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Loris Malaguzzi and the Reggio Emilia Experience: Keynote Address, OMEP Ireland Conference, April 2009

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Introduction

The keynote address at the 2009 OMEP Ireland research conference was given by a team from the School of Education, University College Cork, who had just completed work on a co-authored book entitled Loris Malaguzzi and the Reggio Emilia Experience for the Continuum Library of Educational Thought. This paper presents some of the highlights from that presentation; the book explores these issues in much greater detail and also discusses the thorny issue of curriculum in Reggio Emilia. The Reggio Emilia early years educators strongly resist the idea of describing what they do as a curriculum, preferring instead the word 'experience'. If we define 'curriculum' in the narrow sense of a set of prescribed learning goals and experiences, (rather than all the people, things, experiences and emotions that the child encounters in the pre-school) then this is undoubtedly the wrong word to describe what they do. Nevertheless, their practice is not by any means atheoretical, and the Reggio Emilia educators continually reflect on and refine their practice. The historical background of "Reggio" as well as the various strands of curriculum theory that underpin thinking on how best to foster children's early learning and development are both necessary if we are to see it in context and to make an informed judgement on why Newsweek in 1991 described them as "the best pre-schools in the world".

The Municipal Pre-schools of Reggio Emilia: Background and History

Reggio Emilia is a town in the northern Italian region of Emilia Romagna and it was here on 7 January 1779, the Italian tricolour was first unveiled. Reggio Emilia has also become noted for its development of an early years system of education known as the 'Reggio Experience' which has gained worldwide renown. The Reggio Experience contains the elements now seen as crucial to the development of child centred educational facilities suited to young children. These include parental involvement, close collaboration between home and school, viewing education as part of the wider social context, seeing young children as competent learners, providing an environment that interests and challenges them and allowing children to experience and explore their surroundings. Children are considered as having rights, not as adults in the making, but as people with their own needs and interests.

In relation to understanding how the Reggio Experience came into being, it is necessary to understand the political philosophies which underpinned Italian society prior to the Second World War, for, if any system of education can be said to have grown out of the political landscape of a country, it is that of Reggio Emilia. In the case of Reggio Romagna and its population, the two opposing ideologies of Socialism/ Communism (which was generally approved) Fascism (which was generally abhorred) were fundamentally important to what was eventually to become known as the Reggio Experience. In the case of Reggio Emilia, this history resulted in parents, in particular, searching for a radically different way to educate their young children.

In order to realize this ambition, within a few days of the end of the Second World War, a group of women, members of the G.D.D. (Groups in Defence of Women and in Assistance to the Freedom Fighters), began what has since become known as the Reggio Emilia Experience. On 19 June 1945, women members of U.D.I. (Union of Italian Women) sought subscriptions from the public towards the establishment of a nursery school. Fund raisers included dances, lotteries and theatrical events. The members of the U.D.I. were motivated by a deep sense of social solidarity and were focused on the future which they hoped would be a better one for their children. The fact that it was women, in the main, who spearheaded this initiative, is notable due to the fact that, at that time and in Italy, women would not have been in positions of power to any great extent. In fact, they only received the right to vote in that same year, yet they felt impelled to improve the lives of the population, particularly the young.

In the village of Villa Cella, women salvaged bricks and sold an abandoned German tank, trucks and horses which raised 800,000 Lira for the local Committee of National Liberation (C.L.N.). This money was invested in the school building project. Families worked on the weekends and holidays loading up sand and gravel, collecting bricks, beams, doors and window frames from buildings bombed during the War. Other families brought food to the workers or raised money by gathering hay or selling bundles of sticks. Eventually, after eight months of hard work, the school was opened and was named April 25th School, in honour of the day on which the Allies liberated the region.

If any one person above all others is instantly associated with Reggio Emilia and the Reggio Approach to early years education, it is Loris Malaguzzi (1920 – 1994). He was born in Correggio, near Reggio Emilia in 1920. He enrolled in a teacher training institute in 1939 and qualified as a primary teacher. In 1945, having heard of the attempts of parents to build their own school in Villa Cella and being intrigued by the idea of parents taking control of their children's education in such a direct manner, Malaguzzi cycled out to the village to investigate the situation. Thus began a relationship with preschools,

parents and children, not only in Villa Cella but in the other preschools which followed, which was to last a lifetime. In 1958, he was to become director of preschools in Reggio Emilia where he would spend the remainder of his working life until his death in 1994.

