
INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN ITALIAN SCHOOLS

Body and music for listening and sharing without words

Barbara Zanchi*, Elena Bacarella**, Luisa Bonfiglioli ***, Anna Rita Addressi****,
Elisabetta Colace ***** & Francesca Quadrelli*****

Abstract: This paper illustrates the work developed by the Italian partners in the LINK Project, Learning in a New Key, in relation to the implementation of specific training for school teachers to promote inclusive teaching practice through music and expressive body languages. The theoretical principles and framework of expressive therapies like music therapy and dance movement therapy will be discussed and we will consider how they have informed the work of professional music and dance-movement therapists in implementing the training programme. School teachers have been involved in a series of musical and expressive-body experiences to experiment and elaborate new strategies and knowledge to promote their empathic, relational and creative competences for their educational work. They have also been supported in implementing a series of class based creative activities oriented by the same principles and enhancing a relational and emotional approach in teaching practice. The paper will discuss how teachers and vulnerable young people have experienced transferable skills that might be significant in school and in lifelong learning. In line with the participatory action research paradigm that the project's partners agreed on, the paper will also describe the study carried out by the researchers to analyse the impact of actions implemented during the project both on students and teachers of classrooms involved.

Keywords: teacher training, expressive therapies, inclusive teaching practice, relational well-being

PRÁTICA INCLUSIVA EM ESCOLAS ITALIANAS: CORPO E MÚSICA PARA OUVIR E COMPARTILHAR SEM PALAVRAS

Resumo: Este artigo ilustra o trabalho desenvolvido pelos parceiros italianos do projecto LINK, Learning in a New Key, em relação à implementação de uma formação específica para docentes, no

* MusicSpace Italy (Bologna, Italy)/University of the West of England (Bristol, United Kingdom).

** Istituto Comprensivo Granarolo dell'Emilia (Bologna, Italy).

*** Department of Education Studies, University of Bologna (Bologna, Italy).

**** University of Bologna (Bologna, Italy).

***** MusicSpace Italy (Bologna, Italy)/Art Therapy Italiana Association (Bologna, Italy).

***** MusicSpace Italy (Bologna, Italy).

sentido de promover a prática de educação inclusiva através da música e das linguagens corporais expressivas. Serão discutidos os princípios e enquadramentos teóricos desenvolvidos por terapias expressivas, como a musicoterapia e a terapia do movimento e da dança, e será analisado como estes informaram do trabalho de profissionais da música e terapeutas de movimento e de dança para implementar o programa de formação. As/os docentes foram envolvidos numa série de experiências musicais e de expressão corporal, no sentido de experimentarem e elaborarem novas estratégias e saberes para promover as suas competências empáticas, relacionais e criativas no trabalho educativo. As/os docentes também foram apoiados na implementação de uma série de atividades criativas na sala de aula, orientadas pelos mesmos princípios, e dirigidas para melhorar a abordagem relacional e emocional na prática educativa. Este artigo discute como docentes e jovens vulneráveis experimentaram, nessas atividades, novas competências transversais que podem ser significativas na aprendizagem escolar, bem como no processo de aprendizagem ao longo da vida. Em linha com o paradigma de investigação-ação participativa acordado entre os parceiros do projeto, este artigo descreve também o estudo realizado pela equipa de pesquisa para analisar o impacto das ações implementadas durante o projeto, tanto nas/nos alunos/as quanto nas/nos docentes envolvidos.

