Pedagogical Sheet

Learning environment: an engaging and motivating teaching practice.

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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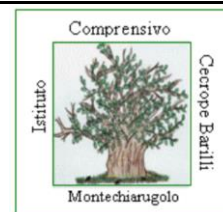
General definition / Brief description of the content

A guide for the design of learning units according to the principles of inclusive teaching.

Use / Area of application

This guide can be used for the planning of learning units in the secondary school of I degree (11-14 years).

Principles and theoretical foundations

Can we improve our students' learning? Can learning contexts be improved to enable the school to play its institutional role more effectively?

What changes are needed in order that the number of students, for whom "what school does is not enough", can be significantly reduced? Is it possible to have an inclusive education able to orient the training offer towards an improvement in terms of effectiveness?

In the TALIS 2013 survey (MIUR, 2014) it is clear that only 28% of teachers, both for TALIS countries and in Italy, propose cooperative work projects that require a formal structuring that is sufficiently organized for timing, tools and strategies. It is an active practice, that is a didactic practice that involves and motivates students' participation in learning.

Also in the same survey it was found that among the main methods of evaluation of students' learning there is the use of the question in class (Italy: 80%, average TALIS countries: 49%). However, the use of self-assessment by students is not relevant (Italy: 29%, TALIS average: 38%).

Extensive research has shown that students prefer to work in groups, both at school and at home, and to use teaching technologies to support their learning process. (*What did they teach you in high school? The perception of students of Languages on their linguistic education*, Edizioni Ca 'Foscari)

There are numerous studies that show how a positive class climate is a fundamental factor both for teaching and for learning.

What do we need, teachers and learners, to feel good at school? What educational and research contexts do we offer our students? How can we do so that everyone can make the most of his potential and can acquire the knowledge necessary to realize his life project? Answering these questions would allow us to implement learning / teaching processes that can also go through the pleasure of being good at school, together. But, to ensure that the school can be transformed from an isolated system divided into disciplines (often become reservoirs of defenseless notions) to an open system of research, communication, development ... we need to work together: being a team, measuring ourselves on teaching. Focus not only on knowledge, but also on skills and competences.

The class group must be understood as a learning group in which the relational aspects must be adequately managed, as the relationship is a fundamental element that conveys and stimulates learning. The quality of the classroom context is, in fact, influenced by the individual characteristics of students and teachers, their perceptions and by the distinctive elements of the school (school policy and spaces).

The teaching group must also work together: discussing the different didactics, checking the educational / teaching projects; to put to good use previous experiences. It must have new ideas, re-launching what has been done successfully and abandoning what has not worked. Even here we need not only knowledge, but also skills and competences.

Cooperative learning, which gives excellent results, refers to an educational method through which students, at various levels of performance, work together towards a common goal. Today, through internet, students and teachers can engage in activities together with other distant students, in the same country or in other countries; to build one's knowledge in a

dimension that is no longer local, but virtually planetary, and to discover that certain problems can be solved better by working together.

It is an anthropological change, rather than educational! Which involves everyone, no one excluded, in designing and implementing an ordinary, open, inclusive teaching for the whole classroom, which starts from the concept that every student has a positive dynamism towards reality. In fact, meaningful learning is the kind of learning based on research and the re-elaboration of knowledge that makes sense of the latter, both through the integration of new information with those already owned, and through the use of the same in different contexts and situations.

The goal is that the person learns and develops problem solving skills, critical thinking, meta-reflection. In short, meaningful learning allows students to become strategic through the development of skills of meta-cognitive (learning to learn), relational (know how to work in a group) or attitudinal (autonomy and creativity).

Presentation of the methodology

The students, in possession of digital skills and the rules for the composition of concept maps and mental maps, have been divided into heterogeneous groups of up to four members each. To each group have been assigned an historical theme and a time of realization of a multimedia product, a short video with a maximum duration of 5 minutes, to be shown to the classroom thanks to the support of the IWB.
The research-action path has been entitled "Along the Enza between nature, art and culture: in search of the Oratorio del Romito"

The historiographical work, followed by a theatrical representation of the most salient moments lived in this place, has been entitled "Along the Enza between nature, art and culture: in search of the Oratorio del Romito". The collected data were "enclosed" in a QR code donated to the Marquis Ludovico Lalatta Costerbosa, owner of the villa, the deputy mayor, councilor for culture of the City of Montechiarugolo, the school and the association "Festa della Storia".

The students were invited to carry out in-depth research using both paper materials proposed by the textbook or other manuals that can be consulted in the school's library, as well as significant information to be searched on the Internet. In this regard it was necessary to help students become info detective, that is to build those research skills on the Net that allow them to gather information efficiently and effectively as real detectives (know what, how and where to look), select information and structure it in meaningful aggregates of knowledge. To this end, the concept maps become a meta-cognitive support for searching the Internet, constructing and re-elaborating knowledge, as they allow to visually focus the object of the research and above all to integrate the results in the pre-existing cognitive structures (SEW-COM method).

