

INNOVATIVE DIDACTIC-PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSALS TO STIMULATE THE PREVENTION OF BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

PROPOSTE DIDATTICO-PEDAGOGICHE INNOVATIVE PER STIMOLARE LA PREVENZIONE DEL FENOMENO DEL BULLISMO NEL CONTESTO SCOLASTICO

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of bullying is increasingly one of the main critical social issues affecting all formal education systems. The present research work that designs and analyzes an educational solution that aims to intervene and prevent the development of bullying within the context of lower secondary school. The intervention was based on a methodological approach in line with "student centred" theories and inspired by the innovative approach of *Unconventional Communication*. The effectiveness of the didactic-pedagogical action implemented was assessed by means of the evaluation instruments of Arora's (1994) "My Life at School" and the "Dan Olweus Anonymous Questionnaire", proposed in the ex-ante and ex-post phases of the experiment. The results made it possible to identify interesting didactic-pedagogical reflections on the subject of bullying for formal education systems.

Il fenomeno del bullismo è sempre più una delle principali criticità sociali che investe tutti i sistemi formativi formali. Il presente lavoro di ricerca che progetta e analizza una soluzione educativa che miri ad intervenire e prevenire lo sviluppo del bullismo all'interno del contesto della scuola secondaria di primo grado. L'intervento si è basato su un approccio metodologico in linea con le teorie "student centered" ed ispirato all'approccio innovativo dell'*Unconventional Communication*. L'efficacia dell'azione didattico-pedagogica messa in atto è stata valutata attraverso gli strumenti valutativi del questionario "La mia vita a scuola" di Arora (1994) e il "Questionario Anonimo di Dan Olweus", proposti nelle fasi ex-ante ed ex-post della sperimentazione. I risultati ottenuti hanno consentito di individuare interessanti riflessioni didattico-pedagogiche, sul tema del bullismo, per i sistemi formativi formali.

KEYWORDS

Innovative Didactics, Unconventional Communication; Bullying, Student Centred, School.
Didattica Innovativa, Unconventional Communication; Bullismo, Student Centred, Scuola.

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Introduction¹

The most recent data from the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) on the phenomenon of bullying quantify a figure of more than two million children involved in bullying in the 11-17 age group. In Italy, therefore, more than half of this segment of the population encounters the socially critical nature of this phenomenon, what is more, with a dynamic of progressive growth in recent years that shows no signs of stopping. The diverse range of violent actions and acts of bullying that tend to be subsumed under the term “bullying” consist of harassment, insults, threats, physical aggression, mockery, defamation and falsehoods aimed at subjugating, discrediting, marginalising or even just excluding someone from the peer group, in full agreement with the Anglo-Saxon origin of the term “bullying”, which translates into using one's strength with the intention of harming a weaker person. Regarding the practical manifestation of the actions listed above, it must be specified that we are dealing with a series of evolving forms that follow the metamorphosis of the community's socio-relational sphere. In this regard, the technological revolution that has affected the models, systems and languages of communication, especially among young people, with the explosion of social networks and digital devices, has redefined the habits and the relationship with sociality and the external environment of young people and even adults, also changing the ways in which bullying is expressed. In today's reality, the 'digital profile' accompanies, precedes and profoundly conditions the social identity of everyone, especially adolescents, going so far as to replace the spaces for meeting and direct dialogue that are so important for the development of their relational skills and their ability to face the transition to adulthood, leaving them vulnerable to an uncontrolled flow of communication that can affect their emotional and psycho-physical state. Again, these mass sharing and communication platforms allow mocking or humiliating images or video content to potentially be viewed, archived within minutes and re-shared by thousands of users amplify the negative impact of a bully's intentional action against his victim. This has imposed on the legislator an effective and timely capacity to intervene with the introduction of a specific type of offence (Article 612 ter of the Criminal Code), for behaviour and offences that until a few years ago were difficult to imagine dictated by a distorted use of communication technologies aimed at committing violence and abuse. At the same time, the need for cultural and