Palavras-chave: formação de professores, terapias expressivas, prática de ensino inclusiva, bem-estar relacional

PRATIQUE INCLUSIVE DANS LES ÉCOLES ITALIENNES: CORPS ET MUSIQUE POUR ÉCOUTER ET PARTAGER SANS MOTS

Résumé: Cet article illustre le travail développé par les partenaires italiens dans le cadre du projet LINK, Learning in a New Key, en relation avec la mise en place d'une formation spécifique pour les enseignants des écoles, afin de promouvoir une pratique pédagogique inclusive grâce à la musique et aux langages corporels expressifs. Les principes théoriques et le cadre développés par les thérapies expressives comme la musicothérapie et la danse-thérapie seront discutés et on examinera comment ils ont été informés du travail des musicothérapeutes et des danse-thérapeutes, pour mettre en œuvre un programme de formation. Les enseignants ont participé à une série d'expériences musicales et expressives pour expérimenter et élaborer de nouvelles stratégies et connaissances et pour promouvoir leurs compétences empathiques, relationnelles et créatives dans leur travail éducatif. Ils ont également été soutenus pour mettre en œuvre une série d'activités créatives basées sur les classes, orientées par les mêmes principes et pour améliorer une approche relationnelle et émotionnelle dans la pratique de l'enseignement. Cet article examine comment les enseignants et les jeunes personnes vulnérables ont connu par le biais ces activités de nouvelles compétences transversales qui pourraient être importantes dans l'apprentissage scolaire mais aussi dans le processus d'apprentissage tout au long de la vie. Conformément au paradigme de la recherche-action qui a été convenu entre les partenaires du Projet, l'étude décrit également la recherche menée par les chercheurs pour analyser l'impact des actions mises en œuvre au cours du projet tant sur les étudiants que sur les enseignants.

Mots-clés: formation des enseignants, thérapies expressives, pratique pédagogique inclusive, bien-être relationnel

Introduction

The main purpose of this article is to illustrate the theoretical reflections and the results emerged from the Link Project integrating different professional areas, mainly focusing this description on the teacher training activities and on the activities carried out with children in the classes. This paper illustrates the work developed by the Italian partners of the LINK Project¹ in relation to the implementation of specific training for school teachers who work with young people who present different kinds of emotional and social vulnerability. The aim of the programme was to promote inclusive teaching practices to prevent early school leaving, ease disadvantages for young vulnerable people and sustain resilience and continued learning through music and arts based activities (Warner, Stachyra, & Zanchi, 2016). Music, arts and expressive body languages are considered in relation to their positive effects on learning processes and emotional regulation, as well as for their creative and relational potentials, have represented the core aspects of the proposed training in the LINK Project.

The project involved music and art therapists working alongside teachers in order to empower them in using music-centred practices and expressive approaches in their work, help them acquire new and innovative skills and support relational well-being in the class, both for students and themselves. Two researchers have also been involved in the project to analyse the efficacy of the interventions on both groups of students and teachers in relation to their emotional well-being.

The evaluation of the work has been implemented in the framework of participatory action research and included qualitative data resulting from art products, feedback, interviews, reports and case studies from students, teachers and therapists, together with quantitative data from a pre and post-test design study using observation and questionnaire with students and teachers. A focus group (Greenbaum, 1998) has also been conducted with teachers. Although adapting the protocol to the different challenging classroom contexts, the impact study focused the analysis on two specific constructs, related to the purposes of the LINK teachers trainer: the emotion regulation (Gross, 1998; Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2007; Gross, 2014) and the Flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) *optimal experience* that results from the balance, perceived by the subject, between the challenges that s/he wants to achieve and the personal skills to achieve her/his goal. Recent studies (Tavarez & Freire, 2016) show how the relation between flow and emotion regulation processes can contribute to positive development in adolescence and how data gathered by normative population can inform positive clinical interventions. This work in Italy has been developed thanks to the collabora-

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tion of three institutions: a school, the Istituto Comprensivo di Granarolo dell' Emilia (ICGE), a music therapy association, MusicSpace Italy and the Department of Education Studies² of the University of Bologna. The paper illustrates the perspectives of these three professional groups: art-therapists, teachers and academic researchers respectively.

Expressive therapies for teachers and young vulnerable people

Contextual and theoretical framework

The growing number of problematic and complex cases in Italian schools requires teachers and therapists to find a mutually fruitful dialogue. This can encourage both teachers and therapists to meet, within their own specific professional role, to address the complex and diverse educational needs of those vulnerable children who suffer hardships or disorders associated with developmental problems and difficult life situations.