Throughout the fifties and early sixties, funding of the preschools continued to be a problem. However, in 1963, the authorities decided to set up 'two prefabricated schools' one of which was to be known as the Robinson Preschool and was to be the first ever city-run school for young children. This was a truly significant event, both in an historical and educational context. As a consequence of this event, throughout the 1960s much pressure was brought to bear on the Municipal authorities to secure the future of the parent–run schools. Eventually, in 1967, these schools were brought under the administration of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. This was a momentous event, as it was part of the larger, country-wide political struggle for publicly supported secular schools. The number of pre-primary classed run by the Municipality grew very quickly: in 1968 there were 12 classes, in 1973 there were 43, in 1980 there were 58 catering for three to six year olds. In 2003, 21 preschools (catering for 1,508 children) and 13 infant-toddler centres (catering for 835 children) were supported by the Municipality.

What does a Reggio Emilia pre-school look like?

Each class has two teachers, University graduates in child development and pedagogy, each of whom has equal responsibility for the class. It is the teacher's job to make the children's learning visible in the school and in the wider community. All work is done in partnership with children, parents and teachers. This involves being constantly open to listening to children, to inviting children to question, to sharing thoughts, ideas, plans with children, parents and colleagues. Reggio teachers believe that one must always build on prior learning and that the child learns best when he gets close to reality. Therefore, all work must be reflected upon, and the interrogation of this work leads to the formulation of theories and to further research. The child sees the teacher as a fellow researcher, a thinker and from this children learn what good thinking routines look like.

Reggio educators envisage their role as one in which they produce learning situations in which children learn by themselves with as little adult intervention as possible. The child must know the adult is there, attentive and waiting to guide if necessary, but always cognisant of the child's need to be the author of his own learning. The method of assessment employed in Reggio schools, through project work and collaboration is reflective of this concept of teacher and child, and it transfers ownership of the learning

process from the teacher to the student, while emphasising the enormous importance of the teacher in the classroom.

In addition to the teachers, each school has an 'atelierista' (artist) who has a completely different educational background from that of the teacher, having attending an Academy or Institute of Art. The Atelierista shares in the entire process of the children's learning, therefore, the work of the school is enriched by constant dialogue between the teacher, atelierista, pedagogista, parents and children. The Atelier (studio where the Atelierista works) is always very well resourced with a multiplicity of inviting materials. These are carefully chosen materials that have multiple or unlimited possibilities and await the child's imagination. The materials are usually light, bright, clear and often transparent. Children often work on projects which allow them to explore the properties of light on the different materials. In fact, Reggio Emilia now has a re-cycling centre which receives material from businesses and factories for the children to use. Children do lots of their work with clay which is very plentiful in the region. In Reggio schools, art is not viewed as a separate part of the curriculum but is fully integrated into every aspect of the child's experiences. 'Teachers consider the learning process to involve both creative exploration and problem-solving' (Edwards et al 1998:15) and the freedom and encouragement to be expressive helps children become capable of rational and imaginative thought.

The schools all benefit hugely from the contribution of the *pedagogista*, (curriculum specialist) who is shared between a number of schools in a district and who works, in collaboration with the teachers and atelieristas, on the development of the curriculum. Each pedagogista works with several schools in a district; therefore, he/she is uniquely placed to gain an overall perspective on the work of groups of schools. The pedagogistas may have different areas of expertise, but many have degrees in psychology. The inter-relationship between these three key roles of teacher is a fundamental part of the organisation and functioning of the schools; it is in essence what makes a Reggio school so unique.

The school and classroom environment

There is no 'typical' Reggio pre-school building in terms of its construction, however, there is much more uniformity in the interiors of the buildings. Each school makes its own statement by ensuring that there is personal information about the school displayed at the entrance foyer or piazza. Reggio schools are very proud of their history, the history of their city and that of their country. In the entrance area of each school, one finds lots of documentation pertaining to the identity of the school. The

schools are full of light and have very attractive open places and spaces and it is quite common to see children 'migrate' from one class to another. There is a distinct lack of clutter everywhere. Work tables are often adorned with greenery to help integrate the indoor/outdoor environment and Reggio staff state that the way in which a workspace is presented to the children is a statement of how we think of education.

