

## DOCUMENTATION

### A WORKING DEFINITION

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. (MLV, 2005)



### FIVE FEATURES OF DOCUMENTATION

1. Documentation involves a specific question that guides the process, often with an epistemological focus.
2. Documentation involves collectively analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating individual and group observations; it is strengthened by multiple perspectives.
3. Documentation makes use of multiple languages (different ways of representing and expressing thinking in various media and symbol systems).
4. Documentation makes learning visible; it is not private. Documentation becomes public when it is shared back with learners—whether children, parents, or teachers.
5. Documentation is not only retrospective, it is also prospective. It shapes the design of future contexts for learning.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF DOCUMENTATION

- Documentation focuses on the processes as well as the outcomes and products of learning.
- Documentation is fundamental to metacognitive activity; it helps children and adults understand how they and others learn.
- Documentation serves as a memory of what goes on in the classroom, offering students an opportunity for reflection, for evaluation of other children's theories and hypotheses, and for self-assessment. It moves us away from the idea that it is only the teacher who teaches.
- Documentation can be created by teachers, children and/or parents.
- Documentation often has a narrative quality, telling the story of an individual's or group's learning experiences.
- Documentation can include moments of learning; it does not need to be restricted to project work. One way to start is by capturing a single moment, writing it up, and sharing it with others.
- Making visible images of learning and being together in a group is a way to foster group identity and learning.
- There are many ways to document.