Italian schools operate within an inclusive model. Classes are open to children with or without disabilities who can interact as equals. Inclusive education is focused on a child-centred pedagogy and aims to be flexible for the needs of all; disabled/vulnerable children are included in the class and participate in the same activities as all the other children but in a way that is tailored to their individual possibilities. Inclusive education is based around the following principles: everyone is unique and can learn; diversity is a resource; children may learn to understand diversities and; learning can grow through cooperation.

Inclusion is a fundamental right in relation to the concept of lifelong «belonging»; its purpose is to allow each individual to access normal life in order to grow and develop as a complete human being. The LINK project fits in very coherently with these principles. It tried to offer new

² The Istituto Comprensivo Granarolo dell'Emilia (ICGE), aggregate nursery, primary and secondary schools in a continuity of curriculum. ICGE has a specific music curriculum and welcomes students with disabilities, special educational needs, social difficulties and non EU immigrants. The institute had 1096 students in 2016; a counselling-educational service is available for prevention of social and emotional difficulties.

The Department of Education Studies of the University of Bologna is one of the pioneers in this field world-wide, with over 30 years of teacher training, research and counselling experience. The Department includes the subject areas of Cultural Anthropology, Pedagogy, Psychology and Sociology. Common research goals are: learning assessment, training and educational models, lifelong learning methodologies, didactical digital contents and teacher training.

MusicSpace Italy, established in 1999 as the Italian branch of «The MusicSpace Trust» based in Bristol (UK), is a leading national association promoting training, practice and research in music therapy in Italy. MusicSpace has collaborated with the Universities of Bristol and West of England (UK) for professional training and with several national institutions for practice and research in hospitals and various health, social and education services.

experiences and resources through arts to meet teachers' needs for a continuing professional development. This is fundamental for an inclusive teaching approach with its individual and social implications. The LINK project aimed both to address these needs and to promote the dialogue between educators and therapists through the programme of teacher training (TT) in arts-based emotional and social education, particularly through music-centred practices, that involved vulnerable young people as social actors and continuing learners. In Italy, the TT programme was implemented by a team of two music therapists, and one dance-movement therapist from MusicSpace Italy. The programme included in the two years a series of meetings with 13 teachers that experienced several music and body based relational activities and a number of class based activities (CBA), which teachers themselves proposed in their teaching practice with the collaborative reflection of the therapists. In the last stage of the training the therapists themselves worked directly in the classes alongside the teachers to conduct some specific musical and movement experiences.

Before illustrating the kind of activities developed, we would like to contextualize expressive art-therapies, specifically music therapy (MT) and dance-movement therapy (DMT) and to explain how and why they have been used in the LINK project. The assumption underlying DMT and MT is that movement and music are primary languages shared by all human beings. They represent the common denominator of expressive, emotional, cognitive and communicative abilities of individuals and cultures. DMT and MT employ a therapeutic use of body language and music respectively, in order to build a therapeutic relationship that addresses dissonance, physical and mental blocks and stress.

The theoretical and methodological models to which we refer include pioneers such as Juliette Alvin (1975), Mary Priestley (1975) and Helen Bonny (1973, 2002) for music therapy, Marian Chace (1975) and Mary Whitehouse (1958) for DMT. Originated mainly from their artistic background, their work has been further developed into different psychotherapeutic expressive-approaches integrating the creative process into the dynamic and relational one (Bruscia, 1998; Kestenberg, 1979). Theoretical and methodological definitions of MT and DMT have been enriched by contributions from object relations theory (Winnicott, 1971; Ogden, 1992), attachment theory (Ainsworth, 2006; Bowlby, 1969, 1988), cognitive neurosciences and their integration with psychotherapy and psychoanalysis (Bromberg, 2011; Gallese, 2014; Schore, 2003; Siegel, 2012). Furthermore, the most recent studies in the field of infant research (Stern, 2010; Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009; Tronick, 2007) and inter subjectivity (Ammanniti & Gallese, 2014) contributed to demonstrate how the dyadic early interactions between mother and child are shaped by musical and bodily elements, named as human «musicality», and to what extent they are involved in the development of the emotional competences in the child and in the affective attunement with the mother.

