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**“REIMAGINING AND EMPOWERING SCHOOLS TO INCLUDE ALL:
FROM DREAM TO REALITY”**

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DREAM TO REALITY**

BOOKS OF ABSTRACTS

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PANEL S1.A

**SHAPING TOMORROW'S EDUCATORS: A FOCUS ON INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN ITALIAN TEACHER
EDUCATION**

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EARLY INTERVENTION AND READING-WRITING DIFFICULTIES: TEACHER'S TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

A substantial body of research developed over the past two decades suggests that most obstacles encountered by students in the process of acquiring literacy skills can be prevented through the implementation of timely, targeted, and intensive educational interventions (Besio & Bianquin, 2017; Foorman et al., 1997; González-Valenzuela & Martín-Ruiz, 2017; Sabatino et al., 2013; Scanlon et al., 2010; Zappaterra, 2017). This assumes relevance in relation to Italian normative framework. From kindergarten, educational institutions are required to implement actions for early identification and intervention (MIUR 2010, 2013). Specifically, teachers are called to monitor academic performance, identify any potential difficulties, and organize specific activities to help students in developing reading and writing skills (MIUR, 2011). However, despite the importance attached to such ministerial provisions, there is still a tendency in daily school reality to adopt passive or expert-delegating positions, which risk compromising teachers' expertise and disempowering them facing educational challenges. Furthermore, it is hard to identify, in teachers' educational practices, a systematic methodology that enables timely educational programming considering the diversities present within the classroom (Cottini, 2017; Gaspari et al., 2015).

In light of these considerations and drawing on reflections on teachers training and the definition of an inclusive professional profile (Mura, 2019; Mura et al., 2019; Mura & Zurru, 2019; Zurru, 2015), this contribution describes the first phases of a broader action research project on the implementation of early teaching interventions. The participants, coming from kindergarten and primary school of a comprehensive institute in the Sardinia region, were involved in collective discussion, comparison, and shared reflection activities on learning difficulties and on the instrumental prerequisites of reading and writing, through *focus groups* meetings. The data collected, processed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), allowed us to understand the perspectives, concerns, and educational needs of teachers regarding timely empowerment, identifying the factors that can hinder or promote teaching-learning processes. In this regard, it has been possible to develop a training path in order to create inclusive learning environments and to outline the necessary elements to support the professional development of the participants.

Keywords: *early intervention, teachers training, professional development, prerequisites, reading and writing skills.*

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SHAPING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH REFLECTIVE PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This work is aimed at sharing the results of a qualitative study carried out with first year early childhood education students studying at the University of Salerno. The future educators were asked to complete a semi-structured reflective diary in part fulfilment of a module delivered in preparation for the students' practical experience to be carried out in nursery schools in the second year of their course. Submitting the diary was the only criterion to pass the module.

The diary was structured using an appreciative approach (Kung, Jiles & Hagan, 2013) to allow students to feel more at ease in sharing their reflections. The reflective activities proposed were aimed at promoting a continuous discovery of the self (Kung, Jiles & Hagan, 2013; Pace, Zappalà, 2021) by reflecting on what's strong and identifying the internal and external resources the students can leverage upon throughout their studies and professional life. As Larrivee (2000, pp. 293-294) postulates, becoming a reflective professional "involves infusing personal beliefs and values into a professional identity, resulting in developing a deliberate philosophical and ethical code of conduct". Indeed, reflective practice is now recognised as a competence that every professional should acquire (EADSNE, 2012). Any form of narration, whether written or oral, involves reflection, bringing to light what is invisible, that which is not perceived in consciousness because it is too close and immediate, too present in ordinary experience (Mortari, 2013). In addition, it is a source of guidance: orientation in reflective practices requires the subject to be a protagonist (Pollo, in Caggiano, 2010), an active participant in terms of his or her own choices as he or she critically reflects through an autobiographical and introspective approach on the choices made. In line with these theoretical underpinnings, among the various objectives that guided the structuring of the set of reflective activities, was promoting the construction of one's professional identity.

The results being presented are related to one of these activities which enticed students to identify the factors that influenced their choice of pursuing this career. Taking into account the responsibility and the challenge in making such a decision, reflection on who or what oriented this important process should not be left to mere common sense or improvisation (Iori, 2018). The title of the activity was "The choice". Students were invited to reflect on what and/or who guided them towards their choice to become early childhood educators and to consider the events or people that oriented their decision. In all the activities, students could choose to use images, text, videos or any other media to share their thoughts. All chose to write in text form their reply.

The responses were analysed inductively, using a thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify the internal and external resources that orient the students' choices regarding their profession and explore their sense of coherence in comprehending, managing and finding meaning in their actions (Antonovsky, 1987).

Keywords: *teacher identity, inclusion, diary, reflective practice*





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PROMOTING INCLUSIVE CULTURE IN EDUCATIONAL PRAXIS: AN INTEGRATED TRAINING COURSE FOR ALL TEACHERS

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Abstract

The need to ensure training activities aimed at all teachers and aimed at the enhancement of professional skills for the full realization of the goals of quality education and quality of inclusiveness is one of the main principles of the new inclusive pedagogical and didactic culture, which focuses on knowledge as a necessity for all and as a resource to ensure the educational success of everyone (European Parliament and Council, 2006; UNESCO, 2009; EADSNE, 2009; European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2011).

In Italy, Ministerial Decree no. 249/2010 and the more recent D. Lgs. n. 66/2017 emphasize the close connection between the quality of learning and the quality of teaching and, consequently, the need for continuous updating of teachers. In the light of the development of the quality of inclusive education, it is desirable that updating is aimed first of all at supporting the ability to design teaching paths capable of enhancing the plurality of personal experiences and the uniqueness of different learning styles and multiple profiles of functioning, with the ambition that the teacher can take on the role of a true “facilitator of well-being and inclusion” (De Angelis & Greganti, 2022) and can contribute, in teaching practice, to the actualization of inclusive policies promoting full participation and equal access opportunities to learning and social contexts for all and everyone (EU, 2021), thus participating, actively, in the co-construction of the inclusive culture (De Angelis, 2017, 2023).

Taking these assumptions as a starting point, here we present a training proposal directed at teachers and educators and intended to promote inclusive culture in professional practice through the development of effective methodological skills for taking charge of special educational needs and through critical reflection on the construct of inclusion and its constituent elements. The course, which has taken the form of a systematic and unified proposal during the interventions carried out over the past 4 years in the Specialization Courses for Support Activities at the University of Roma Tre, integrates three areas: knowledge and information; personal attitudes and beliefs; and skills (EASNIE, 2022). The circular combination of theory and praxis, in fact, roots our training activity on a flexible theorizing methodology that on the one hand considers cognitive, emotional and personal aspects, and on the other hand builds on and recreates experience, rather than simply reflecting on it (De Bartolomeis, 1978).

In particular, the training proposal integrates knowledge of the relevant legislation on inclusion, reflection on the historical transition from the practice of inclusion to the process of inclusion, in-depth study of the theoretical reference models of inclusion (from the Social Model to the Capability Approach, to the construct of Co-evolution), communication codes and listening skills, the bodily dimension of the educational relationship, social-emotional education, reflection and self-reflection skills, cooperative learning, the use of the narrative device and artistic and creative expressive and performing methodologies capable of supporting individual and collective education in an inclusive approach.

Keywords: *inclusive education, teacher training*





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READING AND WRITING. BETWEEN METACOGNITION AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION. RESULTS OF ACTION RESEARCH CONDUCTED WITH STUDENTS – FUTURE TEACHERS

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Abstract

The research was conducted by a group of primary education sciences students at the University of Pisa, aiming to examine the discrepancies and connections between the leading scientific literature on neuro-pedagogical methods for assessing reading and writing skills, and the school textbooks used in Italian primary schools. The goal was to identify strengths and weaknesses-enhancing the former and minimizing the latter-while exploring the opportunities provided by Universal Design for Learning and the concept of Reasonable Accommodation. This approach seeks to ensure that the maximum number of children can benefit from the same textbooks without needing simplified editions.

The study began with a review of literature on reading acquisition and development, followed by a critical evaluation of textbooks to determine the criteria that ensure consistency with general learning processes and, specifically, with reading comprehension.

The scientific basis of this project is rooted in both national and international research on learning processes, particularly how reading skills are acquired and should consequently be taught and nurtured during early education.

The investigation aimed to explore both the connections and discrepancies in the school environment, especially in the early years of primary education, focusing on essential preliminary skills like reading competence, which is foundational for all subsequent phases of knowledge access and skill development.

The analysis specifically addressed the methodological tools and strategies employed to facilitate this learning, examining their alignment or misalignment with the natural human interaction with text.

The focus was strictly on certain textbooks currently used in Italian schools to teach children how to decode, understand, and interpret written signs, which represent both sounds and meanings.

The students divided into groups of four to five members to analyze the texts provided by the Giunti-Scuola Publishing House, a partner in the research.

Keywords: *Reading, Writing, Accessibility, Textbooks*

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TEACHERS' VALUES AND ATTITUDES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION? A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

The research investigates the hypothesis that teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education may be related to their value priorities. Specifically, starting from the Theory of the Universal Structure of Human Values (Schwartz, 2012), it is hypothesized that the value dimensions of Self-Transcendence and Openness to Change correlate positively with teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.

The research involved 785 teachers (M=243/F=519) enrolled in the University of Salerno's TFA support specialization course (Italy) in the academic year 2022/2023.

The Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-RR) (Schwartz, 2012) and the Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) (Mahat, 2008). The statistical analysis, conducted using Bivariate Linear Regression, confirms the existence of a significant positive relationship between the variables examined (Schwartz, 2021).

It turned out that the more a teacher endorses the hypothesized values, the more he or she tends to be in favor of attitudes related to inclusive education (Perrin, et.al., 2021). The results of this study suggest that values should be considered in teacher training programs (Ianniello & Corona, 2023), to promote the implementation of inclusive education policies (Aiello & Sharma, 2018).

Keywords: values; attitudes; inclusion; special pedagogy.

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INCLUSIVE TEACHERS' TRAINING: A CRITICAL RE-READING IN LIGHT OF THE INSTITUTING-INSTITUTED DIALECTIC

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Abstract

The training of inclusive teachers does not regard the school context only, as it involves a multiplicity of factors. Baldacci highlights the importance that the teacher possesses cultural, didactic, and relational skills, which lead back to knowledge, to know-how to do and to know-how to be (Baldacci, 2014, 2020). If the first two areas, in a certain sense, are more identifiable – in that they recall, for example, disciplinary, didactic, methodological, docimological skills – knowing how to be poses considerable problems for its definition, as it invests a large number of factors. Pellerey (2011), in this regard points out that knowing how to be necessarily implies a “knowing how to be with others”, promoting relationships within a value framework based on solidarity and personal responsibility. Results in the literature indicate that teachers, while guided by inclusive ethical-value values (dell’Anna et. all., 2023), have no experience in implementing collaborative design, co-teaching, and co-evaluation (Brendle, Lock, and Square, K., 2017). In this sense, it involves starting from a theoretical-practical training that is cross-disciplinary at all levels and for every order and degree of school, which can train future inclusive teachers, all of them (both specialized and curricular), to refine communicative-relational skills, but not only those, also educational-didactic, organizational, and technical-managerial skills based on engagement and dialogue with various fields of knowledge in an inter- and transdisciplinary manner. The result is a knowledge of “working with others” as one of the fundamental pillars of teaching-learning processes. At the same time, it is important to consider the teachers’ training within a wider horizon, in the light of the instituting-instituted dialectics (Vasquez e Oury, 2010, Canevaro, 2023). According to Brofenbrenner’s perspective (2022), the macrosystem – understood as the whole of the cultural system that cross the life person – influences his system of beliefs, attitudes, and values. Special Pedagogy, as a science of complexity, takes a privileged role in questioning the institute with the aim of problematically re-reading educational contexts (Gaspari, 2023). Analysing the current scenario, it is undeniable the recourse to practices norms and social models that promote practices aimed at competition and hierarchization. The tension towards the enhancement of pluralism is, in fact, undermined by a vision, still widespread, aimed at creating hierarchies among knowledge, among students and, finally, among teachers. We refer, for example, to the emphasis placed on technical-scientific disciplines, the pervasiveness of a meritocratic model anchored in the possession of certain skills, or the marginalization of specialized teachers. Therefore, inclusive teacher training, to be truly impactful, must promote a plurality of languages and methodological approaches, to learn how to “know how to design” together, to create bridges between special education and disciplinary teaching from a perspective of co-responsibility of the teaching team. It involves overcoming old educational paradigms and undertaking new educational practices, also drawing inspiration from the analysis and reinterpretation of good collaborative practices. The goal is to train towards an inclusive educational-didactic co-presence, capable of implementing actions and strategies that can reach all students from an ecosystemic accessibility perspective. Otherwise, the risk is to develop a schizophrenic system that, on the one hand, enhances inclusive attitudes, perspectives, and values, on the other hand creates the conditions for their own annihilation.

