

Inclusion dans les Cités de l'Éducation

Défis, Cultures et Ressources

Inclusion in the Cities of Education

Challenges, Cultures and Resources

Jean Pierre Pourtois, Anna Pileri, Nicola Giacopini,
Roberta Caldin, Clara Silva (Eds.)



CONNECTIONS
DANS LES CONTEXTES
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CONNEXIONS
DANS LES CONTEXTES
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Direction:
Roberto Dainese, Anna Pileri, Mark Alter,
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La collection "Connexions dans les contextes d'apprentissage" se consacre à la recherche et à l'étude de l'apprentissage ainsi que les connexions nécessaires pour le soutenir sur base d'actions partagées et coordonnées. La référence à la perspective systémique-écologique, suivant le modèle bio-psycho-social de la CIF (OMS, 2001), est donc privilégiée.

Cette collection met l'accent sur le rôle essentiel que joue la création de liens lorsqu'il s'agit de répondre aux besoins des élèves avec handicap et de leurs familles. Ces liens dépendent d'enseignants compétents et passionnés. Ils sont essentiels pour favoriser l'apprentissage individualisé et personnalisé, de même que pour guider les trajectoires de vie. En effet, les enseignants vont se montrer capables d'accompagner tous les élèves, de favoriser la réussite sociale, de soutenir les familles et de créer un environnement dans lequel tous les élèves peuvent s'épanouir, quelles que soient leurs capacités.

La collection accueillera aussi des travaux de recherches – de niveaux national et international - axés sur l'expérience d'apprentissage dans des contextes allant de la crèche à l'école secondaire. Dans ces contextes, il s'agit de la mise en oeuvre d'actions de planification et d'enseignement destinées à tous les garçons et à toutes les filles, à tous les élèves, est devenue incontournable, de façon à prêter attention à la synergie entre la participation spécifique et leur réussite, dans l'apprentissage, dans la vie présente et future.

Les thèmes couverts sont inévitablement interreliés : de la formation, des perceptions et des compétences des opérateurs scolaires (directeurs, enseignants, éducateurs) avec la collégialité, en utilisant outils multiples et innovants, y compris des outils technologiques. Cette collection porte également attention à l'impulsion inévitable à donner à l'apprentissage pour tous, grâce aux outils multiples et innovants, y compris des outils technologiques. L'espace offert permettra d'entrer en résonance avec de multiples réflexions scientifiques, des recherches et des projets centrés sur la pertinence et l'engagement didactico-pédagogique.

Concernant tous les élèves et ceux en situation de handicap, différents types de connexions s'avèrent nécessaires, afin d'assurer la coordination des actions structurées dans le cadre des projets individualisés et personnalisés. La planification et l'accompagnement de projet de vie apparaissent indispensables. De plus, ces connexions influencent les actions de soins et de réadaptation, les services à la personne, les services à la personne, les initiatives de participation sociale, ainsi que le soutien en matière de collaboration écolesfamilles- communautés.

Chaque volume sera soumis aux membres du Comité scientifique international. Il sera examiné par les pairs et fera l'objet d'un arbitrage en "double aveugle". La Direction accepte les propositions de publication en effectuant une première sélection.

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*En hommage à Huguette Desmet, son engagement
pédagogique reste pour nous une source précieuse d'inspiration.*

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3.1. Designing art workshops from a transcultural perspective. Observations, dynamics and challenges from the TPAAE project experience

Rosita Deluigi¹

3.1.1. Intercultural dialogue as a platform for transcultural perspectives

To promote an authentic inter/transcultural approach, it is necessary to invest in an open, problematic, and anti-dogmatic dialogue. The circular movement of thought and action could be the basis for the sharing of critical and developmental paradigms for educational interventions situated within creative rationalities, where the contributions of each subject become a shared heritage.