Documentation of Learning

Documentation of learning in Reggio is part of the process of giving the child a sense of place in his/her own community; a visible acknowledgement of the child's voice. Teachers make notes every day on the experiences of the day and these notes are often accompanied by video or audio recordings, which are made available to parents as they collect their children from school. The three strands of good documentation of the child's learning are observation, interpretation and documentation. This observation cannot be separated out from the work of the child, there is a reciprocal demographic involved; the observation is not just done by the teacher and the work done by the child. Observation in Reggio schools is a creative act which requires interpretation. On the basis of the work and observations teachers compile extensive and detailed documentation. The children also document their own work. This documentation is described by Reggio teachers as the gathering of materials to allow for the collegial experience of sharing with colleagues. This is a very new concept for us. Documentation is not just about making short notes about a child's progress but is an integral part of the learning experience. It is open and visible to all. It makes it possible to plan further work and to re-experience past work; it provides 'archives of experience'. Each school seeks to cultivate its own identity through documentation; it serves to make its own cultural identity readable. As the teachers' notes/documentation help to generate collegial discussion, the plans for long or short-term project work *(Progettazione)* take place. Reggio Emilia project work is unusual and distinguished in several ways, not the least of which is the role played by the teacher as he/she follows the child's lead. The topics grow out of the children's interests, and multiple experiences with media are used to aid the children's understandings of concepts. Together with the regular pre-school work, each child is expected to take part in long term project work during the year.

Parents, family and community in Reggio Emilia

The preschools and infant-toddler centres of Reggio Emilia are deeply centred in their own community, its culture, environment and history. According to Jerome Bruner 'You

cannot understand the Reggio schools if you don't understand the city that made them' (Reggio Children 2005, p.2). The Reggio approach to early-years education and care emphasises the social and cultural values of solidarity, democracy and participation (Rinaldi and Moss, 2004). It prioritises the development of high quality and enduring social relationships among both children and adults; Malaguzzi himself described it as 'a pedagogy of relationships' (Malaguzzi, 1994) and stated his belief that

> *No other school distorts and abuses its nature like schools for early childhood – when they fail to connect to families, to customs, to culture, to local problems and are preventing from conversing freely and democratically with the place that generates them (Malaguzzi, quoted in Catarsi, 2004:8).*

Malaguzzi saw early childhood schools as 'agents in a great civil strategy which aims to win back society for children' (Catarsi, 2004). Rather than seeing the schools as places where children are socialised into an existing society, they can become a driving force for social change through the democratic participation of children and their families in these early-years services.

Partecipazione (participation by parents and families) is now a recognised element of early years education all over Italy, and along with gestione sociale (social management), it is enshrined in the laws governing preschools. The Italian concept of partecipazione carries a weight of meaning that is not adequately expressed by the English word 'participation'. It is much closer to the concept of partnership with parents, which has been widely acknowledged as an essential element of quality early years services and of successful schooling later on (Murphy, 2001, 2002). Carlina Rinaldi explains it as 'the sharing and co-responsibility of families in the "construction" and "management" of the nido' (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 40). 'Construction' here refers to the co-construction through dialogue and communication by parents and educators of the way that the nido is structured, in terms of the physical space and the organisation of the nido but also the ways of being and doing things with the children.

Similarly, in the early-years centres, there is an on-going dialogue with parents on educational matters. At the heart of this is the shared documentation of the children's experiences and thoughts. Rather than being presented with a finished product, parents are made aware of and are involved in the on-going processes. Malaguzzi tells us that the Reggio educators wanted to find ways of communicating with parents, keeping them informed about the work of the school, in a way that would enable them to appreciate the work being done by the children:

> *We wanted to show parents how the children thought and expressed themselves, what they produced and invented with their hands and their intelligence, how they played and joked with one another, how they discussed hypotheses, how their logic functioned … We wanted the parents to understand how much value we placed in their children. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 74)*

Parents are formally involved in management at two levels in Reggio Emilia. Firstly, each of the 32 schools and centres has a Community Advisory Council, including representatives of parents, teachers, educational coordinators, cooks, auxiliary staff and community members. Secondly, there is an Advisory Council Coordinating Board, which has representatives from all the Community Advisory Councils along with representatives from the pedagogical team and the municipal administration (Spaggiari, 1998, p. 101).

