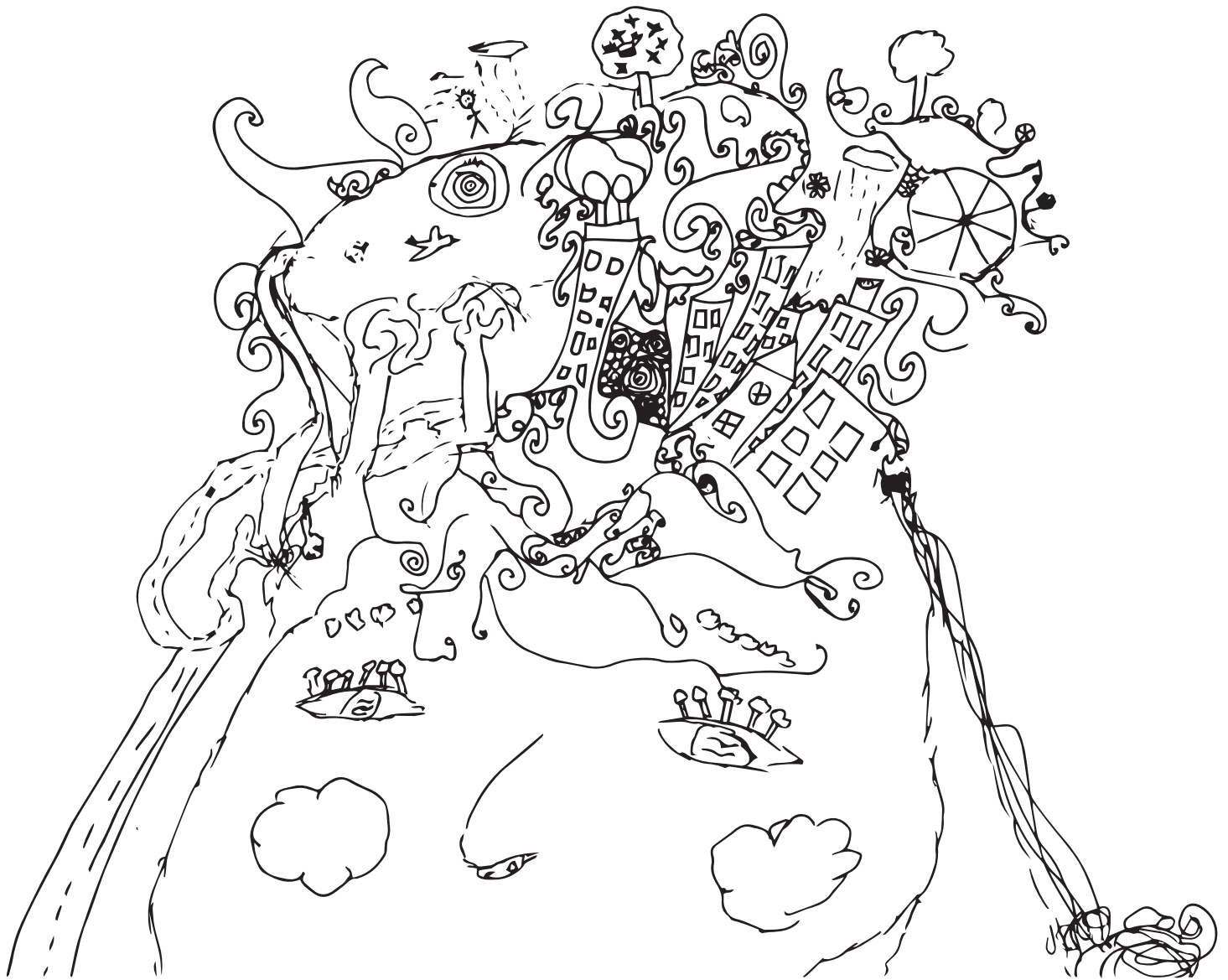


18th Annual OPAL SCHOOL **SUMMER SYMPOSIUM**

Inventing the World



portland
children's
Museum

ABOUT OPAL SCHOOL

Founded in 2001, Opal School of the Portland Children's Museum is a tuition-based early childhood program (Opal Beginning School: 37 children ages 3-5) and publicly-funded elementary school (Opal Charter School: 88 children grades K-5).

Opal School's mission is to strengthen education by provoking fresh ideas concerning environments where creativity, curiosity, and the wonder of learning thrive.

The Portland Children's Museum Center for Learning supports Opal School's mission. The Center presents Opal School's research to educators around the world through conferences, workshops, study tours, consultancies, partnerships, multimedia publications, and an interactive website, opalschool.org

Opal School is guided by a set of values:

- A powerful image of the young child as intelligent, creative, and capable, with gifts and abilities the world needs now
- A belief that children play a central role in the development of their own learning
- A deep respect for differences, however they may be expressed
- A belief that listening, dialogue, and exchange open doors to unimagined possibilities
- A view that learning happens when people form relationships with one another, with ideas, materials, and the environment
- A belief in the rights of children, families, and educators to participate in forming and shaping rich environments of learning, challenge, and choice

These values lead Opal School to **Playful Inquiry**, an approach to learning alive in a community that courageously and collaboratively relies on the unique gifts of childhood to question what it means to be a citizen world-maker in the midst of uncertainty.

INVENTING SCHOOLS FOR INVENTING THE WORLD

We live in a world of our making. Having a strong sense of agency comes from embracing that we have the ability, right, and opportunity to design and create the world we want to live in. Negotiating that process of invention with others is hard work. It requires empathy, curiosity, flexibility, and capacity to embrace different perspectives.

