




Pedagogical Prompts for ENVIRONMENT AS THIRD TEACHER



Invitation to Engage

Dear Reader,

We invite you to critically think about pedagogy using the six pedagogical approaches provided in [How Does Learning Happen?](#).

As you move through the document, feel free to engage with it on your own terms. Jump to pages that speak to you by clicking on the flower icons or underlined text.

Don't be scared to stand still and sit with a quote, question, or concept, and remember that learning can be non-linear.



The term “pedagogy” may be unfamiliar to some in early years settings. Thinking about pedagogy provides a new way for educators to consider their work. It helps educators to:

- Look more carefully at **what** they do each and every day;
- Think about the **why** of their practice;
- Understand more deeply **how** their actions have an impact on children and their families.



Excerpt from [How Does Learning Happen?](#)

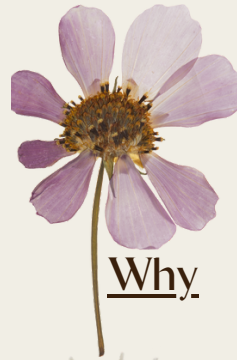
You may also keep a journal to record your thoughts all in one place; this will help you return to your reflections and see your learning process and progress. If you prefer an online journal, here are some options:

- [Penzu](#)
- [Journey Cloud](#)
- [My Journalate](#)

Pedagogical Prompts



What



Why



How



Extend



The word environment translated directly from English to Italian becomes **ambiente**. In English, a closer word would be **ambience**, which means something somewhat different from environment. However, these are closer in meaning in Italian. **Although we talk about the environment in terms of the materials, equipment, and enhancements that create it, what we are trying to create is less tangible than the pieces we use to create it.** It is the way a room feels in its entirety, the way it looks but also the way it smells and sounds, the way the air moves through it, whether it is warm or cold, whether it invites us to linger or encourages us to pass quickly though.





[In Te Whāriki], children are valued as active learners who choose, plan, and challenge. This stimulates a climate of reciprocity, 'listening' to children (even if they cannot speak), observing how their **feelings, curiosity**, interest, and **knowledge** are engaged in their early childhood environments, and encouraging them to make a contribution to their own learning.



Access the full
article [here](#)





“ If the environment is the third teacher, what language does she speak? ”



In "Art that Celebrates the Process", Richards puts this in concrete terms; "If a teacher is controlling available types and quantities of materials, such as how much glue children may use, learning is restricted. It is the very act of experimenting that teaches them how much glue is too much, which materials they need to create their own vision, or what the word sticky means."

ExchangeEveryDay, March 18, 2022

Questions for Reflection

How do you feel in your learning environment?

What in your environment sparks joy (for both you and children)?

What in your environment sparks independence and agency (for both you and children)?

What do you need from your environment to do your best work?

How do children see their ideas bubbling in their learning environment?

If no instructions were shared, how would children go about their day?

How are nomadic learning experiences supported within your environment? Do these include children and materials?







New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2017). *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum*. <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Early-Childhood/ELS-Te-Whariki-Early-Childhood-Curriculum-ENG-Web.pdf>

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *How Does Learning Happen*. <https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>

Wurm, J. P. (2005). *Working in the Reggio Way: A Beginner's Guide for American Teachers*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Pairman, A., & Terreni, L. (2001). *If the environment is the third teacher what language does she speak*. In Fourth Child and Family Policy Conference, Dunedin (Vol. 26).

Speer, S. (2022). *Children Working with Leaf Centrepiece [Photographs]*. Artists and Children Together.