

# A “LIVING” META-SKILLS MODEL TO FORM AESTHETIC HABITS IN THE PERSON

## UN MODELLO “VIVENTE” DI META-COMPETENZE PER FORMARE ABITI ESTETICI NELLA PERSONA

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### ABSTRACT

The urgency and importance of training transversal skills in young people are at the center of the debate on school education, especially after the approval of Law No. 22 of 19 February 2025. In this regard, in order to advance an educational proposal primarily focused on the *person* to be trained in one’s own human qualities, this paper presents meta-skills model of competences, focusing particularly on the dimension of competencies related to the aspiration to the ideal.

L’urgenza e l’importanza della formazione delle skills trasversali nei giovani si trovano al centro del dibattito scolastico, anche in seguito all’approvazione della legge del 19 febbraio 2025, n. 22. A tal proposito, al fine di avanzare una proposta formativa incentrata primariamente sulla *persona* da formare nelle sue qualità umane, il saggio presenta un modello di meta-competenze, focalizzandosi in particolare sulla dimensione delle competenze legate all’aspirazione all’ideale.

### KEYWORDS

Meta-skills model, Paradigm, Aspiring Competences  
Modello di meta-competenze, Paradigma, Competenze di aspirazione

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## 1. Challenges, competences and future perspectives: a new educational paradigm

Today's main global challenges – the *social challenge* (Giaccardi & Magatti, 2022), the *ecological challenge* (Latour, 2022), and the *technological challenge* (Pasqualetti & Sammarco, 2024) – contribute to shaping an uncertain world that makes it increasingly difficult for each individual to imagine a future that lives up to their expectations and dreams (Baffetti, 2024).

For the individual to be able to face such uncertainty without losing one's own subjectivity (in its most interior components and in those involved in the relationship with others), schools should work to train the person's transversal or “non-cognitive” skills. This is a task that Italian schools of all levels will be required to do from the next school year, following the approval and entry into force of law of February 19, 2025, n. 22, which precisely establishes the training of skills.

Although on a legislative level there is evidence of the importance given to the issue of skills; on the other hand, there are no clear indications on how to train them, and this lack of clarity affects several levels. The first one is the *level of content*, as despite the multiple classifications and models, choosing which skills need to be trained still appears vague. Then, the *methodological level*, as it is complicated to identify which training methods to use to train skills; and, lastly, the *evaluative level*, since it is difficult to evaluate an individual's subjective component instead of a strictly “cognitive” one. This unclear framework does not define specific guidelines for teachers to use as a starting point to train young generations in their being fully “human” people and able to face challenges.

The beginning of the first training of skills in schools is imminent, but there are still criticalities and gaps on this matter. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce a process of renewal aimed at defining a new theoretical-conceptual educational paradigm. A paradigm that should seek to overcome the current conception of critical-creative competences and the confusion at the methodological-operational level, which results in a definition that is crucial for the human training of future generations.

Such a paradigm – in order to promote a meaningful and fully human formation (Nosari & Guarcello, 2024) – should necessarily start from the identification of the person to be formed and the relative essential components to develop (Ricœur, 1990). An identification that, by re-proposing “the ontological question to the pedagogical knowledge”, both creates and restores “the sense of the educational projectuality” inherent in it (Malavasi, 1998, p. 43, *my translation*). This sense considers the “capacity to ‘look beyond’ [...] beyond the immediate experience” (Zonca, 2004, p. 12, *my translation*) of the individual, in order to overcome the current predominantly relativistic and performative conception of the being (Malavasi, 1998; Pareyson, 1985; Ricœur, 1990). The subject at the centre of the educational process thus becomes the crucial matter, as it expresses the integral pedagogical commitment – within the intertwining and reciprocity of theoretical understanding and transformative practice (Iori, 1998) – towards *human change* (Malavasi, 1998; Nosari, 2020).

## 2. The components of the human person

This formative proposal of a new paradigm intends not to train the person merely in one’s own performative, productivist, and cognitive components, but also in the way to feel, see, and think about life and existence (Malavasi, 2020). Therefore, this paradigm acknowledges the essential human components, which, beyond any form of relativism, are essential to guarantee and ensure universal dignity for all (Iori, 1998; Pareyson, 1985).