Keywords: *institutional analysis, teachers’ training, inclusion, relational skills.*





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PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY, SELF-EFFICACY AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES: AN ANALYSIS OF PRE-SERVICE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

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Abstract

The journey towards becoming a good teacher is complex and multifaceted. It entails acquiring pedagogical knowledge and skills, developing a strong sense of professional identity, adequate levels of self-efficacy, and adeptness in navigating the inherent challenges of the educational milieu.

Professional identity is a dynamic process influenced by multiple internal and external factors. Specifically, teachers' identity evolves through personal and professional experiences (Beijaard et al., 2004; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Kavrayici, 2020). In recent literature, there has been a growing emphasis on the essential role of teachers' identity within the teaching profession. Teachers who strongly identify with their professional role tend to invest emotionally in the associated tasks, thereby shaping the expectations and behavioral norms associated with this occupation.

Similarly, self-efficacy stands as a pivotal construct in comprehending teaching efficacy. It encompasses personal convictions regarding one's capability to organize and implement actions essential for attaining predefined objectives (Bandura, 1977; 1995). In the context of teaching, efficacy beliefs influence teachers' motivation, level of resilience, and willingness to engage in efforts to support student learning. Hence, teachers possessing elevated self-efficacy are inclined to persist in overcoming challenges and utilize proficient instructional methodologies customized to accommodate the diverse needs of students. Furthermore, adeptly managing stress and tackling the myriad challenges inherent in the teaching profession are imperative for facilitating an efficacious teaching and learning environment.

These dimensions are even more significant for teachers engaged in educational support activities for students with disabilities, dedicated to fostering inclusive learning environments and promoting the academic and socio-emotional growth of all students. However, the professional identity and self-efficacy of teachers operating in inclusive school contexts - often characterized by heightened criticality and complexity - remain largely unexplored.

With these premises, the present study aims to examine the relationships between professional identity, self-efficacy, coping orientation, and attitudes towards inclusive practices among future support teachers, providing interesting insights that can contribute to the development of more effective teacher training programs. A total of 129 participants enrolled in the specialization course for educational support activities were included, to whom an assessment battery targeting the investigated factors was administered. Sociodemographic information was collected, as well as validated measures regarding individual characteristics (Pedrites, 2009; Sica et al., 2008), professional identity and self-efficacy (Wong, 2022; Biasi et al., 2014), and attitudes and feelings regarding students with special needs (Forlin et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2012). Although data analysis is still ongoing, preliminary results confirm that teachers in training with a strong professional identity and adequate self-efficacy are more inclined to address the unique educational requirements of all students.

Paying attention to the processes associated with the construction of increasingly competent and strong professional profiles - also on a personal level - in terms of professional identity, self-efficacy,





and inclusive capacity, is essential to ensure greater individual and professional self-awareness and to promote inclusive practices within educational settings.

Keywords: *pre-service teachers, teacher inclusive efficacy, professional identity, self-efficacy*

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FOREIGN MINORS AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CONTEXTS: THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL AND RESILIENCE SKILLS: A RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

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Abstract

This study aims to identify and analyze the social and educational difficulties encountered by foreign students in primary, middle, and high schools in the province of Reggio Calabria. The main objective is to understand how these difficulties are influenced by the emotional and resilience skills of the students and the emotional skills of the teachers, which play a role in promoting inclusion processes. Through an in-depth exploration of these elements and the use of tools such as the R.P.Q. (Resilience Process Questionnaire) (Richardson et al., 1990; revised by Laudadio, Pérez, & Mazzochetti, 2011), the S.E.D.S. (Social Emotional Dimension Scale) (Hutton, Roberts, 1994), and the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue; Petrides, 2009), aimed at evaluating the behavioral and emotional problems manifested by the student in the classroom context. The project pays particular attention to those aspects that influence effective educational practices and support strategies that promote the integration and well-being of foreign students, who, often inadequately attended to, end up not attending school and, in the worst cases, are driven to early work and/or exploitation in forms of begging. The expected results aim to provide an empirical basis for the development of targeted policies and interventions, aimed at improving the inclusiveness of schools and enhancing the resilience of students, thus contributing to better school and social integration in the province of Reggio Calabria.

Keywords: *ethnic diversity, inclusion and equity, policies educational and social, resilience, emotional skills*

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EMPOWERING THE COMPETENCE OF TEACHERS IN DESIGNING DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION THROUGH THE DINO TEACHING PLATFORM

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Abstract

In recent decades, the intention to provide meaningful learning processes able to address the plurality of needs that characterise the school context is widely recognised. The high intra- and inter-individual variability poses the urgent need to actualise on the operational level the paradigm shift, long hoped for, that moves from a homologating industrial model (Rose, 2016; Robinson, Robinson, 2022) towards the implementation of a plural, open and flexible education, able to meet the cognitive, emotional and socio-relational needs of each student in the classroom (Tomlinson, 1999; D'Alonzo, 2017; Demo, lanes, 2023).

This suggests the need to redirect and integrate teaching competences, in the face of the need to always seek and co-construct new, balanced and temporary adaptations. According to the relevant international literature, this change is currently hindered by the lack of effective teacher training programmes (Suprayogi et al. 2017; Lindner & Schwab, 2020), who perceive the recognised need to respond to the heterogeneity of their classrooms by designing differentiated teaching-learning paths as burdensome. Contributing to this situation is the lack of adequate planning time, which undermines the work of teachers at all stages of design (Folci et al., 2019), as well as unfamiliarity with the available digital teaching tools, able to facilitate the entire differentiation process.

Starting from this research evidence, the presentation intends to discuss the functions implemented in the DINO Teaching platform created as a customised and differentiated didactic design tool, aimed at supporting this change and mediating teacher training. DINO Teaching stands as an acted learning environment insofar as it supports and guides conceptual, as well as operational, steps in the development of didactic designing. Based on the findings of a comparative analysis conducted on different theoretical models (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Tomlinson, 1999; CAST, 2018, Sternberg, 1988; Nunley, 2004; Mariani, 2010; Cornoldi et al, 2020), the platform, in addition, allows future teachers to practise in designing differentiated learning activities, collaborating and reflecting on the responsiveness of what they design to the needs analysis conducted in the classroom context, in order to improve the effectiveness of training programmes aimed at developing teacher competences related to differentiation instruction, consistent with the findings of recent years (Langelaan et al., 2024).

Keywords: *differentiated instruction, teachers' professional development, teachers' competences, web platform, educational technologies.*

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POWERFUL AND HIGHLY IMPROBABLE THEORIES: WHY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WILL NOT REPLACE THE TEACHER

NOTES ON THE NEED FOR INCLUSIVE AI LITERACY

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Abstract

This brief essay stems from the urgent need to stimulate a discussion, following the first tests carried out with the Personal Digital Tutor at Unisa, on the topic introduced by the title: why artificial intelligence will not replace teachers. Taking Chomsky's work into account (Chomsky, Roberts, & Watumull, 2023), a GPT system will statistically extrapolate from a vast Knowledge Base the most likely response to a scientific question. If, during a lesson in a science education classroom, we were to drop an apple on the ground and ask why the apple fell, we would probably get answers that would, in various ways, involve the force of gravity. Someone with a greater inclination towards Aristotelian philosophy might tell us that the apple tends towards its natural place. It is unlikely, however, that anyone would answer us that the apple falls because its mass bends space-time. Yet, according to our current state of knowledge, this would be the most accurate answer. If, with Popper, "we do not seek highly probable theories, but explanations; that is, powerful and highly improbable theories" (Popper, 2002), the idea of a conformist and somewhat priggish artificial intelligence is not for us. This alone would be enough to make teachers breathe a sigh of relief: their function is not in question, they will not be replaced by tireless, efficient and reliable automatons, because they are not intelligent. The relief, however, will be short-lived. Teachers are left with the task of understanding what to do with a revolution that has been compared to fire, the alphabet, printing, and the steam engine.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, literacy, autopoiesis, cognitive paradigm*

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PANEL S1.B

**SHAPING TOMORROW'S EDUCATORS: A FOCUS ON INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN ITALIAN TEACHER
EDUCATION**

Chairperson

Anna Maria Murdaca, University of Enna Kore (Italy)

Discussants

Alessandra Lo Piccolo, University of Enna Kore (Italy)

Elsa Maria Bruni, University "G. D'Annunzio" of Chieti/Pescara (Italy)





VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AND INCLUSIVE DESIGN IN TEACHING: THE PERSPECTIVE OF FUTURE LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHERS

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Abstract

Inclusive design in teaching requires teachers to consider students' learning potential and possible barriers to their full participation in school activities. This involves a systemic approach that takes into account both the functioning profile of learners and the interaction between the individual and the environment. This need is particularly important in educational settings where pupils with sensory disabilities and, specifically, with visual impairment are present; indeed, the common use of visual mediators (Damiano, 2013) within teaching-learning process may negatively impact on their level of participation in educational activities. As some authors have pointed out, our contemporary society can be characterised as the "kingdom of the eye" (Maldonado, 1994), a phenomenon that is linked to the risk of cultural and cognitive exclusion for those with visual impairments (Fiorucci & Pinnelli, 2013). From a cultural perspective, the lack of access to visual contents may reduce the opportunities for active participation in social life, effectively excluding visually impaired people from shared experiences that reinforce their sense of belonging and the collective identity. From a cognitive perspective, the limited exposure to visual information may hinder the acquisition and development of new knowledge and skills, thereby compromising the capacity to learn and interact with the physical and social environment in an autonomous and proficient manner.

It is thus recommended that every teacher consider the global functioning of visually impaired learners, by identifying both their strengths and weaknesses as well as the environmental barriers and facilitators that may impact the teaching-learning process within an inclusive perspective.

Stemming from these premises, an exploratory study was conducted during the Specialization course for those wishing to acquire the learning support teacher's warrant to work in schools (8th cycle) held at the University of Salerno. The study envisaged the administration of a questionnaire to future support teachers in upper secondary school with the aim of investigating their attitudes and opinions regarding visually impaired students. In particular, the results of the analysis of their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of these students will be presented. The answers will be analysed through a top-down approach by using the "Activity and Participation" component of the ICF (WHO, 2001, 2007). The results will be compared with the *ICF core set vision loss* (Billet et al., 2021) to develop a useful tool for the assessment of specific barriers and the identification of the most appropriate facilitators, with the aim of supporting and implementing the design of individualized and personalized teaching-learning activities.

