



Cap sur l'école inclusive
en Europe



Pedagogical Sheet

An active teaching methodology: the debate

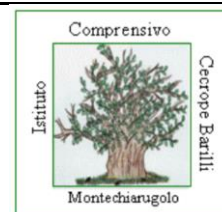
Section of the module/E

*A pedagogical sheet is the description of a learning sequence.
It aims to mobilize and acquire skills (knowledge, knowing how to be and how to do).
It can be built with reference to current and innovative pedagogues.*

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Title: *An active teaching methodology: the debate*

General definition / Brief description of the content

The methodology of the debate consists of a comparison between two teams (made up of three or four students) who aim to support or counter an affirmation proposed by the teacher, placing himself in a field in favor (pro) or contrary (against).

The topics on which to argue may be varied, curricular or extra-curricular.

The art of debate develops communication skills and critical thinking, respect for opinions opposed to one's own, learning through active participation. Moreover, since the thesis to be sustained is not always corresponding to personal opinions, not only the formal ability to construct concepts and reasoning is activated, but also the flexibility in supporting a position that is not one's own in the performance of a representative role.

Use / Area of application

The methodology of the debate is applicable to any subject that requires a precise alignment and the identification of two clear positions.

The choice of topic must provide for equally sustainable pros and cons.

Specifically, reference is made to the use of the debate in the orientation activity foreseen for the 3rd grade (14 years of age) of secondary school of the first degree (11-14 years of age): the debate represents the task of reality of the learning unit "Orientation: for an informed choice" .

Principles and theoretical foundations

The debate, although having "Mediterranean" origins that can be traced back to ancient Greece, is widespread as a curricular discipline, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries. In Italy it represents a minority methodology included among the innovative proposals of INDIRE (National Institute of Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research); this methodology aims at the acquisition of transversal skills (life skills) and dialectical comparison based on times and rules fixed around a theme.

The pedagogical bases of the methodology can be found in the practice of Peer to Peer, Learning cooperatives and Inquiry Learning.

The organization of the debate does not necessarily require the use of technology because it is especially urged to recover orality; in this process the teacher plays the role of moderator and facilitator.

Presentation of the methodology

Students of class 3 ^ of the secondary school of first grade (11-14 years of age) must enroll in high school (14-19 years of age) by 31 January 2019.

Already from the previous year (2nd year) an orientation activity based on self-knowledge was started; this year the course has been more specifically addressed towards school choice.

Besides the activity carried out in the classroom, the students participated in various educational and informative initiatives organized by the Institute.

At the end of the path, the class is divided into groups and three topics of debate are proposed:

1. High school: yes or no?
2. Technical Institute: yes or no?
3. Professional Institute: yes or no?

The teams are composed of three or four students and the path can be summarized as follows:

- a) Preparatory exercises and indication of the topic of debate.
- b) Definition of evaluation methods.
- c) The evaluation section includes three indicators: content, style (body language, tone, volume and speed of voice, gaze ...), strategy (time management and persuasion).
- d) Establishment of working groups (proposed by the teacher).
- e) Phases of research (initially individual, then the groups, in the classroom, develop arguments and strategy).
- f) Realization. Since there are various models of debate, one chooses the structure according to which teams A and B expose their arguments in succession; subsequently A asks questions (maximum three) to B and B to A; at the end the conclusions of A and B. The maximum time for each intervention is three minutes.
- g) Evaluation and self-assessment. The score for each heading in the address book is assigned to the individual. The team with the highest score wins. The jury can be composed of only the teacher, or teacher and student.

What are the advantages of the debate?

The debate facilitates learning because the children are responsible for the construction of the concepts and reasoning they use in their speeches, reduce the aggressiveness of their interventions, learn to argue, to speak in public, to support their thesis with the data.

For the organization of the debate it is essential to create a positive atmosphere within the class and, through a training pact with the students, to establish clearly that interest, attention and respect represent the three fundamental rules of its realization.

In turn, the whole class is debating, so also the students with SEN (special educational needs). Within the group-team the topics are enucleated and the roles are assigned in a shared way; to the weaker pupils the comrades spontaneously assign more accessible roles, perhaps as anticipators of the subsequent contents.

The students with SEN participate in the group's experience and are supported and directed by their teammates; they are also stimulated to speak in public by controlling the expressiveness of the voice and body language even before the contents, which may perhaps be summarized in short cards.

Practicing the debate in the curriculum environment, therefore, promotes cooperative work and peer education; the capacity for argumentation and the ability to find ideas, communication skills and critical thinking are developed, but the methodology takes on a decisive inclusive value when the group takes charge of the students with SEN and accompanies them on a relational path and the acquisition of active listening skills, with respect to a theme that sets out established rules and deadlines.

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