Planning intercultural paths implies commitment to seeking out methods, opportunities, and tools to develop a dialogue between cultures and a constructive, creative comparison, promoting opportunities to exchange different ideas, values, and cultures. Pedagogical research agrees on the importance of the reciprocity of this process and numerous authors have stressed the urgency of identifying meeting points through a dialectical tangle of interactions (Zoletto, 2020). The most common error is to consider oneself satisfied with a comparative transfer between cultures, where the perspective of adaptation, assimilation, and subordination prevails instead of a conscious postcolonial reflection (Burgio, 2022). It is decidedly interesting to opt for a dynamic view of culture by which the prefix *inter* indicates intercultural reciprocity, the proximity of the difference, and the possibility of crossbreeding, in a productive negotiation.

The intercultural perspective can break down reflection into the practices of education, training, and dialogue, opening up spaces for experimentation, where one of the essential dimensions to be addressed is

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disorientation. The search for meeting points opens up to the concept of reciprocity and presupposes the willingness and intention to engage in dialogue through critical thinking. It is essential to emphasise that no openness to individuality is neutral. Proximity, therefore, is the result of a tension between differences that recognise each other and that first and foremost listen to personal identities and shared roots, the same ones from which worldviews, interpretations of reality, and the ability to narrate oneself arise.

Openness to “the otherness” is based on the desire to meet and the willingness to change oneself or allow oneself to be changed by connections such as exchanges. With the awareness that these are articulated and complex processes in which to discover new parts of oneself, sometimes even in a conflictual way, valuing points of contact and their multiple representations. Constructive encounters between differences require open and fluid forms of communication, in which each subject can share his or her journey and participate in processes of change and personal and social enrichment. An important effect of intercultural understanding is to allow subjects to find themselves in a space where boundaries are blurred from a geopolitical point of view, of interacting identities, of shared knowledge, of creative discoveries, and of ways of co-constructing open communities.

It is a matter of wanting, being able, and knowing how to live in several border zones (Deluigi & Cadei, 2019), where the recognition of the other and the relativisation of one’s system of values and ideas allows for the generation of cultural ideas in motion, immersed in an ongoing experience of openness and dialogue, of distinction and encounter, of cohesion and separation, of estrangement and return to the self, of disorientation and familiarity, of memories and projects. The comparative dimension, the categorisation, and the juxtaposition of differences risk ciphering complexity in the light of the competitiveness of majority cultures devouring minority ones. It is more important to work, albeit with uncertainty, on the intercultural paradigm understood as activity that leads to change, transformation, and integration as a result of experiences of dialogue with others. Its origin lies in the awareness of the many diversities that condition and characterise the development of society, but which require coming to terms with one’s internal contradictions and removing the conceptual stages that distinguish “our” practices from “theirs”. The need to question one’s limits, to discuss and enrich the self with new elements, to change without losing one’s identity of reference (Casagrande, 2020).

These conditions have oriented educational and pedagogical research leading to the definition of different intercultural lines and plans that, over time, have taken on a variety of forms and hybrids, opening up to further

dialogues and continuous transformations. The practice of dialogue, the search for creative languages, experimentation in the social and educational field have led to a virtuous short-circuit of thoughts, words, images, and narratives, opening up a fertile breeding ground for the idea of transculturalism, understood as the ability to cross the boundaries of individual cultures as a result of the awareness of being part of a common human species on a unique mother earth, sharing a project of planetary citizenship, based on the principles and values of a universal ethics (Morin, 2016; Bauman, 2003).

The transcultural approach exceeds individual cultures, moving among them without being absorbed by them, and freeing the possibility to cross over between different expressions of human society. «It means sharing a wider vision, able to look at the bigger picture, past diversity, and with these diversities, can reshape a fragmentary image that is now surpassed. A shared project requiring teamwork, “working together” with the same objectives, where every participant is, and feels actively involved in and responsible for the creation of a new and different culture, able to cross over between the borders of individual elements, bringing them together in the name of that which, if achieved, makes them all winners in a single team» (Casagrande, 2020).

