

This is an article from the blog Technology Rich Inquiry Based Research by Diane Kashin. It includes information about Katz and Chard's Project Approach as a point of reference and importantly includes the role of documentation as an integral part of progettazione. I think this comparison helps to an approach familiar to many, is helpful in identifying how progettazione is different and similar to project work.

[Progettazione: Reggio-inspired Teaching in Dialogue with the Learning Processes of Children](#)

Excerpted from: The Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Years Education
[RE Approach to Early Years Education](#)

Progettazione

This is not a free journey but neither is it a journey with rigid timetables and schedules; rather, it is akin to a journey guided by a compass.

-Carlina Rinaldi

Notoriously difficult to translate, the term **progettazione** is often understood to mean emergent curriculum or child-centred curriculum, but the reality is far more complex. Reggio educators talk of working without a teacher-led curriculum but this does not mean that forward thinking and preparation do not take place. Rather, teachers learn to observe children closely, listen to them carefully and give value to their own ideas so that they might gain an understanding of what interests children most and create strategies that allow the children to build upon their interests. Topics for study can come from the children themselves, from subjects that the teacher knows naturally interest children and also from the family and the greater community. Projects do not follow rigid timetables but rather meander slowly at the pace of the children. Children may be involved in a specific project over a lengthy period of time but not every day; rather, they return to it as their interests dictate, revisiting and re-evaluating what they learn.

Children are the protagonists of their learning and are encouraged by teachers to develop projects and solve problems among themselves, using the teacher as a tool who can 'lend' help, information and experience when necessary. Central to this mode of learning and teaching is the development of reciprocal relationships of love and trust between adult and child and between the children themselves. Learning always takes place within a group setting because Reggio educators see interaction and the consideration of differing points of view to be fundamental to the learning process. The building of such relationships and indeed the development of such projects that can continue for days, weeks and sometimes the school

year, takes a great amount of time and cannot be constrained by school timetables or specialist curricular lessons. Time, and how it is conceived, is therefore an important factor. Within the nurseries, learning and teaching take place always at the pace of the child.

What is the role of the teacher in this type of learning process?

The role of the teacher in the learning–teaching relationship known as *progettazione* can be summarised as follows.

- The teacher seeks to know each child as an individual person and to create a trusting relationship in which learning can take place.

- The teacher strives to support and encourage the child on the learning journey, encouraging them to reflect and to question. In this sense, the role of the teacher is not to dispense information or simply to correct. Rather, the teacher is like a tool that the children use when most needed. Sometimes they may observe; at other moments they act as co-investigators or scribes. They may challenge or provoke ideas through the use of open-ended questions and provocations of many kinds. Indeed, a fundamental stage in *progettazione* is knowing how to relaunch an idea or concept with the children in a way which provokes them into taking their understanding and experience to the next level. There is an enormous respect for children's own theories and hypotheses. Allowing children to make mistakes in their quest to solve problems is considered fundamental to the learning process. Teachers are not quick to intervene at every problem the children confront. Indeed, allowing children to travel along what the adult may consider 'the wrong path' and encouraging the children to realise this autonomously is considered an important, if controversial, learning strategy. Through close observation and evaluation of evidence, the teacher learns to judge when intervention is most appropriate. It is only when time is taken to build a close and trusting relationship with the children that the teacher can become confident in this role. This remains one of the principal reasons for teachers and children remaining together for the three-year duration.

- The teacher is also a researcher into the ways in which children learn. Indeed, the place of ongoing research in the classroom has grown and developed significantly throughout the years. While what is termed research in Reggio schools may not always be equated with scientific research in tertiary educational establishments, there is no doubt as to the value of

the search for meaning and understanding that Reggio educators strive for. Carlina Rinaldi has described the place of this research in the following way:

'Research as a term capable of describing the straining to know which is activated each time authentic processes of knowledge are created. Research to describe the individual and common journey in the direction of new universes of possibility ...'
-Carlina Rinaldi

As such the educator must observe the child's learning process as closely as possible. By observing, the teacher enters into a relationship with the child. Reggio educators spend a huge amount of time observing children working in small groups in an attempt to come closer to the children's understanding. The process of observation is considered partial and subjective, hence the need to observe and re-observe and to consider varying points of view.