Another striking aspect of the Reggio Emilia experience is the attention paid to the process of *l'inserimento*- the child's first transition to out-of-home care, or as Malaguzzi himself describes it, 'the child's transition from a focused attachment on parents and home to shared attachment that includes the adults and environment of the infant-toddler centre' (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 62). This process is not confined to the initial days or weeks that the child attends; it begins much earlier and continues for as long as is necessary. There are numerous activities and opportunities for parents and children to meet before the first 'official' starting day and all through the period that the child spends in the nido or pre-school. Particular attention is given to ensuring that parents and teachers develop shared ideas about how best to enable the child to use his/her capabilities, to form relationships with peers and teachers, and to participate as fully as possible in the life of the group. This applies especially to 'children with special rights', where the emphasis is on inclusion, while acknowledging and giving the extra help and support that the child needs.

The centrality of relationships is acknowledged by the time that is devoted to ensuring that parents, children and teachers establish relationships of mutual trust and understanding. These relationships are reinforced over time- the children have the same teachers throughout the three years they spend in the preschool and there are many opportunities for the parents of the children in the group to meet and get to know one another. Malaguzzi saw this practice of keeping the group together as allowing the construction of a history of relationship and a shared culture, which in turn creates a sense of community, recognises children as part of families and ensures their well-being (Edwards, 1995). Many visitors to the Reggio preschools and infant-toddler centres have been struck by the fact that the people who escort them on their visits and who speak so knowledgeably and with such commitment about the schools and

the pedagogical approach are parents rather than professional educators. This does not happen by chance; rather it is a reflection of the partnership that exists in the municipal nidi and preschools of Reggio Emilia between those who work in them and the parents and families of the children.

It is evident that there is a sense in Reggio that the city belongs to all its citizens, including its youngest ones. The children frequently go out into the city as a group. They explore it, and depict it through their hundred languages. They see the city as a place for encounters, for meeting people, for forming relationships, for sheltering and nurturing families. Their contribution to the life of the city is valued. This close relationship between the children and the city is at once a reflection and a consequence of the emotional and structural ties that the Reggio preschools have with the municipality, which has grown out of their history and is integral to their culture. This makes it impossible to transplant a 'Reggio model' intact to settings elsewhere which may have a very different history, purpose and ethos. However, there are many aspects of the way that the early-years centres of Reggio Emilia relate to parents, families and community that can inspire us to look at our own practice.

A Discourse Analysis of Reggio Representations

An analysis of the discourse in Reggio texts illuminates the assumptions made, and the principles and practices endorsed. We were especially interested in how Reggio practices and ideas are represented in the many sources now available. We set out to answer two questions:

- What are the dominant discourses of the Reggio movement?
- What rhetorical devices are used to establish the legitimacy of those discourses?

The point of our analysis is not to say Reggio ideas are 'good' or 'bad' but to interrogate, disrupt, and challenge the preferred/intended meanings of Reggio texts.

We concluded that three key themes were especially relevant in the literature:

- the exceptionality, yet transferability of Reggio;
- the sensory, awe-struck, spontaneous child and the enculturated child; and
- the romanticized, idealized community.

We briefly explain the first one here (see Hall et al, 2010, for a full account)

One is struck by the references in the Reggio literature to how unique and exceptional and different the Reggio approach is represented to be, such that one would expect it to be

geographically and contextually bound and unable 'to travel' beyond its original setting. However, this is not the case. Exceptionality and transferability are accommodated and can co-exist harmoniously as evidenced by the descriptions of the many journeys, some in pilgrimage-style, that UK and US practitioners and scholars make to Reggio annually. Following their visit, educators return to their respective workplaces enthused and inspired and ready to change their home practices in Reggio directions.

Exceptionality and transferability go hand in hand for the former is precisely what captivates the imagination and makes it seductive to outsiders searching for a holy grail of early childhood care and education. Our analysis of Reggio discourse led us to conclude that Reggio is at once a discourse of impossibility and a discourse of hope and potential. A key mechanism used to produce both the exceptionality and transferability of Reggio is binary oppositioning and negative comparing with non-Reggio settings.