Designing mutual understanding also means promoting projects of peaceful coexistence, guaranteeing the fundamental rights to freedom, knowledge, creativity, and respect for differences in language, culture, and religion. Coexistence must be understood in systemic and ecological terms, not as the parallel coexistence of cultures, with enclave-like extremism and ghettoisation, but with the ability to generate complex and heterogeneous spaces and times, where being together is the premise for building new ideas of community.

To improve authentic inter/transcultural pathways, it is necessary to invest in projects that aim to educate on differences and dialogue, through the development of open, problematic, and anti-dogmatic thinking. «A political thought and practice capable of decentralising and moving away from one’s value references to direct oneself towards new cultures that include differences and similarities, returning to one’s own culture of reference, using the experience of dialogue for a more conscious evaluation of one’s specificity in its more or less positive aspects» (Ibid.).

It is the circular movement of thought-action that we can use to build new ways for sharing critical and development perspectives for actions placed in creative, non-linear paradigms, where the contribution of each subject becomes a shared heritage.

«Transculturalism rejects homogeneousness, rigidity, and cultural and gender consistency, highlighting the process of hybridisation among cultures, generating new and unpredictable forms. The varied lifestyle of individuals, the everyday routine, their conduct as architects of their biographies, their self-invention, and methods of social interaction embody a new understanding of culture» (Tumino, 2018, p. 28). The challenge is not to focus merely on differences, avoiding the risk of confirming our mutual distances. It is decisive to identify our mutual contiguities and shared aims, to contribute to the breakdown of prejudice or easy and poor generalisations (Demetrio & Favaro, 2016).

The use of a multitude of languages can create further closeness among people and the artistic dimension, in its ever-changing forms, makes it possible to represent and narrate different worlds that do not necessarily need to be assimilated by everyone. We can set out on new tracks and trajectories of intercomprehension, towards the creolisation of knowledge (Glissant, 2007; 2020). This is a process that we should consider transformative, also in terms of the design of educational practices, as we will illustrate below.

3.1.2. Orientation and reference framework for the TPAAE project²

The project Transcultural Perspectives in Art and Art Education (TPAAE) investigates contemporary art in Europe and East Africa, and forms art education on both continents from a transcultural perspective among a Consortium containing academic and non-academic institutions from Poland, Italy, and Kenya. All the institutions investigate art, culture, and cultural heritage, with various complementary competences, allowing for the research and implementation of its effects into practice. International and intersectoral mobility guarantee an elevated level and effective sharing of knowledge due to the different lines and goals of the project, aimed at developing research at theoretical, academic, and practical levels.

We have seen the importance of living experiences of decentralisation, where diversity can find room for expression. Planning educational actions

2. This section contains some parts of the description of the project, taken from Addendum B of the planning proposal, approved, and financed in 2019 as part of the line Horizon 2020 - Call: H2020-MSCA-RISE-2019 (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research and Innovation Staff Exchange). Topic: MSCA-RISE-2019 Type of action: MSCA-RISE (2020-2024) (<https://tpaae.eu/>). The author has added further thoughts and scientific references connected to research ongoing as part of the project itself.

that move away from linear trajectories requires children and adults to listen, to express the wealth of cultural interpretations linked to each person's biography, as a subject, as part of an educational environment, expanding communication channels and co-education experiences aimed at change and ready to deal with the stresses of today's complexities (Pourtois & Desmet, 2015; 2015a). Differences and pluralities come together in spaces for play, interaction, words, pictures, and imagination, where it is not necessary to set out clear borders between disciplines, contexts, materials, ideas, or subjects. The dialectic between artistic-creative languages is an interesting area in which to take children and teens – and also young people and adults – towards cognitive experiences that fascinate and amaze, able to arouse curiosity and the divergent thoughts that derive from this, and which are exercised within the peer group and adults. The discovery of the self, of others, and the world through plural representations, images, and imaginaries, makes it possible to describe and rewrite situations of which we are not only users or recipients, but also creators.