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educational interventions emerges more and more strongly, with the aim of countering this phenomenon in its original and evolved forms, where it is necessary to recover the awareness deficit currently found in young people and their adequate ability to manage the new technologies, particularly where these define and condition relations and communication, transferring the image and the intimate and private sphere to the level of an indistinct public. The subject of bullying, its evolution, socio-cultural relevance and the interventions of the main educational agencies in the processes of transferring relational models and positive value references to the new generations have also been explored in the scientific literature. Olweus (1973), who was among the first to attempt to investigate this issue in scientific terms, considers bullying to be anti-social behaviour that is characterised by an absence of empathy and a lack of respect for social rules. From this perspective, young bullies easily engage in hetero-aggressive and transgressive behaviour such as criminal conduct of various kinds and, if the same patterns of behaviour persist over time, they are likely to become critical adult figures in society with a strong predisposition to run into problems with the law. On the other hand, in this scenario, young victims approach interpersonal relationships with passivity and an increasing tendency to isolation that may be exacerbated to the point of refusing any external contact. In the medium to long term, repeated exposure to violence associated with processes of social-relational closure may develop a predisposition to self-aggressive behaviour and the structuring of adults with a similarly critical management of the entire community (Petrone, Troiano, 2008). Witnesses, who are the real spectators of bullying acts, may also suffer consequences, as they are called upon to choose whether to act in favour of the victim or the perpetrator, or to ignore the event, even to the point of engaging in ominous behaviour. On a psycho-pedagogical level, spectators alternate between developing a sense of guilt and activating complex defence mechanisms to cope with traumatic situations, and situations in which a lack of perception of the seriousness of the actions that fall within the sphere of bullying emerges, to the point of underestimating the consequences of the phenomenon. Awareness of the effects of bullying in the short and long term therefore requires vigilant attention and a constant commitment on the part of institutions, the family and above all formal educational contexts, which must rise to the role of the primary socio-pedagogical environment where strategies are put in place to combat the phenomenon and promote the awareness necessary to discourage it in the future. In this context, the research action was developed with the aim of proposing a didactic workshop design in the context of the secondary school aimed at preventing and combating the phenomenon of bullying within the

main socio-relational environment frequented by young people. The intervention was aimed directly at the student component with the support and backing of the teachers who shared and supported the work of the experts involved in the experimental didactic proposal.

1. The Bullying Phenomenon: Characterising Elements

The term bullying derives from the English word bullying, which is used to frame all violent and bullying behaviour, characterised by manifestations of physical and psychological oppression, enacted by children and adolescents as individuals or in groups against a member of their peer group who assumes the role of victim (Curti & Giunta, 2009). This nomenclature identifies a whole series of attitudes that are enacted by minors who, in a repetitive and voluntary manner, produce aggression of a verbal and/or physical nature towards one of their peers (O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Bullying is a particularly insidious and pervasive type of aggressive behaviour that is based on the hostile intention of one or more boys, the repetitiveness over time of the persecutory action and the weakness of the victim who is hardly able to defend himself. A concise and effective definition is that of Sharp and Smith (1994), who speak of 'peer abuse', i.e. social relations between peers marked by roles of power and control. The distinctive features of the phenomenon can be summarised as follows (Olweus, 1993; 1999; Menesini, 2000; 2003).

- Intentionality, i.e. the fact that the bully premeditatedly engages in aggressive behaviour with the aim of offending the other person or causing them harm. Bullying behaviour is not the result of an impulsive action linked to a moment of anger.
- Persistence: although even a single incident can be considered a form of bullying, the bully-victim interaction is characterised by the repetitiveness of bullying behaviour over a long period of time.
- Power asymmetry, this is a relationship based on imbalance and unequal strength between the acting bully, who is often stronger or supported by a group of peers, and the victim, who is unable to defend himself.
- Different types with which it manifests itself. Although we often think of physical bullying, we must remember that the attacking behaviour can also be perpetrated in direct verbal ways (insults and threats) and in psychological and indirect ways

(exclusion and defamation). Recently, a new mode of harassment has also emerged that makes use of impersonal tools such as new technologies and the Internet.

- Social nature of the phenomenon. As witnessed by many studies, the episode frequently takes place in the presence of other peers - spectators or accomplices - who may take on the role of reinforcing the bully's behaviour or simply supporting and legitimising it.

