EDUCATIONAL ACTION FOR THE PROMOTION OF GENERATIVE INCLUSIVE PROCESSES

L'AGIRE EDUCATIVO PER LA PROMOZIONE DI PROCESSI INCLUSIVI GENERATIVI

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ABSTRACT

This theoretical contribution intends to propose some reflections on inclusive educational action in training contexts in order to rethink, transform, renew learning and relationship practices in the name of the sustainability of each pupil's Life Project. In this perspective, the professionalism of the inclusive teacher emerges, capable of facing the complexity of the project to enrich it with human values such as participation, accessibility and cooperation, despite the widespread and endemic current problems.

Il presente contributo teorico intende proporre alcune riflessioni sull'agire educativo inclusivo nei contesti formativi per ripensare, trasformare, rinnovare pratiche di apprendimento e di relazione in nome della sostenibilità del Progetto di vita di ogni alunno. In tale prospettiva, emerge la professionalità del docente inclusivo in grado di affrontare la complessità progettuale per arricchirla di valori umani quali la partecipazione, l'accessibilità e la cooperazione, nonostante le diffuse ed endemiche problematiche attuali.

Introduction

The profound epochal transformations, triggered by the new planetary scenarios influenced by the complex contemporary socio-economic, political, digital, health and economic contexts, imply the need to reflect and confront the profound and irreversible changes, especially at the educational and training level (Persi, Montanari, 2022). The increase in inequalities and social exclusions (Benvenuto, Szpunar, 2017), environmental issues, social emergencies (poverty, lack of equity and equal opportunities), the crisis towards the "magnificent progressive fortunes" of humanity of Leopardi's memory, the challenges of today's hypermodernity exacerbated and extreme by the post-pandemic historical period and the Russian-Ukrainian war tensions, call for a critical reading key of a complex nature. The social paradigm of complexity (Morin, 1994), not being a model of a linear nature, is suitable for understanding the discontinuity and antinomies of the new human identity condition, which tends to be subject to dematerialisation and the reduction of the relational dimension, partly due to the dependence on technology.

This existential framework invites the renewal and redefinition of "being in the world" in its foundational aspects of which educational processes are an integral part. By making the interpretation of reality accessible in its interconnections and in the dynamism of the relationships that characterise it, the complexity approach (Ceruti, 2018) represents an extraordinary tool for mental and operational openness marked by a systemic-holistic vision of the world that facilitates the understanding of the meanings of educational contexts, increasingly subject to profound metamorphoses and exposed to the risk of obstacles and blockages of various kinds. The current increase in vulnerability and social fragility resulting from phenomena of marginality, deprivation, isolation and economic-cultural weakness represent obvious obstacles to the human condition that inevitably have repercussions in the educational dimension. The complexity of the scholastic-educational situations requires, therefore, a careful and analytical critical reflection on the offer of a didactic planning aimed at competently supporting and accompanying pupils, whether with special needs or not, along the construction of a concrete Life Project, despite the precariousness and existential problems.

«An authentically emancipative pedagogical project cannot fail to safeguard the unrepeatability of the pupil with a deficit by recognising his specific educational needs, thanks to the implementation of good care and help practices with a high degree of problematisation of events, avoiding the risk of closing in the blind alleys and aprioristically defined hyperspecialism» (Gaspari, 2022, p. 48).

Only through interventions and educational pathways that take into account education as a common good, as an inclusive process aimed at combating exclusion, disadvantage, inequality and discrimination is it possible to transform

and regenerate society to make it more just and equitable (Sassoon, 2022). In seeking to break down the barriers that hinder participation and accessibility, educational institutions, through intentionally inclusive educational action, attempt to promote a real sense of belonging alongside the construction of quality citizenship (Santerini, 2010). This perspective nourishes the vision of the further and the possible for each person, especially for those in situations of disadvantage, vulnerability, marginalisation through the adoption of an authentic educational care (Canevaro, 2015) capable of valuing everyone and everyone, based on educational approaches inspired by democratic sharing, accessibility and universal sustainability (Malavasi, 2017; Loiodice, 2018). Embracing the multiplicity of authentically inclusive educational pathways means lucidly considering the perspective of social generativity (Digennaro, 2020; Giaccardi & Magatti, 2021) committed to countering the increase in unsustainable inequalities by looking towards a different world (Barca & Giovannini, 2020), in the name of planetary solidarity (Morin, 2020).