This one paragraph by Howard Gardner shows how Reggio practices and settings are produced as ideal. Note how textually such an argument is made:

> In America we pride ourselves on being focused on children, and yet we do not pay sufficient attention to what they are actually expressing. We call for cooperative learning among children, and yet we rarely have sustained cooperation at the level of teacher and administrator. We call for artistic works, but we rarely fashion environments that can truly support and inspire them. We call for parental involvement, but are loathe to share ownership, responsibility, and credit with parents. We recognize the need for community, but we so often crystallize immediately into interest groups. We hail the discovery method, but we do not have the confidence to allow children to follow their own noses and hunches. We call for debate, but often spurn it; we call for listening, but we prefer to talk; we are affluent, but we do not safeguard those resources that can allow us to remain so and to foster the affluence of others. Reggio is so instructive in these respects. Where we are often intent to invoke slogans, the educators in Reggio work tirelessly to solve many of these fundamental – and fundamentally difficulty – issues. (Gardner, 1998, xvii and repeated in Dahlberg and Moss, 2007, 3-4)

This paragraph is a polemical attack on the state of early years education in America, indeed it is arguable that they are an attack on education outside Reggio Emelia. The legitimacy of the claims is produced primarily by the use of the binary dynamic: all that is good happens to be found in Reggio and none of what is negative is found there; the exact opposite is the case in America (and England) and by implication outside Reggio Emilia. This is a golden age story where the assumed inferiority of the American and English systems is invoked to establish the superiority of the Reggio system.
The table below highlights the binaries evident in Reggio representations.

Blatant Binaries

Reggio Settings: Positive	Non-Reggio Settings: Negative
Listening to children	Ignoring what children say, talking to/at children
Collegiality, cooperation and cooperative learning	Lack of staff collaboration
True support for the arts	Rhetoric of arts support but lacking in practice
Close, warm parental involvement	Reluctance to work in partnership with parents
Embrace ideal of community	Reject community values in favour of interest groups
Discovery learning giving curiosity free rein	Lacking in confidence and competence to support self and interest-initiated learning so denying freedom to learn
Facilitating debate and discussion	Closing down debate so narrow, dull and rigid interactions with children
Openness, generosity, selflessness	Affluence, greed, selfishness
Authenticity, fit between policies, principles and practices	Inauthentic, gulf between rhetoric and reality
Deep engagement with children's products and attentive to children's meaning-making	Superficial treatment of children's work; trivializing their efforts, denying them their meaning-making

In our work on Reggio we have sought to reveal the language manoeuvres that writers have used to convince their readers of the impartiality, naturalness and authority of their claims. Among such devices are:

- the use of binary opposites and negative comparing,
- the recruitment of feelings,
- 'speaking from the scene' manifested in the journalistic, visual and realist, concrete accounts,
- the inter-textual connections with older discourses (the child as good) and newer scientific genres (e.g. neuroscience).

An assumption we make is applying discourse analysis is that language is deeply implicated in the production of the social and cultural world. Through an analysis of Reggio discourse we suggest that new understandings regarding its appeal may be offered.

Reggio Emilia: A Question of Quality

As we have mentioned, for many in the field of early childhood education, Reggio Emilia is synonymous with high quality provision. We now attempt to situate it within current discourses of quality in early years education and care, in relation to processes, structures and outcomes. We do this in the light of five main correlates of high quality provision. These indicators, which have been found to correlate positively with pedagogical practice, are: a) children's participation; b) partnership with parents; c) the nature of the curriculum, d) early years teacher education and remuneration and, finally e) the level of financial investment in early years services (Cunningham, 2008).

Children's participation

Until relatively recently, children's perspectives on their own experiences were not sought, due to unfounded beliefs, such as that children did not have the linguistic skills to be reliable informants (O'Doherty, Dorit, & Shannon, 2002). However, children's participation is a fundamental guiding principle of Reggio schools. Through the practice of cooperation and solidarity, democracy and emancipation are fostered. Children are considered to be critical thinkers and powerful pedagogues within a pedagogy of relationships (Moss, 1999). The emphasis here is on children as co-constructors of knowledge, through critical thinking and meaning making, rather than children as recipients of pre-packaged answers to predetermined education programmes.

Partnership with parents

We have discussed the issue of partnership earlier in this paper. It only remains to reiterate that the first Reggio Emilia schools were founded by the parents, and that parental participation is at the heart of the pedagogical experience of Reggio schools (Spaggiari, 1998). Malaguzzi (1998) points out that it was from the aspiration of the parents that Reggio Emilia's philosophies evolved, because it was they who wanted legitimate rights and citizenship for their children to be central to the ethos of the schools.