The pedagogical and psychological literature has focused strongly on this phenomenon, highlighting critical issues in two strands of investigation: on the one hand, research that looks at the issue of the roles of the actors involved and, on the other, those that look at the issue of the dynamics that are triggered within peer groups. The first authors who dealt with bullying, such as Olweus (1993), studied the phenomenon by identifying two main actors: bully and victim. Only after a few years did the literature try to identify new actors, arguing for a thesis that identified the social systems in which such circumstances are created, investigating reinforcers and inhibitors in the context. Salmivalli, et al. (1996), by means of a questionnaire, the Participant Role Questionnaire, identified other roles that participate within the act of bullying and there are 6, of which 4 are in aid and help to the bully (pro-bullying) and 2 pro-social (in aid of the victim). First of all, it is possible to identify pro-bullying figures, whose aim is to encourage and assist the bully's role by maintaining his status quo. The first role is clearly that of the bully, the one who takes the initiative in bullying. The bully identifies the victim and not only takes part in, but plans and triggers the conflict dynamic. The bully is characterised by a marked tendency to conflict and impulsiveness; he often boasts a certain degree of superiority, real or presumed. Anger is a prevailing emotion in him and he easily has a low tolerance for frustration. He struggles to comply with the rules and prescriptions of others, often trying to get what he wants through manipulative attitudes. His or her childhood is often characterised by aggressive or lax parenting styles; he or she may, in fact, experience a lack of warmth and involvement on the part of the family nucleus, a preponderant factor in the development of aggressive ways of relating to others, often endorsed by the absence of rules and prescriptions or, on the contrary, by a stringent and aggressive upbringing. In fact, these children may feel legitimised in the use of violence either when parents manage their power through the excessive use of physical punishment or, on the contrary, in the total absence of limits (Curti & Giunta, 2009). The helper, on the other hand, supports and acts, but in a secondary position: he or she helps the bully in the planning and execution, while

maintaining a secondary and inferior role to the bully. The supporter is he or she who reinforces the bully in his or her action, enacts those behaviours that endorse the possibility of future systematic bullying by the bully and is an integral part of the system of violence. As the last figure among the pro-bullies, we find the outsiders: those who follow the whole dynamic without intervening in support of one or the other party, and who, through this attitude, do not counteract the bullying dynamics and rather, implicitly and tacitly, support the bully's hegemony. Instead, the roles counted among the pro-socialists are listed below. They are the victim and the defender. The victim is the one who suffers directly from the consequences of the conflict dynamic; he or she tends to be a person who displays characteristics socially linked to a fragile status, which allows the bully to experience the superiority described above. The defender, on the other hand, takes his side and acts in his protection. Subsequent studies have identified further actors in support of the victim: the mediator and the consoler (Belacchi, 2008). According to a survey carried out by Ipsos1 through 810 interviews with questionnaires filled out online using CAWI methodology with boys aged between 12 and 17, bullies identify potential victims according to a number of characteristics. In the victim selection criteria, 'diversity' in its various forms plays an important role: aesthetic appearance (67%), shyness (67%), sexual orientation (56%), being a foreigner (43%), unconventional clothing (48%) and disability (31%). Of lesser importance, on the other hand, are political and religious orientation, the cause of bullying for 22% and 20% of the boys respectively. On the other hand, with regard to the inherent dynamics of bullying, these, as already mentioned, are of a conflictual nature and concern a particular social issue, which however also finds its roots in the individual psychological components of the subjects. We can include within this category both explicitly aggressive behaviour, which can be defined as direct bullying, and indirectly aggressive behaviour, defined as indirect bullying (de Toni & Giampietri, 2005). In the first case (direct bullying), overtly violent activities are carried out against the victim, physically and/or psychologically, through bullying, violence, insults and the like. On the contrary, in indirect bullying, pro-bullying actors build social dynamics such that they isolate and discriminate against the victim without directly enacting violent and/or aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, many studies have confirmed that the selection of these two different strategies also varies with age: as young children prefer to use more direct and explicitly aggressive strategies, whereas as they grow older they tend to use more indirect and more complex strategies (Björkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992).

