Abstracts

Operational definition of an effective psychological and educational profile: Conceptual and psychometric approach in a sample of Elementary Teachers Spanish Educational System

Miguel Ángel Carbonero Martín, Juan Antonio Valdivieso Burón, Valeria Caggiano, Luis Jorge Martín Antón

From the construction and validation of a rating scale of self-perceived Competence of the Primary School Teachers (ECAD-EP) is obtained the teacher profile assumed and developed by teachers of primary education belonging to the Spanish educational system that tries to answer operationalization of teaching styles that allow the teacher to discover those features that best demonstrate a high effectiveness. The structure of the scale validity presents a three-dimensional factor in the following order: (a) *Socio-emotional*, composed of the variables: "Coexistence", "Mediation", "Revitalization group", "Emotional involvement", "Adapting communicative", "Communicative sensitivity", "Empathy" and "Self-efficacy"; (b) *Communicative- relational*, consisting of the variables: "Assertiveness", "Affective leadership", "Executive leadership", "Conflict resolution", "Nonverbal communication" and "Paraverbal communication"; (c) *Instructional*, which contains the variables: "Adapting to new situations", "Instructional control" and "Planning".

Thus, the theoretical model of teaching as defined initially, has been appreciating elements and factors that form a multidimensional concept of meaning, including not only factual or behavioral variables, but also cognitive and metacognitive, social and emotional. Therefore, teaching is not only seen as a process of sequential linear or uniform but circular in nature with a

constant interplay between a number of variables or dimensions and multiple hierarchies.

Self-esteem and motivation assessment in Luso-African secondary school students in Portugal

Vicente Llorent Bedmar, Vicente-J. Llorent, José-Manuel Mata-Justo, Roberta Messina

Given the international relevance of the Portuguese migration policies, this survey investigates the inclusion and integration processes related to second-generation immigrants who come from Portuguese-speaking African countries and attend the upper-school in Faro and Setúbal (Portugal). To reach this goal, during the 2009-2010 school-year, we realized a quantitative survey focusing on students' educational achievement and its influence on teaching-learning processes. For this aim, we administrated a Likert's scale questionnaire which measures the factors that play an important role in reaching the educational goals. We found that the most relevant and significant factors which contributed to the educational achievement of students were intrinsic: motivation processes and self-esteem.

Contributions to the definition of an interdisciplinary critical technology

Antonella Poce, Laura Corcione, Annalisa Iovine

The Project "Contributions to the definition of an interdisciplinary critical technology" stems from the results of a departmental research started by DIPED (Department for Educational Design) in 2011, "Contributions to the definition of a critical technology", with the aim of favouring and promoting the development of critical thinking skills in higher education students, from different areas of study, offering online cultural insights.

The results obtained in the previous research, though highlighting a certain difficulty in argumentation and writing production, were comforting as regards the employment of the model (Poce *et al.*, 2012) devised by the research group for the project.

The hypothesis to be verified aimed at establishing if proposing cultural insights to students, built according to specific structures on which guided discussions are carried out online, critical thinking skills are improved, notwithstanding the field of study.

Assuming that present higher education students show a widespread difficulty in writing and argumentation, the research group decided to extend the model devised in 2011 also to other areas of study to assess its efficiency. This has ben possible thanks to the creation of an *ad hoc* teaching and learning module entitled "Critical thinking skills and the reading of the classics", available on the *Orbis Dictus* (Vertecchi *et al.*, 2010) e-platform (www.orbisdictus.it), where two groups of students could access: one from the faculty of Education, University Roma Tre and one from the faculty of Engineering – University of Salento.

The activity allowed some general considerations. Notwithstanding the small numbers of the students involved (48 students in total in the year 2012), the opportunity to carry out the analysis with two different cohorts of students (2011 and 2012) from the Faculty of Education – Università Roma Tre allowed a diachronic evaluation of results. For the first time, then, the research group could employ the model also with another field of study students.

Taking into consideration the differences between the groups involved, data collected show a positive impact of a model that wants to make a critical use of technology and, employing consolidated teaching and learning structures, put democratically at disposal of everyone cultural insights, which are essential to educate "a free citizen in a free republic" (Garin, 1957, p.157).

Keywords
Critical thinking skills, online learning, content analysis, innovation, critical technology.

Non-verbal communication with immigrant children in pre-school. A comparative study

Francesca Corradi

Paul Watzalwick's research shows that non-verbal communication represents an essential element in social contact among individuals. In the

study carried out in 2009-2010 the relation patterns between pre-school teachers and immigrant children or children of families emigrated to Avignon, a French city, and to Reggio Emilia, an Italian city, were investigated. The purpose of this article is to cast light on the different interaction patterns of educators with children as far as to the different education contexts in which they normally operate. The analysis performed aimed to study the relation between two variables through the calculation of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient and the analysis of variance (Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests).

The use of various analysis tools, such as Likert-type scale questionnaire, participant observation and semi-structured interview, allowed data triangulation. The analysis highlighted statistically significant differences in physical contact between teachers and children in relation to the location of the school, that is suburban vs. centre city schools, ratio of immigrant children and cities, Avignon/Reggio Emilia.

Evaluating schools and education systems. Better less but better
Bruno Losito

The article focuses on the evaluation initiatives and projects carried out in Italy in the recent years.

It considers different projects aiming at evaluating the school system, the individual schools, and the universities. The purpose is to make explicit the conceptual and methodological assumptions behind them and to illustrate their impact on school and university teachers' perceptions of assessment and evaluation. Particular attention is paid to the assessments carried out by the Italian National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education System. The article also discusses the relationships between evaluation and educational policies.

Pre-school, France, Italy, non-verbal communication, comparative study. The audio-guide to the exhibition Tintoretto. Oral and written comprehension
Emma Nardi

The exhibition on Tintoretto, held in Rome at the Scuderie del Quirinale in 2012, was the setting for an experiment devoted to investigate the cognitive outcome of the introductory audio-guide offered to visitors. Participants were 201 students of two different upper secondary school of Rome, divided into two groups: the first group listened to the audio-guide text and the second read its transcription. The aim of the study was to highlight possible differences between oral and written comprehension, considering not only explicit information retrievable in the text, but also the implicit canon underpinning it, in terms of basic knowledge related to the recognition of the artists' background and origins, of the attribution of works and paintings to their authors, of the recognition of the picture of specific artworks of the time.