There are five essential and defining components to qualify the individual, providing the basis to develop and cultivate critical-creative transversal skills: *mysteriousness*, *relationality*, *problematization*, *imagination*, and *agenticity*<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 1).

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<sup>1</sup> They have been reconstructed by creating a dialogue among three different epistemological perspectives: *phenomenology* (considers the person in the present, with one’s needs and demands), *hermeneutics* (allows for a critical interpretation of the issues under scrutiny) and *ontology* (allows us to define the human components that are valid now and always for everyone in a universal sense). The resulting conception – “ontological-anthropological” – considers the person as a dynamic entity, maintaining their identity while simultaneously undergoing constant transformation (Amilburu, 2013; Ricœur, 1993).

The first component is represented by the *mysteriousness* around each person (Ducci, 1967, 1992), which characterizes one's process to reach the inner and spiritual freedom and the unique realization of one's own humanity. A human creature, by nature, is responsible for one's own process of self-perfection (Ducci, 1967; Mortari, 2002), preserving the personal essence of freedom in the exploration of self-discovery and the journey towards fully becoming oneself. This process should be intentionally awakened and nurtured within the educational relationship, which encourages the formation of the person's uniqueness. Such purpose is achieved by fostering a "platonic" love that bears a "distinct trait of mendicancy" (Ducci, 1992, p. 26, *my translation*) which is manifested in the necessarily partial knowledge of the human creature.

The second component that defines the person is *relationality* (Milella, 2012; Mortari, 2008, 2020), which is the "constitutive generative matrix" (Mortari & Valbusa, 2020, p. 305, *my translation*) of the person capable of becoming human. As a matter of fact, it is precisely in relationships – especially in educational ones (Nosari, 2020) – that the process of human self-realization of the other is preserved and facilitated. A human creature's unique qualities can only be selected and affirmed through relational experience: the interaction with others emphasizes and measures each person's specific characteristics (Ducci, 1983; Malavasi, 1998). Relationality, thus, distinguishes itself from a boundary-less interaction or undefined identification of those involved in the relationship (Mortari, 2002), establishing itself as the essential need for recognizing one's own uniqueness instead (Màdera, 2012).

The third component of the person is represented by *problematization*, embodied in the human capacity to question one's presence and purpose in the world, and reality itself (Gadamer, 2002). It consists in the ability to penetrate phenomena and penetrating them, which requires an unceasing and "radical" thinking (Ubbiali, 2021, p. 111, *my translation*). Such thinking expresses the human passion for questioning, which does not produce abstract concepts (Gadamer, 2002), but, conversely, it renews personal experience with meaning and becomes historicized, enriching the collective human heritage<sup>2</sup>. In light of this, problematization diverges from a cognitive process to be understood as acquisition of knowledge through mechanistic procedures, and which is mainly driven by empirical and productivity-oriented demands (Gadamer, 2002). Instead, problematization reflects the human existential need to reconfigure the order of events by exercising "free decision",

“choice”, personal and critical judgment (Gadamer, 2002, pp. 15-16, *my translation*).

The fourth component that characterizes the “human” person is represented by *imagination* (Coccimiglio, 2018; Montani, 2022; Tavani, 2010). It fosters a dynamic and solid interaction between the person and the external world, exercising the ability to *see* and *make* reality differently from how it currently appears (Roni, 2008; Tognonato, 2006). Imagination enables *seeing reality* in a new way by examining it, recognizing its symbols and archetypes, and discerning its still-unrealized potentials (Abel, Føessel & Mongin, 2024). In addition, imagination encourages *making reality* by materializing it in artifacts or creations (Montani, 2017), leading to the establishment of real practices (*architectural, artistic, political practices*, etc.). Therefore, the imaginative process always begins with a solid connection to reality, even if this reality is later criticized or transcended (Tognonato, 2006). Ultimately, by avoiding being trapped in fantasy, imagination uses it as a valuable resource and an impetus to rethink and transform reality by requalifying it (Lorenzetti, 2024; Nosari, 2020). The fifth component is represented by *agenticity* (Ricœur, 1994). In line with Paul Ricœur's concept of *homo capax*, the person is regarded as a principle of action and an agent of change. Being aware of one's own power to act, the person holds self-respect and respect for others (Malavasi, 2020; Ricœur, 1994). By identifying oneself as the author of one's own actions, the person assumes ethical responsibility for the self before oneself and others (Malavasi, 1998). Therefore, this being is ontologically understood not as an immutable substance (Busacchi & Martini, 2021), but as a fusion of *energeia-dynamis*<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, within the constitutive precariousness and dynamism that characterizes the person lies its freedom to act, to endure, and to initiate (Hall, 2007). It is through these abilities that the person is able to leave unique and constantly renewed marks in the world. As a result, *agenticity* enables the person to overcome an attitude of mere passive acceptance of the present (Furia, 2021).

