

A critique – reggio emilia approach a educational philosophy assignment

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In the Reggio Emilia School, children are viewed as powerful and capable. Children are validated as unique individuals within a social group. They are provided space and time to work alone and in small groups and also to come together as a community. Reggio Emilia teachers embody a collaborative spirit by working together as a center-wide team and with the families, their environment and materials are valued and provided through active interaction and open dialogue. Collaborations between school staff and parents are firmly ingrained in the school culture and parents are viewed as valuable resources and support.

Parents are routinely welcomed to the center for open-house events and are continually participating in project activities. In essence, children are really encouraged to look at, and really see, their world. The Reggio Emilia Approach model was felt to be very important in the early years of the development of children, since that is when they are forming who they will be as individuals. This led to a program that was created based on the principles of respect, responsibility, and community through exploration and discovery in a very supportive and enriching environment based on the interests of the children through a self-guided curriculum.

The Reggio Emilia philosophy is based upon the following set of principles: *

- * Children must have some control over the direction of their learning
- * Children must be able to learn through experiences of touching, moving, listening, seeing, and hearing;
- * Children have a relationship with other children and with material items in the world that children must be allowed to explore and
- * Children must have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

Parents are a vital component to the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

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Parents are viewed as partners, collaborators and advocates for their children. Teachers respect parents as each child's first teacher and involve parents in every aspect of the curriculum. It is not uncommon to see parents volunteering within Reggio Emilia classrooms throughout the school. This philosophy does not end when the child leaves the classroom. The educational era that has helped to shape my philosophy is the Progressive Era because Progressive education is a pedagogical movement that began in the late nineteenth century and has persisted in various forms to the present.

More recently, it has been viewed as an alternative to the test-oriented instruction legislated by the No Child Left Behind educational funding act. The term "progressive" was engaged to distinguish this education from the traditional curriculum of the 19th century, which was rooted in classical preparation for the university and strongly differentiated by socioeconomic level. By contrast, progressive education finds its roots in present experience.

Most progressive education programs have these qualities in common:

- Emphasis on learning by doing - hands-on projects, expeditionary learning, experiential learning *
- Integrated curriculum focused on thematic units *
- Strong emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking *
- Group work and development of social skills *
- Understanding and action as the goals of learning as opposed to rote knowledge
- Collaborative and cooperative learning projects *
- Education for social responsibility and democracy

Assessment by evaluation of child's projects and productions believe that the

Regis Amelia's approach to early education reflects a theoretical kinship with John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Vigorously and Jerome Bruner, among others.

Much of what occurs in the class reflects a constructivist approach to early education.

Regis Amelia's approach does challenge some conceptions of teacher competence and developmentally appropriate practice. Teachers in Reggio Emilia assert the importance of being confused as a contributor to learning; thus a major teaching strategy is purposely to allow mistakes to happen, or to begin a project with no clear sense of where it might end. Another characteristic that is counter to the beliefs of many Western educators is the importance of the child's ability to negotiate in the peer group. I think that one of the most challenging aspects of the Reggio Emilia approach is the solicitation of multiple points of view regarding children's needs, interests, and abilities, and the mutual faith in parents, teachers, and children to contribute in meaningful ways to the determination of school experiences.

Teachers trust themselves to respond appropriately to children's ideas and interests, they trust children to be interested in things worth knowing about, and they trust parents to be informed and productive members of a cooperative educational team. The result is an atmosphere of community and collaboration that is developmentally appropriate for adults and children alike. I think that Reggio Emilia children proceed in an investigation, generating and testing their hypotheses, they are encouraged to depict their understanding through one of many symbolic languages, including drawing,

sculpture, dramatic play, and writing. They work together toward the resolution of problems that arise.

Teachers only facilitate and then observe debates regarding the extent to which a child's drawing or other form of representation lives up to the expressed intent. Revision of drawings (and ideas) is encouraged, and teachers allow children to repeat activities and modify each others work in the collective aim of better understanding the topic, Teachers foster children's involvement in the processes of exploration and evaluation, acknowledging the importance of their evolving products as vehicles for exchange. For this future teacher, the Reggio Emilia approach to teaching young children puts the natural development of children as well as the close relationships that they share with their environment at the center of its philosophy.