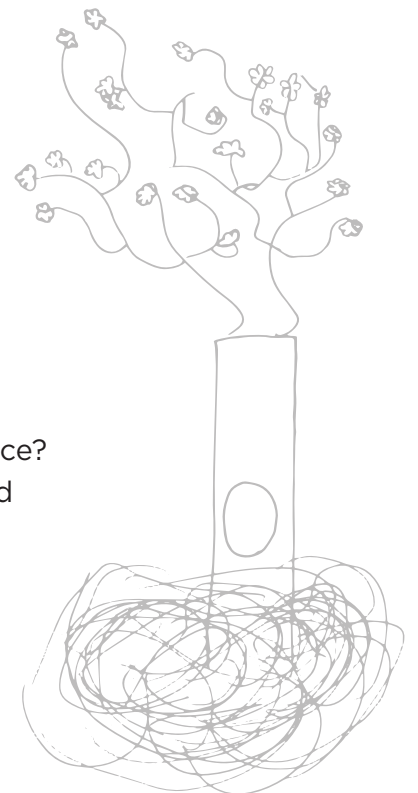
School can be where we practice and strengthen these skills among others – it's where strangers become community. At school, we can learn the benefits of taking safe risks, to become comfortable with uncertainty, to build emotional intelligence, and to exercise civic responsibility.

School can be a place where we identify struggles that we care about addressing – and respond to those problems with others. School can help us learn to cope with the tensions created when we don't know what to do. It can be a place where we learn to be wary of absolute truths and false choices.

This symposium is a celebration of the courage, wisdom, and tremendous capacity to navigate complexity discovered by children and adults when they invent the world together. We hope our time together inspires you to re-imagine the vital role of school for children and democracy: Let's leave better equipped and more strongly committed to working with children to invent more just, dignified, and beautiful worlds.

Together, let's explore:

- What lives in inventiveness?
- What is the value of inventiveness in a democratic society?
What is the relationship between invention and social justice?
- Why might it be important for schools to welcome and expand the dispositions that support inventiveness?
What conditions nurture inventiveness in schools?
- To what extent does inventiveness rely on emotional intelligence?
What kinds of emotional intelligences need to be strengthened in adults who desire to engage with children in environments that support inventiveness?
- What is the relationship between imagination and invention?
How does Playful Inquiry help us see beyond the limits of the present?



INVENTING A FRAMEWORK FOR INVENTIVENESS

For the last year, Opal School has been playing with Ben Mardell and Mara Krechevsky, our friends at Project Zero, to consider some of the conditions in elementary and pre-primary schools that lead to dispositions of inventiveness. Our research - at Opal School and beyond - has resulted in the following document. We expect it to keep developing - in fact, we're sure there will be changes as a result of this Symposium! We're excited to work with you to create something that is of value to a wide range of learning communities

Early childhood and elementary schools invite, expand, and sustain inventiveness when they...

...are grounded in the belief that inventiveness and risk-taking are fundamental human dispositions and that children are strong and capable protagonists of their own learning. Invention education requires a different kind of relationship between teachers and learners.

Invention education requires constant re-invention in light of the changing world.

1.

...are based on clear and explicit values about the purpose of schools.

In a complex world, schools need to foster inventive dispositions and skills that advance a capacity for civic responsibility which lead children to thrive as citizen world-makers pursuing a more just and sustainable future.

2.

...make inventiveness central to the daily life of the classroom. Invention education is not a separate part of the day: it is a pedagogy that transforms the way that children and adults work with each other; is found within and across disciplines; is visible in small moments and across long periods of time. Children and adults are constantly building theories and taking risks, experiencing set-backs as opportunities for learning.



3.

...are driven by big questions that normalize uncertainty. Teachers pose big, open-ended questions that equally value the known and unknown world. The questions asked are ones that teachers have reason to believe have meaning for this group of children to chew on at this point in time. They repeat and make visible children's theories in ways that support, nudge, and challenge thinking.

4.

...embrace the full range of emotions, knowing that academic and intellectual cognition co-exists with feelings. As Immordino-Yang notes, "it is literally neurobiologically impossible to think deeply about things that you don't care about." This promotes children's and adults' engagement in - and extends the depth of - intellectual explorations. The aesthetic dimension is viewed as an essential partner in this effort.

5.

...are grounded in purposeful and facilitated dialogue and collaboration, formal and informal, paired, small-group, and whole-group. In dialogue and collaboration, children and adults put forth ideas, crack them open, create meaning, and invent new ideas and ways to share them. These schools value collaboration and generative democratic exchange.

6.

...rely on play as a strategy for learning within a conflict-rich environment.

Thomas Henricks writes, "Play is not a flight from the world; it is inquiry into the challenges and responsibilities of social living." Children at play experience low-stakes opportunities to explore ideas, take risks, and practice inventiveness. Play provides the opportunity to meet up with problems and practice a willingness to take the risks in solving them.

7.

...empower the use of the imagination,

inviting children through stories and materials to make connections, experience empathy, take advantage of serendipity, and envision an alternative, more just world. In this way, schools push against bureaucratic education that prioritizes the humdrum and reinforces the status quo.

8.

...utilize materials to catalyze, extend, and make thinking visible.

Children have access to a range of materials that embody learning, developing their thinking and making it visible to themselves and others. The materials support children's methods of investigation as well as ways to communicate what they have learned.

9.

...are resourceful in identifying useful cognitive tools that exist in the world and create new ones to support creative and critical thinking. These intellectual strategies and tools may come from disciplines such as psychology, the arts, philosophy, the sciences, or children's own inventions. The practice of seeing your ideas utilized by others advances agency.

10.

...are contingent on reflection. Dewey said that we do not learn from experience; we learn from reflecting on experience. Children examine where ideas come from and how they develop, reflect on how they make connections, find and solve problems, and work through conflict. Teachers systematically and collaboratively reflect on their practice to invent and re-invent their pedagogy. Teachers use artifacts of children's thinking and learning, such as transcripts of conversations and children's work, to ground conversations about teaching and learning and inform their next pedagogical steps.



