The Language of photography

A National ReFocus Network project

'To photograph is to confer importance'

Susan Sontag

Emma Pace / Chris Holmes
5/6/2010

IF...*

If I can

 ask my own questions,
 try out my ideas,
 experience what's around me,
 share what I find;

If I have

 plenty of time for
 my special pace,
 a nourishing space,
 things to transform;

If you'll be

 my patient friend,
 my trusted guide,
 fellow investigator,
 partner in learning;

Then I will

 explore the world,
 discover my voice
 and tell you what I know
 in a hundred languages.

This poem was written by Pamela Houk with valuable suggestions from Lella Gandini and the late Loris Malaguzzi.

Contents

Sightlines Initiative

Sightlines Initiative aims to advocate, demonstrate and support a creative and reflective approach to early childhood education in the UK.

There are very many countries in the world that have become aware of and are interested in the pedagogical approach that has developed in the preschools and Infant toddler centres of Reggio Emilia. The ReFocus Network is a network of people working within early years education who use the Reggio approach as a frame of reference in their work , who are inspired by, interested in and want to learn from this experience. The Reggio experience has offered a new and different way of understanding our role and responsibility as educators in early learning. Sightlines has been organising group visits to Reggio since 1997, and is the UK appointed reference agency for Reggio Children and a member of the Reggio Children International Network. Sightlines has developed courses, consultancies, publications, projects and events to support this interest in the pedagogical practices of Reggio Emilia. These initiatives have seen the participation of thousands of educators, artists, designers and others from the UK. All over the UK there are individuals, groups and schools working with these ideas on various different levels.

Sightlines aim is to support these groups and offering advice, project opportunities and professional development opportunities.

Professional development for artists and early years educators

UK reference point for the Reggio Children network

ReFocus Network

Early Arts North East

Action research projects with early years settings.
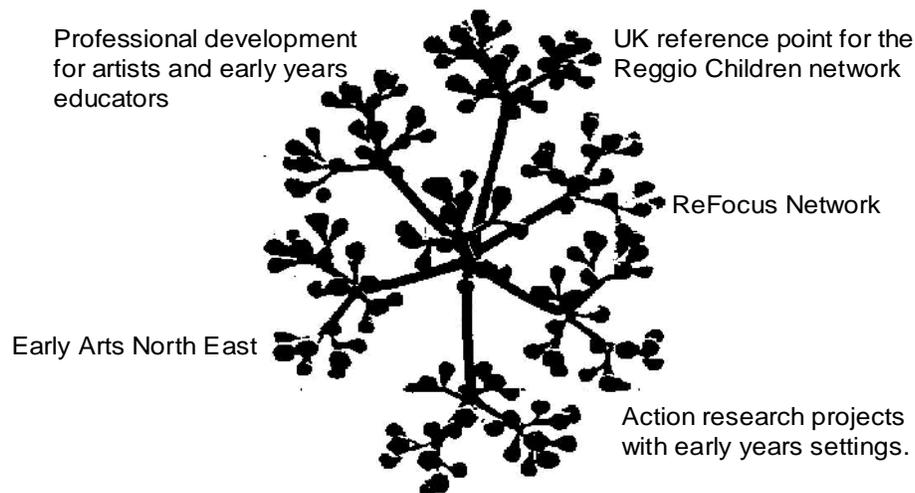
www.sightlines-initiative.com

Introduction

Sightlines has studied the construction of long term, meaningful, action research projects in the preschools of Reggio Emilia and is now proposing a national ReFocus Network members project in the UK.

This project will have as its focus The Language of Photography. The project aims to explore the construction of projects, the potential of photography as a language of expression for young children and as a tool to develop educators' understanding and interpretation of the medium. This subject is currently an area of research and interest in Reggio Emilia and the Reggio Children International Network member countries. So, whilst this is an independent national UK project, formulated and initiated by Sightlines Initiative it is envisaged that it has the potential to develop further connections and collaborations between the UK, Reggio Emilia and network member countries.

The project is open to participation by all ReFocus Network members. It will be managed and co ordinated by Sightlines Initiative. Participants can engage in the project at whatever level is appropriate for them.

Sightlines has in mind the overall timeframe of two years to support and manage this project. This guidance identifies two key project phases, the first being the pre project phase and the second the main project phase. At various stages we will require documentation of project progress to be submitted by participants. This material can then be analysed together and used to shape the direction of the project and to share with others as well as begin to form the basis of a national exhibition.

Sightlines Initiative believes that a national research project amongst members, with a common theme/focus has the potential to enable the following:

- A supportive structure to progress theoretical understandings into daily practice.

- A shared research focus.

- A common subject for exchange, dialogue and connection between members.

- The construction of projects (Progettzione)

- A community of learners, learning together.

- The exploration of the values and principles of the Reggio Philosophy

- A national exhibition to promote and inspire a creative and reflective approach to early childhood education.