To implement the TT programme for the LINK Project we also referred to trauma related studies in DMT (Colace, 2017) and to several clinical music therapy studies on this theme (Robarts, 2016; Bruscia, 2012; Bunt & Stige, 2014; Zanchi, 2002, 2011). Music therapy and DMT are focused on the creative process by which we mean the set of mental, bodily and emotional processes that are activated while the person creates. In order for the creative process to take place, it is essential to activate a core body awareness of the area of pre-verbal experience that has its origins in the internalization of the primary maternal relationship.

In the light of these theories, the expressive languages constitute a privileged channel for reaching and reworking archaic moments of development and any related trauma. In more general terms, they can increase personal awareness, favouring greater integration and control of personal emotions and their affective states, throughout the different developmental stages.

Both these art therapies share an intersubjective matrix that is based on the human drive towards expressiveness and on our innate predisposition to enter into contact with others. They refer to «musicality» as an intrinsic competence of each individual, based on our innate predisposition to recognise and differentiate elements of time and form. This experience reaches back to our earliest dyadic relationships and is common to all the forms of human expression, which allow us to enter into contact with others (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009; Stern, 1985). Thus, these therapeutic practices allow us to reach out to the expressive, communicative and creative core of individuals and groups (Bunt & Stige, 2014).

Experiences and activities

During LINK, in working with teachers, we used some DMT and MT methodologies and techniques offering a welcoming and non-judgmental approach like that one of the expressive therapist in therapy.

We started from the body and movement, then moved towards musical expression and finally to verbal communication. The first stage of the training consisted of five meetings, in which teachers participated directly in the proposals of experiential activity and theoretical discussions offered by the therapist-trainers from MusicSpace Italy. These were not therapeutic groups and did not aim to transform teachers into therapists³. The aim therefore, was to offer a body and music experience that would enable teachers to gain greater inner awareness and achieve closer contact with their own creativity, emotions, needs and resources, to enable con-

³ Specific training for therapists exists in Italy and throughout Europe for a minimum of three years. In Italy, professional areas related to therapy and teaching are regulated by legislation that sets the goals and areas of intervention by protecting their respective roles.

nections between sensory aspects, emotional and imaginative experiences, and between the needs of the class and the teaching role.

The trainers' role was therefore to empower teachers in terms of listening skills and expressiveness at a predominantly non-verbal level through increased awareness and «embodiment». Further aims were to expand educational expressive strategies in terms of emotional self-regulation (Bitti, 1998) and to enhance various styles of expression and pleasure linked to communication and knowledge. We believe that these elements can support teachers in gaining and experimenting innovative and sophisticated strategies for educational purposes from an emotional and social perspective, while promoting the inclusion and management of complex situations. The two years training aimed at investigating three areas: the experiential area, the observational area and that one we have been naming of «creative export» of the experiences in the classroom. These areas are integrated, interconnect with each other.

In the first year, the experiential and observational areas were mainly investigated. In a series of meetings teachers were offered direct experience, both individually and in groups, of elements of Laban Movement Analysis (Laban, 1950), musical improvisation, free and structured, non-referential and referential (Bunt & Stige, 2014; Wigram, 2004), guided music and imagery listening (Grocke & Wigram, 2007; Grocke & Moe, 2015), symbolization, and dramatization. Moments for verbalization to share and reflect were included. Several observational tools to be used in the classroom with students were experimented and discussed with the trainers. This favoured deeper reflections about their teaching role and their strategies in relation to the problems and needs of the students.