Keywords: *visual impairment, inclusive design in teaching, ICF, teacher education.*

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THE INTEGRATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A SCOPING REVIEW

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Abstract

The deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) within the educational sector emerges as a promising solution to the challenges posed by the necessitation for inclusion and the appreciation of diversity within classrooms. The scoping review explores the assimilation of such technologies within teaching practices, investigating their impact in redefining the educational landscape towards a more inclusive perspective. A meticulous analysis of recent international publications unveils the potential ascribed to the AI as a tool capable of personalising the learning experience, efficiently meeting the diverse needs of students. The adoption of AI is not confined solely to support in overcoming obstacles but extends to the proposition of innovative methodologies for assessment and interaction with instructional material. In this context, AI aims to be capable of making significant contributions to education, facilitating the creation of an authentically inclusive teaching environment. One of the primary objectives of this review is to analyse the pivotal role of AI in teacher training. It underlines the importance of equipping future educators with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to effectively integrate these technologies into their teaching and project activities. This approach not only enhances the learning process but also promotes an educational environment sensitive to the varying needs of students. Furthermore, it discusses how, via appropriate utilisation of AI, teachers can address the challenges presented by a diversity of educational needs and, by acting through the principles of Special Pedagogy, implement teaching practices that reflect the values of inclusion and innovation. The review also highlights ethical considerations and potential risks associated with data use in education. It emphasises the necessity of establishing a responsible partnership between the AI sector and educational technology fields, which should be guided by ethical principles favouring diversity and inclusion in innovations. The conclusions further lead to reflections on the need to review and update teachers' education and training design of programmes and activities to effectively integrate advanced competencies in educational technologies and universal design strategies. Such a change could facilitate the adequate preparation of educators in effectively managing diversity within the classroom, promoting more accessible and personalised educational environments.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence (AI); inclusive education; educational technology; teacher training*

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DESIGNING AN AI-BASED CHATBOT TO PROMOTE EMOTIONAL LITERACY AMONG FUTURE TEACHERS

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) is conceived as a complex and multidimensional construct, essential for the ability to effectively identify, manage, and understand one's own emotions and those of others (Panwerm 2023; Goleman, 2011). Various studies have demonstrated that teachers' emotional intelligence is directly correlated with their professional and academic success, significantly influencing personal well-being and the effectiveness of students' educational outcomes (Sharma & Bindal, 2012; Murdaca, 2014). In this context, the current landscape of pedagogical research is exploring the use of innovative technologies, such as chatbots, to enhance educational effectiveness. Artificial Intelligence, particularly Generative Artificial Intelligence, due to its broad applicative versatility, could thus address the challenges arising from the multimodal nature of emotional phenomena. These technologies, with their ability to offer a personalized and immediately accessible experience, can be considered as potential tools to enrich and support the development of teachers' emotional skills. The present study proposes a longitudinal research project employing an AI-based chatbot as a pedagogical tool to promote emotional literacy among future teachers. Specifically, the project aims to develop a chatbot, specially trained on emotion constructs, with the aim of examining the effectiveness of these tools in reducing burnout among teachers and improving students' educational outcomes. The chatbot was developed using Unity 3D, a graphics engine widely used in the development of interactive applications, in order to create an attractive and intuitive user interface that facilitates interaction between users and the chatbot. As for artificial intelligence, the chatbot is based on LLaMA 2, an advanced language model that uses deep learning techniques to understand and generate natural language. LLaMA 2 was chosen for its ability to process large amounts of textual data and its performance in understanding complex contexts, making it suitable for managing emotional and educational interactions. Therefore, the preliminary results of an exploratory survey conducted on a sample of university students will be presented, in order to evaluate the perception of the role of chatbots as emotional and educational support tools in the educational context.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, teacher training, chatbot, inclusion.*

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INNOVATIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR ALL LEARNERS: A STUDY OF EDUCATORS' USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN THE PUGLIA REGION

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Abstract

In the current scenario of education, the integration of real-world and virtual environments presents a formidable challenge for teachers, educators and learners alike. This is more pronounced when it comes to addressing the requirements of students with disabilities or special educational needs. In light of this, a recent investigation was conducted in the Puglia Region utilizing an online questionnaire that surveyed educators across all levels, using a mixed-method approach with random sampling.

The study aimed to explore how educators are using innovative teaching strategies to cater to the diverse needs of learners, particularly those with disabilities or special needs. The findings revealed that a majority of educators are already using inclusive and forward-thinking methodologies that incorporate digital technologies to enhance their teaching approaches. They recognize the significance of technology in delivering tailored instruction and fostering effective learning experiences for all students.

The educators surveyed in this study acknowledged the challenges posed by the integration of real-world and virtual environments, but they also understand the immense opportunities that can be leveraged by using digital technologies to augment their pedagogical approaches. They believe that these technologies can help create more personalized learning experiences for students with diverse needs, and can help them build the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in a rapidly-evolving world.

Overall, the results of this study highlight the necessity of adapting to evolving educational paradigms and embracing innovative teaching strategies to effectively cater to the diverse needs of learners. The findings suggest that educators should continue to explore the potential of digital technologies and other innovative teaching methodologies to create effective learning experiences for all students.

Keywords: *inclusion; digital innovation; digital schools; reality- virtual reality; SEN.*

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TRAINING AND CHANGE.

THE UNDERLYING DYNAMICS OF TRAINING PROCESSES IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The fundamental problem with training lies in the willingness and desire for change of those who apply themselves to it. 'To train' means to give 'form', to mould, to shape... an action that does not take place from the outside - no 'trainer' has these faculties - but from the inside, that is, by a conscious movement of the one who has initially decided to change his own 'form' and who therefore consciously gives assent to an understanding of what he is listening to in function of a modification to be made to his own knowledge system and, consequently, to his own skills and competences. It is quite evident, even to the untrained eye, the resistance to change that occurs, for example, in subjects who are already adults and mature, as opposed to what can instead be found in beings who are starting school or who, even before, are exposed to educational activities that are not yet 'didactic'.

As we know, the average age of the teaching staff in Italian schools is around 55, thus at a mature stage in which systems of knowledge, skills and competences have been consolidated in such a way that the person involved in an educational experience is unlikely to be able to really bring about a substantial change.

Let us try to imagine a 50-60 year old teacher who has adopted a transmissive style in his or her teaching experience for two or three decades, made up of frontal lectures, without interaction with his or her pupils, with a demand for standardised exercises (taken from textbooks), mnemonic learning and uncritical repetition of the contents learned. Let us try talking, in the course of a training activity, with such a teacher, having in mind to get him to completely restructure his teaching approach. How much chance will we have of success in relation to the objectives we set ourselves? Very little, evidently. We have investigated these issues with the support of surveys carried out within university courses. The reference areas are the ordinary subjects of primary education science courses and those of the specialisation course for support teachers.

The two reference groups evidently include very different cohorts, first of all from an age point of view. In the first case, we are in the presence of an age group ranging from 19 to 24; in the second, from 25 to 60, with prevalence - in our case - for the 35-45 age group.

Following an evaluation questionnaire, we posed the problem of investigating more deeply the meaning of the results detected, in order to trace them back to an overall framework, which would give the reason for such differentiated responses in the face of a display of homogeneous contents.

An in-depth questionnaire was then presented, in which the age, cultural and educational background, years of previous work experience and, above all, the degree of conviction on the professional skills and competences achieved as well as the objective set with the attendance of the specialisation course were investigated.

The reported results provide interesting feedback that can guide the training methodologies and tracks for their greater effectiveness.

Keywords: *inclusive education, teachers' training*





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TRAINING THE SPECIALIZED TEACHER IS A COMPLEX NARRATIVE: REFLECTING TO REDEFINE PROFESSIONALISM

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Abstract

The epistemological challenge of complexity and diversity, from the educational and didactic point of view, requires a timely reorganization of the knowledge, knowledge and skills that build the professional background of teachers with the adoption of a plurality of cognitive and methodological-didactic approaches. And this, in order to be able to relate to diversity itself by restoring equal rights of citizenship and adequate historical-social identity to pupils with “special educational needs”. Over time, training has undergone profound revisions of the logics of change and necessary moments of redefinition of the traditional interpretative canons that characterize it: it is impossible not to think of training as a construct that includes a plurality of subject“, institutions, languages, bringing into play an interweaving of elements and situations of a complex and problematic nature: it is a refined game of circular and complementary dialectics crossed by the reading of personal and professional narrative experiences. Training dialogues with and feeds on the narrative paradigm in the construction of the identity of the teaching team, re-processing the professional habitus and personal self-view in the world of the specialized teacher and beyond through the constant reorganization of training experiences. It follows that the problem of training cannot be reduced to the mere acquisition of content theoretical-practical skills, as trainees adopt original ways of feeling, being, learning, narrating themselves, building common belonging. The renewal of teaching professionalism in an inclusive perspective with the contribution of the narrative approach requires the promotion of a “strong” training-project design, characterized by the following objectives:

- Encouragement of intellectual, critical-investigative, exploratory skills, continuous reworking of interpretive frameworks, in the light of errors considered as opportunities to re-think hypotheses, re-verify paths and strategies of inquiry;
- recognition of cultural, individual, social, anatomo-functional diversities-differences;
- enhancement of inclusive skills as constituent elements of the complexity of the “established” context, transforming it into “establishing” narrative-design plots capable of raising the level of inclusiveness at school;
- Recognition of lifelong learning understood “as” a reticular process,” in which moments of continuity and discontinuity of learning experiences, accelerations, stagnations and delays, and possible unforeseen events alternate.

The formative and self-training processes of the inclusive educand and teachers are not a given, but represent a complex phenomenon, a co-constructive and narrative dialectic: in this sense they imply a different and innovative way of “reading” and organizing interventions, situations, activities, presences, critical passages searching for possible solutions of “problems.” In order not to get lost in the fragmentation of knowledge and expertise, it is appropriate to adopt an open and pluralistic interpretive paradigm capable of identifying possible convergences, complementary relationships, common formative orientations, constructive transversal narrative practices. Today’s problem of education contains diversified theoretical values and demands epistemologically qualified





specialized and curricular teachers, because it proposes alternative cultural and educational perspectives of a qualitative nature, such as transversal languages, forms and methods of research, which go beyond the traditional design models declined from an inclusive perspective. Increased professionalism leads to innovative cultural directions and value and methodological choices, to take up the challenge of deciphering the intricate life stories of the most vulnerable pupils interpreted as “particular” narratives, which interrogate the existential and cultural experiences, not only of the subject with disabilities, but, first and foremost, of the future specialized and non-specialized teachers within the optimization of teaching-learning paths in the common context of belonging. It was planned to use a special qualitative research instrument in the narrative domain to investigate the inclusive quality level of the educational training of specializing and in-service teachers, not only to re-read past experiences, but to equip themselves to accept new inclusive challenges in increasingly complex and pluralistic educational contexts.

Keywords: *storytelling, inclusion, training*

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THE ROLE OF TRAINING OF TRAINERS IN PROMOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract

In the international educational discourse, Italy has been a pioneer in inclusive education since the mid-1970s, integrating students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms. This practice, which is now recognised worldwide and supported by numerous international standards and documents (UN, 2006, 2015; Unesco, 2017, 2019; EU, 2021), champions inclusive education not merely on ethical grounds but as a means to foster each student's potential and a culture of acceptance for all forms of diversity. The recent adoption of the "Government Disability Mandate Act" (L. 227/2021, Delega al Governo in materia di disabilità) represents a significant step forward. It envisages a future in which social care is transformed so that people with disabilities can participate fully in society, transcending the boundaries of specialised centres and living "on an equal basis with others" in the real world (Piccione, 2023). This legislative milestone emphasises the need to develop pedagogical practises accordingly and to ensure that teachers are both theoretically informed and practically equipped to guide and facilitate these transformative changes (Bocci, 2018).