A common research project from our point of view should have the aim to be built together in terms of questions that should be asked, in terms of strategies, criteria's, choices, tools, documentation and development of the project. All this should belong to agreements that in part should be taken in advance, in part should be agreed along the way. Taking into consideration what for us is a style that characterizes our approach to research.
Amelia Gambetti: Reggio Children International Network Coordinator

The Language of Photography

We have chosen Photography as the focus for the project as it is amongst the most accessible and versatile of all the expressive languages. It encompasses a huge variety of genres and is uniquely suited to express our fascinations and experiences.

Through photography we can enable children to visually revisit their thoughts, feelings and experiences. We can document learning and develop a tool for reflection and evaluation. Digital photography has an immediacy which makes it the most useful tool in making learning visible. Recent research has proved that memory is constructed from still images, from the visual 'punctum points' of experience not from the moving playback of an event in the mind's eye. This means that by focusing the camera on key happenings we can help reinforce and consolidate children's experiences and learning.

The camera is a tool for communication but also for creativity. Even very young children can go beyond documenting what is in front of them to using the camera expressively. Photography is the most perfect medium to enable children to give expression to their personal, unique view of the world. As well as opportunities to experiment with paint, clay, music and dance, children should be offered opportunities to develop photography as another expressive language. The digital camera is a powerful expressive tool in the hands of very young children who have not yet developed spoken language or skills of representation. By equipping them with the skills and tools to photograph their own experiences, we can see what is important to children. Szarkowski tells us that photography is 'no more than a system of visual editing'. So, in allowing children to distil the essence of their experience through the lens of the camera, we can gain real insights in to their ideas, interests, feelings, schematic behaviours, friendships, preoccupations and more.

The concept is that the project is an opportunity to investigate the point of view of children through photographic language.

> 'Photography is a deceptively simple medium. Pressing the shutter is so easy, yet the moment that is recorded is very likely to reveal a quantity of information that would take hundreds of words to accurately describe. At the same time there will almost certainly be a mountain of information that the image does not reveal. Photographs may clarify things but they can also be ambiguous, mysterious, or downright confusing. An ordinary everyday moment can be (unintentionally) be transformed into something that seems magical- the reverse can also happen. A photo is very complex.'
> Julian Germain

Project principles

The principles below are drawn from Sightlines 'Compasses and tools' statement describing the values, images and characteristics of the organisation. (See articles section)[1]

- Children are rich in curiosity and competence and potential.

- Children are innately sociable and seek exchanges.

- Children have a predisposition to learn, to be curious, and to enquire, to make hypotheses, to interpret and make sense of their experiences, the world and their place within it.

- The environment as the third teacher.

- A pedagogy of listening

- The Hundred Languages of children.

- Dialogue is a tool for the exchange and reflection of learning processes.

- Documentation is a vital tool in making visible the learning processes of children and adults.

- Educators who think for themselves, making choices that will enable rich learning opportunities.

- The school as a studio for the exploration, examination and exchange of ideas.

- The school as a learning community for parents, teachers and children together.

- Children and teachers as co-researchers.

"Children show us they know how to walk along the path to understanding. Once children are helped to perceive themselves as authors or inventors, once they are helped to discover the pleasure of inquiry, their motivation and interest explode. The age of childhood, more than the ages that follow, is characterised by such expectations. To disappoint the children deprives them of possibilities that no exhortation can arouse in later years."
  Loris Malaguzzi, Reggio Emilia

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[1] See article Compasses and tools

Long term action research projects

The project proposed can be described as a long term action research project. By this we mean a project which is not defined by a short or set time frame and has the possibility to develop over a substantial length of time.

In this context we define 'action research' to mean research that is conducted actively by project participants. The research is based on the children and educators actively working together to explore a particular subject, and the observations and learning which is understood as a result of this active exploration. This approach requires children and adults to see themselves as researchers. Once it is ascertained what is already known about a subject then it is a case of learning how to learn, to research, to extend knowledge and understanding.[2]

In Reggio Emilia they would use the term 'Progettzione' for this type of project. There is no direct translation for this term into English. However, its meaning is different to that of what we would normally call a 'project'. We need to think about it differently. One understanding we can offer for the meaning of this word is a projection, into the future, that is 'in motion.' Therefore there is no fixed/known end point or product. It starts with an interest, a provocation and makes a project path which is discovered along the way. It is essential to start with an idea and an acceptance that you do not know where that initial idea with lead. This approach insists upon listening to children and constructing the direction of the project as you go along the path, with the children.

This approach necessitates the need for careful observation and documentation, as a tool for dialogue and reflection for the adults and children. The documentation (photos. video, artwork, transcripts of children's words, records of children's actions etc) can be used as material for adult and child discussions, for revisiting and remembering, for sharing perspectives and interpretations on what is happening and identifying further lines of enquiry.

Long term action research projects create the opportunity to explore children's interests and lines of enquiry in great depth, from many perspectives, and on many levels. The project creates a meaningful context which supports the learning and development of children. Within an action research project where children are engaged because they are interested in the subject and enquiry, The context of a meaningful action research project, based on the interests of children, supports and inspires children to want to express themselves, master skills and learn. It creates a learning context which is not contrived, makes sense to the child and is therefore pleasurable and meaningful, not pressured. In this way a positive relationship to learning, education and self development can be nurtured.