Wednesday, June 20

The Conditions That Invite, Expand, and Sustain Inventiveness At Opal School

- 8:00 Doors Open: Registration - MILLER HALL
- 8:30-12:00 Inventiveness at Opal School:
Presentations, Discussions, Reflection - MILLER HALL
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch - MILLER HALL
- 1:00-3:00 Inventiveness at Opal School:
Self-guided tours of Opal School classrooms
- 3:00-4:00 End of Day Conversation with Opal School Teachers:
Using documentation to provoke reflection, discussion, and connection
- Groups have been randomly distributed
to support intimacy and relationship.
Please attend the session in:
- Alder Cedar Dogwood
 - Cottonwood Sitka Willow Gallery
- AFTER HOURS
- 4:00-6:00 Welcome celebration - Outdoor Adventure.
Meet new friends! Raise a glass with us!

Thursday, June 21

The Conditions That Invite, Expand, and Sustain Inventiveness In Other Settings

- 8:00 Doors Open - MILLER HALL
- 8:30-8:45 Preparing for the Day
- 9:00-10:30 **BREAKOUT SESSION 1**
- MILLER HALL **Crossing Boundaries to Invent the World**
 - DAVID DOUGLAS ROOM **Maker Education: Making new meaning in your community**
 - MT HOOD ROOM **Re-Imagining Mathematics through
Materials and Projects in The Studio**
 - DOGWOOD CLASSROOM **“Because they’re not kids” -
How Children Utilize the Objects that Adults Toss Away**
 - SITKA CLASSROOM **Mentoring Relationships: Supporting New Staff**
 - CLAY STUDIO **Open Exploration**
- 10:30-11:00 Break: Reflect! Connect! Stretch! Breathe!

11:00-12:30 **BREAKOUT SESSION 2**

- MILLER HALL **Embracing Play as a Strategy for Learning:
Thoughts from the Pedagogy of Play Project**
- DAVID DOUGLAS ROOM **Our Story: Engaging all voices in
the invention process through design thinking**
- MT HOOD ROOM **A Witness for What's Beautiful:
Transcending Trauma Through a Pedagogy of Listening**
- DOGWOOD CLASSROOM **Supporting Creativity and Invention in New York City:
If We Can Make It Here, You Can Make It Anywhere**
- MAKER'S STUDIO **Open Exploration**
- SITKA CLASSROOM **Thinking Routines that Expand Inventive Dispositions**
- LOWER MEADOW **Extending Inventiveness through Outdoor Games**

12:30-1:30 Lunch - MILLER HALL

1:30-3:00 **BREAKOUT SESSION 3**

- MILLER HALL **Invention Education: Constructing a useful framework**
- DAVID DOUGLAS ROOM **Inventing Beautiful Worlds: How making-spaces
inspire ideas at Beginnings Nursery School**
- MT HOOD ROOM **Building Worlds that Reinvent the Wrecking Ball**
- DOGWOOD CLASSROOM **A World of Tiny Machines**
- SITKA CLASSROOM **Story Workshop: Practitioners' Conversation**
- LOWER MEADOW **A Walk in the Woods**

3:15-4:00 Reflection and Connection - MILLER HALL

AFTER HOURS

- 4:15-5:15 Run! Join fellow runners on a hilly, 6-7 mile run to Pittock Mansion. Let Amy know you're coming so everybody starts together.
- 8:00-9:00 Meet-up at Powell's Books!
No trip to Portland is complete without a visit to its center of gravity, Powell's City of Books. Find others from the symposium in the children's book room, where we can exchange notes on our favorites.

BREAKOUT DESCRIPTIONS & BIOS

Opal School Staff attending Symposium 2018 • Read about us at opalschool.org/contributors/

Amy Maki	Hana Hutchings	Lauren Adams	Nicole Simpson-Tanner
Anthony Baney	Hannah Chandler	Leslie Bachman	Paula Mims Dion
Beth Hutchins	Heather Scerba	Mary Gage Davis	Sarah MacPherson
Caroline Wolfe	Katharine Anderson	Matt Karlsen	Susan Harris MacKay
Cassie Roberts	Kathryn Ann Myers	Mauren Campbell	Tara Papandrew
Chris Varley	Kerry Salazar	Nassrin Ghayasi	Xavier Pierce

A Walk in the Woods (Amy Maki)

Opal School students adventure into Hoyt Arboretum weekly. This walk invites you to stretch your legs and meet the places that have inspired children and adults over the years. Put on good walking shoes for a four-mile amble through rolling hills.

A Witness for What's Beautiful: Transcending Trauma Through a Pedagogy of Listening

(Aeriale Johnson)

Many children enter our classrooms each day carrying a heavy load. The statistics are alarming. Twenty-six percent of children in the US will witness or have a traumatic experience before the age of four. How can educators help young children navigate their harrowing lives? How can we empower them to use their many languages to face their world — within and without — and reinvent it in transformative ways that deepen their understanding of themselves and their connections with nature and others? In this session, we will explore these questions and harness the power of our personal stories to discover new ways of being alongside our children.

Aeriale N. Johnson is a kindergarten teacher at Washington Elementary School in San Jose, California. She is a National Board Certified Teacher specializing in early-middle childhood literacy. Aeriale frequently presents at the International Literacy Association Conference and the National Council of Teachers of English Convention. She was the recipient of a Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms fellowship which took her to India in 2016 to study the modern-day impact of the vestiges of colonialism on government schools. In 2015, she received a Global Teacher Fellowship from the Rural School and Community Trust to study in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Aeriale is currently serving as Heinemann Fellow and researching how Reggio-inspired practices are best implemented in schools that serve emergent multilingual children who experience trauma and poverty.

