



ISATT 2023

Living and Leading in the Next Era:  
Connecting Teaching, Research,  
Citizenship and Equity

*Edited by*  
Loredana Perla  
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Viviana Vinci  
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# Living and Leading in the Next Era: Connecting Teaching, Research, Citizenship and Equity

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*Loredana Perla, Laura Sara Agrati, Viviana Vinci, Alessia Scarinci*

All contributions published in this volume have been rigorously subjected to peer review by experts in the field, to ensure the high quality of the research and its relevance to the scientific community.

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# What relationship between designing and regulating in times of emergency?

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Emergency is a constant of our time, and its presence causes a climate of uncertainty. In relation to education, uncertainty has always been a feature of the teacher's actions, but nowadays it has become a pervasive presence that impacts on teaching professionalism and requires a revision of the concepts of design and regulation in action. Our research hypothesis proposes to train future teachers to 'design for the unexpected', i.e. getting them used to design patterns setting up a range of possibilities, consistent with the theory of simplicity.

The research lasted two academic years and involved almost 400 future teachers enrolled in a teaching methods course at the University of Macerata. Only in the 2022/23 a.y. we proposed students the model. We analyzed both years' educational designs; results show that students gained greater awareness of their role in regulation and of its causes and modalities; students also became more aware of their decisions.

**Keywords:** teacher education, emergency, design, regulation, unexpected

## 1. Introduction

The interrelation of social, environmental, political, economic, and health crises, often referred to using the word 'polycrisis' (Morin & Kern 1999, p. 74), makes emergency an occurrence of our time (Kvernbekk *et al.*, 2015; Mag-nussen, 2018). Getting back to normality is a utopia. Emergency as the new normality also impacts and characterizes the educational scene and therefore it is necessary to rethink the idea of emergency itself and the one of didactics in emergency (Pentucci *et al.*, 2023).

An additional element that cannot be overlooked is the post-digital culture (Jandri *et al.*, 2018); it places innovation at the center and requires professionals, especially future teachers, to be capable of dealing with unfamiliar and unpredictable situations.

## 2. Theoretical framework

Polycrisis impacts on teaching professionalism and on the need for a revision of design and regulation concepts.

While in the past, regulating in action (Altet, 2003) meant improvising by adopting the teacher's embedded practices nowadays the situation is too complex. Today, design must support regulation in a different way and that's why we propose '*Design for the Unexpected in Education*' (DUE).

DUE is a model constituted by the presence of many possibilities from which to choose and to lean on to decide rapidly (Pentucci, Rossi & Capolla, 2023).

The model is based on five strategies: modularity, anticipation, redundancy, deviation and hierarchization (Berthoz, 2011; Rossi & Pentucci, 2021; Capolla *et al.*, 2023).

## 3. Methods

For the present study, we advanced two main research hypotheses:

- the use of DUE allows the practitioner to deal with the unexpected with greater awareness;
- the use of DUE supports the practitioner in action and allows for "proceduralization" (Bolter, 2019) of regulation.

Moving from these hypotheses we formulated the following research question: does designing for the unexpected enable management of problematic situations and support regulation in action?

Step 1: Analysis of designs to identify typologies of difficulties linked to unexpected events that happen during the lessons.

Based on this analysis the DUE model was developed and the research protocol prepared.

Step 2: Analysis of designs to investigate how DUE changed regulation.

Our research involved almost 400 students who attended the teaching of Theories and Methods of Educative Planning and Evaluation (TeM) of the Master degree of Primary Education Sciences at the University of Macerata (Italy), a five-year degree that trains future primary school teachers.

The analyzed materials relate to the activities carried out in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 academic years. Only in the 2022/23 a.y. we proposed students the DUE model.

At the end of the course, in the 2021/22 a.y., future teachers presented a document that contains:

- the detailed planning of the activities to be carried out;
- the transcript of the lessons they delivered themselves;
- the post-action reflection.

The students of the 2022/23 a.y. had to produce the same document but following the DUE modifications and proposal of hierarchy of the activities. That is, they had to specify in the pre-action plan the alternative paths to be implemented during the lesson.

These design materials represent the corpus we used to collect data for the research.

