

NUOVI PARADIGMI, NUOVI STILI, NUOVE SFIDE EDUCATIVE



a cura di

Marina Geat e Vincenzo A. Piccione

5 Collana | Le Ragioni di Erasmus



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Università degli Studi Roma Tre
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Le Ragioni di Erasmus

Ricerche e intersezioni scientifiche.
Per l'educazione nel presente: le scienze umane,
l'internazionalizzazione, le reti, l'innovazione



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Collana

Le Ragioni di Erasmus

Scopo della Collana è di contribuire a intensificare e diffondere le azioni promosse dal Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione nell'ambito dei programmi Erasmus ed Erasmus+. Tramite la pubblicazione di articoli sia dei ricercatori delle Università straniere legate al Dipartimento da accordi Erasmus o da altre relazioni di collaborazione internazionale sia dei docenti del Dipartimento che vogliono condividere i risultati delle proprie esperienze in *Teaching Mobility* Erasmus, nei progetti di collaborazione internazionale, in ricerche inerenti a programmi finanziati con fondi europei, con particolare riferimento ai programmi ERASMUS+, la collana *Le Ragioni di Erasmus* si propone in particolare:

- di mantenere costante nel tempo e nello spazio la rete dei rapporti internazionali multi-, inter-, trans-disciplinari di cui l’Ufficio Erasmus ha rappresentato negli anni uno dei nodi di sviluppo, affinché un maggior numero di docenti e ricercatori possa averne conoscenza e usufruirne per l’ampliamento dei propri rapporti di collaborazione in ambito europeo ed extra-europeo, mettendo successivamente in comune le proprie esperienze e collaborando così ad allargare e a dare vitalità a questa tessitura di rapporti scientifici di cui il Dipartimento è fulcro;
- di fornire agli studenti del Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, ai vari livelli di studio (triennale, specialistica, master, dottorato), spunti e contatti per allargare i propri ambiti di studio e di ricerca, consentendo loro di conoscere più ampiamente i filoni e i luoghi della didattica e della ricerca internazionali, i docenti stranieri cui fare riferimento, le possibilità che sono loro offerte per sviluppare una visione vasta delle problematiche e delle collaborazioni che sono loro potenzialmente offerte;
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- di costruire un prezioso laboratorio di scambio, interazione, riflessione, esplorazione, ascolto di voci multi-, inter-, transdisciplinari che provengono da aree diverse del mondo e che possono permettere di riflettere su contenuti scientifici originali, pertinenti e coerenti con il progetto culturale del Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione.

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Sezione 1

Riflessioni al tempo del COVID-19

Joanna M. Łukasik, Katarzyna Jagielska,
Anna Mróz, Paulina Koperna¹

*Advantages and disadvantages of distance learning
during COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of teachers²*

ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on distance learning introduced in Poland since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic was officially declared. In order to investigate the conditions of remote teaching, namely its advantages and disadvantages, 50 teachers were individually interviewed using remote communication tools (Skype, Zoom, etc.). As a result of the data analysis, the categories that determine success and failure of remote learning were identified, in regard to the work of teachers and their evaluation of the effectiveness of this form of education. The final conclusions present some recommendations regarding teacher training in online teaching.

KEYWORDS: Teacher, Remote learning, Pandemic

Theoretical assumptions

The outbreak of the pandemic resulted in different crises, difficulties or even traumas that societies in different countries had to face. These experiences have affected various areas of human life, oftentimes forcing emergency responses to adjust to the changes and deal with the unusual circumstances. The outbreak forced individuals and institutions to re-evaluate their priorities and introduce some instant actions to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic. School managers, teachers and students found themselves in an unprecedented

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² The research was carried out as part of the project: *The specificity of work in the perspective of pedagogical competences of teachers and graduates of teaching studies at their professional start* (BN.610-87/PBU/2020)

situation. Almost overnight, they had to implement remote learning in the system which was completely unprepared to it. Events connected with the implementation of this type of learning open a wide area of reflection upon education, especially during recent difficult or traumatic circumstances. According to the definition, the nature of traumatic experiences originates from the fact that persons who face certain events are not able to react to them in the psychological sense, which may result in a destructive impact on the psychological structures of these individuals³. In social sciences trauma is defined as experiencing a situation where the traumatogenic change causes conscious fear, discomfort, deprivation or dissatisfaction, for which the individuals who experience them blame the changing living conditions. Traumatogenic situations can be characterized by the following factors: rapidness, fast rate, short time, surprise, shock, unpredictability, and the way they are experienced depends on individual traits such as self-evaluation or the sense of deprivation. They may affect various areas of life. Their emergency character may result in serious consequences for the functioning and life of an individual⁴.

As already mentioned, the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic became a traumatic experience for many individuals. All people found themselves in a unique situation. The societies faced mass social distancing, the functioning of institutions was limited, new guidelines and restrictions were imposed almost overnight. The culture of fear began to dominate, people were anxious about their lives, jobs, education, health etc. Numerous institutions were closed: schools, kindergartens, universities, offices, theatres, cinemas, museums etc. Access to medical services was limited. The world got reduced to four walls and social relations have become a threat to individual life and health. The new reality forced people to move their daily activities to virtual environment. A mass use of the modern technologies began. The real world moved online and social relations got limited to the closest family members living under the same roof.

In the recent months, the reality based on the culture of fear and restrictions has become the reality for children, youth and adults. Ordered everyday life has been disturbed and replaced with virtual reality. Within days, school became virtual too. Teachers, students and parents had to find themselves in this new reality. Suddenly, the forms of work and the way relationships were built changed. Education during the pandemic has brought new challenges for school managers and teachers. On the one hand, it has offered new, better opportunities to students. On the other hand, it has posed a huge threat of unequal access to or even exclusion from education. The success of online learning has been determined by the financial and socio-cultural status of students. Remote learning evoked a whole range of emotions. Conversations with parents

³ P. NOVICK, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory. The American Experience*, Bloomsbury, London, 2011.

⁴ A. RADZIEWICZ-WINNICKI, *Traumatogenne skutki asynchronizacji rozwoju społecznego w Polsce doby transformacji*, in R. KWIECIŃSKA, J. M. ŁUKASIK, (eds.), *Zmiana społeczna. Edukacja - polityka oświatowa – kultura*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UP, Kraków, 2012.

and students, and online posts stimulate reflection and attempts to answer the question: «Are we ready for distance learning?»⁵.

In fact, remote learning has been in the area of interests of education specialists for years. Using modern technologies in teaching is part of university curricula. One of the conditions to obtain subsequent degrees of professional promotion in teaching is the use of new technologies. Therefore, many teachers participate in professional trainings in this area. There are also many free and paid software, tools and platforms to support teaching and learning. Thus, the outbreak of the pandemic should not have created any obstacles for teachers as they had to switch to remote teaching. One can say, it even allowed both teachers and students to use their didactic and IT competencies to the full. It also provided the opportunity to test various available tools for teaching and learning in times of social distancing. However, the reality showed that teachers could not change their didactic habits (schematic and routine actions). They failed to use online tools to design interesting forms of work for their students⁶. They did not open to innovations and had problems with designing an effective remote learning process. But the ability of the teaching staff to organize remote learning is, apart from the technical literacy of students and teachers and educational resources, one of the determinants of effective distance education⁷. Technical circumstances (poor bandwidth, lack of proper hardware) are beyond teachers' influence. But they can use many free educational software and platforms. Thus, one can say that the financial condition of schools is not the main barrier to the implementation of remote learning. Educational resources are not the barrier either (there are many open-access tools and materials). Therefore, the greatest barrier to implementing online education was the ability of the teachers to organize distance learning. The study by Koludo indicates that the most frequently chosen methods of work were webinars or referring students to a certain source. Teachers transferred the traditional model of education, rooted in the didactic principles formed by J. F. Herbart, to the Internet. They did not use online resources, nor did they encourage students to discuss, reflect, share their opinions or solve problems individually. They moved the traditional teaching into the virtual reality⁸. It is the methodological routine of teachers: one-way teaching which does not work in case of remote learning, which focuses on independent student work, that was the reason of failure of online education. Thus, teachers need empowerment in this particular area⁹.

⁵ A. KOLUDO, *Strategie kształcenia na odległość*, in J. PYŻALSKI (ed.), *Edukacja w czasach pandemii wirusa COVID-19. Z dystansem o tym, co robimy obecnie jako nauczyciele*, EduAkcia, Warszawa, 2020, p. 43.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁹ A. DOUCET, D. NETOLICKY, K. TIMMERS, G.J. TUSCANO, *Thinking about Pedagogy in an Unfolding Pandemic. An Independent report on approaches to distance learning during the COVID19 school closures. Report written by Armand Doucet, Dr. Deborah Netolicky, Koen Timmers and Francis Jim Tuscano to inform the work of Education International and UNESCO*, Paris, 2020, <<https://issuu.com/educa>>

This paper focuses on the experiences of young teachers (up to 10 years of professional career) during social distancing time. The goal of the text is to describe and identify the main pedagogical experiences/categories which refer to the advantages of work in the virtual space during the pandemic and the disadvantages which were considered traumatogenic (sudden event, inability to deal with it, emotional dilemmas, reorganisation of life and work, double trauma: being unable to meet relatives and friends, remodelling family life and personal life).

Methodological assumptions

During the COVID-19 pandemic it was concluded that the particular focus should be on the issues regarding identification of those areas of knowledge and skills among the teachers which need to be strengthened and improved. The situation of the pandemic inspired the discussion regarding online teaching. Due to the paper limitations, the results of the studies into positive and negative aspects of teaching in the virtual environment using modern technologies are presented very briefly and partially.

The goal of the research was to explore and identify the categories which describe the positive and negative aspects of remote learning during the pandemic from the perspective of teachers. The main research problem was formulated as follows: "What are the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning during COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of teachers?"

In order to obtain the research material, the method of qualitative interview was used as it is the best way to present experiences and definitions of a person, a group or an organization, as they are interpreted by this person, group or organization¹⁰.

The study was conducted among 50 female teachers working in primary schools and kindergartens in Southern Poland, who had been professionally active for no longer than 10 years. The respondents were selected according to the above-mentioned criteria, mainly because it was assumed that the youngest teachers are the best prepared to deliver online classes but they may have some difficulties regarding the didactic and educational activities. Their positive experiences and difficulties will be used to improve the process of professional training and identify the scope, forms and methods of vocational development and improvement.

Due to the qualitative research approach adopted, the empirical part does not contain any conclusions or thesis about any social trends. Thus, the results are fragmented and can be applied mainly to the teachers-respondents.

tioninternational/docs/2020_research_covid-19_eng (access: 23.05.2020)

¹⁰ N.K. DENZIN, Y.S. LINCOLN, *Metody badań jakościowych*, PWN, Warszawa, 2009, p. 73.

Advantages and disadvantages of online teaching in the light of experiences of young teachers

For many teachers, the situation of coronavirus pandemic resulted in traumatic experiences. Helplessness when facing new circumstances and events, inability to re-formulate life and use the obtained psychological, IT and didactic knowledge often exacerbated the trauma of the pandemic everyday reality, even though many people saw positive aspects of these difficult experiences. Oftentimes, teachers experienced extreme emotions as they tried to combine their personal life and the new phenomena such as working in the virtual environment or relationships with their loved ones. Despite numerous personal tensions and confusions, teachers pointed to both strengths and weaknesses of online learning. During the content analysis, the main categories were identified. They are presented in Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1. *Categories related to advantages of online learning*
Source: Authors' own research

When speaking about the advantages of distance learning, teachers focused mainly on the following leading categories: economy and health at work, organizational and administrative work, educational activities, didactic competencies, pedagogical competencies, social relationships, personal development

and professional development. It should be emphasized that the above listed categories (both regarding advantages and disadvantages of education during the pandemic) were mentioned in the interviews with different emotional, time and interpretation intensity. As for time savings, the teachers emphasized that: they can save time because they do not commute to work and this translates into the quality and ability to function and organize family life (better organization of family life, more time with family at home). Teachers pointed out that they could choose when to work and find an adequate and comfortable place without leaving home. They also mentioned work hygiene, in particular they emphasized the aspects of daily rhythm like regular meals or bathroom visits, which is disturbed during working hours at school. They also pointed out the favourable working conditions for themselves (lack of noise during breaks) and their students. Another advantage was the fact that remote work reduced the number of necessary documents and relieved them from organizing additional classes or participation in school trips. They stated that during the pandemic they have good conditions to focus on the development of their students. As for organizational activities, the teachers valued fixed daily rhythm, which was comfortable for them and their families, ability to work from any place at home and less work involving preparation of teaching aids. They also pointed out some good effects of distance learning on their educational work. These positive effects included: shy children being more open in the virtual space, more opportunities to analyse individual needs of every child, ability to observe development (collecting assignments or videos with children's work in individual files), personalization of assignments.

As advantages of distance learning, the interviewed teachers mentioned the ability to shape their didactic and pedagogical competencies. In case of didactic competencies, they pointed out that the pandemic gave them the opportunity to activate and practice (and develop) their IT competencies which before they had used only occasionally. Thanks to remote learning, they could apply them combined with their own creativity, which resulted in the quality of the lessons, materials and forms of communication with children/students/parents. As for pedagogical competencies, one person declared that the advantage was that they did not have to work with students with behaviour issues. Unfortunately, this reveals the respondent's lack of expertise and skills to work with students with special educational needs. Other teachers focused on other aspects of pedagogical competencies they could develop and/or reinforce. Many of the respondents emphasized that they managed to establish good cooperation with parents and engage whole families in completing interesting assignments during lockdown. They also pointed out that they were able to initiate, build and maintain good relations with their students. Online work allowed them to observe the family environment of their students and take supporting, informative or intervention actions when necessary. The advantages mentioned by the respondents included social relationships with fellow teachers. During lockdown, they could collaborate and exchange materials only with those colleagues they wanted to work

with. They also received support from them. Some respondents emphasized that in case of online education every teacher finally had to take responsibility for their own work – they could not have their work done by someone else or allow it to be mediocre because parents could see their work and the traces of the form and quality of it have remained in the virtual space. The teachers mentioned the developmental aspects of remote learning in regard to their professional and personal development. Professional development involved mainly acquisition of new IT and technical competencies. Some respondents noticed that they tended to reflect more on their work and its meaning and modified it to gain maximum effectiveness for their students and greater satisfaction for themselves. Isolation from the physical workplace also facilitated teachers' personal development. Thanks to time savings and re-organized daily schedules, they were able to find time to develop their hobbies as well as allowed themselves to feel tired and rest or to admit they struggled with something and needed to change their way of acting or thinking.

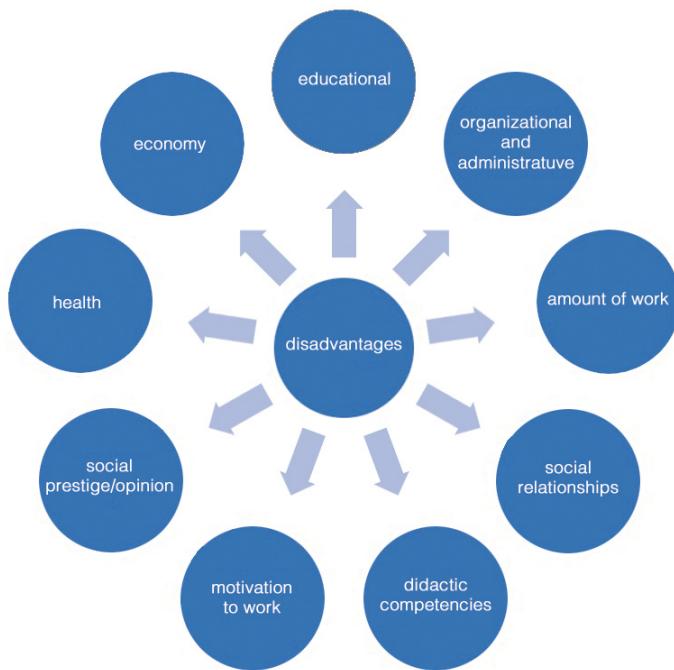


Figure 2. *Categories related to disadvantages of online learning*
Source: Authors' own research

As for the disadvantages of distance learning, the teachers listed: educational activities, didactic competencies, organizational work, motivation to work, so-

cial relationships, social prestige/opinion, health, economy and amount of work (Figure 2). In the context of educational work, which was the dominating category, the teachers felt the greatest discomfort when they could not help victims of domestic abuse (children would not tell about their situation because their parents are at home) and because students with special educational needs could not receive the necessary support (and, consequently, lacked the opportunities for development) they would otherwise receive in school. The respondents also expressed many concerns about the health of the students who spent most of their days in front of their computers. Lack of interactions with some students and parents, unequal access to computers, tools and classes – especially in large families where access to computer/laptop is limited – are other negative aspects of distance learning, on which teachers have no direct influence. The respondents also mentioned that remote learning was not very effective in case of pre-school children and did not provide opportunity to develop their full potential. Additional difficult experience was the lack of possibility to say goodbye to children who finished their pre-school education, to summarize and close several years of actual work with a kindergarten group. The respondents also revealed shortages in their didactic competencies, which were visible in lacking the ideas for online classes or failure to lead the classes during the pandemic (especially among the older teachers who cannot even use Word software – the respondents said older colleagues learned the basics of ITC and it took them most of the day to prepare and deliver their classes). They also mentioned they were afraid to discredit themselves as their lessons could be watched by someone with greater competencies, who would criticize their abilities to use multimedia in teaching. They feared that they had to learn how to design and deliver classes online because so far, their knowledge and skills in this area had not been used in such a scale and university courses had not prepared them to work in such conditions. In the area of organizational activities, the greatest obstacles were: inability to organize work at home, establish daily schedule (time for work, care for own children and their needs during online work), difficulty to find appropriate place at home, technical problems with the hardware and necessity to share the computer with other family members (who also worked or studied remotely). In addition, some respondents mentioned lack of ideas and competencies to design and develop online studying resources. Pre-school teachers emphasized disinformation after returning to offline work, lack of ministerial guidelines regarding work during the pandemic or preparing opinions about 6-year-olds without the possibility of real diagnosis. Some teachers identified difficulties in mandatory reports they had to write regarding their work and collaboration with parents. There were also respondents who pointed out that, due to insufficient IT competencies, their school managers had limited contact with teachers and the information flow was disturbed. For example, information was distributed as SMS – limited in form and content (instructions, commands, tasks etc.). Many teachers lacked motivation to work, which made distance learning even more difficult. Their

motivation was lowered by, for example, fear that they would not be able to meet the expectations of students, parents and school management or lack of information if and to what extent their materials were used by the students. For the young teachers, an additional demotivator was control, monitoring and attempts of the school management to limit free contacts with parents and abusing power by school directors who commanded them to prepare and/or lead classes for other teachers or to train them (older colleagues criticized it and were unwilling to participate in trainings, they also did not use new knowledge in their work). Unwillingness to work and lack of motivation resulted also from the lack of real, offline support in difficult professional and personal moments. In many cases, teachers associated lowered motivation with the prestige and social status of their profession. They expressed they were afraid their work would be compared to the work of other teachers and be the subject of negative social opinions which stigmatize teachers. They were also concerned with the increasing familiarity expressed by the parents, lack of distance and breaking the established limits and rules of cooperation. The issue of social relationships was strongly emphasized in the teachers' statements. The weakness of distance learning in the area of social regulations included missing contacts with students and friendly colleagues as well as fear that these bonds and relationships would disappear. Many respondents pointed out that they were neglecting relationships with their families, children and spouses because they were preparing to remote work and expressed fear that their social relationships may disappear. Apart from the above-mentioned psychosocial difficulties, the teachers also listed health-related problems such as headaches, back pains, sleeplessness due to extensive use of the computer and general stress caused by the pandemic and worrying about the future of their families and career. The disadvantages of distance learning included also economic aspects. The teachers mentioned financial consequences of the pandemic which prevented them from private tutoring (young teachers, whose income is very low, were at risk of not being able to earn their living). The respondents also said that many municipalities did not pay incentive benefits for class supervision and the lack of extra working hours or replacements significantly affected their financial situation. In addition, using private hardware, paying for the use of ICT tools and higher electricity bills additionally loaded the family budget but did not generate additional income. Young teachers also expressed their concerns about keeping their jobs should the pandemic last. Many of them think they might get fired. In the category of economic factors, many teachers also mentioned the amount of work required. They referred in particular to the fact that they spent much more time to prepare materials and remote classes, for which they did not receive any financial gratification.

Conclusions

During the analysis, the categories describing the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic were identified and thus, the main research problem has been solved. Among the strengths of distance learning, teachers focused mainly on the following categories: economy and health at work, organizational and administrative work, educational activities, didactic competencies, pedagogical competencies, social relationships, personal development and professional development. The disadvantages included: educational activities, didactic competencies, organizational and administrative work, motivation to work, social relationships, social prestige/opinion, health, economy and amount of work.

Even though some categories like: economy, organizational and administrative work, educational activities, didactic competencies or social relationships were associated with both advantages and disadvantages of distance learning, their meaning and scope of reference is completely different (what was shown and discussed in the previous parts of the paper). The analyses indicate that young teachers were motivated to perform their educational and didactic responsibilities during social distancing, use their digital literacy in a creative way and further improve their competencies in this area. However, they also experienced fear, anxiety and intense stress. The most stressful was their psychosocial functioning in the new social reality: being locked at home with their families on the one hand, and on the other hand moving their work and relationships to the virtual space. A combination of these two worlds (social distancing vs. unlimited virtual contacts) was difficult even for the young teachers whose level of digital literacy (knowledge and skills obtained during university education) and ability to navigate the virtual space (they grew up in both social and virtual environments since early stages of their education) is much higher than older teachers.

According to the analyses performed, the particular focus should be on strengthening the competencies which facilitate collaboration and teamwork¹¹ and related communication competencies, as well as pragmatic competencies (reflected in organization and planning). Other competencies that must be improved – mainly among the older teachers – are digital literacy, didactic skills and related creative-critical and interpretation competencies (revealing as the ability to understand and define new phenomena, take adequate and non-standard actions which break stereotypes and routine)¹². Also, the abilities

¹¹ J. PAPIESKA, *Children's and Teachers' Social Competence in the Context of Teacher Education*, in J. MADALIŃSKA- MICHALAK, H. NIEMI, S. CHONG (eds.), *Research, Policy, and Practice in Teacher Education in Europe*, Wydawnictwo UŁ, Łódź, 2012.

¹² J. ŁUKASIK, K. JAGIELSKA, A. MRÓZ, A. DUDA, P. KOPERNA, K. SOBIESZCZAŃSKA, *The new model of teacher education in Poland: the directions of changes in the context of the existing research and teaching practices*, in L. GOMES CHOVA, A. LOPEZ MARTINEZ, I. CANDEL TORRES I. (eds.), *ICERI 2019: conference proceedings: 12th annual International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation*,

to cope with stress, relieve emotional tension and overcoming fears should be reinforced – these are skills within the psychological-pedagogical competencies¹³. They are particularly important for both comfort of work and maintaining psychical balance during the pandemic. Lack of these conditions may even result in depression. In addition, these skills will empower teachers so that they will be able to provide proper support for their students who, like them, suffer huge social and psycho-emotional losses due to social distancing.

During the analyses, the authors also tried to identify the sources of satisfaction and difficulties experienced while performing professional work online during social distancing time. The analyses indicated the following sources of satisfaction and motivation to work and social life: family relationships, relations with the students and their parents, development observed in own children and students, satisfaction from well delivered online classes reinforced with positive feedback from the students and their parents. The sources of difficulties were most often found in the pandemic itself, as it was the reason for restricted social contacts, isolation, uncertainty and concerns about life and health of the loved ones. Another source of difficulties was the workplace, especially poor management in the crisis situation, which increased uncertainty, disinformation, and facilitated the use of status and power to, for example, force teachers to lead or prepare classes for their colleagues. The sources of difficulties related to the family environment most often involved living and working conditions, that is, organization of work, access to the computer and the necessity to care for own children. The economic factors referred to difficult financial and material situation (lower income, higher utility bills, lack of possibility to buy additional hardware for other family members who had to use the computer).

Faced with the necessity to provide online teaching and, at the same time, sticking to routinely re-produced daily educational practices, most of the respondents implemented the Herbart's model of teaching which did not work. Instead, they struggled with frustration, anxiety or terror, fearing that students and parents would discover they lacked knowledge and abilities to work with modern technologies. Thus, recognizing and describing the advantages and disadvantages of education during the pandemic, as well as identifying the sources of satisfaction and difficulties experienced in work and daily life will allow to reinforce the specific teaching competencies. This, in turn, will minimize anxiety among the teachers and enable effective actions to be implemented both in professional work (including its virtual or hybrid form) and private life.

(Seville, Spain, 11-13 November 2019), IATED Academy, Seville, 2019, pp. 1296-1302; J. ŁUKASIK, K. JAGIELSKA, A. MRÓZ, A. DUDA, P. KOPERNA, K. SOBIESZCZAŃSKA, *Teachers at the beginning of their professional work-assessment of the level of pedagogical competence of graduates of teaching faculties*, in U. COMITE et al., *1st International Conference on Contemporary Education and Economic Development (CEED 2018)*, Atlantis Press, Paris, 2018, pp. 127-133.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Therefore, one of the important challenges for education (training and professional development) of teachers, especially those who have many years of professional experience, is to develop the skills which enable understanding of digital media, improve digital literacy and reinforce coping strategies used to deal with stressful and adverse situations (traumatic experience prevention). For sure, to function in a world of rapid changes and increasingly unpredictable situations (which require instant solutions and implementation of new methods), modern teachers need knowledge, reflection and critical approach¹⁴.

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¹⁴ J. MADALIŃSKA-MICHALAK, H. NIEMI, S. CHONG, *Trends and Themes in Teacher Education. Research, Policy and Practice*, in J. MADA-LIŃSKA-MICHALAK, H. NIEMI, S. CHONG (eds.), *Research, Policy, and Practice in Teacher Education in Europe*, Wydawnictwo UŁ, Łódź, 2012.

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Michela Origlia¹

COVID-19 e educatori sociali: scenari di una nuova deontologia professionale

ABSTRACT

La pandemia COVID-19 ha causato effetti in molti ambiti della società. Le misure restrittive imposte hanno portato a un aumento del disagio sociale, mostrando le difficoltà del sistema di *welfare* e evidenziando l'importanza del lavoro sociale.

Negli ultimi anni gli educatori socio-pedagogici hanno vissuto una stagione di ridefinizione che ha generato confusione e smarrimento.

Per il mondo post-COVID, tuttavia, sarà essenziale avviare una nuova riflessione etica in grado di orientare l'agire dei professionisti e di restituire senso e centralità all'azione educativa e all'approccio pedagogico. Questo permetterà di dare risposte più efficaci a tutte le persone a cui gli educatori rivolgono il loro intervento.

PAROLE CHIAVE: Pandemia, Disagio sociale, *Welfare*, Educatori, Deontologia

The COVID-19 pandemic caused effects in many areas of society. The restrictive measures imposed led to an increase in social distress, showing the difficulties of the welfare system and highlighting the importance of social work.

In recent years, social educators have experienced a period of redefinition that has generated confusion and bewilderment.

For the post-COVID world, however, it will be essential to start a new ethical reflection able to re-give meaning to the action of professionals and restoring significance and centrality to educational action and to the pedagogical approach. This will allow more effective responses to all those to whom educators address their intervention.

KEYWORDS: Pandemic, Social discomfort, Welfare, Educators, Deontology

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Introduzione

Al momento della sua comparsa nel dicembre 2019 a Wuhan in Cina, del virus SARS-CoV-2 non si possedevano né conoscenze né armi di contrasto sufficienti. La situazione ha fatto sì che molti Paesi si trovassero impreparati e fossero costretti a chiudere e a interrompere tutte le attività; al contempo, ha spinto l'Organizzazione Mondiale della Sanità (OMS) a dichiarare lo stato di 'Pandemia'.

Tale decisione è stata presa a causa della velocità e delle dimensioni del contagio: in effetti, se nel dicembre 2019 sono comparsi i primi casi di contagio in Cina, in breve tempo il virus si è spostato in Italia, nel resto d'Europa e in tutto il mondo.

Sappiamo oggi che i coronavirus sono una famiglia molta ampia di virus respiratori che possono generare nell'uomo malattie di varia intensità, da lievi a moderate, e sono così definiti per le punte a forma di corona che si possono individuare osservandoli al microscopio. Questo genere di virus aveva già in precedenza fatto visita all'uomo colpendolo prima con la SARS e poi con la MERS.

A metà dicembre 2020, più di 93 milioni i casi di COVID-19 confermati in tutto il mondo, più di 2 milioni i decessi; dal numero totale di contagiati dal virus, più di 30 milioni i casi confermati solamente in Europa e, di questi, più di 2 milioni di casi in Italia. Facendo invece riferimento ai deceduti, se ne registravano 669.680 in Europa, e 78.775 solo in Italia².

Tuttavia, per quanto grave e doloroso possa essere per il nostro Paese, il COVID-19 rimarrà nella storia lontano dalle pestilenze sia per numero di vittime che per tassi di mortalità; in effetti, ben più gravi epidemie nel corso del tempo hanno mostrato il loro volto e infierito duramente sugli uomini, quasi come se di tanto in tanto fosse necessario un richiamo alla quiete per quell'uomo sempre più immerso nella fretta, nella cronofagia e nell'egoismo, per quell'uomo che, come ci ricorda Albert Camus, si chiude nella durezza di cuore, nell'ossessione per lo status sociale, nel rifiuto di gioia e gratitudine e nella tendenza a giudicare.

Se da un lato, dunque, è vero che ogni epidemia è diversa dalle altre poiché si verifica in un contesto storico, sociale e politico differente, dall'altro ciò che si ripropone costantemente, nella stessa forma, è la condotta dell'uomo e la sua continua impreparazione. L'impreparazione dei sistemi sanitari, sociali e politici è stata a tutti gli effetti il banco di prova più complesso per tutti i Paesi coinvolti: un virus nuovo ha implicato la necessità immediata di isolarlo, di studiarlo, di individuarne le misure di protezione essenziali e una corsa immediata alla creazione di un vaccino; tempi lunghi, dunque, che non hanno arrestato il contagio. Il *lockdown* ha rappresentato pertanto la soluzione

² MINISTERO DELLA SALUTE, *COVID-19. Situazione nel mondo*, <<http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/dettaglioContenutiNuovoCoronavirus.jsp?lingua=italiano&id=5338&area=nuovoCoronavirus&menu=vuoto>> (data di ultima consultazione: 19 gennaio 2021).

immediata e più efficace: chiuse le scuole, i negozi e tutte le attività, un unico consiglio continuava a diffondersi su tutte le televisioni locali, «restiamo a casa».

Come è già accaduto in tempi lontani nella storia dell'uomo, un'emergenza sanitaria genera un'emergenza economica e soprattutto un'emergenza sociale:

«la compenetrazione e la contemporaneità di queste due crisi hanno creato un po' di obbligata confusione (di idee e di prospettive), in cui però si sono andati affermando grandi stati d'animo: il primo è stato quello di una paura diffusa e indistinta, spesso emotivamente eccitata; il secondo è stato quello di un rallentamento di massa, frutto certo del lungo *lockdown*, ma in fondo accettato (e ben vissuto in ordine e compostezza) dall'insieme della popolazione; il terzo è stato quello dell'inatteso risveglio di una determinazione quasi elitaria (se il termine non scandalizza) di pensare al futuro, al superamento vitale della crisi, alla immaginazione di un futuro diverso dalla dinamica degli ultimi decenni. “Dobbiamo progettare l'Italia che verrà” perché “non saremo e non potremo più essere quelli di prima”»³.

I problemi sanitari stanno, in questo momento, colpendo tutti in modo diretto e indiretto e stanno investendo e condizionando anche i servizi sociali impegnati con bambini, disabili, anziani, famiglie a cui, nell'immediato, occorrerà dare risposte efficienti; l'insieme dei problemi derivanti rischia inoltre di generare nuove situazioni di povertà e di esclusione alle quali sarà necessario far fronte, sarà necessario progettare una società nuova per il mondo post-COVID.

Lo Stato Sociale: la crisi per un nuovo inizio

Lo Stato Sociale, il *Welfare State*, si basa sul principio di uguaglianza sostanziale fra tutti i cittadini e pertanto intende ridurre al massimo le diseguaglianze sociali. Per poter raggiungere tale finalità, lo Stato Sociale mette in campo un complesso e articolato sistema normativo che tenta di attuare il principio di uguaglianza offrendo i servizi di assistenza e quelli sociali con particolare riguardo alle fasce più deboli della popolazione.

Le origini dello stato assistenziale risalgono al lontano 1601 quando, in Inghilterra, con l'intento di ridurre la criminalità, vennero emanate le *Poor Laws*; successivamente, nel corso del 1800, in piena rivoluzione industriale, nacquero le prime forme di assicurazione sociale; tuttavia, fu solamente a seguito della Seconda Guerra Mondiale che si poté intravedere l'inizio di uno Stato di *Welfare*, come oggi è inteso, che si ponesse l'obiettivo di rispondere ai bisogni delle popo-

³ CENSIS, *Un esercizio di autocoscienza del Paese*, in *Stress test Italia, i soggetti dell'Italia che c'è e il loro fronteggiamento della crisi*, <<https://www.censis.it/sites/default/files/downloads/Un%20Mese%20di%20Sociale%202020.pdf>> (data di ultima consultazione: 19 gennaio 2021), p. 4

lazioni danneggiate dal conflitto bellico. Fu proprio, in effetti, nel 1942, che l'economista W. Beveridge introdusse e definì per primo i concetti di 'sanità pubblica' e 'pensione sociale' da destinare ai cittadini. Nel corso di questo periodo iniziarono ad affermarsi le professioni sociali, le quali poterono trovare espressione delle loro competenze nel tentativo di fornire risposte ai bisogni della popolazione.

Il *Welfare State*, dagli anni '50 fino agli anni '70, proseguì la sua espansione, divenendo universale e tentando di eguagliare l'intensità dei diritti politici e sociali; crebbe e migliorò la protezione che lo Stato offriva ai cittadini, contemporaneamente i PIL crescevano esponenzialmente.

Tuttavia, tra gli anni '80 e gli anni '90, diversi Paesi conobbero un rallentamento della crescita economica, un invecchiamento della popolazione e un aumento di bisogni cronici a cui rispondere: un insieme di situazioni problematiche sia dal punto di vista sociale che economico spinsero il *Welfare State* a una condizione di crisi. Tutt'oggi lo Stato Sociale continua a vivere la crisi accompagnata da una stagione di totale ripensamento dei servizi sociali e degli attori coinvolti.

La globalizzazione ha poi fatto in modo che le economie e le società dei singoli Paesi fossero tra loro ancora più intrecciate che in passato, tanto che le situazioni problematiche e quelle emergenziali, come nel caso di una pandemia e delle conseguenti crisi in tutti gli ambiti delle società, non possono essere affrontate singolarmente e localmente, ma richiedono un approccio integrato tra i Paesi e tra i vari settori di ogni singola società.

In questo momento, in piena seconda fase della Pandemia COVID-19, è ancor più evidente quanto lo Stato di *Welfare* del nostro Paese abbia un estremo bisogno di rinnovarsi, di adattarsi a nuove necessità, di rispondere a nuove emergenze, di conoscere i segni del tempo, di imparare ad agire nella complessità.

Oggi siamo consapevoli che il virus non fa eccezioni, con la sua imprevedibilità colpisce tutti, senza alcuna distinzione; tuttavia, coloro che ne hanno pagato e ne pagheranno il prezzo più caro sono le fasce vulnerabili della popolazione, coloro che già erano vessati da una situazione di svantaggio culturale ed economico. La Pandemia e le misure di distanziamento fisico hanno in qualche modo evidenziato ancor di più le disuguaglianze e aumentato altresì il gap tra ricchi e poveri, tra disagio e privilegio:

«9 marzo 2020: il lockdown arriva quasi all'improvviso e gli italiani si trovano a dover vivere un lungo periodo di isolamento forzato all'interno delle proprie abitazioni. Un'esperienza dura, per alcuni durissima, che mette alla prova la tenuta dei sistemi familiari e che, a dispetto delle narrazioni mediatiche, non è uguale per tutti, ma accentua le disuguaglianze e le differenze già presenti all'interno del corpo sociale, ampliando la platea dei soggetti deboli e aggiungendo nuove marginalità a quelle più conosciute»⁴.

⁴ CENSIS, *Il lockdown dei più fragili*, in *Stress test Italia, i soggetti dell'Italia che c'è e il loro fronteggiamento della crisi*, cit., p. 72.

Sarebbe inutile dilungarsi sulla responsabilità dello Stato italiano che poco a poco ha smesso di investire sul sociale e sulla sanità, smettendo così di investire sul futuro. La maggior parte dei servizi e delle attività dedicate al sociale appartengono al terzo settore che

«rappresenta una ricchezza e una peculiarità del nostro sistema Paese. Raccolge il complesso degli enti privati che perseguono senza scopo di lucro finalità civiche, solidaristiche e di utilità sociale, in attuazione del principio di sussidiarietà sancito dalla Costituzione. In altri termini, il terzo settore è l'espressione organizzata della società civile, un mondo composito e vitale fatto di una pluralità di associazioni di volontariato, cooperative sociali, associazioni di promozione sociale»⁵.

Il COVID-19 ha imposto al Terzo Settore una riorganizzazione dei servizi offerti e in alcuni casi il blocco totale delle attività; tuttavia, è anche il settore che ha mostrato una maggiore capacità di resilienza, sapendo infatti riprogettarsi e ridefinendo i propri interventi in funzione dei nuovi bisogni emersi nel corso della pandemia.

Il sistema di *welfare*, negli ultimi anni, ha dovuto fare i conti con la scarsità delle risorse da un lato e un aumento del bisogno dall'altro, in tal modo generando effetti non solo sui professionisti coinvolti nei servizi, ma anche sugli utenti, molto spesso in termini di qualità e di equità dei servizi offerti.

Ci si chiede dunque come un sistema così fortemente piegato e pressato possa oggi rispondere a un possibile e probabile aumento del bisogno sociale generato dalla Pandemia. La risposta a tale domanda rimane una e unica: esiste la necessità di ricominciare a investire sul sociale, considerandolo e trasformandolo in una possibile risorsa per il futuro.

Gli educatori professionali socio-educativi: una risorsa da valorizzare

La situazione di crisi deve oggi porre al centro della riflessione collettiva l'operato degli educatori socio-educativi:

«parliamo di figure che diventeranno sempre più indispensabili grazie alle loro competenze di natura promozionale e preventiva nel campo dell'educazione e della formazione. Nel mondo post-COVID, ancora di più, l'azione educativo-relazionale si fonderà su una visione pedagogica che trova il suo cardine nella categoria dell'educabilità intesa sia come possibilità di cambiamento della persona per tutto il corso della vita, sia di trasformazione della società, tramite l'educazione educativa stessa nella costruzione della

⁵ CENSIS, *La resilienza del terzo settore*, in *Stress test Italia, i soggetti dell'Italia che c'è e il loro fronteggiamento della crisi*, cit., p. 33.

società delle persone [...] Si tratterà di analizzare e interpretare i bisogni educativi delle persone e delle famiglie in difficoltà, nei loro contesti di vita e nelle comunità territoriali sempre più a rischio di povertà e marginalità materiale e educativa»⁶.

È indispensabile dunque restituire a tutti gli attori del lavoro sociale un ruolo cruciale nei futuri processi di sviluppo, per rispondere alle prossime sfide sociali ed economiche, in modo da arrivare preparati al mondo post-COVID, a un mondo che non potrà certamente essere come quello di prima.

La nascita e lo sviluppo delle professioni sociali hanno seguito le trasformazioni, le evoluzioni e i mutamenti economici, sociali e religiosi. Da una prima impronta religiosa attribuita all'educazione nel corso del Medioevo, si è passati a una visione più laica del disagio e dell'azione educativa ad esso legata. Le professioni sociali hanno trovato la loro massima affermazione grazie allo sviluppo dello Stato Sociale solo in tempi assolutamente recenti come il secondo dopoguerra: un momento storico in cui era essenziale fornire risposte a bambini, a giovani disadattati, spesso orfani.

La professione educativa nasce, dunque, dalla rilevazione del bisogno concreto ed emergente della gioventù disadattata a causa della guerra. In tale contesto, viene costituita in Francia, nel 1947, l'ANEJI, la *Association Nationale des Éducateurs des Jeunes Inadaptés*. Questa associazione, che è in realtà di origine francese e tedesca, si pone l'obiettivo di promuovere una migliore comprensione e una più ampia condivisione del lavoro tra francesi e tedeschi che si occupano di giovani disagiati all'indomani della seconda guerra mondiale; già dai primi incontri degli associati ci si rende presto conto dell'importanza di invitare e far partecipare rappresentanti di tutti i Paesi; è per questa ragione che, nel 1951, viene finalmente costituita l'AIEJI, l'Associazione Internazionale degli Educatori Sociali.

Da allora sono state create numerose associazioni nazionali che hanno poi aderito alla rete creata dall'Associazione Internazionale dell'AIEJI.

Dunque, se inizialmente il lavoro socio-educativo era dedicato e pensato perlopiù per bambini e giovani, oggi, al contrario, afferma e richiama la sua necessità d'intervento per un target sempre più vasto; bambini sì, ma anche adolescenti, adulti, disabili o persone a rischio e in situazione di svantaggio.

È negli anni '70 che l'educazione conosce una stagione di massima espansione, acquisendo sempre più un'ottica territoriale e olistica, agendo cioè sui minori e sulla rete familiare nella sua interezza.

Gli educatori sociali negli ultimi anni stanno vivendo un periodo di cambiamenti: una condizione d'incertezza normativa e formativa che rischia inesorabilmente di riflettersi sul loro lavoro e sulla loro identità professionale. Le

⁶ V. IORI, *Sanità ed esistenza: il lavoro socio-educativo per il dopo-COVID*, in «Huffingtonpost» <https://www.huffingtonpost.it/entry/sanita-ed-esistenza-il-lavoro-socio-educativo-per-il-dopo-covid_it_5fef5cec5b6acab284e6392> (data di ultima consultazione: 19 gennaio 2021).

ultime riforme politiche hanno, in effetti, creato il doppio profilo: educatore sanitario da un lato ed educatore sociale dall'altro, generando in tal modo lo svuotamento della funzione pedagogica ed educativa che da sempre ha avuto questa matrice umanistica di ampio respiro in grado di garantire un intervento flessibile, empatico e olistico per l'utente. Si sono creati conflitti, senso di smarrimento e di isolamento.

La situazione d'incertezza, di continuo ripensamento, di ridefinizione e di trasformazione dell'identità degli educatori socio-educativi si respira anche nel contesto europeo; sebbene, come in precedenza evidenziato, la storia dello sviluppo delle professioni sociali in Europa sia piuttosto antica, ancora oggi è presente un ritardo nel loro riconoscimento e nella loro valorizzazione sia nel mondo accademico che in quello politico. A titolo d'esempio, è interessante notare come solamente nel continente europeo si evidenzino almeno nove diverse denominazioni di figure assimilabili all'educatore sociale. Tale pluralità, da un lato, costituisce fonte di ricchezza, dall'altro può aumentare il senso di incertezza dei professionisti.

La crisi del *welfare*, dunque, unita alla precarietà e all'eterogeneità dei percorsi formativi e della regolamentazione dei profili professionali, ha contribuito alla dequalificazione della percezione sociale in termini d'importanza e di efficacia del lavoro educativo. Si è diffusa spesso la convinzione per cui tutti i problemi affrontati nel lavoro sociale non abbiano necessità di formazione, competenza ed esperienza, ma possano, al contrario, essere parte dell'esperienza quotidiana di tutti; questa idea rivela la totale assenza di conoscenza e consapevolezza della delicatezza e dell'importanza dei processi educativi, di accompagnamento e di guida nei percorsi di acquisizione di *empowerment* e di autonomia.

Tutti i cambiamenti che hanno travolto la nostra società a causa della Pandemia hanno posto il rischio che il distanziamento fisico, imposto dal *lockdown*, divenisse anche sociale, rendendo in tal modo più complesso e in alcuni casi persino annullando tutto il lavoro di inclusione portato avanti dalla missione educativa. Le misure di distanziamento hanno lasciato ampio spazio all'uso delle tecnologie digitali. La socializzazione, così come la scuola e il lavoro, hanno dovuto trovare nuovi canali e nello specifico si sono veicolati attraverso i canali tecnologici e i supporti informatici («circa 8,5 milioni i bambini e i ragazzi, dalla scuola dell'infanzia a quella di secondo grado, che si sono ritrovati a essere interessati (ma molti anche esclusi) dalla più grande, per quanto non voluta e non programmata, sperimentazione della scuola italiana, quella della didattica a distanza»⁷). La scuola a distanza ha generato spazi e tempi educativi che sono stati gestiti con grandi difficoltà:

⁷ CENSIS, *Una comunità ricompattata intorno alla scuola dell'emergenza*, in *Stress test Italia, i soggetti dell'Italia che c'è e il loro fronteggiamento della crisi*, <<https://www.censis.it/sites/default/files/downloads/Un%20Mese%20di%20Sociale%202020.pdf>> (data di ultima consultazione: 19 gennaio 2021), p. 18.

«il 74,8% [dei dirigenti scolastici], inoltre, ha verificato come l'utilizzo emergenziale di modalità di didattica a distanza abbia ampliato il gap di apprendimento tra gli studenti, a seconda del livello di disponibilità di strumenti e di supporti informatici, ma anche più in generale in base al livello di cultura tecnologica delle famiglie italiane»⁸.

Seppure questo periodo abbia permesso, dunque, la sperimentazione di nuovi strumenti, la definizione di nuovi metodi, strategie e linguaggi al fine di non generare il 'vuoto relazionale' per i percorsi già avviati, sono state comunque troppe le persone rimaste ai margini, escluse, ma bisognose dell'intervento professionale dell'educatore socio-educativo.

Dunque («se è vero che il lavoro educativo per sua natura è pronto ad accogliere l'imprevisto, i cambiamenti di rotta, l'incertezza, è anche vero che di fronte al vacillare di tutti i paradigmi relazionali noti occorre un pensiero nuovo e originale»⁹), la crisi attuale può e deve quindi essere vissuta come occasione di riflessione e di cambiamento: un nuovo inizio per il pensiero pedagogico che sia sempre più flessibile e adatto alla complessità dell'attuale.

Sebbene fossero molte le riflessioni già aperte sul cambiamento e sull'uso, per esempio, dei dispositivi digitali nell'educativo, come ha affermato V.A. Piccione «l'impatto del cambiamento ha prodotto macro-effetti. Sono cambiati gli stili di vita e di comunicazione sociale, certamente; e sono cambiati gli stili di percezione di sé e dell'altro, certamente; e sono cambiati gli stili di relazione sociale e di interazione»¹⁰; oggi queste parole appaiono ancor più adatte a descrivere la realtà sociale post-pandemia; parole vere, dunque, come la convinzione che il mondo non potrà più essere come prima dell'emergenza: tutto dovrà cambiare e nessuno sembra più disposto ad accettare gli stessi errori.

Agli educatori sociali nel corso dell'emergenza è stato chiesto di interrompere il loro lavoro 'ordinario'. In molti casi gli educatori hanno saputo sperimentarsi, avviare un nuovo educativo caratterizzato da linguaggi, strategie e scenari diversi. È necessario, pertanto, ora e nell'immediato porre le basi per un ripensamento del loro intervento che sappia tener conto delle sperimentazioni fatte nella situazione di crisi e che sappia valorizzare il loro operato. Sono essenziali un'attenta analisi e una valutazione dell'impatto che il virus, la Pandemia e il *lockdown* stanno producendo all'interno della società e delle comunità; questo tipo di analisi favorirebbe la progettazione degli interventi sociali efficaci e dunque risolutivi delle situazioni problematiche future. Ci troviamo di fronte all'inevitabile crescita delle fragilità sociali, della povertà e dell'esclusione e noi, ancora una volta, non siamo pronti. Occorre recuperare e restituire

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ F. RUTA, A. ROSSI, *L'educatore professionale prima e dopo il Coronavirus*, vedi «Vita.it» <<http://www.vita.it/it/article/2020/04/09/leducatore-professionale-prima-e-dopo-il-coronavirus/154969/>> (data ultima consultazione: 19 gennaio 2021).

¹⁰ V.A. PICCIONE, *Per una pedagogia della cura*, in R. OCCULTO (a cura di), *L'educatore supervisore nell'organizzazione dei servizi sociali*, Aemme, Roma, 2014, p. 441.

spazio e credibilità a una presenza qualificata nell'educativo, una presenza effettiva seppure a distanza, che sappia intervenire in modo competente e professionale nei nuovi spazi, con nuovi linguaggi e sperimentando nuovi metodi e nuove strategie. Occorre, già ora, ricostruire un sistema di *welfare* che sappia fornire risposte e servizi adeguati in grado di tutelare le persone e i professionisti coinvolti («se nella prima fase dell'emergenza le professioni sanitarie sono state chiamate a svolgere un ruolo da protagoniste, oggi, nella fase della ricostruzione e rigenerazione, è compito dei professionisti dell'educazione costruire la rete di protezione a sostegno delle nostre fragili comunità»¹¹), è compito della società restituire il giusto valore e profonda fiducia alla riflessione pedagogica e all'agire educativo, quanto meno per evitare il rischio di proseguire sulla strada dei fallimenti educativi degli ultimi anni.

Una nuova Deontologia: orientamento per l'agire professionale

Il lavoro socio-educativo che, come in precedenza evidenziato, era un tempo dedicato perlopiù a bambini e giovani, oggi afferma e richiama la necessità del suo intervento per un target di utenti sempre più vasto e contesti sempre nuovi. Oggi il lavoro socio-educativo richiede ai professionisti un bagaglio di competenze e di saperi sempre più vasti e allo stesso tempo specifici poiché la società in cui esso è svolto è assai complessa. È una società liquida, come definita da Bauman, caratterizzata dalla complessità, dalla rapidità del consumo e delle relazioni, dalla ricerca della perfezione e dello status sociale, che spinge gli individui a una chiusura, a un ripiegamento su loro stessi; è il trionfo dell'individualismo. Tutto questo si allontana dai tempi, dai linguaggi e dall'agire educativo che mira invece alla scoperta e alla valorizzazione delle potenzialità di ogni individuo, investendo su presenza, tempo e attesa. Il dilagare dell'individualismo rischia di allontanare le persone dall'attenzione reale e concreta della cura educativa di chi è e vive ai margini. Lo stato di confusione sociale che permette all'individualismo e all'incertezza di dilagare può trovare risposte efficaci nell'agire educativo e nella riflessione pedagogica che si basano concretamente e realmente sui principi di democrazia, uguaglianza, autodeterminazione e autonomia.

Oggi si richiede all'educativo e alle scienze dell'umano di fornire risposte mirate e immediate, il più possibile traducibili in azioni pratiche e concrete, meno teoriche. La pandemia ci ha cambiati, ha determinato l'accelerazione del cambiamento, ha imposto nuovi scenari educativi, nuovi linguaggi e nuovi strumenti, pertanto dal punto di vista deontologico l'educatore socio-educativo è chiamato a conoscere, a sapere e a non perdere di vista ciò che accade, non può ignorare i cambiamenti. La riflessione etica deve dunque, subito, osservare in profondità i cambiamenti, i fenomeni, le pandemie e il loro impatto sui contesti di persone e gruppi.

¹¹ IORI, *Sanità ed esistenza: il lavoro socio-educativo per il dopo-COVID*, cit.

L'educatore professionale socio-educativo, partecipe, attore protagonista e fautore della relazione educativa, deve essere sempre pronto a un lavoro in continua evoluzione, a emergenze nuove e pressanti, mentre il resto della società non riesce più a tutelare e a riconoscere l'importanza delle strategie e dei linguaggi educativi, degli approcci pedagogici, delle riflessioni delle scienze dell'umano nel loro complesso.