2. The relationship between the school environment and bullying

The group mediates between society and the individual, between external reality and the symbolic dimension, in which the unconscious and affectivity are decisive with respect to the way the group is perceived, experienced and thought about. The group is not defined by the sum of the characteristics of individuals but becomes an entity in its own right that depends on the relationships established within it (De Grada, 1969): it is therefore possible to analyse the typology of these relationships in the context of bullying: in the group the bully is powerful because he meets another who expresses a non-power, he is active because the other is passive, he is dominant because the other lets himself be dominated (Crocetti & Galassi, 2005), there is therefore a complementarity in the roles that are, however, rigidly fixed. Bully and victim appear imprisoned in a cruel game without elasticity and change (Olweus, 1993). In a healthy relationship the roles alternate: whoever is excluded from group life today will be at the centre of it tomorrow, isolating someone else in turn and the alternation will favour the re-establishment of equity between peers by promoting conflict management; in bullying, on the other hand, the game is one-way: whoever is in is in and whoever is out is out forever and often this process of marginalisation and social exclusion takes place in an 'omertous' climate (Crocetti & Galassi, 2005). Individuals in the group undergo a regression: they lose part of their identity, guilt feelings are reduced, defensive systems are called into question and anxiety levels are raised. The diffusion of responsibility immobilises action by fostering moral disengagement and inhibiting critical thinking. If one considers the anxieties of a group of adolescents, seeking acceptance among peers and fearing rejection, it is easy to hypothesise regressions to basic assumptions through acting out, somatisation, massive projections of feelings of helplessness, despair and hatred (Bion, 1961). In this view, the bully could act out the emotions of the group through provocations and challenges, while the victim could represent the possibility of evacuating aspects of frustration and powerlessness from the group. Precisely in this regard, the phenomenon of bullying in a context such as a school has always been present: the bullies, the aggressive, those who sadistically enjoyed hurting, teasing, beating and tormenting their classmates. Whether they were recognised leaders or not, there were always these children and young people who terrorised their classmates in some way. In literature where school situations are mentioned (for example in the book *Cuore*) the figure of the bully is always present. Today, however, it is about something else: we are in a phase of transition from rigid models in which the ethical-normative model prevailed, from the age of etiquette in which the norms were fairly acquired and established and therefore

transgressors were easily identified, to models in which the focus is no longer on rules but on interpersonal relationships, to educational models in which the affective element enters fully and becomes dominant. And a reality that sees a series of difficulties coagulating in the figure of the educator, first and foremost the teacher, who struggles to find a pedagogical centre of gravity on which to lean in order to deal with situations that, up until a generation or two ago, were in any case managed with methods that today no longer have legitimacy. If yesterday certain situations were tolerated and the 'bad guys' dealt with the maximum severity that the school institution could provide and it worked, also because the whole adult world was united in the reactions adopted, today this is no longer the case. It may happen that overbearing children at school are quietly defended by their parents, it may happen that overbearing children deviously blackmail teachers on the emotional side. Certainly there is greater sensitivity on the part of the educational world to the phenomena of violence, and the phenomena of bullying and bullying are no longer tolerated; at the same time, however, we do not have precise and defined instruments as we did a few generations ago, but we have to find new educational rules in the relational-affective sphere. This is very difficult, since there is no deep-rooted and consolidated tradition in this sense, and the school finds itself facing, alone on many occasions, phenomena of child and adolescent suffering, unease and neglect that place it in a critical state in its educational action. To stem these problems it would be necessary for the container (teacher/school), insofar as it is capable of performing a containing function, to allow the group to introject it as a "good object", as a place inhabited by the pleasure of meeting and sharing, of cooperating instead of competing so that the bond of belonging to the group becomes a "narcissistic support" functional to the adolescent's identity development. In adolescence one goes through a phase of weakening of the ego: one is no longer a child and is not yet a teenager: phenomena of fragmentation and splitting of the self-cause confusion, depersonalisation, deconstruction and de-realisation anxieties are activated (death anxieties) that reach their peak during middle school (Crocetti & Galassi, 2005). This fragility must be understood by the adult and requires the presence of an external authority that holds, against which to bring anger, transgression, and struggle. If this does not exist or abdicates, the hate quotas cannot be mentalised and are evacuated externally through action (Crocetti, 1996). The leader of a group must assume the paternal function, the normative function, because norms draw the boundaries of the container and give consistency and cohesion to the group Self. Bullying in fact develops in contexts in which the adult is not authoritative and has not laid the foundations for the growth of the group code.