For instance, in this project which is focussing on children's use of photography as a language, the focus may be photography, but, it will encompass many other areas of learning relevant to the children. If children are excited and engaged in the idea they will naturally be inspired to find ways to communicate their ideas and observations, to narrate their own photos, orally, verbally, graphically or in writing, to work in groups, negotiate, share ideas, discuss, hypothesize, plan and explore their different languages of expression.

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[2] See articles 'The life of an idea' and 'Teachers as researchers'.

Pre-project research

The 'Pre-project' is a term that has been identified to describe the key preparation and exploration stage of a long term action research project. It is a phase where the educators identify an idea that seems worth exploring with the children. The idea may have come from the children, or from the adults. It could be any subject, the important thing is that educators meet together regularly to discuss a subject that would be of interest to explore further and ask themselves *why* it could be interesting.

The pre-project is a time for adults to engage in their own research, to further develop their own knowledge and understanding and engage with a subject of interest. It is a time to research theories relating to a subject, find articles, websites and opportunities and to share these with colleagues. It is also a time to research subjects of interest with the children. What do the children know already? What do they want to know? What are their questions? How can we find that information together. The teachers and children become researchers together. It is the beginning of co-construction by adults and children.

The pre project is a stage of research which involves all project participants. It creates an opportunity to discuss and explore possible ideas with the children, the parents and educators. It enables educators to hypothesize about what the project can contain.

The pre project is a stage of exploring an observed interest or possible line of enquiry of the children where the adults and children work *together* trying to find out all of their ideas, thoughts and questions about the subject. It is a way of opening up a subject for exploration; researching and widening what is already known and understood by the participants before a project path is taken. The adults need to continuously observe the children and maintain a dialogue about what they see and think and document this process. Through discussion the educators can debate what they have observed and possible ways to support the children's enquiries and learning. It enables educators to go beyond the surface and the obvious and unpick what it really is that is fascinating and engaging the children about a subject. The educators can formulate their research questions to drive the project.

The pre project is also a stage in which a project approach is introduced and embedded. [3]It moves away from traditional notions of the adult as the teachers and children as the learners and creates a community of learners, learning together, from and with each other. This is a key element in the long term in depth project work we can observe from Reggio Emilia pre schools.

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[3] See article A Pedagogy of listening

The language of photography

For educators it means a re-evaluation of the role of the teacher, from a transmitter of knowledge to one who engineers an environment of enquiry. Within this environment the educators become allies, sharing in the children's thinking, asking the good questions that enable deeper thinking. If the interests and fascinations of the children, rather than annually repeated topics and themes, shape the activities they engage in, then observations are made as our doorway into the children's worlds.

When the pre project is underway, parents should be invited to share what is being explored and discovered with their children, and the ideas of the teachers. Documentation is a useful way of sharing ideas and progress with parents. The parents can offer their perspectives on the given subject and on their children's learning and interests. Questions can be posed to the parents. This sharing of perspectives again widens the subject, offers some new ideas and new understandings. In this way the parents can become directly involved in what happens in school, their point of view listened to, and opportunities created to participate and learn together with educators. So, the point and purpose of the pre project is to widen a possible line of enquiry to learn and find a focus to move forward with.

An example

In Reggio Emilia a group of schools wished to explore the language of photography with the children. This group included two primary schools and two preschools. In the pre project phase they introduced digital cameras to the children and gave them opportunities to use the cameras and discover what cameras could do, how they worked and observe and analyse the results. The children were then offered the proposal to go into the city of Reggio Emilia and take photographs. The educators were then able to observe, and deepen their understanding about how the different children approached photography and their subjects. They observed and documented the differences between the subjects captured by the pre school children compared to the primary school children and if there was a difference, as well as the differences in approach of the boys and girls.

In this example from Reggio Emilia the approach enabled a widening of understanding about the language of photography and elicited new and interesting questions. It enabled a good beginning which included the participation of parents in the research project and created a community of learners all learning together, with and from each other. It gave all project participants experience in mastering the skills of using a camera and creating images. Following this experimental phase the educators embarked by introducing a theme for the schools to work with. The theme they chose in this example was 'the time of time' and the children were given the challenge 'what is time' and 'can you photograph time' (this project has recently been exhibited at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre, Reggio Emilia.)

Questions to ask ourselves

- Do we allow children time to engage fully with their topic or line of enquiry?

- Are our early childhood settings too busy?

- Is enough time given during the planning process to the time children require to be reflective about their own learning?

- Can time be organised in ways that increase adults' opportunities to be more reflective about the children and their own practice?

- Is there a flexible approach to the curriculum that allows children the time to pursue particular interests?

- What do the eyes of the adult see – who can the adult see?

- What do you want for your children?

- What kind of educator do you want to be?

- Whose learning is it anyway?

- Who is in charge?