A World of Tiny Machines (Rob van Nood)

We all know the wonder of children making tiny worlds with natural materials. Their stories and creations can be magical. Now imagine bringing the elements of hand cranked machines to that world. In this 90 minute workshop we will make miniature automata machines from wood, wire and paper. Our creations will help tell a story we create as we design, tinker and make. This will be a chance to explore how we can use the concepts of tinkering to infuse new creativity and storytelling into worlds that children already love to create.

For 25 years I have been passionate about creating spaces and authentic learning experiences where kids play a crucial role in the direction and decision making of the learning process. While currently the Educational Technology Coordinator at Catlin Gabel School, I have worked with kids of all ages, preschool to high school seniors at public, charter and independent schools. For the past 10 years I have also been running workshops for teachers around design, tinkering and making. I am the co-founder of Tinker Camp, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting STEAM connected experiences at schools, community organizations, libraries and classrooms. My classrooms have always been filled with tools and materials where students learn by doing and making, constructing meaning and long term understanding.

“Because they’re not kids” - How Children Utilize the Objects that Adults Toss Away

(Robin Koo & Wendy Gelsanlitter)

Our Materials Center began with the belief that children need opportunities to express their ideas. Objects sourced from the local community are ripe with possibility, compliment children’s innate curiosity and their desire to explore. This session focuses on ways to collect and introduce materials in the classroom. We will begin by creating “arrangements” with materials from our Center in NYC and reflect on our processes and techniques. Afterwards, we will present our work with children from schools around the city, demonstrating that it does not take any prior experience to utilize these materials to re-invent worlds and tell new stories.

Wendy Gelsanlitter is The Materials Center Coordinator and Educator and Robin Koo is the Program Director for Teaching Beyond the Square. Robin and Wendy met at Beginnings Nursery School as classroom teachers, and collaborated to create the Materials Floor for the school in 2007. At The Materials Center, a community resource open to the public, they have been hosting field trips in addition to bringing found materials to NYC public schools. The Materials Center was established by Teaching Beyond the Square, a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of early childhood education through the advancement of developmentally appropriate practices through collaborative partnerships with school communities. We work with educators, administrators and school communities to create educational experiences that are more playful, engaging and equitable for all children.

Building Worlds that Reinvent the Wrecking Ball (Levia Friedman)

What happens when third graders construct an understanding of the Dominant Narrative of the history of their city and then invent a way to dismantle it?

How does student agency lead to inventiveness, connection, and identity?

The curriculum co-created in my classroom this year taught me what it means to live under the constant threat of oppression AND what it means sit firmly in a place of action when reacting to injustice.

In this session I will share some stories and invite participants to build worlds of their own and experience them through social connections, perspective taking, and metaphorical thinking.

Levia Friedman is a former Opal School teacher. She is currently teaching third grade at Sunnyside Environmental School, a focus option school within the Portland Public School District. She is finding ways to blend her school's focus on social justice and racial equity with her strong commitment to inquiry-based, social constructivist learning.

Crossing Boundaries to Invent the World (Melinda Hayward, Kassy Ell, and Steve Davee)

What can happen when children cross the boundaries of adult expectations? What can happen when children and teachers cross the boundaries of the expectations they hold for themselves?

How does boundary transgression change the world? Teachers working in three inquiry-based preschool classrooms, a collaboration between Teaching Preschool Partners and two public school districts, share stories that challenge the entrenched beliefs about the capacity of children who live on the margins of society. Participants in this session will have a ‘hands-on’ opportunity to practice crossing boundaries.

Teaching Preschool Partners, a non-profit organization founded by Judy Graves and Catherine Willmott, take the inquiry approaches honed at Opal School over many years to priority populations in public elementary schools that serve vulnerable children who are often defined by their deficits. Melinda Hayward, lead teacher at Prescott Teaching Preschool, Kassy Ell, Lead teacher at Gladstone Teaching Preschool and Steve Davee, former Opal School instructor and MakerSpace trainer share stories of children and teachers who are crossing the boundaries of entrenched beliefs.

Embracing Play as a Strategy for Learning: Thoughts from the Pedagogy of Play Project

(Ben Mardell & Mara Krechevsky)

Schools that invite, expand, and sustain inventiveness rely on play as a strategy for learning. Yet incorporating play into the school day isn't always easy. In fact, sometimes play and school are in tension with each other. In this session we will discuss what it means to place play at the heart of school. What is playful learning and what does it look like? What are the core principles that help set the conditions for a pedagogy of play?

Mara Krechevsky is a senior researcher at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She is the Project Director of Making Learning and Thinking Visible, a cross-cultural collaboration to adapt PZ frameworks for Italian secondary schools, and a researcher on the Pedagogy of Play Project, a collaboration with the International School of Billund, Denmark, to develop a pedagogy for supporting learning through play from preschool to middle school. Mara has been conducting educational research for over 30 years, including directing Making Learning Visible (MLV), an investigation into documenting and assessing individual and group learning from preschool to high school, based on collaborative research with educators from Reggio Emilia. Mara has authored or co-authored seven books and over 30 articles and book chapters.

Ben Mardell is a principal investigator on the Pedagogy of Play, a collaboration with the LEGO Foundation and the International School of Billund, exploring how play can have a central part in children's learning in school. Ben has been associated with Project Zero since 1999, initially as a researcher on the Making Learning Visible (MLV) project and helped co-author Making Learning Visible: Children as Individual and Group Learners and Making Teaching Visible: Documentation of Individual and Group Learning as Professional Development. After continuing his work as a preschool and kindergarten teacher, Ben returned as a researcher on MLV and co-authored Visible Learners: Promoting Reggio-Inspired Approaches in All Schools. Ben's publications include: From Basketball to the Beatles: In Search of Compelling Early Childhood Curriculum and Growing Up in Child Care: A Case For Quality Early Education. When not at PZ, Ben enjoys playing with his family (hiking, swimming and playing games) and participating in triathlons.