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<sup>2</sup> The idea of knowing related to comprehension takes shape as the “involvement of every speculative logical thought with the entire lived experience of human life – eventually in the everyday sphere and in history” (Franchi, 2011, p. 330, *our translation*). Here, the concept of “common world” is partly drawn from Hannah Arendt's thought, meaning the “shared set of institutions and artefacts that constitute the context of human activity and represents the current knowledge of the world” (Lange, 2012, p. 3) in which the human creature intervenes through their capacity of judgment.

<sup>3</sup> On this point, Ricœur states that he has sketched “an ontology that opposes both monism and dualism”, precisely in light of “a subject that is simultaneously embodied and capable



Figure 1. The new educational theoretical-conceptual paradigm and the five human components.

### 3. The meta-skills model of competences

Within the reconstructed paradigm, a training of *critical-creative* skills that helps people become fully themselves, nurturing the qualities that constitute them, cannot overlook the promotion of competences related to:

- cultivating a problematizing approach to reality and being open to imagination (*aspiring competences*),
- caring for one's spirituality and developing a sensible approach to reality and its phenomena (*contemplating competences*),
- exercising relationality with other creatures (human and non-human) and committing to action (*making sense of us competences*).

The purpose of these dimensions of competences is to enable the human creature to reach self-affirmation through one's own irreplaceable uniqueness and, thanks to it, to act in order to move the world towards a broader social justice (Moody-Adams, 2022).

However, in current classifications of *critical-creative* skills, it is still not possible to find competences that would be necessary to form a person in this sense. In this

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of detaching themselves from their desires and powers; in short, a subject that is master of themselves and subservient to that necessity symbolized by character, the unconscious, and life" (Ricœur, 1994, p. 41, *our translation*). In this regard, see also: Furia, 2021 and Jervolino, 2008.

regard, a meta-skills model of competences (Das *et al.*, 2023; Oberweis & Schuster, 2010; Spencer & Lucas, 2021), which is consistent with the paradigm outlined and with the idea of the person derived from it, is proposed. This model is developed on the basis of the paradigm and of the official documents related to the formation of competences in the international school context (OECD, 2024; EU, 2022). It is set as a “critical” lens through which each current model can “read” itself, potentially recognizing also its own critical points and weaknesses.

In particular, the new meta-skills model was developed by integrating the three dimensions of competences that are absent but necessary for the formation of the five human qualities of the person (*contemplating, aspiring and making sense of us* competences). It has also been completed with the dimensions of competences that are currently present in school-related classifications and models, which are indispensable for the formation of the human person (Fig. 2). The current dimensions included into the meta-skills model are:

- *Wellness skills*, that are people’s abilities to preserve their psycho-physical and emotional well-being,
- *Enterprising skills*, which refer to the abilities to undertake a challenge, to define and to work towards a goal and to firmly manage one's own learning,
- *Intercultural skills*, which enable the individual to develop intercultural relations, establishing a rich and purposeful dialogue with diversity,
- *Digital and AI skills*, which enable people to approach new digital and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in a conscious, critical, creative and responsible way.

It is a “living” model, that is to say, it can be updated, as it considers the human person in one's own universally valid qualities and, at the same time, is always open to the needs of the person and the surrounding society.

A specific direction, a teleology, is followed to accompany the person’s formation, who is formed to explicate one’s own human nature (Maritain, 1942), becoming a responsible citizen who acts to qualify society in a democratic way<sup>4</sup>. Such person qualifies it through a *habitus* and style of *critical-creative* thought and action. It specifically refers to a person who interprets that reality by going over the surface and attempting to understand it in depth. This person also knows how to act creatively, that is, who not only responds to society and needs by “producing” some

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<sup>4</sup> This is the human tension towards a “‘good life’ with and for others within just institutions” (Ricoeur, 1993, p. 266, *our translation*).

results, but who already brings one's own unrepeatability into the world by simply being born and existing<sup>5</sup>.