- Do we learn alone or together? Are both necessary?

- Do we make good use of all of our senses?

- In 'school' do we learn 'things' or 'learn to learn?'

Listening
There are two very different kinds of listening. One is easy to do. We settle down get comfortable in our chairs and listen for things we know and understand. We don't need to do much thinking of our own-indeed, virtually none. The other kind of listening is hard work. It makes our head hurt. It takes effort and energy. It requires us to listen for what we do not know, rather than things we are familiar with. It requires us to listen for difference, for new ideas, for unexpected perspectives. This kind of listening can be seriously unsettling- but in the long run, seriously rewarding, because of our own learning as we listen.
Mary Jane Drummond
Igniting a fuse/ Developing the creative practice of primary educators
Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination

Key Components

The following components are seen as essential elements to be contained in the project.

1. Pre project research

In this project we envisage the pre project phase will be used to explore the language of photography with young children. It is a time where children and adults can experiment with cameras and begin to master the functioning and potential photography as a language. The following are suggestions for exploration in the pre project phase:

Educators

- To think about how they use photography themselves and develop their own skills and understanding of this medium.[4]
- To develop technical competence with photography.
- To ensure that the correct systems are in place for taking photos, downloading and printing them.
- To engage in research (read articles and texts, visit exhibits and internet sites on the subject.)
- To observe and document how the children use cameras.
- To find time to discuss with colleagues what they have observed.
- To make hypothese about the emerging interests and learning of the children.
- To ask themselves questions; what do children think cameras are? How do they use them? What subjects do they focus on? What do the photographs reveal to us about the child/children and their interests? How do the children react to seeing their photos?
- To document the process including; adults photos of the children, their own hypotheses about what they are seeing, children's own photos, transcriptions of their words discussions and observations.
- To formulate proposals to offer the children to extend interests and learning.
- To identifying research questions.
- To experiment in finding ways to make the learning processes visible

Children

- To experiment with cameras – how do they work? What do they do?
- To experiment with different conditions e.g.light/dark/angles.
- To use cameras, learn how to download and print images.
- To observe and discuss their own and other photographic results.
- To play with images; make prints, share them with the children, examine them, make montages, cut them up, draw on them, print onto acetate, layer them. To formulate questions and theories.
- To take cameras home.
- Teach basic skills.
- Introduce fine art photography.
- Regularly review pictures in Picture

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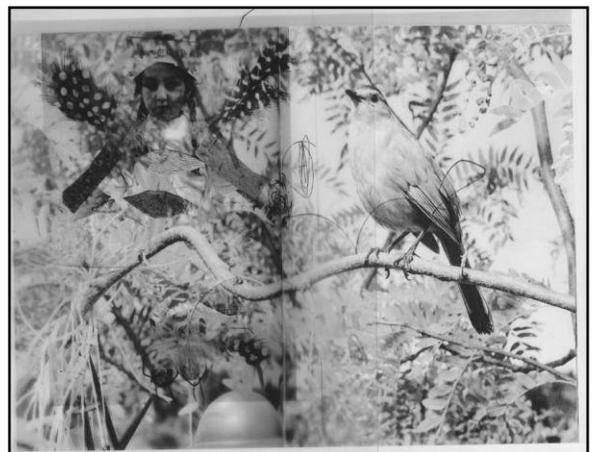
[4] See Article The language of photography – ReFocus Journal 9

Manager.
- Create picture narratives and review them in Powerpoint.
- Spend time looking at photographs, visit galleries and look online.
Where appropriate, have a photographic element to the children's everyday lines of enquiry.
- The digital camera and simple software like Adobe Elements or Photoshop allow children to be playful with imagery, to transform themselves, to appear and disappear.

Parents
- To be introduced to the project approach and purpose.
- To be consulted and informed.
- To be introduced to some theories relating to photography and pedagogy.
- To understand the thinking and planning of the educators.
- To be given information relating to local photography exhibitions to attend (with their children)
- To have means and opportunities to communicate with the setting regarding the childs developing interest in the project.
- To attend photography workshops in the setting.
- To give permission to use photographs of and by their children in an exhibit.
- To have opportunities to come into the setting to participate in the project – parent documenters?

(Please note the above are just a selection of ideas and not a prescriptive list of 'must do's')

2. Documentation and dialogue

The word documentation is widely used and we have to consider what we mean by this. Documentation in the sense we (and colleagues in Reggio Emilia) mean is not record keeping, or objective observation or display. The main purpose of documentation is to provide material for dialogue, to bring to the table for discussion, the observations, the photos, the childrens words ideas and questions, the examples of children's work the questions and hypotheses of the educators.
'A set of photographs pasted to a board, showing a trip to a farm is a display. A set of photographs captioned with children's words would still be a display. The panels need commentary – interpretation and explanation – to qualify as documentation'
(Negotiated learning Foreman and Fyfe attribution)
There are other meaningful uses for it, but its main purpose is to inform dialogue. And the dialogue values the subjective and professional opinion of the educators. This subjective opinion then becomes part of the documentation. Documentation can be captured by individual educators but the dialogue has to be a shared experience; a sharing of perspectives. It is precisely this sharing of perspectives which enables educators to consider many points of view and extend their own thinking in order to support children's learning. [5]
What is it that we have seen? What have others seen? What do others think of what we have observed? What do we think is happening with the children? With this information, what proposals can we make to the children to excite their curiosity and extend their learning? Documentation in this sense is also less concerned with individual development and more focuses on learning groups. How do we work together? Negotiate? Listen to each other, share points of view and reach agreements.