The nature of the curriculum

In Reggio, it is believed that children learn best in a well- resourced, well- prepared environment, with highly qualified practitioners. A core principle is the development of critical thinkers, through opportunities to engage, explore, discuss, represent, hypothesise and problem solve. What is obvious here is that Reggio schools do not

endorse the premature schooling of their children, in the sense of following a traditional curriculum with defined cognitive goals and content. Rather, they embrace a critical pedagogy committed to empowering their children to be reflective thinkers within an equal and democratic society.

Early years teacher-education and remuneration

Studies in several countries have found that the education of the practitioner directly correlates with the quality of the service (Ruopp et al., 1979; European Commission Network on Childcare, 1996; Sylva et al., 2004). Whitebook (2003) found that practitioners who held a bachelor's degree in early education were 'the teachers who are best equipped to lay the groundwork for an optimistic and rewarding experience in pre-kindergarten and beyond' (p. 4). Furthermore, the training within Reggio Emilia preschools offers teachers extensive in-service development opportunities, and reflective practice is at the heart of what they do on a daily basis. It must also be noted that, since 1998, unlike those in many other systems, preschool teachers in Italy receive pay parity with their primary school counterparts.

The level of financial investment

It must be acknowledged that there are huge financial benefits accruing to Reggio Emilia schools following their international success. Interest in Reggio-inspired schools has grown internationally, with 80 countries involved in ongoing study tours to Italy to learn more about the approach. These tours are hosted by 'Reggio Children' and in 2009, the cost of participating in a five day workshop in Reggio Emilia, Italy, was approximately £1,250 sterling (Sightlines Initiative, 2009). By 2007, over 20,000 participants had undertaken these workshops. In addition to this, between 1980 and 2007, 'The Hundred Languages of Children' exhibition was hosted in over 120 venues in various cities and countries worldwide. In 2009, an approximate charge for a country to host these exhibitions was €15,000 per month for its exhibition material, outside the costs of housing and running these exhibitions.

Furthermore, by 2007, more than 200,000 copies of Reggio books were been sold worldwide and they have been translated into sixteen different languages (Reggio Children, 2007). In addition to this, from 1994 (the year of its inception) to 2006, Reggio Children have invested more than €1,700,000 in their early years centres (ibid.). Thus, the Reggio preschools have access to considerable additional funding compared to their counterparts elsewhere.

Conclusion

The Reggio Emilia preschools and infant-toddler centres are unique in many ways. They emerged from a post-war period of hope and social solidarity. Their reputation for excellence is founded on a number of factors, all of which have been shown elsewhere to contribute to quality in early years settings. The inter-relationships between staff, parents, children and the wider community is very special and very much a part of the culture of the schools and the city. The level of resources is very high and the schools work very hard at providing a harmonious and high quality learning environment for the children and staff. The type and level of documentation of learning is exceptional and is very much part of way in which learning is conceptualised. The entire process of working with children is highly reflective. The teacher is highly valued and his/her role is very rich and fulfilling. The structure of the Reggio Schools, in terms of their staffing and resources, show a deep commitment to the very important work of educating and caring for their youngest citizens.

Part of the reason that the Reggio Emilia preschools are so successful is that the Reggio educators place great emphasis on fostering a culture of relationship and belonging, not just with the children and families but with the wider community and the city itself. They acknowledge the rights of children and families to express themselves and to be heard. By making the processes of children's learning visible, through documentation and exhibitions, and by involving parents, families and community members in the infant-toddler centres and pre-schools at every level, they "cross the boundaries" that might otherwise separate early years services from the people they serve (Mantovani, 2006). This, among other things, helps to ensure the continued support of the city and its people for the preschools.

The Reggio Emilia experience reflects a very different view of children and of early years education. For the Reggio educators, the focus is on the present, on the here and now. They do not attempt to measure the outcomes of their programmes relation to children's school adjustment and later school achievement, focusing instead on making the experience as positive as possible in the present for the child. This last point is significant in the light of the debate that quality indicators involve not just structures and processes but also outcomes in relation to children's learning. The schools have achieved a world-wide reputation and, despite the reluctance of Reggio educators to see themselves as a model, they have influenced thinking on quality provision in many countries throughout the world.

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