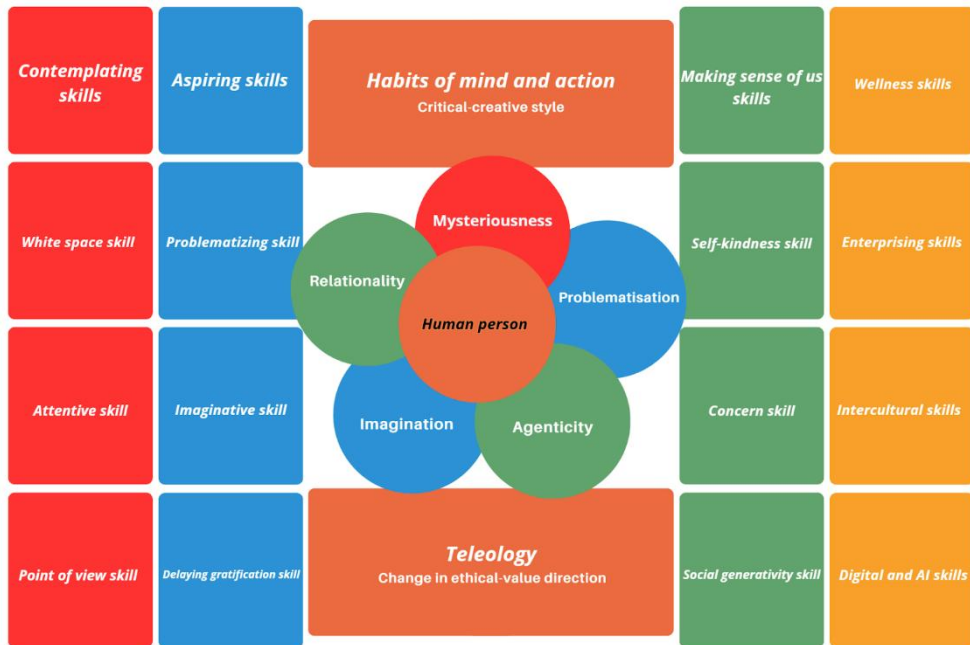


Figure 2. The meta-skills model.

<sup>5</sup> In this regard, drawing on the Arendtian and, even earlier, Aristotelian conception and definition of *poiesis* and *praxis*, the creative process of the person is understood as that open process which embraces “the unexpected element of the real” (Zamboni, 2006, p. 8, *our translation*). Indeed, what the person undertakes are creative actions “understood as *praxis* and not as *poiesis*, where *poiesis* indicates a doing that completely resolves its potentials in the act. *Praxis*, on the other hand, is an acting in which the element of potentiality, latency, and the unresolved in a finished work is present and allows for dynamic capacity. The transformative dimension, which the real enacts, is thus entrusted to the potential for action – latency – in a dialectical relationship with the action at hand. Acting is never something that concludes definitively, for otherwise it would no longer be a process, and the real would be effectively excluded instead of constituting the lever of modification” (Ibidem).

#### 4. The case of aspiring competences

Although the three main dimensions of competences are crucial to form the idea of the person described above, the basis to reconstruct those related to an area we could define as the “aspiration to the ideal” is herein defined. These competences are currently absent, but they are necessary in order to form a person who constantly questions one's own presence in the world, who develops grand dreams for a non-immediate future, and who knows how to go beyond the satisfaction of one's own needs and objectives in the present.

It is this lack of an officially recognized competence in the school setting that severely risks compromising the successful outcome of education. Such education fundamentally aims at empowering human creatures to become themselves and to transform the world in an ethical and value-driven way. These actions require the ability to recognize the existing problematic spaces and to work towards their *slow*, *gradual*, and *significant* transformation. A transformation that, therefore, carries the weight of the “ideal”.

There are currently authoritative studies dealing with the concept of the “ideal” and its weight in contemporary society. They are mainly from the socio-anthropological (Blanes *et al.*, 2016; Hart, 2016; Webb, 2008) and philosophical-pedagogical (Alexandratos, 2021; Nussbaum, 2016) areas. These academic works emphasize the importance – faced with current social challenges – of awakening, at both a personal and, especially, collective level, the human capacity to aspire to ideals. In order to do so, the mobilization of certain internal resources of the subject that guide one's own actions is needed.

