

Loris Malaguzzi in the UK



what future for early childhood education?

A day hosted by Sightlines Initiative and the Thomas Coram Research Unit, with the collaboration of Reggio Children

14th May 2016 at UCL Institute of Education, London 9.30 – 4

“What’s life like for the worms?” Morning Seminar option



Gunilla Dahlberg discusses the transforming of awareness and practice amongst Swedish educators and preschools during the years of the Swedish Reggio Emilia Network. It is a journey of ‘learning to listen’ – going beyond ‘doing’:
“When we began we loved the idea of project work – but we didn’t actually listen to the children!”

This session will be a unique opportunity for UK early childhood and Foundation Stage educators endeavouring to develop learning environments which share the principles evident in Reggio Emilia, to encounter the parallel learning journeys of other Northern European educators who have faced the same problems, and to exchange ideas. Gunilla will bring with her for discussion detailed examples of educators and children’s interactions illustrating key moments in their experiences thus far.

Gunilla is a professor of pedagogy at the Department of Child and Youth Studies at the University of Stockholm and an internationally recognised researcher. Her ideas have made her a frequent lecturer in “early childhood education”. She believes that traditional teaching ignores the children’s full potential. Changing this requires a new view of the child, and also of the role of teaching.

“Our starting point is that children are exploring the world and trying to create meaning. Being attentive to their creation of meaning creates desire, and when children have desire, they also learn other factual knowledge. A teacher does not possess all knowledge. A learning teacher must listen to the child with all senses.

In 1988 a group in Sweden started discussing why so many Swedish pedagogues were attracted by the pedagogical philosophy of Reggio Emilia. After a couple of years we came to realise that there was no pedagogical practice in Sweden that really took such a perspective seriously. A large gap existed between [ideas] and [practice]. It seemed ... that it was relatively easy to take on a view of the child as equipped with huge potential, or of the educator as a as a reflective, co-constructive practitioner – at a surface level. But at a deeper level, what did the Reggio philosophy really mean, both theoretically and in relation to practice?” (Gunilla Dahlberg in Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education & Care: Dahlberg, Moss & Pence)



Here are some topical touchstones in both the Swedish Network experience and in the UK:

- ‘Adventuring’ is the right spirit, but ‘evaluation and assessment’ are given as tools: what then to do?
- How can we remain inventive in times of conformism?
- What languages do we use, or can we use, in listening to and understanding children’s enquiries?
- Questioning involves being on a quest: ‘I know because I’ve explored round that corner’
- What concepts of thinking do we have? (Do we *have* thinking in what we do?)
- The more that we adults question together, discuss, explore, reconsider, try – the more the children do.

[Reading, links, references](#)

[Individual registration](#)

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