Extending Inventiveness through Outdoor Games (Amy Maki)

What happens when you take a well-worn game and lead children in inventing new characters and rules? How might the questions explored in the classroom and PE be interwoven in ways that lead to deeper community understandings? Join Opal School's Outdoor Education Specialist in the field for some full-bodied play. Wear shoes you can move in!

Invention Education: Constructing a useful framework

(Ben Mardell, Mara Krechevsky, Matt Karlsen, Susan MacKay)

With funding from The Lemelson Foundation, Opal School and Project Zero set out to map a framework that invites, sustains, and extends inventive dispositions in schools. The framework is intended to help educators design instruction, document learning, inform instruction, and offer a shared language for thinking about invention and inventiveness. In this session, the research team will engage you in a conversation about the draft framework. How might it be useful in your setting? What ideas does it spark? How could it be improved? We are eager to hear your contributions. Be prepared to roll up your sleeves!

Inventing Beautiful Worlds: How making-spaces inspire ideas at Beginnings Nursery School

Teachers from Beginnings Nursery School, located in New York City, will share several stories of how they have supported children as they make their ideas come to life in their classroom mini-studios. During this hands-on workshop, you will learn how to make ordinary items into beautiful materials to supplement your classroom making-spaces. In addition to learning how to prepare and display found objects, you will also see a variety of ways to curate materials and finished works of art with and for children. For more information on Beginnings Nursery School, please visit our website: www.beginningsnursery.org

Located in New York City, Beginnings Nursery School is a progressive preschool serving children ages 18 months through 5 years. Our emergent curricula are child-centered, Reggio-inspired, and often include a variety of found objects that we source from our homes, local businesses, and the many design industries in our city.

Our presentation team is comprised of studio teacher Amy Miller and classroom teachers Jeanne Graham, Laura Graham, Abigail Cook, Lily Byerly, and Justyna Kittel. Joining us as a materials facilitator will be classroom teacher Jessica Winston. Please visit our website for individual bios: www.beginningsnursery.org/staff.html

Maker Education: Making new meaning in your community (Stephanie Chang)

Outside of the much-hyped tools and activities, maker education is ultimately an approach and vehicle to deeper, more relevant learning. Our world is a better place when youth have the agency and opportunities to create meaning in their lives and in their communities. We'll dive into an interactive, hands-on session to explore how making allows for this learning and creativity to occur, how schools and informal settings are fostering the environments and cultures that support it, and the wonderful variety embedded in it all. Join us to dig in, talk shop, and take away big ideas and practical tips.

Stephanie Chang is the Director of Programs at Maker Ed, focused on supporting educators and institutions across the country to integrate maker-centered learning into their work, whether through curriculum, space design, facilitation, assessment, infrastructure, or materials. For more than a decade, her overall work has been in experiential education, and she continues to be interested in bridging formal and informal learning, working to best leverage the affordances of technology for learning, and designing inclusive, invigorating, and authentic environments for learning and teaching.

Mentoring Relationships: Supporting New Staff (Mary Gage Davis and Tara Papandrew)

As new staff arrive, schools face the challenge of supporting each new member to find their place in the community - while maintaining a vital culture consistent with the school's values. In this session, Mary Gage and Tara will share some of what they have learned in their efforts to support this process - and will encourage productive conversation in the hopes of inviting and expanding the wisdom of all who attend.

Open Exploration (self-guided)

Portland Children's Museum's Clay and Maker Studios will be open for your inventive adventures.

Our Story: Engaging all voices in the invention process through design thinking

(Rich Normality Design Collaborative)

What does it take to invent? Design thinking adds empathy to the process of solving problems. Our story includes the viewpoints of three-to-six-year-old children, teachers, grandparents, college students from various disciplines, and an industry partner. Actively engaging multiple voices is where the magic happens. Through a process of gaining empathy, defining the problem, ideating, prototyping, testing and gathering feedback innovation flourishes. Please join us as we share our story and reflect on outcomes. Participants will actively explore the space in between, participate in a design process, and learn how to enhance problem solving experiences through interdisciplinary collaboration.

At South Dakota State University (SDSU), faculty from six disciplines created the Rich Normality Design Collaborative to explore using design thinking for innovation and invention. The team includes Roxanne Lucchesi, M.S., Advertising; Todd Letcher, Ph.D., Mechanical Engineering; Barb Heller, M.S., Economics; Craig Silvernagel, Ph.D., Entrepreneurial Studies; Angela McKillip, M.Arch, Architecture/Interior Design; and Kay Cutler, Ph.D., Early Childhood Education. The team collaborates with industry partner, Chris Hume, Executive Director and Founder of Kodo Kids, LLC, alongside the Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education at SDSU to create authentic contexts for design processes.



Re-Imagining Mathematics through Materials and Projects in The Studio (Janice Novakowski)

How might children think through and about mathematics with different materials? What affordances do mathematically structured materials and tools, natural materials and art materials provide for students as they uncover mathematical understanding? We have created The Studio in one of our elementary schools for children to engage in mathematical projects and to make math to math, math to self and math to world connections. The Studio space has nudged teachers and children to re-imagine what mathematics teaching and learning can be and to construct mathematical ideas and identity through holistic, aesthetic experiences. Janice will share images and stories from The Studio and we will engage in mathematical thinking through materials.