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[5] See article Documenting the documenter

Documentation also has the power to make children understand that what they do is of value. By gathering documentation, sharing, discussing and displaying it children can clearly see that their actions and ideas are important. Documentation provides a trace or map of the development of an idea or project. This map can be shared with children, with parents, with other staff. It can eventually be displayed to make visible the learning processes of the children and the rationale of the teachers decisions.

There is nothing prescriptive about documenting. All we need is experience in listening, interpreting and analysing what we have seen or heard. The only way to gain this experience is to make a start and have a go, resolute with the knowledge that this is research and open to free thinking subjectivity.

'Documentation as an approach requires adults to be just as curious as children in 'researching children, researching the world'. Having the curiosity to listen and watch will lead us to discover and hypothesise what is going on in the minds of children as they reveal the true levels of their thinking to us.'

Andrea Sully

3. Introducing a project theme

Following the pre project research and development phase, educators will be able to identify some key interests and lines of enquiry to follow with the children. It may be that a line of enquiry comes from the children or that the educators can identify a theme which, based on their observations and professional opinion, would interest the children.

In Reggio the educators sometimes make a strong intervention at this stage, by offering a theme to explore. Their proposals to the children always have wide scope for different possibilities. For example following a pre project which gave the opportunity to explore camera and photography and observe '*How'* children used this medium, the children were offered the proposal 'What is time?' Can you photograph time?

It can be observed from projects in Reggio, that often the project themes proposed are those which explore big concepts or ideas e.g. light, time, space, death, birth, shadows, the city. Educators also propose projects based directly on the interests of the children eg The amusement park for the birds, The little ones of silent movies, A climbing plant in clay, crowds.

We have formulated some possible themes to explore, whilst also acknowledging that groups may discover and wish to pursue their own themes.

We therefore suggest that each group makes an analysis of project direction after the preproject phase and submit this to Sightlines for advice and exchange.

Photography project themes Sightlines have considered:

- A child's perspective on where they live. (creating a sort of map or picture of the UK from children's perspectives.)
- What is beauty? What is beautiful? (A child's perspective on what they find beautiful in their lives)
- Happiness. What makes you happy? (a child's view on what happiness means to them)

Any of the above themes have the possibility to create a stunning, insightful and moving final exhibit – that has the potential to raise awareness about the amazing potential of young children and also material for us to learn about how children see the world and their place within it.

4. Professional development

Each setting participating in this project should also include a professional development programme to support the project. The professional development sessions could include exploring aspects of photography and pedagogy. We recommend that staff have weekly meetings to reflect and discuss what is happening in the project, and also at least one professional development session per half term. Many groups participating in this project are also in ReFocus Learning groups and it is envisaged that learning groups could use this project as a focus for meetings.

Sightlines has developed some materials and support offers for project participants.

- General advice and support.
- A range of articles on the ReFocus members section of the sightlines website. (See list of available articles on p.22)
- A series of questions, any of which could be used as a focus point for discussion. (see page 10)
- A selection of useful websites, references and exemplar projects (see p. 21 &22)
- A reading list
- Project mentors (ReFocus consultants can be assigned as project mentors to support settings for a negotiated fee)
- Professional development packages (Exemplar projects on cd and supporting documents to purchase from Sightlines)
- Visits to national and regional photography exhibitions. (See p 18)
- Seminar and workshop days exploring photography and pedagogy. (Sightlines can organise these per setting or within regions.)
- National exchange event (Provisionally 13th and 14th November at St Thomas Centre, Birmingham.)
- On line forum for discussion.
- Channel for advice and guidance with Reggio Children.

5. Evaluation and production of material

Project leaders must seek permission by families to take and use photographs of children as part of the project and wider educational sphere.

Sightlines will offer further advice about production of material for exhibit as the project progresses.

As far as possible photographs and documentation should be saved in files *and* backed up on discs.

Participants should identify a physical area where ongoing documentation can be displayed and visible to parents and children.

Parents should be regularly consulted regarding the progress of the project.

Project participants are required to submit material to Sightlines at regular intervals (see p 23)

Sightlines intends to use the material generated from this project to form a national curated exhibition in 2012. This will be subject to acquiring funding.

We envisage that the exhibition could be a powerful tool in the UK in promoting a creative and reflective approach to early learning and the perspectives and amazing potential of all children.