La stagione di totale ripensamento, di definizione del duplice profilo professionale per l'educatore ha portato in Italia a una crescente perdita di fiducia e di riconoscimento del valore e del ruolo sociale attribuito all'educativo e alla pedagogia; occorre, al contrario, una nuova affermazione del pensiero pedagogico, dell'azione educativa e della professionalità dell'educatore sociale. Si ritiene, infatti, che la risposta più efficace alle emergenze sociali e educative attuali e future non possa prescindere dall'intervento della Pedagogia al fianco di tutti gli altri approcci e delle rispettive figure professionali.

In una situazione di disorientamento, l'educatore sociale, sia nel corso della sua formazione che successivamente all'interno del lavoro di *équipe*, può anche lui smarrire il senso del proprio ruolo professionale, la peculiarità dell'approccio educativo e pedagogico e l'orientamento del proprio agire. Appare essenziale, pertanto, oggi più che mai, sviluppare e fortificare il senso d'identità professionale degli educatori sociali, affermare nuovamente l'importanza dell'approccio multidisciplinare alle 'emergenze emergenti', fornire delle linee guida per l'agire degli educatori sociali.

La riflessione etica sull'educazione sociale appare oramai necessaria: una riflessione che sappia riconoscere i segni del tempo e della complessità, i limiti e le possibilità dell'azione educativa, al fine di promuovere lo sviluppo personale dell'individuo e quello della comunità in cui è inserito.

Quando si parla di 'Etica' si intende quella parte della filosofia che si concentra sugli obblighi, sui comportamenti e sulla condotta morale di un soggetto all'interno di una società; si parla di 'Etica Professionale' quando ci si riferisce alla moralità dell'individuo all'interno della sua professione; per 'Deontologia' si intende, invece, un richiamo a un 'dover essere'. La parola 'Deontologia', dal greco *deon-ontos logos* ovvero 'discorso su ciò che è necessario fare', trova il suo fondamento nell'Etica e nella Morale per racchiudere l'insieme dei principi, delle regole e delle consuetudini al quale ogni gruppo professionale si ispira. Quando si parla di 'Deontologia Professionale' si intende, pertanto, un insieme di doveri, regole e comportamenti etici prestabiliti che impegnano e allo stesso tempo tutelano i professionisti sia nei confronti della società che nei confronti degli utenti. I codici deontologici sono dunque essenziali per tutte quelle professioni che entrano a contatto con gli utenti e che basano il loro intervento sulla relazione.

In riferimento agli educatori sociali, l'assenza di un assetto normativo ha reso, negli anni, complessa la definizione di un codice deontologico univoco che sapesse direzionare il comportamento di tutti i professionisti e che affermasse con forza i principi, le teorie e i metodi educativi. Sono stati notevoli i

contributi delle singole associazioni di categoria che hanno creato dei codici deontologici privati. Tuttavia, analizzando e mettendo a confronto i vari codici deontologici degli educatori socio-educativi con quelli di altre figure professionali (per esempio, di psicologi e assistenti sociali), appare immediatamente evidente come per gli educatori venga fatta meno leva sull'importanza della formazione, dell'approccio pedagogico, delle strategie, dei metodi, delle tecniche, degli strumenti educativi e sulla necessità della ricerca in campo educativo e socio-educativo.

A fronte, dunque, delle attuali innovazioni – come il tentativo della legge Iori¹² di affermare il ruolo degli educatori sociali e la successiva integrazione dell'articolo 33.bis che riconosce e legittima l'intervento dell'educatore sociale anche nei contesti sanitari in collaborazione con le altre figure sanitarie¹³, e come il protocollo d'intesa tra il Ministero dell'istruzione e le associazioni di categoria, che mira a riconoscere l'importanza dell'intervento pedagogico nei servizi scolastici¹⁴ – a fronte delle sperimentazioni fatte nel periodo di chiusura determinato dalla Pandemia e a fronte delle future ‘emergenze emergenti’, appare ancor più essenziale dotare oggi gli educatori sociali di principi, regole e doveri trasparenti e univoci. Un nuovo codice deontologico, una linea guida che sappia leggere i cambiamenti e che in linea con essi possa aggiornarsi quanto meno ogni cinque anni, una linea guida univoca per tutti i professionisti, che li aiuti a rafforzare la loro identità professionale e a sviluppare una costante capacità riflessiva sul loro agire. La riflessività del professionista è essenziale («non solo nel momento della teorizzazione (della deontologia pedagogica) ma anche e soprattutto in quella dell’azione, delle pratiche perché è lì che il pensiero viene messo alla prova e le migliori intenzioni possono rivelarsi velleitarie»¹⁵), è essenziale per l’agire quotidiano e consapevole, per la condivisione delle buone prassi e per la creazione di una più ricca cultura pedagogica.

La creazione di un codice deontologico univoco e condiviso tra tutti i professionisti permetterebbe non solo di restituire valore e dignità all’agire educativo ma anche di creare quella ‘rete educativa’ che farebbe percepire all’utente di essere all’interno di una condivisione chiara e concreta di obiettivi, metodi, teorie, prassi e linguaggi; tutto ciò farebbe dunque crescere la fiducia nei confronti dei servizi educativi.

È chiaro che la strada per il riconoscimento sociale e istituzionale della pratica dell’educatore socio-educativo è ancora lunga; nell’ultimo periodo sono stati fatti dei passi in avanti ma grande è l’impegno richiesto ai singoli profes-

¹² Legge 29 gennaio 2018, n. 244, «Disciplina delle professioni di educatore professionale socio-pedagogico, educatore professionale socio-sanitario e pedagogista».

¹³ Legge 13 ottobre 2020, n. 126, «Conversione in legge, con modificazioni, del decreto-legge 14 agosto 2020, n. 104, recante misure urgenti per il sostegno e il rilancio dell’economia».

¹⁴ Protocollo d’intesa «Attivazione progetti finalizzati a promuovere l’educazione alla convivenza civile, sociale e solidale, quale parte integrante dell’offerta formativa», 27 agosto 2020.

¹⁵ M. CONTINI, S. DEMINIZZI, M. FABBRI, A. TOLOMELLI, *Deontologia pedagogica: riflessività e pratiche di resistenza*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2014, p. 33.

sionisti e agli istituti di formazione. La creazione di un nuovo codice etico non potrà garantire la professionalità dell'educatore; è infatti fondamentale investire e offrire una formazione iniziale adeguata e una formazione continua davvero utile e sempre innovativa.

Le fonti ispiratrici dalle quali non si potrà prescindere per creare un nuovo codice sono la *Dichiarazione Universale dei Diritti Umani* (1948), la *Costituzione Italiana*, la *Convenzione sui diritti delle persone con disabilità* (2006), la *Convenzione sui diritti dei bambini* (1981), oltre a tutti i codici deontologici già utilizzati dalle altre professioni, a quelli privati delle singole associazioni di categoria, la *Dichiarazione di Barcellona* (2003) che sancisce la necessità di linee guida etiche comuni a tutti gli educatori sociali in Europa, la *Dichiarazione di Montevideo* (2005) che afferma l'intervento specifico dell'educazione sociale, la *Dichiarazione di Copenaghen* (2009) che affronta il ruolo dell'educatore sociale alla luce del mondo globalizzato.

L'educazione sociale in termini culturali e un educatore competente in termini professionali sono il risultato di un mosaico di saperi ed esperienze (sapere, saper essere e saper fare) intessuto con un alto grado di eterogeneità nelle competenze e negli ambiti di intervento, con una grande prontezza nel riflettere, pensare, decidere. L'educatore sociale, pertanto, fondamentale per ogni momento presente e futuro, in ogni contesto sociale, lavora quasi sempre in *équipe* multidisciplinare, si pone l'obiettivo del lavoro di rete e di un'azione dall'alto grado di complessità; ha dunque la necessità di dotarsi di un codice etico univoco che possa integrarsi con quelli delle professioni con cui lavora.

Per prima cosa un nuovo codice deontologico dovrà fornire la definizione di un ruolo, di ambiti d'intervento; un utile esempio è offerto dalle definizioni presenti nella Legge Iori:

«l'educatore professionale socio-pedagogico e il pedagogista operano nell'ambito educativo, formativo e pedagogico, in rapporto a qualsiasi attività svolta in modo formale, non formale e informale, nelle varie fasi della vita, in una prospettiva di crescita personale e sociale, secondo le definizioni contenute nell'articolo 2 del decreto legislativo 16 gennaio 2013, n. 13, perseguendo gli obiettivi della Strategia europea deliberata dal Consiglio europeo di Lisbona del 23 e 24 marzo 2000. Le figure professionali indicate al primo periodo operano nei servizi e nei presidi socio-educativi e socio-assistenziali, nei confronti di persone di ogni età, prioritariamente nei seguenti ambiti: educativo e formativo; scolastico; socio-assistenziale, limitatamente agli aspetti socio-educativi; della genitorialità e della famiglia; culturale; giudiziario; ambientale; sportivo e motorio; dell'integrazione e della cooperazione internazionale. Ai sensi della legge 14 gennaio 2013, n. 4, le professioni di educatore professionale socio-pedagogico e di pedagogista sono comprese nell'ambito delle professioni non organizzate in ordini o collegi»¹⁶.

¹⁶ Art. 1, L. 2443/2011 (Legge Iori).

Gli utenti e i contesti a cui oggi dunque si rivolge l'educatore professionale socio-educativo sono molteplici: ci sono i minori (bambini e adolescenti), gli adulti, gli anziani, i disabili, coloro che sono in stato di bisogno o svantaggio durante tutto l'arco della vita.

I principi cardine ai quali dovrà ispirarsi saranno quelli dell'inclusione, della valorizzazione delle differenze, dell'interculturalità, della centralità dell'utente, della sospensione del giudizio; non basterà pensare che è prioritario non discriminare, ma sarà fondamentale che il percorso educativo di chiunque miri alla scoperta e alla valorizzazione delle sue potenzialità personali, al suo ruolo di protagonista attivo del suo progetto esistenziale.

La finalità dell'agire educativo dell'educatore sociale è senz'altro, dunque, l'*empowerment*, ovvero l'espansione delle capacità e della libertà d'azione dell'individuo, che si raggiunge promuovendo un percorso di crescita e cambiamento.

L'educatore sociale, in relazione ai metodi e alle strategie da adottare, è chiamato a costruire il suo intervento su una relazione d'aiuto e di fiducia con l'utente; in altre parole, deve costruire una relazione asimmetrica che sappia garantire sicurezza nell'agire sia a lui che all'utente. Opera progettando e valutando continuamente le necessità e gli obiettivi raggiunti. Si basa sulla conoscenza delle teorie pedagogiche e delle scienze dell'umano, delle strategie, delle tecniche e dei metodi e degli strumenti socio-educativi ed educativi. Il suo intervento è sempre intenzionale, ovvero è il risultato di un'attenta e analitica osservazione, di una rilevazione e di una valutazione dei bisogni, di un'attenta e analitica definizione degli obiettivi, di un'attenta e analitica progettazione delle azioni necessarie, di un'attenta e analitica valutazione continua del suo agire. Infine, opera in *équipe* multidisciplinare, affiancando tutti gli altri professionisti e valorizzando la peculiarità dell'approccio educativo e pedagogico al fine di raggiungere il benessere psicosociale degli utenti, ispirandosi al concetto di salute promosso dall'OMS: la salute è lo stato di totale benessere fisico, psichico e sociale.

Altro caposaldo dovrà essere la valorizzazione della ricerca in ambito educativo e socio-educativo e la divulgazione scientifica, così che si possa contribuire a perfezionare l'identità professionale degli educatori e finalmente a restituire «voce capace di un'idea pedagogica, indispensabile per evitare la banalizzazione delle scienze dell'educazione, una tecnicizzazione delle scienze dell'educazione»¹⁷.

L'emergenza sanitaria ha imposto uno stravolgimento delle routine, una frattura delle relazioni sociali, vissuti di ansia, angoscia, confinamento, malattia e morte ma anche speranza, cambiamento e pratiche innovative; tutti questi sono temi oggetto di interesse pedagogico ed educativo¹⁸. Tuttavia, non basta fermarsi all'*hic et nunc*, occorre, al contrario, una riflessione lungimirante: gli

¹⁷ PICCIONE, *Per una pedagogia della cura*, cit., p. 442.

¹⁸ RUTA e ROSSI, *L'educatore professionale prima e dopo il Coronavirus*, cit.

educatori socio-educativi, ancora una volta, non hanno ricevuto linee guida chiare, coerenti e univoche; ancora una volta hanno vissuto e operato nell'ombra, da soli, con grande forza, grande intensità, grande impegno. Il loro rispetto, la loro cura e la loro sintonia con gli utenti, le famiglie, la solidarietà e la vicinanza sono i fondamenti etici di una professione che va a tutti i costi tutelata e valorizzata per il futuro di tutti e di ognuno, dell'intera società.

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José Luis Parejo¹, Paula Pecharromán²

A pedagogy of death in times of COVID-19

ABSTRACT

The global pandemic situation caused by COVID-19 has generated, according to WHO, more than 247,000 deaths worldwide to date. Death has become a daily news in the opening headlines of news, if not a fact that thousands of families are going through. One might wonder how children are coping in a pandemic situation. In our chapter we treat child grief as an element that reconstructs the life of the person who has suffered the loss or questions about it. It is a relationship that the child establishes with the emptiness that such loss has left, with the aim of knowing and reflecting on its importance and working on the frustration and suffering that has created it in the best possible way.

KEYWORDS: Death education, Pedagogy of death, Curriculum, Spanish education system, COVID-19

1. Introduction

The health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a social and economic impact due to the high mortality rate resulting from it, especially among the elderly. Nearly 500,000 people died worldwide, according to the WHO, and 28,325 in Spain, according to the Ministry of Health. These figures, always surrounded by controversy on a media level, show the fragility of the human race and the opposite side of its life: death. Confinement as a measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 has meant that family members could not be visited when they were ill in hospital and that has prevented the normal wake and burial of the deceased. Thus complicating direct contact with death itself and, above all, making the mourning process more difficult, especially for minors, as they would not have been able to understand what had happened.

This chapter addresses the phenomenon of death. This is a phenomenon

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that we believe should be present at the curricular level in education systems since it is a natural event with an important social and cultural component. We advocate a pedagogy of death that educates children in the life cycle of people and keeps them away from myths, falsehoods and concealment that have traditionally prevented them from knowing and assuming, from their own level of maturity, this phenomenon³. For Herrán-Gascón and Cortina-Selva⁴, dealing with death in the classroom prevents the creation of children's fears and their fixation; it teaches children to create and develop strategies to overcome their fears autonomously and reduce them, thus avoiding experiences of induced terror. Another factor that makes educational intervention on death necessary is the feeling of guilt that the child usually displays. The aim is to work on the stages of mourning. Grief, as Gabaldón-Fraile⁵, points out, is somewhat different from that of an adult, since children do not have the necessary notions to fully understand death and it is important to teach them what they are and also to work on them in order to promote their acquisition and understanding.

2. Death

2.1. Definition

The concept of death has changed throughout history. In the past, people died when they stopped breathing and their heart stopped beating. But in today's society, due to technological advances, this concept must be reconsidered since a person can be kept alive through artificial means such as respirators, pacemakers, artificial blood, etc. The concept of death, according to the Royal Spanish Academy (Real Academia Española)⁶, is derived from the Latin word *mors, mortis*. It is defined as the end of the living organism, that is, when a living being stops functioning in its totality, all vital signs are reduced to zero and brain inactivity is produced. The concept is also conceived as the end of life caused by the body's own inability to maintain the homeostatic process.

In short, we can define death as the process that causes the total shutdown of the organic system caused by various factors such as loss of brain activity,

³ P. RODRÍGUEZ HERRERO, A. DE LA HERRÁN GASCÓN, V. DE MIGUEL YUBERO, *The inclusion of death in the curriculum of the Spanish Regions*, in «Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education», 2020, pp. 1–19, <[doi:10.1080/03057925.2020.173219](https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2020.173219)> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020).

⁴ A. HERRÁN GASCÓN Y M. CORTINA SELVA, *Introducción a la pedagogía de la muerte. Educación para la vida-muerte*, in «Educación y futuro. Revista de investigación aplicada y experiencias educativas», n. 17, 2007, pp. 131-148.

⁵ S. GABALDÓN FRAILE, *El duelo en el niño*, in «Formación Médica continuada en atención primaria», n. 13, 2006, vol.7, pp. 344-348, <<http://guixa.es/pdf/El-duelo-en-el%20nino.pdf>> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020).

⁶ REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, *Diccionario*, Real Academia Española, Madrid, 2014.

cardio-respiratory arrest or any other situation that may cause the functional collapse of the systems.

2.2. The social impact of death

The lifestyle of different civilizations is influenced by and revolves around the vision they have of death, leading, over time, to the construction of various beliefs and practices necessary to understand and manage this natural and inevitable event. Thus, we have to conceive the concept of death in continuous evolution as culture manifests it in art, traditions and rites.

Nowadays, with the existing scientific and technological advances, people seek to die without pain and with their families close by, although in the hospital they are often not aware of the proximity to death, avoiding the psychological suffering that such a situation can cause. This leads to the patient creating false hopes for him or herself and prevents him or her from preparing for the end of his or her life, from arranging it and from becoming aware of it. But there is a growing initiative in which palliative care is beginning to be carried out at home.

Even in the funerary culture, changes have taken place: wakes are no longer held at home, the bodies being removed from the home so that they can be handled by professionals; mourning has become obsolete or a thing of the past; funerals are usually short and cold; and, finally, visits to cemeteries have decreased. Even so, according to Mejía and Valderrama⁷, there is a growing awareness of this issue: more and more people feel that death is neither negative nor a negative event, since dying is the final phase of life and is irremediable, natural and universal.

Therefore, we consider it necessary, from an early age, to help children understand and make them aware of the process of death and to prevent them from feeling that it is something non-existent, imaginary. Death exists, it is part of our lives, religions, cultures, artistic representations, festivities... and as much as we do not want to, at some point we must face it: the pain, the suffering that this loss causes. And as it has been done throughout the history of humanity, we must give children instruments and/or means to know, accept and assimilate that a loved one has died and will no longer be physically with them, even if he or she remains in their memory.

3. Grief

Before we talk about child grief, it is necessary to introduce the meaning of grief in general and the types of grief that exist, as well as the purpose of it, so that we can then focus on the grief of children.

⁷ A. MEJÍA, A. VALDERRAMA, *La muerte en la sociedad moderna*, in «Dharma», no. 3, 1986, pp. 1-4, <<http://www.revistadharma.com/potala3.htm>> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020).

3.1. *Definition of grief*

«Grief» can be defined as «una reacción adaptativa natural ante cualquier tipo de pérdida, aunque suele ser más intenso tras el fallecimiento de un ser querido»⁸. Bucay in his book *El camino de las lágrimas* («The path of tears»)⁹ considers that «el duelo es el doloroso proceso normal de elaboración de una pérdida, tendiente a la adaptación y armonización de nuestra situación interna y externa frente a una nueva realidad»¹⁰. This means that the person comes into contact with the void left by the loss, knows and reflects on its importance and addresses the frustration and suffering that this void has created, in the best possible way. But... what is loss? A loss is to be deprived of what one has had, to lose what one has been caring for and which one values. It is any reduction of the personal, material and/or symbolic resources to which a person is emotionally attached or any experience that a person lives and feels as a loss: losing a valuable object, a hobby, a dream, some skill... In general, we can talk about loss as any traumatic or critical event that leads the person to a mourning process that does not necessarily have to be death.

Due to the number of losses that can be found, different types of grief can be identified¹¹. The first of these is ‘grief for the loss of a loved one’, whether it be the death of a family member, friends, pets... It tends to be one of the most painful losses that a person experiences in his or her life due to the bond that exists with the deceased. It is a dramatic and unavoidable experience of life where support is needed, especially that of the family, in order to be able to overcome the grief. It is a situation that is very difficult to surmount if you are away from home or alone. Another kind of grief is the loss of a partner (widowhood). In this case, the person loses the meaning of life, its order, balance and even identity. Therefore, he/she might feel overwhelmed by emotions because he/she is experiencing a void by the loss. The ‘broken heart syndrome’ appears, in which the death of the couple induces the death of the other. Grief ends when the person who has experienced the loss is able to create, realize and get involved in new projects as well as to love again (family, friends, new partners...). Finally, grief occurs when the loss of a child occurs. It is the most extreme type of loss of a loved one that can happen to a person. By the law of life, it is the elderly, parents and grandparents, who die first due to the health problems that arise with age or because of age itself. The difficulty of overcom-

⁸ C. LÓPEZ DE AYALA GARCÍA, T. GALEA MARTÍN, R. CAMPOS MÉNDEZ, *Guía Clínica seguimiento del duelo*, in «Observatorio Regional de Cuidados Paliativos de Extremadura», 2010, p. 28, <<http://www.psicofundacion.es/uploads/pdf/Guia%20clinica%20seguimiento%20del%20duelo.pdf>> (Last accessed on June 20, 2020). Personal translation: «the natural adaptive response as a result of a loss, somewhat deeper after the death of a loved one».

⁹ J. BUCAY, *El camino de las lágrimas*, Grijalbo, Barcelona, 2001, p. 72.

¹⁰ Personal translation: «grief is the painful natural process after experiencing a loss that helps our own internal and external adaptation and integration to face the new reality».

¹¹ BUCAY, *El camino de las lágrimas*, *op. cit.*

ing grief and stress is such that it can lead to psychological, biological and/or neurological problems.

3.2. Stages of grief

After knowing what death, grief and loss are, we see the need to identify which are the stages of grief that all people go through when someone close to them dies. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross¹², a Swiss-American psychiatrist, explains in her book *On death and dying* five stages of grief in order to understand the evolution of the person, from loss to overcoming. She points out that sometimes not all the stages take place and they can even be in a different order to the one established in her book, although there have always been at least two of the stages indicated. Its sequence is called «Elisabeth Kübler Ross' model» and is organized in the following stages:

1. Denial stage

Denying the true reality that a loved one is no longer with us helps the person cover up and displace the pain that comes with knowing about the person's death. Denial works as a buffer after unexpected and shocking news, thus giving the person time to adjust to what has happened. It is considered as a provisional defence, in which the person tries to repress all his/her pain, until it is replaced by a partial acceptance (not yet fully accepted).

2. Anger stage

Anger and rage are caused by the frustration of not being able to do anything to prevent the death of the loved one, which causes the person's feelings to collapse. Death is perceived as the result of a cause for which culprits are sought, but when they are not found, the sensation of anger appears, which is then projected in all directions towards objects, animals and people (family, friends...).

3. Bargaining stage

The anger is left behind, but the fantasy of being in control of the situation appears: one fantasizes about being able to reverse the process and one even looks for strategies so that death isn't irrevocable (resurrection). From here arises the negotiation with supernatural and divine entities, almost always with God, who are asked to go back in time so that death does not occur in exchange for a reformulation of life and good behaviour.

4. Depression stage

At this stage, the person stops imagining non-existent realities and has a sense of emptiness because the deceased loved one is no longer with them. An

¹² E. KÜBLER ROSS, *On death and dying*, Routledge, New York, USA, 2006.

existential crisis occurs because the sadness and pain cannot be alleviated through fantasies, shields (denial) and excuses (anger). It is characterized as a stage of isolation and psychological and physical exhaustion due to the whole situation in which the grieving person finds him/herself.

5. Acceptance stage

For Gala-León, Lupiani-Jiménez, Hernández, Guillén-Gestoso, González-Infante, Villaverde-Gutiérrez and Sánchez, «si se van superando las fases poco a poco surge el afrontamiento y se reorganiza la propia existencia»¹³. This phase occurs after the previous stages have been completed. It is the moment in which, after a period of adaptation, the death of that person is accepted. The pain and sadness gradually disappear and the balance is rebuilt by adapting to the absence.

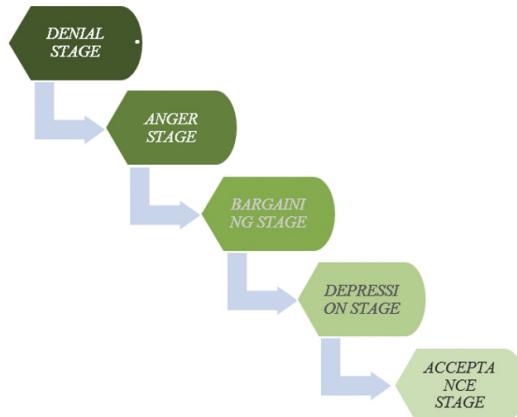


Figure 1. *Evolution of the grieving process.*
Source: Own elaboration

Everyone, after a loss, often has a time when they are not psychologically the same as they were before the event. They tend to be more negative and aggressive about everything that happens around them. This is because of the stage in which they are and it is logical that upon the loss of a loved one they are somewhat defensive since they protect themselves from any minimal damage that an action, event, etc. may cause them.

¹³ F.J., GALA LEÓN, M. LUPIANI JIMÉNEZ, R. RAJA HERNÁNDEZ, C. GUILLÉN GESTOSO, J.M. GONZÁLEZ, F. INFANTE, M^a C. VILLAVER DE GUTIÉRREZ, I.A. SÁNCHEZ, *Actitudes psicológicas ante la muerte y el duelo. Una revisión conceptual (Psychological attitudes toward death and bereavement. One conceptual review)*, in «Cuadernos de medicina forense», 2002, pp. 39-50, <http://scielo.isciii.es/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1135-76062002000400004> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020), p. 39. Personal Translation: «if you overcome the phases step by step, you will manage the loss and you will be able to reorganize your life».

3.3. Grief in children

Children, like adults, experience grief because, even though they are young, they participate in the same experience as the rest of their relatives. In fact, the loss of a family member has an impact on the whole family, causing a disorganization of the roles that each one played until the loss. The relationships between them and their environment are deeply affected. For example, the death of a grandfather whom the family visited every Sunday to spend some time together. Children can also be disturbed by the loss because the family turmoil can cause them to change their behaviour, routines, habits... such as those mentioned that directly affect them, having to adapt to the new situation. Poch and Herrero¹⁴, after carrying out their research on death and grief in the educational context, developed a matrix where they compare a series of myths that society has created about grief in children linked to the reality they live in:

MYTHS	RESEARCH AND CLINICAL PRACTICE
Children do not realize what happens after a loss.	They realize that something different has happened and not talking to them is turning them into "spies" on something they may not even understand.
Children and adolescents do not elaborate on grief.	They do elaborate on grief.
Children and adolescents do not attach meaning to events.	Not only do they attribute meaning to the events, but they need to do so.
Adults must protect them as much as possible from pain and suffering, so it is better not to include them in rituals. (Protection understood as "exclusion" and experienced by the child as "abandonment" and "loneliness")	We protect them best if we involve them in the family process, and we involve them as far as their age is appropriate (protection understood as "inclusion/incorporation" and experienced by the child as "being part of" and "companionship").
They don't understand the rituals, so it's best that they don't attend them.	We can help them understand (at least minimally) the rituals and allow them to participate in them as much as possible.

Table 1. *Myths about child and adolescent grief and results of research and clinical practice*
Source: Poch and Herrero (2003, p. 206)

As we have seen in table 1, children are aware of loss and its consequences. They are able to grasp everything that is happening around them, even if they do not always express it, and it can be reflected in a change of behaviour and in actions, sending signals to the adult about their pain and bewilderment in the face of the loss. However, adults usually try to keep them as far away as possible by excluding them from any activity, acting 'normally' in order to protect them, but leaving them alone in the face of this grief, unable to express

¹⁴ C. POCH, O. HERRERO, *La muerte y el duelo en el contexto educativo. Reflexiones, testimonios y actividades*, Paidós, Barcelona, 2003.

themselves, show their feelings and without knowing what really happened. In fact, as indicated by Gorosabel-Odriozola and León-Mejía¹⁵, it has been shown that children benefit greatly from dealing with this subject in different conversations, where they talk mainly about the emotions and feelings that they do not fully understand and where adults help them to understand by having more experience.

With this we want to emphasize that children feel the absence of the person, they are not alien to it, especially the more they appreciated the person. It is true that they may not understand it completely, but they know that this person will no longer be in their lives and they miss him/her. They may not convey it in words, but they can 'communicate' it through drawings or other actions. It's just a matter of observation. We believe that in addition to having more contact with the child, such as doing more activities with him/her, it would be good for the parents to talk to the child and not 'buy into his/her happiness' through distracting elements, since in this way the child will not appease his/her pain, but only relieve it or set it aside for a moment.

In contrast, adolescents and pre-adolescents have one characteristic that stands out during their grieving process and is different from child grief: their maturing crisis. They tend to move away from their parents and become more independent, causing a biographical imbalance that does not occur in childhood.

«El duelo en estas edades determina, a veces, el paso de una etapa a otra, de la infancia a la adolescencia, de ésta a la edad adulta o de muchacho a hombre, de forma repentina o forzada, lo que origina cambios psíquicos diversos. También puede dar lugar a cierto detenimiento de la evolución o tendencias regresivas»¹⁶.

As we can see, at each stage of life grief is experienced differently. However, we can assert that child grief is characterized by incorporating elements common to pre-adolescent/adolescent grief (lack of maturity) and adult grief (direct influence on social relations), being a combination of both, since child grief is the most complicated and difficult to overcome because of the lack of the necessary strategies and cognitive resources and the lack of a complete understanding of the 'disappearance' of the loved one and the reason for it.

¹⁵ M. GOROSABEL ODRIOZOLA, A. LEÓN MEJÍA, *La muerte en educación infantil: algunas líneas básicas de actuación para centros escolares*, in «Psicología Educativa», no. 22, 2016, pp. 103-111. <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1135755X16300252>> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020).

¹⁶ E. GAMO MEDINA, P. PAZOS PEZZI, *El duelo y las etapas de la vida*, in «Asociación Española de Neuropsiquiatría», no. 29, vol. 104, 2009, p. 462. Personal translation: «Sometimes grief at this age determines the passage from one stage to another, from childhood to adolescence, from the latter to adulthood or from boy to man, in a sudden or forced way, which causes diverse psychic changes. It can also give rise to a delay in evolution or even regressive tendencies».

3.4. Characteristics of child grief

Childhood grief is different from adult grief because the child is at a different stage of physical and psychological maturation and has a different view of the world. The child's conception of death depends on various factors, such as the way in which the family presents it to the child, personal experiences, religion, etc. For this reason, several authors establish a relationship between the child's age and his or her developmental characteristics in order to classify and organize the level of concept of death and mourning presented by children. Sabel Gabaldón-Fraile¹⁷, psychiatrist at the Hospital Sant Joan de Déu in Barcelona, in his article *El duelo en el niño*, analyses the phases of grief, its types and the notions that children have about death (loss), from birth to adolescence.

AGE	NOTION OF DEATH
From birth to 18 months old	The child does not have, nor understand the notion of time, so it does not allow him to locate death. Death is absence and life is presence, but without the notion of time, the concept of absence does not appear, nor does that of presence.
Between 18 months and 5 years old	The concept of time begins to be associated with concrete events. The child begins to differentiate between yesterday, today and tomorrow. He/she begins to have notion of death associating it to sleeping, immobility and as reversible phenomenon. They can have a great emotional impact on the loss of a loved one and be left with a lasting impression.
Between 5 and 10 years old	The child relates and integrates within death everything that is capable of performing some function: everything that moves, feeds and even the insensitive and immobile.
Around the age of 9-10	The child acquires the notion of death as a universal phenomenon and the first fears of losing someone and of his or her own death appear.
Adolescence	A new notion appears: death comes to everyone, whoever you are. Most likely the child has already had close experiences, influencing his or her experience of death with the impact it has.

Table 2. *Conceptual elaboration on death.*
Source: Own elaboration based on Gabaldón Fraile (2006, p. 346).

¹⁷ S. GABALDÓN FRAILE, *El duelo en el niño*, in «Formación Médica continuada en atención primaria», no. 13, vol. 7, 2006, pp. 344-348, <<http://guixa.es/pdf/El-duelo-en-el%20nino.pdf>> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020).

Children, because of their dependence due to their lack of development and the influence of the environment, become more vulnerable than adults to the loss of a loved one.

«Viven y sienten la muerte de un ser querido, en mayor o menor intensidad, como una forma de abandono, de ahí que sea absolutamente necesario acompañarlos e incluirles en los rituales y reuniones familiares que tengan lugar. Proporcionarles la compañía de seres queridos que les den afecto y abrigo coloca a los menores en una situación de protección y de amor que les ayuda a combatir sus estados de aflicción, abandono, desconcierto y dolor»¹⁸.

The complexity of the concept of death forces us to understand and construct its meaning through the different sub-concepts that compose it. Poch and Herrero¹⁹ recommend that the first thing they must learn is the subconcept of «universality», that is, every living being dies, it is inevitable and unpredictable. At first, they will relate it to magical concepts since they think that death is selective and accepting that in fact this is not reality will bring them closer to the understanding of death. Another sub-concept you should learn is that of «irreversibility»: death is a process that cannot be reversed, that is, what is dead cannot be brought back to life. This is a difficult sub-concept for children to understand because in their daily lives, in video games and in movies, dead characters are often resurrected (reversibility). Therefore, they may believe it will happen to the people around them. The sub-concept of «non-functionality» refers to the fact that the body no longer performs its vital functions when the person has died. Likewise, children are influenced by unrealistic thoughts, making them believe that a mortally wounded person or one lacking a vital organ does not die. From this fact arise the questions that children ask us: will he be cold; will he be hungry? The sub-concept of «causality» indicates that every death has a reason or is due to something or for something. Children often relate it to magical events that can affect them negatively, as they can relate discussions (in which bad thoughts surface) as the cause of that person's death (wishing for something to happen to them). They need to understand that death is not the result of an extraordinary event but a natural one. Finally, children need to understand the sub-concept of «non-corporeal continuation», which has to do with religious aspects. The child understands

¹⁸ L. CID EGEA, *Explícame qué ha pasado. Guía para ayudar a los adultos a hablar de la muerte y el duelo con los niños*, Fundación Mario Losantos del Campo, Madrid, 2011, p. 84. Personal translation: «They live and feel the death of a loved one, to a greater or lesser extent, as a form of abandonment, hence it is absolutely necessary to accompany and include them in the rituals and family meetings. When children feel affection and shelter from their loved ones, they will feel protected and loved. Therefore, it will help them to manage grief, abandonment, bewilderment and pain».

¹⁹ POCH, HERRERO, *La muerte y el duelo en el contexto educativo. Reflexiones, testimonios y actividades*, op. cit.

that it is not an end or it is – if it has no relation to religion – and contributes with his/her own theories since it is not known what happens after death. For example, children often answer family questions making statements such as: «my grandmother is in heaven», «my grandparents look after me from above».

After analysing what loss and grief mean to people, particularly to children, we can argue that it is not advisable, in any way, to hide death from children because of fear of not knowing how to answer their questions, because it is believed that they will not understand or because of trying to protect them from pain and suffering. This could end up provoking just the opposite, making them feel more afflicted and alone in the face of grief. The important thing in these situations is not to leave the child alone and not to make the subject taboo. It is necessary to start a dialogue where children can express their feelings and emotions, where they can share their fears and theories about what happened, where their questions about it are answered in a clear and simple way.

3.5. Addressing death in the school curriculum

If death is considered taboo in society, it's even more so at school.

Death is part of the cycle of life: birth-growth-death, although it is a process of suffering and pain for most people. Fear of death causes people to try to get as far away as possible from that reality, which is inevitable, causing us to be living a phenomenon of a culture anesthetized towards it²⁰.

But... if it is inevitable, why can't we work to face it in the best way? As we already know, children are aware of death, even if they do not express it like adults do. Therefore, school, where they spend almost all of their time during the day, becomes a suitable environment where they can talk about it naturally, as well as to prepare them, through different educational intervention protocols, to be able to act and face such a significant event in their lives as the death of their loved ones.

3.6. Syllabus on handling death

Gorosabel Odriozola and León Mejía state that «a pesar de la importancia que tiene un correcto afrontamiento de la muerte en los más pequeños, esta necesidad se encuentra muy desatendida debido a que la muerte se ha convertido en un tabú social y educativo»²¹. The REAL DECRETO 1630/2006, of 29

²⁰ N. MARTÍNEZ, M. BEDMAR, M., *Impacto de la producción científica acerca de la educación para muerte. Revisión bibliométrica en Scopus y Web of Science*, in «Revista Iberoamericana de Educación», no. 82, vol. 2, 2020, pp. 65-78.

²¹ M. GOROSABEL ODRIOZOLA, A. LEÓN MEJÍA, *La muerte en educación infantil: algunas líneas básicas de actuación para centros escolares*, in «Psicología Educativa», no. 22, 2016, pp. 103-111. <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1135755X16300252>> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020), p. 104. Personal translation: «in spite of the need of children to be able to correctly deal with death, this need is not being met due to the social and educative taboos about death».

December²², which establishes the minimum teaching requirements for the second cycle of Early Childhood Education, states that the aim is «contribuir al desarrollo físico, afectivo, social e intelectual de los niños y las niñas»²³ and that therefore a good integral, gradual and harmonious development will be sought. Curiously, there is not a single element related to death although it is one of the main causes of emotional imbalance due to the pain and suffering it causes in early childhood. The affective-social development is threatened and unbalanced, and must be reconstructed.

As it is a subject that is not found in any of the three areas of the Early Childhood syllabus – Self-knowledge and personal autonomy, Knowledge of the environment, Languages: Communication and Representation –, it is assumed that it must be dealt with as transversal content, that is to say, content that spans all three areas in the formation of the student's integral development and his or her integration into society. As Cortina Selva says, «una enseñanza que no tenga en cuenta la muerte, no se está dirigiendo a los seres humanos, ya que los delimita impidiendo una mirada global hacia su condición de ser vivo»²⁴. This concept should be addressed more in the area of 'self-knowledge and personal autonomy' than in the rest of the areas because it would be more focused on the way of being of the person and the development of his/her personality and, as we already know, a loss can mark the child by hurting him/her psychologically.

In order to avoid imbalance in the curricular approach of the areas, we consider it important to draw up or introduce objectives in area one so that teachers can work with students on losses, starting with elements that are not very relevant for children, such as an object or toy that means little to them, and then moving on to higher, more complex levels. In this way, the child learns emotional education content such as self-control and how to be more autonomous and not depend so much on objects as on people. In order to do this, children must be able to disassociate themselves from meaningful elements, as well as know and understand their emotions and the people around them; express their emotions and fears in the face of the loss of a family member, a pet, etc.; allow themselves to be helped and supported by the rest of their peers and teachers, who will provide them with a series of tools and strategies to promote and strengthen the child's emotional balance.

²² REAL DECRETO 1630/2006, December 29, establishing the compulsory education guidelines of the second cycle of Early Childhood Education, p. 1.

²³ Personal translation: «to play a key role in the physical, social and intellectual development of boys and girls».

²⁴ M. CORTINA SELVA, *El cine como recurso didáctico en Educación para la muerte: Implicaciones formativas para el profesorado* (tesis doctoral), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, 2010, p. 58, <https://repositorio.uam.es/bitstream/handle/10486/4487/30079_cortina_selva_mar.pdf?sequencia=1> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020). Personal translation: «if death, as a natural part of life, is not included in our education system, it will narrow our perspective of what it is to be alive as a human being».

3.7. Importance of educating about death and on death

In the classroom, we only work on the subject of death when there is a loss of someone close to the student, whether it be a pet or a family member. We intervene if the child appears to be too affected, to help him/her overcome the situation and return to the normal classroom routine. Educating about and on death is also educating about and on life as well as being key to guidance on it²⁵. All living beings are born, grow and die; it is the cycle of life. If the issue of death is not addressed or, worse, if it is silenced in the classroom, children will not be able to learn meaningfully about this cycle. While death brings the suffering of loss and the pain of not being able to see the loved one again, it can lead to fear in the knowledge that one's life will end. This fear can be transformed into other fears and, if not addressed, can have a negative impact on the child's emotions and social life, making a negative mark on them. For Herrán Gascón and Cortina Selva²⁶, dealing with death in the classroom prevents children's fears from emerging, and also provides students with cognitive strategies that will help them overcome their fears on their own and avoid experiences of induced terror. Children tend to feel that they are the cause of death of the person or animal, since they relate their thoughts or actions as those that originated the loss – such as wishing for something bad to happen to that person or doing some bad action that caused the loved one to disappear from their lives. To prevent these situations, which are very difficult for children to manage, we must encourage self-control and resilience to increase their confidence and trust, and to learn to control their emotions in extreme moments. Finally, at school we have to carefully, gently, willingly and continuously address fears to prevent that the damage and pain that can be caused by the death of someone important leaves its mark on the child and ends up causing problems in the future.

The true purpose of educating about and on death is to bring children closer to the reality of life. It is to help them to know their limitations, to overcome or reduce their fears. But, above all, to grow internally, allowing them to ask themselves questions about the meaning of existence (reflective thinking), to learn that the life of a living being is not finite (born-grow-death) and that death is a real fact, through the so-called Pedagogy of Death. This is defined by Martínez and Bedmar as «un área de conocimiento educativo emergente la cual nos permite centrarnos en una intervención para poder crear un proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje acorde con las dimensiones del ser humano»²⁷.

²⁵ E. PEDRERO, *Educación para la Salud y pedagogía de la muerte: percepciones y demandas del profesorado universitario en España*, in «SCIFELO», 2019, <<https://www.scielosp.org/article/icse/2019.v23/e180404/>> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020).

²⁶ A. HERRÁN GASCÓN Y M. CORTINA SELVA, *Introducción a la pedagogía de la muerte. Educación para la vida-muerte*, in «Educación y futuro. Revista de investigación aplicada y experiencias educativas», n. 17, 2007, pp. 131-148.

²⁷ N. MARTÍNEZ, M. BEDMAR, *Impacto de la producción científica acerca de la educación para muerte*.

3.8. *Role of the teacher*

It is essential that the child finds a space in the classroom where he/she can express him/herself freely and channel his/her emotions through the different activities carried out. The child must feel free to express his or her feelings, as well as to acknowledge them. For their part, the teacher must be the guide, the one who serves as a reference point for the child, providing empathy and helping him/her to answer the questions that are asked and to work on his/her concerns and worries.

The teacher must be trained to work on this subject in the classroom given its difficulty. It is a subject that continues to be taboo in society because of the fear caused by not knowing what happens after death, and therefore the answers to most of the questions raised cannot be answered. To this fear we must add the fear of pain, of suffering, which we try to avoid by distancing ourselves, our family, from everything that could harm us. In this sense, Poch and Herrero²⁸ consider that the teacher should: promote an educational action to address situations that push people to the limit; create a pedagogy of life and death; influence the values that can be created during suffering, death and the question of whether it is going to happen or not; be trained in the psychology of death and the mourning process; be able to collaborate or have the technical assistance of other knowledgeable professionals on the matter, since they can help promote the creation of materials and instruments that encourage communication and sharing of experiences. Finally, the teacher must provide his or her students with strategies and tools to be able to face death and to reflect on life, such as the use of stories, as these are educational materials that allow reflection and increase «confianza y la comprensión del fenómeno de la muerte como un proceso más de la vida»²⁹.

3.9. *Protocols*

A protocol is a document or regulation that establishes criteria of conduct, techniques and actions necessary to act in certain situations whose objective, according to Fernández-Vázquez³⁰, is to normalize social relations between governments and institutions. In this chapter we present an original intervention protocol on death in Early Childhood Education, despite the existence of two

Revisión bibliométrica en Scopus y Web of Science, in «Revista Iberoamericana de Educación», no. 82, vol. 2, 2020, p. 65. Personal translation: «an emerging area of educational knowledge which allows us to focus on an initiative to create a teaching and learning process in line with the dimensions of the human being».

²⁸ POCH, HERRERO, *La muerte y el duelo en el contexto educativo. Reflexiones, testimonios y actividades*, op. cit.

²⁹ E. COLONO, *Pedagogía de la muerte y proceso de duelo: Cuentos como recurso didáctico*, in «Revista Electrónica Iberoamericana sobre Calidad, Eficacia y Cambio en Educación», no. 14, vol. 2, 2016, p. 64, <<https://repositorio.uam.es/handle/10486/670637>> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020). Personal translation: «trust and understanding death as a natural process».

³⁰ J.J. FERNÁNDEZ-VÁZQUEZ, *Antecedentes históricos del protocolo y su influencia a través de la historia en los Estados, en la sociedad y en la política en España y Europa*, 2012.

types of protocols: the prevention protocol, which serves to prepare children for the loss of a loved one by means of tools and strategies that help them to face up to the loss; and the action protocol, also called intervention protocol, which seeks to develop tools and strategies when the loss has occurred. The aim of this type of protocol is to develop a plan for children's grief to facilitate the process and meet all the needs of the student and his or her family. For this reason, schools should be able to guide and provide all the necessary responses to the situation, which implies the participation of the members and professionals of the educational community belonging to the educational stage of the student in grief. The intervention protocol aims to provide appropriate responses to the grieving student and family members; to guide families and help teachers in the process of the student's grief; to help coordinate the different members of the teaching team to ensure the physical, social and emotional well-being of the child and to provide the necessary emotional support.

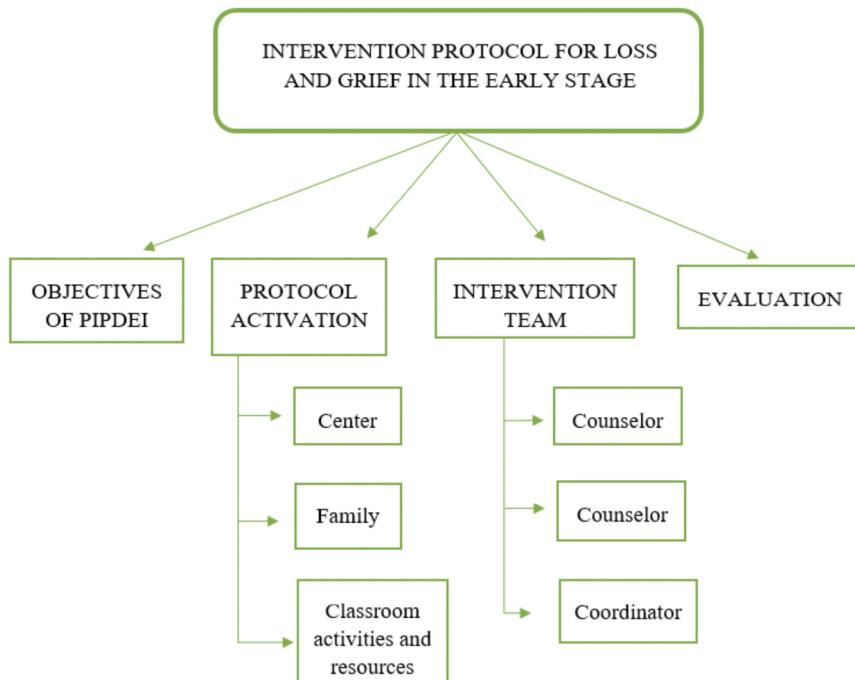


Figure 2. *Intervention Protocol for Loss and Grief in Early Childhood Stage (Protocolo de Intervención para Pérdidas y Duelos en la Etapa de Infantil, PIPDEI)*
Source: Own Elaboration

In order to activate the protocol properly, there must be good coordination between the teacher of the student in question, the family members and the

members of the school closest to the student. To do this, the directive staff must hold a meeting to find out the events that have caused the protocol to be activated urgently. Afterwards, the teacher and the members of the institution closest to the student, together with the director of the school, will hold a meeting with the family of the grieving child to obtain detailed information about the death of the loved one and to inform them about the intervention protocol that has been activated in the face of this event, the objectives of the same and the activities to be carried out, as well as offering them guidance, support in the face of the complicated situation they are experiencing, advice and periodic meetings to learn about and observe the evolution of the student's grief.

As indicated by Gánuza-Jimeno³¹, the teacher should be responsible for maintaining close contact with the family during the grieving process. The activities carried out in the classroom should be totally flexible and adapted to the child's emotional level. Finally, the tutor must coordinate with the counsellors to plan the activities correctly. The counsellor must guide families on how to act before the situation, guide the teacher on the functioning of the activities to work on grief, establish connections and coordinate with different specialists in the school as the psychologist of the Early Care Team (if appropriate) and counsel the family to give the child the news. Finally, the intervention protocol coordinator must inform all teachers close to the student about the situation and evolution of the student, in addition to defining the guidelines to be followed when intervening with the family, the school and in the classroom.

Who
Preferably the parents or the closest relative. Emotionally close person. Recruiting some meaningful figure for the child.
When
Immediately or as soon as possible.
Where
Quiet place. Safe place (as familiar as possible for the child).
How
Using appropriate physical contact. Avoiding the use of euphemisms. In a clear way. Without too many details or abstract explanations. Using a warm tone of voice. Sharing your emotions with the child or adolescent. Taking an interest in their feelings and thoughts about what happened and its effects. Asking about their doubts. Remembering the person who died with the child or adolescent.

Table 3. *How to talk with kids about death*
Source: Poch and Herrero (2003, p.121)

³¹ S. GÁNUZA JIMENO, *El duelo infantil: un protocolo de intervención en la etapa de primaria*, (bachelor thesis), Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, La Rioja, 2015, <<https://reunir.unir.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/3267/GANUZA%20JIMENO%2C%20SARA.pdf?sequence=1>> (Last accessed on October 1, 2020).

In addition to the above, we consider it important for the child concerned to be aware that the rest of his or her family members are not with him or her because they cannot at the moment or are making preparations. It is important that the child does not feel abandoned or alone in the face of the situation, but on the contrary, he/she must feel loved and supported. Finally, as a major consideration, we must ensure that children communicate their thoughts and express their emotions without fear of being judged, as this is the best way to lessen the pain and suffering that the loss is causing them.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have tried to introduce the relevance of the concept of death at a social level in the context of the health crisis caused by the COVID-19. From this explanation, we have defined the importance of working with the concept of death in Early Childhood Education, reaching the conclusion that it favours the creation of cognitive-emotional strategies to overcome difficult situations, helps to know personal limitations, overcome fears, allows the child to grow internally and reinforces the development of reflective and critical thinking about the existence of the individual. Finally, it makes it possible to understand the finiteness and irreversibility of life.

We have also analysed the different types of existing action protocols on the psycho-pedagogical approach to death through the analysis and implications of prevention and intervention protocols. Both are used to work on death, but with different purposes. The prevention protocol tries to explain death and make it understood. On the other hand, the original intervention protocol proposed has a broader and non-propaedeutic objective: it aims to explain, make people understand and help the child who is grieving to overcome or cope with the loss he or she has suffered as best as possible. It facilitates a greater understanding of the concept of death since it has a more preventive character during its starting phases so that the affected child understands what death is, before intervening and working on his or her grief. So the best protocol to work on death in the classroom is the intervention protocol as it covers a first 'preventive' moment (working on the concept of death), and then move to the moment of 'action' or 'palliative' where it's time to work on actual grief, being the classroom the protagonist or focusing more on the child in question.

We have identified that, at a curricular level, in the Early Childhood stage there is no section or mention regarding the term 'death' and its implications, so we consider that this issue should be worked on directly or indirectly because it is part of a person's life cycle. In this way, the objective that the stage should contribute to the physical, affective, social and intellectual development of the students would be fulfilled because the main element affected after suffering a loss is the emotional one, which, if not worked on, can have repercussions in

other areas. The proposed protocol has been designed in an original way, based on other action protocols, to intervene educationally in the death and grief of the affected child.

To conclude, we believe it is necessary to work on death from childhood in order to make children aware of the process, to understand it and to prevent them from feeling and perceiving it as something unreal and distant, even though it exists and, unfortunately, is inevitable. For this reason, it is unavoidable to learn to live with the suffering caused by the loss of a loved one through strategies that can help to accept and assimilate the death of that person.