Janice Novakowski is a district teacher consultant for the Richmond School District in Richmond, BC, Canada. Her current role is to support K-12 teachers and students in enacting BC's curriculum framework, particularly in the area of mathematics. She facilitates a provincial network that is examining how Reggio-inspired practices increase engagement and promote deeper, connected learning in mathematics through materials and projects. Janice's graduate studies have focused on mathematical inquiry and problem-posing and a current area of passion is working with teachers and children in inclusive learning environments to re-imagine the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Story Workshop: Practitioners' Conversation (Kerry Salazar)

Opal School has developed its approach to early literacy around the pillars of meaning making, immersion in the arts, time for play, and sharing stories. Educators around the world have embraced Story Workshop and are exploring it in varied settings. This session invites teachers who have already begun exploring the approach in their settings to share their experiences and respond to each other's questions.

Supporting Creativity and Invention in New York City:

If We Can Make It Here, You Can Make It Anywhere (Robin Koo & Wendy Gelsanliter)

The value of incorporating found materials that are open ended, promote different points of view and invite collaboration has gained new importance with the spread of process based work in schools across the country. The Materials Center began as a small space and developed into a public resource center serving the greater New York City area. It has spawned the development of materials resource carts, closets and rooms across the city. Robin and Wendy will share the lessons learned and provide a visual and tangible how-to guide for setting up a materials area, whether it's for your classroom, school or city.

See bios under "Because they're not kids"

Thinking Routines That Extend Inventive Dispositions

(Mauren Campbell and Nicole Simpson-Tanner)

Thinking routines hold the power to explore complex issues, deepen thinking, and uncover new perspectives. They keep you curious, encourage comfort with provisional thinking, and support living in questions. This year, we found those outcomes equally true as we used them with third- and fourth-grade children, our colleagues, and ourselves. In this working session, we'll share stories from our practice, engage with some protocols, and build a more robust toolbox.

Friday, June 22

Constructing Theories and Bringing Them Home

- 8:00 Doors Open - MILLER HALL
- 8:30-9:30 Adaptation with Integrity: Bringing Your Ideas Home - MILLER HALL
- 9:30-9:45 Going to Materials: Introducing the Studios - MILLER HALL
- 10:00-10:30 Exploring Studio Environments - OPAL SCHOOL & PORTLAND CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Cedar

- Nothing Without Joy: A Sensory Exploration of Light, Water, and Color

Alder

- Storytelling and Reflection in Loose Parts Collage

Potato Rooms

- Looking for Serendipity: Tinkering with LED Lights and Motors
- What lives in the space between black and white?
An Exploration of Charcoal

Clay Studio

- Adding, Subtracting, Transforming: What is possible with clay?
- Graphite: Mark Making and Perspective Taking

Dogwood

- Engaging the Senses Through Transformation of Natural Materials

Playground or Maker Studio (Depending on weather)

- Two Hands, Four Hands, Collaborating with Cardboard and Tape

Sitka

- Watercolor: A Doorway to Practicing Relaxed Alertness

Cottonwood

- Constructing Worlds with Newspaper
- Making the Familiar Extraordinary: Exploring Wire and Foil

Willow

- Mark Making with India Ink and Paint Brush Design
- Observational Drawing as a Way of Knowing

- 10:30-11:30 Studio Engagement 1:
Exploring affordances and collaborative provocations
- 11:45-12:45 Lunch
- 12:55-2:15 Studio Engagement 2:
Using studio materials to construct theories
- 2:30-4:00 Children And Adults Sharing Their Theories With The World - MILLER HALL

At the beginning of each year, Opal School teachers meet with each other to articulate their intentions for the year. We share this year's letters here hoping they help you better understand the stories you encounter this week.

LETTER OF INTENTIONS: BEGINNING COMMUNITY

Dear Families,

In this complicated and uncertain world, we believe school is where we learn to be human. And right now, more than ever, we need people who can listen with empathy and understanding, imagine multiple possibilities, communicate their ideas in a variety of ways, and see challenges as opportunities for learning and growth.

One of our goals at Opal School is for students to develop strategies that contribute to the quality of their community. We hope to nurture our students to develop their distinct sense of self and belonging, while respecting the rights and identities of others.

With this in mind, we have some hopes for the Beginning Community as all of us, children and adults, continue to build our understanding of what it means to be a citizen. We hope to cultivate courageous thinkers, collaborators, and changemakers. We want them to know, as we do, that their ideas and stories can change the world.

This year in Alder and Cedar, the big idea that children and adults will be co-researching is transformation related to self and others, the arts and sciences, and the natural world. When imagining possibilities for our curriculum, we look for a concept that offers multiple entry points and has the power to connect our learning community. We seek to frame these ideas in ways that are simple yet profound, include an element of surprise, and are open-ended, engaging and challenging.

We see play as a natural learning strategy and are curious how playful inquiry might support the children's evolving theories about transformation. Some of the questions framing our work this year are:

- **How might the study of transformation influence the children's and adults' worldviews?**
- **How might empathy and agency nurture a commitment to civic responsibility?**
- **How might the process of creating, imagining, or inventing support the children's sense of purpose and belonging in a community?**
- **How might the unique gifts of childhood support a community to find value in our differences?**
- **How might we, the teachers and families, amplify the voices of the children and celebrate their stories throughout the city of Portland?**

This is a snapshot of our intentions for the year, a sneak peek into what we've been thinking while preparing our classroom environments and reflecting on our school's values. We will offer many windows into the children's learning and growing ideas of transformation as we share stories, dialogue and images on the blog. We look forward to playing with you around this idea, too.