The University of Turin's Professional Development Course (CUAP) "Expert in inclusive educational processes" is a proactive response to these needs. This initiative, developed as part of a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding to promote inclusive culture in Piedmont, aims not only to improve the skills of teachers with a university qualification in special needs education (Romano *et al.*, 2021), but also, and more importantly, the skills of their trainers (Damiani *et. al.*, 2021). This course, embedded in the Disability Studies in Education (DSE) framework, is particularly aimed at those who lead laboratory activities in specialisation courses and is designed to equip trainers with advanced methods and practises to promote an inclusive educational environment (Taylor&Cranton, 2012).

This approach recognises the central role trainers play in shaping the future of education by preparing new teachers to meet the challenges of inclusion (Gibson *et. al.*, 2016). By focusing on the development of trainer competencies, the course aims to create a domino effect and ensure that the principles of inclusive education are embedded at all levels of teacher education (Priestley *et al.*, 2015).

Our presentation will critically analyse the structure, content and outcomes of the "Expert in the processes of inclusive education" course and provide insights into effective strategies to promote a truly inclusive educational landscape, starting with the training of trainers.

To summarise, the University of Turin's efforts are exemplary of how educational institutions can act as catalysts for social change by redefining the role of teachers as 'activists of change' within inclusive education (Naraian&Schlessinger, 2017). The findings emphasise the collective responsibility for developing competent educational contexts that are able to adapt to the diverse needs and potentials of all students, thus advancing the agenda for a more inclusive society.

Keywords: *expert, inclusive education teachers, training of trainers, higher education, professional development*





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SHAPING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN IRAN: CURRENT REALITIES AND FUTURE HORIZONS

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Abstract

This presentation explores the insights of an Iranian PhD student whose academic journey in Italy has prompted an in-depth analysis of Iran's education system, with a specific focus on special and inclusive education. This study aims to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the Iranian system in comparison to education policies, practices, and cultures envisaged in recent international goals to promote quality education for all (UN General Assembly, 2015; UNESCO, 2020).

Iran, a predominantly Muslim nation in the Middle East, spans 1,648,195 square kilometres in southwestern Asia, making it the sixteenth largest country globally. The country boasts a diverse population with various ethnic and linguistic groups (World Population Review, 2019). Approximately 83.6 million people live in Iran, and the literacy rate for individuals aged 15 and older is 86% (UNESCO, 2015). The Iranian education system has been heavily influenced by the historical French education system, with policy decisions centrally governed (Behbahani, 2010).

In Iran, education is a key social and cultural institution essential for imparting, preserving, and transmitting the nation's cultural heritage. It aims to give students a strong foundation and instil core values (Bakhshalizadeh & Karimi, 2019). Education is free for all students up to secondary school, which is crucial for ensuring the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills, the right to education, and quality education (Hazari, 2015). All six-year-old children must undergo a mandatory national screening to assess their readiness for primary school. Over 90% of children diagnosed with developmental delays, intellectual disabilities, or other special needs are placed in special schools, classified into seven categories: intellectually disabled (mentally retarded), deaf (hearing impaired), blind (visually impaired), autism spectrum disorder, physically disabled, multiple disabilities, and specific learning disorders. Unfortunately, there is still the risk of being excluded from education entirely. Notably, students with specific learning disorders are not screened in the national program but are diagnosed after starting school (Samadi & McConkey, 2018).

For most children with disabilities in Iran, going to school is an out-of-reach dream. For the relative few who can attend, the experience is often a hard one. The training for teachers in inclusive education methods is limited, hindering full access to education for children with disabilities. Instead of integrating inclusive education principles into all teacher curricula, some universities offer special education teaching as a separate program. This results in new teachers being trained either as special education teachers or mainstream teachers without the necessary skills for inclusive education. The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities raised similar concerns in its 2017 review of Iran, criticizing the low prevalence of special education, the low number of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, and the lack of measures to train teachers, education personnel, and parents about inclusive education (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

Despite the Iranian dual-track system and the pervasive bio-medical approach, the culture among teachers and parents is slowly changing, providing hope to promote inclusive practices in general education and special schools. For example, as of 2011, special classes have been introduced to educate students with mild intellectual disabilities, and visual or hearing impairment (UNESCO, 2020). Although this is not an inclusive model, the integration of these students in specific curricular activities with their peers in other classes, could be considered a first step to create awareness about





the students' real potential, the benefits of truly inclusive educational contexts for all students, irrespective of ability. It is hoped that by working on teachers and parents' perceptions of disability and diversity, small steady steps could be taken to move towards a more inclusive educational society.

Keywords: *inclusive education, special education, disability, teacher training, Iran, diversity.*

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INDEX/3-P. PROCESSES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF INCLUSION IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The process of progress towards the construction of an inclusive school context is at the center of the critical-transformative approach linked to the Index for Inclusion. The metaphorical image of the tree gives us the complexity of the macrosystem which is the life of a school, made up of values, culture, choices, practices, process management, but also made up of life in the classroom, within that microsystem which depends on the superstructures, but which, at the same time, has a life of its own. The adoption of an inclusive transformative critical perspective through improvement processes must address both the school macrosystem and the classroom microsystem, not remaining on the threshold but entering it. The indicators of inclusiveness in the classroom, placed in relation to the dimensions of the Index, enrich the metaphorical image of the tree by providing it with fruits, representative of life in the classroom and providing a further dimension around the 3-Ps: Presence, Participation and Progress with others.

This path was born following the results of research conducted through the use of the Index for Inclusion and concluded by highlighting the need to adopt an inclusive transformative critical perspective through improvement processes capable of addressing life in the classroom. If a tree represents the life of a school, how could it represent that of a classroom?

What happens when the Index approach enters the classroom? When are the planning and implementation of activities guided by the 3-Ps: Presence, Participation and Progress with others, i.e. the indicators of inclusiveness in the classroom? What happens when the Index dimensions meet the 3-Ps? How could the two-dimensionality of the equilateral triangle representing the Index be developed upon entering the classroom?

What are the questions of the Index for Inclusion aimed at investigating life in the classroom following the indicators of inclusiveness?

Starting from the questions in the Index, an initial selection was carried out, seeking those that could investigate aspects relating to the indicators of inclusiveness in the classroom, i.e. the 3-Ps. The process involved five experts and the selected questions were grouped according to the 3-Ps, leaving the Index Dimensions. This new tool was adopted with teachers in training for the achievement of specialization for support activities for students with disabilities of the VIII Cycle of the University of Florence in the form of a questionnaire as a guide to the observation of classroom work by of subjects in training and as a self-evaluation tool with a view to improvement.

The contribution intends to present the tool as the result of the selection of questions carried out by five experts and the first results of its use as a tool to guide the observation and self-evaluation of inclusive activities in the classroom.

Keywords: *inclusion indicators; index for Inclusion; relational model; bio-psycho-social approach; quality of inclusion in the classroom.*

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SIMPLEX DIDACTICS AND TEACHERS' TRAINING: AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

The classroom-system is characterized by certain peculiarities and several complexities that may arise from individual, social, political, economic, and cultural changes (Bakker, 2016; Morin, 1994; Osberg, 2010). It has a significant influence on the teaching-learning process requiring teachers to select and adopt didactic approaches to overcome these complexities and foster inclusion, not only when in presence of specific Special Educational Needs (Van Geert & Steenbeek, 2014; Aiello, 2018). In fact, within this dynamic context of heterogeneous classes, teachers play a crucial role to promote the educational success of every student. They address problematic situations, make decisions, take strategic choices, design educational interventions, and evaluate students' outcomes in order to create a learning environment that meets the needs of each learner, ensuring an effective and inclusive educational path (Aiello, Sharma & Sibilio, 2016). To this end, it is considered appropriate to investigate the educational and inclusive potential of teaching approaches that can guide teachers' actions and support them in deciphering and addressing the complexities of classrooms, improving the coherence between teachers' theoretical beliefs, the characteristics of the class and students, and educational practices (Davis & Sumara, 2012; Sibilio, 2015).

Based on these premises, simplex didactic (Sibilio, 2014), a transposition into the educational field of the theory of simplicity proposed by Alain Berthoz (2011), suggests adopting some adaptive rules and tools typical of living organisms in educational contexts to promote educational interaction. Several studies have reflected on and investigated its educational application (Aiello et al., 2017; Di Tore, 2016; Di Tore et al., 2020; Sibilio, 2015; Sibilio, 2014; Sibilio, Aiello, Corona, 2013; Zollo, 2018; Zollo, Di Gennaro, Sibilio, 2021), its potential in promoting teacher agency (Sibilio & Aiello, 2018), and increasing their awareness of the use of internal and external resources to promote the teaching-learning process from an inclusive perspective (Aiello et al., 2021). In particular, to explore the educational potential of the properties and principles of simplicity, research has been ongoing for several years involving future learning support teachers enrolled at the Specialization course for those wishing to acquire the learning support teacher's warrant to work in Italian schools.

This study presents the results of the data collected during the VIII cycle of the aforementioned specialisation course, which included a training (both theoretical and practical) on simplex didactics within the module "Special didactics: Metacognitive and cooperative approach". This training activity involved 295 future support teachers in lower secondary school and included a 10-hour module on cooperative teaching and a 20-hour module on metacognitive and simplex didactic. Before starting the latter module, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to explore their perspectives on teaching practice (Zollo et al., 2018). This tool was also administered at the end of the activities to investigate any potential changes. This paper will present the results of this data collection and share some practical proposals for applying simplex properties and principles to reflect on their educational and inclusive potential.

Keywords: *simplex Didactics; non-linearity; teaching-learning process; inclusion.*





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EXPLORING PEER RELATIONS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITY TO PROMOTE SOCIAL PARTICIPATION. AN OBSERVATION TOOL OF RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS AT SCHOOL FOR TEACHERS

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Abstract

The objective of promoting the 'full development of human potential' (UN 2006, art. 24) is the mission of an inclusive education system and is firmly anchored to the participative and relational processes that the school, in its educational and socializing function, must guarantee. The disadvantaged position that disability involves in acquiring a social role, requests to trace those dimensions that recall the intensity of the disabled person's involvement in the community to which they belong (Edwards, Cameron, King and McPherson, 2019). Participation is the powerful lever of inclusion; therefore, it cannot be left to chance, it must be thought out, designed, supported, and freed from all those unfavourable conditions that hinder its exercise. The educational work in the integrated school context must pursue the promotion of stable and authentic friendly relationships among peers, which transcend helping or caring interactions (Hall and McGregor, 2000; Savarese, 2009; Gilbert and Silvera, 1996;), and produces a real long-term social inclusion that goes beyond the time and space of the school setting. The analysis of the literature describes a different picture. A number of studies conducted in various secondary schools show how the social participation of pupils with disabilities, specifically intellectual or multiple disabilities (De Boer and Pijl, 2016; Bossaert, Colpin, Pijl and Petry, 2013; Asmus, Carter, Moss et al., 2017), is not taken for granted in classrooms considered inclusive. These students are less accepted, risk isolation or develop low-quality, elusive or ephemeral friendship relationships (Mamas, Daly, Cohen and Jones, 2021). What has been described represents the background of a research project structured within the PhD course in Human and Social Sciences at the University of Salento. The study investigates the personal and contextual variables that prevent the full and effective social inclusion of students with disability in the peer group in some schools in the Salento area. This paper presents the preliminary results from an ad-hoc grid, specifically structured for teachers, aimed at capturing significant information from school relational contexts. The instrument explores the multiple variables involved in the interactions between peers with and without disability and was used by a group of special education teachers on a sample of 109 students aged between 15 and 18, in four Secondary Schools in the Province of Lecce.