The available data have been analyzed, synthesized and re-elaborated in the form of concept maps and schemes, to which explanatory images and narrative items have been added. The pupils used more expressive channels (linguistic-verbal, visual, auditory, kinesthetic) and more languages (audio and video) in re-elaborating and proposing the contents.

The class has not been passive spectator: on the contrary, it has interacted with the working groups by proposing questions and acting proactively in the educational dialogue.

As a teacher, I have proposed myself in this educational situation as a mediator; "I teased" the curiosity, "I intrigued" by asking questions, involving mental faculties, causing the anxiety of research. My task, in short, was to encourage and encourage meaningful learning at the expense of mechanical, passive and not motivating learning.

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THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In such a learning environment, everyone has something to give to others (because he's the repository of resources) and to receive, and this allows us to create an equal and truly inclusive learning.

In structuring learning paths of this type it was necessary to keep in mind some indications:

- form groups in a functional way (heterogeneous with a plurality of competences, fair and flexible);
- agree on the time allowed for work (max 3 weeks);
- give detailed written deliveries (use strategies of anticipation of contents and vocabulary, avoid redundancies and slides too crowded with sentences; make a discussion that goes from general to detail; use techniques to emphasize the main concepts; use as a support for the explanation maps conceptual and mental maps);
- set the date for the exposure to the classroom;
- establish with the classroom the criteria for verification, evaluation and self-assessment (correct treatment of the topic, analysis, synthesis, reprocessing, clarity in the exposure, ability to make connections, ability to motivate and involve the class;);
- evaluate group work.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The use of information technology offers many advantages, because it leverages students' interest and motivation, prepares them for their future, expands the variety of content and methods that can be used, amplifies the ability to express the knowledge of the content (evaluation), increases the number of students who can succeed. Current tools provide a range of more flexible and accessible supports, with which students can successfully participate in their learning and express what they know (formative assessment).

Paying more attention to the development of oral production skills through the realization in the classroom of a multiplicity of verbalization opportunities, as well as developing the global communication and linguistic competence, allows to widen the evaluation moments of the students, not relegating them to the "oral tests". They are inclusive educational behaviors that also favor students with SLD and SEN, for whom the legislation requires the compensation of the written tests with the oral tests but also the possibility to express themselves using technological compensatory tools.

EVALUATION OF SKILLS

To assess the skills are not sufficient and not adequate the tools usually used to evaluate the profit, it is necessary instead to orient the teaching by putting into play the knowledge and skills acquired through authentic tasks based on problematization. In fact, competence emerges in a situation, such as "knowing how to act" in the solicitations offered by experience that stimulate the use of cognitive processes in new contexts, combining in an original way in addition to cognitive, practical, relational and social dimensions.

The overall assessment by teachers, not having to limit themselves to measuring the acquired knowledge, must have available observation elements related to the ability to solve problems, to make choices, to argue, to make a product. The subject in learning becomes a subject that must be listened to (give a voice to the students), who has a cognitive story to tell and is confronted in an intelligent and original way with situations belonging to the real world, transferring procedures and reflections in partially different contexts from those of traditional teaching.

An authentic performance is made explicit precisely when students build their knowledge in an active way in real and complex contexts and use it in a precise and relevant way, demonstrating the possession of one or more skills. This is inherent in the construct of competence: *"proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and / or methodological skills, in work or study situations and in professional and / or personal development; the skills are described in terms of responsibility and autonomy"*. (Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council of 5 September 2006 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework and the Lifelong Learning Titles)

Evaluating skills implies, therefore, the ability of teachers to be able to observe multiple performances, to be able to promote self-assessment skills by students and to be able to offer a plurality of tools. (Pellerey 2004)

In this context, the role of the student changes completely. In fact, as a passive receptor, he becomes an active constructor of his learning, as he brings into play his characteristics in order

to take full advantage of the training experience. He must take into account the general conditions of his learning, must learn to evaluate his skills, to recognize those to be achieved, to mature an attitude available to invest personal resources in his training and to take part, for what is right, the responsibility for his educational success.

For pupils with SLD, these tasks and educational situations can become very important occasions to demonstrate strategies and tricks of resolution that other comrades do not know; we know that often the students with SLD have notable intuitions and creative abilities that become, with these activities, strengths for themselves and for the cooperative group they work with. Consider the possibilities of implementing the self-esteem that arise in cooperative projects.

TOOLS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS: EVALUATION COLUMNS

We can speak of authentic evaluation when *"we are able to directly examine the performance of the student in the act of carrying out significant intellectual tasks"*. (Wiggins, 1990)

According to Arter, *"an authentic assessment must express a judgment not only on what a person knows, but on what he can do in tasks that require using high processes such as thinking critically, solving problems, working in groups, reasoning and learning in a way. permanent"*. (Arter, Bond 1996)

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