During discussions, a thematic synthesis was carried out around some symbolic words representing the main polarities and aspects emerged from the teachers, such as: personal space/relational space; structure/form; rules/freedom; creativity; identity; self-expression; containment; feeling safe and therefore free; feeling welcomed; imagination; having fun; diversity; resources.

To give an example, we encouraged teachers to explore their own internal space, through breathing exercises and imagination. They were then invited to feel their skin, as the «shell» which differentiates internal and external worlds, and then to take time to explore their own external space, or «kinesphere» (Laban, 1950). After this, they could draw or write something about personal space, in order to make some connections between the different levels of experience: body, movement, emotion, imagination, thoughts, etc. A second part was dedicated to the interaction between one's own spaces and the other's, again through non-verbal body-movement exploration. The transition from non-verbal to verbal experience was encouraged by questions, focusing attention on the different ways of sharing spaces and communicating through them (with reference also to Winnicott's «transitional space» where play and creativity can exist).

In general, the teachers noticed that working with body and movement could open direct access to emotional and relational level of experience, sometimes also to archaic memories and lived experience. At the same time, they found that sharing their own movements, images and thoughts with other colleagues could open a shared space of play and creativity, which they could export into the relationship with their students. As trainers, when we proposed a similar experience in classes, tailored for those where «boundary» problems were more relevant, teachers were able to accept the children in a more all-embracing integrated way, as they said in a later collaborative reflection moment. We think, and the teachers confirmed, that being able to access their own connections (body and movement, memories and emotions, musicality and thoughts, etc.), and share them with colleagues, may give teachers a very important tool for embodied relational understanding and attunement with pupils, in particular with more vulnerable ones.

In the second year, after a first experiential meeting to bring the group of teachers together again, work focused on «creative export» of experiences in the classroom. Ideas and suggestions for projects to be carried out in classes were discussed. These projects were focused on needs of students, teachers and problematic situations which came to light. Each project called for the therapist-trainers to be present in the classrooms for a set number of encounters, and for the teachers to carry out another number of class activities which were constantly coordinated and supervised by the trainers.

In this second phase of the LINK project, the teachers asked for some more direct therapist-trainers interventions in the classes to observe both their professional work and the reactions of pupils to some MT and DMT techniques and experiences specifically tailored to fit students' needs, particularly those of the more vulnerable ones.

The activities in the classes were accompanied by group and individual supervisions.

In primary school classes, the trainers found that several creative projects were already being carried out by the teachers. As well as offering new tools and strategies that could be integrated within these projects, the trainers also and primarily encouraged a different observational perspective based on accepting and valuing the children's individual styles of communication. The main issues addressed in the various classes were those of personal space and space of the relationship, body boundaries and a sense of one's self, primary and complex emotions and their regulation, listening and observation of self and companions.

In secondary school classes, therapists' direct intervention became more frequent as teachers found it more complex to integrate these kinds of uncommon creative experiences within the didactic programme of the different subjects. In fact, in Italy, part of university training for teachers of primary schools focuses on creative work, while in university education for secondary and high school teachers, there is no such training and lessons on specific subject teaching are preferred.

In general, the trainer offered an observational perspective that listened to the experiences of the pupils, focusing more on the creative process than on the creative product. The aim was not so much «what» to do, but «how» to do it, how to be in a relationship with the children and the group, how to observe and respond to demands of students, especially those emotionally and socially vulnerable.

Some examples of activities introduced by the teachers in both levels of school showing the progress in their teaching practice by means of training are: music listening in different moments of the school day to facilitate transitions between different activities and to regulate mood as starting the school day with musical listening to focus attention; listening to a piece while painting to stimulate imagination; listening to a short piece to release the tension before a test and to focus the attention on the task; body percussion and movement with music to activate, energise and interact; class song compilation; song writing about school and life.

Below we describe an example of a CBA developed in secondary school with a class of 25 students, aged 13-14, where the music therapist expert worked constantly alongside the mathematics teacher. The process developed over six sessions conducted alternately by the music therapist and the teacher; the last one was conducted interactively together with the class.