The group thus becomes a confused and confusing place that restores splitting and fragmentation of the self and is not able to help the adolescent move from the private to the public world, from narcissistic investment to object investment. The construction of a sense of belonging and a distinction between inside and outside allows a containing function that enables anxieties to be thought and not evacuated through acting out. The school, in this sense, must represent a great opportunity in the fight against all forms of discrimination and bullying, including cyberbullying, in order to foster school inclusion and the right to study of pupils, with the support and cooperation of the local social, health and educational services (Sorrentino et al, 2023). It is clear, however, that in order to have a real impact on the pursuit of these educational and social objectives, it is essential to implement preventive actions that allow us to act simultaneously on the current generations and on future ones. It is in this perspective that the experimental didactic intervention that is the subject of this research is inserted.

3. Structure, methodological framework and evaluation tools of the innovative didactic-pedagogical proposal

The context in which it was decided to implement the experimental didactic-pedagogical proposal is that of the secondary school. This decision was taken with the intention of intervening in the age group most affected by this phenomenon and where an effective operational and preventive intervention could generate both social and educational prospective benefits. Confirmation of the validity of this decision was provided by the data collected by the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Surveillance Institute - HBSC Italy 2022 and published by the Italian Ministry of Health, which identifies the highest incidence of bullying in the 11-13 age group. More specifically, the experiment took place in a Campania school involving fifteen classes (five in the first year, five in the second year and five in the third year) with a total of 298 students and 12 teachers, who actively collaborated and participated in the activities. The planning of the teaching offer, based on a workshop approach, was carried out during school hours for a period of eight months (October - May) with a weekly meeting lasting two hours for a total of sixty hours. The didactic-pedagogical intervention took the form of a workshop, the main aim of which was to produce an emotional impact aimed at the empathic stimulus, understood as the ability to disengage oneself from oneself in order to put oneself in the other person's shoes and promote knowledge by accepting their differences. In order to produce an effective emotional re-alphabetisation pathway, it was decided to move away from the more 'canonical'

modes of educational or elaborative-psychological intervention, since these modes would have solicited more rational responses but would not have been very effective in provoking a deep-rooted emotional impact. Furthermore, we wanted to take into account the inflation of information and educational communications on the subject of bullying to which the children had certainly already been exposed during their school careers: retracing classical modes of engagement would certainly have contributed to generating boredom and distance from the subject. In this regard, the methodology adopted was inspired by the unconventional communication approach. This strategy is a form of social communication that is not regulated by the codes of conduct of international conventions and meets the following criteria:

- addresses an addressee accustomed to canonical promotional forms;
- it studies and attempts to reproduce the languages in which the target audience identifies itself; it imitates bottom-up and horizontal forms of communication;
- does not interrupt the viewer engaged in entertainment but presents itself as a playful form or as original food for thought;
- it defines its effectiveness by enhancing the social quality of its messages.

This allows this communicative approach to break a series of stereotypes concerning the representation of certain themes around which a campaign revolves and aims to persuade rather than argue, taking root at a deep level, using different techniques:

- the search for the highest degree of realism
- the ironic and paradoxical style;
- the playful and creative solutions;
- involvement through stories and the senses: the use of strong narratives that captivate the user, encouraging identification with the theme around which the communicative feedback revolves.

From an operational point of view, the various classes participating in the project followed the same path of experiential and cooperative activities based on visual, cultural and playful stimuli, limiting the direct intervention of the operators to a minimum in order to give greater incisiveness to the material proposed and place the emphasis on the student and their actions, in line with the main "student-

centred" theories. The various phases of the didactic-pedagogical activities implemented are illustrated in the table below.