1. **Inclusive educational thinking and acting in the complexity of school scenarios**

The new and complex challenges of hyper-modernity call for a dialectical reciprocity between the protagonists of the educational scene (pupils, teachers, headmasters, non-teaching staff, educators, families, health authorities, territorial institutions, etc.) that brings them authentically together in the name of a renewed pedagogical action. The school, as a peculiar training place interested in experimenting the educational potential of differences and diversities, is particularly suitable to promote pupils' adherence to and participation in classroom life in order to stimulate greater expressive creativity in them by enhancing, for example, the transformative function of divergent thinking (Gariboldi & Cardarello, 2012). Formative action, therefore, assumes a fundamental role in supporting pupils, right from Kindergarten, in the elaboration and interpretation of experiences, which are increasingly heterogeneous and complex, in research, in the understanding of the plurality of meanings related to experiences, relationships and in the construction of learning and knowledge, in an inclusive perspective. Inclusive processes as multi-level complex processes can be described through the concept of the "butterfly-chaos" proposed by A. Canevaro (Canevaro, 2008, p. 13) who interprets these two images, the butterfly and the chaos, according to an interactive relationship. Reference is made to the well-known scientific theory of chaos created to describe the ecosystemic complexity of phenomena in their contexts in correspondence with perturbative and retroactive movements, even unforeseen and apparently independent of each other.

To head only towards the butterfly is to realise a single inclusive event, equally to head towards chaos implies a perspective of change in relationships. Contemplating both positions is a necessity to promote an educational perspective

«aware of the fact that the process of inclusion represents the "beacon" to look at, but at the moment it is a reality in fieri within which, once again, man with his individual and collective choices establishes the concrete conditions of citizenship and, thus, the sense of his own humanity» (Mura, 2016, p. 209).

The inclusive paradigm as an establishing thrust (Bocci, 2020) embraces, from an educational and training perspective, both the idea of school and the model of society that is intended to be developed in order to create and enhance stimulating learning contexts rich in opportunities for all pupils, no one excluded. The promotion of such an innovative dimension recognises the richness of thinking geared towards meeting the significant challenge of defining the founding and constituent principles of inclusive education, with a view to the realisation of a just and effective school (Canevaro, 2013; Perrenoud, 2018).

Supporting the priority and educational value of inclusive action means conceiving the school as an institution based on a new sense of belonging and real coexistence of differences and diversities, with a view to the transition towards a society committed to systemic change on the design level, so as to respond flexibly to the needs of all pupils. This vision gives rise to possible and even unprecedented transformations of the social community in which the school assumes the role of trait d'union between the subject and the living contexts. The inclusive school, in this sense, can be likened to a pedagogical agora, as stated by A. Goussot (2015), which allows the existence of the dialogical space between differences, affirming their encounter. In the constant endeavour to strengthen the values of welcome, accessibility, collaboration and participation (Polenghi et al., 2018), the school institution is called upon to revitalise curricular areas, didactic organisation, and methodological arrangements by acting in the direction of a concrete change with respect to the traditional way of doing things, still predominantly oriented towards pursuing performance logics tout court.

Recognising and enhancing differences (Delueze, 1997) and individual potential is, therefore, the indispensable premise for the complex remodelling and necessary renewal, in an inclusive perspective, of didactics aimed indiscriminately at every pupil. Educating for differences and diversity determines a complex process that needs to rethink and revisit, even critically, the paths and didactic interventions adopted for the realisation of an inclusively democratic school. «Inclusion represents the ability of the school system to transform itself in order to guarantee the participation and scholastic success of all pupils in regular contexts, as persons and not because they belong to specific minorities» (Medeghini et al., 2013, p. 215).

This school profile is characterised, therefore, by a compelling educational challenge focused on the desirable, desirable and unavoidable construction of valid, relevant and appropriately projected actions in school and out-of-school contexts. In order to foster the inclusion of each pupil, despite the presence of barriers, obstacles and/or the existence of elements facilitating participation, learning and relationships, the educational institution is invited to adopt an innovative and inclusive posture aimed at welcoming, understanding to read the complexity of the peculiarities of the educational needs, special and otherwise, of its learners in an effort to produce significant and unexplored changes and transformations, in order to avoid the undesirable risk of attributing marginalising labels (Bocci, 2016), even entering the folds of a diagnostic epidemic (Zappella, 2021). In order to avoid educational interventions inspired by normalisation (Bellacicco et al., 2022) and assimilation predominantly based on a rigid diagnostic interpretation, the assumption of inclusive educational responsibility makes it possible to overcome the linear vision that cages the person in the pathology not being particularly interested in taking into account the complex web of meanings with which his or her existence is interwoven.