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Il COVID-19, la percezione del tempo vissuto, la percezione di tempi nuovi da vivere

ABSTRACT

Il punto di vista pedagogico deve partecipare al dibattito interdisciplinare che negli ultimi mesi ha proposto letture e analisi dell'impatto prodotto, a partire dalla primavera del 2020, per gli individui e all'interno di micro- e macro-contesti sociali, su stili di vita, stili aggregativi e sociali, comunicativi, espressivi, di apprendimento, percezione della realtà. Questo articolo propone l'analisi e la lettura delle risposte che un gruppo di insegnanti, educatori, genitori hanno dato, nei primi mesi del confinamento in Italia, alle domande di un questionario impegnato a osservare il disagio prodotto dalla imprevista pressione vissuta in tempi e spazi individuali e collettivi.

PAROLE CHIAVE: COVID-19, Processi di apprendimento, Cura educativa, Approcci pedagogici, Pensiero pedagogico

The pedagogical point of view must participate in the interdisciplinary debate that in the last few months has been providing readings and analyses of the impact produced, from spring 2020, for individuals and within micro- and macro-social contexts, on lifestyles, on social, communicative, expressive, learning styles, on the perception of reality. This article analyses and reads the answers that a group of teachers, educators and parents gave, in the first confinement months in Italy, to the questions of a questionnaire committed to observing the discomfort felt and lived because of the unforeseen pressure experienced within individual and collective times and spaces.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Learning processes, Educational care, Pedagogical approaches, Pedagogical thinking

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Introduzione

Nel corso delle settimane successive al confinamento vissuto per la diffusione del COVID-19, nei mesi di marzo e aprile del 2020, da parte di colleghi di moltissime università europee e di altri continenti sono stati inviati in giro per il mondo moltissimi questionari, dai molteplici obiettivi, caratterizzati da attenzione ad aspetti e contenuti diversi: il rischio vissuto e percepito a carico del benessere personale e della vita economica, a carico della salute e della qualità della vita personale e familiare, i rischi determinati da un'eccessiva esposizione all'isolamento, i rischi per chi si è esposto, per lavoro, al contagio. Il momento era così particolare e insolito da rendere semplice la previsione di un impatto profondo, quanto meno, sugli stili di vita e di socializzazione, sui ritmi e sulle quotidianità della vita domestica e del lavoro. Per pedagogisti e educatori, il momento era così intenso, improvviso, esplosivo, le possibili trasformazioni così profonde, da rendere inevitabile l'idea di guardare con attenzione a cosa stava accadendo e di riflettere sulla realtà, sulla qualità di stili educativi, didattici, formativi; obiettivo comune era osservare contesti micro-sociali e macro-sociali, leggere una realtà imprevista e delicatissima, interpretare nuovi cambiamenti, dedurre implicazioni, analizzare significati, leggere l'impatto provocato dall'adozione di idee e azioni per convivere con una realtà del tutto nuova; in sostanza, poteva risultare interessante osservare una situazione straordinaria – effettivamente straordinaria – e leggerne possibili nuove realtà legate agli atteggiamenti educativi, ai comportamenti educativi, alle relazioni educative, alle loro possibili ragioni.

Il momento era così insolito e particolare che rischiava di produrre emergenze pedagogiche e educative supplementari rispetto a quelle che conoscevamo o di farne notare i segnali chiari e diffusi fra le professioni impegnate nella cura educativa o di sentirne gli echi provenire dai contesti familiari costretti al confinamento:

- l'allontanamento da un'idea ragionata di educabilità e sostenibilità, nella illusione che il buon senso o la banalizzazione o la psicologizzazione possano sostituirsi a un approccio pedagogico e all'educazione del sé sociale e individuale; sembra, cioè, che quell'adulto che in alcuni casi sta delegando il suo ruolo educativo e in altri abbia già abdicato al suo ruolo educativo pensi che bambini e adolescenti siano incapaci di apprendere e non apprendano attraverso esplorazione, concentrazione, sperimentazione, processi logici, di riflessione, elaborazione, ragionamento, selezione, scelta, deduzione, attribuzione di senso e significato, attribuzione di valore, memorizzazione, rappresentazione mentale, simbolizzazione, astrazione, percezione del mondo, percezione del presente e dei progetti di futuro individuali e collettivi³. È ancora: sembra che quello stesso adulto

³ Per un approfondimento, vedi, quanto meno, H. GARDNER, *Intelligenze creative*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1994; E. MORIN, *La testa ben fatta. Riforma dell'insegnamento e riforma del pensiero*, Cortina,

ritenga che i modelli di comunicazione adottati da bambini e adolescenti siano basati su assenza di dialogo interiore e mancanza di capacità introspettive⁴;

- la medicalizzazione⁵ e la generalizzazione della didattica e della valutazione scolastica⁶, nella illusione che le complessità dei comportamenti, delle azioni, dei pensieri possa essere semplificata e risolta da soluzioni meccaniche o sommative che, ad esempio, dimenticano che, come ogni altro essere umano, tutti i vecchi e nuovi portatori di bisogni educativi speciali non sono degli incapaci, ma agiscono, pensano, forse esprimono bisogni personali, forse un conflitto complesso, forse un profondo e acuto dissenso, forse una grande insofferenza per le continue richieste di performance, forse una sofferenza causata da adulti assenti, ciechi, muti e incapaci di spiegare, accompagnare, prendersi cura di chi cresce;
- l'artificializzazione dei rapporti con la cultura, con il sapere, con le idee, con gli ideali, nella illusione che la riduzione della complessità al sommario, al concreto e al pratico sia portatrice di pragmatismo, verità, giustizia⁷;
- l'inaridimento dei rapporti con il sé profondo nella illusione che la presenza e la visibilità sul web diano effettivamente senso a un sé sociale e individuale⁸;
- la nemicalizzazione, nella illusione che la possibilità di giudicare l'altro dia valore a un pensiero, a una posizione, a un'idea del mondo, a un sé sociale e individuale;
- l'azzeramento del senso e del valore della memoria e della progettualità individuale e collettiva, nella illusione che l'idea di apparire, sembrare, mostrarsi solo in un 'qui' e in un 'ora' possa prevalere a lungo non tanto

Milano, 2000; F. GUATTARI (a cura di), *Pensiero globale, cervello sociale. La lotta dei concetti contro le opinioni per resistere al presente*, Mimesis, Milano, 2001; E. MORIN, *I sette saperi necessari all'educazione del futuro*, Milano, Cortina, 2001; C. CASADIO, *Logica e psicologia del pensiero*, Carocci, Roma, 2006; D. DEMETRIO, *L'educazione non è finita. Idee per difenderla*, Cortina, Milano, 2009.

⁴ Per un approfondimento, vedi M. CASTELLS, *Volgere di millennio*, EGEA, Milano, 2003; U. GALLIMBERTI, *L'ospite inquietante, il nichilismo e i giovani*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2007; H. GARDNER, *Cinque chiavi per il futuro*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2007; V.A. PICCIONE, *Manifesto della Comunità Educante Diffusa*, Aemme, Roma, 2020.

⁵ Per un approfondimento del problema da un punto di vista culturale e socio-educativo, psicologico clinico, pedagogico clinico, vedi, quanto meno, A. CAROTENUTO, *Il tempo delle emozioni*, Bompiani, Milano, 2003; M. BENASAYAG, G. SCHMIT, *L'epoca delle passioni tristi*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2004; E. BORGNA, *La dignità ferita*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2013; M. BENASAYAG, *Oltre le passioni tristi. Dalla solitudine contemporanea alla creazione condivisa*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2016.

⁶ Vedi, a questo proposito, l'interessante articolo di J.-F. HUNG, K. LEE, M.-A. PAN, F.-P. HSIEH, *The construction and validation of the scientific thinking disposition inventory*, in «USChina Education Review», 7, 7, July 2017.

⁷ Vedi, quanto meno, J. BRUNER, *La cultura dell'educazione. Nuovi orizzonti per la scuola*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2000; G. BOCCI, M. CERUTI, *Educazione e globalizzazione*, Cortina, Milano, 2004.

⁸ Per un approfondimento dal punto di vista culturale e pedagogico, vedi, quanto meno, A. CAROTENUTO, *Vivere la distanza*, Bompiani, Milano, 2003.

sull'idea di sapere, saper essere, saper fare, quanto sul prendersi cura di un pensiero, di una riflessione, di un progetto di vita individuale e sociale⁹.

In altre parole, per noi, sullo sfondo, sarebbero rimasti tangibili e visibili aspetti importanti, fenomeni preoccupanti presenti nella realtà del presente, dei quali avevamo già discusso. Quegli aspetti sarebbero stati utili per osservare se, prima di abituare tutti alla distanza, alla lontananza, allo spazio invalicabile, al distacco, nelle case, nelle stanze, il cambiamento di stile di vita avrebbe determinato anche una trasformazione significativa nelle relazioni familiari, una nuova percezione pedagogicamente orientata della educabilità, una nuova attribuzione di senso alle relazioni educative, un nuovo approccio pedagogicamente orientato alla vivibilità nei micro-contesti familiari e nei macro-contesti collettivi. Sarebbero stati utili per osservare se, insomma, una realtà così improvvisamente e radicalmente nuova avrebbe suggerito la necessità di uno scatto collettivo verso una profonda e intensa maturazione sociale e civile, verso un nuovo stile di pensiero, verso una qualità rinnovata della riflessione sul futuro delle generazioni più giovani. Inoltre, così facendo, avremmo potuto tenere d'occhio alcuni dei processi che preoccupano e interessano la pedagogia e le scienze dell'educazione per considerarne eventuali trasformazioni.

Insieme a un gruppo di colleghi di quattro istituzioni universitarie europee¹⁰, abbiamo pensato anche noi a un questionario, abbiamo riflettuto sulla necessità di elaborarne uno che avesse caratteristiche, per struttura e contenuti, particolari e originali rispetto agli altri, che puntasse a una lettura di vissuti e impatti che il confinamento aveva provocato e stava provocando, in contesti individuali e familiari.

Innanzitutto, abbiamo pensato a una sorta di percorso di avvicinamento ai contesti familiari e micro-sociali (quanto meno, case, case-famiglia, aule virtuali); abbiamo pensato che fosse necessario concentrarci su poche parole chiave che la nostra professione di pedagogisti e educatori ci avrebbero suggerito, allo scopo di far emergere eventuali disattenzioni o distrazioni, eventuali cambiamenti e trasformazioni: approfondire, interpretare, commentare, analizzare sono obiettivi prioritari in educazione, certamente di grande rilevanza per chiunque si impegni in una professione di cura. Le nostre stesse domande, dunque, avrebbero dovuto evitare il rischio dell'eccesso di sintesi, della gene-

⁹ Per approfondire, vedi, quanto meno, T. MALDONADO, *Memoria e conoscenza. Sulle sorti del sapere nella prospettiva digitale*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2005; U. BECK, *Lo sguardo cosmopolita*, Carocci, Roma, 2005; Z. BAUMAN, *Homo consumens. Lo sciame inquieto dei consumatori e la miseria degli esclusi*, Erickson, Trento, 2007.

¹⁰ Professoressa Mª Teresa del Olmo Ibáñez, Universidad de Alicante, Departamento de Innovación y Formación Didáctica, Facultad de Educación; professor George K. Zarifis, Department of Education, Faculty of Philosophy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; professoressa Viviane Devrièsère, Institut Supérieur de Formation de l'enseignement Catholique - ISFEC Aquitaine; professoressa Yamina Bettahar, Laboratoire AHP-PReST - Archives Henri-Poincaré, Philosophie et Recherches sur les Sciences et les Technologies, Université de Lorraine.

ralizzazione, della riduzione in pillole di contenuti e significati, della semplificazione, della sommarietà e della sbrigatività; avrebbero dovuto sollecitare riflessioni, attenzione, perfino dialogo con se stessi. Leggere un fenomeno come quello che tutti stavamo vivendo, analizzarne l'impatto e gli effetti temporanei e duraturi, dunque, dissuadeva dal seguire l'esempio di molte interviste particolarmente brevi, dalle domande generiche, accompagnate solo da brevissime risposte a scelta multipla. Abbiamo condiviso l'idea per la quale, per onestà culturale e intellettuale, avremmo dovuto privilegiare solo alcuni nodi tematici, pensare a domande particolarmente attente a dettagli, che spingessero l'intervistato a riflettere prima di rispondere, a scegliere fra opzioni di risposta diverse. Le risposte raccolte in Paesi diversi avrebbero dato materiali di lavoro importanti da condividere, contenuti e significati da comparare, informazioni sulle quali riflettere, individualmente e/o come gruppo.

I nostri questionari sarebbero stati di proposito inviati a distanza di almeno due mesi dall'inizio del confinamento, poco prima dell'inizio dell'estate, a insegnanti, professori, educatori sociali che, possibilmente, avessero anche un ruolo genitoriale; avremmo, cioè, chiesto informazioni a chi ha scelto una professione di cura e vive la quotidianità della cura parentale, è abituato a cogliere e leggere implicazioni e aspetti educativi, è stato, fino a quel momento, sistematicamente, quotidianamente, impegnato a lavorare in rete e per una rete di approcci e obiettivi, ha vissuto e vive nella relazione educativa le ragioni delle sue scelte personali e professionali. Le nostre domande avrebbero selezionato nodi tematici importanti per l'educazione: la fiducia, la responsabilità, l'interazione sociale. Le nostre domande sarebbero arrivate quando un impatto iniziale del confinamento avrebbe già lasciato delle tracce, avrebbe già sollecitato ulteriori timori, si sarebbe sommato alle implicazioni determinate da esperienze di convivenza forzata, prolungata, non abituale, non voluta.

Per osservare meglio come gli intervistati stavano affrontando l'esperienza del confinamento, abbiamo deciso di conoscere meglio lo sfondo, cioè: la nuova situazione imponeva quotidianità diverse che tutti stavano vivendo con una partecipazione emotiva del tutto particolare. Ecco, dunque – abbiamo ragionato – cosa poteva aiutarci: osservare la presenza di un'emozione specifica, dopo averla individuata fra quelle più plausibili. Abbiamo deciso di scegliere la preoccupazione, perché – abbiamo pensato – era l'emozione inevitabilmente presente ovunque, nelle case, nelle strade, sarebbe arrivata attraverso gli aggiornamenti e le voci di media e personale sanitario; era inevitabile, in quel momento, che la preoccupazione fosse presente e intensa: alcuni sarebbero stati condizionati dalla preoccupazione per qualcosa di insolito, inaspettato e totalmente lontano dall'ordinario, altri avrebbero reagito tenendola lontana, non le avrebbero permesso di condizionare a lungo e a fondo.

In questo articolo, presenteremo le informazioni raccolte nel nostro Paese nel corso dei mesi di aprile e maggio del 2020; leggere le risposte date è stato interessante, soprattutto per le potenzialità di comparazione con le risposte

date nelle settimane successive nel nostro e in altri Paesi. Ci siamo resi conto, leggendo le risposte, del fatto che il COVID-19 stava condizionando non solo la percezione che le persone avevano del rischio per la salute del corpo, ma iniziava a condizionare, da una parte, in termini personali, la percezione dell'intimità, e, dall'altra, in termini sociali, la disponibilità alle relazioni, all'interazione significativa, all'incontro, alla partecipazione. In realtà, dunque, le prime risposte segnalavano che il COVID-19 stava provocando un impatto ancora invisibile, non tangibile, attraverso un insieme di emergenze pedagogiche e educative supplementari: nuovi disagi, nuove distanze, nuovi allontanamenti, nuovi pregiudizi, nuove prevaricazioni, ulteriori ostacoli al progetto di un sé individuale e sociale. Nel corso di quelle otto settimane sono state raccolte le risposte a 235 questionari; si è trattato di un numero più alto rispetto alle attese, proprio per l'impegno e l'attenzione che le domande e le loro opzioni di risposta richiedevano¹¹.

La percezione del tempo individuale, il tempo vissuto nei giorni del confinamento

Con la prima sezione del nostro questionario ci siamo posti l'obiettivo di raccogliere informazioni sulla percezione del cambiamento e delle sue implicazioni, sulla lettura della realtà, sulla effettiva percezione della straordinarietà della situazione, su un tipo di rifiuto della realtà legato piuttosto al timore che l'impatto del confinamento portasse solo all'indebolimento delle relazioni affettive, che il distanziamento portasse allontanamento e isolamento.

Prima di passare a domande o osservazioni legate al tempo vissuto negli spazi familiari, personali, agli intervistati è stato chiesto di scegliere le ragioni più importanti per le quali, durante le settimane del confinamento, è stato importante restare a casa. La maggior parte degli intervistati ha permesso di rile-

¹¹ La prima parte, generale, ci ha dato informazioni personali importanti (nessuno, ovviamente, ha visto lesi il suo diritto all'anonimato): l'84,7% delle risposte è arrivato da donne, il 77,9% da adulti di età superiore ai 36 anni, oltre il 70% da insegnanti dipendenti pubblici e del privato.

Il dato generale sui titoli di studio ha permesso di rilevare delle informazioni interessanti: oltre a permettere di rilevare che il 34,9% di chi ha risposto era in possesso di una laurea magistrale il 17,9% di una laurea triennale, il 26,8 di un diploma di scuola secondaria superiore, la domanda ha fatto rilevare una percentuale pari al 3,8% di persone con un diploma di scuola media inferiore. Poiché le risposte a scelta multipla ammettevano una sola risposta utile, il dato riferito ai titoli di studio sono alternativi (nessuno ha potuto rispondere, in sostanza, di avere sia un diploma di maturità che una laurea triennale e una magistrale); ancora: considerando che chi ha acquisito i diplomi di scuola media di secondo grado, inferiore e superiore, raggiungeva il 30,6%, che il 52,8% aveva una laurea triennale o magistrale, il restante 16,6% aveva acquisito un titolo superiore, distribuito fra dottorato e specializzazioni post lauream.

Infine, la maggior parte degli intervistati ha dichiarato di aver vissuto le settimane del confinamento insieme ai familiari, generalmente mariti, mogli, partner, figli (178, il 75,8% del totale), pochissimi con figure parentali (6, il 2,6% del totale); fra le opzioni libere che hanno fatto riferimento comunque a figure familiari, emerge 1 sola risposta (lo 0,4%) da parte di chi ha vissuto il confinamento da solo.

vare aspetti del tutto coerenti in termini di rispetto dei provvedimenti e di attenzione verso gli altri; da una parte, 129 su 235, il 54,9%, hanno dichiarato che accettare il confinamento è stata la cosa migliore da fare, 110 (il 46,8%) hanno voluto evitare ogni rischio, per chiunque, 58 (il 24,7%) hanno risposto che la loro adesione è stata determinata dal rispetto delle norme imposte dai decreti approvati dal nostro Governo. La grande maggioranza, dunque, ha scelto opzioni legate alla ragionevolezza dei comportamenti, un intervistato su 4 ha dichiarato di aver sostanzialmente obbedito a un ordine; altri intervistati hanno dichiarato di aver rispettato i provvedimenti malgrado la loro città fosse stata appena sfiorata dal coronavirus (20, pari all'8,5%) e la loro famiglia non fosse stata nemmeno sfiorata dal contagio (42, pari al 17,9%). Numeri bassissimi hanno interessato chi ha avuto esperienza diretta del contagio nella propria città (solo 5 risposte l'hanno indicata, pari al 2,1%) o nella propria famiglia (solo 3, pari all'1,3%).

Alla richiesta di dichiarare perché la diffusione del COVID-19 avesse preoccupato e continuasse a preoccupare, nessuna delle 10 opzioni di scelta possibili è stata selezionata da una percentuale di intervistati inferiore al 10%, solo 3 opzioni su 10 sono state scelte da meno del 20% degli intervistati, altre 2 opzioni sono state scelte da meno del 40% degli intervistati, le altre 5 sono state selezionate da più del 55% degli intervistati. In concreto, fonte di grande preoccupazione è avere figli minorenni (57, pari al 24,3%), il fatto di non sapere molto del virus responsabile della pandemia e di ritenerlo in grado di condizionare il presente (62, il 26,4%) e il futuro (84, al 35,7%) della famiglia, la sola idea che familiari o amici morissero, da soli, in ospedale (68, pari al 28,9%), il fatto che la diffusione del virus fosse stata una situazione imprevista e imprevedibile alla quale ognuno doveva abituarsi rapidamente (101, il 43%). Fonti meno intense di preoccupazione sono state l'idea di non poter incontrare alcuni familiari (33, il 14%) e alcuni amici (23, il 9,8%), l'idea di ritrovarsi a lungo in situazione d'isolamento e quarantena (16 6,8%), di avere figli maggiorenni (11, il 4,7%), il timore di un effetto devastante sulle famiglie, a causa della convivenza forzata (12, il 5,1%). Alcuni degli intervistati hanno indicato opzioni supplementari: preoccupazione per la propria salute (1 intervistato), preoccupazione provocata dai comportamenti altrui, ovvero da negligenza, psicosi, incapacità di gestire la situazione, improvvisazione (4, l'1,6%), preoccupazione provocata dalla potenziale durata della pandemia (0,4%).

Come si vede, solo indirettamente qualche opzione fa riferimento a qualcosa di immateriale (la coesione e la solidità del gruppo familiare, per esempio) e solo in un caso si supera il livello micro-sociale degli amici e dei familiari per prendere in considerazione un livello macro-sociale (per esempio, l'imprevedibilità della pandemia e la necessità di adeguarsi con rapidità a una situazione fuori controllo). Fiducia e responsabilità sembrano essere legate a fatti contingenti, a comportamenti quotidiani; senso delle prospettive e progettualità sembrano essere scomparse; il 'porto sicuro' è e resta il micro-contesto domestico perché lì vivono i legami affettivi e sentimentali. Sullo sfondo, sembra che

compaiano, dunque, processi di distacco e di allontanamento da macro-contesti sociali perché produttori di problemi, rischi, fratture, complicazioni, ansie, timori, disagi; in altre parole, sembra comparire il tempo vissuto con la percezione di distacco, fratture, distanze, freddezza verso il mondo, compare il tempo vissuto con una nuova attenzione alle intensità emotive e sentimentali, al familiare, allo spazio vissuto proprio¹².

Le successive due domande del questionario si concentrano sulle più importanti ragioni per le quali gli intervistati hanno vissuto con preoccupazione, nei primi mesi del confinamento, la presenza della pandemia. La prima delle domande chiede di osservare il contesto micro-sociale proprio, la seconda il macro-contesto collettivo.

Dalle risposte alla prima domanda emerge la conferma che il COVID-19 è stato una fonte di intensa preoccupazione; in quei primi mesi non era ancora possibile sapere se saremmo tornati alla vita di sempre (83, il 35,3%), se saremmo tornati alla vita sociale di sempre (68, il 28,9%), se saremmo tornati alla vita economica di sempre (64, il 27,2%), se saremmo tornati alla vita emotiva di sempre (47, il 20%), se saremmo tornati migliori, quando tutto sarebbe finito (48, il 20,4%); non era possibile sapere quando saremmo tornati alla vita di sempre (74, il 31,5%).

Numericamente, non sono altrettanto rilevanti le risposte che hanno segnalato scetticismo verso il futuro; questo tipo di intervistati ha affermato: niente sarà come prima, nessuno sarà come prima (29, il 12,3%), non si comprende perché Paesi diversi hanno affrontato la situazione in modo diverso (34, il 14,5%), non si comprende se modi diversi di affrontare le situazioni produca sempre conseguenze diverse (12, il 5,1%). Relativamente rilevanti dal punto di vista numerico ma significative dal punto di vista emotivo sono anche le risposte che manifestano uno dei possibili stati d'animo; emergono, cioè, la sensazione di sentirsi costretti, senza una via d'uscita vicina, in termini di spazi e tempi, la percezione di solitudine: mi sembra e mi è sembrato di essere in prigione (8, il 3,4%), mi sono sentito e mi sento solo, perché vivo solo (3, l'1,3%), mi sono sentito e mi sento solo, anche se vivo con i miei familiari (9, il 3,8%). Sorprendono, perché lontane dalle scelte degli altri intervistati, le risposte espresse come opzioni libere da singoli intervistati, concentrate su manifestazioni di profondo scetticismo: grande preoccupazione è provocata dall'ignoranza con cui la pandemia viene affrontata strategicamente a livello politico e sanitario, dalle speculazioni sociali ed economiche, da un crescente divario economico fra classi, dal timore di tornare alla vita sociale facendo finta

¹² Per un approfondimento dei temi legati a queste riflessioni, vedi, quanto meno, oltre ai volumi indicati nelle note precedenti, M. CASTELLS, *Galassia Internet*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2002; C. DANANI, *Utopie: abitare il mondo, aver cura del limite, praticare la soglia*, in «Rivista di studi utopici», III, 5, aprile 2008, pp. 44-55; P. DI NICOLA, *La rete: metafora dell'appartenenza. Analisi strutturale e paradigma di rete*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2015; M. CASTELLS (a cura di), *Europe's crisis*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2018.

che nulla sia accaduto o culturalmente e socialmente più lontani, freddi, disinteressati all’altro da sé. Un solo intervistato preferisce guardare alla sua famiglia e si dice preoccupato perché non sa se tutti i suoi membri sarebbero riusciti a cavarsela.

Le risposte alla seconda delle due domande permettono di rilevare forte scetticismo; solo sette mesi fa una parte degli intervistati pensava che la scienza ha tempi troppo lunghi per preparare un vaccino (69, il 29,4%), la politica ha tempi troppo lunghi per adottare misure affidabili (47, il 20%), la scienza e la politica, da decenni, ormai, sono deludenti e fanno solo i loro interessi (47, il 20%). E ancora, con più generalizzato scetticismo, gli intervistati hanno sostenuto: a volte, da parte dei media, non abbiamo ricevuto e non riceviamo informazioni coerenti (73, il 31,1%), a volte, da parte degli esperti, abbiamo sentito e sentiamo opinioni poco coerenti (73, il 31,1%), non pensavo che qualcosa di simile potesse coglierci di sorpresa (58, il 24,7%), troppi contagiati, troppi morti, troppo tutto (35, il 14,9%), nella mia città ci sono milioni di persone, non tutte sono ancora consapevoli della realtà (45, il 19,1%), è stato ed è tutto incomprensibile, è tutto qualcosa più grande di noi (21, 8,9%), lo smart working non potrà funzionare a lungo (22, il 9,4%). Percentuali più basse ma da non trascurare sono quelle rilevate a proposito di una forte carica di disapprovazione e rinuncia: è tutto inaccettabile: da tempo, le cose andavano male e vanno sempre peggio (7, il 3%), ho perso il lavoro (3, l’1,3%), il virus muterà e noi saremo sempre più lontani, nessuno tornerà più a scuola, nessuno rispetterà più alcuna regola (4, l’1,6%)

Si confermano in maniera marcata e intensa la presenza di processi di distacco e di allontanamento dai macro-contesti sociali, l’attribuzione generalizzata di distrazione e disattenzione a ogni altro da sé con una conseguente e generalizzata colpevolizzazione di ogni altro da sé; sullo sfondo, compaiono i segnali di processi di nemicalizzazione, lo scetticismo profondo verso le sorti felici e progressive dell’umanità. Si nota, in sostanza, la presenza di fenomeni importanti rilevati dalle scienze dell’educazione: generazioni di adulti hanno delegato il loro ruolo educativo perché hanno delegato la loro presenza adulta nei contesti collettivi. Se in educazione si tratta di un fenomeno che amplifica e rafforza i gap esistenti rispetto alle generazioni più giovani perché manca una partecipazione significativa nei percorsi di crescita di bambini e adolescenti¹³, in questo caso sembra apparire la delega della coscienza civile, della coscienza etica, della lettura etica della realtà; emerge un atteggiamento per il quale l’assoluzione di sé è possibile attraverso la colpevolizzazione dell’altro da sé, per il quale non viene nemmeno concepita l’idea che ambito politico e ambito sanitario non sono altro che lo specchio di ogni altro ambito del nostro contesto civile.

In maniera del tutto diversa rispetto alle domande precedenti, la quarta e la quinta della seconda sezione chiedono di sapere perché la pandemia non ha

¹³ V.A. PICCIONE, *Manifesto della Comunità Educante Diffusa*, citato, pp. 12-22.

preoccupato, perché non ha creato timori, disagi, ansie, complicazioni, rischi, fratture, problemi. Come si vedrà, anche in questo caso buona parte delle risposte farà notare auto-assoluzioni, ma l'atteggiamento cambia. Compaiono spiragli importanti, le fonti di preoccupazione sono meno presenti, senz'altro perché sono proprio le domande a generare una profonda variazione di prospettive.

Di fatto, la maggior parte degli intervistati sceglie opzioni di risposta positive e propositive: nel corso del confinamento sono state spiegate e adottate le misure necessarie (69, il 29,4%), medici e infermieri sono stati modelli di comportamento perché hanno lavorato con il loro consueto, grandissimo impegno (106, il 45,1%) e hanno recuperato il senso morale della professione (30, il 12,8%); non pochi nutrono grande fiducia nel futuro dello smart working: lo smart working è stata un'ottima soluzione e l'adotteremo con soddisfazione anche in futuro (53, il 22,6%); il confinamento produrrà effetti bellissimi sulle famiglie, perché la convivenza forzata farà riscoprire sentimenti veri (58, il 24,7%), produrrà effetti bellissimi sulle famiglie, perché la convivenza forzata farà riflettere su ciò che conta (83, il 35,3%), produrrà effetti bellissimi su ognuno, perché tutti rifletteranno più a fondo sui loro stili di vita (44, il 18,7%). Pochissimi scelgono un'opzione meno legata al micro-contesto sociale familiare e più legata al singolo, all'individuo e alla sua percezione del suo percorso di vita: il confinamento produrrà effetti bellissimi su ognuno, perché ognuno di noi rifletterà più a fondo sui suoi obiettivi (6, il 2,6%); una percentuale maggiore dà voce a letture apparentemente più egoistiche: in genere, non mi preoccupa nulla, godo di perfetta salute (14, il 6%), sono giovane, al massimo potrei avere qualche sintomo ininfluente sulla mia salute (24, il 10,2%).

Percentuali di risposte decisamente basse fanno rilevare la convinzione del fatto che quella della pandemia è stata ed è una situazione che presto finirà del tutto (16, il 6,8%), che le misure adottate sono state eccessive e per questo limiteranno presto e del tutto le loro devastanti conseguenze sanitarie (4, l'1,7%); anche il numero degli scettici è decisamente limitato: la pandemia non preoccupa perché nulla di quello che i media riportano preoccupa, i media sono inaffidabili (13, il 5,5%), il COVID-19 è un virus costruito in laboratorio, e chi lo ha costruito ha già il vaccino da vendere (11, il 4,7%), limita e limiterà la libertà individuale, non produrrà effetti positivi su nessuno, tutti si lasceranno andare all'abbruttimento e daranno il peggio di loro stessi (7, il 3%). Una sola risposta libera su 235 afferma che la pandemia e il confinamento hanno sicuramente aiutato e aiuteranno il pianeta.

Le ultime due domande, all'interno della sezione alla quale è stato affidato il compito di raccogliere informazioni sulla percezione del senso, degli obiettivi e dell'importanza del confinamento, hanno di nuovo sollecitato l'atteggiamento di colpevolizzazione dell'altro da sé e, quasi inevitabilmente, di auto-assoluzione.

Agli intervistati è stato dapprima chiesto di dirci cosa pensavano della lettura collettiva della situazione. Ecco le opzioni preferite: non tutti hanno avuto e hanno la stessa percezione della sua gravità, ne stanno sottovalutando la gravità (162, il 68,9%), non tutti hanno compreso quello che sta accadendo, non ne hanno nemmeno percepito la pericolosità (75, il 31,9%). Pochi intervistati, in rapporto, hanno invece mostrato fiducia; essi affermano: per fortuna c'è stata e c'è responsabilità diffusa, abbiamo affrontato con serietà la situazione (39, il 16,6%); è vero che esisteranno sempre, ma, per fortuna, i superficiali e gli irresponsabili sono pochissimi (37, il 15,7%); sono totalmente consapevole di quanto è accaduto e sta accadendo (39, il 16,6%); mi sono sempre informato e ho sempre avuto una percezione chiara del fenomeno (20, l'8,5%). Il numero degli scettici è effettivamente molto alto: l'opzione «forse, non sapremo mai tutta la verità» viene scelta da un terzo degli intervistati (82, 34,9%).

È stato poi chiesto quali fossero state le fonti di informazione privilegiate e quelle più affidabili. Opzioni diverse sono state scelte da molti intervistati; le risposte, di fatto, hanno permesso di rilevare che essi si sono affidati a molteplici fonti di informazione, hanno sempre confrontato le notizie e continuato a farlo a lungo (141, il 60%), a telegiornali e quotidiani online (96, il 40,9%), a trasmissioni televisive specifiche, anche se spesso hanno disorientato o hanno fatto notare importanti contraddizioni (48, il 20,4%), a siti web affidabili (53, il 22,6%). In numero sostanzialmente inferiore sono state scelte altre opzioni: riviste scientifiche disponibili online (36, il 15,3%), programmi radio affidabili (14, il 6%), social network affidabili (21, l'8,9%), amici e conoscenti (24, il 10,2%). Pochi scettici hanno sostenuto di non aver scelto alcuna fonte di informazione: 10 intervistati (il 4,3%) hanno preferito non sapere e raccogliere saltuariamente alcune informazioni principali, 4 (l'1,7%) hanno affermato che i media non sono affidabili perché riporterebbero di tutto pur di rafforzarsi e vendere pubblicità; altri 5 (il 2,1%) ritengono che media, familiari, amici, conoscenti, oggi, non siano credibili. Un solo intervistato ha affermato che la sua fonte privilegiata è stato il sito internet dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità.

La vita quotidiana con i figli

Se l'obiettivo della prima parte del questionario era di esplorare un contesto e osservare le tracce lasciate da un vissuto emotivo del tutto straordinario, alla seconda parte era stato affidato l'obiettivo di rilevare aspetti particolarmente specifici, tanto specifici da parlarci di vecchie e nuove abitudini, di vecchie e nuove routine, di vecchie e nuove interazioni in condizioni del tutto straordinarie e inaspettate¹⁴. La raccolta di queste informazioni avrebbe dovuto essere

¹⁴ Per approfondire, vedi, quanto meno, oltre a quanto indicato nelle note precedenti, T. MALDONADO, *Reale e virtuale*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1994; P. LÉVY, *Il virtuale*, Milano, Cortina, 1997; H. GARDNER, *La generazione app*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2014; E. MORIN, T. RAMADAN, *Il pericolo delle idee*,

accompagnata da un'attenzione ancora più specifica ai vecchi e nuovi rapporti fra adulti educatori e figli, alunni, allievi.

Al centro della sezione che segue, in concreto, sono il tempo vissuto con i figli, il tempo dedicato, il tempo comune, il tempo della noia, del lavoro, dell'impegno, il tempo dell'educazione, c'è l'attenzione al tempo domestico e allo spazio domestico vissuti con loro. Diamo qui un'anticipazione. Nelle opzioni di risposta, abbiamo volutamente inserito frasi che ci permettessero di cogliere la presenza culturale di stereotipi, di genere e di ruolo; nessuno degli intervistati si è accorto delle 'trappole', anzi: il numero delle adesioni è stato percentualmente alto. Questo aspetto ha generato più di una sorpresa e qualche perplessità, proprio perché tutti gli intervistati sono insegnanti o educatori e/o genitori.

Infine, una brevissima annotazione: una parte degli intervistati (36, il 15,3%) – tutte insegnanti di scuola dell'infanzia e di scuola primaria – ci ha comunicato di non avere figli o di avere figli già grandi, con una loro vita indipendente; è un totale di 199 il numero delle risposte prese in considerazione in questa seconda parte. Con loro, ci siamo innanzitutto concentrati sul dialogo fra genitori e figli, sulla sua presenza effettiva. La nostra ipotesi di lavoro era specifica: se esiste un dialogo fra adulto educatore e minore, la conversazione sui temi caldi della pandemia sarà quanto meno presente; se il dialogo esiste, se ne parlerà in termini di conseguenze e implicazioni per il futuro. Infine, abbiamo chiesto informazioni su abitudini e routine, sulla percezione individuale e familiare del tempo e dello spazio domestico. Infine, abbiamo posto domande su un tema particolarmente rilevante: la didattica a distanza.

I genitori rilevano che i loro figli piccoli, a due mesi di distanza dall'inizio del confinamento, hanno soprattutto reagito con nuovi interrogativi (68, il 35,6%) e manifestando dei timori durante e dopo le loro conversazioni sulla pandemia (29, 15,2%); non pochi bambini ne avevano già parlato a scuola (50, il 26,2%); relativamente pochi non hanno manifestato né timori né dubbi (21, l'11%). Sorprende l'adesione a due stereotipi (che siano culturali o di genere o di ruolo, al punto di vista educativo la differenza non può importare; per il punto di vista educativo si tratta comunque di nodi problematici), apparentemente limitata a pochi casi: i bambini – nessuno di età inferiore a 4 anni – sono troppo piccoli per comprendere (10, il 5,2%); è sempre la mamma che spiega le cose ai bambini (21, l'11%); in realtà, a rifletterci bene, considerando che si tratta di risposte date da un gruppo di 199 genitori, in termini percentuali medi parziali, si tratta di un'adesione di quasi 1 genitore su 5.

La maggior parte dei genitori di figli adolescenti informa su aspetti specifici: a due mesi di distanza dall'inizio del confinamento, gli intervistati parlano soprattutto dei temi legati alla pandemia dopo aver ascoltato gli aggiornamenti (49, il 30,2%), dopo che un figlio ne ha parlato con amici o compagni su app

o social network (11, il 6,8%); solo 10 genitori (il 6,2%) rispondono che non è stato necessario parlarne perché il loro figlio era già informato; nessuno risponde di non averne mai parlato e di non parlarne mai. In termini comparativi e percentuali, sembra rilevante sia il numero totale di adolescenti che vivono la situazione con ansia (22, il 13,6%), con timore (9, il 5,6%), che non vogliono più parlarne, sono preoccupati e insolitamente taciturni (2, l'1,2%), sia il numero totale di adolescenti che non vivono la situazione con preoccupazione (22, il 13,6%). Sorprende e delude il dato da riferire agli insegnanti: solo 2 su 199 ne hanno parlato in aula. In ogni caso, il confinamento ha permesso di confermare l'esistenza di un dialogo intenso fra genitori e figli adolescenti: parlano tanto, della situazione straordinaria del presente e di altro (58, il 24,7%), parlano tanto, ma in realtà lo hanno sempre fatto (96, il 40,9%), parlano tanto, anche se comporta un grande impegno di tempo e energie (9, il 3,8%). In termini comparativi, informazioni di taglio del tutto diverso sembrano dover preoccupare meno: genitori e figli adolescenti parlano tanto, ma il disaccordo emerge più spesso che in passato (11, il 4,7%), commentano esclusivamente le notizie del giorno (14, il 6%), non hanno parlato mai molto e lo fanno ancora meno (1, lo 0,4%)

Abitudini e routine, nei mesi successivi a marzo del 2020, sono profondamente, inevitabilmente, cambiate. Le prime sono cambiate molto (88, il 37,4%), abbastanza (93, il 39,6%), poco (49, il 20,9%), per niente (5, il 2,1%). Le seconde sono cambiate molto (84, il 35,7%), abbastanza (89, il 37,9%), poco (55, il 23,4%), per niente (7, il 3%). Risulta sorprendente che alcuni genitori, per quanto pochissimi, rispondano che abitudini e routine non sono cambiate per niente, soprattutto in termini comparativi: di fatto, tutti segnalano, nelle risposte successive che si concentrano sui momenti familiari cruciali, l'esistenza di nuove abitudini e nuovi riti. Rispetto al passato, in concreto, vengono segnalate sia la regolarità (113, il 48,1%) che la nuova flessibilità (64, il 27,2%) degli appuntamenti quotidiani abituali della colazione, del pranzo e della cena; si sottolinea che non è stato difficile organizzarsi (18, il 7,7%). Comparativamente meno importante è il dato da riferire a chi deve decidere ogni mattina gli orari della giornata (12, il 5,1%), deve agire con totale flessibilità perché gli impegni settimanali da rispettare lo impongono (19, l'8,1%); c'è chi ha scelto di non adottare alcuna regolarità per evitare il rischio della monotonia (2, lo 0,9%). In modo coerente, le risposte sui ritmi quotidiani, sui principi condivisi, sulle regole delle quali ogni famiglia si è dotata, permettono di rilevare poche variazioni (94, il 40%), nessuna (79, 33,6%), non poche (48, il 20,4%), molte (14, il 6%).

È senz'altro molto importante, sorprendente e, comunque, molto significativo, che il tempo domestico del confinamento, sempre nei mesi successivi a marzo 2020, sia stato vissuto come tempo da valorizzare, perché occupato da attività che richiedono più impegno (58, il 24,7%), finalmente ben utilizzato (55, il 23,4%), sorprendentemente importante (74, il 31,5%), sorpren-

dentemente prezioso (66, il 28,1%), utile per pensare e progettare i mesi successivi (80, il 34%), perfino utile per pensare e progettare un cambiamento (2, lo 0,9%). Rilevante e alquanto preoccupante che il tempo domestico del confinamento sia vissuto come inoperoso, noioso (61, il 26%), tempo perso (13, il 5,5%), parzialmente perso (13, il 5,5%), sospeso, faticoso, da alienazione, utile per riflettere sulla fragilità, perfino un incubo (5, il 2,1%). Rilevante attribuzione di senso viene riferita al tempo trascorso con i figli in attività non scolastiche: si tratta di tempo sorprendentemente importante, perché ci fa vivere momenti insoliti (32, il 13,6%) e emozioni insolite (56, il 23,8%), sorprendentemente prezioso, perché ci fa riflettere più che in passato (43, il 18,3%) e conversare più che in passato (6, il 2,6%), occupato da attività che richiedono più impegno e soluzioni alternative alle solite (81, il 34,5%), ben utilizzato perché occupato da piacevoli attività note e nuove (33, 14%). Fa da contraltare un numero inferiore ma comparativamente importante di genitori che ammettono che il tempo domestico è irritante e inoperoso, perché un figlio guarda sempre troppo la TV (64, il 27,2%), perché tutta la famiglia trascorre troppo tempo davanti alla TV (11, il 4,7%), perso perché le attività servono solo per ingannare il tempo (7, il 3%). Preoccupa che alcuni genitori attribuiscono limitato valore al tempo dedicato al gioco; per loro, il tempo domestico è tempo parzialmente perso perché le attività sono puramente ludiche (17, 7,2%). Non ci sono state grandi sorprese nelle risposte che hanno indicato, invece, i luoghi preferiti o scelti per trascorrere del tempo per conto proprio; in successione, sono la camera da letto matrimoniale (55, il 23,4%), qualsiasi luogo pur di avere un po' di tempo per sé (48, il 20,4%), il soggiorno (33, il 14%), il giardino (31, il 13,2%, a prescindere dal bel tempo). Un numero limitato di scelte è andato all'opzione «qualsiasi luogo della casa va bene, pur di spingere i miei familiari a essere più autonomi» (13, il 5,5%) e all'opzione «qualsiasi luogo della casa va bene, pur di spingere mio figlio a essere più autonomo» (3, l'1,3%); nessuno ha citato spazi domestici ridotti o l'impossibilità di beneficiare, da soli, di uno specifico spazio della casa.

L'ultima parte di questa sezione è dedicata all'attribuzione di valore e alla percezione della qualità d'impatto della didattica a distanza. Le risposte di genitori, insegnanti, educatori destano delle perplessità, a volte contraddittorie, a volte caratterizzate da pregiudizi infondati e stereotipi. Vogliamo evitare, qui, qualsiasi cenno che faccia correre il rischio di rispondere in modo demagogico a voci che si sono alzate ricche di toni e lessico demagogici. Certo, far lezione a distanza impone l'adozione di uno stile comunicativo, di uno stile espressivo, di uno stile lessicale profondamente diversi; impone l'adozione di uno stile di insegnamento profondamente diverso. E, certo, senza un cambiamento in questa direzione, è inevitabile che bastino pochi minuti per perdere l'attenzione di chi sta dall'altra parte del monitor, per far crescere la distanza relazionale, per ridurre la qualità dei processi di insegnamento e apprendimento. Ma questo poco ha a che fare con la scelta di usare la didattica a distanza in alternativa

alla didattica d'aula; in altre parole: se, mentre facciamo lezione a distanza, perdiamo l'attenzione di chi sta dall'altra parte del monitor, è sostanzialmente certo che perderemmo anche in aula l'attenzione di chi ci sta di fronte; perché è così ragionevole che questo possa accadere? C'è una ragione particolarmente importante, particolarmente e strettamente legata alla qualità della preparazione di tutti gli insegnanti nella didattica, all'aggiornamento collettivo nell'uso degli strumenti, della tecnica, dei metodi della didattica; di fatto, gli ultimi venti anni hanno visto generazioni di bambini e bambine, di adolescenti profondamente diversi dalle generazioni precedenti, ma né la scienza dell'educazione né la didattica hanno proposto approcci pedagogici e azioni didattiche più coerenti con stili di apprendimento marcatamente cambiati¹⁵. I problemi delle scienze dell'educazione e dell'istruzione non sono la didattica a distanza né una pandemia né un confinamento; quando torneremo alla vita sociale e alla presenza piena nelle aule, resterà, profondo e grande, il fardello di stili di insegnamento immutati, sempre gli stessi, anno dopo anno. Chi avrà usato la demagogia in questi mesi la userà ancora¹⁶. E il grande problema del pedagogista non sarà la demagogia; piuttosto, sarà la diffusione fra le nuove generazioni dell'atteggiamento demagogico nella lettura della realtà. I problemi delle scienze dell'educazione saranno le nuove forme di indifferenza, di diffidenza, di distacco, di allontanamento che i mesi passati e i prossimi affiancheranno alle emergenze alle quali abbiamo accennato in apertura. A chi farà eco, ad esempio, come già accade, alle voci che parlano, in modo superficiale, rumorosamente vuoto, illegittimamente, della neonata forma di socializzazione digitale, bisognerà far sentire voci pedagogiche profonde, attente, impegnate, aggiornate, provenienti da una lettura interdisciplinare dei nuovi processi di apprendimento e di socializzazione.

Ecco le risposte date dai nostri intervistati: gli insegnanti, per tutto il periodo del confinamento, sono stati importantissimi, perché hanno impegnato un figlio in attività scolastiche utili (62, il 26,4%), perché hanno parlato molto con un figlio e con i suoi compagni (34, il 14,5%), perché hanno interagito così tanto con i nostri figli che nessuno di loro dimenticherà questo momento e gli incontri online (24, il 10,2%), perché hanno indirettamente suggerito anche a me argomenti dei quali parlare (15, il 6,4%). Naturalmente, gli scettici hanno confermato la loro presenza: gli insegnanti avrebbero dovuto impegnarsi e impegnare i nostri figli con una quantità maggiore di attività di studio e apprendimento (16, il 6,8%); alcuni di loro non si sono accorti di quello che gli insegnanti hanno fatto e sostengono che i nostri figli li hanno incontrati saltuariamente (8, il 3,4%); purtroppo, per gli ingegnanti è importante solo l'interrogazione online dopo

¹⁵ Per un approfondimento di questi temi, vedi V.A. PICCIONE, *Mappe educative e formative 1. I nuovi setting pedagogici*, Aemme, Roma, 2012², pp. 23-217.

¹⁶ Vedi, a tal proposito, le considerazioni poco approfondate e poco sostenute da riferimenti concreti ed effettivi presenti in M. SPITZER. *Demenza digitale. Come la nuova tecnologia ci rende stupidi*, Corbaccio, Milano, 2013.

aver assegnato compiti e studio (16, il 6,8%). Preoccupa che degli adulti educatori, seppure pochi, abbiano affermato che, senza gli insegnanti dei loro figli, non avrebbero saputo come gestire un tempo domestico così prolungato (30, il 12,8%), hanno affermato che gli insegnanti non sono più efficaci né incisivi, esiste troppo disaccordo tra gli insegnamenti (4, l'1,6%).

Le opzioni scelte per commentare la didattica a distanza preoccupano ancora di più: per fortuna, con la didattica a distanza i nostri figli hanno avuto e hanno ogni giorno un impegno regolare, sistematico (64, il 27,2%), scoprono che tutti ci siamo adattati a una situazione straordinaria (40, il 17%), scoprono nuovi modi di interagire con compagni, amici, familiari (37, il 15,7%), apprendono in modo diverso dal solito (32, il 13,6%) e con tempi diversi rispetto al passato (19, l'8,1%), rispettano vecchie e nuove regole durante le lezioni (29, il 12,3%), cercano in modo diverso gli amici e le amiche (16, il 6,8%), sono cercati in modo diverso da amici e amiche (9, il 3,8%). Preoccupano gli scettici: la didattica a distanza non può sostituire la didattica in presenza (63, il 26,8%), serve solo a non far perdere l'anno scolastico (23, il 9,8%), non serve a nulla (5, il 2,1%), annienta le relazioni umane (1, 0,4%). E ancora: gli insegnanti non sono pronti, usano gli strumenti multimediali come se fossero tradizionali (43, il 18,3%), non sono formati all'uso degli strumenti della didattica a distanza (40, il 17%), non sono pronti, non sanno affrontarla, sono troppo legati alla didattica tradizionale (34, il 14,5%), sono poco disponibili all'uso degli strumenti della didattica a distanza (30, il 12,8%) e alla impostazione di attività didattiche nuove (31, il 13,2%); la didattica a distanza ha previsto tempi troppo ridotti per avere una buona qualità (35, il 14,9%). E ancora: la didattica a distanza pone problemi tecnici di disparità a chi non ha una buona connessione a internet (68, il 28,9%), a chi ha in casa un solo computer che non può bastare per tutti (76, il 32,3%). Da parte degli scettici non sono presi di mira solo gli insegnanti; ce n'è anche per i genitori: ancora non comprendono le qualità della didattica a distanza (22, il 9,4%), ancora non conoscono gli strumenti adottati dai loro figli nella didattica a distanza (24, il 10,2%), sono poco disponibili a riconsiderare l'utilità delle attività didattiche multimediali (17, il 7,2%), sono così impegnati dai problemi di lavoro che non riescono né a vedere né a occuparsi dei loro figli alle prese con la didattica a distanza (35, il 14,9%).

La vita quotidiana e la cura del tempo proprio

Nell'ultima sezione del questionario ci siamo posti l'obiettivo di osservare se e quanto intensamente, nelle case, nelle famiglie, i genitori, i genitori insegnanti, gli insegnanti, i loro figli hanno avuto cura del loro tempo personale, del loro tempo dedicato, di ciò che li appassiona, interessa.

Verso i loro figli, sembra che gli intervistati abbiano un atteggiamento positivo, disponibile, ma non si nota, né nelle scelte delle opzioni di risposta

proposte né nelle risposte libere, la loro reale presenza, nemmeno per un tempo brevissimo, accanto ai loro figli, bambini o adolescenti che durante il confinamento hanno usato gli strumenti digitali per interagire con compagni di scuola, amici, rispettivi insegnanti. Si tratta di un aspetto decisamente sorprendente, per due ragioni. Da una parte, l'adulto con ruolo da educatore, nelle risposte precedenti, ha attribuito agli strumenti digitali la responsabilità di effetti negativi a prescindere dal fatto contingente del confinamento. Dall'altra, è un adulto che prende in considerazione l'eventualità della sua presenza durante l'uso di social network o di piattaforme per l'interazione a distanza solo nel caso di attività ludiche o formali (scambiarsi informazioni su compiti scolastici), e dunque si auto-assolve, abdica a un impegno educativo importante¹⁷. Ecco le risposte: i nostri figli hanno continuato ad avere rapporti significativi con compagni e amici e li abbiamo agevolati (poiché non hanno ancora l'età per avere una loro identità sui social, abbiamo consentito l'uso delle nostre credenziali per usare gli strumenti digitali) (48, il 20,4%), con i genitori dei loro compagni abbiamo lasciato che si videochiamassero anche solo per vedersi (48, il 20,4%), con i genitori dei loro compagni abbiamo agevolato i loro rapporti perché ne comprendiamo l'importanza (31, il 13,2%), i nostri figli si videochiamano per giocare o scambiare informazioni sui compiti, alla presenza di un adulto (39, il 16,6%). Pochi intervistati hanno dichiarato che i loro figli non hanno continuato ad avere rapporti significativi con compagni e amici perché non è stato facile per loro continuare a coltivare le amicizie, sono condizionati dai tempi familiari (11, il 4,7%), non è stato facile per loro continuare a coltivare le amicizie, hanno tempi quotidiani molto contratti (10, il 4,3%), i tempi dettati dalle attività scolastiche ed extrascolastiche a distanza riducono i tempi sociali (6, il 2,6%), i nostri figli sono autonomi, mantengono vivi i loro rapporti e organizzano videochiamate di gruppo (3, l'1,2%), i nostri figli hanno coltivato solo i rapporti più consistenti e convincenti (1, lo 0,4%), per i nostri figli è sempre stato difficile avere rapporti amicali significativi (1, lo 0,4%).