Phases	Description Activity	No. of hours	Expected results
Phase n. 1	Ex-Ante evaluation: administration of the questionnaires	2	To identify the starting level of the students on the indicators analysed, useful for then comparing it with the results obtained at the end of the experiment to assess any improvements or worsening.
Phase n. 2	Through an unconventional dialogue based on a "circle time" approach, a cognitive survey was conducted on the students' cultural consumption in order to understand them and orientate themselves in their world, to test their tastes and imagination, the quality of their growing up. Subsequently, the discussion focused on the topic of bullying. From a practical point of view, the pupils in the various classes were randomly divided into sub-groups of up to 6 to carry out future activities. From a practical point of view, the children from the	4	<p>To be aware of the characteristics of the students in order to shape the curriculum accordingly. Making teaching activities and tools as "customised" and "close" to the students so that they are welcomed and enthusiastic.</p> <p>To become aware of the students' opinion on the subject of bullying and the related presence of information distortions, stereotypes and concrete criticalities on which to act by students with the related presence of information distortions, stereotypes and concrete criticalities to act on.</p>

	<p>various classes were randomly divided into sub-groups of up to six to carry out future activities.</p>		
Phase n. 3	<p>Provision of a qualitative training proposal through propositional cultural repertoires, useful for developing a reflection on the theme of bullying, through a different perception, narrated in films and books on this theme, capable of soliciting a different and participated attention. The viewing of the film and the reading of passages is interspersed with brain storming sessions on what has been seen, heard and read.</p>	12	<p>Experimenting with the different forms of aggression underlying the bullying phenomenon, from the most adaptive to the most destructive; eliciting feelings or simple statements (even apparently trivial ones) and then arguing them in brainstorming.</p>
Phase n. 4	<p>Moving on to practical training with the proposal of Team Working activities geared towards the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of one's own emotional register and that of one's peers, through the request to express and share one's emotional state 	15	<p>Preparing the class for a more playful moment by focusing on recognising the expressions of others and imitation.</p> <p>Knowing how to recognise and feel the emotions of others.</p> <p>Reading the emotions of others, dislocating them from oneself and feeling them</p>

	<p>with a free artistic representation that required the participation of other students for its realisation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Recognition and imitation of the emotions felt by the members of the other groups, again with free-form reproduction; • - Reproduction of the various emotions, again free-form, between the various groups; • - Reproduction of the emotions felt after seeing a bullying scene and sharing with the other groups. 		<p>within oneself.</p> <p>Promoting reflection through identification with the group and its role in bullying.</p>
Phase n. 5	<p>Creation of a short video (short film) on the topic of bullying, using a free format.</p> <p>Proposal of the video to the other students with discussion.</p>	20	<p>Focusing on group complicity.</p> <p>Stimulating creativity and cooperation among peers.</p> <p>Raising awareness of the need to be in emotional contact with oneself in order to feel the emotions of others</p>

			Understanding the importance of the self within the group, through respect for others, support for the weaker members of the peer group and stigmatisation of aggression and violence.
Phase n. 7	Ex-Post Evaluation: administration of questionnaires	2	Improvement of all indices analysed through test administration.
Phase n. 8	Reflection on Achievements	5	<p>Acquiring awareness of the critical starting situation from an emotional, socio-relational and empathic point of view, in strict reference to the phenomenon of bullying, and simultaneous satisfaction with the improvement of one's status as an individual and member of a community.</p> <p>Acquisition of the negative aspects of bullying and its consequences for the individual and the community.</p> <p>Students' assumption of the role of initiators of a movement in their peer groups against the spread of bullying.</p>

Table n.1: The phases of the Didactic-Pedagogical Activities

In order to carry out the activities effectively, the work team, in addition to the 12 teachers of the school institute, was made up of two university lecturers in the

field of didactics and special pedagogy, in the role of coordinating and managing the research activities, two Cognitive-Behavioural Psychologists-Psychotherapists, experts in research methodology and data analysis, one Psychologist expert in Social and Interpersonal Relations and 8 young researchers expert in didactic activities oriented towards creative and expressive didactics and Unconventional Communication. In order to assess the didactic-pedagogical goodness of the intervention and its incisiveness on the students, the questionnaires "My life at school" by Arora (1994) taken from Sharp and Smith (1994) and the "Dan Olweus Anonymous Questionnaire" in the Italian version by Menesini & Fonzi (1997) were administered to all the classes both prior to the delivery of the experimental proposal and at its end.