In terms of evolution to change, educational action makes use of the design of effective teaching methods and strategies (Castoldi, 2017) designed to facilitate the teaching-learning processes to recognise and increase the different abilities present in the classroom as the cornerstones of living and existing, regardless of the weaknesses that distinguish and define the peculiar and original history of each pupil. Not disregarding the identification and didactic formulation of differentiated, special, non-standardised educational responses aimed at the different narratives of each student belonging to a given class group, inclusive thinking and acting tend to avoid resorting to hyper-specialist and hyper-technological approaches as presuppositions that devalue the person's identity posture.

The search for educational action, understood as a complex of intentional practices aimed at positive changes in perspectives, requires the strategic promotion and adoption of settings, languages and didactic-educational tools capable of virtuously modifying contexts. The constant and necessary remodelling of spaces, times and organisational methods by teachers is, thus, functional to the special training needs of everyone and each pupil flanked by knowledge, behaviour and communication styles (Selleri, 2018), by relational choices that produce well-being, participation, sharing and regeneration in the classroom. The revitalising role of the actions and practices of inclusive teaching-learning processes passes through the relationship of encounter and exchange with knowledge, which must become the very object of desire, as M. Recalcati (2014) rightly argues.

Arousing desire and passion in learners towards knowledge means opening and creating voids, spaces, adventures, profound cognitive and emotional experiences in relation to previously unimagined worlds, harbingers of educational

opportunities with a strong symbolic value and existential poignancy crossed by the recognition and understanding of the plurality of codes of the mind and heart belonging to each individual (Mortari, 2017).

3. Transforming and regenerating educational contexts: the role of the inclusive teacher

The school as an inclusive context that welcomes, understands and recognises the complex multiplicity of special needs of all pupils aims to go beyond the short-sighted visions of normalising linear approaches in order to promote the authentic culture of participation and belonging. This orientation adopts a "plural" educational-didactic approach characterised by the polyvalence of methods, practices and teaching strategies.

«In order for a didactic intervention to create real opportunities for inclusion and learning, it is necessary for each teaching team to identify, within the wide range of teaching methodologies available, those that are most responsive to the needs of the class, with the aim of proposing not one-size-fits-all didactics but "didactics" that respect the needs and uniqueness of each pupil. The differentiation of didactics that is based on the idea of valuing individual differences in increasingly heterogeneous educational contexts and that does not simply aim to integrate diversity but to make it the focus of the educational project, may be the only option to bring about a teaching-learning experience that is valid for all pupils» (Galdieri & Sibilio, 2020, p. 410).

The potential and resources of each pupil, especially if in a vulnerable condition, must be carefully recognised and enhanced by the inclusive teacher, both curricular and specialised, within an authentic caring and helping relationship. The didactic research activity translates into inclusive care practices when the teacher, acting in the situation, calibrates, adapts and remodels the educational dialogue with pupils, taking into account their intellectual, learning and affective differences that demand flexibility and personalisation. In this sense, adopting effective educational tools, such as storytelling, represents a rich opportunity to foster existential redesigning logics from the perspective of the development of the capacities and autonomy of each and every pupil.

In assuming an attitude of active listening to pupils, especially those in fragile conditions, in welcoming and reading their needs, in creating a classroom climate that is participatory, serene and "warm" (Lucangeli, 2019), the inclusive teacher is trained to know and recognise him/herself, learning to metabolise emotions, to effectively develop the skills of attention, reflection (Mortari, 2004), representation and affiliation with colleagues and pupils in a perspective of developing multi-

purpose and multi-dimensional skills. The inclusive teacher, if adequately trained to read, interpret and act consciously on the educational reality is able to promote and experience a professional identity that faces the unexpected and disorientation caused by diversity, resorting to a didactic action fed by continuous reflexive processes (Schön, 1993), aimed at the promotion and implementation of activities and practices impregnated with inclusive values (Booth & Ainscow, 2014). The intention to create a culture, and consequently, an everyday inclusive didactics in the classroom (Perla, 2013; Cottini, 2017) invites the teacher to constantly renew his mental habitus, to draw on different languages, theories, methods and practices, to adapt, even unexpectedly, his professional baggage to the challenges, opportunities, unexpected events, mistakes and second thoughts that influence and ground educational action.

Change-oriented action represents a desirable transformative and transforming tool that attempts to get to know and deepen the existential fabric of all pupils, with and without special needs, in order to help them adequately re-orient their personal Life Project (Friso, 2015). In approaching the singular existential stories of the students belonging to the class group, both those with vulnerabilities and all the others, the inclusive teacher (Ianes, 2015) empathically comes into contact with their abilities and conduct, their languages and attitudes, their resources through a powerful contamination between their own and others' life narratives within a reflective and self-reflective process (Nuzzaci, 2014) that promotes reconstruction, transformation and generative change. In the attentive care and active listening in the classroom, the inclusive teacher, in concert with the reference team, undertakes to support with lively participation the respectful coexistence of all the original personal uniqueness (Ianes & Demo, 2023), moving with planning intentionality within the space of action and didactic experience of an inter-individual and intra-individual nature.