Warmly,

Hana, Caroline, Nassrin, Cassie, Leslie, and Tara

LETTER OF INTENTIONS: PRIMARY COMMUNITY

*"A child's most sought after goal is to recognize himself in others,
and to find in others parts of himself."*

-Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the pre-primary schools of Reggio Emilia

Dear Primary Community families,

At Opal School, we see all children as competent, creative, curious, and courageous. We believe they come to school full of experience and wisdom, eager to make meaning of their lives and everything that surrounds them. This year, the Opal School Primary Community teachers are particularly curious about what it means to be an individual within a community. We believe that exploring the tension between our individual needs or desires and those of the community not only helps us know ourselves better – it also prepares us to engage with the most important questions facing our world.

One goal and expectation for Opal School students is to develop strategies that contribute to the quality of the community by collaborating with others to construct ideas and create new knowledge.

With this goal in mind, our work together this year will be framed around the big idea of "the we that I am." Within this big idea, we wonder:

What does it mean to belong to a community that recognizes and values differences?

Inside of this big question lives many smaller questions:

- **How might better understanding ourselves help us better understand others?**
- **What are our rights and responsibilities as members of a community?
What is the relationship between rights and responsibilities?**
- **How might considering our different perspectives invite us to grow
our collective understanding of ourselves, each other, and the world?**
- **How can listening and awareness of our impact on others inform our actions?**
- **What becomes possible when we are curious about difference?
How might curiosity about difference support empathy?**

This above is a snapshot of our intentions for the year, a sneak peek into some of our thinking and the possibilities we're imagining. We look forward to sharing many windows into the children and teachers' learning experiences and the evolving theories of identity and community we are constructing together.

Warmly,
Heather, Lauren, Kerry, Sarah, and Katharine

LETTER OF INTENTIONS: INTERMEDIATE COMMUNITY

Dear Intermediate Community families,

At Opal School, we see all children as competent citizens with rights. We see them driven to connect, eager to empathize and be understood. We know that the arts are powerful pathways to develop understandings of ourselves, each other, and complex ideas. We value increasing proficiency with the conventions of communication and the academic disciplines.

This year, the Opal School Intermediate Team is particularly curious about relationships between play, the arts, empathy, and invention. Our work is intended to grow a new citizenry that has strong emotional intelligence, a real discomfort with certainty, and a deep sense of empathy and civic responsibility. How will children gain experience in seeing how their ways of thinking can increase justice and well-being? How will we connect the work in our classroom to the world outside?

We've begun school engulfed in smoke while our beloved Columbia Gorge burns, and the children, quickly approaching teenage-hood themselves, know that teenagers sparked that fire. They are seeing images of other places in our country under water or torn apart by storms. The power of nature and the power of humans are engaged in incredibly visible and visceral tension. What are our choices?

In light of our goals and expectations, guiding principles, and values, we wonder:

How can we explore interdependencies and stories of the past in a way which inspires us to take action as mindful citizens?

As we explore our stories and stories from American history, we will use water as a vehicle for exploring interdependencies and multiple perspectives. Together we'll be asking: What does it take to care for something bigger than yourself? What does it mean to care? What do we care about? What does it mean to be an American? What happens when we view stories of history through multiple lenses? What is the danger of a single story and the role of the master narrative? Who decides which stories are told? How do stories connect to rights?

As we step into this new year, we – children and adults – are connected by Opal School's values. Together, we are exploring what it means to hold a strong image of children who are competent and capable, whose birthright of imagination and natural strategies of play lead to the discovery of inventions and ideas that the world needs now. Our work together develops essential life skills and habits of heart and mind, like critical and interdependent thinking, empathy, persistence, innovation, risk-taking, flexibility, collaboration, and perspective-taking. We're eager to step into this new year with a spirit of vulnerability and openness, inspired by the words of Carlina Rinaldi: "To be open to others means to have the courage to come into this room and say I hope to be different when I leave."

We can't wait to begin!

Warmly,

Hannah, Chris, Susan, Nicole, Mary Gage, and Mauren

Some of the writings that have inspired our thinking about inventiveness:

Veronica Boix Mansilla, "Global Thinking: An ID-Global Bundle to Foster Global Thinking Dispositions through Global Thinking Routines." Project Zero.

The Deep Play Research Group, "The Courage to be Creative: An Interview with Dr. Yong Zhao." AECT.

Charles Duhigg, "What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team." New York Times.

Agustín Fuentes, *The Creative Spark: How Imagination Made Humans Exceptional*.

Karen Gallas, *Imagination and Literacy: A Teacher's Search for the Heart of Learning*.

Lella Gandini & Louise Cadwell, *In the Spirit of the Studio: Learning from the Atelier of Reggio Emilia, Second Edition*.

Henry Giroux, "Education as a Weapon of Struggle: Rethinking the Parkland Uprising in the Age of Mass Violence." Counterpunch.

Matt Glover and Ellin Oliver Keene (eds), *The Teacher You Want To Be: Essays about Children, Learning, and Teaching*.

Maxine Greene, Collected Works at maxinegreene.org

Anya Kamenetz, "Here's How to Prevent the Next School Shooting, Experts Say." NPR.

Ellin Oliver Keene, *Engaging Children: Igniting a Drive for Deeper Learning*.

Pagan Kennedy, "How to Cultivate the Art of Serendipity." New York Times.

Pagan Kennedy, *Inventology: How We Dream Up Things That Change The World*.

Sarah Lewis, *The Rise: Creativity, the Gift of Failure, and the Search for Mastery*.

David Perkins, "Mapping the Inventive Mind." Report of the Committee for the Study of Invention.

Matt Richtel, "To Encourage Creativity in Children, Ask Them: 'What-If?'" New York Times.

Marilynne Robinson, "What are we doing here?" New York Review of Books.

Derek Thompson, "Google X and the Science of Radical Creativity." The Atlantic.

Tony Wagner, *Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change the World*.

Judith Wells Lindfors, *Children's Inquiry: Using Language to Make Sense of the World*.