Le risposte degli intervistati alle domande sul loro tempo, sul tempo usato per coltivare i rapporti sociali e i loro interessi personali permettono di notare un'insolita – considerate tutte le risposte precedenti –, intensa adesione alla protezione degli spazi, delle relazioni, dei tempi propri. Ecco le risposte: ho continuato ad avere rapporti significativi con familiari e amici perché sono molto legato ai miei familiari, impossibile trascurarli, ho spesso sentito e vi-

¹⁷ Per approfondire, vedi, quanto meno, A. CALVANI, M. ROTTA, *Comunicazione e apprendimento in Internet. Didattica costruttivistica in rete*, Erickson, Trento, 1999; G. CALLEGARI, *Educablob. Laboratorio della comunicazione multimediale*, Erickson, Trento, 2003; P.C. RIVOLELLA, *Costruttivismo e pragmatica della comunicazione online. Socialità e didattica in Internet*, Erickson, Trento, 2003; A. FATA, *Gli aspetti psicologici della formazione a distanza*, Angeli, Milano 2004; N. MAMMARELLA, C. CORNOLDI, F. PAZZAGLIA, *Psicologia dell'apprendimento multimediale*, Mulino, Bologna, 2005; G. BONAIUTI (a cura di), *E-Learning 2.0. il futuro dell'apprendimento in rete, tra formale e informale*, Erickson, Trento, 2006; C.M. SCARCELLI, *Intimità digitali*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2015.

deochiamato tutti (139, il 59,1%), sono molto legato ai miei amici, impossibile trascurarli, ho spesso sentito e videochiamato tutti (83, il 35,3%), sento e videochiamo gran parte di loro insieme a mio figlio, anche lui è molto legato a loro (45, il 19,1%), mantenere il legame affettivo con i familiari e gli amici più cari è una priorità per me e mio figlio (51, il 21,7%). Pochissimi hanno trascurato i loro rapporti familiari e sociali: gli stili di vita e i tempi della quotidianità sono troppo contratti, ormai, non riesco a parlarci (6, il 2,6%), non riesco più a parlare con loro, e quello che più mi preoccupa è che non mi mancano (3, l'1,3%), non riesco a parlare con loro, e quello che più mi preoccupa è che mio figlio non mi chiede di loro (1, lo 0,4%), sembra che questo confinamento abbia modificato le priorità affettive, per me e mio figlio (2, lo 0,9%).

Alle domande relative alla cura del tempo proprio¹⁸, la maggior parte degli intervistati ha affermato che è stato essenziale, importante, significativo farlo; ecco le opzioni scelte: continuo a dedicare del tempo a me, per pensare, leggere, sentire musica, fare esercizio fisico (136, il 57,9%), ne ho bisogno, perché devo distrarmi e recuperare energie da usare contro il pessimismo (31, il 13,2%), ne ho bisogno, il mio coniuge e io ne abbiamo bisogno, a volte lo facciamo insieme (21, l'8,9%), ne ho bisogno, il mio coniuge e io ne abbiamo bisogno, il nostro rapporto non è cambiato (22, il 9,4%), non posso farlo, in questa situazione è indispensabile restare insieme, distrarsi insieme, parlare (17, il 7,2%), non riesco a farlo e non mi manca; la nuova situazione mi dà più di quanto pensassi (3, l'1,3%), non riesco a farlo e non mi manca: la nuova situazione collettiva ha rafforzato i miei rapporti affettivi e sentimentali (8, il 3,4%). Un numero decisamente inferiore ma rilevante di intervistati si è mostrato dispiaciuto per non essere riuscito a prendersi cura del suo tempo e ha affermato: non riesco a farlo, e me ne dispiace, mi manca molto stare un po' da solo (38, il 16,2%).

Per finire, dopo le osservazioni e le considerazioni espresse nelle pagine precedenti, preferiamo proporre solo due brevissime riflessioni; non avrebbe senso riproporre le parole chiave che abbiamo evidenziato. La prima riflessione raccolge un'idea progettuale interessante di Michela Origlia: la ricercatrice, nelle prossime pagine, dirà che la pedagogia e le scienze dell'umano devono, oggi, investire energie professionali, sociali, economiche sulla presenza, sul tempo, sull'attesa; sicuramente, Origlia ha ragione e le sue parole, concrete e metaforeiche, colgono nel segno. La seconda: senza dubbio, le scienze dell'educazione hanno bisogno di confermare le parole del loro lessico – quanto meno, fiducia, responsabilità, creatività, intenzionalità, autonomia, scelta, mediazione, par-

¹⁸ Per approfondire i temi legati alla cura in educazione, vedi, oltre al mio *Manifesto della Comunità Educante Diffusa*, già citato, quanto meno, V. BOFFO, *La cura in pedagogia*, Clueb, Bologna 2006; L. MORTARI, *La pratica dell'aver cura*, Bruno Mondadori, Torino, 2006; R. DE CICCO, *L'esperienza di sé, la cura di sé, le biografie del sé*, Aemme, Roma, 2013; L. MORTARI, *Filosofia della cura*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano 2013; L. MORTARI, *La sapienza del cuore. Pensare le emozioni, sentire i pensieri*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 2017.

tecipazione, senso della cittadinanza, affidabilità, credibilità. Sembra, tuttavia, che una dicotomia supplementare debba essere considerata come una nuova urgenza pedagogica; è la dicotomia ordinarietà vs straordinarietà. Se i medici dell'OMS hanno ragione¹⁹, se hanno ragione i ricercatori che prevedono che le prossime, nuove, profonde trasformazioni si susseguiranno con una rapidità mai vista prima nella storia dell'uomo, allora le voci della educabilità, della visibilità nei micro-contesti sociali, nelle collettività dovranno essere riconsiderate. Non basterà dire che è necessario abitare o tornare ad abitare i luoghi dell'educazione; lì, pedagogisti e educatori dovranno prendere la cittadinanza stabile, osservare, partecipare, leggere, dedurre, motivare, promuovere con piena costanza e continuità, in piena coerenza con le trasformazioni e il loro impatto.

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¹⁹ I medici dell'OMS lanciano un allarme: l'uomo deve abituarsi all'idea di un futuro di pandemie; ce ne saranno ancora, nei prossimi anni, non tutte devastanti come il COVID-19, e non saranno poche.

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Yamina Bettahar¹

L'épistémologie à l'heure de la COVID-19: si on changeait de paradigme?

ABSTRACT

Cet article résulte de réflexions épistémologiques échangées avec mes collègues de l'Université Roma III (Département des sciences de la formation) lors de différentes missions d'enseignement effectuées dans le cadre d'Erasmus+.

Ces réflexions dont nous livrons ici une synthèse, ont été actualisées à l'heure de la crise de la COVID-19 qui se prolonge au moment où nous achevons notre contribution et qui prend une dimension complexe avec l'irruption de variants plus contagieux et qui semblent entraver le processus de mobilité intra-européenne.

MOTS-CLÉS: Épistémologie, Crise de la COVID-19, Changement de paradigme, Mobilités hybrides

This paper is the result of epistemological reflections exchanged with my colleagues from University Roma III (Education sciences department) during various teaching missions carried out within the framework of Erasmus+.

These reflections, which we are summarizing here, have been regularly updated. Indeed, the COVID-19 crisis is still on: we are regularly completing our contribution, especially taking into account the emergence of more contagious variants that seem to hinder the process of intra-European mobility.

KEYWORDS: Epistemology, COVID-19 crisis, Paradigm shift, Hybrid mobilities

1. *Introduction*

L'épistémologie est au cœur de notre quotidien et constitue l'un des piliers fondateurs de notre modernité. Les découvertes scientifiques et le progrès oc-

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casionnés ont contribué à transformer les rapports inter-humains, façonner nos identités, nos façons de penser, d'agir et de concevoir le monde qui nous entoure. De façon générale, il existe au moins deux façons de définir l'épistémologie. Selon la première, elle est une pratique qui cherche à évaluer les méthodes et les présupposés d'une discipline académique. Elle a, en ce sens, longtemps porté sur des objets spécifiques: la physique, les mathématiques, l'informatique, la biologie.

Depuis la fin des années 1990, les questions liées aux enjeux de l'épistémologie et de la/les connaissances dans nos sociétés contemporaines ont acquis une visibilité croissante dans l'espace public et soulèvent aujourd'hui des questionnements, des débats et des controverses plus affirmés que par le passé.

2. L'épistémologie: une discipline-carrefour au service des connaissances

Il apparaît aujourd'hui que la tradition épistémologique dominante a été remise en question et qu'elle a, depuis quelques années, cédé la place à une épistémologie qui serait devenue une discipline au carrefour et au service des connaissances. Ces évolutions sont marquées par l'émergence et le développement de la *Big science* (ou mégascience) tout particulièrement après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale (cf. le succès du projet Manhattan), avec l'irruption d'outils comme les *big data*, la problématique du stockage et de l'analyse des données numériques de plus en plus volumineuses. À cela il faut adjoindre la mise en place de nouvelles méthodologies plus adaptées à l'analyse des situations spécifiques comme l'approche *bottom-up* versus *top-down*, qui permet d'aller du singulier au général et non l'inverse (au plus haut niveau décisionnaire et destiné à être appliqué par les gouvernés).

Et même si récemment son champ d'application s'est étendu à des disciplines comme la sociologie, une grande partie des sciences humaines en est longtemps demeurée éloignée. Par exemple, l'esthétique compte parmi ces disciplines délaissées par les épistémologues².

L'épistémologie dont il est question ici est l'étude de la science, ou plutôt des sciences. L'usage et la conception qu'exprime ce terme sont relativement récents puisqu'ils datent du début du xx^e siècle. En France, le terme 'épistémologie' remplace celui de 'philosophie des sciences', employé par Auguste Comte et Augustin Cournot, et également usité dans la tradition anglo-saxonne. D'ailleurs, les auteurs anglo-saxons désignent par *epistemology* la théorie philosophique et moderne de la connaissance, qu'ils distinguent alors, et avec raison, de la philosophie des sciences proprement dite³.

² V. GRANATA, R. POUIVET, (éds.), *Épistémologie de l'esthétique*, PUR, collection «Hors série», Rennes, 2020.

³ H. BARREAU, *L'Épistémologie*, PUF, collection «Que sais-je?», Paris, 1990, p. 3.

Grâce à l'épistémologie, nous savons que la science est une forme de connaissance particulière. Pour la définir, il convient d'abord de savoir ce que connaître veut dire. Dans ce cadre, l'intérêt de se poser les deux questions suivantes est pertinent: La science est-elle une forme de connaissance différente des autres formes de connaissance? La science est-elle une forme de connaissance supérieure aux autres formes de connaissance?

On pourrait évoquer le fait que la science est une connaissance 'extraordinaire' car elle implique l'usage de méthodes particulières, soit un ensemble de méthodes systématiques telles que les méthodes expérimentales, les essais dits cliniques ou la modélisation et d'instruments précis (énoncés scientifiques, théories scientifiques, lois, définition de variables), pour acquérir des connaissances (les connaissances scientifiques).

Le terme 'épistémologie' est employé pour désigner une sorte de 'science de la science' qui comprendrait l'étude critique des procédures et des méthodes de production du savoir scientifique. Ceci étant, qu'il s'agisse d'épistémologie ou de philosophie des sciences, on sait que les deux appellations sont parties intégrantes du travail des historiens des sciences mais aussi de la pensée et de la réflexion des scientifiques, qui peuvent avoir à réfléchir sur l'histoire de leur discipline, comme ce fut le cas d'Albert Einstein (1879-1955) en physique⁴, Ernst Mayr (1904-2005) en biologie⁵ ou Jean-Michel Berthelot (1945-2006) pour la sociologie⁶.

La science a des buts précis: se donner des objets concrets, en fournir des explications universelles, codifier ses façons de travailler et rendre ses résultats reproductibles. Bien qu'elle vise des retombées pratiques, elle est néanmoins sous-tendue par des philosophies comme celle du réalisme, du rationalisme, ou de l'instrumentalisme. Pourtant, à l'inverse de philosophes des sciences comme Karl Popper⁷ qui se sont intéressés à la production et à la validité des théories dans un univers clos, épuré de toute force sociale, nombreux sont les épistémologues, dont des sociologues⁸, qui, chacun à leur manière, pointent depuis le début du xx^e siècle le caractère nécessairement relatif et socio-historique de toute théorie scientifique. Tirant les enseignements épistémiques, économiques, sociaux, culturels et politiques des contextes conflictuels des deux guerres mondiales et des crises antérieures, un nombre important de chercheurs pluridisciplinaires contemporains tentent d'explorer de nouvelles pistes de réflexion et tracer de nouveaux sillons visant à articuler davantage les pratiques

⁴ A. EINSTEIN et L. INFELD, *L'Évolution des idées en physique: des premiers concepts aux théories de la relativité et des quanta*, trad. de Maurice Solovine, Flammarion, collection «Champs», Paris, 1983.

⁵ E. MAYR, *Histoire de la biologie: diversité, évolution et héritérité*, Fayard, collection «Le Temps de science», Paris, 1989.

⁶ J.-M. BERTHELOT, (dir.), *Épistémologie des sciences sociales*, PUF, collection «Quadriga manuels», Paris, 2001.

⁷ K. POPPER, *La Logique de la découverte scientifique*, trad. fr., rééd., Payot, coll. «Bibliothèque scientifique», Paris, 1995.

⁸ J.-M. BERTHELOT, *op. cit.*

scientifiques et les pratiques sociales. Il n'est pas possible de les citer de manière exhaustive. Parmi eux, il y a des figures tutélaires qui sont incontournables comme celle de Th. S. Kuhn.

2.1 Thomas Samuel Kuhn: «la structure des révolutions scientifiques»⁹, entre logique et sociologie

Par ses réflexions innovantes entamées à la fin des années cinquante, l'historien des sciences et physicien américain Th. S. Kuhn (1922-1996) a contribué à l'avènement d'un premier tournant épistémologique, en proposant l'idée de révolution paradigmatische. Dans son ouvrage devenu un grand classique de l'épistémologie, *La Structure des révolutions scientifiques* (1962), il analyse les bouleversements de la pensée scientifique (Copernic, Newton, Lavoisier, Einstein...) et y étudie les moments de crise que traverse la science au cours de son évolution: il y a révolution scientifique lorsqu'une théorie scientifique consacrée par le temps est rejetée au profit d'une nouvelle théorie.

Th. S. Kuhn apporte des éléments complémentaires à l'analyse mertonienne¹⁰ dans la perspective d'une prise en compte des dimensions transversales dans l'étude des objets et des contenus scientifiques. Il oppose ses analyses d'historien des sciences à celles du philosophe logicien Karl Popper (1922-1996). Pour ce dernier, le progrès des connaissances scientifiques ne repose pas sur la démonstration du bien-fondé des propositions ou des théories avancées mais sur celle de leur «falsification». Dans ce contexte, il s'est intéressé à la production et à la validité des théories dans un univers épuré de toute force sociale. À l'inverse de K. Popper, Th. S. Kuhn part du principe que la science est une activité essentiellement critique, il évoque l'idée d'une révolution permanente et individuelle et, affinant son analyse, il s'intéresse à ce qui se passe entre chaque révolution, durant des périodes qu'il qualifie de «science normale» et durant lesquelles la science se transmet de façon collective et dogmatique par le biais de «paradigmes», c'est-à-dire d'ensembles structurés de théories et de savoir-faire admis et acceptés dans tout ou partie d'une communauté savante, à partir desquels se construit une tradition de recherche. Il nous explique que ladite révolution scientifique intervient lorsque le paradigme s'avère inadéquat à résoudre un nombre croissant d'énigmes. Il affirme qu'au sein même des sciences de la matière, le consensus théorique parmi les chercheurs n'est ni parfait ni permanent. Il évoque l'idée d'une succession de paradigmes dominants (ensemble d'objets, de questions, de méthodes, de savoirs, qui sont légitimés à un moment donné par une communauté de savants) qui scendent l'histoire des sciences. Ainsi en est-il de n'importe quel autre énoncé scientifique. C'est le cas de théories en sciences humaines et sociales (ex. la sociologie). Elles possèdent une particularité indéniable: celle de pouvoir mobiliser leurs propres

⁹ Th. S. KUHN, *La Structure des révolutions scientifiques*, trad. fr., rééd. Champs sciences, Paris, 2008.

¹⁰ R.K. MERTON, H. MENDRAS, *Éléments de théorie et de méthode sociologique*, A. Colin, Paris, 1997.

outils pour faire de la science un objet d'étude privilégié. Parce que la production de connaissances scientifiques est une pratique sociale comme une autre, la portée des théories (comme la sociologie) doit être évaluée au prisme des enjeux et configurations socio-historiques dans le cadre duquel le savoir se façonne. Selon Kuhn, chacune de ces révolutions transforme non seulement l'imagination scientifique mais aussi le monde dans lequel s'effectue ce travail scientifique.

Th. S. Kuhn a ainsi contribué à montrer que les connaissances (ou les paradigmes) ont une portée locale (incommensurabilité des paradigmes) concrétisée par des groupes identifiables de scientifiques. De même que la cohésion de ces groupes repose bien entendu sur les paradigmes qui les relient. De même qu'il a inauguré et nourri les réflexions du courant dit du «Programme fort» de l'Université d'Édimbourg et sa collaboration avec des sociologues des sciences français comme Bruno Latour¹¹.

2.2 L'émancipation des sciences humaines et sociales: une coupure épistémologique fondamentale ou le point de non-retour

Retenons ici que c'est au cours du XIX^e siècle que les sciences humaines vont s'émanciper et conquérir leur indépendance¹². Avec l'émergence et l'institutionnalisation de nouvelles disciplines comme la psychologie expérimentale, la sociologie (grâce à Émile Durkheim et ses condisciples), l'anthropologie (Malinowski), le travail de terrain s'impose graduellement tandis que de nouvelles chaires universitaires sont créées. L'histoire, l'économie, la linguistique développent leurs propres méthodes faisant d'elles des disciplines scientifiques à part entière: elles revendiquent alors leur autonomie et cherchent à se détacher de leurs disciplines matricielles prenant parfois l'allure d'un véritable rejet (comme ce fut le cas avec la philosophie)¹³. Le travail de terrain, les exigences de comparabilité et d'interdisciplinarité prennent peu à peu une place non négligeable qui sera renforcée et contribuera à ouvrir davantage les frontières disciplinaires.

Depuis son émergence originelle, l'épistémologie concerne aujourd'hui un large spectre de disciplines parmi lesquelles on trouve la sociologie, les sciences de la décision et de l'organisation, les sciences politiques, les sciences de la ges-

¹¹ B. LATOUR, S. WOOLGAR, *La Vie de laboratoire. La production des faits scientifiques*, trad. fr., rééd., Éditions La Découverte, coll. «Poche», Paris, 1988.

¹² G. GUSDORF, *Introduction aux sciences humaines. Essai critique sur leurs origines et leur développement*, les Éditions Ophrys, Paris, 1974.

¹³ C'est précisément le cas d'Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) lorsqu'il entreprit de fonder la sociologie et la tradition sociologique française; ce fut également le cas de l'anthropologue Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009), «lassé par les exercices intellectuels gratuits de la philosophie», qui découvrit vers 1933 l'ethnographie et le travail de terrain mené par ses collègues sur les sociétés primitives en Afrique, en Amazonie, en Amérique. Il embarqua pour le Brésil où il se lança à son tour dans une description minutieuse des modes de vie, des règles de parenté, des croyances, des techniques des peuples indigènes du Brésil.

tion, les sciences de l'information et de la communication, les sciences dites de la computation, les sciences de l'éducation, sans compter les sciences de l'ingénieur qui contribuent à l'élaboration de nouveaux paradigmes fondateurs. C'est ce que le philosophe et sociologue français Edgar Morin appelle la «complexité généralisée».

3. Edgar Morin: la connaissance, une pensée complexe

Sa première formulation de la pensée complexe a été évoquée dans l'ouvrage *Science avec conscience*: «Le but de la recherche de méthode n'est pas de trouver un principe unitaire de toute connaissance, mais d'indiquer les émergences d'une pensée complexe, qui ne se réduit ni à la science, ni à la philosophie, mais qui permet leur intercommunication en opérant des boucles dialogiques»¹⁴.

E. Morin nous explique que nous avons appris par notre éducation à séparer, et notre aptitude à relier est sous-développée. Connaître étant à la fois séparer et relier, nous devons maintenant faire un effort pour lier, relier, conjuguer, car ceci est nécessaire dans tous les domaines. Pour penser la complexité, il faut une pensée complexe. Une telle pensée relie, elle ne découpe pas les études en champs de connaissances centrés sur un objet. Elle restitue le contexte et les interactions et en particulier les rétroactions. Lorsqu'il parle de la complexité «généralisée», E. Morin, évoque l'idée selon laquelle il s'agirait d'un paradigme qui imposerait de conjointre un principe de distinction et un principe de conjonction. La complexité demande que l'on essaie de comprendre les relations entre le tout et les parties. Mais la connaissance des parties ne suffit pas à la connaissance du tout; on doit faire un va-et-vient en boucle pour réunir la connaissance du tout et celle des parties. Ainsi, au principe de réduction, on substitue un principe qui conçoit la relation d'implication mutuelle entre tout et parties. S'opposant à la doctrine holiste et au positivisme marquant du XIX^e siècle¹⁵, E. Morin, insiste sur le fait qu'il faut relier l'objet au sujet et l'objet à son environnement. Poursuivant sa réflexion, il ajoute qu'on ne doit pas considérer l'objet comme une chose inerte et privée de forme, mais comme un système doué d'organisation. Quant à la théorisation, elle devrait faire dialoguer ses résultats avec l'incertitude et le contradictoire. Il faut, selon lui, respecter la «multidimensionnalité» des êtres et des choses. La connaissance doit se connaître elle-même, être une «science avec conscience». La pensée complexe est pluri-inter-transdisciplinaire, elle doit s'efforcer de tisser ensemble les idées venues de plusieurs domaines.

¹⁴ E. MORIN, *Science avec conscience*, Points, coll. «Points Sciences», Paris, 2005.

¹⁵ Le positivisme est entendu ici comme une démarche scientifique qui perçoit les faits comme des données extérieures et indépendantes qu'une méthodologie rigoureuse doit permettre de restituer dans leur intégrité en éliminant tous les 'biais' dus à l'observation.

4. *L'interdisciplinarité au cœur de l'interculturalité disciplinaire*

La question de l'interdisciplinarité est commandée par des enjeux divers qui recouvrent les intérêts de la connaissance. Depuis plusieurs décennies, nous avons vu apparaître une exigence d'interdisciplinarité qui se voulait une réponse à une hyperspécialisation et à un savoir atomisé. Certains y voyaient un phénomène de mode. Pourtant, la demande d'interdisciplinarité a été fortement encouragée, n'a cessé de croître. C'est ainsi que le sociologue et philosophe allemand Jürgen Habermas (né en 1929), s'inscrivant dans la tradition allemande, a également contribué au débat critique de la raison occidentale, conçue selon lui comme l'expression de la technoscience dominatrice et aliénante¹⁶. Dans sa *Théorie de l'Agir communicationnel* (1987), il recherche les conditions d'un espace social légitime. Ceci étant, cette demande a fini par s'imposer dans la communication pédagogique des différents niveaux d'enseignements, qu'il s'agisse du secondaire (voir l'exemple des TPE)¹⁷ ou du supérieur (avec le développement de ce qu'il est convenu de nommer les 'compétences transverses'), et lors de la mise en œuvre de projets conduits dans les laboratoires et les équipes de recherche pluridisciplinaires. Aujourd'hui, on parle même de transdisciplinarité¹⁸. Il s'agit d'un domaine académique qui a donné lieu à de multiples débats sur la sémantique des termes «trans, inter- et pluridisciplinarité» que ce soit en France ou ailleurs¹⁹. Actuellement, la transdisciplinarité est une posture, un concept consolidé qui donne lieu à des recherches appliquées parmi lesquelles celles qui concernent la *Big history* qui cherche à comprendre les interconnexions des humains avec les différents niveaux de réalité qui coexistent dans la nature et dans le cosmos (voir l'exemple des expériences mystiques et spirituelles lors des rituels chamaniques et l'usage de plantes sacrées). Dans des universités d'Amérique du Sud comme le Brésil, la Colombie ou l'Argentine, cette approche transdisciplinaire intègre et unifie diverses *épistémè*²⁰ qui se situent dans, entre et au-delà des disciplines scientifiques (c'est le cas des émotions, des expériences mystiques, de l'art) que l'histoire des sciences et son approche positiviste ont longtemps négligées.

¹⁶ J. HABERMAS, *La Technique et la science comme «idéologie»*, trad. fr., Éditions Gallimard, Paris, 1990.

¹⁷ Il s'agit des Travaux personnels encadrés (TPE), des Projets pluritechniques encadrés (PPE) ou des Projets interdisciplinaires (PI).

¹⁸ Le terme 'transdisciplinarité' a été inventé par Jean Piaget en 1970. Il s'agit d'une posture scientifique et intellectuelle qui a pour objectif la compréhension de la complexité du monde moderne et du présent. Elle se distingue ainsi de la pluridisciplinarité et de l'interdisciplinarité dans la mesure où elle déborde les disciplines et qu'elle ne reste pas circonscrite dans la recherche disciplinaire proprement dite.

¹⁹ Voir notamment J.-M. BESNIER, J. PERRIAULT, (dir.), *Interdisciplinarité: entre discipline et indiscipline*, dans «Hermès», n°67, 2013.

²⁰ Le concept d'*épistémè* a été développé par le philosophe français Michel Foucault entre 1965 et 1977, avant qu'il ne l'abandonne, considérant que son utilisation aboutissait à une impasse.

5. L'épistémologie à l'heure de la crise de la COVID-19 et du surgissement de ses variants

Plusieurs exemples pris parmi tant d'autres dans l'histoire des sciences²¹, auraient le mérite de montrer le faisceau de relations interdépendantes qui relient les scientifiques et leur environnement, dans un jeu relationnel élargi qui mobilise différentes ressources autour de la fabrique de la science et de ses enjeux économiques, politiques et idéologiques (Deuxième Guerre mondiale, guerre froide, etc.). Cependant, l'exemple de la crise de la COVID-19 pris dans le feu de l'actualité endémique que nous traversons depuis plusieurs mois à l'échelle globale, a valeur d'exemple. En effet, cette crise mondiale totalement inédite, comparée aux épidémies précédentes, est une crise généralisée qui n'a épargné aucune région du globe, alors que les précédentes étaient plus circonscrites et ont pu être relativement jugulées. En effet, de manière générale, les crises sanitaires qui ont secoué différentes parties du monde, sont un phénomène ancien. On peut notamment mentionner la peste noire (1347-1352), la grippe espagnole (1918) et plus récemment le SRAS, le Mers, Ébola, la grippe H1N1. Cependant, l'épidémie de la COVID-19, a révélé une corrélation multiscalaire au niveau global (politique, organisationnel, géopolitique, économique, social et culturel) qu'il est difficile de juguler et qui a révélé des tensions et des affrontements qui ont favorisé l'émergence ou la consolidation de mouvements de contestation, de défiance, et de désobéissance civile au sein de pays fortement affectés par l'épidémie. Elle a également mis à l'épreuve des institutions étatiques et interétatiques nationales et internationales chargées de la gestion de la politique sanitaire d'urgence et les dirigeants politiques. Elle a également révélé des enjeux de pouvoir entre les scientifiques et le politique. Pour les chercheurs, la crise de la COVID-19 offre un champ de recherche fécond et des possibilités de comparabilité pertinentes (voir l'exemple d'une gestion différenciée en Chine, aux USA, au Brésil en Europe ou en Asie). En France, par exemple, dans une société encadrée par des institutions régaliennes et dotée d'un dispositif législatif et réglementaire historiquement bien ancré, de plans d'urgence conçus préalablement pour apporter des réponses à d'éventuelles situations d'urgence sanitaire, l'épidémie de la COVID-19 que nous subissons depuis la fin de l'année 2019, a paradoxalement révélé une crise organisationnelle incommensurable²²: des carences au niveau de sa gestion et un registre discursif

²¹ La radioactivité et les révolutions paradigmatisques qui l'accompagnèrent, annonciatrices des grandes évolutions du début du XXI^e siècle. En médecine, ces découvertes ont permis d'obtenir des résultats appréciables dans la lutte contre les tumeurs malignes: la première guérison authentifiée par irradiation d'un cancer remonte d'ailleurs à 1899. Sur un autre registre, faut-il rappeler La catastrophe de Tchernobyl, premier accident classé au niveau 7 sur l'échelle internationale des événements nucléaires (INES). Il est considéré comme le plus grave accident nucléaire répertorié avant celui qui se produisit à Fukushima (Japon) en 2011.

²² Cf. H. BERGERON, O. BORRAZ, *et al.*, *COVID-19: une crise organisationnelle*, SciencesPo Les Presses, Paris, 2020.

de la part des acteurs politiques et sanitaires discordant et contradictoire tout au long de la période dans laquelle ils étaient censés apporter des éléments d'information fiables et des préconisations dignes de foi permettant aux membres de la société de se plier en toute confiance aux injonctions gouvernementales. Au lieu de cela, un sentiment de défiance a envahi une majorité de la population au sujet du port du masque (obligatoire ou pas), des distanciations physiques...et plus récemment, sur le fait de se faire vacciner ou pas.

5.1 La crise de la COVID-19: quel impact sur les mobilités Erasmus+?

Le programme Erasmus+ offre ici un exemple particulièrement pertinent pour illustrer les effets produits par la crise pandémique sur la mobilité institutionnelle intra-européenne.

De manière générale, il est reconnu que les échanges Erasmus+ constituent un des principaux piliers de la mobilité intra-européenne. Depuis plusieurs années, de jeunes étudiants inscrits régulièrement dans des institutions universitaires européennes ont pu expérimenter ce qui est communément appelé 'l'auberge espagnole', y ont trouvé tous les bienfaits de la découverte d'un nouveau pays, de nouvelles cultures, la rencontre avec d'autres jeunes issus de cultures différentes, l'enrichissement d'un apprentissage interculturel lors de pratiques pédagogiques inclusives de la citoyenneté européenne, tout en bénéficiant d'un enseignement supérieur de haut niveau.

Cependant, la crise pandémique que nous traversons depuis plusieurs mois a profondément perturbé les projets de mobilité intra-européenne. Qu'il s'agisse des étudiants ou des enseignants, nos habitudes de communication et de circulation ont été bouleversées et nous avons été amenés à faire preuve d'inventivité, d'imagination, de créativité et d'innovation pour poursuivre et maintenir nos échanges tout en réinventant les paradigmes de nos pratiques.

Depuis l'irruption de la crise, de nombreux questionnements ont fait l'objet de débats au sein des instances européennes, nationales et des établissements d'enseignement supérieur fortement touchés par les effets de la crise: report des mobilités, changement de destination, cours hybrides. En cette période de forte incertitude, la question est de savoir comment permettre aux jeunes, mais aussi aux enseignants, de continuer à bénéficier des échanges devenus quasi-vitaux pour les raisons invoquées ci-dessus. En lieu et place d'une mobilité effective, des cours en ligne se sont multipliés ici et là, selon les dispositions prises par la Commission européenne en mai 2020²³. Dans ce contexte particulier, les participants au programme Erasmus+ ont pu bénéficier de nouvelles formes de mobilités expérimentales dites 'hybrides', mêlant activités virtuelles et mobilités physiques. Dans les faits, ces cours ont été réalisés pour l'essentiel en ligne car la situation sanitaire ne s'est guère améliorée depuis l'année 2020

²³ Ces dispositions, qui devaient être mises en œuvre pour la période 2020-2027, ont été accélérées pour répondre au mieux aux difficultés de déplacement liées à la crise de COVID-19.

et la promesse d'une possibilité de poursuivre des études à l'étranger dès que la situation serait rétablie, s'est peu à peu éloignée en raison de l'évolution de la crise de COVID-19, du surgissement récent de ses variants (notamment britanniques) et du durcissement des procédures sanitaires lors des circulations intra-européennes. En effet, de nombreuses contraintes imposées par différents pays à l'égard des ressortissants européens entrants et sortants ont constitué un frein qui a ralenti de manière significative l'élan militaire des jeunes Européens. Avec la signature, le 31 décembre 2020, de l'Accord de retrait de l'Europe, le Royaume-Uni semble avoir rebattu ses cartes en ce qui concerne l'échange des étudiants.

Cet accord a des effets directs sur la mobilité des étudiants européens. En effet, l'accord post-Brexit va sans doute priver un nombre important d'étudiants européens de choisir le Royaume-Uni comme destination militaire²⁴. Le nouveau variant du SARS-CoV-2 observé au Royaume-Uni circule à présent au sein de l'Europe et son fort pouvoir de contagiosité, attesté par les autorités sanitaires européennes, a contribué au processus de ralentissement des projets de circulations intra-européennes, déjà fortement contrariés par la COVID-19.

La révolution numérique et celle de l'intelligence artificielle ont incontestablement apporté de grands changements en ce qui concerne nos pratiques sociales, amicales, professionnelles, tout comme elles ont révolutionné nos pratiques pédagogiques. Aujourd'hui, l'usage du numérique nous est essentiel et nous a permis de contourner les effets du confinement en adoptant divers instruments pour la communication en ligne parmi lesquels on trouve Teams, Zoom, parmi les plus usités. S'agissant de la mobilité et de la circulation des étudiants et des enseignants-chercheurs, des formes alternatives comme la mobilité hybride, ont permis d'organiser des cours à distance afin de maintenir le lien avec les étudiants, mais aussi des colloques, journées d'étude, séminaires en ligne pour poursuivre un tant soit peu le travail scientifique et la poursuite des relations de collaboration scientifique avec des réseaux internationaux constitués. Cependant, une critique des technologies est nécessaire car les outils ne sont jamais neutres. En effet, leur consommation immodérée peut faire apparaître des comportements déviants: addictions, isolement, perte du lien social et du sens du 'vivre ensemble', du partage et de la solidarité. Aussi, face à l'utilisation addictive de ces outils, la vigilance quant à l'emprise qu'exerce la digitalisation sur nos vies est de mise.

Aujourd'hui, il est évident que les conséquences liées à la fermeture momentanée des établissements d'enseignement supérieur, des lieux culturels, l'instauration de nouvelles formes d'enseignement et d'évaluation à distance, de même que la restriction des déplacements hors des frontières nationales,

²⁴ Le Royaume-Uni participait au programme Erasmus depuis 1987 et a été depuis longtemps une destination privilégiée pour les étudiants européens. Par exemple, en 2018, le Royaume-Uni a accueilli dans ses universités plus de 31 000 étudiants Erasmus+. Cependant, malgré les assurances du Premier ministre britannique, il semblerait qu'une page de l'histoire des échanges intra-européens est tournée.

aggravées par une gestion différenciée de la crise sanitaire (pourtant dans un cadre européen unifié), ont contribué à la création d'incertitudes plus ou moins durables, à l'émergence de fragilités multidimensionnelles (économiques, sociales, psychologiques) et au décrochage de certains étudiants. C'est ce que révèlent les premiers travaux conduits à chaud dans le cadre d'enquêtes qualitatives et/ou quantitatives²⁵, dont les pistes réflexives restent à approfondir.

6. Ouvertures: vers une épistémologie des vertus?

La question des vertus épistémiques est particulièrement sensible pour nous aujourd'hui. Face aux déséquilibres actuels auxquels la France, les pays de l'Union européenne et plus largement notre planète sont confrontés depuis plusieurs décennies, La production de cette dernière décennie s'est caractérisée par une profonde mutation dans le domaine de la réflexion épistémique: de nouveaux chemins sont explorés (comme celui de l'anthropocène)²⁶. Les processus de remise en question de nos croyances, de nos façons de vivre, de penser, nos modes de croire et de se comporter ont connu des bouleversements significatifs et ont ouvert la voie à l'émergence de nouvelles expérimentations, de nouveaux modèles, de nouveaux modes de pensée et d'action (paradigmes)²⁷. Comme nous l'y invite Stanley Cavelle, il s'agit «d'attacher une extrême importance aux relations personnelles et à la possibilité, ou à la nécessité, de notre transformation et de la transformation de notre société»²⁸.

Cependant, le chemin à parcourir reste encore long et parsemé d'obstacles. Pour tenter de saisir les défis auxquels nous sommes collectivement et individuellement confrontés, certains auteurs, universitaires, chercheurs, citoyens ont entrepris de lancer des alertes sur l'urgence de solutions innovantes et responsables car elles relèvent de notre survie (pauvreté, réchauffement climatique, destruction d'écosystèmes marins, disparition de certaines espèces animales et végétales).

La crise de la COVID-19 a globalement contribué à l'accélération du processus de recherche du vaccin et a mobilisé la communauté scientifique internationale autour de collaborations scientifiques et de partage des données. Mais cet exemple est l'arbre qui cache la forêt (course à l'innovation, milieux scientifiques de plus en plus concurrentiels, désengagement de plus en plus grand

²⁵ Voir notamment l'enquête menée au niveau de l'Université de Lorraine ou l'enquête nationale menée par l'Observatoire de la Vie étudiante (l'OVE).

²⁶ J.-B. FRESSOZ, Ch. BONNEUIL, *L'Événement anthropocène – La terre, l'histoire et nous*, Points, Paris, 2016.

²⁷ Voir R. LACASSIN, S. LAVELLE, *The crisis of a paradigm. A methodological interpretation of Tohoku and Fukushima catastrophe*, dans «Earth-Science Reviews», volume 155, April, 2016, p. 49-59.

²⁸ Voir S. CAVELL, *Conditions nobles et ignobles. La constitution du perfectionnement moral émersonien*, Éditions de l'éclat, Paris, 1993, p. 47; R. POUIVET, *Vertus épistémiques, émotions cognitives et éducation*, dans «Education et didactique», vol. 2, n°3, décembre 2008.

de l'État, contraintes financières que subit, notamment en France, le secteur de la recherche publique au regard de ses besoins croissants en ressources humaines, matérielles... et qui créent des facteurs différenciants entre recherche fondamentale et recherche appliquée mais aussi entre recherche publique et recherche privée).

Les enjeux liés à la démocratisation des savoirs supposent de repenser nos conceptions des modalités de communication et de diffusion des connaissances via des espaces non-verbaux plus ouverts, accessibles gratuitement comme les muséums et musées de peinture, palais de la découvertes, observatoires, instrumentation scientifique ou autres lieux chargés de la production et de diffusion démocratique de la culture et du savoir scientifiques et techniques²⁹. Les nouveaux défis portant sur la question du partage, de l'évolution du travail scientifique, de la gratuité de l'accès aux connaissances et des formes de leur popularisation doivent être inclusifs. L'exemple des pays africains dont les chercheurs manquent cruellement de moyens et de données pour poursuivre leurs activités de recherche recourent à une culture scientifique du don et du contre-don pour partager les connaissances et les savoir-faire ancestraux transmis par leurs aînés. Ils font également preuve d'inventivité et de créativité pour contourner les conditions locales souvent désastreuses de réalisation de leurs activités scientifiques et font appel au système D.

En ce qui concerne l'enjeu des relations entre la science et le politique, l'exemple de la crise de la COVID-19 a été le révélateur de tensions permanentes; pourtant les deux entités sont intimement liées, voire interdépendantes et devraient être solidaires et transparentes pour faire face aux problèmes et crises majeures que nous traversons actuellement. Le politique doit prendre en compte l'avis des experts, en choisissant l'une des voies proposées avec transparence. Au niveau de la recherche scientifique, il s'agit de promouvoir une plus grande autonomie du champ scientifique disposant de ressources significatives pour favoriser les conditions de l'innovation, de la créativité, loin de la financiarisation et de la marchandisation de nos sociétés. Cela passe également par une indépendance des experts scientifiques qui conseillent les politiques, plus d'éthique, de confiance mutuelle et de responsabilité³⁰. Les scientifiques doivent bénéficier de plus de ressources (humaines, matérielles et financières) et du temps nécessaire pour mener sereinement leurs activités de recherche fondamentale. Sont également en jeu les moyens d'action collective à mener pour préserver les biens publics mondiaux tels que l'éducation et la scolarisation des filles, la paix en Europe et dans le monde, la santé, l'environnement et la connaissance qui supposent leur prise en charge par de nouvelles formes de gouvernance et une communauté transnationale³¹. Les travaux de la philo-

²⁹ Cf. R.G. MAZZOLINI (ed.), *Non-verbal communication in science. Prior to 1900*, Firenze, Leo S. Olschki, 1993; R. FABRE et al., *Les Nouveaux enjeux de la connaissance*, ISTE éditions, Paris, 2017.

³⁰ M. WEBER, *Le Savant et le politique*, trad.fr., Plon, Paris, 1959.

³¹ Selon I. Stengers et B. Latour, il ne s'agit plus de questionner seulement la façon dont les humains

sophe Isabelle Stengers et du politologue Bruno Latour se sont emparés de ces problématiques: en mettant en exergue la notion de «cosmopolitismes», ils apportent une vision élargie du politique et remettent en cause certaines analyses antérieures proposées par d'autres chercheurs.

Isabelle Stengers développe l'idée d'un «citoyen du cosmos» qui prendrait le pas sur le citoyen d'un État particulier bien identifié. Dans son œuvre *Cosmopolitismes* et dans d'autres contributions³², elle prend appui sur certains savoirs scientifiques et se demande pourquoi les sciences modernes n'avancent que sur le mode guerrier ? Elle pose l'hypothèse que ces savoirs puissent avancer et s'affirmer tout en coexistant en paix avec d'autres savoirs comme les sciences humaines et sociales. Dans la continuité et le prolongement des travaux d'Isabelle Stengers, Bruno Latour met en relief la nécessité de créer un nouveau rôle diplomatique du chercheur en sciences sociales. Il reconsideère la question du Global à la lumière des travaux du philosophe allemand Peter Sloterdijk.

Quoiqu'il en soit, cette crise a incontestablement ébranlé nos certitudes et révélé les limites inhérentes à notre mode de faire société, nos croyances, nos habitudes sociales (*habitus*) et nos postures comportementales. Elle a également permis de remettre en question notre assurance quant à la manière dont nos sociétés sont gouvernées et quant à notre gestion/appropriation de la nature et de notre environnement.

L'épistémologie ne doit plus simplement occuper isolément les réflexions des chercheurs dans le cadre de leur travail scientifique et disciplinaire: sa démocratisation doit être au cœur de l'action publique (une sorte d'agir communicationnel) au sens de Jürgen Habermas. D'ailleurs, les débats et controverses qui sont menés depuis quelques années et tout particulièrement depuis l'irruption de la crise pandémique que ce soit en France, en Europe, ou au niveau planétaire, sont les signes avant-coureurs d'une révolution paradigmaticale en marche pour le monde d'après.

En ce qui concerne la France, la mobilisation de la société civile a permis l'émergence de collectifs d'associations citoyennes dont la plus récente est la Convention citoyenne pour le climat: elle est à pied d'œuvre pour tenter de tirer profit d'une approche collaborative concertée. Le processus participatif permet, en l'état actuel de la situation, de conduire collectivement et démocratiquement une réflexion plus humanisée loin des cénacles confidentiels des élites technocratiques décisionnaires qui imprimaient le sens directionnel (*top-down*) des décisions 'décrétées'.

Dans les ruptures épistémologiques qui accompagnent cette révolution pa-

s'organisent pour concrétiser le 'vivre ensemble' et régler les différents conflits qui portent sur l'appropriation et la préservation des 'biens communs' et des ressources qui commencent à manquer sur notre planète ou qui sont mises à mal par une utilisation exacerbée.

³² I. STENGERS, *Cosmopolitismes I & II*, Paris, La Découverte, collection «La Découverte Poche/Sciences humaines et sociales», 2003.

radigmatique, la philosophie du *care*³³, du bien-être et de la réparation psychique et psychologique doit prendre plus de place dans nos sociétés en souffrance.

Conclusions provisoires

Ces réflexions autour du concept de l'épistémologie, étayées par quelques exemples illustratifs, nous ont permis de mettre en exergue quelques lignes de force saillantes telle que la complexité ou l'hétérogénéité des acteurs chargés de la gestion et de la prise de décision. De même qu'apparaît l'importance de la responsabilité des collectifs concernés face à la diversité, à l'enchevêtrement des acteurs, des enjeux impliqués dans la gestion de la crise sanitaire (en France, le Conseil scientifique COVID-19, l'Agence nationale de santé et ses antennes régionales, etc...) et leurs relations avec les responsables politiques.

Les récentes querelles qui ont divisé les experts (politiques, économiques, culturels, scientifiques, médicaux, sanitaires, économiques) ont révélé l'hétérogénéité des acteurs impliqués³⁴. À ce stade, il est permis de poser l'hypothèse, avec d'autres³⁵, qu'une révolution paradigmatische est bien en marche.

La gestion de la crise sanitaire a créé de vives tensions au sein des milieux scientifiques et continue de diviser les milieux politiques et médiatiques (voir l'exemple de l'hydroxychloroquine comme traitement de la COVID-19 prononcé par le professeur marseillais Didier Raoult et les controverses scientifiques qui ont agité la communauté scientifique et médicale française). Quelles que soient les prises de position des uns et des autres (théorie du complot, anti-vaccination, fin du progressisme, présentisme, théorie de l'effondrement ou collapsologie, climatoscepticisme), nombre de contempteurs s'accordent sur le fait qu'il devient impérieux d'apprendre à fonctionner autrement et d'imaginer collectivement le monde de demain.

Bien qu'il soit encore trop tôt pour en faire une typologie raisonnée, nombre de travaux pluridisciplinaires témoignent déjà en faveur d'une révolution paradigmatische en cours pour l'instauration du monde d'après. Tous les espoirs sont permis: une nouvelle page d'histoire est en train de s'écrire.

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³⁴ M. CALLON, P. LASCOUMES, Y. BARTHES, *Agir dans un monde incertain*, Seuil, Paris, 2010.

³⁵ C. FLEURY, A.-C. PRÉVOT, *Le Souci de la nature. Apprendre, inventer, gouverner*, CNRS Éditions, Paris, 2017.

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Marina Geat¹

*Camus, Morin, il COVID-19 e l'urgenza di un cambio
di paradigma*

ABSTRACT

L'inizio della pandemia COVID-19 ha coinciso con la data di un convegno su Albert Camus che non si è mai svolto. A un anno di distanza, gli interrogativi sull'uomo e sulla sua collocazione nel mondo che quel convegno voleva affrontare si ripropongono e si precisano con ancora maggiore urgenza. Le riflessioni di A. Camus, E. Morin, D. F. Wallace, I. Capua, pongono l'accento sull'importanza di una visione complessa che non separi l'umano e il suo benessere dalla consapevolezza di un legame inscindibile e di una responsabilità ineludibile nei confronti del pianeta terra e di ogni sua componente, vivente e non vivente. In un'ottica interdisciplinare, la letteratura e ogni scienza, umanistica o 'dura', contribuiscono alla comprensione di questa complessità e delle sue conseguenze etiche, estetiche e assiologiche.

PAROLE CHIAVE: COVID-19, Albert Camus, Edgar Morin, Cambio di paradigma, Interdisciplinarità

The beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic coincided with the date of a conference on Albert Camus that never took place. A year later, the questions about man and his place in the world that the conference wanted to address are being raised again and are becoming even more urgent. The reflections of A. Camus, E. Morin, D. F. Wallace, I. Capua, place the accent on the importance of a complex vision that does not separate the human being and his well-being from the awareness of an inseparable bond and an inescapable responsibility towards planet earth and every living and non-living component of it. From an interdisciplinary perspective, literature and every science, humanistic or 'hard', contribute to the understanding of this complexity and its ethical, aesthetic and axiological consequences.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Albert Camus, Edgar Morin, Paradigm shift, Interdisciplinarity

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«Nous devons savoir aujourd’hui que le problème central est celui d’une politique de l’homme, qu’il n’y a pas de politique de l’homme sans théorie de l’homme, et qu’il n’y a pas encore de théorie de l’homme»².

«Il mondo si divide tra quelli che rimangono indifferenti all’universo e quelli che continuano a meravigliarsene»³.

Il 5 marzo 2020 era previsto al Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione dell’Università Roma Tre un convegno per ricordare i 60 anni dalla scomparsa di Albert Camus. Un convegno che non si è mai svolto, a seguito dell’emergenza COVID-19 e del DPCM del 4 marzo, con il quale tutte le attività universitarie in presenza sono state sospese. Il titolo di quel convegno sarebbe stato *Albert Camus, alla ricerca di un nuovo umanesimo*⁴, e si sarebbe incentrato su alcune parole chiave – la rivolta, la libertà, la giustizia, l’impegno, l’Europa, la storia, la sofferenza, la solidarietà, la bellezza, il silenzio, la natura, l’innocenza, la memoria – che, fondamentali nel pensiero di Camus, apparivano e appaiono di grande urgenza per un rinnovamento profondo dell’attuale visione dell’uomo e del sistema di valori che guidano il suo essere al mondo.

Ad alcuni mesi di distanza da quel convegno mai avvenuto c’è da chiedersi se l’esperienza dell’attuale pandemia COVID-19 non abbia ulteriormente sollecitato, con forza dirompente, quello stesso interrogativo, quella stessa urgenza: come ripensare un nuovo umanesimo oggi?

Proprio in un contesto epidemico Camus ha ambientato uno dei più celebri tra i suoi romanzi, *La Peste*, del 1947. È noto il senso metaforico che la peste ha assunto nella maggior parte delle interpretazioni del romanzo, a cominciare da quelle proposte dallo stesso Camus: essa alluderebbe alla recente tragedia storica del Nazismo o, più filosoficamente, alla vita stessa⁵.

L’attuale emergenza sanitaria, e le riflessioni che suscita, invitano però anche ad un’attenzione più ‘letterale’ nei confronti di questa malattia infettiva che dà il titolo al romanzo, emblema per antonomasia di tutte le malattie collettive che hanno da sempre flagellato l’umanità, ma rappresentata questa volta in un contesto moderno per vari aspetti anticipatore della situazione di oggi. Quanto

² E. MORIN, *Le paradigme perdu: la nature humaine*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1973. Le citazioni sono tratte dall’edizione digitale realizzata da Nord Compo/Centre National du Livre, p. 187. Edizione italiana E. MORIN, *Il paradigma perduto. Che cos’è la natura umana?*, Mimesis edizioni, Milano-Udine, 2020, traduzione di Eugenia Bongianni. Sono io che traduco le parole citate: «Dobbiamo sapere oggi che il problema centrale è quello di una politica dell’uomo, che non c’è una politica dell’uomo senza una teoria dell’uomo, e che non c’è ancora una teoria dell’uomo».

³ Frase dell’astrofisico Giovanni Bignami, affissa su una parete dell’ASI - Agenzia Spaziale Italiana. Ringrazio la mia amica Agnese Albonetti di averne fatto lo spunto di riflessioni condivise con me durante i giorni della pandemia COVID-19.