In such studies, ideals are not abstract; they are closely intertwined with the portion of reality that a person aims to transform and emancipate (Wood, 2007).

Furthermore, an initial diffusion and reception of the construct of “aspiring skills” applied to transversal skills is emerging internationally – even if at the level of common sense (Ibrahim, 2023; Shahani, 2020). However, this construct of transversal skills currently presents at least two main areas of criticism:

- a weak basis from a theoretical-conceptual perspective,
- a conception of the person that is predominantly oriented towards the subject's efficiency related to one's own performance.

By setting aside this construct of aspiration that does not adequately value the moral and sensitive components of the human creature at school, the focus is on competences that enable young people to nurture a part of them that is not immediately marketable, but nurtures them in their humanity<sup>6</sup>.

In this respect, the aim is to reconstruct and propose a new interpretation of *aspiring competences* by focusing on its three constitutive aspects: the *paradigmatic structure*, the *critical-creative value*, and the *aesthetic implications*. These aspects are based on John Dewey's theory (Dewey, 1915, 1922, 1922), which has recently been revisited, though in different interpretations, in the current debate on transversal skills (Benadusi, 2018; Birbes, 2020; Nussbaum, 2006; Pellerey, 2023; Pérez-Ibáñez, 2018; Walker, 2012).

Regarding the aspect of the paradigmatic structure, *Human Nature and Conduct* is the primary reference work (Dewey, 1922). In this book, the human creature is conceived not as a “separate and independent consciousness” (Dewey, 1930[1922], p. 85), but as a living bodily organism in a transactional relationship<sup>7</sup> with the environment (Dewey, 1922; Dreon, 2021). This transactional relationship enables the person to create one's own knowledge and representations of the self and the world, actively modifying the natural and social environment and allowing people to project themselves purposefully into future actions.

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<sup>6</sup> A promotion that impacts the properly spiritual dimension of the human being (Ducci, 1983), that is, on “what has to do with life and meaning, becoming a “formation of the human” that values and works specifically towards emancipating and transforming those “aspects of the person that greatly exceed the current predominance of the economic” (Manicardi, 2021, p. 135, *our translation*).

<sup>7</sup> The concept of “transactional” is drawn from the epistemological conception theorized in the 1949 work *The Knowing and the Known* by John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley, who elaborate on three concepts related to the knowledge relationship established between the subject and the object: self-action, interaction and transaction. In the first two, the poles are independent, whereas in the third, this division is overcome. This conception of human subjectivity transcends a “unilateralising paradigm (naturalistic or spiritualistic)” (Busacchi, Nieddu & Michel, 2022, p. 6), emphasizing that “the moments when the creature is both most alive and most composed and concentrated are those of fullest intercourse with the environment, in which sensuous material and relations are most completely merged” (Dewey, 1980 [1934], p. 103).

In this regard, in his work *Creative democracy: The task before us* (1939), Dewey states that “democracy is a way of personal life controlled not merely by faith in human nature in general but by faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action if proper conditions are furnished” (Dewey, 1976[1939], p. 227). Therefore, it is important to establish the conditions that most effectively promote the free and full expression of the essential qualities of the human creature, and the subsequent critical-creative skills. In order to achieve this purpose, it is necessary for the exercise of these skills to not have as ultimate goal the provision of a qualified workforce for the markets to sustain the economic growth of the country. The guiding purpose of educational action, which aims at the development of skills, should instead be focused on promoting the well-being of each person as a “resource for human/social growth and [...] a good in itself” (Alberici, 2008, p. 19, *my translation*). This perspective considers the human creature not only in terms of efficiency and productivity, but as a creature endowed with universal, non-negotiable value and dignity (Ducci, 1967; Ricœur, 1994). The human creature is thus capable of conceiving great ideals and participating in the process of liberation and humanization of social experience (Dewey, 1939).

Within the reconstructed paradigmatic structure, the *ideal component of aspiring competences* enables an individual to think and feel those ideals and grand dreams (Dallari, 2022) that arise from “a vital need” (Borghi, 1955, p. 54, *my translation*), which is inherent in the human person. These ideals are always temporary and constantly in the process of definition (Blanes *et al.*, 2016), as they are closely tied to the *material component* of social reality (Dewey, 1915).