There are many ways to listen. The most difficult way is the one that leaves space to the other, to his or her strategies and points of view. There is no true listening, or respect, if we are not convinced that the other person is capable of telling us things that can enrich us.
Vea Vecchi Atelierista/Diana preschool Reggio Emilia

Resource Pack

The language of photography
The democratic camera
Reading lists
Exhibitions
Exemplar projects
Reference websites
Articles
Questions to ask ourselves
Timeframes

Jodie
'She's just a baby bird, a princess bird. She's got a bird crown.'

Further resources will be offered as the project progresses

For centuries, children have expected adults to believe in them - in their talents, their sensitivity, their creative intelligence and their desire to understand their surroundings. We have to understand them through the things they want to do and show that they can do. Children use 100 'languages' to teach us and show us. They have an inexhaustible desire to learn. Here in Reggio Emilia we believe in children. And if we also believe in ourselves, we can change many things. 'We must stop bringing up our children on the basis of predetermined. syllabuses and timetables. We have to give a higher priority to the ability of children to teach themselves and to collaborate with them in developing syllabuses and discovering their real areas of interest. However, it is a process which requires family support. This is what we have been trying to achieve over the years... and we will succeed if adults, completely without prejudice, learn to think, enquire and discuss how we can help children to have a good life,' he says and adds a powerful conclusion: Another thing which always fascinates people who take an interest in our activities is the vast documentation we have assembled over the years. It contains research findings which confirm that we can combine theory and practice. To see, feel and show are exceptional qualities for teachers, who often simulate, conceal and just talk!

Loris Malaguzzi, conversing with visitor, 1992

The language of photography

The movie-director Wim Wenders speaks about photo click as a time that starts from the photographer, a time that goes towards the subject in the picture and comes back. A time of going and coming back that also establishes a relationship. The intensity of the relationship with the subject to catch through the photographic lens is the main element of a good photography.

In the classroom we can use photography to engage children in the documentation process. When a piece of work is finished, have the author photograph it. To help the children consider composition, ask how we should photograph it. Which side? Which angle? Where should we put it? What should the light be like? A domestic torch can be offered to the children to illuminate their finished piece and create images with different atmospheres and characteristics.

A photograph says as much about the photographer as the subject.
'Children often use cameras in a very exciting way- unrestricted by conventional notions of what makes a good picture they are so direct, curious and unpretentious that I often find myself liking their pictures more than my own.'
Julian Germain

It is never too soon to expose children to good photographic imagery. Every subject has been the object of a fine art photographic enquiry. Google major galleries to find examples of inspiring imagery to form part of the children's lines of enquiry.

The Democratic Camera

'Photography is a deceptively simple medium. Pressing the shutter is so easy, yet the moment that is recorded is very likely to reveal a quantity of information that would take hundreds of words to accurately describe.
At the same time there will almost certainly be a mountain of information that the image does not reveal. Photographs may clarify things but they can also be ambiguous, mysterious, or downright confusing. An ordinary everyday moment can be (unintentionally) be transformed into something that seems magical- the reverse can also happen. A photo is very complex.'
Julian Germain

With digital technology we need fewer technical skills to produce correctly exposed, sharp, colour-balanced images as cameras do much of the work for us. But if we are aware of the basic elements of the photographic image we can improve the quality of the images we and the children can produce and do justice to the ideas and experiences.

As society increasingly views photography in the digital age as a medium which endangers children's safety, we have a duty to reassert children's right to be visible, to have their identity, experiences and achievements brought into the public domain and celebrated. With common sense data-sharing policies, photography used responsibly and effectively can enrich children's lives.

Reading list

Photography

Konttinen, Sirkka-Liisa – **'Byker '** Bloodaxe Books in association with AmberSide
ISBN 0 906427 90 8
Konttinen, Sirkka-Liisa – **'Byker Revisited'** Portrait of a community
Northumbria University Press ISBN 978 190 4794424
Steele Perkins, C –' **England My England '**
Northumbria University Press ISBN 9781904794387
Steele Perkins, C **'Northern Exposures'**
Northumbria University Press ISBN 9781904794202
Williams, Val **'Martin Parr'**   Phaedon ISBN-10: 071484389X
Eggleston, William **'Paris'** Steidl ISBN 13: 9783865219152
Longstaff, Jacky and Wharton,Chris **'Room'** bookprojects.net
ISBN 978-1-   90458762-0
Berger, J.,(1972) *Ways of Seeing* Penguin Books ISBN 978 014 013515 2
Waite, C., (1999) **Seeing Landscapes**   Collins and Brown Ltd. ISBN 1 85585 748 0
Waite, C., (2005) In **My Mind's Eye Seeing in Black and White**, Photographers' Institute
Press ISBN 1 86108 437 4
Sontag, S., (1979) **On Photography**
Wells, L., (2002) **The Photography Reader**
Germain, J., (2005)For **Every minute you are angry you lose 60 seconds worth of Happiness**

ReFocus Journal Issue 9 Autumn 2009 - Article Chris Holmes ' The language of photography'