Transcultural perspectives are essential, today more than ever, to appreciate cultural diversity and to recognize the importance of defending and promoting tangible and intangible cultural heritage. To a transcultural interpretation of social contexts, education implies a relational connection able to mediate between an irreducibly fractal self and the many forms of otherness. If the understanding of others is conditioned on the understanding of ourselves and vice versa, then the process of transcultural education is also a process of self-knowledge and of self-education in relation to otherness.

This approach is even more challenging in contemporaneity, since the singularity of “the Other” disturbs and slows down maximum speed flows and the reproduction of “the Equal”, which fosters the maximum speed and functionality of social processes. If only the positivity of “the Equal” is promoted, life becomes poorer and new pathologies arise in a cycle of self-referentiality and self-destruction. Only meeting the – destabilising and enlivening – Others can give each of us our own identity and generate real experience. For this reason, there is a real urgency to build a human community based on authentic listening and on real openness to “the Other” (Han, 2018).

Interactions of cultural perspectives in processes of education can be fostered while developing an institutional model of artistic education and creating spaces for free creativity development, artistic creation, cooperation, and so forth. The fact that this takes place anyway and anyhow due to globalisation, can be directed consciously in the educational system and at universities due to orientating programmes towards transcultural openness,

and can be stimulated by direct cooperation between co-creators from different countries and cultures.

3.1.3. Fluid spirals of creativity and imagination

Planning artistic and creative activities within the TPAAE, has followed the logic of the third aim of the project: *Practical* – supporting the development of an art scene in the region of Kilifi (Kenya), with fruitful artistic research and interaction, concretizing in the Festival of Art and Education “DUOS,” fostering mutual relations between the European and Kenyan art scenes (Jastrubczak, 2024).

The activities implemented were transformative in the way the participatory research paths were conducted, supporting collective and involved thinking in the contexts of intervention. A community approach was favoured, which, over time, took on further value, especially in terms of educational and didactic co-design. In the following, I will describe some significant stages in the development and declination of the concept of creativity of artistic language, as this paradigm has influenced transcultural operating methods (still being implemented and developed in further research-action projects in the field).

There are no common definitions of creativity and related dispositional factors. «Creativity is a complex process that can be viewed as an interactive system in which relationships among persons, processes, products, and social and cultural contexts are of paramount importance. [...] People are not creative in a general sense; they are creative in particular domains such as the visual arts» (Zimmerman, 2009, p. 386). [...] «Creativity based on models developed in art education and other fields, can be enhanced and teaching strategies can be developed to stimulate creativity. [...] A model of creativity for the visual arts that is inclusive, rather than exclusive, and views creativity as possessed by all people, not just an elite, is one that should be encouraged» (Ibid., pp. 391-393).

Regarding the broader relationship between creativity and knowledge, Herber Simon sustained that «acts are judged to be creative when they produce something that is novel and that is thought to be interesting or to have social value. Interesting or valuable novelty is the touchstone of the creative» (1985, p. 3). This definition directs our reflection to the collective impact that divergent thought can have at level of innovation and social change. We all have potentialities to develop to be creative (Barile, 2017) and we can all play an active role in global and local contexts. It is also interesting to specify the aspects that define creativity from a psychological

perspective (Guilford, 1950) looking in greater detail at some characteristics from an educational viewpoint:

- *fluidity*, that is the ability to generate ideas, regardless of their use in problem-solving. It means being able to overcome performance anxiety and the results often associated with learning;
- *flexibility*, that is the ability to change ideational strategy, and therefore to pass from a succession of ideas to another, from one pattern to another – with critical revisions, arguing choices in close connection with completed situations, adding to the flexibility of thought, not just as a dispersion of energy but as an exercise in critical thought;
- *originality*, which consists of the ability to find unique, particular, and unusual answers, which may not be included in the immediacy, but which raise questions and doubts, leading to exchange dynamics valorising intuition and personal discoveries;
- *processing*, can be defined as the progression through to the conclusion of an ideational trajectory, characterised by a substantial degree of intricacy and interconnectedness. This progression should be pursued with a view to identifying a consistency that does not constrain creative logic, but rather serves to reinforce it in the face of linear approaches and other readily identifiable rationales within training and educational facilities;
- *awareness of problems*, which means selecting ideas and organising them in new ways, understanding what is and what isn't right, can be perfected in the use of everyday objects – with a strong reference to practice, experience, and being part of specific contexts that, being plural, heterogeneous and complex, require tools for analysis, thought, and dynamic and transformative action (Biasion, 2017).