As this dimension aims at the discernment of reality in terms of how it is (*materialism*) and the creative emancipation of it as it could be (*idealism*), in order to be meaningful, it requires the exercise of three skills:

- *Problematizing skill* (Chase *et al.*, 2019; van Rijsbergen & de Rooij, 2019),
- *Imaginative skill* (Blomkvist, 2022; Salis & Frigg, 2019; Shtulman, 2023),
- *Delaying gratification skill* (Doerr *et al.*, 2011; Protzko, 2020).

The first skill – *problematizing skill* – enables the person to manage the task of idealizing and universalizing experience while in a *state of dissatisfaction*, namely, in a state of tension towards perfectibility. Perfectibility is understood as the commitment to continually problematize oneself and reality, by transcending them. The human, actually, sees one's potential not as a fixed goal, but as a horizon of purpose and meaning (Mortari, 2002). The person is, indeed, inexhaustible and in tension towards a trajectory that “suggests the sense of moving, of advancing in

a directed manner, of reaching a desired and awaited point” and expresses that “living tension” of the human person towards “anxious wandering” (Ducci, 1992, p. 11, *my translation*).

The second skill – *imaginative skill* – refers to the ability to build a theoretical vision of the self and the world in order to rise above the immediacy of contingent reality and to the realm of universality. This is the ultimate essence of the humanistic concept of *Bildung* from the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, which can be encapsulated in the ability to develop a personal, general perspective on reality, abandoning the accidental and transient experiences (Alexandratos, 2021). This process of conceptualization and generalization enables the conception of a universal ideal that envisions and foreshadows change.

The third skill – *delaying gratification skill* – is the one that allows the person to cultivate a particular feeling that makes the subject grateful for the idea conceived, the feelings experienced, and the ideals a person daily nourish oneself with. In the exercise of *aspiring competences*, in fact, the act of imagining and conceiving grand ideals does not necessarily find “reassurance” in visible and evident results in the present or near future. These skills, in order to be meaningful, require the subject to practice the ability to daily nourish oneself with ideals of which people are living witnesses. The feeling of gratification thus makes the person aware of the powers of choice and self-determination that allow them to act in the reality (Rossi, 2002).

## **5. Rethinking the formation of critical-creative competences: the aesthetic approach**

Starting from the three specific skills to be formed in order to be able to exercise the dimension of the aspiration to the ideal in the person and to be able to nurture one’s own qualities, a rethinking of the training methods of these skills is required. In order to do so, it is necessary to refer to Dewey and his concept of skills as *habits*. Skills, indeed, are understood by the philosopher as *habits*, that is, enduring patterns of thought and behaviour in the person (Dewey, 1922). Within this conception, distinguishing them from *routine habits* that are linear and sequential in nature, *critical-creative* skills would fall under the category of *artistic habits*, meaning that they are acquired not only through cognition but also through sensitive perception (Cuevas-Badallo, 2021). They seek a dynamic and effective balance between adaptation, flexibility and sensitivity to the environment and resistance to it (James, 1981). A tension that should always be kept alive between

these two poles for them to be meaningful for human and social emancipation. The artistic ability, when promoted and exercised in the human creature, allows for critical reflection and discernment of a person's ideas, sometimes consciously rethinking *habits* in order to reaffirm or reorganize them in an alternative way (Dewey, 1922). Similarly, it exercises the person's creative thinking through imagination and sensitivity, where "'reason' [...] cannot [...] complete grasp and a self-contained assurance", requiring "the embodiment of ideas in emotionally charged sense" in order to reach "its height" (Dewey, 1980[1934], p. 33).

Within Dewey's thought, the figure of the artist is particularly emblematic to detect the issue. It represents the person who – being a "masterful technician" (Dewey, [1930]1922, p. 71) – is able to combine technical skills and artistic skills by critically and creatively reinterpreting the meaning of experience, starting from existing materials in reality. It is able to care "deeply for the subject matter upon which skills is exercised" (Dewey, 1980[1934], p. 48), proceeding "by means of meaning that exist immediately as feelings having qualitative color" (Ivi, p. 120).

