

Dancing with Rhizomes: Enlivening a Pedagogy of Listening

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Within [a pedagogy of listening](#) (Rinaldi, 2006) lives a tension between pulling closer and stepping back from what we are encountering. Pulling closer and stepping back are like a dance, a dance requiring presence, intimacy, attunement and embodiment. This dance occurs when we critically reflect on [traces of practice](#) (Government of British Columbia, 2019, p. 54)—auditory and otherwise—that present themselves. A pedagogy of listening is more than attuning to something “out there” to be extracted from the experience. Rather, we’re listening to create something new. The process is subjective and rhizomatic (for more, see Government of British Columbia, 2019, pp. 25, 47, 105). Senses blur and we wonder: “What part of me is making sense of all this?”



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The [BC Early Learning Framework](#)'s smooth description of a pedagogy of listening, nicely laid out on the page, often feels in contrast to living it, which is actually quite a fumbling ordeal. Risky, in fact, requiring an opening to the unknown. As pedagogists facilitating a forum discussion on the [BC Early Years Professional Development Hub](#) that was thinking with this very concept, we similarly had to open ourselves to the unknown. When we first began the discussion forum, we imagined it would be a lively space where ideas flowed conversationally as people contributed responses to one another, where traces of contributions [trailed vertically down the webpage](#). Very quickly we encountered difficulty with those



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In the many challenges, or limitations, that we face as pedagogists (and as educators), there are also opportunities. Within that tension we can choose to stay with the same thing, think linearly, uphold the status quo, or we can question all that and try something new. Our forum discussion revealed how, as each of our own [thinkings became intertwined rhizomatically](#), something new grew, a transformation happened. The transformation lives with us as we continue to become—with our educators, in online forums, in the lives of classrooms—as we indeed live the work. This transformation will have a ripple effect. Outwardly, exponentially, widely. And, only if we slow down to notice can we see the marks on the water. Do we see them living and moving there? Making their imprint? Take a photo. Write about those movements. Step outside the confines of narrow vertical thinking. Distance ourselves to view the transformation anew, before we are danced elsewhere!

References

Government of British Columbia. (2019). British Columbia early learning framework.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/early-learning/teach/earlylearning/early_learning_framework.pdf

Rinaldi, C. (2006). *In dialogue with Reggio Emilia: Listening, researching, and learning*. Routledge.