Creativity is part of the life skills that denotes an innovative design thought (Glăveanu, 2011; 2014; 2021). «Creativity and innovation involve putting things together in new ways, it involves risk-taking, experimenting and refining, valuing the role of productive failure, it involves making and doing, and is often collaborative and co-creative. While creativity is about the capacity to put things together in new ways, innovation is often seen as putting them to work and out into the world so that they meet a need, want or interest. These capacities do not get switched on when people hit the world of work, they need to be cultivated across the education lifespan in all subjects in as many ways as possible» (Davis, 2017).

The capacity to articulate ourselves in a creative manner enables children, young people, and adults to immerse themselves in diverse scenarios, transcend cultural boundaries in novel ways and ascertain their significance as articulate advocates for their personal development and their

function within community frameworks. This occurs in a continued dialectic between acquired knowledge and the production of an original thought: “inside-the-box thinking” is the basis for creativity “out of the box” (Weisberg, 2009). Creativity, therefore, is not the result of the complementarity of deduction and intuition, reason and imagination, emotion and reflection, divergent and convergent thought (Biasion, 2017). It is therefore essential to develop learning paths aimed to circulate a «culture that makes it possible to understand our condition and to help us to live, it is, at the same time, a way of thinking, freely and openly [...] through the power of “ecologising” thought, it is because this «is a fundamental quality of the human mind [...], it is a question of developing it rather than atrophising it» (Morin, 2000, pp. 3-19).

3.1.4. Plural orientation of the Kids’ Session: design thinking

One specific action of the TPAAE project was the DUOS Festival (an exchange and cooperation among artists from Poland and Kenya) in which the Italian partner was responsible for the Kids’ session aimed to involve children, teenagers, families, schools, and communities in meaningful creative and artistic experiences.

Two editions of the Festival were organised in 2021 (given the interruption to activities caused by the Covid-19 pandemic), through the creation of a special Kids’ session that, continuing the subjects dealt with in the project, focused on the areas of “Community” in the first edition (February 2021) and “Women Empowerment” in the second (August 2021). The last edition was implemented in March 2023 taking in consideration the topic “Social Ecology”.

Different levels of intercultural, transcultural, and creative reflection are present in the design of the activities and art workshops carried out in various primary schools and socio-educational services in the city of Kilifi. The objective was to reconnect pedagogical and educational processes within a complexity that is still evolving and has left different traces on the way of thinking and interpreting pedagogical research and art education approach, together (Knowles & Cole, 2008; Leavy, 2017).

The first level concerns the work group that conducted the activities: a team of researchers in educational and art history from the University of Macerata; teachers and educators from the primary schools and socio-educational agencies in Kilifi; local artists (painting and sculpture professionals); students from Pwani University and volunteers from local

socio-cultural associations that cooperated in the planning and creation of the workshops.

The management of a team with different skills, cultural backgrounds, and roles was a decisive step in interrogating educational intentions in dialogue with numerous requests. Interaction, group consolidation, the possibility to reconnect with working networks that have been in place for some time, and cultural mediation, connected to a readily available dialogue among the parties have played a key role in co-planning the work system and in conducting the activities (Deluigi, 2019). This was not an episodic gesture, a sporadic event, or a momentary action, it was a matter of consolidating bridges of dialogue that had been open for quite a long time (considering that initial research activities carried out in partnership on similar subjects date back to 2018 with the TICASS project)³, including processes for the deconstruction of stereotypes and decolonial discussions that are still ongoing. The strength of the partnership network lies in its extreme variability regarding to the issues addressed and the communities involved and, at the same time, in its consolidation in relation to the methodologies of interaction and collaboration.