- Session I: Exploring musical instruments, group improvisation, verbalization/sharing (trainer-therapist conducting).
- Session II: Class group reflects on the previous experience and gives feedback on meaning of the experience (teacher conducting).
- Session III: Class is divided into four groups. Each group has a conductor (class student) and an assigned theme previously agreed; the themes explored are «freedom», «rules», «freedom and rules», «sound and silence». Each group, led by its conductor, discusses the theme, chooses some musical instruments to explore it and performs an improvisation on the theme to the class. A final verbalization completes the session (trainer-therapist conducting).
- Session IV: Each group reflects on the experience done and writes some thoughts on the theme assigned. Based on the ideas that emerged, each group chooses a title for the improvisation (teacher conducting).
- Session V: Through discussion and dialogue each group, chooses a picture and a song to associate with the given topic (teacher conducting).
- Session VI: All material chosen and produced is collected and organised in a video that is watched and discussed all together; the students give their feedback on all the experience. A final musical listening ends the process (teacher and therapist-trainer conducting).

In the last session, to reveal the phenomenological impact of the LINK activities, we invited the students to give free feedback about the process. Many of them underlined the beauty and

fun of such unexpected experience and said it had been important to work in group with the music like this. They enjoyed, expressing their feelings and cooperating for a shared aim. At the beginning they didn't believe they could achieve such a result. To watch their work in a final video was very important to get a full sense of the whole process and students were very proud of it.

One student said that for the first time he could find the space to think extensively about important themes, «taking a break» from daily school and adolescent worries. Some of them were enthusiastic about being able to make music in a way that allowed them to be active, make choices and take responsibilities in the music; to explore through music themes so close to their life was strange and chaotic at the beginning but very meaningful.

This experience has been very useful not only because we skipped the lesson but because it was important to be able to work in this way in a group, to have new experiences and to bring some fun here in school. To learn to play new beautiful instruments was important and the video made very interesting and good. (student)

Another one affirmed: «At the beginning I thought playing instruments was just a funny game, then I realised how articulated it can be... I understood many things. With this experience I got to know my school friends much better». Several students with social and emotional difficulties were involved in this experience and said that they would like to have more of these activities in their school time.

The teacher who collaborated with the music therapist said she was very satisfied with the experience; she realised how much the students focused on the task and developed a collaborative way of working, including those with more difficulties. She also thought that watching the work in video was very gratifying for some students and challenging for others, but really important for all the group.

Teachers' feedback to the project were collected in different occasions and forms: during the collaborative reflections, in their reports, in the final meetings of each year of the TT, in the interviews, questionnaire and focus groups carried out for the impact studies. From these different data sources emerged a positive teacher evaluation of the project.

In their comments teachers showed the development of self-reflection and awareness about their role and professional competences. Some of them underlined the relevance of the self-experiential part of the work to sustain the continuing personal development essential in their work. Instead, others stressed the importance of the specific expressive «exercises» or «techniques» they experimented as an opportunity to get more involved in the relationship and stimulate the children to learn with joy and become more confident of their own expressive and creative potential.

Many teachers reported how strongly they experienced the power of music during the

school day: «playing instruments is an activity that brings the children to listen, to focus their attention and to be more able to attune with the others» and furthermore «listening to music at the beginning of the school day has helped the children not only to relax and focus their attention on the day, but also to recognise and become more confident with different emotions».

Some critical moments that occurred during the classed based activities were discussed in collaborative reflection in relation to the power of music and bodily experiences to reach intense emotional states. In these occasions the collaboration between therapist and teachers proved to be fundamental for supporting teachers in adopting educational approaches and strategies informed by therapeutic thinking.

The development of a social-emotional competence in teaching practice and the importance of the relational aspects beyond the contents and the products offered and done were core elements of the entire TT.

