

HI PRO Highlight Resource of the Month



Your Image of the Child: Where Teaching Begins

Malaguzzi, 1994

Summary

Loris Malaguzzi, a pioneering perspective behind Reggio Emilia's *The Hundred Languages of Children* approach, invites educators to maintain curiosity with how they observe, understand, and relate to children. Teachers and children can co-create both learning and teaching opportunities. Seeing children as empowered agents in their educational journey is enhanced when educators, "believe that the child is very intelligent, strong, beautiful, and has ambitious desires and requests" (Malaguzzi, 1994, p. 6). Thus teachers are not only teaching their students, but also perpetually learning about students' experiences, interests, and opportunities for mutual growth.

A Child's Reality and Unknowns

Children can be unpredictable, emergent beings. Rather than a predictable game of billiards, accepting myriad unknown factors that are part of the equation of who a child is and how they interact with others is important in considering what constitutes a child's reality. Further, self-reflection can clarify what perceptions and images of childhood adults are informed by. Consider:

- What images or ideas do I have about children?
- How is the child's background informing their behavior?
- Why arrive to rapidly assessed truths of the child's capacities rather than be spacious/curious? Why do we do this work in education, and why is it important to learn from the child rather than simply teach the child?

Learning to Wait and Discovering New Ways of Observing

Adults can impose our own timelines, pressures, and expectations on children. Sometimes, children simply need space to explore/expand their developmental capacities. How teachers, "become better observers, able to penetrate into the child to understand each child's resources and potential and present state of mind..." can support children in becoming the "authors of their own learning" (p. 3). Simultaneously, being present for their *process* may help children more than simply focusing on the *product* they aspire to complete. Further, peer-to-peer friendly interactions can teach them in different ways rather than purely teacher-centric information dissemination.

Hot Air Ballon Metaphor

Preschool is like a hot air balloon where children come to explore and learn about the world. Families need to know the importance of this expedition, and that the pilot (teachers) can guide the experiences safely. In working with diverse abilities, how do teacher's images of children impact their education?



Malaguzzi, L. (1994). Your image of the child: Where teaching begins. Child Care Information Exchange, 3, 52-61. <https://www.sightlines-initiative.com/images/Library/reggio/Your Image of the Child-Where Teaching Begins.pdf>