The second level of reflection concerns the actual realisation of the artistic and creative activities that, starting with co-stimulation of researchers, artists, and teachers, opened many learning perspectives and expression of forming identities. Through the use of artistic materials, prevalently pictorial and graphic – the children explored their imaginations, working individually and in small and large groups.

On the theme “Community” cooperative workshops were set up, focusing mainly on the creative process of the group and not only on the outcome. The need and ability to share time, spaces, materials, ideas, and representations encouraged participants to cross over into inclusive, interactive dynamics, making room for creativity as a shared process and experience (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 2014).

Narratives of personal experiences were considerable, as were the expectations and the wishes for the second edition of the workshop, “Women Empowerment” which saw, in particular, young girls and teenage girls at

3. TICASS - *Technologies of Communication Imaging, Art and Social Sciences* - is a project, financed by the European Union as part of the Horizon 2020 programme. Call: H2020-MSCA-RISE-2016. The Consortium was composed by: Akademia sztuki w Szczecinie (Poland - coordinator), The Polish University Abroad in London (UK), Stowarzyszenie Edukacja, Nauka, Kultura in Szczecin (Poland), Univerzita Jana Evangelisty Purkyne v Usti nad Labem (Czech Republic), University of Macerata (Italy), University of the Witwatersrand (Republic of South Africa - until 01.02.2018), Pwani University Collge (Kenya - from 01.02.2018) (2017-2021) (<https://ticass.eu/>).

the centre of attention, looking for rights and educational opportunities that participation could offer for more equality. Knowledge was co-constructed among the children and adults through constant dialogue, with different languages that conveyed a host of abilities, skills, and attitudes, such as elements of personal stories outlined using different expressive modes (Deluigi, Cuccu & Mondin, 2022).

Finally, the last edition, dedicated to the “Social Ecology”, explored the theme in depth through artistic and expressive workshops in which children and adolescents explored the territory, took photographs, drew personal and group representations, and mapped significant areas of urban and rural spaces they had experienced. The use of the body in the realisation of the activities took on a particular value, also to learn cooperation and team-work logics, aimed at supporting the importance of creating human communities in balance between ecological and eco-systemic subjectivities.

The third level of analysis regarding creative and participatory processes concerns the adults who interacted with the children in an interdisciplinary team, proposing a transcultural model (in development), getting involved, and opening dialogues aimed at understanding complex situations within the context of numerous classes and with a developing teaching syllabus, currently in use in Kenya (CBC – Competency Based Curriculum). The presence of researchers, artists, teachers, students, and volunteers fostered a greater awareness of their skills to design initiatives that could convey educational approaches for adults and children. Promoting creativity to support children in the discovery and narration of their imagery required an educational care able to solicit critical reflection from an artistic and cultural point of view and a repositioning of adults within the contexts of action. Moreover, the possibility of experimenting with collective creative approaches in formal and non-formal learning contexts opened up further educational opportunities, even in more peripheral areas, which thus had equal access to the same opportunities.

Finally, in the current state of research, a final element that emerged concerns the cooperative approach and “learning by doing” (Dewey, 1938; Reese, 2011) which has allowed participants to become the actual protagonists of the workshops with a high level of engagement. This made it possible to create spaces open to dialogue and the creation of shared stories that could be further narrated in the light of the significant experiences that led to the involvement and desire to communicate points of view, interpretations, and emotions linked to the proposed themes. The function of “third educator” performed by the environment, understood as a setting, broadened the meanings, also in a relational climate that stimulated the

exchange of ideas and brought out personal and group skills on the creative and expressive axis (Capriotti, Deluigi, 2022).

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