4. Results of the Didactic-Pedagogical Experimentation

Through the questionnaire "My life at school" (Arora 1994) it was possible to determine the average index of bullying incidents; this figure, found in the classes that took part in the didactic-pedagogical prevention intervention, was equal to a value of 22.12. After taking part in all the phases of the experimental proposal, the same classes repeated the questionnaire and a value of 10.02 was found for the average index of bullying incidents, thus recording a decrease in the frequency of bullying incidents of 54.70%. With regard to the "Anonymous Questionnaire" by Dan Olweus, the following table shows the main results.

Question	Analysis of Results
<i>How many times have you been bullied in the last period?</i>	<p>Before the didactic-pedagogical prevention intervention, 47.4% of the students stated that they had been bullied in the last period "a few times or more", while 37.6% stated that they had been bullied "once a week or more".</p> <p>Following the prevention programme, 14% of the students who completed the questionnaire stated that they had been bullied in the last period 'a few times or more', while 8% stated that they had been</p>

	bullied 'once a week or more'.
<i>Did you tell any of your teachers that you were bullied?</i>	<p>Prior to the intervention, 38.5% of the students who completed the questionnaire stated that they had spoken to their teachers about the bullying they had experienced; following the prevention programme the percentage dropped to 23.5%.</p> <p>According to the students, following the prevention intervention, the reasons why many of them did not talk to their teachers about the bullying they had experienced were: a decrease in bullying episodes, an increase in the ability to overcome conflicts with peers, an increase in requests for help from peers, the presence of the team of experts ready to address requests for help.</p>
<i>Have you been bullied recently?</i>	<p>Before the prevention intervention, 36% of the students who filled in the questionnaire stated that they had bullied in the last period.</p> <p>Following the intervention, the percentage drops to 16%.</p> <p>Before the trial, among those who stated they had committed bullying in the last period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 57.15% stated that they engaged in such behaviour 'sometimes or more'. - 19% 'once a week or more'. <p>Following the intervention, among those who stated that they had bullied in the last period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8% had engaged in such behaviour 'a few times or more'; - none (0%) had bullied once a week. <p>All the rest of the respondents stated that</p>

	they had bullied "only once".
<i>Did any teachers talk to you about your bullying?</i>	Before the prevention programme, 0.7 per cent of the students who bullied say that teachers talk to them about it, whereas after the intervention this percentage is 27 per cent.
<i>What do you do when you see a child being bullied?</i>	<p>Before the prevention programme, the students who filled in the questionnaire answered as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - 42% do nothing; • - 4% ask an adult or the teacher for help; • - 44% intervene directly to help the child in difficulty; • - 10% did not answer the question. <p>Following the prevention programme, the students answered as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% do nothing, • 48% ask an adult or the teacher for help, • 38% intervene directly to help the child in difficulty, • 6% do not answer the question. <p>It is particularly noticeable how the percentage of students who do not intervene when they see a fellow pupil being bullied has decreased. The percentage of students who ask an adult, such as a teacher, parent or support team professional, for help has also increased.</p>
<i>What do you think about boys</i>	Before the prevention programme, the

<p><i>who bully?</i></p>	<p>students who filled in the questionnaire answered as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5% believe that bullies are boys who have personal problems but also family problems (they are insecure, they have bad parents, they have family problems), - 70% believe that they are stupid, mean and cowardly boys, - 25% believe that bullies are boys who behave like that just to get attention. <p>Following the prevention programme, the students who filled out the questionnaire responded as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 63% believe that bullies are boys who have personal problems but also family problems (they are insecure, they have bad parents, they have family problems), - 23% believe that they are stupid, mean and cowardly boys, - 14% believe that bullies are boys who behave like that just to get attention. <p>It can be seen, therefore, that the percentage of students who believe that bullies are 'mean' or merely 'show-offs' has decreased, while the percentage of those who believe that bullies are troubled and problematic boys has increased considerably.</p>
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Table n. 2: Analysis of the results of the "Anonymous Questionnaire" by Dan Olweus