Keywords: *inclusive education; social inclusion; adolescents; peer interaction; disability.*

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FROM LANGUAGE TO KNOWLEDGE: THE IMPACT OF NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING IN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS. AN EDUCATIONAL PROPOSAL

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Abstract

Natural Language Processing (NLP) represents an innovative and promising approach to bring about significant improvements in learning environments. This technology, which combines computer science with linguistics, has the potential to radically transform the way education is delivered and received. Numerous studies have shown that intelligent NLP-based tutoring systems can adapt to the individual needs of students, improving learning outcomes in subjects such as mathematics and science. These systems use NLP algorithms to analyse students' responses, providing immediate and personalised feedback that facilitates autonomous learning.

Automatic assessment programmes, examined in other research, use NLP to correct written assignments, reducing teachers' workload and allowing them to focus more on personalised support for students. Automated assessment not only improves efficiency, but also ensures more consistent and impartial assessment. In addition, customised learning platforms using NLP tailor learning content to individual student needs, analysing learning data to provide specific study materials, hints and additional resources, making learning more targeted and effective.

Based on the emerging evidence, this study proposes a new didactic application of NLP in educational contexts: the 'Intelligent Language Tutor' (TLI). The TLI is designed to personalise students' learning paths through real-time analysis of their responses. It works in three main stages: text analysis, error detection and personalised feedback. Using advanced NLP algorithms, the system will understand and interpret students' written responses, detecting syntactic, semantic and contextual nuances. It will identify grammatical, syntactic and semantic errors, providing a detailed diagnosis of areas for improvement for each student. Finally, it will offer specific suggestions to correct errors and improve students' language skills, adapting to each student's level and learning style.

The educational proposal envisages the implementation of TLI in various educational contexts, from primary school to higher education institutions. To assess the impact of TLI on student achievement, empirical studies will be conducted that include data collection through questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. Questionnaires will be administered to teachers and students to gather feedback on the effectiveness of TLI. Interviews with teachers will provide qualitative insights into their experiences of using the system, while classroom observations will monitor students' interaction with TLI and their progress over time, allowing for the identification of areas of success and future prospects.

Keywords: *natural language processing; education; learning environments; didactics.*

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DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION AND OPEN EDUCATION. THE WORK PLAN AS AN INCLUSIVE DEVICE FOR STUDENTS WITH ADHD: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This contribution is part of an action-research project (Losito & Pozzo, 2005) entitled 'Promoting personalised and inclusive learning at primary school: an action research project with the Plan de travail', carried out by the IperDEA research laboratory of the University of Bergamo, whose aim is to lead teachers in a process of institutional innovation, addressed at experimenting inclusive and personalised teaching tools.

The project starts from the assumption that although classrooms are organised with students of the same age (Perrenoud, 1996; Connac, 2012), in reality they are strongly characterised by heterogeneity, referable for example to needs, functioning, interests, preferences, socio-cultural backgrounds and beliefs (Bocci, D'Alonzo & Pinnelli 2015) and this undoubtedly urges the need to personalise and individualise the teaching-learning process (Baldacci, 2005).

The research project therefore took on two theoretical/methodological frameworks of reference: differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 1999; 2006) - an educational design approach that encourages the use of different strategies, content and time to address pupils' needs - and open education (Jürgens, 2009; Bohl & Kucharz, 2010; Demo, 2016) - which emphasises the proactive role of pupils, giving them the opportunity to choose, organise themselves and participate freely and responsibly.

To transpose the theoretical/methodological frameworks into teaching practice, the project proposed the use of the educational device of the work plan, or Plan de Travail (PdT), derived from Freinet's (1962) institutional pedagogy. It consists of a list of personalised, differentiated, multidisciplinary and self-correcting tasks that are completed autonomously or with peers within a defined time (Connac, 2009) and is particularly functional in promoting processes of self-regulation, autonomy, self-control, organisation and cooperation (Connac, 2009; 2012; Arena & De Resende, 2022).

Specifically, this paper illustrates a segment of the larger research project and focuses on students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that seems to particularly challenge teachers; it is characterised by impulsivity, hyperactivity, poor cooperation, difficulty in concentration, sustaining attention, following rules, planning actions and solving problems (Cornoldi et al., 2001) and is present in 5-8 % of children (Barkley, 2016). Pupils with ADHD require a well-structured routine, appropriately organised materials and clear, defined time frames (Fedeli & Vio, 2017; Barkley, 2016).

The contribution presents an exploratory (Yin, 2009; 2012) multiple (Dumez, 2013) case study and focuses on the analysis of the effectiveness of the use of PdT with primary school children with ADHD. Through an observational process, supported by direct classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires administered to teachers and pupils, an analysis was conducted to understand how the use of the PdT influenced certain variables - attention, organisation, cooperation, compliance with rules and autonomy - of pupils with ADHD. The





presentation will illustrate the outcomes of this part of the research and the adaptations implemented by teachers to better meet the needs of pupils with ADHD.

The initial results that emerged allow us to state how the tool can be used appropriately to support differentiation processes aimed at the whole class and is also particularly effective in promoting the development of transversal skills in students with ADHD.

Keywords: *differentiated instruction; open education; ADHD; work plan; inclusion*

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UDL-BASED INTERVENTIONS FOR ACADEMIC STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract

Our research focuses on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a comprehensive framework for designing and implementing teaching strategies across diverse educational settings, with a particular emphasis on higher education (CAST, 2018). Recognizing the positive impact of training teachers in UDL guidelines on both student skills and the overall quality of teaching (Rusconi & Squillaci, 2023), our study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

While previous synthesis studies have explored UDL at the university level (Cumming & Rose, 2021; Roberts et al., 2011) and its application in teacher education (Rusconi & Squillaci, 2023), there is a notable gap in reviews that concurrently consider these two critical dimensions. To address this void, our proposed mapping review aims to systematically review research on UDL-based interventions in tertiary education involving teaching/academic staff which were expected to generate an impact on faculty members, faculty development, and/or students.

A mapping review is chosen as the research method to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize existing literature within this specific niche of interest. By adopting this approach, we aim to provide valuable insights into the predominant trends, methodological approaches, and thematic gaps in the literature related to UDL in higher education teacher professional development (Grant & Booth, 2009).

A list of eligibility criteria was adopted to select relevant studies for this mapping review:

- *Study Design*: qualitative, quantitative, mixed-method or multi-method studies;
- *Language*: studies carried out in any country, but published in English;
- Publication time frame: 2014-2023;
- *Setting*: studies need to present the results of a professional development programme or teacher training on UDL conducted in higher or tertiary education;
- *Outcomes*: studies investigate the impact of training or interventions on teachers' knowledge and skills to design and implement inclusive teaching strategies.

Relevant works were searched electronically through general and educational databases (SCOPUS, Web of Science, ERIC, PsycInfo) using a combination of keywords. Additional works were included through backward citation chasing practices, or snowball search. The title and abstract screening phase will be conducted by two independent researchers using the ASReview software, enabling the utilization of machine learning to identify relevant studies and expedite the workflow.

The studies selected were coded independently by two researchers, referring to a shared table containing a list of aspects related to the setting (country, type of university context, faculty, teaching area), to the type of training intervention or programme implemented on the UDL (duration, intensity, content, etc.), to the participants in the study (university lecturers, administrative staff, etc.), to the beneficiaries of the interventions (students with disabilities, non-traditional students, all students), to the type of outcome measured or observed (e.g. improvement





in teaching skills, strategies, motivation or learning outcomes) and to methodological aspects (research design, sample, information source, instruments, etc.).

The results of the review highlight certain trends in the international literature, such as the bias towards specific research designs or the over-representation of some countries.

They also indicate some perspectives for the expansion of future research in the field, particularly regarding the types of intervention that can be carried out in a university context about UDL. Finally, issues that have already been raised by other synthesis studies (Rao et al., 2011) emerged, such as fidelity in the application of UDL principles to teaching practices.

Keywords: *universal design for learning; higher education; teacher professional development.*

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AAC, IN-BOOKS AND ACCESSIBLE READING: PERSPECTIVES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract

Several studies demonstrated that reading aloud and listening to stories may have a significant benefit on children's cognitive, emotional and relational dimensions from very young age. Nonetheless, the presence of communication disabilities may hinder participation in shared reading activities and may affect person's ability to interact and communicate with others. Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC), with its specific tools and aids, can facilitate the development of functional communicative interactions, including within the classroom.

In particular, Inclusive Books (In-Books), which are picture books with a text entirely translated into symbols, may prevent further linguistic, cognitive and relational challenges for the student with Complex Communicative Needs (CCN). The adoption of specific modeling strategies, the creation of environments rich in visual supports, and careful instructional design can transform In-Books into books accessible to all learners and for all. In fact, Symbol-based texts may enhance language, expand vocabulary, improve joint attention ability, and foster inclusion by supporting pleasant and spontaneous communicative exchanges with peers and adults.

Keywords: AAC; inclusive book; inclusion; didactics.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF SENSORY PERSONALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR A HIGH-FUNCTIONING PERSON WITH AUTISM: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This case study describes the implementation of a sensory-focused Personalized Educational Plan for a high-functioning autistic student. A distinctive aspect of this case is the adoption of strategies aimed at adapting the school environment to meet the sensory and emotional needs of neurodivergent students, thereby improving their school well-being and academic performance.

The subject in question has an IQ of 140 and was diagnosed with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD-HF) at the age of 14, during the first year of high school. Although the student does not face significant academic difficulties, thanks to the adoption of self-developed learning strategies over time, they struggle with social-relational and emotional challenges and exhibits stereotypies.

Numerous factors affected the student's daily school well-being. Sensory overload emerged as a continuous and significant challenge, making it difficult to manage a school environment with intense or unexpected stimuli. Additionally, the adolescent experienced difficulties in social interaction, understanding social situations, and recognizing and managing emotions. In light of this, the importance of a personalized pedagogical approach that carefully considers the student's specific sensory and emotional needs became evident.

In accordance with the Ministerial Directive of December 27, 2012, a Personalized Educational Plan was developed starting from the second year of high school, involving the family and teachers, to create favorable conditions for the student's learning and well-being. Based on the typical sensory gating deficit in autism spectrum disorders, a neurological process that filters irrelevant sensory inputs to facilitate the management of perceived information and prevent sensory overload in higher brain functions (Crasta et al., 2021), the implemented strategies focused on adapting sensory stimuli in the surrounding environment to the student's specific sensory reception modalities. In particular, strategies were implemented to ensure the adequate use of light sources, the prevention of olfactory and auditory overstimulation, and the optimization of scheduling to avoid physical overload.

This sensory PEP model, resulting from a longitudinal effort conducted in synergy with the psychotherapist, family, and teaching staff, was adopted for three school years, with updates in response to the student's emerging needs. Its implementation significantly improved the quality of the student's school life, not only for the neurodivergent student but also for the entire class, which benefited from the proposed adaptations, contributing to peer awareness of neurodiversity and the creation of a more inclusive school environment. The student's academic performance improved,





highlighting the effectiveness of sensory and emotional interventions in supporting the academic performance of students with autism.

This case study, therefore, underscores the importance of adopting personalized educational strategies to adapt the school environment to the individual needs of students with autism spectrum disorders.