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“The rebirth of curiosity doesn’t last long,
unless we learn to enjoy being curious.”

-Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi



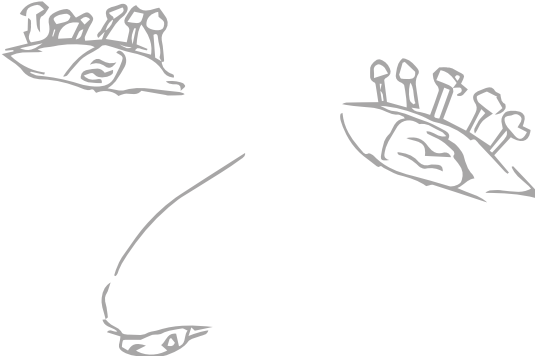


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“It takes a particular kind of imagination
to see value in what others don’t see at all.”

-Pagan Kennedy



Continuing Inventing the World with Opal School

We hope that your time at Opal School's 2018 Summer Symposium leaves you hungry to continue your inquiry with Opal School - and that you'll encourage your colleagues to join you.

Join our online community at **opalschool.org!**
discussion boards - articles - presentations - videos - classes

Next class:

Developing Your Story Workshop (August-October, 2018)

Join us for one of our 2018-2019 professional development retreats:

Creating Courageous and Collaborative Communities - October 25-27

Investigating the Conditions that Invite, Sustain, and Expand Playful Inquiry -

Session 1: February 6-8 or Session 2: March 6-8

Reading the World: April 10-12

International Educator Study Tour: May 13-15

Summer Symposium: June 19-21

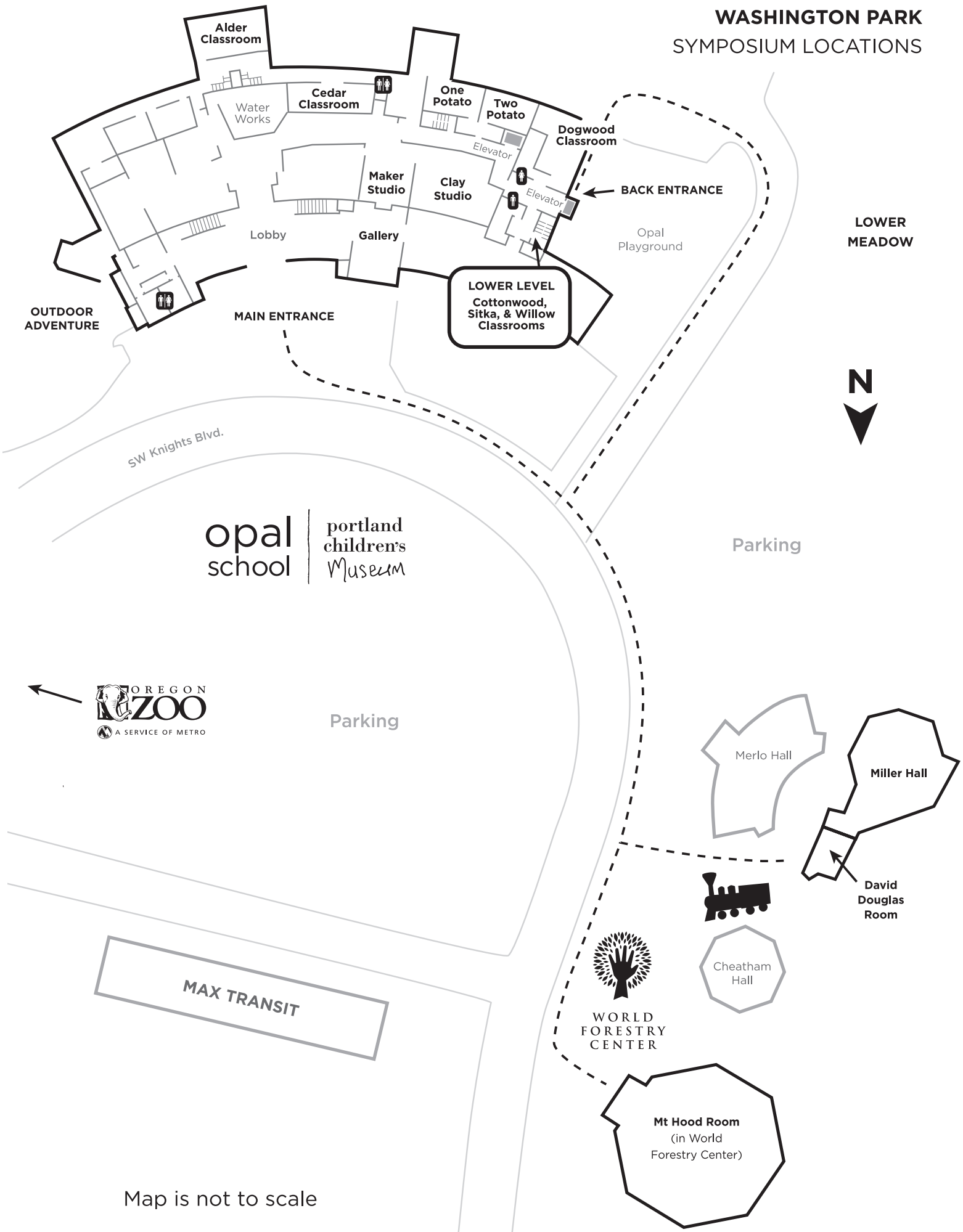
opalschool.org/workshops-and-events/

Want to set up an Opal School workshop
or Study Tour for your school or district?

Let's talk!

thecenter@opalschool.org

WASHINGTON PARK SYMPOSIUM LOCATIONS



Map is not to scale



“The most important word is ‘yet’.”

-Eliana, age 4