In their final feedback at the end of the TT, teachers shared and named several attitudes they were able to experiment and develop: they talked about the importance of listening to pupils' subjective ways of expressing themselves, of valuing their emotional competencies and of being more flexible and creative in their interactions. They reported that their observational skills developed towards a student-centred way of teaching and that their attention focused more on the «process» rather than predominantly on the «product» of the learning experience. At the same time they stressed the importance of having adequate time in the school day for these activities and of being supported in the development of new practical educational actions related to these competences.

In the next section, we will illustrate teachers' reflections about the integration of LINK activities in the pedagogical framework and in the educational context of the Italian school involved.

An emotional network approach in education

Nowadays, girls and boys attending schools are wrapped in an aura of «vulnerability» that is common to different ages and social backgrounds.

As *educating subjects*, the uneasiness that we are called to face require us to become able to use a different magnifying glass when reading the needs of the new generations. LINK full understanding of this, enabled all participants from different countries to experiment and adopt different pathways converging toward the same direction.

We need «to invest in relationships and dialogue between different professional figures that have to work in a group inside our schools» (State Undersecretary for Education, Hon. Faraone), opening a LINK Multiplier Event at the ICGE School, April 2016.

During the first year of the project, ICGE School focused its attention in planning learning spaces, gleaning the physical, social and psychological effects on the students. The training that engaged all the school team led to spread the «cooperative» lesson and the actions undertaken in the classes participating to the TT, made it possible to accompany, monitor and document the activities in cooperative learning in teachers' daily practice.

The project provided answers about teacher's role. After basic training in non-traditional «values and feelings», the teachers took on a different role in the relationships that s/he establishes. Teachers can improve their ability to recognize/observe a child's access to different emotions and a child's ability to regulate emotions to favour social integration and well-being in school. Teachers involved have supported the students' learning process favouring discussion and cooperation among group members.

The group shows more and more variables of non-alignment with surrounding society and risks estranging school from students if we do not invest in training to alternative communicative and expressive codes (Chabas, 2010), like those of the expressive arts and music languages. Naturally, these reticular connections require defined professional profiles and contributions from more and more advanced digital competences as well as to stimulate reflection in the academic world and to avoid being estranged from other educational agencies.

School immediately latched on to this necessity. With the scientific support of the Italian Ministry of Education, the school attempted to develop a dialogue with the university and the professional world of music therapy. Due to Italian legislation, these professions are not connected, and the recourse to therapeutic practices in extracurricular activities is ignored. The LINK «formula» was effective for «tracing» the development of reflection, of an activity or specific training, which involved us, *institutional subjects*, in the frontline.

Moreover, musical instruments, artistic practices and activities with computer tools can help teachers and students provide these types of cooperative lessons in other school situations with similar background. In the school model proposed by LINK methodologies, the teaching-learning setting constantly changes on the basis of the channel experimented and used. Experimentation involved musical productions in a mathematical key, active listening, thematic comic strips, collection of illustrations and iconographic productions worked out with music (Moreau, 2013), selection of musical passages for class discovery, expressive conceptual maps, audio and video recording and audio and video editing. Podcasting and digital storytelling are the tools used to show and disseminate at the best the experience of the ICGE School.

We undertook to promote inclusive practices, for the purpose of favouring students' learning and commitment, particularly of those with educational needs. The lessons or workshop experiences in class were based on relaxation techniques not only before the performance tests but also at the beginning of the school day or before practical and workshop experiences

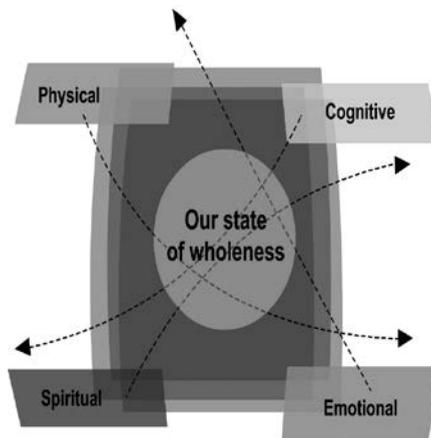
(painting, theatre and dance workshops, music and dance activities, etc.), using tools like LIM (multimedia) or audiovisual support to the presentation of a final production.