Keywords: *school inclusion; sensory overload; environmental adaptation; personalized didactic strategies; neurodiversity.*

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MAKING SOCIAL ROBOTICS RESEARCH FOR DISABILITIES ACCESSIBLE TO SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS: BEST PRACTICES FROM A PROJECT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GENOA

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Abstract

The use of social robotics is often perceived as complex and only feasible within university contexts or research centers (Papadakis et al., 2021).

In educational settings, robotics has been met with considerable difficulty, mainly due to limited understanding of the potential of these tools (Papadakis et al., 2021). However, in recent years, robotics has gradually attracted the attention of practitioners in the fields of rehabilitation and education, as well as teachers, who have begun to recognize its value across various dimensions. Among these are the development of cognitive and social skills (Alimisis, 2013), the creation of practical and engaging activities to stimulate students' interest and curiosity (Eguchi, 2017), as well as support to ensure the active participation of those who, due to their functional characteristics, require special educational attention (Pennazio, 2018).

Based on a recent project proposed by the Education Department of the University of Genova and funded by FIA (Italian Foundation for Autism), this contribution aims to propose some best practices to ensure that interventions with social robotics can more effectively involve people with disabilities and their support networks: teachers, educators, families, and school peers.

The project has the dual objective of using robots for the development of social skills in children and adolescents with autism and of promoting the active participation of multiple professionals in the implementation and continuation of interventions. In parallel with an experimental research phase involving the use of social robots (specifically: Nao, Buddy, Navel) initially introduced in rehabilitation settings and then in schools, the activation of a permanent laboratory has been conceived to assist the support network of students with autism, particularly educators and teachers, in understanding the educational utility of social robotics and in learning the basics to design inclusive educational pathways.

The project aims to address a need for greater understanding of the underlying dynamics of social robotics, as well as a need for training on its functioning, offering the opportunity to acquire the ability to co-design meaningful pathways through interaction among the various systems revolving around the student with disabilities, based on the scientific evidence from studies conducted over the years on the application of robotics in working with people with disabilities. Fundamental to the realization of a permanent laboratory with a real impact was the mapping of the needs of the various professionals involved, achieved through exploratory and standardized questionnaires supplemented by specific focus groups.

The experimental research thus becomes a means to involve educational centers, families, schools, and - very importantly - people with disabilities and their school peers, who actively participate in defining the research objectives and reflect on the effectiveness of the intervention with the support of experienced researchers. The fact that the research does not end with experimentation, but can





continue with the activities of the permanent laboratory, allows participation in the research experience to be a seed that sprouts with further training aimed at autonomy in the use of robotic tools in educational contexts.

Keywords: *robotics; disability; inclusion; accessibility.*

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A PILOT STUDY OF CULTURAL MEDIATED FACTORS

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Abstract

Drawing on the anthropology and cultural neuroscience, the topic of how culture shapes the cognitive and affective profile is nowadays recognized as a great challenge to understand the relation between the emotional profile and other anthropological dimensions of the persons and the group.

In this pilot study, we introduce this debate in a pedagogical context, recognizing the importance of evaluating and discussing the cultural phenomenon within the school context.

School is recognized as a core context when social and learning skills are drastically involved, representing the first context of interactions that prepare children and adolescents for mature society interaction. It follows that emotional and learning processes are widely involved, and a question arises when we ask how and if cultural factors influence factors like peer and teacher interactions.

The pedagogical is full of school-related constructs that require deep investigations in terms of different groups. Introducing the concept of culture in a similar debate is not easy. Culture is a multi-faceted concept that involves other related dimensions like religion and ethnicity, that would require careful analysis.

In this pilot work, we will carry out a screening within an elementary school using the QBS questionnaire "Questionnaire for the Evaluation of School Wellbeing and Identification of Risk Factors". Through this instrument, our goal is to provide a general picture of well-being in the school context, and more specifically, through the questionnaire we will investigate 5 subscales related to the following constructs: satisfaction and recognition, relationship with teachers, relationship with peers, emotional attitude to school, and self-efficacy.

By recognizing strong simplifications in terms of methodology and anthropological classification, we propose to distinguish students as European and not European. Data collection and statistical analysis on these two different groups will be performed to ask if factors involving will require deeper investigations in pedagogical contexts, especially focusing on social factors like peer interactions and teacher understanding of different worlds.

We expect to find higher levels of school well-being in European compared to non-European students, due to different scoring on the peer interaction and teacher interactions subscales.

Keywords: *culture; school well-being; QBS; emotions; inclusion.*

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OUTDOOR EDUCATION FOR ALL: A RESEARCH JOURNEY IN CONTEXTS OF SOCIAL MARGINALITY

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Abstract

This study explores the potential of Outdoor Education for including children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities in contexts of risk and social marginalization. Inclusion is considered a fundamental pillar for a fair and quality educational system (Ianes, Canevaro, Caldin, 2012). Outdoor Education is a pedagogical approach that promotes educational practices outdoors, both in school and extracurricular settings, recognized for its potential to enhance cognitive and psychomotor empowerment through active and experiential learning (Farné, 2015).

(Kolb, 1984) and place-based education (Sobel, 2004), which emphasize the importance of cognitive, emotional, and sensory experiences as the core of the learning process and recognize the value of place and territory as primary sources of stimuli for personalized and meaningful learning.

As highlighted by some studies (Salvaterra and Rossini, 2015; Schenetti, 2018; D'Ascenzo, 2018; Bortolotti, 2019), the industrial revolution introduced the problem of indoorization, i.e., confining learning environments indoors. However, only recently in Italy, studies and educational proposals on Outdoor Education have started to spread in school and extracurricular contexts.

Outdoor Education (OE) is already known in European countries through various projects (OUT learn IT! funded by Erasmus Plus; Learning in Motion, part of the Socrates program of the European Union; Project Land European Academy; SEE Project-Sustainability and Outdoor Education; Udeskole Project; Teachout Project). In recent years, it has been spreading in Italy through research and training projects (Hi Ability Catania project; INDIRE's Educational Vanguard; FISRO1 Project; Alma Mater University of Bologna's Outdoor Education center).

In the field of Didactics and Special Pedagogy, particularly internationally, projects targeting young people with disabilities have spread over the past ten years. "Outdoor for all" (Alexandros Stavrianos, Simon Pratt-Adams, 2022) refers to the inclusive practice of providing educational experiences in outdoor environments that are accessible and beneficial for everyone, regardless of physical, cognitive, or sensory abilities (e.g., Louv, 2005: pp. 203-211; Stavrianos & Spanoudaki, 2015).

The presented research project focuses on contexts of marginalization and social risk. It hypothesizes that the lack of outdoor experiences due to danger, limited opportunities, and the absence of accessible and safe public outdoor spaces could negatively impact these processes. Disability is thus amplified by adverse environmental conditions, becoming an additional disabling factor, considering individual transformations as the result of experiences made by the individual in their environment from birth (Berti & Bombi, 2001).

Children and adolescents with disabilities living in contexts without significant experiences might find outdoor experiences useful for developing their potential and self-determination (Ianes, 2006). One of the research objectives is to investigate the social representations of disability within families, considering these representations as elements that strongly influence the choices and abilities of individuals to grasp the invitations to act, the affordances (James Jerome Gibson, 1979) of the context.





Therefore, this study aims to verify whether educational planning based on Outdoor Education can meet the educational needs of children and adolescents with disabilities living in such contexts, promoting significant and emancipatory life trajectories (Cottini, 2017; Cottini, Morganti 2015; Crosbie, 2016).

Keywords: *outdoor education; inclusion, disability, marginality.*

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DESIGNING EDUCATIONAL-INCLUSIVE CONTEXTS THROUGH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LIFE DESIGNING

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Abstract

This theoretical study focuses on the exploration of the "Life Designing" paradigm (Savickas, 2005; Guichard, 2005) together with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to improve the inclusion of people with disabilities in the educational context. Drawing on narrative counselling techniques (McIlveen, 2008; Young & Valach, 2004), the development of a virtual AI tutor is envisaged that responds in a personalised manner to the needs of students/users, enhancing their individual potential and promoting self-determination (Giaconi, 2015; Ianes & Cramerotti, 2009; Friso & Caldin, 2022). This research intends to examine how the innovative "Life Designing" approach, integrated with AI solutions, can constitute a turning point in the field of inclusive education, offering more effective and accessible tools for overcoming the various barriers. The aim is to design educational practices and inclusive pathways, using AI to adapt the curriculum to the different needs of each pupil, in line with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (Meyer, A., Rose, D. H., & Gordon, D., 2014), also guaranteeing the realization of the personal life project.

Keywords: *life designing; Artificial Intelligence; inclusion; life project; teaching.*

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ACTIVE BREAKS AND ADHD. RESEARCH TRENDS AND CRITICAL ISSUES

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Abstract

Researchers' interest in exploring the benefits of integrating physical exercise interventions into school for children with ADHD has grown over the years (Vysniauske et al., 2020; Liang et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2022). Numerous studies report that physical exercise programs (e.g. active breaks) have a positive impact on cognitive performance, behavioral problems observed in children with ADHD and, therefore, on their school inclusion (Chan et al., 2022; Ziereis & Jansen, 2015; Piepmeier et al., 2022). However, other studies specifically highlight negative outcomes in mathematics skills given the characteristics of these students (Tosto et al., 2015; Zentall, 1990, 1994). In fact, executive functions and attention, often compromised in the functioning of children with ADHD, are recognized as mediators in learning mathematics. Mathematical competence, here understood as the ability to understand, judge, do and use mathematics in a variety of contexts and situations (Niss, 2003), is however the basis of the participation of all pupils in society and of the construction of a active and aware citizenship.

This work aims to share some results of a systematic review (SR) conducted within the Italian project "Inclusive didactic for enhancing math learning and reducing math anxiety: efficacy of active breaks in the classroom" (AB MOVE), supported by the MUR PRIN 2022 PNRR. Specifically, the research trends on the topic of outcome of the national and international empirical literature will be illustrated.

The synthesis was conducted following the PRISMA model, with the broader objective of detecting the effectiveness of different types of interventions integrating physical activity and mindfulness on mathematics anxiety, on executive and attention functions and on STEM area learning for all students, including those with ADHD. According to the starting hypothesis, interventions integrating physical activity into curricular teaching, such as active breaks, are promising in improving the attention and executive functions of students with ADHD and, therefore, their mathematical competence. After defining the synthesis protocol, the research group selected 298 abstracts in the EBSCOhost platform and from the analysis of previous SRs. Of the current 20 full-texts already included and coded (the process is ongoing), 10 studies have analyzed the effectiveness of these types of interventions on attention and executive functions, but only 2 specifically focused on students with ADHD and learning mathematics.

Despite the importance of offering inclusive teaching in line with the characteristics of the hyperactive child, the first results have highlighted a vacuum of studies within the STEM area precisely with the children who would most benefit from this methodology, which sees in body in movement its founding nucleus. This observation leads to underlining the importance of evidence-based studies also and above all on this fragile population, an integral part of school classes in order to verify the real effectiveness and replicability of interventions by teachers. Within this framework,





PANEL S2.B

EMPOWERING INCLUSION: UNVEILING PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS THROUGH SHARED BEST PRACTICES

Chairperson

Pasquale Moliterni, University "Foro Italico" of Rome (Italy)

Discussants

Francesco Peluso Cassese, Pegaso Online University (Italy)

Pio Alfredo Di Tore, University of Cassino (Italy)





THEATER AS AN EDUCATIONAL MEDIATOR FOR INCLUSION. A RESEARCH-TRAINING IN LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

The contribution describes research aimed at demonstrating how the performing arts, specifically theatre, strengthen respect for human rights, encouraging the construction of a sense of belonging to a common humanity (UNESCO, 2014).

