



Cap sur l'école inclusive
en Europe



Pedagogical Sheet

The circle time

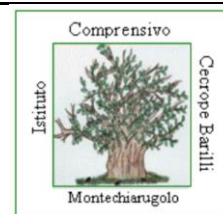
Section D of the training module

*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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General definition / Brief description of the content

The circle time is an educational and didactic moment to develop a healthy communication among peers and with the teacher. It is a guided communication on a specific topic that helps children to open up and trust the class group and the adult for the creation of an effective relationship in a perspective of inclusion of all individuality and diversity.

Use / Area of application

This model lends itself to being used at different times of the year with pupils of all ages to set up an effective relationship between pupils and teachers, in order to positively influence learning.

Principles and theoretical foundations

Learning takes place within a human relationship: if the relationship is positive, learning "passes", if the relationship is negative, learning stops. Setting up an effective relationship between teachers and students is crucial: student learning can increase by 20% in a healthy environment.

US psychologist and psychotherapist Carl Ransom Rogers teaches us how acceptance, authenticity, empathy and correct communication are fundamental in every human relationship (mirroring technique). Wrong communication blocks creativity, autonomy, trust while effective communication increases self-esteem: those who do not feel considered do not feel loved and those who do not feel loved do not feel up to it and find it hard to relate to peers and with teachers.

The clinical psychologist Thomas Gordon, a close collaborator of Rogers, emphasizes how active listening and the message of reality are fundamental for a methodology able to set up a valid relationship.

The teacher-student relationship is as important as the teaching content: this principle is fundamental for both "normal" children and for children with disabilities, SEN (Special Educational Needs) or SLD (Specific Learning Disorders).

Presentation of the methodology

The theme of the circle can be chosen among different proposals depending on the age of the children. With 6-7 year olds it is useful to work on the CONCEPT OF SELF (my story, my home, a beautiful memory of my childhood, a photograph ...); with children aged 7-8 you can work on BELONGING therefore recognize the social relations (my family, my friends, things we have in common and differences, the country from which I come, the country from which some comrades come ...); for children of 8-9 years we can work on PROSOCIAL SKILLS (I in the society: knowing how to study, how to listen and communicate, how to resolve conflicts, how to work in a group ...) and so on.

The spaces

Class or gym.

Children must sit in a circle, together with the teacher; if the class is very numerous it is better to divide the pupils into two groups so as to guarantee everyone the opportunity to speak and be heard by their classmates. If there is an educator in the class or the support teacher, it is good to be present in order to facilitate the participation of children with disabilities.

The methods:

Rules:

- listen (without interrupting)
- look at the speaker
- do not challenge
- do not judge

Objectives: to gratify basic needs

- Security: stay safe in the group, be heard and accepted
- Membership: I belong to the group in my uniqueness and with my differences
- Estimate: that we receive and give to our companions (we all need to be considered)
- Self-realization: identification of Jung that reminds us that as adults we are aware of being unique but in the developmental age it is necessary to guide the children
- Knowing how to participate experiences and feelings
- Being able to be creative: freedom in choosing what you want to talk about
- Being able to be effective members of a group: everyone must be able to contribute and be able to respect silence
- Knowing how to see positive experiences: highlight positive appeals

The role of the teacher:

- Facilitate the emergence of rules (space and rules of the circle).
- Exercise active listening: everyone looks at each other, they listen to each other, if there are times when they are not able to establish a time for a break.
- Clarifying concepts: "Did you say this?", Without saying: "No, you're wrong".
- Reflect the feelings: I feel that you are excited ... excited ...
- Maintaining the topic: "We are talking about ..." looking at all the children.
- Synthesize: take notes and then activate a discussion with the children: "you talked about ..."
- Support and encourage group members: if a child is in difficulty, he will resume his words with a mirroring technique so that the child can go on.

Listening techniques

The time of the circle allows us to create a moment of listening and mutual knowledge, of acceptance of the differences among the children, which is fundamental for individual growth and as a group-class. Communicative exchanges also pass for the non-verbal: silence and body movements are very useful clues to observe. Teachers must pay close attention not only to the relationship among peers but especially to how they address children. Communication disorders can lead to confusion between content and relationship, hence they may derive from it: confirmation, rejection or disconfirmation!

If a student is ill (often children with disabilities, SEN or SLD, who have problems of acceptance and self-esteem) the teacher must send an empathetic message, an I message, as if the problem were his (active listening); in case of a child who has a problem and opens with the teacher then you have to pass a passive listening: "I listen ... I'm trying to understand, you want to tell me something else?" so the child manages to open up.

We always remember the words of Wetzlawick:

"Human communication is characterized by an interaction, it must be based on a code and something similar to a grammar, which all the participants are bound to respect"
(The pragmatics of communication).

Bibliography

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