⁴ Convegno organizzato sotto la responsabilità scientifica di Marina Geat e Marco Giosi.

⁵ Cfr. A. CAMUS, *Lettre à Roland Barthes sur la Peste*, datata Paris, 11/02/1955, riprodotta in A. CAMUS, *Œuvres complètes*, NRF Gallimard, Paris, 1962 (collection «Bibliothèque de la Pléïade»), t. II, p. 1973-1975.

mai attuale appare in particolare la denuncia di una radicale frattura tra Uomo e Natura che Camus sottolinea potentemente nell'incipit del romanzo, al suo secondo paragrafo, descrivendo la città di Orano. La 'bruttezza' è mostrata allora non soltanto come una categoria estetica, ma innanzitutto come una condizione etica conseguente a una logica mercantile e predatoria sul mondo, tipica dello sviluppo industriale e commerciale in progressiva ascesa per tutto il Novecento:

«La cité elle-même, on doit l'avouer, est laide. D'aspect tranquille, il faut quelque temps pour apercevoir ce qui la rend différente de tant d'autres villes commerçantes, sous toutes les latitudes. Comment faire imaginer, par exemple, une ville sans pigeons, sans arbres et sans jardins, où l'on ne rencontre ni battements d'ailes ni froissements de feuilles, un lieu neutre pour tout dire? Le changement des saisons ne s'y lit que dans le ciel. Le printemps s'annonce seulement par la qualité de l'air ou par les corbeilles de fleurs que des petits vendeurs ramènent des banlieues; c'est un printemps qu'on vend sur les marchés»⁶.

Ogni considerazione di ambito critico-letterario esula dagli obiettivi di questo articolo. Ciò nonostante, il riferimento a Camus a inizio di questa riflessione mi è sembrato importante, sia per la coincidenza temporale con quel convegno mancato a inizio pandemia, sia soprattutto perché Camus esprime, con particolare evidenza, la coscienza del legame, estetico ed etico, che ci unisce inesorabilmente alla natura, qualunque sforzo l'uomo moderno compia per separarsene e del peccato, capitale e mortale, conseguente alla rottura di questo legame. L'autore di *Noè*, l'innamorato del sole, del mare, del vento del Mediterraneo, pur nella lucidissima coscienza dell'assurdità dell'esistenza, della crudeltà della malattia, e della «tendre indifférence du monde»⁷, mi è dunque sembrato ergersi significativamente, quale una sorta di nume tutelare, alle soglie di una riflessione, che l'urgenza attuale sollecita, sull'Umano, sulla sua essenza e sui suoi rapporti con quanto lo circonda.

L'irruzione della pandemia ha potentemente portato alla scena, per chi ha occhi capaci di vedere, la natura 'trinitaria' dell'essere umano di cui tante volte

⁶ A. CAMUS, *La Peste*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, cit., p. 1219. Per comodità di lettura trascrivo in nota la traduzione italiana dei brani francesi citati: «La città, a onor del vero, è brutta. Il suo aspetto tranquillo impedisce che si colga subito ciò che la rende diversa da tante città commerciali a qualsiasi latitudine. Come immaginare, per esempio, una città senza piccioni, senza alberi e senza giardini, dove non si incontrano né battiti d'ala né fruscii di foglie, un luogo neutro insomma? Qui il passaggio delle stagioni si legge soltanto nel cielo. La primavera si annuncia esclusivamente dalla qualità dell'aria e dalle ceste di fiori che i venditori portano dai sobborghi; è una primavera che si vende al mercato». (A. CAMUS, *La Peste*, Bompiani Giunti Editore, Milano, 2017, p. 9, traduzione di Yasmina Mélao-uh).

⁷ «La tenera indifferenza del mondo», sono io che traduco. A. CAMUS, *L'Étranger*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, cit., p. 1211.

ha parlato e scritto Edgar Morin⁸: ad un tempo individuo; essere sociale; membro della specie biologica *homo sapiens*, quest'ultima inserita all'interno di un delicato e complesso equilibrio con ogni specie vivente su scala planetaria. La malattia epidemica – la peste come il COVID-19 – ci pone di fronte all'evidenza biologica e sociale della nostra essenza umana come nessun'altra esperienza probabilmente può fare.

Due concetti espressi da Morin mi paiono essenziali per comprendere la situazione attuale.

Le paradigme perdu

Il primo è quello del «paradigme perdu», strettamente connesso alla domanda fondamentale che Morin si pone e ripropone sin dai suoi primi scritti: «Qui sommes-nous? Qu'est-ce que l'homme dans le monde?»⁹ La pandemia ci sollecita urgentemente a confrontarci con questo interrogativo, dal quale discendono comportamenti collettivi e individuali, scelte politiche, gerarchie di valori. Un'etica, insomma. Un solo esempio: può esistere una 'salute' che sia esclusivamente umana?

In una sua recente conferenza intitolata *La pandemia circolare*¹⁰ la scienziata Ilaria Capua dimostra che no, la salute umana non può essere disgiunta dalla salute dell'ambiente planetario in cui l'umano è, indissolubilmente, inserito. Riprendendo l'immagine suggestiva e antica dei quattro elementi, la salute umana, ricorda la scienziata, non può non essere interconnessa, nel bene e nel male, alla salute dell'aria, dell'acqua, della terra e del fuoco, ossia al problema dell'inquinamento e del crescente surriscaldamento climatico. È questa circolarità, è questa complessità che la pandemia, afferma Ilaria Capua, «ci urla in faccia»¹¹.

Riprendendo l'interrogativo di Morin, la pandemia ci ricorda con forza che, oltre a essere persone con le proprie caratteristiche e le proprie esigenze individuali (al centro delle più cogenti preoccupazioni a causa di una sorta di egocentrismo malato), siamo anche e indissolubilmente parte di un insieme vivente e, non dovremmo dimenticarcene, anche di un insieme geologico e

⁸ Concetto recentemente ribadito nella lezione di Edgar Morin sulla *La pensée complexe* a Roma, Ambassade de France près le Saint-Siège, Villa Bonaparte, 26/06/2019.

⁹ E. MORIN, *Le paradigme perdu: la nature humaine*, cit., p. 16. Sono io che traduco le parole citate: «Chi siamo? Che cos'è l'uomo nel mondo?»

¹⁰ *La Pandemia Circolare*, lezione di Ilaria Capua svolta in streaming il 09/11/2020 nell'ambito delle Lezioni di Scienza organizzate da Mondadori Education. Cfr. <<http://mondadorieducation.it/formazione-e-aggiornamento/appuntamenti/con-ilaria-capua/>> (ultima consultazione 05/01/2021).

¹¹ *Salute circolare: intervista con la virologa Ilaria Capua. Le Colazioni Digitali del Corriere*, intervista di Massimo Sideri, trasmessa in streaming il 04/06/2020 e consultabile al link <<https://youtu.be/JgpbdXNxUn8>> (consultato il 05/01/2021). Cfr. I. CAPUA, *Salute circolare. Una rivoluzione necessaria*, Egea editore, Milano, 2019.

cosmico ancora più ampio (siamo fatti di stelle, recita il celebre titolo di un libro dell'astrofisica Margherita Hack¹², evocando con un tono poetico la verità della nostra composizione fisico-chimica). La consapevolezza della nostra natura biologica e di specie ci pone di fronte alle nostre responsabilità: in un mondo in cui l'umano, sempre più numeroso e immerso nella logica dell'economia consumistica, accelera la sua attività predatoria su tutto quanto lo circonda; in cui, per il profitto delle sue produzioni, ha fortemente compromesso la biodiversità; in cui l'espansione spaziale dell'antropizzazione e gli effetti devastanti dei cambiamenti climatici hanno provocato spostamenti e vertiginose riduzioni delle altre specie viventi; in cui la globalizzazione economica esige una circolazione planetaria sempre più intensa di uomini e di merci; in un mondo come questo, come poteva, prima o poi, non insorgere una moderna pandemia zoonotica, causata cioè dal 'salto' di un virus (sulla terra da milioni di anni prima dell'*homo sapiens*) da un animale 'serbatoio', cui l'evoluzione l'aveva adattato, verso la nostra specie, ugualmente animale, ma irrispettosa e fortemente invadente, espandendosi rapidissimamente lungo le rotte della nostra economia globalizzata? Quanto aveva predetto già nel 2012 il giornalista e scrittore David Quammen nel suo libro *Spillover*¹³ non è forse la conseguenza ineluttabile di questi comportamenti? E la vera, forse più grave malattia, non è forse (come per l'epidemia nella città senza nome di José Saramago¹⁴) l'umana cecità rispetto all'interrogativo centrale posto da Morin: «Qu'est-ce que l'homme dans le monde?»

Cercando risposta a questa domanda, vi è poi da considerare il terzo aspetto della natura 'trinitaria' dell'umano di cui parla Morin, la sua essenza sociale. Piuttosto vulnerabile e fragile a livello individuale (rispetto ai macro e ai micro predatori dell'ambiente, per esempio), l'umano ha sviluppato la capacità sincronica e diacronica di creare reti collaborative e solidali: sincronica, gestendo collettivamente (nel bene e nel male) l'organizzazione delle sue attività a tutti i livelli (in questo particolare contesto pandemico, ricordiamo almeno la ricerca scientifica, il funzionamento degli interventi sanitari, le comunicazioni mediatriche, il sostegno alle situazioni di maggior difficoltà); diacronico, trasmettendo il sapere, il pensiero e i valori attraverso le generazioni. In senso più ampio, dell'essenza sociale dell'umano fanno parte moltissime delle attività che poniamo sotto l'etichetta delle parole 'cultura' e 'educazione', di cui la narrazione (e dunque la letteratura) è una componente fondamentale. Ma perché? E come questa riflessione può risultarci utile nel nostro attuale contesto pandemico?

Tra le molte risposte possibili, vorrei soffermarmi su quella formulata dallo

¹² M. HACK, M. MORELLI, *Siamo fatti di stelle. Dialogo sui minimi sistemi*, Einaudi, Torino, 2016.

¹³ D. QUAMMEN, *Spillover: Animal Infections and the Next Human Pandemic*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2012. Edizione italiana: D. QUAMMEN, *Spillover. L'evoluzione delle pandemie*, Adelphi, Milano, 2017, traduzione di Luigi Civalleri.

¹⁴ Cfr. J. SARAMAGO, *Ensaio sobre a Cegueira*, Caminho, Lisboa, 1995. Edizione italiana: J. SARAMAGO, *Cecità*, Einaudi, Torino, 1996. Traduzione di Rita Desti.

scrittore David Foster Wallace, in un discorso rivolto ai laureati di un college americano nel 2005 e divenuto una sorta di manifesto degli studi umanistici¹⁵. Wallace riflette con gli studenti su «your liberal arts education's meaning», giungendo alla conclusione che essa è così fondamentale perché consente all'essere umano (a noi stessi) di uscire dalla sua «default setting», cioè dalla sua «modalità predefinita», di riuscire a sottrarsi, nel comportamento e nel pensiero, agli automatismi e ai condizionamenti inconsapevoli, moltiplicando la capacità di penetrare in situazioni umane e contestuali differenti dalle proprie, infrangendo i limiti imprigionanti della propria esclusiva individualità egocentrica. Entrare nella situazione dell'altro, immaginare altri scenari, essere consapevoli di ciò che è essenziale nella realtà circostante, ma che spesso le rigidità delle «modalità predefinite» non consentono di vedere (per i pesciolini inconsapevoli dell'aneddoto citato da Wallace, è il saper riconoscere quanto per loro c'è di più evidente, ma di cui non si rendono conto: «This is water», questa è l'acqua), e sulla base di questa visione più ampia compiere le proprie scelte, di valori e di comportamenti, e dunque essere più liberi.

Queste affermazioni di Wallace non sono soltanto utili a una riflessione sull'importanza della letteratura, e più in generale degli studi umanistici. Il semiologo Stefano Bartezzaghi, in modo pertinente e stimolante, collega ciò che Wallace reputa così importante in queste attività formative – consentire all'umano di uscire dalla propria «modalità predefinita» – ad un'altra attività, il gioco¹⁶, essenziale nell'infanzia, ma anche in ogni altra fase dell'esistenza umana, sino a connotare antropologicamente la nostra specie, secondo la celebre definizione di Johan Huizinga: *Homo ludens*¹⁷. La letteratura, afferma Bartezzaghi, «[...] è in continua relazione con la sfera del gioco», proprio perché, attraverso la forma della simulazione e quindi del 'come se', educa il pensiero a vedere ciò che la nostra 'modalità prestabilita' rischierebbe di offuscare, moltiplicando le possibilità di modelli e di punti di vista, consentendo la rappresentazione mentale di una molteplicità di scenari possibili, e dunque di scegliere, di essere (più) liberi¹⁸.

Ma la variazione, la flessibilità, e dunque la scelta e la trasformazione (non soltanto nella genetica, ma anche nell'approccio cognitivo e affettivo al mondo,

¹⁵ D.F. WALLACE, *This is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion, About Living a Compassionate Life*, Little, Brwon & Company, New York, 2009 (discorso ai laureati del Kenyon College, 2005). Traduzione italiana online in L. LIPPERINI, *Sul tenersi fuori, e sulla citazione di questa è l'acqua*, in Lipperatura di Loredana Lipperini, 28.12.2020, consultabile al link <<http://loredana-lipperini.blog.kataweb.it/lipperatura/2020/12/28/sul-tenersi-fuori-e-sulla-citazione-di-questa-e-lacqua/>> (ultima consultazione 05/01/2021).

¹⁶ Cfr. S. BARTEZZAGHI, *La ludoteca di Babele. Dal dado ai social network: a che gioco stiamo giocando?*, UTET, Milano, 2016.

¹⁷ J. HUIZINGA, *Homo ludens*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, 1967. Traduzione italiana di Corinna von Schendel (edizione originale olandese 1938).

¹⁸ Cfr. G. GHIONI, Bartezzaghi: «La letteratura è in continua relazione con la sfera del gioco», intervista in Il Libraio.it, 13.06.2016, consultabile al link <<http://illibraio.it/news/dautore/stefano-bartezzaghi-gioco-intervista-369036/>> (ultima consultazione 05/01/2021).

per un ‘umano’ in cui i confini tra natura e cultura si sono definitivamente assottigliati e in cui, come dice Morin, specie biologica e ‘specie’ sociale sono indissolubilmente interconnessi in un’unica ‘trinità’ con il suo essere individuo), sono anche – darwinianamente – le qualità fondamentali dell’adattamento all’habitat di vita, della ‘selezione naturale’, dunque della possibilità stessa della permanenza dell’umano sul pianeta Terra. Antropologicamente, per l’*homo ludens*, il gioco, così come la letteratura, sarebbero dunque strumenti essenziali e imprescindibili di questa flessibilità del ‘saper vedere’ e del ‘saper agire’, uscendo dalla propria ‘modalità prestabilita’. Sono le potenzialità di trasformazione che consentono all’umano di mantenersi nel mondo e col mondo. La pandemia ci mette di fronte a questa evidenza.

Ritornando alla pagina della *Peste* di Camus con cui abbiamo iniziato questa riflessione, essa ci fornisce un esempio calzante di come la letteratura possa invitarcia ‘vedere’, a percepire, cognitivamente ed esteticamente, la rottura del nostro paradigma perduto. Il cittadino di Orano, prima della peste, mostra la frattura della sua ‘trinità’ imprescindibile: individuo bloccato nella ‘modalità predefinita’ della routine quotidiana e commerciale, ha perso la consapevolezza del suo essere ‘specie biologica’, ossia parte della natura, che ha addirittura eliminato dalla sua contemplazione (strade «senza piccioni, senza alberi e senza giardini, dove non si incontrano né battiti d’ala né fruscii di foglie [...]»; «è una primavera che si vende al mercato»). Analogo discorso vale per la morte, la finitudine biologica dell’umano, eliminata dalla sua visuale, come mostrano le pagine successive del romanzo¹⁹. La letteratura – in questo caso il capolavoro di Camus – sollecita il lettore a vedere, cognitivamente ed esteticamente, potremmo dire ‘poeticamente’, questa frattura. Ed è qui che il suo stimolo si incontra con un secondo aspetto importante del pensiero di Edgar Morin.

*Vivre poétiquement*²⁰

In *Penser global. L’homme et son univers*, del 2015, Edgar Morin ripropone il suo interrogativo fondamentale, da cui tutto il resto discende – che cos’è l’umano – sottolineando, oltre alla complessità del suo oggetto di ricerca, anche la sua sostanziale bipolarità: «Ainsi, une nouvelle complexité de l’être humain peut nous apparaître. Ce qui est intéressant dans ces nouvelles façons de voir *sapiens, faber, economicus, demens, religiosus, mythologicus, ludens*, c’est que nous pouvons dégager l’idée de bipolarité, fondamentale pour expliquer cette richesse de l’individu»²¹.

¹⁹ Cfr. A. CAMUS, *La Peste*, cit., p. 1220-1221.

²⁰ E. MORIN, *Penser global. L’homme et son univers*, Robert Laffont, Paris, 2015. Le citazioni sono tratte dall’edizione digitale. Sono io che traduco le parole citate: «Vivere poeticamente».

²¹ *Ivi*, p. 26. Edizione italiana E. MORIN, *Sette lezioni sul pensiero globale*, a cura di M. Ceruti, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 2016, traduzione Susanna Lazzari. Sono io che traduco il brano citato: «Così può apparire una nuova complessità dell’essere umano. Quello che è interessante in questi nuovi

Le due polarità che Morin distingue nell'essere umano egli le designa con due avverbi la cui etimologia deriva direttamente dal contesto della letteratura: vivere prosaicamente *versus* vivere poeticamente. Entrambe sono presenti nell'umano e in ciascun individuo. Spiega Morin: la polarità prosaica è quella che riguarda tutto ciò che facciamo esclusivamente per bisogno, per la sopravvivenza; la polarità poetica è quella che presiede lo sviluppo interiore più profondo, cui si collegano i sentimenti di comunione con gli altri e con quanto ci circonda (l'amore, l'amicizia, l'armonia, la felicità). E conclude: «Tout ce qui nous procure un sentiment de beauté ou de qualité contribue à la qualité poétique de la vie»²².

La letteratura, come modalità verbale della bellezza, potrebbe allora porsi su questo spartiacque tra sopravvivere e vivere, tra soffermare unicamente l'attenzione e l'azione, politica e individuale, sui bisogni strettamente economici, come incita a fare l'attuale modello di civilizzazione incentrato sui valori prioritari dell'interesse e della crescita²³, e il comprendere e sentire davvero – esteticamente, poeticamente²⁴ – il legame che ci unisce al mondo, la condivisione di essenza e di destino con gli altri uomini, come pure col vivente e il non vivente in cui siamo immersi, di cui facciamo parte.

È importante, spiegava Morin già nel suo *Les sept savoirs nécessaires à l'éducation du futur*, del 2000²⁵, che tutte le discipline, tutte le modalità del sapere convergano verso questa piena comprensione dell'umano e del suo essere al mondo. Ciò implica la messa in discussione di molte delle barriere disciplinari ancora vigenti in ambito scolastico, come pure nella mentalità comune. Un vero e proprio cambio di paradigma educativo²⁶. «Il faut non seulement réunir

modi di vedere *sapiens*, *faber*, *economicus*, *demens*, *religiosus*, *mythologicus*, *ludens*, è che possiamo ricavarne l'idea di bipolarità, fondamentare per spiegare questa ricchezza dell'individuo».

²² *Ibid.* Sono io che traduco il brano citato: «Tutto ciò che ci procura un senso di bellezza o di qualità contribuisce alla qualità poetica della vita»

²³ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 24: «L'évolution et le progrès ont conduit à envisager à partir du XVIII^e siècle une autre définition de l'humain avec l'*Homo economicus*. Nous sommes actuellement dans une civilisation où l'intérêt privé, personnel, est devenu de plus en plus important avec notamment une politique entièrement dévorée par l'économie, inféodée à l'économie, et pas n'importe quelle économie: l'économie qui parle uniquement des intérêts». Sono io che traduco il brano citato: «L'evoluzione e il progresso hanno portato a considerare a partire dal XVIII secolo un'altra definizione dell'umano con l'*Homo economicus*. Siamo attualmente in una civiltà in cui l'interesse privato, personale, è diventato sempre più importante, in particolare con una politica totalmente divorata dall'economia, assoggettata all'economia, e non a un'economia qualsiasi: l'economia che parla unicamente degli interessi».

²⁴ Cfr. *ivi*, p. 28: «La poésie n'est pas seulement dans le poème. Elle est une composante de nos vies». Sono io che traduco il brano citato: «La poesia non è soltanto nel poema. È una componente delle nostre vite».

²⁵ E. MORIN, *Les sept savoirs nécessaires à l'éducation du futur*, Seuil, Paris, 2000. Edizione italiana: E. MORIN, *I sette saperi necessari all'educazione del futuro* Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 2001, traduzione Susanna Lazzari.

²⁶ Sull'urgenza di un cambio di paradigma, resa ancora più pressante dall'esperienza della pandemia

des connaissances venues des sciences naturelles et des sciences humaines pour comprendre l'humain, mais aussi envisager la littérature qui est également un moyen de connaissance», ribadisce in *Penser global*²⁷.

Due parole chiave sembrano utili a comprendere il ruolo che Morin riconosce alla letteratura in questo avanzamento congiunto del sapere: poeticità e immaginazione. Sulla prima, che sembra coincidere col concetto di bellezza, di sentimento estetico di unione e condivisione, ci siamo già brevemente soffermati. Quanto all'immaginazione, che è capacità di formulare ipotesi, di giocare al 'come se', di rappresentare scenari alternativi e plurali, di cogliere nessi e analogie inattese, se è vero che la letteratura ne mette in atto e ne esercita tutte le potenzialità, essa è anche una componente essenziale delle cosiddette 'scienze dure', come dimostrano le testimonianze di molti prestigiosi scienziati sul loro *modus operandi*²⁸: «Dans le jeu entre l'imaginaire et le réel, l'imaginaire nous aide à mieux voir le réel, à mieux le vivre, à avoir des "lucidités" sur l'homme, tel le besoin humain de reconnaissance dont parlait le philosophe Hegel» – conclude Morin²⁹.

La ricerca di una verità «mystérieuse, fuyante, toujours à conquérir»³⁰; il conseguimento di una libertà (anche dagli valori sociali dominanti e dalla propria modalità prestabilita) «dure à vivre autant qu'exaltante»³¹; la via maestra della bellezza, quale strumento potente di comprensione e di condivisione, che la letteratura sembra indicare anche in momenti difficili da vivere e da comprendere. Sono questi gli obiettivi che danno senso al «rôle de l'écrivain»³², come Camus li esprimeva nel suo celebre discorso di accettazione del Premio Nobel nel 1957. Il discorso di Wallace agli studenti, come anche le indicazioni di Morin per una riorganizzazione paradigmatica del sapere e dell'educazione

COVID-19, cfr. in questo stesso volume l'articolo di Y. BETTAHAR, *L'épistémologie à l'heure de la COVID-19: si on changeait de paradigme?*

²⁷ E. MORIN, *Penser global. L'homme et son univers*, cit., p. 26. Sono io che traduco il brano citato: «Non basta riunire soltanto le conoscenze provenienti dalle scienze naturali e dalle scienze umane per comprendere l'umano, ma occorre considerare anche la letteratura che è ugualmente un mezzo di conoscenza».

²⁸ Cfr. J.-F. DORTIER, *L'imagination scientifique, la science et la recherche*, in M. WIEVIORKA (a cura di), *La science en question(s)*, Éditions Sciences Humaine, coll. «Les entretiens d'Auxerre», Auxerre, 2014, p. 53-60

²⁹ E. MORIN, *Penser global. L'homme et son univers*, cit., p. 26. Sono io che traduco il brano citato: «Nel gioco tra l'immaginario e il reale, l'immaginario ci aiuta a vedere meglio il reale, a viverlo meglio, ad avere delle "lucidità" sull'uomo, come il bisogno umano di riconoscimento di cui parlava il filosofo Hegel».

³⁰ A. CAMUS, *Discorso di ricezione del Premio Nobel*, Stoccolma, 10/12/1957, consultabile sul sito The Nobel Prize, al link <<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1957/camus/25232-albert-camus-banquet-speech-1957/>> (ultima consultazione 05/01/2021). Sono io che traduco le parole citate: «misteriosa, sfuggente, sempre da conquistare».

³¹ *Ibid.* Sono io che traduco le parole citate: «dura da vivere quanto esaltante».

³² *Ibid.* Sono io che traduco le parole citate: «ruolo dello scrittore».

del futuro sulla base di una rinnovata consapevolezza dell’umano³³, sembrano muoversi nella stessa direzione di quanto esprime Camus.

Il mondo in cui viveva Camus usciva da due guerre mondiali, aveva vissuto la tragedia del Nazismo, percepiva come incombente il rischio dell’autodistruzione nucleare. La sua peste, di cui abbiamo parlato all’inizio di questa riflessione, appare, anche e soprattutto, come una grande metafora dei mali politici della sua epoca. La rappresentazione nel suo romanzo della malattia e delle sue conseguenze, fisiche, psicologiche e sociali, non è per questo meno esemplare rispetto all’esperienza della pandemia contemporanea, come pure lo stupore e l’impreparazione del cittadino moderno di Orano, chiuso nella ‘modalità pre-stabilità’ di un’esistenza improntata alla logica commerciale, cieco alla vita degli altri, come pure al suo posto nella natura, nella storia e nella sua interrelazione sociale, sostanzialmente incapace di interrogarsi sul senso del proprio essere al mondo.

È così differente la sua situazione di fronte a quella peste, immaginaria e metaforica, rispetto alla situazione che ci confronta oggi con la pandemia del COVID-19? Certamente la potenza della scrittura romanzesca – la sua bellezza – concentra in poche centinaia di pagine, in una sola città e in alcune esperienze di personaggi significativi quanto l’umanità sta attraversando su scala planetaria. Ma le domande di fondo che quella scrittura sollecita a porsi restano profondamente simili, l’invito pressante a interrogarsi, attraverso tutte le modalità del sapere e del capire, su quale sia la collocazione dell’umano rispetto alla sua specie biologica e all’insieme del vivente; quali siano il senso e i valori dei legami, degli affetti, della condivisione e della collaborazione sociale; quali le responsabilità delle scelte mancate, per egoismo o per inconsapevole ignoranza; quali le conseguenze, che la peste di Camus, così come la pandemia odierna e planetaria, ci invita a saper immaginare, dunque a prevenire, attraverso una rinnovata armonia e un nuovo umanesimo: « Chaque génération, sans doute, se croit vouée à refaire le monde », scrive Camus nel suo discorso per il Nobel. « La mienne sait pourtant qu’elle ne le refera pas. Mais sa tâche est peut-être plus grande. Elle consiste à empêcher que le monde se défasse»³⁴.

La malattia epidemica – la peste come il COVID-19 – ci pone di fronte al-

³³ Cfr. anche E. MORIN, *La Tête bien faite. Repenser la réforme, réformer la pensée*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1999, p. 135: «Enfin, il faut être conscient du problème du paradigme. Un paradigme règne sur les esprits parce qu’il institue les concepts souverains et leur relation logique (disjonction, conjonction, implication, etc.) qui gouvernent de façon occulte les conceptions et les théories scientifiques qui s’effectuent sous son empire». Sono io che traduco la frase citata: «Bisogna essere infine consapevoli del problema del paradigma. Un paradigma regna sulle menti perché stabilisce dei concetti dominanti e le loro relazioni logiche (disgiunzione, congiunzione, implicazione, ecc.) che governano in modo occulto le concezioni e le teorie scientifiche che si realizzano sotto il loro dominio». Edizione italiana: E. MORIN, *La testa ben fatta. Riforma dell’insegnamento e riforma del pensiero*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 1999, traduzione di S. Lazzari.

³⁴ *Ibid.* Sono io che traduco la frase citata: «Ogni generazione, senza dubbio, si crede destinata a rifare il mondo. La mia sa che non lo rifarà. Il suo compito è forse più grande: consiste nell’impedire che il mondo si disfaccia».

l'evidenza biologica e sociale della nostra essenza umana come nessun'altra esperienza probabilmente può fare. E delle responsabilità che ne conseguono.

Le parole chiave del convegno Camus che non si è mai realizzato (la rivolta, la libertà, la giustizia, l'impegno, l'Europa, la storia, la sofferenza, la solidarietà, la bellezza, il silenzio, la natura, l'innocenza, la memoria) e la sua prospettiva di ricerca «verso un nuovo umanesimo», ci sembrano, a un anno di distanza, tanto più urgenti e attuali.

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Sezione 2

Varie

Ossi Autio¹, Mart Soobik, Gisli Thorsteinsson,
Brynjar Olafsson

*Technology Education and Technological Reasoning in Finland,
Estonia, and Iceland*

ABSTRACT

The research took place in Finland, Estonia, and Iceland. The researchers were interested in the present level of students' technological reasoning at the ages of eleven and thirteen. Students' technological reasoning was measured with a questionnaire regarding mechanical systems connected with simple physical phenomena. Data was collected using a questionnaire distributed to 317 students in Finland, 303 in Estonia and 277 in Iceland. The results highlighted general lack of understanding in technological reasoning. Some differences between Finland, Estonia and Iceland were found. This is explained by different curriculum settings. Furthermore, difference between boys and girls was found, which could be due to different interests in technological area.

KEYWORDS: Technology education, Technological reasoning, Technical literacy

1. *Introduction*

The goals of the Finnish, Estonian and Icelandic national curriculums for Technology education are basically quite similar and aim to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to develop technological knowledge and reasoning². Curriculums include technological knowledge and reasoning based on handicraft skills within a problem-solving context. Teaching aims to help students to manage in their daily lives and possibly earn a living in society through innovative thinking and an entrepreneurial approach. The subjects also aim to develop students' understanding on how to assess, un-

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² Framework Curriculum Guidelines, Helsinki, Opetushallitus, 2004; O. AUTIO & R. HANSEN, *Defining and Measuring Technical Thinking: Students' Technical Abilities in Finnish Comprehensive Schools*, in «Journal of Technology Education», 14 (1), 2002, pp. 5-19; NC, *Põhikooli riiklik õppekava* [National curriculum for comprehensive schools], 2010.

derstand use and manage technology in a broad context, both at home and in the community.

Although the goals in the curriculums are quite similar, the main difference seems to be that Finnish Technology education is nowadays officially named Handicraft and it is claimed that Technical craft and Textile craft should be compulsory for boys and girls in grades 3–9. The

general aim of Finnish Technology education is to develop students' craft skills and support their self-esteem through practical craft activities; it also aims to increase students' understanding about the various craft tools, manufacturing processes and the use of different materials. Furthermore, the subject aims to encourage students to make their own decisions in designing, allowing them to assess their ideas and products. Students' practical work is product orientated and based on experimentation, in accordance with the development of their personality. In addition, gender issues are important throughout the whole curriculum³.

Estonian curriculum has in practice two different craft/technology subjects – the technologically based Technology education (TE) and Handicraft/Home economics (HHE) separately. Students can choose the subject based on their wishes and interests. Subjects taught in the subject field of Technology in Estonia enable students to acquire the mentality and values inherent to the contemporary society. In lessons, students study and analyse phenomena and situations, as well as use various sources of information, integrate creative thinking and manual activity. As a part of the study process, students generate ideas, plan, model, and prepare objects/products and learn how to present them. Teaching develops their skills in working and cooperating, as well as their critical thinking and the ability to analyze and evaluate⁴.

In Iceland, artistically based Textile craft is included in Home economics while technological contents are taught in Technology education for both boys and girls. The present national curriculum for Technology education places an emphasis on individual-based learning. It also gives teachers the freedom to run an independent curriculum in school, which is based on the national curriculum. The subject is product based and students learn via traditional craft activities. Students' work is based on craft tradition rather than technology; however, innovation and idea generation are an important part of the Icelandic curriculum. There are also the aims of developing students' manual skills, instructing them in the manufacturing processes and training them to organise their own work. The national curriculum also incorporates outdoor education, working with green wood and sustainable design⁵.

³ Framework Curriculum Guidelines, Helsinki, Opetushallitus, 2004.

⁴ SFT, *Põhikooli riiklik õppekava. Ainevaldkond "Tehnoloogia"* [National curriculum for comprehensive schools. Subject field Technology], 2010.

⁵ B. OLAFSSON & G. THORSTEINSSON, *Examining Design and Craft Education in Iceland: Curriculum Development and Present Situation*, in «FORMakadmisk», 3(2), 2010, pp. 39-50.

In practice, the researchers were interested at the present level of students' technological reasoning and the relation between the curriculum and students' achievements. To evaluate students' technological reasoning in Finland, Estonia and Iceland, a questionnaire was devised, concerning mechanical systems based on simple physical principles. The age of research participants was 11 and 13. Both boys and girls were represented as equal amount. Finally, a statistical analysis was done, and some valuable data was found between these three countries. The research questions were:

1. What is students' practical level of technological understanding and reasoning in Finnish, Estonian and Icelandic schools?
2. What is the relationship between Technology education curriculums and students' technological knowledge and reasoning?
3. Are there differences between students' technological knowledge and reasoning in these three countries?

2. Technological reasoning

Within the Finnish, Estonian and Icelandic curriculums, the aim of Technology education is to facilitate students' technological reasoning, to prepare them for participation in modern society and working life. Students learn practical skills and learn about technology connected to whole environment and all human activity, using various tools from different design contexts associated with the transformation of energy, information, and materials.

The development of students' practical handicraft skills provides them the opportunity to learn about and utilise various technologies. Students put ideas into practice through practical projects and the knowledge and skills gained are applied not only to the creation of new products, but to the adaptation and maintenance of existing products, machines, and different materials.

Technological knowledge and understanding are important for students, in rationalising the changing world of today. Furthermore, as active citizens, it enables them to play a part in the modification of the environment. Technology can be described by means of how humans modify the world around them to meet their needs and solve practical problems⁶. It extends human possibilities and enables people to do things they could not otherwise do. Technological action focuses on fulfilling specific goals under the influence of a variety of factors, such as individual, group or societal needs and the development of components, devices, and systems.

Technological reasoning was measured with a questionnaire regarding mechanical systems connected with simple physical phenomena. Mechanical sys-

⁶ Maryland Technology Literacy Consortium, *Maryland Technology Literacy Standards for Students. Professional Development and Technology Measures for Students, Teachers and School Administrators*, 2014.

tems are systems commonly built for a single purpose and usually comprise a few parts or subsystems. Simple mechanical systems are prevalent in our daily lives and are built in such a way that their parts are in synchronisation with each other, working towards a shared goal. Their operations are obvious to us unless we examine them precisely. The Oxford Online Dictionary⁷ introduced the adjective ‘mechanical’ as skilled in the practical application of an art or science, of the nature of a machine or machines, and relating to or caused by movement, physical forces, properties or agents such as is concerned with mechanics.

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary⁸ defines reasoning as the action of thinking about something in a logical, sensible way, to form a conclusion or judgement. In science and technology, reasoning and argumentation are important in establishing the best explanation for a natural phenomenon⁹. The ability of technological reasoning is a necessary precondition in the development of improved technological and scientific explanation and in students’ ability to improve the level of understanding¹⁰.

Technological understanding and reasoning have been examined within the context of technology and science education Hubber, Tytler and Haslam¹¹ claim that, if students are to successfully learn about technology and science, they must be aware of the different concepts and processes and the relationships between them, in order to understand these within the context of technological knowledge.

Autio¹² researched the technological knowledge of students aged eleven and thirteen in Finnish comprehensive schools and found statistical differences between boys and girls. The author assumed that boys and girls differ in their interests and spatial visualization. The performance on the visualization-in three-dimensions test is seen as an estimate of spatial skills thought to be related to science achievement and career selection and as an estimate of general analytical ability¹³. It is obvious that spatial visualization influences technological reasoning. This finding is consistent with some other researches¹⁴. It is as-

⁷ The Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2014.

⁸ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 2014.

⁹ National Research Council, *A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts and Core Ideas*, The National Academies Press, Washington DC, 2012.

¹⁰ P. SUTONO & B. WALDRIP, *Impact of a representational approach on students’ reasoning and conceptual understanding in learning mechanics*, in «International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education», 11(4), 2013, 1-24.

¹¹ P. HUBBER, R. TYTLER & F. HASLAM, *Teaching and learning about force with a representational focus: pedagogy and teacher change*, in «Research in Science Education», 40, 2010, 5-28.

¹² O. AUTIO, *Oppilaiden teknologiset valmiudet – vertailu vuoteen 1993 [Students’ technical abilities – a comparison to year 1993]*, in «Kasvatus», 44(4), 2013, pp. 367-380.

¹³ M. LINN & A. PETERSEN, *Emergence and characterization of sex differences in spatial ability: A meta-analysis*, in «Child Development», 56(6), 1985, pp. 1479–1498.

¹⁴ S. JOHNSON & P. MURPHY, *Girls and physics: Reflections on APU survey findings*, London, Department of Education and Science, 1986; J.H. STREUMER, *Evaluieren van techniek*. Encshede, Univer-

sumed, that this has also an impact on girls' motivation for learning about technology¹⁵.

Within the context of Technology education, the link between practical work and technological reasoning is important and helps students to understand technological principles through their own experience. Kohl, Rosengrant and Finkelstein¹⁶ assume that the ability to demonstrate is a key in studying physical science. In addition, students with higher ability to demonstrate principles are better at solving problems¹⁷. Rosengrant, Heuvelen and Etkina¹⁸ supposed that students who frequently used representations were successful in technological reasoning. Ainsworth¹⁹ claimed that illustrations are important in learning and constructing a deeper understanding. Furthermore, several researchers have suggested that when students learn to implement materials and tools, they improve their understanding about technological learn to implement materials and tools, they improve their understanding about technological phenomena²⁰.

3. Methods

The research was undertaken during the years 2015-2016 in Finland, Estonia, and Iceland. The participants were 11- and 13-year-old students. The Finnish sample was 317 participants. The Estonian part of the research was undertaken with 303 students and in Iceland 277 students took part in the study. Approximately the same number of boys and girls and correspondingly younger and older students took part in the research. However, in the Icelandic sample there was more emphasis in 13-year-old students' age group. In more detail, the amount of research participants can be seen in Table 1.

siteit van Twente, 1998.

¹⁵ M. BYRNE, *Techniques for Classroom Interaction*, Longman, Harlow, 1987; D.F. HALPERIN, *Sex Differences in Cognitive Abilities*, Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ, 1992.

¹⁶ P.B. KOHL, D. ROSENGRANT & N.D. FINKELSTEIN, *Strongly and weakly directed approaches to teaching multiple representation use in physics*, in «Physics Review Special Topics - Physics Education Research», 3, 2007, pp. 1-10.

¹⁷ K.L. MALONE, *Correlations among knowledge structures, force concept inventory and problem-solving behaviors*, in «Physics Review Special Topics-Physics Education Research», 4, 2008, pp. 1-15.

¹⁸ D. ROSENGRANT, A.V. HEUVELEN & E. ETKINA, *Do students use and understand freebody diagrams?*, in «Physics Review Special Topics - Physics Education Research», 5, 2009, pp. 1-8.

¹⁹ S.AINSWORTH, *The educational value of multiple representations when learning complex scientific concepts*, in J. K. GILBERT, M. REINER & M. NAKHLEL (Eds.), *Visualisation: Theory and Practice in Science Education*, Springer, New York, 2008, pp. 191-208.

²⁰ R. COX, *Representation construction, externalised cognition, and individual differences*, in «Learning and Instruction», 9, 1999, pp. 343-363; A.A. DISSERA, *Metarepresentation: native competence and targets for instruction*, in «Cognition and Instruction», 22(3), 2004, pp. 293-331; J.G. GREENO & R.P. HALL, *Practising representation: learning with and about representational forms*, in «Phi Delta Kappa», 78(5), 1997, pp. 361-368; B. WALDRIP & V. PRAIN, *Changing representations to learn primary science concepts*, in «Teaching Science», 54(4), 2006, pp. 17-21.

Country	11 year old boys	11 year old girls	13 year old boys	13 year old girls	Total
Finland	90	58	94	75	317
Estonia	75	74	78	76	303
Iceland	30	31	116	100	277

Table 1: *The number of Finnish and Estonian research participants.*

In the Finnish sample the schools were selected on the basis to ensure schools with different curriculums as well as rural and city schools. The Finnish sample related to earlier research projects in a larger context concerning technological abilities: technological will, technological skill, and technological knowledge²¹. In Estonia participating schools were selected through convenience sampling in both urban and rural areas. However, most of the city schools came from Tallinn which is the capital of Estonia. In Iceland both rural and city schools were included in the sample. However, the whole sample did not consider a selection that is representative of the entire population in Finland, Estonia, and Iceland²².

To evaluate students' technological knowledge and reasoning, a questionnaire was devised, concerning simple mechanical systems and physical principles used and seen in daily life. The questionnaire was developed by the ministry of labour in Finland and has been widely used for students to see if they have competence to a technological career. The questions referred to students' technological knowledge and reasoning supported by their education and life experiences. The questionnaire consists of 28 questions, with related figures. Each question included three possibilities, one of which was the correct answer. Examples from simple mechanical contexts used in the questionnaire are presented in Figure 1.

²¹ AUTIO & HANSEN, *Defining and Measuring Technical Thinking: Students' Technical Abilities in Finnish Comprehensive Schools*, op. cit.; AUTIO, *Oppilaiden teknologiset valmiudet – vertailu vuoteen 1993 [Students' technical abilities – a comparison to year 1993]*, op. cit.

²² L. COHEN, L. MANION & K. MORRISON, *Research Methods in Education*, Routledge, New York, 2007; D.R. COOPER & P.S. SCHINDLER, *Marketing Research*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2006.

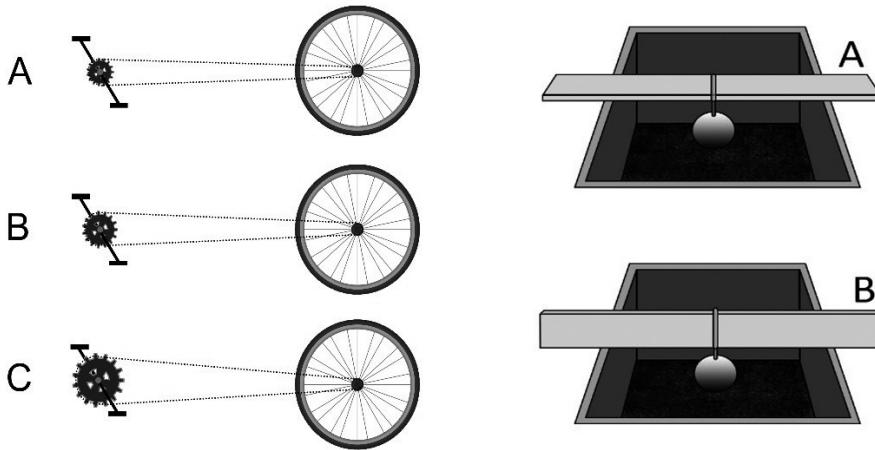


Figure 1. Example pictures from the questionnaire

This kind structured and closed questions make statistical treatment and analysis easier and enabling comparison across groups²³. Moreover, a questionnaire should be attractive and encouraging to respondents²⁴. It must be considered that the questionnaire was not originally designed to evaluate the curriculum of technology education. Some of the questions were quite difficult especially for the younger students, but this was necessary to ensure sufficient statistical dispersion for both 11- and 13-year-old students.

A numerical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS), which provided total averages, the median, standard deviation, and averages for different classes of questions. As expected from the earlier researches, Finnish, Estonian, and Icelandic samples approximately followed a normal curve. In earlier studies of the Finnish ministry of labour reliability was measured to be 0.85 and in a research of students' technical abilities (1993-1996) reliability was 0.88.

4. Results

The main idea of this research was to evaluate the present level of students' technological knowledge and reasoning. In addition, the study tried to find out: is there a relationship between students' Technology education lessons and the results of the questionnaire in technological knowledge and reasoning?

²³ A.N. OPPENHEIM, *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement*, Pinter, London, 1992.

²⁴ COHEN, MANION & MORRISON, *Research Methods in Education*, op. cit.

As expected, based on an earlier study the correct answers obey normal distribution. Figure 2 presents the number of Finnish, Estonian and Icelandic students' correct answers in the survey.

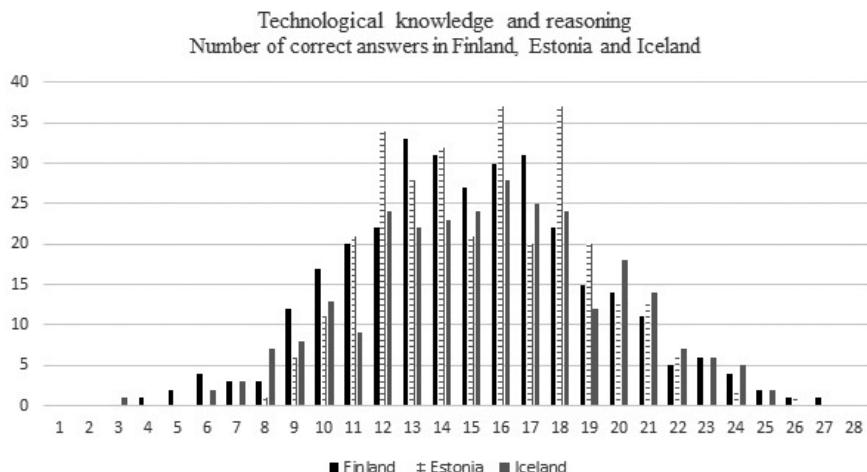


Figure 2. *The number of Finnish, Estonian and Icelandic students' correct answers in the questionnaire.*

The total average of right answers to 28 questions was in Finland 15.0, in Estonia 15.4 and in Iceland 15.5. The biggest category in the Estonian sample was 16 and 18 right answers scored by 37 students. In the Finnish sample the biggest category was 13 correct answers provided by 33 students. In Iceland 16 correct answers were scored by 28 students. As expected, there were differences in the answers provided by the 11- and 13-year-old students. The average number of correct answers to 11-year-old students in Finnish sample was 14.1. In the Estonian sample the figure was 14.9 and in Iceland 14.7. In the group of 13-year-old students, the small difference was almost disappeared as the average in Finland was 15.7, in Estonia 15.8 and in Iceland 15.8.

In Finland, there was statistically significant difference between boys and girls ($p<0.001$). Based on the total answers provided by both sexes, Finnish boys answered 15.7 of the questions correctly while the girls had 14.0 right answers. In addition, there were statistically significant differences between boys and girls in Estonia ($p=0.003$). In terms of the total answers provided by both sexes, the boys answered 16.0 of the questions correctly while the girls had 14.7 correct answers. The difference between boys and girls was the smallest in Iceland ($p=0.025$). The boys answered 16.0 of the questions correctly while the girls had 14.9 of correct answers.

	All students	11 year old students	13 year old students	Boys	Girls
Finnish students	15.0	14.1	15.7	15.7	14.0
Estonian students	15.4	14.9	15.8	16.0	14.7
Icelandic students	15.5	14.7	15.8	16.0	14.9

Table 2. *Finnish, Estonian, and Icelandic students' correct answers in the survey.*

In Finland, no statistical differences were found within the schools of similar curriculum of Technology education. Even in the University training school the results were the same as in rural areas, even though the school is usually ranked one of the most successful in Finland. Thus, we can assume that the questionnaire measured technological reasoning, not just the context students learn in school. In Estonia, the study participants were students in both urban and rural areas. Although the difference between schools was not measured, we can assume that in Tallinn city schools the students' knowledge level was somewhat higher than in the country schools. In Iceland, large part of the students came from the capital of Iceland – Reykjavik. However, it is the only city in Iceland and most of the whole population in Iceland live in that city.

Later, the questionnaire was classified into eight categories based on their technological nature, as seen in Table 3. The number of questions in each category was different and some of the questions were more difficult than others. This was not considered as the questionnaire was originally designed to measure technological reasoning, but not to evaluate the contents of the curriculum in technology education directly. These categories, however, give interesting indications of students' knowledge in these areas. The highest average of correct answer in Finland was 68 % right answers to 28 questions. It was found in the category for balance and gravity. Next one in Finland was 62 % for speed, acceleration and distances followed by 58 % for speed of pulleys and gear-wheels. In Estonia and Iceland, almost the same categories were highest in the list: 65 % in Estonia and 70 % in Iceland for balance and gravity. Correspondingly, 63 % and 54 % for direction of rotation followed by speed, acceleration and distances 60 % in both Estonia and Iceland. The lowest averages of correct answers in Finland were 34 % for mechanisms and 45 % for lift pulleys. In Estonia, the lowest scores were also in mechanisms 29 % and 48 % for lift pulleys. In Iceland, the most difficult category was mechanisms 40 %.

Categories	Numbers of questions	Correct answers FIN / EST / ICE
Direction of rotation	6	56 % / 63 % / 54%
Speed of pulleys and gears wheel	3	58 % / 56 % / 65 %
Lift pulleys	2	45 % / 48 % / 50 %
Speed, acceleration, and distances	3	62 % / 60 % / 60 %
Balance and gravity	4	68 % / 65 % / 70 %
Thermodynamics and pressure	3	54 % / 59 % / 51 %
Power and torque	4	51 % / 57 % / 51 %
Mechanisms	3	34 % / 29 % / 40 %
Total:	28	Average: 54 % / 55 % / 56 %

Table 3. The average of correct answers for the main fundamentals in the questionnaire

Students' earlier experiences and simple physical knowledge should have helped them to answer most of the questions for example in the category of balance and gravity. As a matter of fact, the average of correct answer to this category was in Finland as high as 68 %. The same category was scored the highest also in Estonia (65 %) and Iceland (70 %). The lowest average of correct answers in Finland, Estonia and Iceland was for mechanisms (34 % / 29 % / 40 %). As we can conclude from the example questions in Figure 3 it is obvious that in the category of mechanisms more technological understanding and reasoning is needed. It seems that this part from technological literacy cannot be learned directly from textbooks.

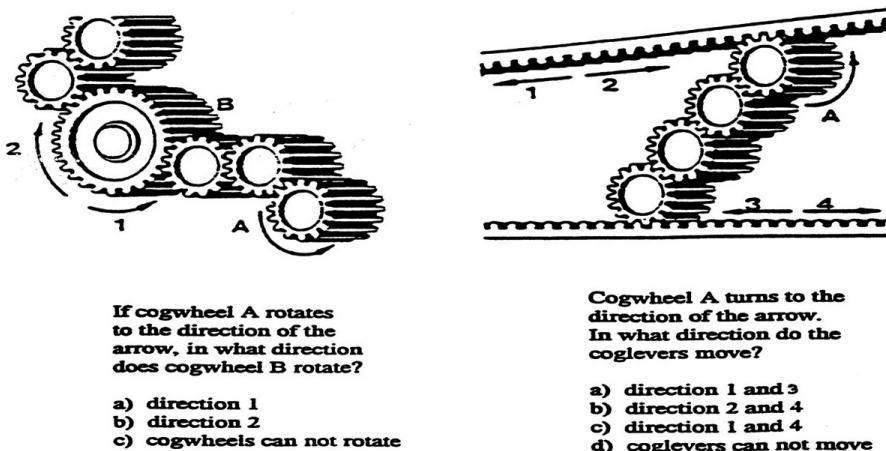


Figure 3. Example questions in the category of direction of rotation and mechanisms

5. Discussion

The first research question was: What is students' practical level of technological understanding and reasoning in Finnish, Estonian and Icelandic schools? Our research data shows that Icelandic students gave 15.5 right answers to 28 questions. Among Estonian students the figure was 15.4 and in Finland 15.0. The students did not perform in the measurement of technical knowledge and reasoning as well as expected. There are multiple reasons for this. In Science education, a common problem is that many teachers teach the typical presentation-recitation way while students do routine practical work or just solve simple textbook problems. Those activities do not encourage students to construct scientific concepts or meanings; neither does it help them to see phenomena and objects in the environment²⁵. In addition, learning is too often focused on production skills and in too many schools technology lessons are still based on reproducing artefacts according to given models without a connection with technological reasoning. Technology education lessons are more practical rather than theoretic and the optimal solution between theory and practice has not yet been found.