In light of this "technical" and "aesthetic" nature of these abilities (Montani, 2014; Simondon, 2014), their formation cannot and should not be based on a behaviourist learning model based on the stimulus-response mechanism. Instead, it must be based on an aesthetic training process, involving practices based on artistic, music, literary and/or motor experiences, among others (Dewey, 1934).

These practices are designed on the basis of activity proposals that start from children's previous experiences, including, for example, moments dedicated to the production of their own self-portrait; workshops for writing a personal diary; "contemplative" activities that involve listening attentively to a sound and then returning the meaning attributed to it; sensorial activities capable of awakening memories linked to a specific aroma, taste or tactile perception (Gude, 2013; Mortari, 2022; Zajonc, 2006). These activities become an opportunity for each child to re-elaborate and express, guided by the teacher, one's own experience, also sharing it with others (Bolondi & Bonacini, 2021). With this educational proposal, it is possible to overcome a concept of education represented, on the one hand, by the "external imposition" (Dewey, 2014[1926], p. 22) of pre-packaged activities, which risk reiterating predefined standards to which one must conform. On the other hand, it is also characterized by the "free expression" (Dewey, 2014[1926], p. 22) of the self, which, when it is totally spontaneous and unaccompanied by the adult, does not allow for the reinterpretation and effective internalization in a reflective way of the processes implemented.

Instead, activities competently and responsibly carried out by the teacher, and based on the children's personal experience, can promote in the subject acknowledgement and awareness of the meaning and value of the skills used, practiced and cultivated. Therefore, the same skills are transformed into personal and enduring habits of “independent judgment and inventive initiation” (Dewey, 1988[1922], p. 70).

## Conclusions

The proposed conceptual framework highlights the need to promote aesthetic quality education aimed at the exercise of critical-creative skills in new generations, in order to prepare them to face their future lives and the challenges they will encounter. In such a training process, the teacher represents precisely that central figure who should exercise – personally – a (self-)awareness about one's own educational role, in order to be able to design and lead pathways in a reflective, competent, contextual and effective way (Castoldi, 2014; OECD, 2024; Scheirlinckx *et al.*, 2023).

Within this perspective, the experimentation taking place within a research-training project during the academic year 2024-2025 has been developed. The project involves 28 participants (11 in-service teachers and 17 students from the degree course in Childhood and Primary Teachers Education at the University of Turin) and the presence of a “critical friend” (Asquini, 2018; Nigris *et al.*, 2020). The experimentation includes a theoretical-experiential course, which will be evaluated through pre-post questionnaires given to the participants (closed- and open-ended), further analysed through a qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2022; Schreier *et al.*, 2019). This activity qualifies as an initial verification and questioning of the reconstructed theoretical model, which will lead to the definition of possible project guidelines for the training of transversal skills in schools aimed at the promotion of long-lasting aesthetic habits in human beings.

Indeed, the aesthetic quality approach to education is particularly coherent with the training of *aspiring competences*, as by grasping their ultimate essence, it exercises the feeling that human tension toward the improvement of the self and the world. However, it is not limited to *aspiring competences* alone, but it also concerns the other dimensions of competences – those of *contemplation* and *feeling the sense of “us”* – which were only mentioned here – of the new outlined educational paradigm. It refers to competences that express those qualities that

are inherent to the human being but which require intentional action on the part of those who educate the young person. While on the one hand these are constitutive elements of the person, on the other hand, currently there is no sufficient regard at the educational-school level for these dimensions.

Instead, they should be recognized, awakened and cultivated as dimensions that describe and delineate a transformative journey of the self and the world. A journey that starts from an *aesthetic relationship* with reality, of contemplation of one's own feeling towards experience, and that thus allows one to authentically reconstruct one's personal point of view on the world. This perspective imagines change, embodying it in oneself and in one's relationship with others. Therefore, cultivating relationships with others, recognizing the common root of humanity and creaturalty, becomes a proactive act that leads to knowing how to be in a community, not in the sense of homologating to it, but of redefining it and reviving it (MacDonald, 2016). Such a vision can prefigure, by imagining them, ideals of prosperous transformation “not simply for oneself, but in responsibility towards others, in historical action in view of an end that is value and meaning” (Mancini, 2007, p. 147, *my translation*). This meaning is shared intergenerationally and envisaged in a future that is not yet visible but desirable, and each of us contributes to its creation.

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