Pedagogy

In Dialogue with Reggio. Carlina Rinaldi. Routledge. (2007)
Making Learning Visible. Reggio Children Project Zero. (2001)
Adventuring in Early Childhood Education. Sightlines Initiative (2009)
Advisories - Reggio Children (2002)
Browsing through ideas- Reggio Children(2009)
Dialogue with places – Reggio Children (2009)
Researching children, researching the world – 5x5x5=creativity (2008)
Doing the right thing (DVD) Sightlines Initiative (2009)
The Hundred languages of Children (second edition) Ablex

Exhibitions

Photography Exhibitions
'A photograph gives you everything all at once, but takes time to unravel. It contains more than what's there in the sheen of the paper, in the chemicals and grain of the printed surface.' Adrian Searle ,The Guardian 11 Jan '10

Check local and national press for photographic exhibitions.

The Photographers' Gallery is the largest public gallery in London dedicated to photography. From the latest emerging talent, to historical archives
www.photonet.org.uk

Side Gallery
Amber is a film & photography collective incorporating Amber Films, Side Gallery and Side Cinema... The work is rooted in social documentary, built around long term engagements with working class and marginalized communities in the North of Englan. Amber has built up a significant photographic collection which is available online.
www.amber-online.com

National Museum of Photography, Film and Television
The National Media Museum in Bradford, West Yorkshire has 10 free galleries, covering photography**,** film**,** television and animation, 2 cinemas & an IMAX
www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk

National Portrait Gallery
www.npg.org.uk

Annual competitions such as The Taylor Wessing Photography Prize and the Deutsche Borse are well worth reviewing. They are available as touring exhibitions.

Flickr is a treasure trove of diverse contemporary photographic practice.
www.flickr.com

'What the human eye observes casually and incuriously, the eye of the camera notes with relentless fidelity.' Berenice Abbot

"The best conditions for thinking, if you really stop and notice, are not tense. They are gentle. They are quiet. They are unrushed. They are stimulating but not competitive. They are encouraging. They are paradoxically both rigorous and nimble. Attention, the act of listening with respect and fascination is the key to a thinking environment….. when you are listening to someone, much of the quality of what you are hearing is your effect on them. your attention, your listening is that important." Nancy Kline – Time to think

Exemplar Projects

Kids With Cameras
An international network focusing upon children as photographers
www.kids-with-cameras.org

Telling Images-Stories of a Community by Julian Germain
www.creativepartnerships.com

My Family My History by Julian Germain
Julian Germain is fascinated by people's family

The camera makes real what one is experiencing…it is a way of certifying experience..and of converting experience into an image.'
Susan Sontag

albums, pictures in newspapers, archives, CCTV stills, adverts, product catalogues etc- by all kinds of photographs. Many of his projects place his own pictures alongside others that he's 'found', 'borrowed' or 'collected', revealing a variety of approaches or points of view. He also invites people, especially young people, to actively *participate* as photographers. 'Children often use cameras in a very exciting way- unrestricted by conventional notions of what makes a good picture thay are so direct, curious and unpretentious that I often find myself liking their pictures more than my own.'

My Family My History   uses photography to make the past relevant in the present, creating images of contemporary life that will have value in the future.
In 2005/6 Julian Germain worked with pupils from Barnes Primary School and Seaview Junior School, Seaham who took cameras home and with their families made a visual record of their lives. They explored family photo albums of their parents and grandparents when they were children. 'Old' pictures were used as reference points for making a series of new ones. This often involved revisiting a specific location, wearing certain clothes, or adopting a particular pose and composition. The Sunderland echo and local historian David Angus allowed access to and use of their historic collections of photographs.

Brazilian artist Patricia Azevedo used historical and contemporary photographs to create two imaginary panoramic landscapes of Sunderland and Seaham. Her extraordinary technique (imagine drawing in the dark) generates beautiful dreamlike images about memory and intuition. ' **My Family My History'** is a kind of collage which uses photography in making links across time- to show that history is happening now.

No Mundo Maravilhoso do Futebol 1995 – 2002 by Julian Germain
A collaboration with Patricia Azevedo, Murilo Godoy and approximately 50 young people and women from the favela (slum) of Cascalho, Belo Horizonte, Brazil. An integral feature of Germain's earlier projects was the inclusion of imagery from a variety of sources, including press archives, snapshots, postcards etc.
 'No Mundo…' moves from 'collecting images' to actually 'generating' them – asking people to join in as producers. This is the precursor to the ongoing 'No Olho da Rua' project and the first

project made in partnership with Brazilian artist Patricia Azevedo and graphic designer Murilo Godoy.

Between 1995 and 1998 photography, painting and writing workshops took place. In 1998 images were sold to magazines and newspapers (e.g Suddeutsche Zeitung, L'Express, The Independent) to finance publication of a book. Revenue from book and print sales enabled the construction of Cascalho Library which opened in 2002.