The second question of our research was: What is the relationship between Technology education curriculums and students' technological knowledge and reasoning?

A remarkable part of the Finnish, Estonian and Icelandic national curriculum for Technology education is associated with handicraft skills and design principles within a problem-solving context. Practising handicraft within Technology education lessons give students plenty of opportunities to learn about technology. Practical work with tools, machines and different materials is expected to accommodate both technological practice and knowledge²⁶.

Based on students Technology education studies and the use of textbooks in other subjects, such as physics, the students should have been more familiar with the content of the survey²⁷. The goal of transfer is the ability to use the knowledge learned in lessons in practical reasoning used outside the school²⁸. Although there is evidence about the problems in transferring²⁹, the results in technological knowledge and reasoning were not as good as we could have expected.

We can assume that there is a certain relation between the content of cur-

²⁵ A. ARONS, *Teaching Introductory Physics*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1997.

²⁶ V. PRAIN, R. TYTLER & S. PETERSON, *Multiple representation in learning about evaporation*, in «International Journal of Science Education», 31(6), 2009, pp. 787–808.

²⁷ KOHL, ROSENGRANT & FINKELSTEIN, *Strongly and weakly directed approaches to teaching multiple representation use in physics*, *op. cit.*

²⁸ J. BRASNSFORD, A. BROWN & R. COCKING, *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*, National Academy Press, Washington D.C., 2000.

²⁹ V.E. CREE & C. MACAULAY, *Transfer of learning in professional and vocational education*, Routledge, London, Psychology Press, 2000; K.J. PUGH & D.A. BERGIN, *Motivational influences on transfer*, in «Educational Psychologist», 41(3), 2006, pp. 147-160.

riculum and the results in technological knowledge and reasoning. During last twenty years technological knowledge and reasoning has diminished from 17.2 to current 15.7 correct answers in 28 questions. Especially, among 13-year-old boys the difference was statistically very significant ($p=0.001$) as the result has come down from 18.5 to 16.5³⁰.

The third research question was: Are there differences between students' technological knowledge and reasoning in these three countries?

Although, the difference between the three countries was relatively small, the difference was seen between Finnish, Estonian and Icelandic girls. As a matter of fact, the difference in technological knowledge and reasoning between Finnish (14.0) and Icelandic/Estonian girls (14.9 / 14.7) was not expected while in Finland the gender equality has been one of the main educational goals for decades. It seems that, at least in technological knowledge and reasoning, the Finnish compulsory system is not working as it has been planned. It seems that there are simply not enough lessons in technology education as just one subject is divided into two different contents.

It was not the main goal of this research, but we cannot pass the differences between boys and girls. Although it is not a surprise, that boys and girls differ in their interests, this result usually is emotionally charged. In any case, statistically significant differences between boys and girls in Estonia ($p=0.003$) were found. The boys answered 16.0 of the questions correctly while the girls had 14.7 right answers. In Finland, the difference was even more significant ($p<0.001$) as Finnish boys answered 15.7 of the questions correctly and girls had 14.0 correct answers. In Iceland, the difference was not as significant ($p=0.025$) while boys had 16.0 and girls 14.9 correct answers. This difference in technological knowledge, especially in spatial reasoning corroborates with several other researches³¹. However, we must consider that spatial skills and technological reasoning consistently improve with training and they are mostly due to previous experience in design-related activities, as well as play with construction toys such as Legos³². Anyway, it is obvious that this has an impact on girls' motivation for learning about technology³³.

³⁰ AUTIO, *Oppilaiden teknologiset valmiudet – vertailu vuoteen 1993 [Students' technical abilities – a comparison to year 1993]*, op. cit.

³¹ O. AUTIO, *Oppilaiden tekniosten valmiuksien kehittyminen peruskoulussa [Student's development in technical abilities in Finnish comprehensive school]*, Helsinki, The University of Helsinki, Department of Teacher Education, 1997; JOHNSON & MURPHY, *Girls and physics: Reflections on APU survey findings*, op. cit.; LINN & PETERSEN, *Emergence and characterization of sex differences in spatial ability: A meta-analysis*, op. cit.; STREUMER, *Evaluieren van techniek*, op. cit.; D. VOYER, S. VOYER & M. BRYDEN, *Magnitude of sex differences in spatial abilities: A meta-analysis and consideration of critical variables*. Psychological Bulletin, 117(2), 1995, 250-270.

³² S. SORBY & B. BAARTMANS, *The development and assessment of a course for enhancing the 3-D spatial visualization skills of first year engineering students*, in «Journal of Engineering Education», 89(3), 2000, pp. 301-07.

³³ BYRNE, *Techniques for Classroom Interaction*, op. cit.; HALPERIN, *Sex Differences in Cognitive Abilities*, op. cit.

6. Conclusions

The school subject Technology education is an important aspect of modern education. It aims to support students' technological knowledge and skills. Developing students' practical handicraft skills helps them to learn about and utilise various technologies in their work. It also helps students to use technology within broader contexts outside the school. Finnish, Estonian and Icelandic Technology education curriculum is associated with technological knowledge, handicraft skills and design principles within a problem-solving context. Practical skills are supposed to accommodate both technological knowledge and understanding³⁴. Practising handicraft within technology lessons should help students to learn about technology and develop their skills further in many different learning environments. However, in technology education lessons the optimal solution between theory and practice has not yet been found.

According to the results, there were differences between Finland, Estonia, and Iceland. This might be due to different curriculum settings. All curriculums provide students technological knowledge based on handicraft skills within a problem-solving context. However, the main difference seems to be that both Technical craft and Textile craft are compulsory for both boys and girls in Finland. In Estonia, students can choose the subject based on their wishes and interests. This allows students to study in detail the subject that they are really interested in. In Iceland two different subjects: art-based Textile education and innovation-based Technology education, compulsory for both sexes, seem to be relatively good setup for gender equity as the difference in attitudes and technological reasoning was the smallest in Iceland. In Estonia, Textile craft is a separate subject mostly included in Home economics while technological contents are taught in Technical craft/Technology education lessons. Both boys and girls can choose these lessons based on their interest area. We can assume that this is a relatively good setup for both boys and girls compared with the Finnish compulsory system.

The difference in results between boys and girls was not a surprise. Gender-based segregation and falling recruitment for scientific and technological studies is a common phenomenon. However, it is a paradox that the inequity is still noticeable in Finland, where for decades gender equality has been a prime educational goal. One possible reason for this might be the different social expectations for boys and girls. Furthermore, the feeling of autonomy is especially important for older students who want and need more autonomy in their decisions and perhaps want to concentrate more on their real interest area. Some research in other life contexts such as education in general has also shown that high levels of autonomous motivation toward education lead to high academic performance³⁵.

³⁴ PRAIN, TYTLER & PETERSON, *Multiple representation in learning about evaporation*, op. cit.

³⁵ K. BURTON, J. LYDON, D. D'ALESSANDRO & R. KOESTNER, *The differential effects of intrinsic and*

However, the most obvious reason for gender differences is different interest areas for boys and girls. In the future, it is a challenge for the curriculum development. How can technology education benefit from the fact that especially girls are interested in technological everyday solutions rather than technological details as reported in several other researches³⁶. In addition, motivation in technology education can be significantly improved by developing special programs³⁷, where teachers are aware of the differing interests of both genders and consider ways of making the environment and the subject attractive to all³⁸.

Due to several reasons, we cannot fully generalise the results. Although the schools were selected on the basis to ensure schools with different curriculums as well as rural and city schools; the sample did not consider a selection that is representative of the entire population. In the future, also the questionnaire needs to be improved and the content needs to be updated. In any case, the study provided the authors new ideas to develop students' technological knowledge and reasoning. It will be the basis for a new research with a reconstructed survey.

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³⁶ J. ECCLES, *Who Am I and What Am I Going to Do with My Life? Personal and Collective Identities as Motivators of Action*, Educational Psychologist 44(2), 2009, pp. 78-89; C. MITTS, *Gender Preferences in Technology Student Association Competitions*, in «Journal of Technology Education», 19 (2), 2008, pp. 80-93; K. WEBER & R. CUSTER, *Gender-based Preferences toward Technology Education Content, Activities, and Instructional Methods*, in «Journal of Technology Education», 16 (2), 2005, pp. 55-71; I. WENDER, *Relation of Technology, Science, Self-Concept, Interest, and Gender*, in «Journal of Technology Studies», 30 (3), 2004, pp. 43-51.

³⁷ I. MAMMES, *Promoting Girls' Interest in Technology through Technology Education: A Research Study*, in «International Journal of Technology and Design Education», 14, 2004, pp. 89-100.

³⁸ S. SILVERMAN & A. PRITCHARD, *Building Their Future: Girls and Technology Education in Connecticut*, in «Journal of Technology Education», 7 (2), 1996, pp. 41-54.

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Marília C. Cid¹

*Assessment and classroom learning: discontinuities
between theory and practice²*

ABSTRACT

Assessment literacy remains a major educational challenge, despite progress in this area. The literature shows the need to improve assessment literacy and the quality of teacher training in order to promote effective assessment knowledge and practice. The idea that assessment can improve students' learning has gained increasing acceptance but the systematic use of learning-focused assessment seems to be the exception rather than the rule. In our research in the Portuguese context, the use of assessment as a tool for learning is not indicated by the data collected from teachers.

KEYWORDS: Classroom learning, Assessment for learning, Assessment of learning, Assessment literacy, School teachers

1. *Introduction*

Assessment has been used in formal education since the 16th century, when exam techniques were first used as a tool to enhance oral competence through argument and the verbal challenge of ideas, and then evolving into written form. But assessment as we understand it today is closely linked to the expansion of public schools to the general population and, in that sense, has existed for just over a century³.

Nowadays, assessment is an increasingly consolidated scientific domain of great social importance and has taken a central place in the educational field, being present in different areas of school life. We assess in order to monitor the quality of education, to identify the strengths and weaknesses of educational programs and projects, and to monitor the progress of students or the performance of teachers.

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³ J. PINTO, L. SANTOS, *Modelos de avaliação das aprendizagens*, Universidade Aberta, Lisboa, 2006.

The assessment of students' learning has been increasingly studied since the 1990s and much has been written in this field of research. However, many of these articles often refer to the need to increase assessment literacy and improve training quality in this area, seeing these as the only ways to promote the theory and practice of assessment⁴.

In the literature, there is a continuing tendency to see the acts of teaching and learning as being separate from the act of assessing. The risk of assessment being detached from teaching and learning is strongest in the countries with the most prevalent and systematic use of tests and exams, where the focus tends to be on fulfilling the requirements of programs of study and preparing students for exams⁵ rather than supporting students in their learning.

Evidence to support the idea that assessment can improve students' learning has increased but the literature still shows that the systematic use of assessment to enhance learning has been the exception and not the rule. Wiliam⁶ considers that the lack of effective improvement of assessment practices in schools worldwide is related, at least in part, to the lack of consistency in the implementation of formative assessment.

This article addresses a need to better understand formative assessment in the Portuguese education system. We start by elucidating the way we understand assessment in the classroom and then present an analysis of data collected at the beginning of training courses that we developed for Portuguese teachers in primary and secondary education. We go on to consider how this research relates to other contexts.

2. Assessment for learning

The initial paradigm for systematic assessment was focused on learning outcomes and was driven by schools becoming more accessible to all sectors of society in the second half of the 18th century⁷. The assessment of students' learning is a recent development when compared to the measurement of learning outcomes.

Measure has been linked to assessment since it was transposed from the scientific method that flourished in mathematics and experimental sciences to the area of social sciences in the 19th century. Its application to education oc-

⁴ D.S. PACE, *Using collaborative action research (CAR) to investigate the beliefs-to-practice relationship about a pedagogy*, in *ISNITE 2019 Proceedings: International Symposium on New Issues in Teacher Education* (Valletta, University of Malta), 2020.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ D. WILIAM, *Assessment and learning: some reflections*, in «Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice», n. 24(3), 2017, pp. 394-403.

⁷ A.J. AFONSO, *Políticas educativas e avaliação educacional. Para uma análise sociológica da reforma educativa em Portugal (1985-1995)*, Instituto de Educação e Psicologia da Universidade do Minho, Braga, 1998.

curred when educational systems became more complex, with a rapid increase in students and a trend towards classifying normal and rational human behaviour. The development of psychometrics, with the elaboration of metric scales of intelligence, ended up influencing the use of tests in the pedagogical field⁸, tests that started to allow the measurement and quantification of learning, along with comparing and grading.

The 20th century saw the emergence of alternative assessment models that were more focused on the learning process than on learning outcomes. The term formative assessment was used for the first time in 1967 by Scriven⁹, who distinguished it from summative assessment in an analysis based on the link between assessment and the curriculum. Bloom, in 1969, also made use of this distinction in defending the use of tests with a purpose beyond mere classification, suggesting instead their use as an aid to the process of teaching and learning: «We have found that such formative evaluation procedures are most effective when they are separated from the grading process and are presented primarily as aids in the teaching-learning process»¹⁰.

Over the following decades, several studies were carried out with a focus on investigating ways of integrating assessment into pedagogical practice and considering the use of assessment to improve teaching and learning. In addition, several reviews of studies were also carried out to survey this new field of investigation. The review that had the most impact was that of Black and William, published in 1998, in which the authors analysed a great diversity of studies and realized that the systematic use of formative assessment led to significant gains in learning¹¹.

Various definitions of formative assessment have been proposed by different authors. In 1998, Black and William assigned great importance to feedback on the quality of learning and considered assessment to be the set of activities undertaken by teachers and students that provides information capable of modifying their teaching and learning activity. This type of assessment can be defined as formative if it is used to regulate and adapt teaching to students' needs. Cowie and Bell¹² add that if it is meant to increase learning, the process of recognizing and responding to the way students are learning must be done while the learning is taking place. The 2005 OECD¹³ report concludes that in

⁸ PINTO, SANTOS, *Modelos de avaliação das aprendizagens*, op. cit.

⁹ M. SCRIVEN, *The methodology of evaluation*, in R. Tyler, R. Gagné & M. Scriven (eds.), *Perspectives of Curriculum Evaluation* (AERA Monograph Series on Curriculum Evaluation, No. 1), Rand McNall Chicago, 1967, pp. 39-83.

¹⁰ B. BLOOM, *Some theoretical issues relating to educational evaluation*, in R.W. Tyler (ed.), *Education evaluation: New roles, new means*, t. II, vol. DXVIII, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1969, p. 49.

¹¹ P.J. BLACK, D. WILIAM, *Inside the black box. Raising standards through classroom assessment*, King's College London School of Education, London, 1998.

¹² B. COWIE, B. BELL, *A model of formative assessment in science education*, in «Assessment in Education», n. 6, 1999, pp. 101-116.

¹³ OECD, *Formative assessment: Improving learning in secondary schools*, OECD, Paris, 2005.

several countries formative assessment is understood as a frequent and interactive process of assessing students' progress to understand and identify their learning needs in order to adequately adjust teaching.

In order to limit multiple interpretations of the term formative, researchers began to use the term 'assessment *for* learning' to increase the focus on the process of assessment and its distinction from 'assessment *of* learning' which is more focused on the final results. It was Stiggins in 2005 who popularized the expression 'assessment for learning' and established its difference to 'formative assessment':

«Assessment FOR learning is different from what historically has been referred to as formative assessment. If formative assessment is about more frequent, assessment FOR learning is about continuous. If formative assessment is about providing teachers with evidence, assessment FOR learning is about informing students about themselves. If formative assessment tells users who is and is not meeting state standards, assessment FOR learning tells them what progress each student is making toward meeting each standard while the learning is happening – when there's still time to be helpful»¹⁴.

Assessment for learning can thus be seen as a means to encourage students' self-regulation¹⁵ and at the same time provide a relevant aid for teachers in order to regulate their own teaching¹⁶.

Pintrich¹⁷ presents the concept of self-regulation as an active and constructive process, whereby students establish goals for their learning and then seek to monitor, regulate and control their cognition, motivation and behaviour, targeted and guided by the objectives and contextual characteristics of the environment. Basically, it is about learners being able to coordinate their cognitive resources, their emotions and actions and put them at the service of learning goals.

Assessment for learning and self-regulated learning turn out to be overlapping processes, since both involve setting goals, monitoring/assessing progress towards those goals, and reacting to feedback by adjusting teaching, learning and/or the activities carried out¹⁸.

¹⁴ R. STIGGINS, *Assessment for learning defined*, in ETS/Assessment Training Institute's International Conference: Promoting Sound Assessment in Every Classroom, Portland OR, 2005, September, pp. 1-2.

¹⁵ D. WILIAM, *Formative assessment and contingency in the regulation of learning processes*, in Symposium Toward a Theory of Classroom Assessment as the Regulation of Learning (Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association), Philadelphia, PA, 2014.

¹⁶ L. ALLAL, *Régulations des apprentissages: orientations conceptuelles pour la recherche et la pratique en éducation*, in L. Allal, L. Mottier Lopez (eds.), *Régulation des apprentissages en situation scolaire et en formation*, De Boeck, Bruxelles, 2007, pp. 7-23.

¹⁷ P. PINTRICH, *The role of goal orientation in self-regulated learning*, in M. Boekaerts, P. Pintrich, M. Zeidner (eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation*, Academic Press, San Diego, 2000, pp. 451-502.

¹⁸ H. ANDRADE, S.M. BROOKHART, *The role of classroom assessment in supporting self-regulated learning*, in D. Laveault, L. Allal (eds.), *Assessment for learning: Meeting the challenge of implementation*, Springer, Cham, Switzerland, 2016.

Assessment for learning therefore involves an active participation of both the teacher and the students in the assessment process and puts emphasis on interactions that favour learning and, as a result, even modifies the way students see themselves as learners¹⁹. Black and Wiliam²⁰ consider that the process is formative if evidence on the students' performance is collected, interpreted and used by teachers and students to make decisions about the next teaching and learning steps, leading to more appropriate actions that promote future learning. The authors conceptualize formative²¹ assessment based on three essential processes: a) identifying where students are in their learning; b) identifying where they must go; and, c) identifying the best way to get there²².

Considering the teacher, students and the role of peers in the process, Leahy, Lyon, Thompson and Wiliam²³ added a set of five key strategies that should be the basis of formative assessment²⁴: a) clarify, share and understand learning goals and success criteria; b) organize discussions, activities and tasks that make students' learning visible; c) provide feedback that allows students to progress in their learning; d) encourage students to become responsible for their own learning; and e) encourage students to carry out peer assessment activities and give feedback.

The idea is that evidence collected about learning is used to adjust teaching to students' needs. However, according to Wiliam²⁵, the key to the process is to organize learning environments that involve students, and both teachers and students need to commit to the process of assessment for learning.

When this assessment practice for learning is integrated into daily classroom activities, it produces significant improvements in student performance, which is confirmed by external summative assessments²⁶.

3. Assessment for learning and assessment of learning

The assessment of learning (summative), in contrast to the assessment for learning (formative), aims, according to Fernandes, «to sum up what students

¹⁹ B. COWIE, J. MORELAND, K. OTREL-CASS, *Expanding notions of assessment for learning: Inside science and technology primary classrooms*, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, N.L., 2013.

²⁰ P.J. BLACK, D. WILIAM, *Developing the theory of formative assessment*, in «Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability», n. 21(1), 2009, pp. 5-31.

²¹ Once the concept is operationalized, we will continue to use Black and Wiliam's term *formative assessment* once it is a common use designation in the literature and it tends to be used in the same sense of *assessment for learning*.

²² D. WILIAM, *Embedded formative assessment*, Solution Tree Press, Bloomington, 2011.

²³ S. LEAHY et al., *Classroom assessment: Minute-by-minute and day-by-day*, in «Educational Leadership», n. 63(3), 2005, pp. 18-24.

²⁴ WILIAM, *Embedded formative assessment*, *op. cit.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ P.J. BLACK et al., *Assessment for learning. Putting it into practice*, Open University Press, Berkshire, 2011; WILIAM, *op. cit.*

know and are capable of doing at a given moment», and is generally used for grading purposes, thus providing «summarised information intended to record and make public what appears to have been learned by the students»²⁷.

Assessment, in general terms, is used to investigate what people know and are capable of doing, in order to make decisions about whether or not they have learned what they were expected to learn. It is, therefore, an essential aspect in the educational process, and systematic processes for obtaining and interpreting data have been developed so that conclusions can be drawn about the learning undertaken. If assessment is seen simply as a process of obtaining valid information about the students, it makes no sense to present a conflict between formative and summative assessment²⁸.

In fact, considering formative and summative assessment as separate entities has been a source of confusion as assessment relates to the practices and instruments we use to invoke any information about knowledge, understanding and students' attitudes²⁹. Collected evidence can be interpreted and used for formative or summative purposes and it is the purpose for which it is used that differentiates it. An instrument can, however, be designed in such a way that is more useful for one purpose than for another, and this can lead to misunderstandings³⁰.

Assessment, whether formative or summative in nature, is a procedure for making inferences about learning³¹, with students performing tasks, teachers observing, and the outputs generating data that are interpreted to support these conclusions³². These inferences about learning outcomes imply intentionality in teaching and learning and strong interaction between teachers and students, with students able to present information to the teacher and to be comfortable working on the basis of the teacher's feedback. On the other hand, for these inferences to be effective and meaningful, the purpose of assessment must be clear to all involved³³.

Thus, as Black and Wiliam³⁴ point out, distinguishing formative from summative assessment corresponds to distinguishing the types of inferences resulting from

²⁷ D. FERNANDES, *Para uma teoria da avaliação no domínio das aprendizagens*, in «Estudos em Avaliação Educacional», n. 19(41), pp. 347-372, 2008, p. 358.

²⁸ P.J. BLACK, D. WILIAM, *Classroom assessment and pedagogy*, in «Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice», n. 25(6), 2018, pp. 551-575.

²⁹ P. BLACK, *Pedagogy in theory and in practice: Formative and summative assessments in classrooms and in systems*, in D. Corrigan, R. Gunstone, A. Jones (eds.), *Valuing Assessment in Science Education: Pedagogy, Curriculum, Policy*, Springer, Dordrecht, New York, 2013, pp. 207-229.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ BLACK, WILIAM, *Classroom assessment and pedagogy*, *op. cit.*

³² D. WILIAM, *Assessment and learning: some reflections*, in «Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice», n. 24(3), 2017, pp. 394-403.

³³ PACE, *Using collaborative action research (CAR) to investigate the beliefs-to-practice relationship about a pedagogy*, *op. cit.*

³⁴ BLACK, WILIAM, *Classroom assessment and pedagogy*, *op. cit.*

assessment. If these are related to the student's present state or his or her future potential, assessment has a summative function. If they relate to the type of actions that would help students to learn better, then assessment has a formative role.

In line with this, there should be no marked opposition between the two assessment modalities, indeed there can and should be synergies between them³⁵. The two cannot work simultaneously, as this would raise many difficulties, but can complement each other, as long as it is taken into account that not all assessment strategies allow this articulation, especially those of a more informal nature. Strategies that involve students in more than one assessment process work better for learning, but, as Santos³⁶ warns us, this may require profound changes in the existing assessment culture.

Promoting assessment for learning in the classroom and achieving a good articulation between the two modalities of assessment (of and for learning) is not a simple task as it requires a mastery of assessment processes, the ability to design teaching, learning and assessment in an integrated way and a good knowledge of students and learning contexts. These conditions require time with learners, openness to change and training.

4. Teachers' views of assessment

Our experience of developing in-service training for primary and secondary school teachers has allowed us to gather information about the points of view that trainees express about assessment of their pupils' learning. The courses begin with a written response to some diagnostic questions to assess the trainees' perceptions at the start of their training. For the purposes of this article, we consider the question: 'What words occur to you when you think about assessment? (Please indicate three)'.

Data on the words that teachers associate with assessment was collected over two years (2017-2019) and the results from 124 surveyed teachers are presented in Figure 1 ($N = 540$). We obtained 201 unique words and a great diversity of associations, with 71 words mentioned only once. Words that were only mentioned once include the following: qualitative, collect, inclusion, support, autonomy, collaboration, context, diverse, progress, interpretation, overcoming, teamwork.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ L. SANTOS, *A articulação entre a avaliação somativa e a formativa, na prática pedagógica: uma impossibilidade ou um desafio?*, in «Ensaio: Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação», n. 24(92), 2016, pp. 637-669.

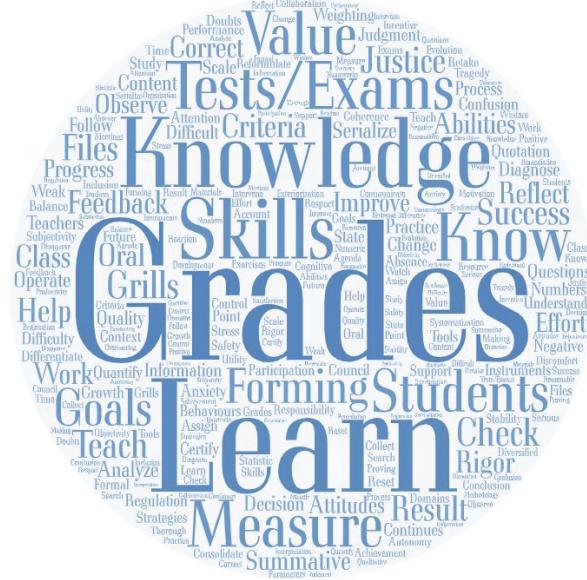


Figure 1. Map of words associated by teachers with assessment.

The most frequently mentioned words are shown in Table 1 and emphasis is given to those mentioned by more than 20% of respondents.

Words	Number of References	Relative Frequency (N=124)
Grades	33	26.6%
Knowledge	30	24.2%
Learning	29	23.4%
Test/ Exams	28	22.6%
Measure	26	21.0%

Table 1. Words most mentioned by teachers

Thus, we can see that the word 'grades' appears in first place, which shows the teachers' great concern with the attribution of grades to their students. At first, this appears to be a vision more focused on the certifying function of assessment, associated with balance and control. We assume this is related to the current practice and culture in many of the school contexts, which continue to exert pressure to show evidence of student achievement, encouraging teachers to use summative assessment practices.

The word ‘knowledge’ comes in second place. Although this term in itself doesn’t indicate a preference for any one of the assessment modalities in question, we interpret it as meaning that facts, information, and subject content is a concern of teachers in terms of assessing their students’ knowledge. It is common for teachers to place more emphasis on knowledge than on students’ abilities and attitudes³⁷ and our survey bears this out: ‘knowledge’ was referred to by 30 teachers, ‘abilities’ by 6 and ‘attitudes’ by 5. We interpret these as associations referring to valid and useful knowledge to which assessment provides access to the reality of what students know and are capable of doing. In this regard, we wonder why none of the 124 teachers mentioned terms linked to student self-assessment, which involves students in knowledge construction and is fundamental to helping students appropriate assessment criteria and decisive in students’ ability to generate knowledge and feedback for themselves.

The term ‘learning’ is mentioned by 23.4% of the teachers. This shows that our teachers have moved far from the pedagogical model of the 19th century where assessment took place at the end of a long teaching sequence as a strict verification of knowledge. As assessment, whether of a formative or summative nature, corresponds to a procedure to make inferences about the learning accomplished³⁸, we would expect the key words to imply that there is intentionality in teaching and learning and a strong interaction between teachers and students. Assessment in support of learning is based on an established consensus that refers us to this close link: a) assessment is addressed to the student and his or her own learning; b) the student is aware of learning barriers and facilitators; c) assessment is integrated into the learning process itself; d) assessment values what is observed and what information is collected rather than the results; e) assessment makes it possible to understand the causes of errors and learning difficulties; and f) useful information is gathered from assessment to guide learning³⁹.

The next most common words were ‘test/exam’, which have a direct connection to the assessment tools that are most commonly used in Portuguese schools. These terms reveal the high presence of tests and exams in the teachers’ daily routine, and they are the only type of assessment instrument directly mentioned. Although we agree with Harlen⁴⁰ that it is not the instruments themselves that define the two assessment modalities, the fact is that tests and exams are generally used with a summary function and not for the purpose of helping students to learn. Portfolios, projects, rubrics, reports, reflections and debates, for example, are not mentioned by any of the teachers, even though these are instruments and techniques more favourable to formative assessment.

³⁷ A. MARTINS (coord.) *et al.*, *Livro branco da Física e da Química: Diagnóstico 2000, Recomendações 2002*, Ministério da Educação, Departamento do Ensino Secundário, Lisboa, 2002.

³⁸ BLACK, WILIAM, *Classroom assessment and pedagogy*, *op. cit.*

³⁹ PINTO, SANTOS, *Modelos de avaliação das aprendizagens*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁰ W. HARLEN, *Teachers' summative practices and assessment for learning: Tensions and synergies*, in «The Curriculum Journal», n. 16(2), 2005, pp. 207-223.

'Measure', at last, was one of the keywords teachers came up with and is a term closely associated with the use of tests and exams, suggesting the association of assessment with its function of measuring and grading students' learning. The assessment process, viewed from this perspective, corresponds essentially to a technical question and the idea is that by building good quality tests it is possible to measure students' learning in an objective, impartial and rigorous way⁴¹. The resulting pedagogical model is centred on the teacher, making the assessment out of step with teaching and learning as it occurs at times specially created for the purposes of verification and control. The aim of this model is to select and certify what has been learned and express it, normally with the numerical value of a grade. Students are assessed through standardized procedures in order to differentiate them and the results are established according to the group average, constituting a normative referencing process⁴². Measurement is always part of the assessment process, but in our research, as the word 'measure' appeared as one of the most prevalent words associated with assessment, it may possibly be an indicator of its strong presence in the school's daily life, especially as it appears at a similar frequency to 'tests/exams'.

Taking into account these five main word associations, we can say that the respondents tended to add value to summative assessment functions, rather than to the monitoring and regulation of learning functions, since the terms 'grades', 'tests/exams' and 'measure' appear at the top of the table.

The words 'improvement', 'training' and 'feedback' were each mentioned by 8 teachers and the term 'regulation' by 4, which shows the concern of some of the teachers with definitive aspects of assessment for learning. We have to point out, however, the absence of terms referring to self-assessment, hetero-assessment and self-regulation, which are of primary importance in the process of students developing autonomy. In fact, educational research has shown that the improvement of classroom work is possible if a teacher believes in using key tools such as peer review, self-assessment and questioning, in addition to feedback⁴³.

5. Implications and challenges

The literature shows that increased assessment literacy, especially a higher quality of formative assessment, improves learning. As Black and Wiliam⁴⁴ have shown, the positive effect of formative assessment on results is consistent across ages, subjects and countries.

⁴¹ D. FERNANDES, *Avaliação das aprendizagens: desafios às teorias, práticas e políticas*, Texto Editores, Lisboa, 2005.

⁴² PINTO, SANTOS, *Modelos de avaliação das aprendizagens*, op. cit.

⁴³ P.J. BLACK et. al., *Working inside the black box. Assessment for learning in the classroom*, King's College London Department of Education and Professional Studies, London, 2002.

⁴⁴ P.J. BLACK, D. WILIAM, 'In praise of educational research': formative assessment, in «British Educational Research Journal», n. 29(5), pp. 624-637, 2003.

While there is little doubt that formative assessment works, it is important to think about how it can be a reality in the day-to-day routine of schools, knowing that the predominant teaching practices emphasize results, are focused on content and aim mainly to certify learning at the end of the year or semester⁴⁵.

In order to reduce discontinuities between theory and practice, it is not enough to change assessment methods, but also to change the way in which teaching and learning is organized. To do this, the different stakeholders with decision-making responsibilities, from government ministers to headteachers and school manager, need to be involved, and everyone has a role to play in making teaching-evaluation-learning integration a reality, so that assessment criteria are in articulation with the tasks to be performed by the students and the development of their learning.

The data from the present exploratory study confirms a trend for the dominance of summative practices⁴⁶ over formative ones, which are still rarely and inconsistently used, despite the conceptual value that teachers place on formative assessment⁴⁷. This is a situation that has been observed in several international studies, which continue to point to the intensive use of tests as the dominant practice, which encourages superficial learning and memorization⁴⁸.

The same conclusions were drawn by Evans et al.⁴⁹, who analysed the situation in a set of eight European education systems (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) and found that although assessment practices differ from country to country, summative assessment is prioritized over formative assessment in all of them. The main inhibiting factors identified in these countries were the following: a) «teachers' beliefs about assessment as an instrument for generating grades and ranking students»; b) teachers consider formative assessment «laborious and difficult to implement»; c) existence of a dilemma when choosing between alternative assessment methods and evaluation so «students might not openly ex-

⁴⁵ M. CID, I. FIALHO, *Critérios de avaliação. Da fundamentação à operacionalização*, in I. Fialho, H. Salgueiro (orgs.), *TurmaMais e sucesso escolar. Contributos teóricos e práticos*, Centro de Investigação em Educação e Psicologia da Universidade de Évora, Évora, 2011, pp. 109-124.

⁴⁶ C. BARREIRA, J. PINTO, *A investigação em Portugal sobre a avaliação das aprendizagens dos alunos (1990-2005)*, in «Investigar em Educação», n. 4, 2005, pp. 21-105; D. FERNANDES, A. GASPAR, *Dez anos de investigação em avaliação das aprendizagens (2001-2010): uma síntese de teses de doutoramento*, in C. Tomás, C. Gonçalves (orgs.), *VI Encontro do CIED – I Encontro Internacional em Estudos Educacionais. Avaliação: Desafios e Riscos*, CIED, Escola Superior de Educação, Lisboa, 2014, pp. 512-527.

⁴⁷ J. PINTO, *Avaliação formativa: uma prática para a aprendizagem*, in M.I. Ortigão, D. Fernandes, T. Pereira, L. Santos (orgs.), *Avaliar para aprender no Brasil e em Portugal: perspectivas teóricas, práticas e de desenvolvimento*, CRV, Curitiba, Brasil, 2019, pp. 19-43.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*; BLACK et al., *Assessment for learning. Putting it into practice*, op. cit.

⁴⁹ R. EVANS et. al., *European educational systems and assessment practice*, in J. Dolin, R. Evans (eds.), *Transforming assessment through an interplay between practice, research and policy*, Springer, Cham, Switzerland, 2018, pp. 211-226.

press their ideas, opinions, and problems if they know they will be evaluated»; d) «lack of time and a lack of teacher competence to differentiate between different levels of proficiency with in a class»; e) «demands for summative assessment»⁵⁰. To overcome these obstacles Evans and colleagues point out the need for pre- and in-service teacher training, with an emphasis on the aspects of assessment related to how children learn, and support to improve assessment literacy, as well as to change teachers' beliefs about assessment.

Pre- and in-service teacher training is therefore essential, but this training cannot be restricted to increasing knowledge about assessment; other aspects must be taken into account, such as those highlighted by Nóvoa⁵¹, regarding the main principles guiding this training, of which we highlight the following:

- Teamwork – it is important to keep valuing the collective exercise of professional development, with the reinforcement of collaboration, intervention in school projects and building communities of practice that lead teachers to go beyond organizational limits.
- Social commitment – the principle of social responsibility is fundamental, with a focus on social inclusion and cultural diversity, and the facilitation of communication and professional participation in the public realm of education. It is important that teachers learn how to enable children to go beyond the boundaries of their personal and social backgrounds.
- Practical component – practice has to be focused on student learning and the study of concrete cases.

This practical component is also highlighted by Fernandes who argues that practice is the element that «contextualizes and gives real meaning to the whole set of theoretical perspectives and to the whole set of discussions and reflections that training should provide»⁵². On the other hand, taking into account that if the purpose of assessment is to help students learn, it will be desirable, according to the same author, «that any training in assessment should include teams of trainers in the curriculum, assessment and specific didactics»⁵³.

This focus on training resulting from a multifaceted approach should also be associated with research, not only to systematize knowledge, but because it can be used as a training strategy itself. If training incorporates teachers' participation in reflective processes, research is essential for understanding, questioning and changing teachers' practices, and everything must move within a collaborative strategy, which is fundamental for teachers' professional development.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223.

⁵¹ A. NÓVOA, *Para una formación de profesores construida dentro de la profesión*, in «Revista de Educación», n. 350, 2009, pp. 203-218.

⁵² D. FERNANDES, *Avaliação das aprendizagens: uma agenda, muitos desafios*, Texto Editores, Lisboa, 2004, p. 51.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

We conclude with a definition of positive change from Nóvoa, which reinforces the importance of collaborative work and reflection and draws attention to one last point, that this training should preferably take place at school, so that theoretical knowledge can gain new meanings in the professional environment and with the participation of professional teaching communities:

«School metamorphosis happens whenever teachers get together as a group to think about the work, to build different pedagogical practices, to respond to the challenges posed by the end of the school model. In-service training should not dismiss any contribution from outside, especially the support of university and research groups, but it is in the school place that it is defined, enriched and thus can fulfil its role in the professional development of teachers»⁵⁴.

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⁵⁴ A. NÓVOA, *Os professores e a sua formação num tempo de metamorfose da escola*, in «Educação & Realidade», n. 44(3), pp. 1-15, 2019, p.11. Italics in the original.

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*Importancia de la lectura dialógica en el inicio
del proceso de alfabetización*

ABSTRACT

El aprendizaje de la lectura es una de las herramientas fundamentales para el éxito escolar y para el desarrollo personal. La lectura dialógica se sitúa dentro de las teorías que destacan las interacciones personales como elementos generadores del aprendizaje. El propósito de este trabajo fue estudiar si mediante la utilización de programas didácticos que integren la lectura dialógica en los programas de enseñanza se adquiere un mejor aprendizaje de esta habilidad lingüística. Se empleó un diseño cuasi-experimental de comparación entre grupos con medidas pretest y posttest en el que participaron 112 alumnos con edades comprendidas entre los 6 y los 7 años. Los resultados apoyan el desarrollo de modelos de enseñanza que integren la lectura dialógica en la práctica del aula.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Diálogo, Lectura, Alfabetización, Interacciones personales

Learning to read is one of the fundamental tools for accessing information and in the school environment for acquiring learning. Dialogic reading is situated within the theories that emphasize personal interactions as generating elements of learning. The purpose of this work was to study whether, through the use of didactic programs that integrate dialogic reading together with the habitual teaching of reading, a better learning of this linguistic ability is acquired in the early ages. A quasi-experimental comparison design between groups with pretest and posttest measures was used. 112 students with ages between 6 and 7 years participated in the study. The results support the development of teaching models that integrate dialogic reading into classroom practice.

KEYWORDS: Dialogue, Reading, Literacy, Personal interactions

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1. Introducción

Durante los últimos años se ha producido un notable interés por el aprendizaje de la lectura y sobre el modo de facilitar el acceso a esta habilidad lingüística en las primeras edades². La alfabetización no es un proceso que se adquiere de modo natural, a diferencia de lo que sucede con el lenguaje oral requiere de intencionalidad educativa, es decir de intervenciones directas que permitan que el individuo sea un lector competente.

El aprendizaje de la lectura es uno de los instrumentos más importantes del sujeto para el éxito académico puesto que la mayor parte de la enseñanza está basada en el lenguaje escrito, lo que significa que el niño que no domine la lectura tendrá serias complicaciones con la mayoría de las asignaturas escolares.

La lectura es una actividad compleja que resulta imprescindible para el logro de los conocimientos del ámbito escolar y para desarrollarse de forma satisfactoria en la sociedad. La adquisición del lenguaje escrito es posterior al aprendizaje del habla, de donde se destaca la importancia de las habilidades orales y el hecho de que esta destreza haya que trabajarse previamente al inicio del aprendizaje del código escrito.

Dominar la lectura implica desarrollar una serie de estrategias que permitan aplicar los procesos de correspondencia de forma ágil y automática para así acceder a los significados del mensaje escrito de manera comprensiva.

Dada la vinculación entre lenguaje oral y escrito, una de las cuestiones a analizar que se ha planteado durante años era saber si la estructura sonora del lenguaje tendría una influencia en el aprendizaje de la lectura. Numerosos estudios³ han establecido que para aprender a leer en un sistema de representación alfabético se requiere junto a la automatización de las reglas de correspondencia grafema-fonema, el conocimiento explícito de la estructura sonora del lenguaje, en concreto las unidades mínimas (fonemas) que componen las palabras.

La capacidad para identificar la estructura sonora del lenguaje hablado se conoce como conciencia fonológica. El desarrollo de las habilidades de conciencia fonológica facilita la asociación entre ambos lenguajes (oral y escrito), lo que evidencia la relación entre el aprendizaje de la lectura y el desarrollo de las habilidades que conducen a la reflexión y al análisis sobre el habla⁴.

² M. AGUSTÍ, M. BALLART, M. GARCÍA, *Aprender a leer con la lectura compartida. Otra lectura es posible*, en «Aula de innovación educativa», n. 43, 2014, pp. 39-43; M.J. GONZÁLEZ, I. MARTÍN, *Effects on Reading of an Early Intervention Program for Children at Risk of Learning Difficulties*, en «Remedial and Special Education», n. 38(2), 2017, pp. 67-75.

³ S. DEFIOR, F. SERRANO, *La conciencia fonémica, aliada de la adquisición lenguaje escrito*, en «Revista de Logopedia, Foniatria y Audiología», n. 31(1), 2011, pp. 2-13; R. GUTIÉRREZ, *Habilidades favorecedoras del aprendizaje de la lectura en alumnos de 5 y 6 años*, en «Revista Signos», n. 51(96), 2018, pp. 45-60.

⁴ A. MORENO, A. AXPE, V. ACOSTA, *Efectos de un programa de intervención en el lenguaje sobre el de-*

La conciencia fonológica es una habilidad lingüística que permite reflexionar sobre el lenguaje hablado y tomar conciencia de los sonidos del lenguaje oral. Consiste en identificar, segmentar o combinar, de manera intencional, las palabras que componen las oraciones (conciencia léxica), las sílabas (conciencia silábica), los elementos intrasilábicos (conciencia intrasilábica) así como los fonemas (conciencia fonémica).

De estos niveles existe acuerdo en que el dominio de las unidades menores de las palabras y conocer la secuencia de los fonemas que las componen es el aspecto que más relación presenta con el aprendizaje de la lectura debido a que cuanto mejor se identifiquen los fonemas de una palabra mayor facilidad existirá para asociar los sonidos con sus correspondientes grafemas⁵.

La adquisición de este dominio facilita el aprendizaje de la correspondencia grafema/fonema, lo que posibilita que los escolares puedan identificar los sonidos de las letras a partir de su conocimiento. Esto es, en la medida en que el niño sepa que las letras representan los sonidos de su propio lenguaje y que estas se articulan en palabras, estará en condiciones de acceder a su significado a través del proceso decodificador.

El conocimiento alfabético es otra faceta de gran importancia en el aprendizaje del lenguaje escrito⁶, lo cual es bastante lógico debido a que en sistemas alfabéticos existe una elevada relación entre los nombres de las letras y sus correspondientes sonidos, lo que facilita los procesos decodificadores. El conocimiento del nombre de las letras favorece a su vez el desarrollo de habilidades fonológicas al establecerse una relación causal entre el conocimiento del nombre de las letras y el aprendizaje de sus sonidos.

También junto al conocimiento alfabético y la conciencia fonológica se ha comprobado que la rapidez de nominación es otro factor relevante en el aprendizaje lector en cuanto que su ejecución determina la velocidad con la que se recupera una información almacenada en la memoria a largo plazo. Este hecho se ha estudiado en diferentes lenguas observándose que las tareas de velocidad de denominación son predictoras del aprendizaje inicial de la lectura especialmente en ortografías transparentes, aunque en menor proporción en las lenguas opacas⁷.

sarrollo del léxico y del procesamiento fonológico en escolares de Educación Infantil con Trastorno Específico del Lenguaje, en «Revista de Investigación Educativa», n. 30(1), 2012, pp. 71-86; M. J. GONZÁLEZ-VALENZUELA, I. MARTÍN-RUIZ, Efectos en la escritura de la intervención temprana en estudiantes españoles de Educación Infantil con riesgo de dificultades en el aprendizaje, en «Revista de Educación», n. 388, 2020, pp. 85-107; K. VIBULPATANAVONG, D. EVANS, Conciencia fonológica y lectura en niños tailandeses, en «Reading and Writing», n. 32, 2019, pp. 467-491.

⁵ M. IBRAHIM, *Explicit versus implicit modes of EFL reading literacy instruction: using phonological awareness with adult arab learners*, en «English Language Teaching», n. 11(9), 2019, pp. 144-155; L. CASTEJÓN, S. GONZÁLEZ, F. CUETOS, Adquisición de la fluidez en la lectura de palabras en una muestra de niños españoles, en «Infancia y Aprendizaje», n. 34(1), pp. 19-30.

⁶ B. DIUK, M. FERRONI, Dificultades lectoras en contextos de pobreza: ¿Un caso de Efecto Mateo?, en «Revista Psicología Escolar e Educacional», n. 16(2), 2012, pp. 209-217.

⁷ M.J. RABAZO, M. GARCÍA, S. SÁNCHEZ, Exploración de la conciencia fonológica y la velocidad de

Los estudios efectuados en torno al aprendizaje de la lectura se han centrado mayoritariamente en la relación entre el lector y la información escrita como un proceso individual, desde un lector que se enfrenta a un código intentando crear significados a partir de sus esquemas de conocimiento, considerando las acciones estratégicas como objetivos personales sin considerar el valor que puede alcanzarse si el acto lector se realiza con apoyo colectivo. Esta colaboración puede llevarse a cabo en la medida en que la práctica lectora se realice de manera colectiva ya que de este modo se comparten las aportaciones y reflexiones que cada estudiante hace del conocimiento del lenguaje escrito, lo que se encuentra en la base del aprendizaje mutuo.

Los estudios pioneros de los beneficios de la lectura compartida se iniciaron hace algunas décadas estableciendo relaciones entre las prácticas lectoras con el desarrollo de las destrezas de lenguaje oral⁸. La finalidad era analizar las estrategias que en mayor medida favorecían el desarrollo lingüístico de los niños⁹.

Posteriormente se han realizado otros trabajos que han constatado las aportaciones de la lectura dialógica en el desarrollo del lenguaje¹⁰.

La lectura dialógica al ser una de las actividades más importantes en el desarrollo del lenguaje hablado, puede también contribuir a la adquisición de la lectura puesto que este dominio está relacionado directamente con el lenguaje escrito, en concreto con la sensibilidad fonológica en las primeras edades, por lo que este tipo de prácticas pueden resultar de gran utilidad para favorecer el acceso al aprendizaje de la lectura.

Sin embargo, son escasos los trabajos encontrados orientados a estudiar la influencia que las habilidades prelectoras junto con lectura compartida ejercitados de manera conjunta pueden contribuir al aprendizaje de la lectura en las primeras edades. De aquí la realización de este estudio que tiene como objetivo analizar el efecto que la intervención de un programa centrado en el desarrollo de prácticas de lectura dialógica junto con las habilidades que se han considerado como favorecedoras de la lectura en las primeras edades tiene en el aprendizaje lector. Para ello, se compara el grado de adquisición de la lectura en dos muestras de alumnos de entre 6 y 7 años, uno que recibe intervención mediante la instrucción en las habilidades prelectoras junto con prácticas de lectura dialógica y otro que sigue el mismo modelo de enseñanza, pero únicamente a partir del trabajo personal. La hipótesis que se plantea es que el

nombrado en alumnos de 3º Educación Infantil y 1º de Educación Primaria y su relación con el aprendizaje de la lectoescritura, en «Revista de Psicología», n. 1(1), 2016, pp. 83-94; P. SUÁREZ-COALLA, M. GARCÍA DE CASTRO, F. CUETOS, Variables predictivas de la lectura y la escritura en castellano, en «Infancia y aprendizaje», n. 36(1), 2013, pp. 77-89.

⁸ C. CHOMSKY, *Stages in language development and reading exposure*, en «Harvard Educational Review», n. 42, 1972, pp. 1-33.

⁹ A. NINIO, *Joint book reading as a multiple vocabulary acquisition device*, en «Developmental Psychology», n. 19, 1983, pp. 445-451.

¹⁰ A.M. BORZONE, *La lectura de cuentos en el jardín infantil: un medio para el desarrollo de estrategias cognitivas y lingüísticas*, en «Psykhe», n. 14, 2005, pp. 192-209.

alumnado perteneciente al grupo que recibe instrucción a partir de la lectura dialógica junto con las habilidades favorecedoras de la lectura obtendrá un mejor rendimiento en el aprendizaje lector.

2. Método

2.1. Participantes

En el estudio participaron 112 alumnos con edades comprendidas entre los 6 y los 7 años ($M = 6.37$; $DT = 0.47$), de los cuales el 48.3% eran niños y el 51.7% niñas. Estos alumnos pertenecían a dos centros educativos de la provincia de Alicante, que compartían la característica de estar ubicados en un contexto sociocultural de nivel medio. De los 62 participantes experimentales, el 45.6% son varones y el 54.4% mujeres, mientras que de los 60 participantes del grupo control, el 46.8% son varones y el 53.2% son mujeres. El análisis de contingencia (chi cuadrado de Pearson) entre condición y sexo no evidenció diferencias estadísticamente significativas ($X^2=0.63$, $p > .05$). Todos ellos compartían la característica de estar ubicados en un contexto sociocultural de nivel medio.

2.2. Instrumentos

Con la finalidad de evaluar las variables dependientes objeto de estudio se utilizaron cuatro instrumentos de evaluación con garantías psicométricas de fiabilidad y validez:

- Prueba para la Evaluación del Conocimiento Fonológico (PECO)¹¹. Este test evalúa los niveles de conocimiento fonológico (silábico y fonémico), cada uno de los cuales se compone de tres tareas distintas: identificación, adición y omisión. Además, se considera la posición que ocupa la sílaba o el fonema: al inicio, en medio o al final de la palabra. Esta prueba incluye tres subtests con sílabas y fonemas (actividades de identificación, adición y omisión), con un total de 30 ítems (15 de sílabas y 15 de fonemas). La puntuación máxima que puede obtenerse es 30, un punto por cada respuesta correcta y cero por cada error. La confiabilidad, medida a través del coeficiente alfa de Cronbach es de .80.
- Velocidad de nombrado. The Rapid Automatized Naming Test (RAN)¹². El objetivo de la tarea es nombrar 200 estímulos lo más rápido posible, agrupados en cuatro subtests: dígitos, letras, colores y dibujos. En el registro de la tarea RAN se anota el tiempo que se tarda en nombrar los estímulos de cada cartulina y el número de errores que se cometan al

¹¹ J.L. RAMOS, I. CUADRADO, *Prueba para la Evaluación del Conocimiento Fonológico. PECO*, EOS, Madrid, 2006.

¹² M. WOLF, M. DENCKLA, *Rapid automatized naming tests*, Super Duper, Greenville, 2003.

nombrarlos. Con estos dos datos se realiza un índice de eficiencia por cada uno de los 4 tipos de subtests presentados, convirtiendo las puntuaciones en dígitos por segundo, letras por segundo, colores por segundo y dibujos por segundo. Esta prueba presenta un coeficiente de fiabilidad de Cronbach de 0.80.

– Evaluación de los procesos de lectura. Para la evaluación de la lectura se han utilizado cuatro subtest del test PROLEC-R¹³. Se emplearon las pruebas de lectura de palabras y pseudopalabras para valorar los procesos léxicos y los subtest de estructuras gramaticales y comprensión de oraciones para evaluar los procesos semánticos. La puntuación total en cada una de estas cuatro pruebas se obtiene asignando un punto a cada respuesta correcta, además en las dos primeras se tiene en consideración el tiempo invertido en cada subtest. Esta prueba presenta un coeficiente de fiabilidad de Cronbach de 0.79.