#### 4. Results

We started by analyzing the 2021/22 a.y. data set. We classified, according to Braun and Clark (2006) methodology of thematic analysis, the main difficulties that future teachers encounter when an unexpected event happens (Pentucci, Rossi & Capolla, 2023). After the analysis of the following academic year data set, we found five categories of difficulties, mainly linked to:

- time management;
- technology management;
- classroom climate;
- learning processes;
- inappropriate strategies.

To carry out the analysis, we:

- analyzed 229 lesson plans from the a.y. 2021/22 and 199 from the a.y. 2022/23;
- used the root of the verb “to decide” to extrapolate sentences from long and complex text in order to obtain data (Manovich, 2020) that highlighted the moment in which something unexpected happened and forced future teachers to modify their plans;
- looked to see if there were any explicit references to the lesson plan or the hierarchy of the activities;
- pinned the difficulties linked to unexpected events by tracing them to one of the five categories (see Figure 1).

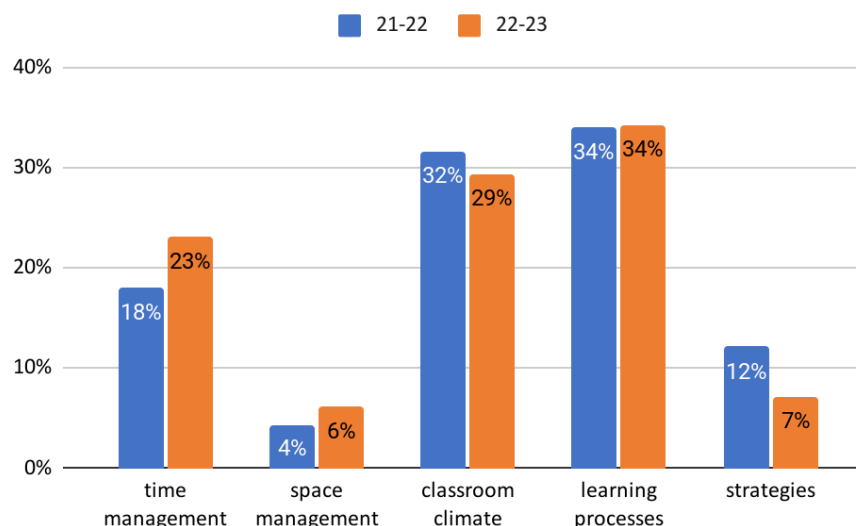


Figure 1. Typologies of difficulties

After the analysis we found the following. Using “deci” as the sentence inclusion element, we found:

- 275 excerpts in 229 designs (1,2 average) for the a.y. 2021/22;
- 539 excerpts in 199 designs (2,7 average) for the a.y. 2022/23.

The sentences including terms such as “I decided” highlight students’ awareness of the act and the teacher’s role. Students also specify the motivation of their choices.

## 5. Conclusions

The categories of difficulties encountered by students remained quite stable between the two years allowing us to use and compare the two data sets.

A more frequent presence of the term “decision” suggests that students have greater awareness of their role in regulation and of its causes and modalities; students also became more aware of their decisions.

In 24% of designs there is the reference to the adoption or non-adoption of redundant activities and students declared that the DUE helped them to feel supported in managing anxiety.


DUE modifies regulation in action: reliance on experience alone to deal with the unexpected and improvisation nowadays are not enough. Regulation becomes a redesign in action and involves the use of both implicit intelligence (embedded practices) and explicit intelligence (Damasio, 2021) (i.e. strategies of DUE).

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In the ever-evolving landscape of education, teaching transcends mere artistry; it is a profound commitment requiring wisdom, continuous development, community collaboration, and research support. With the complexities of modern classrooms, educators face unprecedented demands. They require comprehensive initial training, ongoing professional growth, collaboration within the social fabric, and backing from research communities. Addressing these needs empowers educators not just to endure but to thrive, shaping the forthcoming era towards inclusive digital citizenship and gender equality.

The ISATT2023 conference, hosted by the University of Bari, convened over 200 scholars worldwide. This publication compiles their insights, spanning diverse continents and cultures. Organized into three thematic sections, it delves into research methodologies, societal challenges, and innovative pedagogical approaches. From exploring teaching paradigms to fostering inclusive environments, this collection offers a panoramic view of contemporary educational landscapes, stimulating curiosity and promoting further exploration into the realm of teaching and learning.