5. Concluding Didactic-Pedagogical Considerations

The first consideration that emerged from the research was certainly the effectiveness of the didactic-pedagogical intervention even in the immediate term and not only in a prospective key; in fact, a considerable decrease in bullying episodes was highlighted, as revealed by the "My life at school" questionnaire. On the whole, it was observed how acting together, the studied design of individual creative impulses included in the choral action, the mutual adaptation of aptitudes and potentials beyond the relational standard institutionalised by and in the school, supported the students' stimulus to learn what was proposed to them. In addition, a critical-assessment approach was fostered around the dynamics of producing and implementing small scripts and ideas compiled and emerged during the meetings, helping to give practical form to what was learnt theoretically; actions such as reading, writing, scriptwriting educate to the economy of communication, to the need for operational constancy that heals boredom and the disappointment of not being able to do. Proposing an expressive mediation to a young person in difficulty means welcoming and taking care of the dynamic that animates him, this implies a work of analysis 'in real time' with the surrounding environment; stimulating, through didactic action, his creative potential in its positive meaning and giving vent to his expressive needs is a fundamental educational task for any educational context. More specifically, the Dan Olweus Anonymous Questionnaire evaluation tool firstly highlighted a starting situation that could be defined as critical to say the least, with almost the entire sample having been bullied in the last period and with a very high frequency with which such phenomena occurred, and then noted how these values had significantly decreased thanks to the educational intervention implemented. This was reflected in the considerable drop, post-test, in the percentage of students who said they had bullied a member of the peer group, confirming the extent to which the educational activities implemented had triggered a process of awareness in the students on the subject of aggression and on the enhancement of empathic relations and respect for the emotional state of others. The reduction in bullying phenomena, attributable to the pedagogical project experienced by the students, has led to a proportional reduction in requests for help from teachers, a fact also attributable to the possibility for students to turn both to an expert on the subject, present in the work team, and to their peers. This demonstrates, on the one hand, the need for school systems to be equipped among their human resources with professional figures specialised in the socio-relational dynamics of young people and, on the other hand, the enhancement of ties within the peer group, where, thanks to the training process experienced together, one recognises in one's peers a resource open to listening and constructive dialogue capable of

providing support and with whom one can share one's emotional state. In fact, those who followed and contributed to the activities increased their ability to identify the protagonists of the bullying episodes, accompanied by an increase in their willingness to intervene directly with them, dictated by a greater awareness of the problem and the enrichment of their knowledge and skills necessary to intervene. In this sense, the need to take care of ongoing training processes for teachers at all levels on the social dynamics and critical issues experienced by the young people with whom they deal on a daily basis emerges forcefully. As a clear consequence of what has just been analysed, it has also been noted how much the students themselves have acquired trust and esteem in the figure of the adult, an aspect that is confirmed by the notable increase in those who prefer to rely on figures such as the teacher, experts or parents in the event of bullying episodes. In this circumstance, there is a significant decrease in the number of students who prefer 'not to act' (down almost to 0), a symptom of a new perception of the phenomenon, more mature and with an awareness of the need for help and of the importance of themselves in the processes of social improvement and peer group relations. By intervening in the first person or through a request for support from individuals with a higher degree of institutional authority in the educational context, the student demonstrates that he or she has learned the moral and social role and responsibility he or she has as a member of a community, finally playing an active part within his or her socio-relational environment. A definitive step in the formative development conducted by the latter is also the understanding of the nature of the bully, dictated by a critical personal, family or socio-relational situation, which goes beyond mere discrimination or unfounded judgement and lacks a process of analysis, understanding of the underlying problem and stimulating the creation of a helping relationship. This, further enhances the goodness of the preventive action inherent in the didactic-pedagogical project implemented. In conclusion, the intervention made it possible to bring out the real relational difficulties of both the bullies and the victims, to support and strengthen the victims so that they could develop greater self-esteem and social skills, to help the "bullies" to feel, experience and manifest their own emotions, and above all, to understand and absorb those of others; help, respect for others and social-relational skills in the pursuit of common goals were developed through the stimulation of collaborative and cooperative attitudes, laying the foundations for students to be the first active promoters in the fight against bullying phenomena. This makes it possible, therefore, to affirm how much activities of this kind must be implemented and institutionalised in the educational action of any school

context in order to guarantee a concrete and prospective turnaround with regard to bullying and any other form of juvenile deviance.

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