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**Assignment – Understanding The Reggio Emilia Approach**

**“The Reggio Report”**

**ECC 124 / CVS3 & CVS4**

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**UNDERSTANDING THE REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH 2**

Villa Cella, is a tiny working class village located close to the town of Reggio Emilia, in

the region of Emilia – Romagna, Italy. Villa Cella is the home of the first Reggio Emilia

preschool named “25 April School” (Chertoff, 2013). Here, the beginning of the Reggio Emilia

Approach of learning was established.

After the event of the Second World War and at the end of the fascist regime, parent’s

views changed in regards to how to raise and educate their children (Hall.2010, p. 10)

From rubble stones and bricks the community together built a school from destroyed

building materials. They also sold abandoned horses from the German army to buy other

materials.

“Loris Malaguzzi, a young teacher living in the area, biked to Villa Cella to see the

construction site for himself. Watching the citizens of the town build a school with their own

hands, he had two jarring thoughts:

That the idea of building a school would even occur to ordinary people, women, laborers,

workers, farmers, was already traumatic enough. The fact that these same people, with no

money, no technical assistance, authorization or committees, no school inspectors or party

leaders, were working side by side, brick by brick to construct the building was the second

shock. ... It turned logic and prejudice, the old rules of pedagogy and culture upside down. It set

everything back to square one.

Malaguzzi, who had lived under Fascist rule from the age of two, went to Rome in 1946 to

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attend one of the first postwar child psychology classes. When he returned to Reggio, he helped

the parents of Villa Cella run the 25 April school -- and began founding other preschools in the

area as well” (Chertoff, 2013). When developing the Reggio Emilia Approach Loris Malaguzzi

was influenced by great thinkers from around the world, Celestin Freinet, Jean Piaget, Lev

Vygotsky, John Dewey, David and Frances Hawkins.

**The Reggio Emilia approach is made from a foundation of the following 6 core components:**

1. **The importance of creativity to the development of young children**

Offering creativity young children become curious and have desire to explore, construct and

learn. Through their experiences of touching, moving, listening, and through observing the

children’s needs, interests, and abilities, developmental stages are supported. Based on the

children’s responses and interactions to their creative experiences, and through or by exploring

different elements of materials in their world, the Reggio Emilia teacher’s develop appropriate

and emergent curriculum to continue and expand on the children’s learning. These activities of

creativity are available throughout the classroom with an open ended time frame approach and

often become long-term projects. Whether children engage in a creative activity in their own

space, or with a friend, or in a small group they learn the joy in learning.

I believe this philosophy allows a child to be the unique individual that they are. To build on

their own original ideas and to expand their ideas with their imagination gives them a feeling of

self importance. A child’s “curiosity, insight, flexibility, sensitivity to problems, and

redefinition” (Avender, 2019, p. 7 & 8), skills are empowered to grow through creativity.

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“Creativity seems to emerge from multiple experiences, coupled with a well-supported development of personal resources, including a sense of freedom to venture beyond the known. —Loris Malaguzzi, The Hundred Languages of Children” ( BIERMEIER, 2015).

1. **The environment as ‘The Third Teacher’ (the importance of aesthetics)**

In the Reggio Emilia Approach there are many important teachers supporting one another

with respect and who work in harmonious relationships.

The first teacher is the child, as they are valued in the highest of respect. The second

teacher, are the teachers and colleagues who facilitate and encourage learning alongside the child

working in a partnership. “The Third Teacher” is the environment surrounding the classroom

space both inside and outside the classroom. The child’s parents, families and the community are

also important teaching role models.

The importance of aesthetics is present in the physical environment through the design and

open space for small and large group activates in the classroom. Incorporating the “nature of

beauty” (Henderson, 2019) is extremely important and is present through large windows

providing natural light, indoor plants, coloured ceramic tile flooring, and mirrors. The classroom

is personalized with displays of the children’s art work and photographs which is appealing and

engages the viewer’s senses.

There is a “focus on the beauty and richness in materials in the environment” (American

Journal of Play, 2011). The classroom is well organized with materials, tools, natural elements,

play equipment and books. All items are chosen carefully with beauty in mind and displayed

with a creative approach. Therefore this enhances the quality and beauty of the third teacher’s

environment.