Art, in fact, is a relationship with reality and also an externalization; in the artistic theatrical act man expresses his desire to meet the other and relate to him. In the specific case of theatre, the subject, engaged in a work of "art", first of all becomes the subject of a relationship experience with another identity, an alter ego. The actor training (Grotowski, 2001) used was a path of inner growth and self-awareness. Theatrical art and pedagogy seem to find a meeting point in this new "humanism" in the name of experience (Costantino, 2015). Theater allows us to implement a process of transformation of reality.

Through the dichotomous theatrical representation, in Boalian terms, the student has the opportunity to reflect and analyze the present by becoming aware of situations of discomfort and conflict and to strengthen himself as an individual and as a group by actively participating in the construction of possible futures (Mazzini, Talamonti, 2011).

The performing arts, as teaching methodologies, therefore, provide students with the necessary tools to overcome prejudices and stereotypes through critical thinking, relationships and mutual listening, in order to "spread an increasingly necessary culture of coexistence" (Reimers et al., 2018: 7). The training research envisaged a double level of actions. The first training course intended for students in collaboration with the research team. The second level was then built on the first training level, which instead involved a training-expressive type of planning with the use of tools. A creative autobiographical laboratory was activated with the fairy tale technique (Santagostino, 2013) divided into eight phases whose aim was essentially to achieve awareness of the aspects of global citizenship, through fictional stories taking inspiration from real or invented stories useful for strengthening the culture of participation.

The training research was conducted with three second year classes of a lower secondary school with a high rate of pupils with Special Educational Needs (difficulties related to the emotional, relational sphere (fears, anxiety, aggression, low self-esteem), family difficulties). Starting from the lessons for student empowerment by Reimers et al. (2018), the students were engaged in theatrical literacy activities, which offered the opportunity to discuss issues close to them and to cooperate on a common project, encouraging processes of sharing, negotiation and self-affirmation within a safe context and the creation of a global citizenship education path.

The training device involved the use of diversified mediators:

1. "exploratory" focus groups on the idea of global citizenship (carried out with students);





2. construction of the creative autobiographical laboratory with the fairy tale technique carried out with the students (within which 8 phases have been foreseen)
3. dramatization
4. return of the main issues relating to the global citizenship education process

The analysis was conducted using the GT procedure in the version of Strauss and Corbin (1990) based on three reading and coding operations of textual corpuses according to an increasing scale of conceptualization (open, axial and selective coding). The first findings will be presented.

Keywords: *inclusion; theatre; active teaching; citizenship.*

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MUSEUM EDITOR (MUSE) - A VR APPLICATION FOR THE CREATION OF DIFFERENTIATED EDUCATIONAL PATHS IN MUSEUMS

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Abstract

A new technology is created in response to people's constant desire to do less labour themselves. Human operation, which is the result of mastering a skill or aptitude, naturally suggests consideration of the ergonomics of such operation. When we want technology to favour the knowledge acquisition process rather than any specific piece of knowledge, a more punctual reflection emerges than is necessary. One of the moments when a technology can favour the learning process should be when the interactions between humans and the environment acquire agility (Aiello, P. et al. 2012). These interactions are in fact direct manifestations of our distinct adaptation process (Sibilio, M. 2017); in other words, these are the empirical proof that every student exists and is unique. As suggested from Universal Design for Learning (Savia, G. 2016), the design of didactic tools should contemplate the classroom context as a plurality of unicities. As one of these technologies, Virtual Reality is still being experimented with. The results, although encouraging in terms of participation (Hamilton, D. et al., 2021), also present new inclusivity issues (Di Tore S. et al., 2022). This contribute introduces the MUSEum Editor, a Virtual Reality application that suggests simulating a visit to a museum. The program incorporates the inclusive elements of the Inclusive Virtual Museum (Campitiello, L. et al. 2022). It also adds a third experience mode that may modify the first two experience modes' surroundings to the two that are offered through desktops or viewers. Actually, the editor mode allows the teacher to design personalised learning pathways by fusing digital teaching resources of their own with digital replicas of archaeological relics scanned at the museums where they are preserved.

Keywords: *museum education; VR; inclusive technologies.*

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THE EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND FAMILY: THE ROLE OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOL LEADERS

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Abstract

The construction of a pedagogical alliance between schools and family represents a central aspect of every inclusive practice aimed at fostering the accessibility of all students to living environments and oriented towards developing a new way of interpreting, valuing, and, above all, acting on everyone's differences (Goussot, 2015). As documented for decades in literature (Henderson, Berla, 1994; Epstein, 2001; Henderson, Mapp, 2002), such a coalition proves to be strategic in promoting students' learning and fostering a solid and inclusive educational relationship, aiming at a global improvement in the quality of life for all.

One of the values underlying the Profile of Inclusive Teachers (EADSNE 2012; EASNIE, 2022) is "Working with others"; delving into the specifics of "Knowing how to work with parents and families". On the one hand, the centrality of communication with families and the necessary acquisition of awareness regarding collaboration with families emerge as an additional aspect. On the other hand, emphasis is placed on the professional responsibility of teachers regarding the effectiveness of this collaboration. In Italy, the alternation between formal and informal relational practices, as well as the proliferation of seemingly generic practical indications, might suggest a rhetorical alliance. However, the need to operationalize such an alliance fits within a national regulatory framework full of significant pedagogical suggestions and insights into practices aimed at building dialogical relationships. Therefore, what emerges in reality is a gap between theory and practice. Thus, it would be important to start from an organizational model serving as a reference framework, acting as a progressive and organized structure and configuring itself as a possible path to be followed for the construction of effective dialogue aimed at genuinely inclusive educational action.

In light of the above, the responsibility is entrusted to the school, conceived as a professional learning community (Paletta, 2020) and as a complex organization founded on human relationships (Argyris, 1995; Brundrett, Burton & Smith, 2003) to identify solutions of synthesis that make this alliance sustainable and concrete. Thus, it seems appropriate to recall within the school organizational processes the role of middle leaders, who represent the nexus of relationships between the leadership, teachers, and the external context (Leitwood, 2016; Fullan, 2015; Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015), aiming to promote a shared vision, also referring to values such as inclusion and equity of educational offerings (Harris & Jones, 2019; De Nobile, 2018). In this regard, within the Italian context, among middle leaders, it is possible to identify *funzioni strumentali* (school leaders), whose appointment and precise scope of action are left to the autonomy of individual institutions. Among the school leaders, there is one dedicated to the area of inclusion,





whose commitments can be summarized in activities collaborating with the Principal, supporting colleagues and families, promoting training initiatives, improving, optimizing, and ensuring the sustainability of resources. Inclusive school leaders in Italy, therefore, represent an important resource to promote equity, to ensure the development of all students, and to foster the full and conscious participation of all in the inclusive process.

The actions of inclusive school leaders inevitably refer to the theoretical model of distributive educational leadership. In fact, according to this model the functions of those performing distributive leadership should be based on a shared pedagogical vision at the school level, consisting of a set of values, orientations, and reflections on practices. The objectives are to support colleagues in the process of implementing these principles and to promote constant dialogue with families so as to better respond to the multiple educational demands. Moreover, as highlighted in literature, the key elements of distributive educational leadership, such as interaction, collaboration, cooperation among various stakeholders, would have a positive impact on the quality of learning and inclusive processes (Bennett et. Al., 2003; Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). As a result, anchoring the action of instrumental functions for inclusion to this perspective, it seems appropriate to recall the aforementioned point from the text of the Profile of the Inclusive Teacher - "Working with others," specifically "Knowing how to work with parents and families," highlighting the potential of the distributive leadership model of inclusive school leaders to concretely and operationally realize the school-family alliance.

Based on these premises, this paper presents the preliminary results of an exploratory investigation aimed to explore the perceptions of some inclusive school leaders operating in schools in the Campania Region, regarding the nature of the school-family alliance, its importance in promoting inclusive processes, and which actions falling within the scope of their role as middle leaders they promote to foster the sustainability of such an alliance.

Keywords: *inclusive school leaders; inclusion, teacher inclusion; distributive leadership; school-family alliance.*

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BEST PRACTICES FOR DESIGNING INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: WAVELENGTHS TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' ATTENTION

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Abstract

Learning environments are rich and dense with stimuli that directly interact with the information acquisition process, conveying their modalities and outcomes. Thus, the importance of context in all the elements involved in learning processes, such as attention, memorization and recall, is highlighted (Di Barbora et al., 2023; Barrett et al., 2015). A functional integration of sensory stimuli allows the child to regulate their behavior and respond to the expectations of the surrounding environment (Mulligan et al., 2021); conversely, the presence of vulnerabilities in terms of sensory integration can negatively influence children's participation in their occupations and daily routines, including learning processes, socialization and behavioral regulation (Mutsaddi & Sadhale, 2019; Santos et al., 2018; Galiana et al., 2021). The literature analysis reports the presence of difficulties in processing and integrating sensations in a significant number of children: specifically, 10%-55% of them have no diagnosis, an estimate that increases to 40%-88% with the presence of one (Pfeiffer et al., 2018).

The school environment can lead students, both typical and atypical in development, to experience higher levels of sensory sensitivity (Little et al., 2017). In this context, employing an approach aimed at promoting increased awareness of one's perceptual modalities and preferences, regulating them, and acknowledging interindividual differences is crucial (Nielsen et al., 2020). Simultaneously, it's essential to underscore the importance of consciously designing learning environments that effectively cater to students by offering optimal environmental conditions conducive to learning processes.

The current model supports a process of acceptance of diversity, foundational to creating an inclusive and respectful environment in which every individual can feel comfortable expressing and utilizing their processing modalities. We hold the belief that the design of learning spaces should incorporate the adoption of educational practices that consider the influence of particular environmental factors in enhancing various methods of information acquisition and processing. This design should reflect the cognitive, emotional, and sensory predispositions of each individual.

In light of the foregoing, this paper aims to present a study that has highlighted the impact of exposure to different wavelengths of color on the attentional processes of students, with typical and atypical development, aged between 6 and 11 years old. Specifically, attention was drawn to the wavelengths of blue and red, highlighting their different impacts, due also to the cognitive functioning, on the attentional task proposed to students. The results obtained provide a basis for designing an inclusive educational environment that takes into account the potential of light stimuli on the learning conditions of individuals.

Keywords: *expert; inclusive education teachers; training of trainers; higher education; professional development.*





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TEACHING LATIN BETWEEN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INCLUSION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Abstract

Every discipline possesses its own formative value (Grossman, 1990), as it enables individuals to comprehend reality and to autonomously and critically experiment with interpretative frameworks. This process contributes to building a repertoire of resources that can be utilized beyond educational settings. Consequently, learning a discipline involves understanding its unique interpretative perspective and mastering it to the extent that one can progressively apply it in practice (Bertagna, 2008).

On the other hand, there is nothing more essential in the disciplines than their methodology (Bruner, 1995), the acquisition of which leads to the development of autonomy of thought and action in learners, representing for those who learn them an instrument of formative solidity and empowerment of creative and cultural energies (Laneve, 2011, p. 27).

Latin has a high educational value: the classics are, in fact, a 'school of freedom' (Balbo, 2023) because they educate to listen, to recognise one's own limits and the value of others, striving for self-improvement. It should then be considered that it is a future language, it is the language of the languages that will be because it relentlessly gives birth to names and words through which to give order to experience; studying Latin is studying something that persists, but, at the same time, is continually renewed because nothing ever begins now and nothing ever ends at any time (Gardini, 2018). Studying Latin, moreover, improves mother-tongue knowledge contributing to better speaking and writing (Prete, 2015). Looking beyond Italy, the analysis of SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) scores, a US national test that aims to assess knowledge and skills in the scientific and linguistic areas -reading, writing, maths- for students wishing to enrol at university, shows, until 2016, that better results are achieved in oral and written linguistic expression compared to those who do not study Latin.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight the inclusive value of Latin considering that even students with Special Educational Needs and Specific Learning Disorders can improve their mother tongue learning, through different and effective methodologies ranging from the comparative method and thematic analysis of the period to gamification and digital platforms based on the principle of adaptivity. However, data show an increasing decline in enrollment in courses of study involving Latin, just as the reforms of the Italian school system since 1859 show a decrease in interest from the part of society and institutions towards our 'mother' language.