2.3. Diseño y procedimiento

El trabajo utilizó un diseño cuasi-experimental de medidas repetidas pre-test-postest con grupo control. El análisis de la potencia estadística permite la selección de un tamaño muestral que garantice el éxito de la investigación¹⁴, presentando la muestra en este estudio un valor de 0.936.

Antes y después de implementar el plan de intervención se aplicaron tres instrumentos de evaluación a los alumnos experimentales y control con el propósito de medir las variables dependientes sobre las que se hipotetizó que el programa iba a tener efecto, el aprendizaje de la lectura. La aplicación de las pruebas antes y después de implementar el programa se llevó a cabo por profesionales de la educación (maestros especialistas en audición y lenguaje y psicopedagogos) previamente entrenados, lo que facilitó la homogeneidad en la recogida de los datos.

La valoración inicial de los alumnos se llevó a cabo de forma individual en espacios próximos al aula ordinaria dentro del horario escolar. Posteriormente se implementó el plan de intervención en los grupos experimentales (5 sesiones de 45 minutos semanalmente), el mismo tiempo que los grupos control realizaron el programa de la asignatura de lengua siguiendo el libro de texto junto con las habilidades favorecedoras de la lectura. Una vez concluida la aplicación del programa se volvió a realizar la evaluación a todo el alumnado con los mismos instrumentos. El estudio respetó los valores éticos requeridos en la investigación con seres humanos (consentimiento informado, derecho a la información, protección de datos personales, garantías de confidencialidad, no

¹³ F. CUETOS, B. RODRÍGUEZ, E. RUANO, D. ARRIBAS, *Prolec-R, Batería de evaluación de los procesos lectores*, Revisada, TEA, Madrid, 2007.

¹⁴ A. DAVEY, J. SAVLA, *Estimating statistical power with incomplete data*, en «Organizational Research Methods», n. 12(2), 2009. pp. 320-346.

discriminación, gratuidad y tener la posibilidad de abandonar el programa en cualquiera de sus fases).

2.4. Programa de intervención

El programa para el aprendizaje de la lectura que se utilizó se compone de 50 sesiones de 45 minutos de duración. Tenía como objetivo desarrollar de manera explícita la conciencia fonológica, los procesos de decodificación, la velocidad de denominación a partir de situaciones de lectura dialógica.

Los estudiantes del grupo experimental recibieron instrucción sistemática del desarrollo de la lectura a través del programa de intervención diseñado al efecto consistente en llevar a cabo situaciones de lectura compartida a través de textos narrativos que eran presentados en la pizarra digital. A partir de cada cuento se llevó a cabo un proceso de lectura dialógica caracterizado por simultanejar la lectura en voz alta con dinámicas interactivas de diálogo y formulación de preguntas orientando la acción lectora al empleo de diferentes estrategias, tales como: hacer preguntas abiertas, formular nuevas preguntas sobre las aportaciones dadas, ampliar el contenido a partir de las opiniones ofrecidas, mostrar modelos de respuesta indicando lo que es correcto, realizando predicciones e hipótesis sobre la lectura... con el propósito de fomentar la participación y el desarrollo lingüístico del niño.

A partir del contenido trabajado en esta situación de lectura compartida se ejercitaban las habilidades prelectoras relacionando el contenido trabajado con las distintas tareas que se iban llevando a cabo.

La exactitud lectora se abordó a través de actividades de articulación fonémica y discriminación de las grafías del alfabeto (desarrollo fonológico), llevando a cabo acciones de identificación de rimas, conteo, adición, omisión y sustitución de sílabas y fonemas, asociación de imágenes y palabras, búsqueda de antónimos y sinónimos, categorización de conceptos, ordenamiento de imágenes y palabras para construir oraciones a nivel verbal de diferentes longitudes, lectura de letras, palabras y pequeños textos.

La velocidad de nominación se ejercitó mediante plantillas con imágenes relacionadas con la temática de los cuentos trabajados, se presentaban en la pizarra digital al finalizar la lectura de cada cuento. Se combinaba la lectura del profesor con la lectura por parte de los distintos alumnos, tanto de manera individual, en pequeño grupo, como de manera colectiva.

El grupo control trabajó las mismas habilidades prelectoras: conciencia fonológica, velocidad de denominación y conocimiento alfabético, pero de manera descontextualizada y sin llevar a cabo acciones de lectura dialógica. La dinámica de trabajo se centraba en la explicación del profesor, realización de las actividades por parte de los estudiantes y corrección individualizada del docente.

3. Resultados

En las Tablas 1, 2 y 3 se muestran los datos obtenidos por el grupo control y experimental en el pretest en las pruebas PECO, RAN y PROLEC-R en cada uno de los niveles que intervienen en el proceso lector, de igual modo en las Tablas 4, 5 y 6 se presentan los resultados obtenidos en esas mismas pruebas en el postest.

	C. Silábica	C. Fonémica
Grupo Control	.362	.338
Grupo Experimental	.357	.341

Tabla 1. *Resultados obtenidos por el grupo control y experimental en el pretest en la prueba PECO*

Nota. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

	Colores	Dibujos	Letras
Grupo Control	.441	.427	.312
Grupo Experimental	.438	.429	.311

Tabla 2. *Resultados obtenidos por el grupo control y experimental en el pretest en la prueba de velocidad de denominación*

Nota. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

	Lectura de palabras	Lectura de pseudopalabras	Estructuras gramaticales	Comprensión de oraciones
Grupo Control	.318	.283	.218	.186
Grupo Experimental	.314	.278	.216	.182

Tabla 3. *Resultados obtenidos por el grupo control y experimental en el pretest en la prueba PROLEC-R*

Nota. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

	C. Silábica	C. Fonémica
Grupo Control	.412	.387
Grupo Experimental	.448**	.436***

Tabla 4. *Resultados obtenidos por el grupo control y experimental en el postest en la prueba PECO.*

Nota. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

	Colores	Dibujos	Letras
Grupo Control	.511	.468	.372
Grupo Experimental	.539*	.483*	.416***

Tabla 5. *Resultados obtenidos por el grupo control y experimental en el postest en la prueba de velocidad de denominación*Nota. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

	Lectura de palabras	Lectura de pseudopalabras	Estructuras gramaticales	Comprensión de oraciones
Grupo Control	.338	.314	.248	.204
Grupo Experimental	.396***	.376***	.296***	.253***

Tabla 6. *Resultados obtenidos por el grupo control y experimental en el postest en la prueba PROLEC-R*Nota. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Como se puede observar en las Tablas 1, 2 y 3 no existen diferencias significativas entre los grupos control y experimental antes de iniciar el programa de intervención en ninguna de las variables analizadas. Sin embargo, sí que se observan diferencias en las variables de conciencia silábica, conciencia fonémica, lectura de palabras, pseudopalabras, estructuras gramaticales y comprensión de oraciones, así como en la velocidad de denominación tanto con colores, dibujos y letras a favor del grupo que ha participado en el programa de intervención.

4. Discusión y conclusiones

El objetivo de este trabajo era analizar el efecto que la intervención de un programa centrado en el desarrollo de prácticas de lectura dialógica junto con el desarrollo de las habilidades que han sido consideradas como favorecedoras del aprendizaje lector en las primeras edades presenta en la adquisición de la lectura.

Los resultados obtenidos ponen de manifiesto que la instrucción conjunta en estas habilidades a partir de las prácticas de lectura compartida mejora el acceso al proceso de alfabetización de manera significativa en los primeros niveles de escolarización.

En línea con otros trabajos anteriores los datos obtenidos señalan que los estudiantes pueden experimentar una mejora en el uso de estrategias lectoras

desde las primeras edades si se implementan experiencias de aprendizaje adecuadas¹⁵.

Respecto a la conciencia fonológica analizando los datos recogidos se observa que el grupo experimental ha mejorado de manera significativa respecto al grupo control en el manejo y la toma de conciencia de las unidades del lenguaje oral, lo que constata que el desarrollo de las habilidades fonológicas interviene y favorece el aprendizaje inicial de la lectura, lo que confirma las aportaciones encontradas en otros estudios sobre la influencia que los procesos fonológicos presentan en el aprendizaje lector¹⁶.

En cuanto a la rapidez de nominación se comprueba que los escolares del grupo experimental mejoran en esta habilidad en mayor medida que los estudiantes del grupo control. Este progreso se observa en todos los tipos de tareas, es decir, en la capacidad para denominar tanto colores, dibujos como letras, pero es de destacar que es en esta última tarea en la que los estudiantes participantes en el programa de intervención obtienen mejores resultados. Estos datos se encuentran en consonancia con los aportes de otros trabajos en los que se evidencia que la rapidez de denominación constituye una habilidad destacada del proceso alfabetización en las primeras edades, además de ser una destreza que contribuye a predecir la adquisición de la lectura en los cursos posteriores.

De aquí la importancia de favorecer el desarrollo de estrategias orientadas a la mejora de la rapidez de evocación a través de situaciones lúdicas al observarse que esta medida puede ser muy eficaz para la mejora del rendimiento lector, puesto que incrementa las interacciones alrededor de las dinámicas de lectura.

Respecto a las habilidades lectoras se ha puesto de manifiesto que los estudiantes del grupo experimental obtienen resultados mejores en el reconocimiento de palabras, pseudopalabras y oraciones. De donde se deduce que la intervención directa de las habilidades fonológicas, junto con dinámicas centradas en la rapidez de nominación junto a las prácticas de lectura dialógica mejoran el aprendizaje de los procesos decodificadores, lo que evidencia el progreso en el procesamiento fonológico y en el acceso a la representación de las palabras de forma rápida y precisa.

Como se observa en el presente trabajo un factor relevante que puede favorecer el proceso de alfabetización es el fomento de las situaciones de verbalización conjunta en cuanto que permiten intensificar el desarrollo de los

¹⁵ R. GUTIÉRREZ, A. DÍEZ, *Efectos de un programa de conciencia fonológica en el aprendizaje de la lectura y la escritura*, en «Revista Española de Orientación y Psicopedagogía», n. 2, 2017, pp. 30-45.

¹⁶ V. FELD, *Las habilidades fonológicas, su organización neurofisiológica y su aplicación en la educación*, en «Pensamiento Psicológico», n. 12(1), 2014, pp. 71-82; A. REZAEI, E. MOUSANEZHAD, *Las contribuciones de los componentes de control atencional, la conciencia fonológica y la memoria de trabajo para la capacidad de lectura*, en «Revista de Investigación Psicolingüística», n. 49, 2020, pp. 31-40.

distintos componentes del lenguaje hablado¹⁷. En este sentido, las prácticas de lectura compartida constituyen un recurso pedagógico de gran interés en la práctica del aula puesto que posibilitan intensificar el proceso de aprendizaje mediante las interacciones que se establecen entre los estudiantes del grupo clase. Es de destacar que las dinámicas comunicativas compartidas favorecen el desarrollo lingüístico y pueden ser un recurso de interés para reducir las carencias expresivas que algunos escolares presentan en las primeras edades.

Los resultados señalan que este tipo de instrucción resulta eficaz para favorecer el aprendizaje lector y constituye una estrategia eficaz para la mejora educativa, por lo que la interacción dialógica, la participación conjunta, la ayuda mutua y la reflexión compartida que se produce entre los distintos compañeros a través de las prácticas de lectura dialógica constituyen una medida muy eficaz para el acceso al aprendizaje de la lectura.

En definitiva, a nivel práctico se sugiere el diseño de programas orientados al desarrollo de las habilidades lectoras en las primeras edades mediante propuestas didácticas en las que los estudiantes participen de manera activa a través de dinámicas conjuntas de lectura compartida ya que de este modo se fomenta el desarrollo lingüístico, la comunicación dialógica, la reflexión personal y colectiva, el aprendizaje mutuo mediante la valoración de las aportaciones personales, ya que se ha comprobado que este es un medio eficaz para el acceso al proceso de alfabetización infantil. Una limitación de este trabajo es que no se efectuó un seguimiento para evaluar si los resultados se mantienen en el tiempo, de aquí que una propuesta de interés para futuros estudios podría ser analizar si los efectos de las intervenciones efectuadas presentan continuidad en los niveles superiores.

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¹⁷ C. ZHANG, G.E. BINGHAM, M.F. QUINN, *The associations among preschool children's growth in early reading, executive function, and invented spelling skills*, en «Reading and Writing», n. 30(8), 2017, pp. 1705-1728; V. AZPILLAGA, N. INTXAUSTI, L. JOARISTI, *Implicación de las familias en los centros escolares de alta eficacia en la Comunidad Autónoma Vasca*, en «Bordón», n. 66(3), 2014, pp. 27-37.

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María Ángeles Martín del Pozo¹

*Preparing prospective primary teachers to value
and to develop inference in reading comprehension*

ABSTRACT

International assessment of reading comprehension in Spanish primary and secondary education (PIRLS, PISA) indicates weak inferential comprehension. The cause could be a combination of sociological, psychological and pedagogical factors, such as an insufficient training. A first step towards developing inference in children is to raise teachers' awareness about the importance of this skill and to provide them with competences and tools to train the children. The paper reports an experience of tutoring four prospective primary education teachers whose final year projects dealt with reading comprehension. Conclusions suggest the positive effects of this and similar research lines in final year projects and the expectation that the learning may be reflected in their future classroom practice.

KEYWORDS: Teacher education, Reading comprehension, Inference, Reading skills, Higher education

Introduction

The relevance of reading literacy is evident. More than any other skill, the ability to read is a foundation for learning across all subjects. In addition, this skill is necessary in almost every sphere of life.

Spain ranked very low in oral and written language comprehension in the latest cycles of international assessment programs (2011 and 2016). This fact aroused attention to the importance of knowing the psychological and instructional factors on which comprehension depends. The need to train teachers in the different abilities of the reading comprehension process becomes evident. As Moreno² reflects, comprehension questions do not develop any cognitive skill because they are formulated considering the text and not the cognitive

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² V. MORENO, *Sobre lectura y educación*, in «Revista de Educación», núm. Extraordinario, 2005, pp. 9-14.

ability they aim to develop. Semantic, lexis, narrative, stylistics, structures and principal ideas are mingled in comprehension questions. Teachers find it difficult to know what aims are pursued with such activities. Though research on teacher training to teach reading is a young science³, reports and literature reviews by the European Union are delimiting the state of the art to try to move ahead. The identified requirements for teaching how to read and improving a child's reading skills include «a profound understanding of reading development and a sound knowledge of teaching theory and practice including teaching methods, class management and knowledge of appropriate materials»⁴.

This paper reports and reflects on an experience preparing undergraduate students to teach reading. The paper focuses on the comprehension process of inference making and how undergraduates, in the framework of their Final Degree Dissertations, designed activities to observe children's competence and to enhance it. The Spanish results in the most recent international assessments are commented as well as the foundations of these evaluations. The paper concludes relating the prospective teachers' viewpoint with guidelines and conclusions from European studies.

International assessments of reading comprehension: PIRLS and PISA

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) has been conducting international comparative studies of student educational achievement since 1959. One of them is the regular assessment of children's reading literacy and the factors associated with its acquisition worldwide. The study called Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), inaugurated in 2001, focuses both on the achievement of children in their fourth year of schooling and the experiences they have at home and at school in learning to read. PIRLS is conducted every five years. PIRLS 2021 will be the fifth cycle in this program with more than 50 participant countries. PIRLS 2016 framework, materials and schedules⁵ included a new extension, the assessment of online reading: E-PIRLS. It aimed to assess how successful students are prepared to read, comprehend, and interpret online information. All results were published in December 2017. The top-performing countries

³ L. MOATS, *Science, language and imagination in the professional development of teachers*, in P. McCardle and V. Chabria, (Eds), *The voice of evidence in reading research*, Paul H Brookes Publishing, Baltimore, 2004, pp. 69-288. Cited in EURDICE, *Teaching reading in Europe: Contexts, policies and Practices*, 2011.

⁴ EURDICE, *Teaching reading in Europe: Contexts, policies and Practices*, Brussels, 2011, p. 83. The Eurydice Network, co-ordinated and managed by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels, provides information on and analyses of European education systems and policies.

⁵ I.V.S MULLIS & M.O MARTIN (Eds.), *PIRLS 2016 Assessment Framework*, 2nd Edition, TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA, 2015.

in PIRLS 2016 were Russian Federation, Singapore, Ireland, Finland, and Poland.

Assessments of reading abilities such as PIRLS or PISA provide information that can contribute to educational reform and policy analysis. These cyclic evaluations make a double comparative analysis possible for participants: synchronic comparison among countries and a diachronic view of each one of the participant countries. This double perspective enables countries to evaluate their own aims⁶. The first PISA results in 2003 aroused alarm in Spain and educational laws were blamed⁷. However, an alarmist approach is erroneous. A rigorous and constructive analysis which may lead to an impartial and realistic appraisal of these assessments is needed.

The purposes for reading and the comprehension processes assessed in PIRLS are summarised in Table 1. Next section of this paper will focus on the comprehension processes. Motivation and processes are like the two pillars where comprehension is sustained⁸. Therefore, teachers should have knowledge of them and a reliable evaluation should consider them.

<p>Why 4th year?</p> <p>Transition point in children's development as readers</p> <p>Reading is not an object of learning but an instrument for learning.</p>	
Purposes for reading	Comprehension processes assessed
<p>reading for literary experience</p> <p>reading to acquire and use information</p>	<p>focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information</p> <p>make straightforward inferences</p> <p>interpret and integrate ideas and information</p> <p>examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements</p>
<p>Test format (different for ePIRLS)</p> <p>Booklet with literary and informational passages</p> <p>non-continuous text features such as text boxes or diagrams</p> <p>Approximate length: 800 to 1,000 words approximately 12 questions perpassage</p> <p>Colourful illustrations to engage student interest</p>	<p>Questionnaires to students' parents, teachers, and school principals (students' home and school experience in developing reading literacy) to participant countries (education systems and reading curricula)</p>
<p>Source: Adapted from Compendium of results and analyses: <i>PIRLS Encyclopedia</i> (Mullis, Martin, Goh, & Prendergast, 2017)</p>	

Table 1. Framework and core features in PIRLS

⁶ A. SANZ MORENO, *La lectura en el proyecto PISA*, in «Revista de Educación», núm. extraordinario, 2005, pp. 95-12.

⁷ J. ALONSO TAPIA, *Claves para la enseñanza de la comprensión lectora*, in «Revista de Educación », núm. extraordinario, 2005, pp. 63-93.

⁸ ALONSO, *Claves para la enseñanza de la comprensión lectora*, op. cit., p. 64.

As seen in this table, inference is a key concept in reading processes. This concept has been approached from linguistics and from psychology. A dialogue among them is feasible⁹. Regarding the roles of inference in reading comprehension, some key findings of a literature review by the National Foundation for Educational Research¹⁰ are:

- «that the ability to draw inferences predetermines reading skills: that is, poor inference making causes poor comprehension and not vice versa» (p. 2)
- There are different kinds of inferences. However there is no consensus about the number of types or how they should be named.
The next lines consider the relationship of inference and the four levels of reading competency considered in PIRLS (see Table 1):
- Process 1 (Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information) requires little or no inferring or interpreting. The meaning is evident and stated in the text; therefore there are no ‘gaps’ in meaning to be filled. The information is usually contained within a sentence or phrase.
- Process 2 (Make Straightforward Inferences). While constructing meaning from text, readers make inferences about ideas or information not explicitly stated. Straightforward inferences imply moving beyond the surface of texts to fill in the ‘gaps’ in meaning. Most of the information is contained in the text and the reader merely needs to connect two or more ideas or pieces of information. The ideas may be explicitly stated but not the connection between them, which must be inferred.
- Process 3 (Interpret and integrate ideas and information) requires straightforward inference and a further step of integrating personal knowledge and experience with meaning from the text.
- In Process 4 (Examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements) the focus shifts from meaning construction to a critical consideration of the text itself.

Therefore, inference plays an indispensable role in the three later comprehension processes. The research conclusion stated at the beginning of this section¹¹ regarding the effect of inference in comprehension becomes evident for the comprehension evaluated by PIRLS. Research¹² has pointed at different levels of inference as an important source of individual differences in comprehension. In addition to this, there is agreement in the possibility of improving

⁹ V. MORENO-CAMPOS, *Sobre el concepto de inferencia: un diálogo entre Lingüística y Psicología*, in S. Díaz, A. Goin (coord.), *Territorios en red: prácticas culturales y análisis del discurso*, Biblioteca nueva, Madrid, 2007, pp. 159-178.

¹⁰ A. KISPAL, *Effective teaching of inference skills for reading: literature review*, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) National Foundation for Educational Research, corp creators, 2008.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² E. SÁNCHEZ, *Los textos expositivos: estrategias para mejorar su comprensión*, Santillana, Madrid, 1993 y *Comprensión y redacción de textos*, Edebé, Barcelona, 1998.

these abilities with suitable training. Therefore, it seems relevant that teacher training courses consider what inference implies and how to foster this.

Spain in PIRLS

This section presents a cursory analysis of the results obtained in reading by Spanish students in the latest PIRLS assessment in 2016. Research on factors affecting comprehension is also summarized. All comments regarding PIRLS or reading abilities will be about Castilian Spanish, the official language of Spain. The language of instruction is Castilian except in communities with another official language: Catalan, Galician, Valencian, and Basque.

A total of 14,600 students coming from 630 different Spanish centres participated in PIRLS 2016. Reading comprehension level of Spanish students reached 528 points, fifteen more points than in the 2011 edition, but still below European average (540 points) and the OCDE average (539). Table 2 displays the 2016 corresponding data.

Participants	14,600 students	630 centres
Reading comprehension level	528 points (15 more points than in the 2011 edition)	Still below European average (540 points) and the OCDE average (539)

Table 2. *Spain in PIRLS 2016*

Regarding the factors affecting results in PIRLS 2011, six different research groups carried out investigations which attempted to link particular social and family aspects to the results obtained (see studies in the Spanish report¹³). PIRLS 2016 results in Spain still require further interpretation. Some correlations regarding performance and other factors can be found in the Monograph Revista de Educación (2019). In any case, these studies on 2011 and 2016 results aimed to lead to conclusions and recommendations that should help the academic authorities to make decisions aimed at improving the results of students. Thus, the pedagogical value of evaluations is to provide information about results which enables decision making to improve education. In the specific context of the experience here reported, a teacher training college, this translates into actions to develop competences to teach reading.

¹³ MECD-INEE, *PIRLS - TIMSS 2011, Estudio Internacional de progreso en comprensión lectora, matemáticas y ciencias*, IEA, Volumen I y Volumen II, Informe español, 2012.

Teacher training for teaching reading in Spain

1. The Spanish Reading Curriculum in the Primary Grades

Curricular policies are shaped in many different ways. In Spain, the highest level is established in some detail by government and jurisdictional requirements. Then, a second level is further affected by regional government regulations, the Statutes of Autonomy of the 17 autonomous communities. Finally, local schools have some freedom for decision making.

Since the beginning of the democracy in Spain in 1977, the country has seen legislative instability regarding education. Eight different laws regulating primary and secondary have been drafted until the current Organic Law on the Improvement of the Quality of Education (LOMCE). LOMCE¹⁴ is not a new Law of Education but an amendment of the existing school reform LOE (Organic Law of Education). With the LOMCE, Primary School is a six-course stage. One of the core subjects in Primary education is ‘Spanish language and Literature’, which is split into five content blocks:

1. Listening, Speaking and Interacting;
2. Reading;
3. Writing;
4. Knowledge of Language and Linguistic Features;
5. Literary education.

In the previous law, reading and writing were combined in one block. The new division enables the formulation of more specific aims and evaluation criteria of both skills which are expected to provide enhanced attention to the processes comprehended in these skills. Therefore, teachers are required to be capable of it.

2. Teacher training for teaching reading literacy

The delivering of a coherent and rigorous curriculum depends on well-qualified teachers. The importance of teacher’s preparation in the subject matter they teach and of their qualification status is certified by research¹⁵. In any subject, teacher preparation is a powerful predictor of students’ achievement, perhaps even overcoming socioeconomic and language background factors, as growing evidence shows¹⁶. Perhaps attention should focus on the need to train teachers to teach reading comprehension

Since 2010, following the European process of convergence, the educa-

¹⁴ In January 2021 Spain’s eighth educational law in just over four decades of democracy came into force, the LOMLOE (‘Organic Law of Modification of the Organic Law of Education’). Modifications to the language curriculum will be implemented in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

¹⁵ A.J. WAYNE & P. YOUNGS, *Teacher characteristics and student achievement gains: a Review*, in «Review of Educational Research», 73 (1), 2003, pp. 89-122.

¹⁶ L. DARLING-HAMMOND, *Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence*, «Education Policy Analysis Archives», 8(1), 2000. Cited in PIRLS 2011, p. 186.

tional route to primary teacher certification in Spain is a four year degree, the *Grado de Maestro en Educación Primaria* or the *Grado de Maestro en Educación Infantil*. These are generalist education programs. The core subjects in the curriculum include language and literature fundamentals and their pedagogy. Universities may as well offer other optional courses related to these disciplines. Spain lacks reading specialists among the professional profiles. Only eight countries in the European Union provide reading specialists at school to support teachers and pupils, as stated in the cross-national report on teaching reading practices in Europe *Eurydice*¹⁷. The language and literature teacher, usually the classroom teacher, is responsible for reading instruction. The only reading specialist in primary education is the special needs teacher, committed mainly to children with difficulties. However, there is an increasing emphasis on reading comprehension in all curricula subjects, encouraged by the Reading Promotion Plan by the Spanish Education Ministry (2003). Initial teacher education in Spain lacks central guidelines but covers aspects of reading instruction in the programmes. Given the variation in the level of autonomy granted to initial teacher education institutions in Europe, these aspects are difficult to assemble. In Spain this teaching is under the responsibility of Departments or areas of *Didáctica de la Lengua* (Language teaching). This is an emergent area of knowledge («disciplina en proceso de construcción»¹⁸) coming out from Linguistics and Education, but very recurrently orientated exclusively towards the former. For this reason, though to our knowledge there is no study evidencing this, a very frequent tendency is to use this space for teaching language to undergraduates instead of teaching them how to teach language. This trend is depriving prospective teachers of the knowledge to teach an instrumental skill, which is a severe deficiency. Those Faculties of Education whose Departments of *Didáctica de la Lengua* are willing to teach teaching reading can find a compendium of the crucial elements to include in initial teacher education in *Eurydice*¹⁹. These are grounded in a synthesis of various types of research enabled by the International Reading Association: «a foundation in research and theory, preparation to use a range of teaching strategies and a variety of material, preparation to use appropriate assessment techniques, balance and consistency between a theoretical knowledge base and field experiences»²⁰. Next sections center on an experience pursuing the development of these crucial aspects in prospective teachers.

¹⁷ EURYDICE, *Teaching reading in Europe: Contexts, policies and Practices*, op. cit.

¹⁸ J. DOLZ, , R. GAGNON, & S. MOSQUERA, *La didáctica de las lenguas: una disciplina en proceso de construcción*, in «Didáctica. Lengua y Literatura», n. 21, 2009, pp. 117-141.

¹⁹ EURYDICE, *Teaching reading in Europe: Contexts, policies and Practices*, op. cit., p. 86.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Final degree dissertations on reading comprehension

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) implies a shift from knowledge transmission to competences acquisition. The Spanish regulation of degrees and masters (RD 1393/2007) establishes a compulsory final degree dissertation (FDD) and final master dissertation (FMD)²¹. One of the aims of both will be the evaluation of competences acquired during the degree or master (art. 12.7). Hitherto, in Spain this type of dissertations were related to engineering degrees²². The current regulations in the EHEA make them compulsory in all degrees.

As the title suggests, the focal point of this paper is the experience of four prospective primary education teachers whose FDDs dealt with reading comprehension in Spanish schools. The four projects are summarized in Table 3 and their respective empirical contributions are then described. The following section will comment on the students' responses to a brief open questionnaire dealing with inference in reading comprehension before, during and after their work in the FDD.

Dissertation Title	School year in which it was implemented	Number of children	Contribution
Observation of inferences in reading comprehension in year 2	2nd	15	Though inference is not explicitly stated in the curriculum at this age, children showed to be able to infer explicit information
Reading comprehension in non-linguistic discipline: its relationship with the moment of initial instruction	2nd	20	Shows a correlation between moment of initial reading instruction and reading competence for Science and Math
Reading comprehension in a rural school	4th, 5th, 6th	9	Possibilities of working the same type of texts with children of three different academic years
Reading comprehension: a didactic proposal	6th	22	Activities which demand inference (guessing game, conundrums) have a positive impact in reading comprehension.

Table 3. *Final degree dissertations reported*

²¹ In the Spanish original Trabajo de Fin de Grado (TFG) and Trabajo de Fin de máster (TFM).

²² S. ROMÁN-SUERO, J. SÁNCHEZ-MARTÍN, F. ZAMORA-POLO, *Opportunities given by final degree dissertations inside the EHEA to enhance ethical learning in technical education*, in «European Journal of Engineering Education», n. 38(2), 2013, pp. 149-158.

Before considering each one of the 4 FDDs, the context and the circumstances are described. These FDDs were carried out at the Faculty of Education in a large university in central Spain. During the four year degree, students had three 6 ECTS subjects related to language: Spanish language content, Children's literature and Castilian Language teaching. The specific didactics of mother tongue are presented in the latter. The time slot available for teaching reading is fairly reduced as there are other 3 content blocks which should be dealt with (oral language, writing and knowledge about language). Therefore, a FDD on teaching reading is a bonus for the education of the prospective teacher, as the core subjects can only provide a preliminary introduction. The empirical contents of the FDDs are summarized below.

Final Degree Dissertation

Children (7-8 year old) were given a reading comprehension task which required basic straightforward inferences. Inference is not considered in the curricula at this age, but children proved capable of it by using previous knowledge and schemata.

The author of the FDD (an already in-service Primary teacher who wanted another qualification) shared the thought that teachers were not giving inference the significance it should have. One of the conclusions of her FDD is the need to encourage inference development from Infant education by the use of riddles and simple mystery solving games and enigmas.

Final Degree Dissertation 2

A seven-session program was implemented to find out its impact on 6th grade learners' reading comprehension skills. Sessions lasted only 20-30 minutes and were focused on the reading of texts from PIRLS released questions and other texts with an entertaining dimension such as guessing games, riddles and conundrums. The reading comprehension tasks included the four types of comprehension processes assessed in PIRLS: focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information; make straightforward inferences; interpret and integrate ideas and information; examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements.

Pre-test and post-test procedure was used to measure the impact of the program on students' achievement. Of the four processes investigated (see above) making straightforward inferences provided the most striking results with a considerable increase in achievements.

The prospective teacher who designed the pedagogical intervention and carried out the tests concluded with some reflections on relevance of awareness about the skills related to comprehension. He made explicit the expectation

of having modestly contributed to fill the lacunae about information and proposals to teach reading. In his conclusions he warned other teachers about the necessity of systematic and theory grounded proposals.

Final Degree Dissertation 3

The author of this FDD observed the relationship between moment of initial reading instruction (whether at the age of 3 or 4 or 5) and reading comprehension of Science and Math texts. The aim was to see if an earlier exposure to the code could have an influence on the stage where the written language is not learnt itself but is used to learn. Results seem to indicate that those children who had started earlier performed better.

These results coincide with those by the Spanish institute of educational evaluation (INNE)²³ (MECD-INEE, 2013) which showed that the beginning of schooling at Infant Education led to better reading comprehension results. In the same line, PISA 2014 showed that 15 year olds who had attended Infant Education performed better than those who had not. The author of the FDD remarked the importance of an early start in teaching reading and of reading comprehension in non-linguistic disciplines.

Final Degree Dissertation 4

The context for this FDD was a rural school with 9 children ranging from 9 to 11 in the same class and with the same teacher. The aim was to observe if comprehension of scientific texts and argumentative texts was dependent on age or more on individual factors. Regarding inferences in both types of texts, results indicated that academic year (and therefore age) was not the determining factor. In some occasions younger students performed better than those in a higher course. The author of the FDD concludes that, in the context of this heterogeneous class age, there seems to be no reason not to work the same texts to the different ages, as they have proven themselves capable.

It is evident that the contributions of these four small scale research pieces are only valuable for the own investigated contexts and for very similar ones. However, the major gain is for the prospective teachers who performed the observations and investigations. This is presented in the next section.

Insights from final degree dissertations

FDDs have the potential to be a proper educative space for developing

²³ MECD-INEE, *Panorama de la Educación. Indicadores de la OCDE 2013*, Informe español, 2013.

transversal competences within the university higher education²⁴. The present paper leaves aside the indicators of competences developed, which could be the content of another paper, and centers on students' awareness about the relevance of inference and the didactic approach to it. Nonetheless, a brief reflection on competence development will be included in the conclusions section.

The tutoring process during the planning, the implementation and the writing of these projects allowed the tutor and author of this paper to perceive the emergent interest of the prospective teachers in inferential comprehension and their increasing attentiveness of the relevance of such skill. A seven questions open questionnaire (see Table 4) was administered to the four graduates who had authored the four FDDs described above. Their responses indicate how the contact with real data (children's performance in the comprehension tasks, the reading materials for the task and the materials for the reading practice) triggered their awareness of inference and the convenience and possibility to develop it.

1. What did you think/ know about reading comprehension before your FDD/taking the subject on Language Didactics?
2. What did your FDD/Language Didactics subject bring you with regard to reading comprehension?
3. Assess the importance you gave to INFERENCE
 - before your FDD / Language Didactics
 - after your FDD / Language Didactics
4. What learning about INFERENCE (relevance, way of work, difficulty, etc.) did your FDD bring you?
5. Do you think INFERENCE is valued in the day-to-day life of the classroom? And in the teaching materials, activities and resources?
6. Why should every teacher know the concept of INFERENCE and how to work this skill?
7. Any other COMMENTS, EXAMPLE, ANECDOTE RELATED to inference derived from your TFG?

Table 4. *Questionnaire administered to graduates after their FDD*

Their responses provide an insight of several aspects summarized as follows. Firstly, as regards knowledge of the skill of inference as a constituent of reading comprehension, only the student who was already an in-service teacher was aware of it. This knowledge was probably due to her undergraduate studies or to other in-service training. The other three students reported to have considered reading comprehension as a whole and not being aware of the different components of the reading process.

Secondly, concerning how their FDDs had contributed to their knowledge about reading comprehension and about inference, the four agreed about the deeper understanding of the topic provided by the FDD. Each one of them indicated some acquired knowledge related to their specific

²⁴ F. ZAMORA POLO, J. SÁNCHEZ MARTÍN, *Los Trabajos Fin de Grado: una herramienta de desarrollo de competencias transversales en la Educación Superior*, in «REDU - Revista de Docencia Universitaria», n. 13(3), 2014, pp. 197-211.

topic. For example, the author of FDD 3 emphasized her awareness of the essentiality of inference when reading math problems or scientific texts. The author of FDD 4 highlighted she had also learnt to observe when a child is making inferences or when there might be difficulties. The in-service teacher reported the FDD had widened her prior knowledge and changed her approach to teaching reading.

A third issue presented in the questionnaires was the evaluation of the relevance given to inference in everyday classroom practice. The in-service teacher admitted that many teachers were completely unaware of this concept, and one of the students reported the same by intuition based on her brief experience. In consequence, both pointed that these professionals could not make profit of activities which, though in very scarce supply, were present in books and other resources. The other two respondents did not identify teachers' lack of knowledge as the cause of poor presence of inferential activities in the classroom. However, they both agreed that inference was dangerously undervalued and that approaching reading comprehension as a whole and not from the different comprehension processes was delaying efficiency.

In fourth place, regarding their future application of their knowledge about inference, students affirm to have included inference when they have to plan lessons in their practicum period. The author of FDD 1 reported to have tried to adapt to different levels the activities which implied inference. As it could be expected, the in-service teacher includes inference in her lessons since she completed her FDD.

Finally, as regards the question why all teachers should be familiar with the concept of inference and how to approach it, there was consensus about the requirement to make teachers aware of inference for a successful teaching of reading. The emergency finds one of its foundations in the instrumental nature of this skill. Respondents also highlighted children would benefit if teachers were trained in teaching reading.

To conclude this section, two notorious aspects should be commented. In first place, the general consensus among the four, though expressed with variation. Secondly, the quality of recollection of the four authors, considered that their FDDs were implemented and written in May 2013 and the questionnaires were administered nearly three years later. This seems to indicate the enduring nature of learning by doing and its effects not only on knowledge but mainly on competence development.

Conclusions

As previously stated, the small-scale investigations or experiences in these FDDs are only relevant for their own context and fulfilled the purpose of providing the competences required to obtain a qualification. However, some pertinent conclusions of the overall experience could be applied to other contexts.

Their significance will be endorsed with guidelines and recommendations by *Eurydice*²⁵ report or by literature.

Regarding the contribution of FDDs to competence development, as it can be observed, in the four FDDs there is an evident relationship among the competences associated with the dissertation itself and subsequently with the specific competences of the degree. Many of the competences seen as generic in the curricula are dealt with by these FDDs. Evidently, there are still some competences which the FDD does not cover, as it is merely a complementary space to the rest of the subjects in the degree. However, it can be said that the students have developed competences to teach reading and in particular, competence to teach and observe inferential comprehension.

As regards continuous professional development, writing this paper verifies that practising teachers /lecturer (as the author of this chapter) can continue their learning through the processes of teaching. Tutoring and guiding the undergraduates in their FDDs provided an insight not only of the reality of teaching reading comprehension in the classrooms, but mainly of teachers' requirements. Primary school teachers' knowledge about reading comprehension will also benefit from the feedback received in their own evaluations of children's competences and in their own process of teaching.

Eurydice states an advantage which has been proven in our context: «For prospective teachers, applying knowledge to field experiences provides opportunities for reconstructing prior beliefs inconsistent with effective reading instruction»²⁶. For example, undergraduates reported to have considered reading comprehension as a whole and not taking into account the different comprehension processes. An evident pedagogical implication is the need to train teachers in the different abilities of the reading comprehension process²⁷.

The same report suggests that «shifts in student teacher beliefs may be attributed to consistency between theoretical foundations provided during coursework and carefully structured and supervised field experience»²⁸. In our context field experience regarding teaching reading was especially supervised since it was part of the FDD. In the case of undergraduates with a different FDD topic, this aspect was not observed. As a consequence of their shifts, prospective teachers display confidence in their ability to teach, another aspect mentioned in *Eurydice*. With these FDDs prospective teachers were given the opportunities to learn the necessary skills for teaching reading and they were able to practice them during their teaching practice.

According to the results in PIRLS (2011) emphasis on how to teach reading during initial education is related to effective reading instruction. Our experience serves to illustrate an approach to that initial teacher education. Later, in

²⁵ EURYDICE, *Teaching reading in Europe: Contexts, policies and Practices*, op. cit.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁷ MORENO, *Sobre lectura y educación*, op. cit.

²⁸ EURYDICE, *Teaching reading in Europe: Contexts, policies and Practices*, op. cit., p. 86.

continuous professional development, these undergraduates could recur to collaborative forms (i.e. knowledge-sharing or peer-learning activities) to learn from other professionals or to enrich them with the experience acquired in their FDDs. Continuous professional development (or initial training) will have to prepare teachers for the teaching of reading of electronic texts via today's communication technologies, taking into account the changing nature of reading in contemporary society.

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Andrea Rácz¹ ² and Dorottya Sik³

*To stay or to leave?
The phenomenon of running away, as a form of criticism
against the child protection system*

ABSTRACT

The research is based on quantitative and qualitative parts and the focus is on the effects and symptoms of the running away phenomenon from children's homes and from foster families. Running away from the public care system means escaping from childhood which is equal with escaping to adulthood. From risky childhood to risky adulthood. The goal of our research is to understand and analyse the causes of this phenomenon and find solving methods to decrease running away from the child protection system. In our study we will reflect on how children and professionals interpret the problem and on what kind of preventive and reactive methods exist in the Hungarian public child protection system.

KEYWORDS: Running away, Child protection system's disfunctions, Preventive solutions, Children and youth at risk, Future developments

Introduction

23 thousand children and young adults are cared by the Hungarian child protection system, and the running away of children and underaged youths from placement is an increasingly serious issue. The aim of our study is to ex-

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amine the motivations for running away among children and young people in child protection, and to map the related prevention and management practices of the institutions. First, we present a few international researches and good practices relevant in this field, then we outline the main results of our research based on a qualitative methodology. We also highlight the views of children and professionals on the running away phenomenon and the solutions these views might point to, in order to tackle the issue and the underlying motivations. Our results, through the identification of the phenomenon of runaway youth and the analysis of the underlying motivations, reveal certain acute shortages of the system. Our conclusion is that at present there are no real institutional solutions to prevent and manage running away behaviours, and beyond running away, there is a substantial need to adequately approach, care for, and educate the target group, and on long term to support their successful social integration. The most needed change is to ameliorate the relationships between the youths living together, to support the relationship with the family, but also to create a more flexible regulation regarding how they can keep the contact; and to make institutions more open by making use of other services of the wider social system. Children perceive that the child protection system has no proper means regarding their upbringing; this perception is based on the fact that they cannot establish a trustful relationship with the educators and caregivers, which would ensure a solid ground to providing help related to the phenomenon of running away or all sorts of individual problems, needs or life events. There isn't any helpful professional in the children's environment they could rely on, they could trust, and other types of supportive background are also lacking, like psychologists. Institutional life is desolate both in terms of material and professional conditions, therefore troubled, rebellious teenagers do not find reasons for staying in the homes. Yet, dangers of the outside world and their consequences are often invisible and unpredictable, but responsibility relies on the child protection system, which, at present, does not have preventive, problem-centred and therapeutic solutions either.

International research and good practices concerning runaway youth

According to a relevant research in the field⁴ carried out on the basis of a web survey and interviews with children and young people (the survey was conducted among 117 children in 55 children's homes, average age 15, the youngest was 8, the oldest 18 years old), the view on children's homes and the attitude of the staff working there are the most important factors in preventing running away attempts from the children's homes. In addition, the young peo-

⁴ OFSTED, *Life in children's homes - A report of children's experience*, Children's Rights Director for England, London 2009 <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/182/7/Life%20in%20children's%20homes_Redacted.pdf> (last access 01.30.2020)

ple mentioned the facilities available in homes and the possibilities to have leisure activities. As negative aspects of living in a children's home, they mentioned missing their family, the difficulty to adapt to rules and restraints and to endure the noise typical of such institutions, the compulsory cohabitation with other children and the problems it entails. Besides this, the children also mentioned the lack of pets as well. For their well-being it is very important to place them not far from their family, and school and leisure activities should be easily accessible from the institution. It is an important observation of the participants to the research that living in a children's home means more rules and procedures, they need to learn to live together with other people who are not their family, while different children have different habits⁵. According to international experiences, episodes of running away from children's homes usually last for a short time, maximum one week; the oldest the youngsters are, the more frequent and longer the episode is, and girls tend to escape more frequently. There is no difference in the tendency to run away on the basis of the ethnical background. Youths running away usually have problems at school, have suicidal thoughts, have several, documented behavioural problems, struggle with addictions, and typically have mental problems as well⁶. Research finds links between the frequency of running away events and the alterations of placements. The more places a youngster is living in, the more frequent is the running away. Data show that children removed from their family due to neglect run away more frequently. Those children who were placed in homes due to abuse, tend to run away at a lower rate than other children. This aspect can be attributed also to the fact that escaping children most frequently return to their old home environment⁷. The University of Chicago led a research examining a twenty-years period, between 1993 and 2003. Data were available on 14,000 cases of runaways, and 42 interviews were conducted with caregivers and foster parents. According to research data, the vast majority of children who ran away were aged above 12, and most of them were girls. Running away was more frequent among those children and youngsters who had addiction issues or mental illness, who experienced placement instability and changed institutions many times. The likelihood of running away was higher in case of children separated from their siblings. The interviews with the youngsters revealed that most of them did not run away from something, but for something, like independence, family ties, romantic relationships, or greater autonomy⁸.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ M.R. PERGAMIT, M. ERNST, *Running Away from Foster Care: Youths' Knowledge and Access of Services*, 2011 <<https://monarchhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/runawayyouth.pdf>> (last access 01.30.2020).

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ M.E. COURTNEY, A. SKYLES, G. MIRANDA, A. ZINN, A., E. HOWARD, R.M. GOERGE, *Youth Who Run Away from Out-of-Home Care*, Issue Brief 103, Chapin Hall Center for Children, March 2005, <https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Courtney_Youth-Who-Run->

The first experiences within an institution are decisive regarding the likelihood of running away. Young people running away recurrently will typically have difficulties in establishing bonds with others in their adult life or they will be even unable to establish relationships, they will often commit crimes and join gangs. The emergence of addictions, the lack of educational qualifications and professional knowledge are also among the consequences of this phenomenon⁹. While on the run, children and youths more often fall victims of crimes, especially of sexual abuse, but in order to survive, they might become themselves the actors of crimes. The likelihood of HIV infection is fifteen times higher than in the case of their peers who do not run away. It is a typical experience that while on the run, they are mugged, beaten and stolen off. They also commit crimes in such situations¹⁰. Pimps and procurers have a preference in recruiting youths from children's homes, offering accommodation, food, money and drugs for those who are likely to make that step. The illusion that these people and gangs would ensure the missed family love and security in fact exposes these youngsters to the dangers of human trafficking and prostitution¹¹.

Multiple programs and prevention methods are available to tackle the running away, which can be adapted and adjusted to the Hungarian child protection system. Just to mention a few examples, the Family and Youth Services Bureau is a transnational organisation based in the USA, which aims at providing support to homeless youngsters exposed to different risks. One of the goals of this organisations is to decrease and prevent running away. It carries out field work, operates shelters and a webpage, which is specifically dedicated to running away and the prevention of it¹².

According to an American prevention method developed in 2012, the most important component in preventing running away behaviours is a team of professionals with adequate training and attitude. The timetable of children has to be flexible and adjusted to the children's needs, in the sense that the caregivers have to be available to the children whenever they need them. A key factor in preventing running away tendencies is the enhancement of the communication between foster parents, educators and the affected youth, and of their conflict management abilities. Upon recognizing these, a webpage and hotline functional across the states were created, providing support for youths on the run wherever they are. A distinct interface is dedicated to parents and

Away_Brief_2005.pdf> (last access 01.30.2020).

⁹ K. CROSLAND, G. DUNLAP, *Running Away from Foster Care: What Do We Know and What Do We Do?*, in «Journal of Child and Family Studies», 6, 2014, pp. 1697-1706.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1699.

¹¹ *Ibid.* and UNICEF, *A child is a child Protecting children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation*, New York 2017 <https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_A_child_is_a_child_May_2017_EN.pdf> (last access 01.30.2020).

¹² <<https://www.rhyttac.net/>> (last access 01.30.2020).

educators, who can address their questions to professionals and can receive help and guidance in the arising problems and dilemmas¹³.

When considering the reasons behind running away behaviours, legal and illegal drug prevention has an outstanding role and significance as well. Drug prevention has to be embedded in the series of activities related to health, mental health, and children wellbeing in general within an institution. Regarding the school environment, learning and teaching have to be interactive and the teacher-student relationship should not be defined by hierarchy, especially in situations where decision has to be made regarding the community. Pedagogical models built on cooperation and partnership facilitate the application and acceptance of the required preventive mentality and the methods to be applied¹⁴.

All this shows that the most important component in preventing running away tendencies is the improvement of the institutional system and the professional development of the staff. Professionals with proper skills are able to create a trustful environment, where children can turn to them with trust and feel safe. Supporting the educational path, addressing eventual behavioural and mental issues, providing help in case of learning difficulties and processing traumas, coupled with the appropriate prevention methods, contribute to the decision of children and youths regularly running away or exposed to the risk of running away to choose other solutions to their problems – however, all this requires a dedicated child protection system.

The examination of reasons and motivations of runaways in Hungary

1) Overview

According to 2017 data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 20,948 children aged 0-18 lived in child protection care. Just over half of the children were aged 11-17. The rate of sexes is almost identical. 37% of the children, a number of 7,793, were considered as having particular needs (children with a chronic disease, with disabilities, and aged 0-3). A little more than 2% of the cared children, 449 individuals, were considered as having special needs, this group includes children with addiction, showing symptoms of mental illness or with behavioural problems. The older a child is, the less are the chances that they can be placed in foster care, as only 42% of children aged 14-17 live in foster care, while this percentage is 67% if we consider all the age groups. Almost all the children with special needs live in children's homes or in closed or semi-closed institutions specialized for such children, and only 3.6% of children with such issues were placed in foster care.

In 2017 the number of children involved in runaway issues was 3,475, 48%

¹³ <www.1800runaway.org> (last access 01.30.2020).

¹⁴ UNITED NATIONS *School based education for drug abuse preventios*, New York 2004 <https://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/handbook_school_english.pdf> (last access 01.30.2020).

of them being girls. Most of them ran away from children's homes and family-type care homes. Regarding the county distribution, Budapest was on top of the list, the second being Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county, where the percentage of children in state care is very high and which, moreover, is the less developed part of the country. The number of runaway cases was 19,126, while the number of running away attempts per children was very high, 5.5. Among the children who ran away, 5% committed crimes, one quarter of them being girls. When considering the tendencies of recent years, the number of children running away slightly decreased, but the frequency of runaway incidents transformed substantially. The number of children running away only once decreased, while the number of children running away two or three times is increasing; the number of children running away four or more times also slightly decreased. It is a reason for concern that while on the run, more and more children commit crimes with an increasing frequency. The committed crimes are related to material damage, the second most frequent infringement is drug abuse¹⁵.

	Children's homes	Foster care
1	953	81
2 times	485	25
3 times	345	11
4 and more times	1,541	34
Total number of children running away	3,324	151
Runaway cases	18,812	314

Table no 1. *The number of runaways in 2017*
Source: Own edition based on data collection of Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2017

2) The qualitative research

As part of the qualitative research, we conducted interviews with ten professionals. The range of professionals included foster parents, legal guardians, an institution manager, a psychologist, professionals involved in decision-making at ministry level. Moreover, interviews were conducted with twenty affected persons, sixteen children and four young adults, who at present live in state care. We talked to eleven girls and nine boys; the interviewees were aged 12–19. The interviews were conducted in the capital and in other parts of the country. We were interested in finding out what the reasons and motivations for running away are, how institutions react, what measures exist following running away, if there are any institutional efforts to prevent running away behaviours and their recurring. In what follows we will present the standpoint

¹⁵ KSH 2017 (Statistical data collection, unpublished data).

of professionals, then we'll examine reasons and motivations prompting children to run away from their own perspective. Finally, we outline the identifiable institutional reactions, revealing the insufficiencies in this field as well.

3) Main results

3.1 The reasons and motivations of runaways according to professionals

Compared to professionals working outside children's homes and to decision-makers, people working in homes have a very different view on the motivations behind running away. Those working within the facilities do not perceive such a significant institutional effect, and they do not attribute so many negative features to the institution in relation to running away, as those professionals who are connected to the system as external actors, like child protection guardians. The employees working in children's homes explain the issue rather through the life situations of children, and they do not perceive any organisational or structural deficiency, displaying a rather repelling attitude. They state firmly that institutional rules are acceptable to children, and that they do not run away because of the exaggerated expectations and rigid institutional setup. They are convinced that youngsters feel at ease in the homes. A further typical form of shifting institutional responsibility is the reference to behaviour patterns linked to age specificities. Boys are associated with the phenomenon of ganging up, while girls, but boys too, with the effect of romance. «That's what's usually happening, boys are hanging around with their gangs, fall in love, just as girls do, and since peer relationships are above everything else, if they haven't got permission, they leave without it. I think it's that simple» (educator responsible for teenagers, countryside).

Professionals working outside the institution display more criticism, as in their view the main reason of runaways is that children's homes do not establish genuine partnership relations with the youths. The effects of socialization hardly allow the adaptation to strict rules, pointing to the rigidity of the system of outings, which disregards age specificities.

«[...] the children's home is unable to keep them, they can't build up a partnership with them. [...] children have difficulties to bear the limits, and are used to different limits» (child protection guardian, Budapest).