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I am convince the environment surrounding children impacts and influence their

development. When experimenting, exploring and creating in an aesthetically pleasing class

room, with beautiful and engaging materials, tools and objects, the children’s domains (social,

emotional, language, cognitive and physical) develop through their own natural curiosity. In the

class room their senses are being heighten to help understand the beauty of the world around

them. Also the third teacher’s visible beauty has the power to allow the children to feel comfort,

security and is able to help them to express their feelings, thoughts, and their own theories.

**3. The Image of the Child**

The Reggio Emilia philosophy see the image of the child being “competent, powerful,

knowledgeable, motivated to communicate and engage in society, actively co-constructs

knowledge with peers and adults, interested in and capable of exploring complex and abstract

ideas” (Fraser, 2002).

“Here they focus on cognitive development because teachers believe that children right

from their earliest years onwards are trying to develop explanations for the word around them”.

(**CNN & Time News Report, n.d).**

I support this philosophy because the teachers respectably believe in the Reggio Emilia

philosophy themselves. Therefore they show respect to the children and value the “child as a

person and the child as a thinker” (American Journal of Play, 2011). They also acknowledge all

children have different strengths and are capable to learn, which they encourage and support.

Side by side, and as partners, the teachers and children learn, researcher and communicate

together. Most importantly the children lead the way in learning, allowing the teachers to observe

their abilities.

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**4. The Hundred Languages of Children**

A key component of the Reggio Emilia Approach is the involvement of “the hundred

languages of children” which allows children to express themselves through multiple symbolic

languages. ”The Hundred Languages are often expressed through “drawings, sculpting, dramatic

play, writing and painting.”” ([Reggio Emilia, 2015)](https://reggioemilia2015.weebly.com/the-100-languages.html). The children also learn a variety of ways to

express their thoughts and feelings also.

I believe combining play and learning together definitely supports one another, which

allows children to play with a purpose. Through repetition of activities children develop the

skills of investigating, problem solving, revising, and negotiating.

**5. The importance of relationships**

The Reggio Emilia Approach believes in building strong relationships. “When Reggio

educators refer to relationships, they refer not only to those between people-such as between

child and teacher, child and family, teacher and family, teacher and teacher. Although

relationships between people are vitally important, Reggio educators also consider the

relationships between materials. This will influence how materials are stored, displayed, and

presented to the child”. (Stacey, 2018, p. 161). The community is another very important

relationship with Reggio schools by providing support and wanting to know what is happening in

the classrooms.

With the understanding of the importance of all these relationships through interacting,

engaging, and communicating with one another, I realize the children’s knowledge of the world

around them greatly expands.

““Let’s work together to keep education friendly, light hearted, and

respectful to all participants. Respect the individual timing and rhythm of development. Do

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nothing without joy!” ~Professor Loris Malaguzzi” (Reggio Emilia, 2015).

**6. The Role of Documentation**

“Documentation of the growth of both children and teachers is another important

component of the Reggio Emilia approach. Photos of children at work and play, along with

dictations of their experiences, help teachers and parents learn more about what does and does

not work for a child. Teachers can then adjust the dynamics of their classrooms accordingly”.

(Stoudt, 2019, para, 4).

Documentation is a way of recording the children's process of their learning and also

provides knowledge of how their experiences of exploring, and how their environment

impacts their development. There are many forms of documentation tools such as a tablet, video

recorder, and voice recording equipment.

In regards to the role of pedagogical documentation, the children’s learning becomes

aesthetically visible to them and creates a sense of wonder. I feel there is a clearer understanding

of the children’s thinking. “Seeking to find meaning, early learning teachers read and reread

documentation, look at the visuals, and try to identify whether what they are seeing aligns with

an image of the child as being competent and capable in their play experiences” (Deitze, B. &

Kashin, D, 2019, p. 89). When teachers and children engage with reflections and interpretations

of their documents together, children’s attention and memory skills are building.

The 6 core components of the Reggio Emilia Approach allow teachers to become more in

sync with the children’s learning and development. Through the process of experiences the

children learn about the world around them. The flexibility of the Reggio Emilia curriculum

supports the children to lead the teachers in the direction of what they are interested in. Children

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learning, playing, and exploring through many varieties of the hundred languages, continues to

build and expand the confident, responsible, cooperative, resourceful, and creative children they

are!

“Creativity becomes more visible when adults try to be more attentive to the cognitive processes of children than to the results they achieve in various fields of doing and understanding.”   
― **Loris Malaguzzi. (Goodreads, 2019, para. 2).**

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