

Howard Gardner

In Reggio, the teachers know how to listen to children, how to allow them to take the initiative, and yet how to guide them in productive ways. There is no fetish made about achieving adult standards, and yet the dedication exemplified by the community ensures that work of quality will result.

As an American educator, I cannot help but be struck by certain paradoxes. 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.

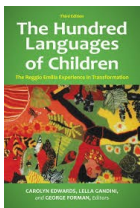
We call for parental involvement, but are loathe to share ownership, responsibility, and credit with parents.

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 difficult—issues.



The Hundred Languages of Children
The Reggio Emilia Approach - Advanced Reflections
1998 Ablex Publishing Corporation, Greenwich, CT
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During the past two decades, Gardner and colleagues at Harvard's Project Zero have been involved in the design of performance-based assessments; education for understanding; the use of multiple intelligences to achieve more personalized curriculum, instruction, and pedagogy; and the quality of interdisciplinary efforts in education.