It is extremely important to talk about the dangers as well, like sexual abuse, which, due to the need for emotional attachment, is a real threat. «Because they don't feel at ease inside, they have no one to attach to, and that's how many kids say it, "who cares, because there, at least they love me". They have an emotional connection there, they feel loved, that's all, that's the price of it. "They would buy me this or that", but then, some of them are used physically, so are forced to work» (child protection guardian, Budapest). At this point, the risk of prostitution and the abuse of illegal and legal substances is very high, the latter being a problem anyway in child protection.

Among the anomalies of institutional functioning, the phenomenon of

institutional neglect was also mentioned: the professionals often do not have accurate information on the cared children, they do not know what the youngsters are doing in their free time, where they go, what they are interested in, what their wishes regarding the near or more distant future are, or in general, how they feel. They often do not know their family and peer relationships either. «They simply do not know much about the children living there. The educators do not spend time with the children, but stay in the educators' room, doors closed, they are afraid of children or what, I don't know. That kid is a good kid, who's just a statistical number, but who's not in the system, so one doesn't need to be looked after» (child protection guardian, Budapest).

The professionals describe as a structural problem the fact that there aren't adequate recommendations at place as how to care efficiently for preteenagers and teenagers, what should be the basic principles the upbringing relies on, especially that in their case, they have few chances to be placed in foster care because of their higher age and behaviour problems. «So I think that tweens with many problems are in such a vacuum of care, to which there aren't adequate answers at present, in the care for preadolescents, to how a children's home should be operated» (manager of an institution, Budapest).

3.2 Runaway from the perspective of children and youths in child protection care

We can conclude that most children and young adults run away to their family of origin. In most cases, after running away they do not return to the institution, only days or weeks later, but they stay with their family and parents instead. It is evident that the fact that there isn't a proper procedure at place to keep the contact with their family, and the distance from their parents and familiar environment increase the risk of running away, and the length and frequency of such incidence. Going to their families is often only the starting point of a series of running away episodes, as later on children tend to run not only to their family, but to friends and acquaintances too, because they do not want to return to the children's home. «When I ran away for the first time, it was sometime in November, I went to my parents with my older sister. And I stayed there for one day, then I returned. Now they let me go to my friend for one day. Everything was fine there, but that one day passed and we were heading to the bus station to return to D. [the town], then here [to the institution], and we were chatting, all that, and I was with my sister and with my friend, and they convinced me to stay» (countryside, child living in a children's home).

Beyond this, we can observe another, rather standard pattern too, when running away is triggered by the desire to join dangerous company, or to be free and get rid of rules and limitations, and by the intensifying need for drugs. These situations are even more dangerous, since in such cases the children do not go to their families, but spend time on the streets, in abandoned buildings or playgrounds, without the supervision or help of an adult. «We always found such a place, for example there was in Ny [a place where the interviewee previously lived in an institution], at a railway station a warehouse-like building,

a very old warehouse, and so, we were either there, or were sleeping in a train. We did the same in the daytime, things like that» (Budapest, young adult living a post-care home).

In such situations, the risk of becoming a victim, or being exposed to health threatening situations is very high. In such cases, illegal drug abuse or the consumption of legal substances occurs in all cases and is a decisive factor. «We got to know each other better with these other kids from homes, they were also on drugs, they were smoking too so to say, like me and my little brother, the older one. So then, as we were smoking weed, there was a circle, people who were smoking weed, they had been doing this before us, and so we got into it too» (Budapest, young adult living a post-care home).

3.3 Institutional responses and their perception

According to the scant accounts of professionals and the experiences of the youngsters, the professional child protection system does not dispose over proper institutional tools and methods to prevent running away behaviours, and there are no meaningful reactions to such acts, after the children return to the institution voluntarily, with their parents or escorted by the police. There is no trustful relationship between the cared children and the caregivers, which would allow for the sharing of secrets and experiences they had gone through. This is problematic also in those cases when a child runs away to his/her family, since there was a reason for being removed from their family. But it is even more risky if they hang around on the street or at acquaintances during their unpermitted leave. «“Well, I usually don’t talk to anyone when I come back”. Didn’t you talk with the caregivers about whether there would be a next case, or why you had left? “No.”» (countryside, child living in a family-like home operated by the church). «The caregiver asks me where I’d been, and we write a note» (Budapest, young adult, sent to a correctional institution with a history in the child protection system 1).

What is needed in order to prevent running away or its repeating? The children and young adults mention three factors:

- 1) It is important to experience confidence, affection, to have an adult caregiver or professional in any other position to whom they can turn to openly, who gives advice, is present in their lives, cares for them, who finds them important, and they can count on in times of hardship. «Well, first of all, love. Lots of love, then, I don’t know. At that time drugs guided me, and the lack of love, this, you know, well, since we weren’t locked in, you know, we could go everywhere we wanted, in turn, it’s even worse if someone is locked up out there, ‘cause they would commit even more crimes» (Budapest, young adult sent to a correctional institution with a history in the child protection system 1).
- 2) At this age, exaggerated and rigid rules and expectations also evoke serious reluctance on the part of the youth, especially if the limits, rules and expectations were very different back home.

- 3) An important factor is the desolation of institutions, boredom, the fact that there aren't exciting programs, and the available options are very limited. Among boys, internet, TV, computer, computer games are important and widespread, but besides these, sports, outdoor activities and extra-institutional programs are also indicated as needs. In case of girls, the lack of technical equipment is less emphasized, they would rather prefer outings. «Well, if only we had more programs, that would be good» (Budapest, young adult, sent to correctional institution, with a history in the child protection system 2).

Conclusion

The interview-based research revealed that, similarly to international trends, it is typical to the phenomenon of running away that children and youth tend to run away more and more frequently and for more and more extended periods. In most cases, they go to their family of origin, the eventuality of it being evidently higher if a child lives in state care for a shorter period of time and has a closer relationship with the family. It can be observed that first children run away to their family, later, when running away becomes part of their strategies, they run not only home, but to other places too. Thus, the risks they become exposed to are increasingly high and serious.

The child protection system has no means to address the issue. There isn't a relationship of trust between the caregivers and the cared children, which would ensure a solid ground for supportive discussions related to running away behaviours, while sessions with a psychologist are not frequent enough, if they are accessible at all, in order to become efficient factors of change. Another important aspect is that in the narrative of the children and youngsters, boredom within the institutions, the lack of programs and activities are indicated as typical reasons leading to running away.

Running away is a symptom, revealing the anomalies of the system. In order to prevent the phenomenon, and in general, to make child protection care efficient, the following are needed:

- Increased efforts are needed in order to ensure that the contact between the biological family and the child is continuous and maintained; this relationship might be reconsidered due to changing needs, especially with the advancement of age.
- Enforcing the relationship of confidence between the cared children and the professionals: there isn't any helping professional in the environment of the children, on whom they could rely on, in whom they could trust. For any efficient intervention from the part of the specialised care regarding both running away and other factors threatening children (i.e. drugs, alcohol, committing crimes, prostitution), a stronger and deeper relationship between the carer and the cared is indispensable.

- There aren't any therapeutic alternatives to process traumas experienced in the biological family or within the institutions. At present the institutional system is unable to fulfil all tasks related to child protection. It is evident that a considerably high rate of the children running away are affected by various deviancies, many of them are under pharmacological therapy, therefore during any unpermitted leave, the extent of the danger is also much higher.
- Insufficiencies in professional knowledge also show that professional knowledge is not adjusted to the life conditions of the cared children, and there isn't any openness to look for simple solutions on institutional level.
- Institutions organize targeted programs aimed at prevention only occasionally. They don't even consider it necessary, arguing that the type of problem already arose within the institution. Reactive solutions are also adventitious in all topics; besides runaways, we can mention in this respect victimization, drug abuse, and teen pregnancy as well. According to professionals, the most important need is to organize group activities for the young people, and to improve relationships among youths living in the same homes. However, the tools for such actions remain unknown.
- Professional failures, the feelings of powerlessness and incapacity, and the concrete cases of runaways also have a negative impact on the attitude of professionals. It is important to dedicate attention to the improvement of the human relationships of professionals working with youths, to the life stories of children in child protection care or to the processing of feelings of failure caused by cases of runaways, in general, to allow space for professional dialogue (professional discussions, supervision and coaching).

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Bea Tomšič Amon¹

Narrativas trasmediáticas en la educación a distancia

ABSTRACT

El papel del profesor ha cambiado radicalmente con la introducción de los medios digitales en el proceso educativo. Este actúa como un dramaturgo, que crea narrativas transmediáticas para involucrar a los estudiantes en su acceso al conocimiento e incentivar experiencias emocionales específicas. Estas experiencias funcionan como un complejo interconectado en la medida en que los estudiantes necesitan desarrollar herramientas para la interpretación, negociación del significado de la información a la que están expuestos en el contexto de lo transmediático.

Esta contribución presenta un proyecto interdisciplinario que exploró y utilizó narrativas transmediáticas en el campo de la educación a distancia en los recientes meses de cuarentena.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Narrativas transmediáticas, Contextos de enseñanza y aprendizaje, Información multisensorial, Creación de significado de contenidos, Educación artística

The role of the teacher has changed radically with the introduction of digital media in the educational process. He/she acts as a screenwriter, creating transmedia narratives to engage students in their access to knowledge and to encourage specific emotional experiences. These experiences function as an interconnected complex to the extent that students need taking into account that they have to develop tools for interpretation, negotiation of the meaning of the information to which they are exposed in the context of the transmedia.

This contribution presents an interdisciplinary project that explored and used transmedia narratives in the field of distance education in the recent months of quarantine.

KEY WORDS: Transmedia narratives, Teaching and learning contexts, Multisensory information, Content meaning creation, Art education

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Introducción

En el contexto de la virtualización obligatoria de los espacios de enseñanza a raíz de la pandemia del COVID 19, quienes tomamos la palabra y ponemos el cuerpo frente a la cámara de una computadora en una plataforma de encuentro quedamos expuestos de una manera que en la mayoría de los casos no ha tenido precedentes. Ha obligado a los que considerábamos con recelo el uso indiscriminado de la tecnología en la educación a repensar métodos, objetivos, estrategias didácticas, al espacio de la escuela en su totalidad y en su sentido más amplio.

Aun antes de esta experiencia, el mundo de los nuevos medios ha cambiado inevitable y profundamente la actitud de profesores y estudiantes respecto de la información. Datos de todo tipo y de cualquier campo científico están fácilmente disponibles en cualquier momento y prácticamente en cualquier lugar del planeta.

Sin embargo, los datos aislados no significan conocimiento. Nos referimos al conocimiento cuando una interdependencia de información adquiere un significado particular en determinadas condiciones. Cómo usar y conectar esta información para no manipular ideológicamente a los estudiantes de manera que aun sin tener esta intención, les impidamos desarrollar sus propias ideas críticas es una de las principales cuestiones sobre la que los maestros deberíamos reflexionar. El proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje no es operado en una sola dirección y solo por el maestro. La mayoría de las veces, el maestro es una especie de dramaturgo, que crea historias, relatos de una serie de eventos relacionados, experiencias que a través de la argumentación, la descripción, la exposición, etc. son parte de los modos retóricos del discurso que usa para motivar a los estudiantes en sus actividades y generar la ansiada aproximación al conocimiento. Teniendo en cuenta sus objetivos, elige ciertos contenidos relevantes y descarta otros, los conecta buscando una visión interdisciplinaria del mundo que tenga sentido y le dé sentido a su narración.

Los medios técnicos que hoy son accesibles a los maestros han cambiado la naturaleza de sus narrativas en el contexto del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Las historias que una vez se pudieron presentar solo en forma textual o audiovisual, hoy se pueden crear utilizando una gama mucho más amplia de posibilidades, abordando todos los sentidos, sumergiendo al espectador en una nueva realidad mucho más convincente y sin requerir condiciones especiales para ser efectivo. Las narraciones siempre se dirigen a un público determinado porque son un acto de comunicación. En este proceso, el narrador es prácticamente tan importante como el público. Una narración efectiva parte y recibe su forma a partir de las percepciones de los narradores, y afecta y transforma las percepciones de los espectadores².

Las experiencias multisensoriales que cada narración ofrece a los estudiantes

² K. KALINOV, *Transmedia Narratives: Definition and Social Transformations in the Consumption of Media Content in the Globalized World*, en «Postmodernism problems», n. 7, 2017, pp. 60-68.

debe desplegar las potencialidades del desarrollo cognitivo, afectivo y psicomotriz de los mismos. En estos casos, podemos hablar de narrativas transmediáticas, que son esenciales para la creación de una comunidad de conocimiento efectiva³.

Enseñar a través del arte

Enseñar a través del arte visual, expresa claramente su naturaleza interdisciplinaria. Cualquier otra disciplina escolar se puede enseñar correlacionando y explicando sus contenidos a través del arte. Como consecuencia de estas afirmaciones, surgen algunas preguntas cruciales: ¿Cómo se pueden beneficiar otras materias de la educación en artes visuales?, ¿Qué contingencias se podrían esperar de una aplicación inadecuada de estrategias pedagógicas interdisciplinarias para el arte visual en sí y por el contrario, como representaciones gráficas inadecuadas pueden influir el aprendizaje en otros campos del conocimiento?, ¿Cómo estrategias o métodos específicos de arte visual, visualizaciones, representaciones gráficas, etc. pueden ayudar a otras áreas del conocimiento? No responderemos concretamente a estas preguntas aquí, pero trataremos de ofrecer enfoques que puedan señalar una ruta a las respuestas.

Este artículo presenta una investigación múltiple de tres fases en la que las estrategias de enseñanza y aprendizaje se adaptaron en el contexto de cada nueva fase para evaluar qué aspectos de las mismas cumplieron con nuestras expectativas y en cuáles era necesario hacer hincapié o hallar otra estrategia que fuese más efectiva. La investigación fue comenzada antes de que hayamos tenido que cerrar las puertas de la universidad. Por eso, la primera fase se llevó a cabo en el espacio real de la facultad. Las siguientes se realizaron a distancia. Comenzamos con clases tradicionales, donde el maestro presentó los contenidos dando lecciones frontales; mientras que los estudiantes tuvieron que reproducir y encontrar más ejemplos de ciertos fenómenos que eran el contenido central de las clases. En la segunda fase, los estudiantes recibieron todos los ejemplos y la tarea era conectar fenómenos similares sobre la base de una visión interdisciplinaria sobre los contenidos. No satisfechos con los resultados, tuvimos que aceptar que no es posible esperar conexiones visuales interdisciplinares si los estudiantes no habían desarrollado estas competencias con anterioridad. Aunque parece una pregunta insignificante, debemos reconocer que muchas veces no podemos presuponer competencias o habilidades de los alumnos. Sobre todo aquellas ligadas a los tipos y caracteres de los estudiantes. Aquí se impone la pregunta qué estrategias de enseñanza y aprendizaje pueden promover el desarrollo de estas competencias. Esta cuestión es el punto crucial en este artículo que propone evaluar las posibilidades que ofrecen las narrativas

³ H. JENKINS, *Transmedia Storytelling and Entertainment, An Annotated Syllabus*, en «Journal of Media & Cultural Studies», n.º 6, 2010, pp. 943-958.

transmediáticas para mejorar la calidad del proceso pedagógico a través de conexiones interdisciplinarias.

Un enfoque interdisciplinario en la mayoría de sus definiciones, significa el logro de ciertas habilidades, conocimientos y competencias que de hecho son compartidos por diferentes disciplinas escolares. Un enfoque interdisciplinario integrado aborda conceptos que son comunes para diversas áreas de estudio. Significa un enfoque meta-curricular para el desarrollo de habilidades mentales, habilidades sociales, inteligencias múltiples, tecnología y habilidades de aprendizaje a través de diferentes disciplinas debido a los valores intrínsecos de la transferencia.

Las estrategias pedagógicas basadas en enfoques interdisciplinarios se centran en el hecho de que la integración activa un proceso que deriva de objetivos comunes de aprendizaje, explícitos, muchas veces a nivel conceptual, orientados al aprendizaje como proceso y no como resultado final.

Los contenidos debieran presentarse como diferentes aspectos de una realidad común. Esto permite la transferencia de estrategias de pensamiento y motiva el pensamiento crítico. La promoción de niveles taxonómicos más altos se intensifica a través de la resolución creativa de problemas dentro de las diferentes disciplinas⁴. Los contenidos y los procesos de aprendizaje siempre están entrelazados y dependen uno del otro. La información holística se puede recuperar fácil y rápidamente en la memoria a medida que el cerebro se organiza para recibir más información simultáneamente⁵.

«Los supuestos ideológicos que forman la base de nuestro sistema escolar apuntan a la supremacía de las asignaturas que desarrollan y promueven el pensamiento lógico-analítico-matemático y la capacidad de expresión verbal, mientras que la experiencia y la expresión artístico-estética quedan en un segundo plano. El sistema claramente da prioridad al desarrollo y uso del hemisferio cerebral izquierdo. El reconocimiento de que ambos hemisferios no funcionan por separado, sino que complementan efectivamente sus funciones, lleva a la conclusión de que se debe dar prioridad a procesos que integran la capacidad de ambos polos cerebrales. La teoría de las inteligencias múltiples de Gardner,⁶ que es muy actual en las últimas décadas, distingue la inteligencia lingüística, musical, lógico-matemática, espacial, motriz, interpersonal e intrapersonal y apoya la integración curricular transversal. Los niños deberían poder desarrollar las siete inteligencias, ya que esta es la única forma de descubrir y explotar sus potenciales»⁷.

⁴ H.L. ERICKSON, *Stirring the head, heart, and soul: redefining curriculum and instruction*, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California, 1995.

⁵ S.M. DRAKE, *Creating Integrated Curriculum: Proven Ways to Increase Student Learning*, Corwin Press, Inc., California, 1998.

⁶ H. GARDNER, *Frames of Mind, The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Fontana Press, London, 1993.

⁷ B. TOMŠIĆ AMON, *Transmedia Narratives in Education: The Potentials of Multisensory Emotional Arousal in Teaching and Learning Contexts*, en B. Peña Acuña (ed.), *Narrative Transmedia*, IntechO-

La complejidad de la sociedad actual y la diversidad de roles que cada uno debe cumplir, exige a cada individuo el desarrollo de la creatividad relacionada con los diferentes aspectos de la vida. Es importante puntualizar que creatividad no significa solo originalidad o novedad, como muchas veces se cree, sino también flexibilidad para reconocer un problema, para producir varias soluciones al mismo y saber discernir cual es la más apropiada. La educación artística ayuda a desarrollar no solo la creatividad artística sino también la creatividad en general. Por eso es un segmento importante del proceso educativo.

La creatividad artística es un complejo que incluye la habilidad en el uso de materiales y herramientas, procedimientos y métodos de trabajo, sensibilidad en la percepción de los productos artísticos y sus cualidades materiales, flexibilidad en la transformación de materiales y la solución de problemas artísticos. Por eso, el fomento de la creatividad artística es fundamental en el desarrollo de las personalidades de los alumnos. La vinculación de la lógica y las materias artísticas a través de la planificación interdisciplinaria en la escuela ayuda a los estudiantes a pensar cómo resolver problemas analíticos reales en campos contradictorios o diferentes, como lo son a primera vista las ciencias y las artes.

Eisner hace hincapié en el hecho de que nos urge crear una definición amplia del conocimiento al afirmar que el arte puede hacer vívido lo que las palabras y los números tomados literalmente agotan mucho antes⁸.

En un ámbito más general, pero con un mensaje similar, Catmull & Wallace dicen que si no nos esforzamos por descubrir lo que no se ve y comprender su naturaleza, no estaremos preparados para sobrevivir en el mundo de un futuro cercano⁹.

La percepción vinculada a la observación detallada se encuentra condicionada por ciertos factores importantes como la atención, vinculada a las emociones, la memoria, las experiencias y vivencias previas, las afinidades personales y la capacidad individual de racionalizar principalmente los procesos emocionales que dan forma a las capacidades de codificación y decodificación de señales o signos en el medio ambiente¹⁰.

Las percepciones en un ambiente excesivamente alienante, donde es difícil distinguir los fenómenos elementales de lo circunstancial, donde los estímulos se encienden como fuegos artificiales a nuestro alrededor, son experiencias diversas que muchos maestros y estudiantes traen inevitablemente a la clase. Estas percepciones pueden limitar nuestras emociones y nuestra atención o, por el

pen, Londres, 2020, p. 54.

⁸ E.W. EISNER, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2002.

⁹ E. CATMULL, & A. WALLACE, *Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration*, Transworld Digital, Chicago, 2014.

¹⁰ R.D. WRIGHT & L.M. WARD, *Orienting of Attention*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008.

contrario, motivar un proceso realmente rico para tomar conciencia de este mundo particular.

Por otro lado, Crary afirma «que cuanto más se revela que los sentidos son inconsistentes, condicionados por el cuerpo, presos del hilo de la distracción, más se define un individuo normativo en términos de capacidades atencionales objetivas y estadísticas que facilitan la compatibilidad funcional del sujeto dentro de entornos institucionales y tecnológicos»¹¹. Estas suposiciones son de crucial importancia dentro del proceso educativo.

El uso de la experiencia de los sentidos y la detección de información mediante la conceptualización mental o visual son los elementos principales que permiten a los estudiantes procesar información. Reflexionar sobre cómo abordar las necesidades de aprendizaje de los estudiantes como individualidades significa planificar experiencias significativas intentando mejorar el proceso de retención de lo aprendido de la manera que es esencial para cada alumno en particular.

La mayoría de los estudiantes de hoy en día están en contacto diario con los medios digitales, saben utilizar diferentes programas informáticos, impresoras y escáneres, saben cómo manipular con imágenes, pero el dominio real en este complejo mundo de posibilidades no es del todo habitual. La cámara fotográfica se ha extendido por todas partes y se ha convertido en un poderoso instrumento en la creación de imágenes. Pero a pesar de su popularidad, no ha llevado a los espectadores a un nivel de visión más complejo.

Hoy todos pueden tomar fotos, grabar un video y compartirlo en las redes sociales. Pero hay una gran diferencia entre capturar una escena de la vida diaria de manera aleatoria y crear imágenes para contar historias visuales. El contenido visualmente interesante es la base de la narración visual. La proliferación de dispositivos es un desafío importante que enfrentan los estudiantes dentro de la educación artística. La capacidad de ver y evaluar imágenes con un ojo educado es crucial. Y esto es de importancia clave en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de la educación artística; de hecho, es uno de sus objetivos principales.

La investigación

Problema y objetivos

Hemos dicho que la experiencia de los sentidos y la detección de información mediante la conceptualización mental o visual que surge de esas experiencias son los elementos principales que permiten a los estudiantes procesar información. La pregunta a la que queríamos encontrarle una respuesta coherente con esta investigación estaba relacionada con el grado de transferencia de experiencias y conocimientos de temas o contenidos que los alumnos de-

¹¹ J. CRARY, *Techniques of the Observer - On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 72.

berían haber aprehendido antes de realizar las actividades de esta investigación. Obviamente medir cuantitativamente esta transferencia es prácticamente imposible en el campo del arte, pero solo una visión cuantitativa de los datos nos permitiría hacer un análisis cualitativo de las respuestas para llegar a una conclusión fehaciente. De hecho, la investigación resultó en una investigación de acción con tres fases.

Nuestra investigación se llevó a cabo durante el año escolar 2018/2019. Incluyó a 71 estudiantes que finalizaron el programa de estudios de grado de maestro de educación primaria. Después de la graduación y realizando un año más de maestría, enseñarán bellas artes o dibujo en la escuela primaria del primer al quinto grado, así como también ciencias naturales y matemáticas. Un profesor de primaria, un profesor de biología y un profesor de matemáticas también participaron como consultores.

La idea para la extensión de la investigación, que al principio estaba destinada a ser solo una revisión de los resultados de los alumnos en una de las preguntas de un examen, surgió después de notar que a pesar del hecho de que los ejercicios comparando composiciones artísticas y composiciones en el mundo de la naturaleza y la geometría se realizaron muchas veces en clase, sorprendentemente en el examen final las respuestas no fueron tan exitosas como esperábamos. El 49% de los estudiantes no respondió correctamente a la siguiente pregunta: «Encuentre un ejemplo de una composición geométrica en la naturaleza y un ejemplo similar en el campo de las bellas artes y descríbalas por comparación (con el material visual de su elección)». En la figura 1 se presenta un ejemplo del material visual que se esperaba de los estudiantes como respuesta a la pregunta 1.

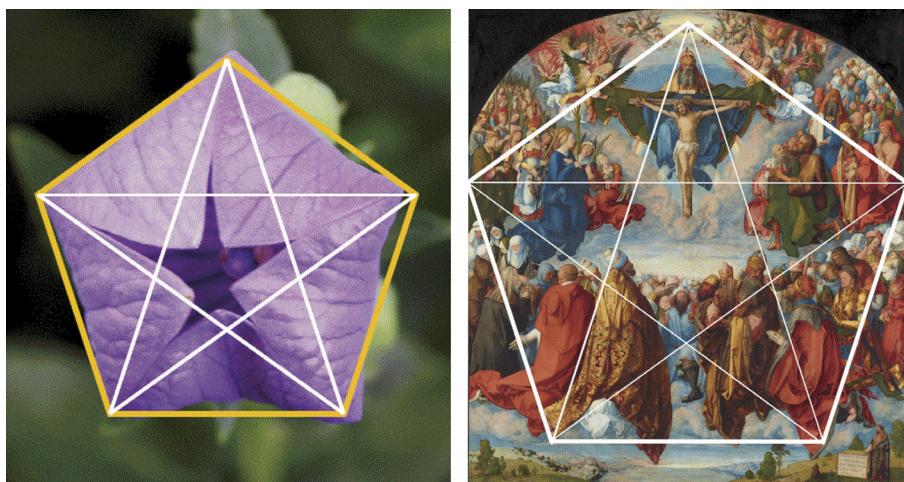


Figura 1. Ejemplo del material visual que se esperaba de los estudiantes. El ejemplo del campo del arte es en este caso la pintura Adoración de la Trinidad (1511) de Alberto Durero.

Analizando los resultados, llegamos a ciertas conclusiones que nos mostraron qué destacar en el futuro para una comprensión e internalización más adecuada de los contenidos y para lograr más eficientemente nuestros objetivos.

Muchos estudiantes simplemente no podían ver la estructura geométrica de las composiciones ni en la naturaleza ni en el arte. Para estos estudiantes, estos tres mundos, la naturaleza, la geometría y el arte no tienen nada en común. Probablemente perciben su programa de estudio como organizado siguiendo un esquema en el que las diferentes disciplinas son compartimentos estancos, completamente separados entre sí.

En la primera fase de la investigación, los estudiantes tuvieron que encontrar el material gráfico y visual por sí mismos, lo que en muchos casos resultó ser bastante problemático. Muchos de ellos declararon que es una tarea difícil que nunca habían hecho antes. Es por eso que en la segunda fase decidimos preparar una prueba (figura 2). Consistió en seis tareas similares. Esta vez se entregó todo el material gráfico. Los elementos geométricos se presentaron en un orden lógico: línea, triángulo, cuadrado, pentágono, hexágono y círculo, mientras que las fotos del mundo natural, las flores, los animales y las reproducciones de las pinturas se mezclaron¹². La tarea consistía en vincular con una línea los tres ejemplos que tenían características comunes. Un ejemplo de la segunda prueba se presenta en la figura 2.

Geometría	Naturaleza	Arte	Resultados
			
△			
□			
pentágono			
hexágono			
○			

Figura 2. Ejemplo de la prueba resuelta dada a los estudiantes dentro de la segunda fase de la investigación.

¹² K. CRITCHLOW, *The Hidden Geometry of Flowers*, Floris Books, Edimburgo, 2011.

En este caso, los resultados de la prueba se analizaron de la siguiente manera: dentro de cada una de las rúbricas Naturaleza y Arte establecimos cuántas respuestas eran correctas. Había una rúbrica especial para los casos que eran correctos en ambas rúbricas. Los resultados de la prueba se pueden leer en la tabla 1.

GEOMETRIA	NATURALEZA				ARTE				COINCI-DENCIAS	
	correcto		incorrecto		correcto		incorrecto			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Línea	64	90.14	7	9.86	71	100	0	0	64	90.14
Triángulo	71	100	0	0	71	100	0	0	71	100
Cuadrado	65	91.55	6	8.45	25	35.21	46	64.79	22	30.99
Pentágono	65	91.55	6	8.45	22	30.99	49	69.01	20	28.17
Hexágono	68	95.77	3	4.23	9	12.97	62	87.33	5	7.04
Círculo	71	100	0	0	71	100	0	0	71	100

Tabla 1. Resultados de la prueba realizada dentro de la segunda fase de la investigación.

A pesar de que estas tareas fueron más fáciles de entender, hay algunos puntos interesantes al observar las diferencias entre los seis ejemplos. Los resultados para línea, triángulo y círculo fueron excelentes y en los tres casos hubo una gran coincidencia entre Naturaleza y Arte (línea: 90.14%, triángulo: 100% y círculo: 100%). El cuadrado obtuvo buenos resultados en Naturaleza (91.55%) y pobres en Arte (35.21%). Una situación similar sucedió con el pentágono (Naturaleza: 91.55%, Arte: 30.99%). En estos dos casos, la coincidencia fue de 29.58% en promedio. El hexágono presentó resultados diferentes porque la mayoría (87.33%) tuvo dificultades para descubrir el esquema hexagonal en la composición de la pintura. Por esta razón las coincidencias son bajas (7.04%).

En conversaciones con los maestros consultores, confirmamos que muchos estudiantes simplemente no pueden ver la estructura geométrica de las composiciones ni en la naturaleza ni en el arte. Probablemente, estos estudiantes perciben los contenidos de diferentes disciplinas como algo completamente separado de una estructura central de conocimiento de la que forman parte. Simplemente tuvimos que mejorar la investigación para descubrir estrategias que se mostraran eficientes cuando los contenidos interdisciplinarios son nuestro objetivo.

Siguiendo estas ideas, se tuvo que implementar una nueva estrategia en la tercera fase de la investigación. Partimos de las siguientes ideas que tratamos de hacer estrictamente realidad. Las experiencias de enseñanza y aprendizaje se convierten en un complejo interconectado, estimulando reacciones emocionales sensibles de varias capas porque los estudiantes necesitan desarrollar herramientas para la observación precisa, interpretación, negociación y significado de la información a la que están expuestos. Se les debe proporcionar las herramientas que en el futuro les ayudarán a hacer interpretaciones precisas de la información. La información no conectada no significa mucho si se muestra en un contexto que se mantiene fuera de una representación holística del mundo. Cómo facilitar las herramientas que los estudiantes necesitan en un mundo de infinitas posibilidades de obtener información es una consulta dirigida a los maestros. Seleccionar, decodificar y dar sentido a la información es un proceso que involucra principalmente emociones y atención. Las emociones llevan a la atención. Por lo tanto, son una importante herramienta de motivación interna en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje¹³. La atención hace hincapié en los potenciales de la excitación emocional multisensorial que aumenta la consolidación de la memoria, el proceso de crear un registro permanente de la información codificada y permite diferentes interpretaciones¹⁴. La enseñanza

¹³ R.L.P. VIMAL, *Attention and Emotion*, «ARBS Annual Review of Biomedical Sciences», Vision Research Institute Inc., <<http://arbs.biblioteca.unesp.br>> (consultado 30 de marzo del 2019); WRIGHT & WARD, *Orienting of Attention*, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ J. YIEND, *The effects of emotion on attention: A review of attentional processing of emotional information*, en «Cognition & Emotion», n. 1, 2010, pp. 3-47.

y el aprendizaje son realmente imposibles si falta motivación entre los estudiantes y el maestro.

Para mejorar la motivación entre los estudiantes, decidimos que probablemente el uso de nuevos medios debería brindarnos una nueva posibilidad de abordar el problema de cómo diseñar un proceso pedagógico interdisciplinario. La estrategia ahora era usar narrativas transmediáticas y trabajar en grupos. Las narrativas transmediáticas eventualmente significan el uso de múltiples medios (digitales o no) que se refieren a un contenido único a través de diferentes canales¹⁵. Incluso si estas experiencias son difíciles de controlar y evaluar los resultados nos mostraron que es esta una estrategia adecuada y actual en el proceso educativo.

Las narrativas transmediáticas se refieren tradicionalmente a contar una historia en múltiples plataformas, permitiendo la participación de la audiencia, de modo que cada plataforma sucesiva aumente el disfrute y la motivación de la misma. Pratten completó esta definición afirmando que «esto significa llevar a la audiencia a un viaje emocional que va atrapandola de un momento a otro»¹⁶.

Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Zoom y otras plataformas en medios digitales dan espacio a nuevas formas de diálogo entre sus usuarios, ya que cualquier material se puede compartir fácilmente en ellos. De hecho, no sabemos nada sobre el destino de ningún material que compartimos en dichos medios ni de las reacciones que puede producir. Se pueden crear muchas historias específicas e impredecibles a partir del punto de partida de cualquier material publicado.

Uno de los objetivos principales de la tercera fase de la investigación fue verificar hasta qué punto los estudiantes profundizarían su adquisición de conocimiento si la experiencia propuesta no presentara ninguna limitación con respecto a los contenidos de aprendizaje y si se llevara a cabo a la distancia. Otro objetivo fue detectar cómo los estudiantes aprovecharían la propuesta de usar diferentes canales de distribución durante su proceso de aprendizaje.

Decidimos lanzar la tercera fase de nuestra investigación, que incluyó tres momentos básicos que consideramos actividades clave. La primera parte incluyó la formación de grupos de trabajo entre los alumnos, la presentación de los contenidos básicos por parte del profesor, la distribución de los temas entre los grupos de alumnos y la realización de una obra de arte introductoria. También incluyó la recopilación individual de información, elaboración y presentación utilizando multimedia para el resto de los participantes en cada grupo. La segunda fase estaba destinada al intercambio de estudiantes en las redes sociales, creando una historia con toda la información recopilada dentro de los grupos. Las historias visuales que los estudiantes crearon vinculando la infor-

¹⁵ H. JENKINS, *Convergence culture, where old and new media collide*, New York University Press, Nueva York & Londres, 2006.

¹⁶ R. PRATTEN, *Getting Started with Transmedia Storytelling: A Practical Guide for Beginners*, Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, Scotts Valley, California, 2015, p. 17.

mación requirieron la elaboración de ideas y soluciones de planificación, originalidad, lo que significó estrategias inusuales al resolver el problema de presentación de los resultados usando multimedia. El intercambio en las redes sociales, la creación de una historia a partir de la información recopilada, desde diferentes puntos de vista, fue parte del desafío. Al final, todos tuvieron que subir sus trabajos en un nuevo grupo creado que incluía a toda la cohorte.

La tercera parte incluyó el intercambio y la conexión de las historias desde diferentes puntos de vista. La historia breve y esencial de comprensión de los significados y el alcance de los contenidos debía conducir a una nueva historia visual original y más amplia. Al final de esta parte, los estudiantes de cada grupo tuvieron que proponer una actividad dentro de la educación artística destinada a los estudiantes que participaban en el resto de los grupos. Algunas actividades fueron muy interesantes y una forma muy creativa de mostrar cómo el conocimiento interdisciplinario creció a través de todo el proceso pedagógico. La figura 3 muestra un ejemplo de trabajos que tuvieron su punto de partida en el material de la prueba de la fase anterior y se convirtieron en un nuevo objeto, el diseño de un patrón para textiles. Lo interesante es que los diseños originales estaban vinculados a la forma del pentágono y el hexágono; ‘jugar’ con las formas les hizo descubrir el cuadrado en sus patrones y desarrollar sus conocimientos y competencias para vincular contenidos que tienen significados complementarios. Esta fue la conclusión de las actividades de los estudiantes y estaba destinada a usar y consolidar prácticamente el conocimiento adquirido. La última parte del proyecto incluyó una reunión de todos los participantes, donde los estudiantes presentaron el desarrollo de su trabajo durante las diferentes fases. Este fue el material evaluado por los profesores. De esta manera, podríamos tener una idea del proceso dentro de todos los grupos de estudiantes, comparar los resultados y sacar conclusiones.

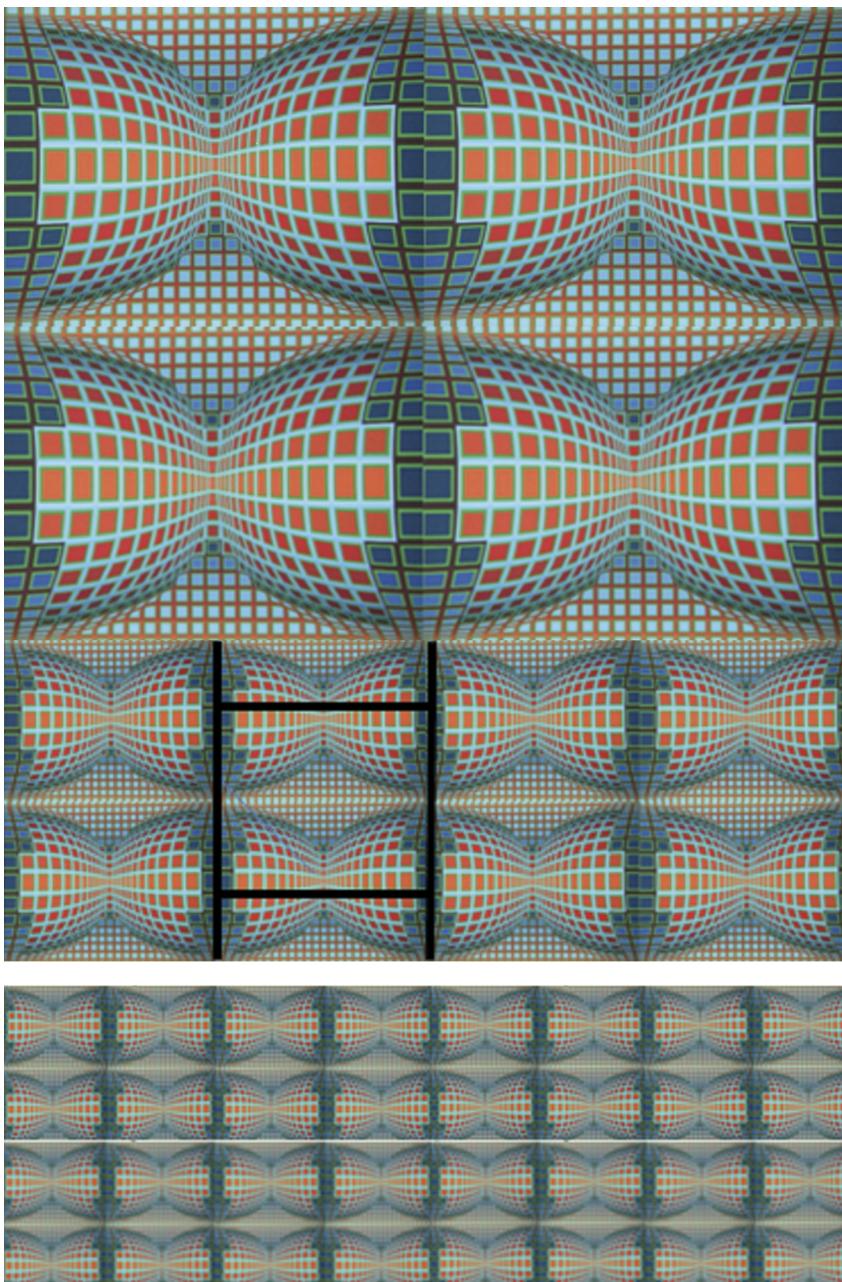


Figura 3. Un ejemplo del proceso de diseño. En este caso los alumnos utilizaron la pintura titulada Papillon (1981) de Victor Vasarely y la convirtieron en el diseño de un patrón para material textil.

Resultados y discusión

Los resultados parciales de las pruebas realizadas a través de la primera y la segunda fase de la investigación de acción fueron el punto de partida para el diseño de la tercera parte, probablemente la más importante y decisiva de la investigación. Es por eso que no los repetiremos aquí y más bien nos concentraremos en los resultados de la última fase.

Al finalizar el curso utilizando la narración transmediática con integración interdisciplinaria entre diferentes contenidos de bellas artes, biología y geometría, los estudiantes, el profesor y los profesores consultores se reunieron para discutir sobre las actividades realizadas y su evaluación, y para conocer las opiniones de los estudiantes.

Los estudiantes elogiaron la integración gradual de la introducción de una estrategia individual para resolver tareas y la posibilidad de elegir individualmente ejemplos de bellas artes. Afirmaron que estaban muy motivados por la sorpresa de las conexiones inesperadas entre los contenidos dentro de los diferentes temas desde el punto de vista de la experiencia artística y estética general. También fueron motivados por el uso de conceptos conocidos en nuevos contextos.

Las respuestas de los estudiantes mostraron una fuerte simpatía por el enfoque utilizado, principalmente debido a la posibilidad de que cada uno pueda crear sus propias soluciones para tareas artísticas que expresen los intereses, expectativas y que cada cual haya podido crear su propia estrategia de trabajo.

Los estudiantes que no usan las redes sociales con tanta frecuencia o son reacios a su uso, ya que sienten que están constantemente expuestos a reacciones inesperadas sin embargo declararon que la tarea no les fue fácil. La creación de grupos con colegas que conocían y en los que se sentían cómodos y seguros les hizo tener más confianza y al final se sorprendieron por los diferentes caminos que condujeron sus trabajos. Sin embargo, afirmaron que tenían que trabajar en su motivación personal para sentirse incluidos en sus grupos de trabajo. Esta combinación de aprendizaje individual y comunitario fue una gran experiencia para ellos porque les mostró cómo podían enriquecer sus visiones y las formas en que podían seguir un proceso satisfactorio aprendiendo más y de nuevas maneras.

«Tener en cuenta las diferentes formas en que los estudiantes aprenden mejor, ya sea visual, auditivamente, a través de la palabra, la escritura o el movimiento y los estilos de aprendizaje con respecto a las formas en que los estudiantes manejan sus experiencias es de primordial importancia al diseñar material didáctico multimedia para la clase y planificar estrategias educativas transmediáticas. Transmedia, basado en conexiones interdisciplinarias, requiere que el profesor tenga un excelente conocimiento de los contenidos y objetivos de las asignaturas correlacionadas y que realmente crea en la posibilidad de un trabajo integrado dentro de ellas»¹⁷.

¹⁷ TOMŠIĆ AMON, *Transmedia Narratives in Education: The Potentials of Multisensory Emotional Arou-*

La integración interdisciplinaria es un desafío y una oportunidad para la motivación interna, el crecimiento profesional y personal para el profesor así como una experiencia de vida para los estudiantes.

El profesor admitió que era bastante extraño trabajar en parte en un espacio virtual donde no era posible evaluar y monitorear a los estudiantes. El aula ofrece seguridad. El material didáctico está ahí para ser utilizado. Las aulas virtuales, lo hemos vivido en las clases durante la pandemia de COVID 19, requieren pensar la didáctica de otra manera. Por eso, la evaluación final de los logros desarrollados por los estudiantes exigió un enfoque específico que, de hecho, era nuevo. Exigió una reflexión sobre qué y cómo evaluar el trabajo de los estudiantes.

El uso de narrativas visuales transmediáticas fue la más exitosa de las tres estrategias pedagógicas comparadas en esta investigación. Fue la parte más exigente con respecto a la organización, la preparación del material de estudio, la evaluación de los estudiantes, tomó más tiempo y fue la más impredecible con respecto a los resultados. Sin embargo, sus resultados superaron nuestras expectativas.

Conclusión

Comprender cómo el arte tiene su origen en la naturaleza es un objetivo principal dentro de la educación de futuros maestros de diferentes asignaturas escolares, desde el jardín de infantes hasta la universidad. Esta es una condición central si deseamos educar a los jóvenes creando un sentido holístico del mundo y sus vidas. La dificultad para conectar la información y transferir el conocimiento, las habilidades deficientes para dar significado a las imágenes y comprender el discurso visual parece ser un problema persistente en muchos aspectos dentro de la educación en todos los niveles.

El uso de los medios digitales y su desarrollo exponencial crea un mundo de fuertes diferencias. Probablemente no sea tan importante en el aspecto social. En realidad, cualquier teléfono puede realizar todo lo que necesitamos para mostrar nuestra vida a otros en Instagram. Pero, por otro lado, hay una brecha generacional entre muchos maestros que se enfrentan al hecho de que los estudiantes poseen o saben cómo acceder a una gran cantidad de información facilitada por los medios digitales. Muchas veces esta información excede los contenidos requeridos dentro de los planes de estudio. La contradicción consiste básicamente en el hecho de que los maestros muchas veces poseen menos información que los estudiantes, estos por otro lado, no poseen las herramientas para manejar y clasificar críticamente dicha información. Dentro del mundo a veces altamente burocrático de la educación oficial, los cambios curriculares se desarrollan a un ritmo significativamente más lento que la ne-

sal in Teaching and Learning Contexts, op. cit., p. 64.

cesidad de los estudiantes de adquirir conocimientos y experiencias. La adquisición de conocimiento a través de una experiencia que no presenta límites o limitaciones con respecto a los contenidos de aprendizaje es un potencial emocionante para actuar tratando de mejorar esta perspectiva eventualmente conflictiva. Probablemente, este límite es al mismo tiempo una de las dificultades claves que enfrentan los maestros para planificar sus procesos de enseñanza.

Las experiencias multimedia son importantes no solo en el caso de la educación artística sino también para otras asignaturas escolares. La mayoría de ellas necesita de representaciones visuales y auditivas de todo tipo. No es difícil imaginar el significado de la capacidad de imaginar relaciones espaciales en los campos de la geometría, geografía, biología, física o química. Medios complejos y refinados de percepción visual y auditiva y todos los significados que este concepto implica y supone son necesarios en casi todas las actividades. Las escuelas de todos los niveles deben ofrecer a los estudiantes experiencias operativas adecuadas y desarrollar competencias específicas. En la segunda década del siglo XXI no hay dudas al respecto. En las últimas tres décadas el mundo cambió a un ritmo que no hubiésemos podido imaginar. No tenemos motivos para creer que en el futuro será diferente.

Una visión dialéctica de la experiencia supone que se forma sobre la base de intercambios entre la percepción sensorial y la reflexión. La experiencia no es solo parte de una percepción del mundo exterior, sino que adquiere su significado a través de la conciencia interpretativa. Una experiencia estética puede transformar a una persona si ésta reconoce un tipo particular de experiencia en ella. Con este proyecto, podríamos entrar en contacto con este aspecto del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje.

Esta estrategia de trabajo también abre contradicciones entre diferentes experiencias individuales, objetivos y métodos establecidos para alcanzarlos, el significado tradicional y los mecanismos de motivación y compromiso personal en todo el proceso. Cuestiona la posición de cada individuo que promueve la autorreflexión para conectar los aspectos cognitivos y emocionales con la acción. Podríamos decir que se da cuenta de los pensamientos de Dewey¹⁸ de que cuando miramos, podríamos agregar o creamos una obra de arte, las emociones y el pensamiento funcionan juntos en su conexión perceptible y sensual, por lo que la experiencia es el complejo en el que el mundo se abre y nos da significados y valores de manera no verbal.

Podemos afirmar sin dudas que la educación artística en el siglo XXI enfrenta nuevos desafíos de todo tipo. Es necesario mejorar las experiencias utilizando todas las posibilidades que ofrecen los nuevos medios porque facilitan el desarrollo de la visualización espacial y las operaciones con formas complejas que prácticamente no se pueden realizar de la manera tradicional con papel y lápiz; ahoran tiempo y brindan la posibilidad de muchas variantes sobre el mismo tema muy fácilmente. Por otro lado, es obvio que una visión del proceso pe-

¹⁸ J. DEWEY, *El arte como experiencia*, Fondo de cultura económica, México D.F., 1949.

dagógico de la educación artística exige la inclusión de una forma específica de evaluación precisa de las actividades hápticas tridimensionales que permita a los estudiantes experimentar las características de los materiales como textura, dureza, temperatura, elasticidad, flexibilidad, plasticidad y porosidad, que los medios de pantalla no permiten. La comprensión del pasado y de los productos de arte contemporáneo exige un conjunto de experiencias complejas y ricas, que es uno de los principales objetivos de la educación en todos los niveles. Las narrativas transmediáticas, debido al uso potencial de diferentes canales de distribución, que de hecho no están necesariamente conectados con los medios de pantalla, ofrecen una amplia gama de posibilidades que vinculan lo real y lo virtual en modos específicos. Esta nueva cultura desplaza el centro del proceso educativo de una relación frontal entre maestros y estudiantes, con una respuesta individual y compromiso de estos, a una comunidad que continuamente está creando y recreando conocimiento.

En el mundo actual conectado globalmente, en el que es posible utilizar diferentes plataformas para conectarse y comunicarse, los alumnos y los profesores ya no están relacionados con un espacio material específico. De alguna manera, incluso si es difícil de imaginar, podríamos decir que el aula, ya que el espacio material donde tienen lugar la enseñanza, el aprendizaje, los intercambios sociales, etc. está cambiando. La comunidad de aprendizaje es, de hecho, una comunidad global y multicultural que eventualmente usa muchos lenguajes verbales y guiones y no necesita un espacio tridimensional para vivir. En este contexto, el lenguaje visual se convierte en un universal que debe entenderse ampliamente, llevando al mismo tiempo el toque particular de las peculiaridades culturales¹⁹.

Sin duda, se requerirán nuevas formas especiales de organización por parte de los maestros y de los estudiantes. La flexibilidad en la planificación y evaluación de los resultados del trabajo serán imposibles de evitar. Nuestras propias ideas sobre lo que esperamos del proceso de aprendizaje deberán estar en sintonía. La dialéctica entre las sucesivas experiencias que involucran a los maestros con su propia experiencia, profesionalismo, habilidades organizativas, conocimiento e intuición para el liderazgo individual, y el estudiante que interpreta y construye una imagen del mundo deriva de la forma en que cada uno acepta el mundo y reúne elementos en un nuevo todo con significado en un contexto particular y renovado cada vez.

El significado de esta investigación debe verse en un contexto extenso y al mismo tiempo bastante ecléctico: cambios importantes en la percepción y evaluación de eventos en el mundo de las artes, que se producen al mismo tiempo que grandes cambios en el entorno escolar, cambios funcionales rápidos en la vida de los maestros, estudiantes y nuestra sociedad en general, y una escuela

¹⁹ C. BRUSHWOOD ROSE, *Making Emotional and Social Significance: Digital Storytelling and the Cultivation of Creative Influence*, en M. DUNFORD & T. JENKINS (eds.), *Digital Storytelling*, York University, Toronto, 2017, pp. 185-202.

que no será el edificio que el anciano recordará con apego y emoción, sino una nube virtual, en algún lugar del universo.

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Questo quinto volume de "Le Ragioni di Erasmus" viene alla luce in un'epoca difficile della storia dell'Europa e del mondo. La crisi profonda che, sin dall'inizio del 2020, la pandemia del Covid-19 ha suscitato a tutti livelli della vita sociale e individuale, ha investito l'intero sistema educativo e dunque anche la ricerca universitaria del Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione dell'Università Roma Tre. "Le Ragioni di Erasmus", coerentemente con la vocazione della collana a favorire il confronto di idee tra i contatti internazionali che questo Dipartimento ha sviluppato, consacra un'ampia sezione del suo quinto volume a riflessioni che, su scala europea e in varie prospettive, hanno per oggetto tematiche inerenti alla pandemia, dalle problematiche dell'insegnamento a distanza a nuovi scenari per le professioni di educatori e pedagogisti; dai mutamenti nella percezione e nell'utilizzo del tempo all'urgenza di un cambio di paradigma. Una seconda sezione del volume raccoglie articoli su argomenti diversi, in continuità con filoni di ricerca sempre attuali in dimensione inter- e transnazionale: la valutazione e l'educazione tecnologica; la teoria e la pratica didattica della lettura in contesto scolastico; la narrazione transmediatica nell'educazione a distanza.

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