"Photography, stripped down to it's essentials, is actually a simple and generous medium. The act of pressing the shutter is so easy, yet the fleeting moment that is recorded on film may provide endless fascination and be a beautiful, complex and emotive social document. The idea therefore, was to equip favela children with cheap 'point and shoot' cameras with flash and colour film, and to encourage them to use photography to express their feelings and explore the relationship between football and their community." Julian Germain, Patricia Azevedo, Murilo Godoy, from the introduction of 'No Mundo Maravilhoso do Futebol', Basalt publishers, 1998.

"In the beginning there was nothing, not a stone or a tree. Dinosaurs were everywhere. There was only one little house, far in the distance; Eve and Adam's. They made a bomb and destroyed all the dinosaurs. Then Adam and Eve made us and sent us to live here in Cascalho. Then came chickens, dogs, birds, horses, cats, pigs, rabbits, goats, rats, cockroaches and many more people..."

From, 'The History of Cascalho', a collective text by the children of Cascalho, 'No Mundo Maravilhoso do Futebol', Basalt publishers, 1998.

Born into Brothels:the DVD

Gour "I want to show in pictures how people live in this city. I want to put across the behavior of man."

Directors Ross Kauffman, Zana Briski

(available through Amazon- Region 2 format)

'The language of photography allows us to observe, to see and see again with discernment and to construct meaning.'
Moran and Tegana (2005)

Reference websites

Julian Germain website (www.juliangermain.com)

The Wonder of Learning and the Hundred
Languages of Children – on line exhibit
www.thewonderoflearning.com

Jane Bown – photojournalism and portraiture
www.npg.org.uk/collections

Taylor Wessing Photographic Prize
National Portrait Gallery
Contemporary portraiture
www.npg.org.uk

'Photographing is a way of at least tacitly encouraging whatever is going on to keep happening.'
Susan Sontag

The Side Gallery www.amber-online.com
Film and photography collective. On line archive of international, classic and contemporary documentary photography

BJP- weekly journal for professional photographers

Laura 'I got my own little pink camera at home, I try to photograph flowers in the park, and in the garden as well.'

Patricia Azavedo (on Julian Germain's website)
Telling Images - Stories of a Community
Featuring dream-like images concerned with history, memory imagination and intuition

Charlie Waite- www.charliewaite.com

> *Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.*
> *John Berger*

Articles

The articles listed below are available to members on the ReFocus section of Sightlines Initiatives website. (Go to ReFocus/ Library/Articles to download)

- Teachers as researchers – Carlina Rinaldi
- Reflecting on the reflective cycle Liz Elders, Mary Fawcett, Deborah Jones.
- Daily life in school. Paola Strozzi. (Making learning Visible)
- The role and responsibility of documentation - Andrea Sully
- A knowledge building project about crows - Ann Ahberg
- Exploring shadow and light- Emma Pace
- Everything is a beginning – Mary Jane Drummond
- The thought that sustains educational action – Carlina Rinaldi
- The curiosity to understand – Vea Vecchi
- Documentation and assessment – what is the relationship? Carlina Rinaldi
- Compasses and tools – Sightlines Initiative
- The life of an idea – Robin Duckett/Elaine Mason
- A Pedagogy of listening
- Documenting the documenter- Making Learning Visible
- Photography top tips (systems and management)– Chris Holmes
- Guiding Principles – The Hundred Languages of Children

'Photography helps people to see'
Susan Sontag

Part of it has to do with the discipline of being actively receptive. At the core of this receptivity is a process that might be called soft eyes. It is a physical sensation. You are not looking for something. You are open, receptive. At some point you are in front of something that you cannot ignore.
Henry Wessel

Timeframes

Year 1
- Pre project phase April 2010 to October 2010
- Project phase October 2010 to June 2011

Year 2
- Pre project phase Jan 2011 to October 2011
- Project phase October 2011 to June 2012

Final Exhibit 2012

"We feel that the teacher must be involved within the child's exploring procedure, if the teacher wants to understand how to be the organiser and provoker of occasions, on the one hand and the co-actor in discoveries on the other. And our expectations of the child must be very flexible and varied. We must be able to be amazed and enjoy, like the children often do. We must be able to catch the ball that the children throw us, and toss it back to them in a way which makes the children want to continue the game with us, developing new games perhaps, as we go along."
Filippini 1990 The Hundred Languages of Children 2nd Edition.

Sightlines Initiative

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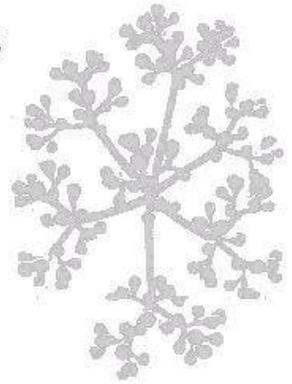
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The language of Photography project managers Emma Pace & Chris Holmes.

Photographs in this document by Chris Holmes from projects facilitated by Sightlines Initiative.

"Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that will never be again. And what do we teach our children? We teach them that two and two make four, and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the years that have passed, there has never been another child like you. Your legs, your arms, your clever fingers, the way you move. You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel? You must work, we must all work, to make the world worthy of its children."
Pablo Picasso