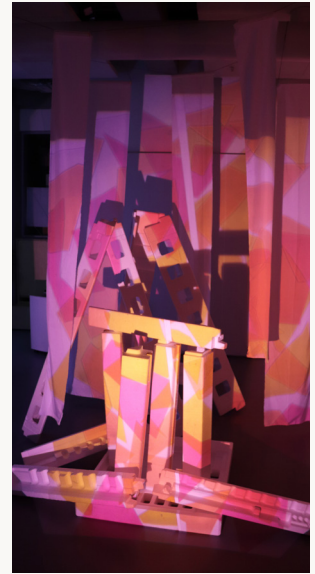
The environment is not just the classroom but all areas of our school and community.



‘Airplane’ in Classroom

“A walk around Whittle school got the children of Prek 6 enchanted about flowers. We started our flower exploration by creating a bouquet shop where children were able make their own bouquets. Different painting activities using loose parts, pictures of painted flowers, and displays of colorful laminated petal arrangements on our windows. All this and much more made our third teacher play a vital part in our learning journey.” -Ms Miki Barr (Pre-K6 Chinese Teacher)

Our ELC also contains shared spaces to explore areas of shared interest. Our Light and Shadow room is an environment that creates wonder and curiosity. “The importance of light - lighting



1	2	1. Bouquet shop
	3	2. Paint with flowers
	4	3. Exploring Trees
		4. Light and Shadow Room

should offer an environment illuminated from a variety of sources; incandescent, fluorescent, vapour, halogen etc in order to make optimal use of the wide range of possibilities. Light should flood from underneath and through objects to create shadows on the floor and walls. This emphasis comes from a deep understanding of how light calls our attention to changes in colour, form, motion and personal perspective.” (100 Languages of Children)

About the Author

Joshua Barr
Teacher of ELC

Joshua has been teaching ECE (Early Childhood Education) in China since 2010 and has worked in Australian, Chinese, IB/PYP and American curriculum schools. He has obtained a BA (Honors) in English and American Studies, MA in Education Leadership and Management, MEd in Education Globalization and is currently finishing an MA in Early Childhood Education. In each school in which Josh has worked, he has taken on a number of roles alongside his teaching responsibilities, including Teacher Trainer, English Department Manager, Sports Coach, and Kindergarten Subject Advisor. These positions have helped Josh develop a number of skills, including training new teachers, curriculum design/development, and leading teams in projects, year groups, and departments.



环境是幼儿的第三位教师

荟同幼儿园对瑞吉欧教育模式的探索与实践

文 / 张媚 (Miki Barr)

成人、同伴以及环境是幼儿发展中不可或缺的三位教师。

—— Loris Malaguzzi (瑞吉欧教育体系的创始人)

在荟同学校幼儿部，我们采用瑞吉欧教育模式。经过精心设计与建构的瑞吉欧环境，不仅能吸引幼儿自主探索，而且能够帮助幼儿发展不同领域的技能，幼儿自主从瑞吉欧环境中获得的学习成果往往要比教师直接教授的成果要显著。瑞吉欧教育模式旨在创作一种培养对幼儿工作尊重、引导创造性探索、利于沟

通与关系建立的环境。起初，我们通过创造丰富的区域以满足幼儿多样的兴趣与探索需求，将教室与学校空间设计成充满奇思妙想的地方。随着时间的推移，教室环境会随着幼儿的学习兴趣变化而改变。如瑞吉欧创始人 Loris Malaguzzi 对环境的描述，“在一个承载了幼儿、教师与家长之间复杂互动的关系



的环境中，幼儿们能感受到活力、归属感和信任感。

在设计班级环境时，我们遵循瑞吉欧教育体系中的几点关键原则。在荟同幼儿园，自然采光及自然材料是我们环境中的亮点。幼儿在每间教室都能够无障碍地观察到其他重要的学习环境，如我们的社区和城市。教室环境辅助幼儿的学习与探究，随着幼儿兴趣的变化而改变。以下是荟同幼儿园个别班级的环境展示图，您会发现每个班级的独特之处。

Pre-k2 班级内布置了一所可供幼儿扮演消防员、探究消防演是如何工作的消防站。为什么消防站会建立于 Pre-k2 班级呢？原来这是 Pre-k2 班级在学习关于火车的项目时，延伸出关于城市的

| 幼儿园学生在教室里扮演消防员



话题：城市除了有火车，还需要什么？
幼儿提出，城市里应该要有消防站，于是教师为幼儿提供了许多不同的材料，让幼儿自行制作消防站以及消防车。

Pre-K5 班级的幼儿们观察到：当把羽毛放在空气净化器上方时，羽毛会漂浮起来，于是他们对风产生了浓厚的兴趣。他们的教室因此也布置了一架飞机，供幼儿进一步探究风是如何影响人们的生活的。

学习环境不仅限于教室环境，还包括学校及社区等环境。为了让幼儿能充分使用他们的感官学习关于树的知识，对树产生更浓厚、持久的兴趣，荟同幼儿园大班的个别班级到学校的奇幻森林实地探索、研究不同的树。



| 幼儿园学生在教室搭建的“飞机”

环境不仅是第三位教师，还是能够直观展示幼儿思想与学习作品的载体。在 Pre-K4 学习探究恐龙的过程中，幼儿对创造恐龙居住地非常感兴趣，于是分享了他们的奇思妙想，使用不同的材料合作制作了森林与河流给他们的小恐龙们。——Pre-K4 英文主班老师 Elaine Eastwood

校园漫步过程中，Pre-k6 的孩子们对鲜花产生了浓厚的兴趣。Pre-k6 在班级设置了鲜花店，幼儿可以自主到花店制作自己的手捧花。与此同时，幼儿在教室使用不同的材料绘制、摆置鲜花，并使用鲜花及过塑纸制作鲜花窗花等。Pre-k6 教室的每个角落都布满了鲜花及关于鲜花的作品，环境作为幼儿的第三位教师在幼儿的学习过程中扮演了至关重要的角色。

学习环境不仅限于教室环境，还包括学校及社区等环境。

在荟同幼儿园，我们营造了共同探索区域供有相同学习兴趣的幼儿进行探索所



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|---|---|--------------|
| 1 | 2 | 1. 制作手捧花 |
| | 3 | 2. 鲜花作为创作素材 |
| | 4 | 3. 研究树木与自然环境 |
| | | 4. 光影房间 |

学。比如我们光影房间为幼儿提供了满足其好奇心与创造的环境。瑞吉欧《儿童的100种语言》中提到了“光的重要性，环境中的光应该是多样化的（如白炽灯、荧光灯等）。不同的灯光能达到不同的效果并满足幼儿不同的探究需求。当光线从下方穿透物体，从而在地板和墙壁上产生阴影，由此唤起幼儿对由光引起的颜色、形式、运动以及个人视觉变化产生深刻理解。

关于作者

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幼儿园教师

张媚女士是一名具有教师资格且经验丰富的幼儿双语教师，获有国内教育学学士学位以及美国幼儿教育硕士学位。2013年起，张媚便置身于幼儿教育事业中，好学的她一直不断地提升自我专业技能、进修与幼教相关的知识内容，其中包括学习享誉幼教届的蒙特梭利、瑞吉欧以及奥尔夫音乐教学法与课程等；为教师与家长提供工作坊、培训等。加入荟同前，张媚教授过多种不同的国际课程，如：IB-PYP课程、加拿大课程以及美国课程。