By observing, analysing, interpreting and deciphering the complexity of educational acts, methodological approaches and communicative styles in multimodal and multi-perspective terms, the inclusive teacher is interested in refining the metabolic drive towards the accessibility and sustainability of current educational contexts (Dozza & Gola, 2022) composed of trajectories not only related to learning, but also to life orientations and choices (Montanari, 2023). In this sense, it is fundamental to reiterate how inclusive practices contribute to strengthening teachers' awareness of transformative educational-didactic action, to enhance in them the function of facilitating agents of change within the class group understood as a system in which each pupil-person is not considered a limit but «an opportunity, a resource, an asset to be exploited» (Xodo Cedolon, 2001, p. 186).

By making the cultural and ethical choice to set up contexts that welcome everyone, through training actions oriented towards participation, collaboration, growth and development, the inclusive teacher is committed to promoting thought processes

focused on the complexity of educational problems and decision-making in terms of sustainability (Riva, 2018). The maieutic regenerative and transformational function of the inclusive teacher within a classroom that becomes a community of research and learning (Cacciamani & Giannandrea, 2004), represents one of the essential ways to achieve full participation and belonging as it contributes to the emergence of a dialogue between different points of view and values of all and everyone. In the systemic-global perspective of inclusive education, the dialogue modality promoted in the classroom tends to enhance common learning in order to give shape to the capacities, emotional-affective representations and existential visions, in progressive transformation, redefinition, repositioning and reconstruction, proper to each pupil even if vulnerable and fragile.

In reinforcing the professional identity of the inclusive teacher with regard to the complex aspects of project intentionality, the formative tool of dialogue acts in the direction of an educational care capable of making pupils feel part of a class-community where change responds to the need to engage in the construction and enhancement of equity and justice, as the nerve centres of school and social inclusion processes (Coggi & Bellacicco, 2023).

Conclusions

The multidimensional metamorphoses that we are experiencing, in the micro and macro socio-cultural contexts, invite the educational system to unavoidably take into account the hyper-complexity of post-modern thought (Mariani, 2008) in order to attempt to find functional keys to understanding reality in its fragmentations, challenges, criticality and/or opportunities. The complexity model turns out to be an effective support tool in the analysis and critical interpretation of the recursive, dialogic, modular aspects that influence, constitute and embody in a flexible, and in some ways contradictory way, the actual reality.

In the educational sphere we are witnessing the proliferation of new modes of practice, reinforced by the decisive and incisive thrust of complexity, which require a plurality and depth of interpretative readings inevitably connected to the certainty of the uncertainty of contemporary living (Ceruti & Bellusci, 2020). The multidimensionality of the complexity paradigm invites the school world and its actors to promote educational processes capable of embracing and understanding the categories of differences and diversities that dwell in classrooms, giving rise to a fertile pedagogical reflection, to a constant, continuously renewed and regenerating educational action.

Inclusive teachers are, therefore, called upon to embrace the problems, contradictions, challenges, and resources offered by post-pandemic modernity in order to acquire a design perspective aimed at integrating and making full use of tools, methods, and strategies aimed at the participation of all, without exclusion

and/or marginalisation in order to promote a "first-class school" (Schleicher, 2020). The teacher's inclusive action is interested in realising, in this sense, a perspective defined on the basis of the cultural possibility of each pupil so that his or her educability potential can be fully manifested (Ceruti, 2009). Contributing to the quality of the interventions promoted by the school, as an institution and as an authority, is the implementation of a concretely open, flexible and effective didactic planning (Calvani & Trinchero, 2019) aimed at developing a valid personalisation and differentiation of the educational proposals shared in classrooms designed to host the heterogeneity of differences and diversities (d'Alonzo, 2017).

Renewing and rethinking teaching and learning practices means, therefore, embracing design constructs that place at the centre of inclusive action the interaction between the variables due to different individual functioning and the living environments in which the person, whether with special needs or not, interacts and lives. Faced with the plurality of needs present in class groups, it is no longer possible to propose mono-functional, homologated and canonical didactic itineraries that do not correspond to the complexity of today's educational emergencies that demand a scholastic transformation at a didactic, methodological and organisational level.

In conclusion, the interpretative figure of the culture of change is aimed at achieving the elaboration and redefinition of inclusive educational models and practices (Pavone, 2014) based on the valorisation of differences, as an emerging value in the perspective of the construction and development of a new cultural and social humanism.

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