In Europe, the percentages of pupils studying Latin are significantly lower than in our country (France 3%, Germany 5-8%, Great Britain 1-2%) and the trend would seem to follow the Italian one, but Great Britain in 2021 attempted to reverse this trend by investing £4 million in the Latin Excellence Programme, which includes the study of Latin at Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old) and other activities such as visits to Roman heritage sites. The project, which started in 24 schools chosen by the DfE in September 2022, is progressively developing regional Latin hubs across England.





Interest in Latin is also present in China, where Peking University has opened a study center called *Latinitas sinica*.

Despite these best practices and a rich scientific literature of reference, why is Latin not chosen more often? Certainly it is neither a communication language nor a living language. Can we, however, really consider it dead? If we think that Dante, Galilei, Kant and Pascoli wrote in Latin; that the Catholic liturgy until the 20th century was in Latin and Vatican documents are still written in Latin, thus coining new lemmas; that words such as curriculum, audio, extra, super and tutor belong to the international lexicon; that even 65% of English words have Latin etymology... we can only answer: 'no'!

Therefore, considering the growing gap between theory and practice, and taking into account its formative and inclusive value, the aim is to carry out a systematic review of the national and international scientific literature in order to identify possible training itineraries to follow, based on emerging results.

Keywords: *didactics of disciplines; latin didactics; inclusion; teacher education.*

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TERRITORIALITY AND DEPOPULATION: EDUCATING A CULTURE OF SYSTEMIC INCLUSIVITY. A PILOT STUDY

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Abstract

Starting from the Lisbon Memorandum of 2000, social inclusion has established itself as the main horizon for building a society that is more cohesive, fair and democratic and at the same time capable of sustainable economic growth, through the expansion of the quantity and the quality of life chances (Striano, 2010). This assertion has led to another piece of evidence, namely educational emergencies and training needs which cannot fail to be related to social needs. This leads to a pedagogical reflection on the constant relationship between inclusion and training. This creates an indissoluble link between training policies and social development policies and strategies. The objective of the research, being tested at the Giustino Fortunato University, is to support social cohesion, sustainability and active citizenship, welfare and employment through the promotion of an inclusive culture through the application of learning models. system such as the Flipped Inclusion model (Corona, De Giuseppe, 2016). The exploratory descriptive study therefore aims to investigate whether this model tested in formal learning contexts, starting from democratic education for territorial contexts, can be applied with similar transformative results up to a conscious active participation to promote inclusive communities (Di Tore, 2023). In particular, it is a pilot study, which starting from the problem of depopulation, intends through a structured analysis of the object of study from a situated historical-evolutionary point of view, with a focus on the evidence of practices, policies and pedagogical actions put underway in the Benevento area, collect evidence, analyze data and identify possible implementable scenarios, according to the perspectives of the Index For Inclusion (Booth , Ainscow, 2014), in order to trace and act pedagogically on the inclusive quality of a community (Sibilio, 2023). A first hypothesis which is being investigated concerns the impact of the urban village in the perspective of circularity of places of well-being and inclusive relationships, of the economy of work and trade, of services to people and activities (Aiello, 2022), as based on the propensity to rebuild ecological and solidarity conditions in coherence with a new offer of services that increase the housing, suburban or rural dimension (Charmes, 2019).

Keywords: *inclusive educational policies; sustainability; citizenship; welfare; democratic education.*

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INTELLIGENCE WITHOUT A BODY? INCLUSION BETWEEN AUTOPOIESIS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

In the neuroscientific perspective, understanding human knowledge is deeply rooted in our sensorimotor system (Maturana, 2002). Our body acts as an essential bridge between us and the surrounding world, enabling us to perceive, act, and interact with the environment around us. Through our body, we acquire new information, experiences and skills. The human nervous system, with its intricate network of neurons, is organized to manage these constantly evolving interactions, thus shaping our intelligence. In this context, the body represents an integral part of the cognitive process and learning, a fundamental pathway through which we construct our knowledge of the world.

On the other hand, the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) introduces a different paradigm, suggesting the idea of intelligence without a physical body. In this context, an AI system is conceived as software capable of processing information and making decisions but lacking a physical manifestation in the world (Floridi, 2022). This perspective raises fundamental questions about the nature of intelligence itself and its relationship with the human body. How can we conceive of an intelligence that exists outside of bodily incarnation, when human intelligence is so intimately connected to bodily experience? In this essay, the complex relationship between intelligence and the body is examined, exploring the possibility of intelligence without a body, but intrinsically intertwined with bodily experience and interaction with the physical world.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence; embodied cognition; autopoiesis; cognitive paradigm.*

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INCLUSIVE E-TUTORING, EMOTIONAL SKILLS AND EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

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Abstract

The advent of e-learning in the educational field has been characterised by the affirmation of communication technologies (Vegliante & De Angelis, 2019). This has led to reflecting on the advantages and added value of technology, capable of offering personalized paths suited to the times and methods most suited to the student who becomes not only a consumer but also a producer of content (Toffler, 1980). By taking advantage of this opportunity, the student can operate through the use of platforms that, in addition to providing content, allow for horizontal, peer-to-peer interfacing in virtual communities. (Wenger, 1998), in which learning is both individual and collaborative (Sibilio. Aiello 2018). However, it is also necessary to reflect on what could be seen as disadvantages. It is at least appropriate to dwell on learning characterized by the absence of corporeality (Corona, De Giuseppe, 2016), and on the difficulty that it could entail in emotional literacy (Lucangeli, 2019).

In this context, the role of the e-tutor becomes crucial, as he is called upon to guarantee social relationships and to apply methodologies aimed at promoting the management of emotions and inclusiveness (Di Tore, 2013).

Therefore, starting from the assumption that emotions play a fundamental role in learning processes and that in general emotional skills, like cognitive aspects, contribute to facilitating the learning process (Meccariello & Mentasti, 2023) not only individually but also in the entire formal, informal or non-formal learning context, this article aims to investigate how the affective component, also by using platforms characterized by artificial intelligence, can be monitored and if necessary anchored to the careful figure of the e-tutor, who becomes a tool for school and social inclusion. In particular, through an exploratory study based on a mixed qualitative-quantitative method, currently being tested at the Giustino Fortunato Telematic University of Benevento, we will investigate the possible methodologies applicable by e-tutors, such as Flipped Inclusion (De Giuseppe, 2016), aimed at creating a pro-social education and building inclusive communities.

Keywords: *inclusive e-tutoring; emotional skills; artificial intelligence.*

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INCLUSIVE INQUIRY AND STUDENT VOICE: A PATHWAY TO IMPROVE THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES AND INVOLVING THE AREA OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN ITALIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

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Abstract

Italian schools have been pioneers in the inclusion of students with disabilities, however current research highlights a gap between theory and practice and the individualised planning tools in use still reflect in some respects a medical model of disability, departing from the rights paradigm established by the UN Convention. The research presented here aims to investigate, in the light of the Inclusive Inquiry and Student Voice constructs, their effectiveness in the construction of inclusive learning contexts. Therefore, the results of a Systematic Review on the use of Student Voice with groups of students including people with disabilities in school and higher education will be presented. The key question that this work aims to answer is how to authentically give voice and space for action to these students, making them protagonists in their education and preparing them to be protagonists in their lives, in line with the UN Convention (2006).

In fact, Dell'Anna et al. (2022) point out as a limitation of their review on *Learning, Social, and Psychological Outcomes of Students with Moderate, Severe, and Complex Disabilities in Inclusive Education* that the information reported in the articles was often obtained from adults, whereas students and in particular persons with disabilities were less involved.

Through of a thematic analysis, we will also analyse in detail the results that speak of listening to the voices of students with intellectual disabilities and disabilities involving the area of verbal communication, in order to problematise how much and in what way their voices are listened to and taken into account in designing educational pathways, and to investigate tools that complement and replace the exclusivity of the logical-verbal plane in the sharing of perspectives, voices and experiences. It will also investigate the impact of listening to the voices of people with disabilities on individualised planning and on the educational context, and how it is valorised in training courses for trainers, highlighting which other voices are most listened to in co-design courses involving them.

In conclusion, an experimental project will be presented which, in the light of the results of the literature review, will experiment with the listening of people with disabilities in the co-design of teaching and learning environments. The research will be carried out in some secondary schools in the Turin area, with the aim of assessing the impact on the well-being and academic results of all students, and in particular those considered "hard to reach", of Student Voice and Inclusive Inquiry practices that use alternative and complementary tools to the verbal channel in co-design.

Keywords: *accessibility; inclusion; student voice; inclusive inquiry; literature review.*





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DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORS AND EDUCATIONAL MODELS. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The observation and study of human behavior and its manifestation within the ever-changing historical, social, and cultural conditions of the modern era have led to the continual search for new constructs (in the sociological, pedagogical, anthropological, and psychological fields) capable of investigating its multifaceted aspects through a multidimensional lens. Navigating through the various perspectives offered by the extensive literature in the human sciences, the aim of this contribution is to focus on a specific perspective that primarily addresses forms of "behavioral dysfunctionality" leading to "relational issues" within school and family contexts, encompassing, in a multi-perspective manner, its varied manifestations (from functional to dysfunctional). Dysfunctional behaviors can stem from diverse causes and manifest as problems of different natures (emotional, psychological, environmental), showing up in various types of behaviors (aggressiveness, social isolation, mood disorders, self-harming behaviors, eating disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive-compulsive behaviors, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorders). While acknowledging the specificity of each of the aforementioned dysfunctional forms, we aim to focus, in this context, on those "externalizing behaviors" that are more frequently encountered in the school environment (ADHD, ODD, CD). It is evident that the educational-didactic approach effective in countering dysfunctional behaviors arises both from the specific nature of the behavior exhibited and from the particular contextual, cultural, and social needs of the individual. Generally speaking, it is essential to adopt a paradigm that, starting from the intrinsic value of being a person-subject, proposes an "educational and inclusive action" aimed at outlining horizons of meaning, socio-relational welfare, and projective trajectories geared towards the construction/implementation of capabilities life projects. Centering attention on the "person" with their existential trajectories, rather than on the individual, means focusing on the specificity of their being, their weaknesses, their vulnerabilities, but also their potentials and needs. In a more strictly methodological sense, the educational-didactic intervention depends both on the specific nature of the behavior to be countered and on the peculiar formative needs of the subject. Nevertheless, there are general criteria that, beyond the technical specificity of each planned intervention, assume particular significance. "Open communication and active listening," for example, can create a safe space where the individual feels free to express their feelings and concerns; "positive reinforcement" recognizes and rewards desired behaviors, encouraging their manifestation. Additionally, interventions such as "stress and emotion management," behavioral modeling, as well as psychological interventions in the form of cognitive-behavioral therapies, family therapies, etc., are important. It is necessary to emphasize that in every intervention, whether educational or habilitative, the conscious and expert use of the tools and methodologies employed, and the synergistic collaboration among all those engaged, on multiple





fronts and in diverse directions, in the effort to counteract that specific form of dysfunctional behavior, assume particular relevance.

Keyword: Dysfunctional Behaviors, Externalizing Behaviors, Projective Trajectories, Capabilities Life Projects, Inclusive Action.

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