To give an example, one can imagine peer groups that, after doing a given drill or in-depth examination job, are sharing, revising and presenting the assigned activities in class resorting to creation and discussion.

It was very important for trainers and researchers to observe the teacher playing a role as a selector of teacher-learning resources (in a scaffolding logic), monitoring the activity and facilitating discussion in the class (25 pupils).

One may say that what has been said coincides with the theories of «Connectivism» by Siemens (2006) in relation to the fields of knowledge: physical, spiritual, cognitive and emotional.

FIGURE 1
Domains of knowing (Siemens, 2006)



Since knowledge originates from a network of prejudices, opinions, self-corrections and preconceptions, this American sociologist thinks that the three main theories informing the creation of learning environments, Behaviourism, Cognitivism and Constructivism, arose when learning had not yet come to face with technology and with various forms of uneasiness that «people» can present in our classes (Siemens, 2006).

During the last twenty years, technology has reorganized our way of living, communicating, interacting, facing off in the social environments and also learning, favouring sometimes new forms of illiteracy.

In LINK classes, a comparison can be made between the concept of learning subtending the traditional psychological theories (Bertacchini & Guerra, 2002) and the new learning modalities,

worked out thanks to a paradigm of networks (Barabási, 2002) that focuses on its crucial points trying to explain how informed use of new technologies can send out positive messages of «social justice» to the new generations.

The correlation between the different tools of the LINK setting and *connectivism* starts from the idea that knowledge is defined as a particular model of relationships and learning, as the creation of new connections and structures that guide us in the present-day reticular model (Siemens, 2004). This model reproduces the structure of Internet, involving a series of networks, and in training it's possible to feel its greatest impact affecting the contents of management and leadership.

The analysis of our data indicates that LINK will go from strength to strength and teachers, young people and trainers will all benefit from the enthusiasm that we are generating together.

Promoting well-being in school: analysing flow experience and emotion regulation

Taking into consideration the overall purpose of this article and with the aim to outline how researcher, trainer and teachers engaged together in capturing the effect of musical and arts based innovative experiences carried out during the project, this section describes the specific contribution of the researchers briefly presenting the general protocol design of the impact study together with some preliminary conclusion shared with other Italian partners from different professional areas.

The aim of the impact study carried out by researchers from the University of Bologna during the second year of the LINK Project was to test the efficacy of the interventions in promoting well-being of the young vulnerable people identified and their willingness to engage in continuing learning and school attendance (Addessi, Bonfiglioli, & Clough, 2016). In order to contribute to deepen both the theoretical framework and the evaluation process of the new training model based on music and music therapy, the expected impact was investigated in students and teachers. The former was made up of young people in Europe who are currently disadvantaged in formal education because they are challenged by their emotional and mental states and poor social interactions. The second group includes teachers who attended the training programme described above in order to improve young people's well-being, resilience and continuing learning. Taking into account the general context of Participatory Action Research (Lewin, 1946; Chevalier & Buckles, 2013) referred above, the impact study concerns the evaluation of the new training model. Moreover, a further aim of the impact study was to carry out comparative data analysis providing some intercultural insights.

Several meetings were carried out with teachers and trainers in order to share the protocol,

introducing and clarifying the specific roles (researchers, trainers and teachers). Ethical issues, materials, procedures concerning both the collection of parents' consent form including general information about the project and the questionnaire administration were shared between researchers and teachers in a signed agreement.

The impact study, shared and finalized with the Italian national group at the beginning of the school year, aimed to collect data about some indicators of two specific psychological constructs related to well-being: flow and emotion regulation.

As an important motivating and supporting experience that enhance creativity and learning processes, *Flow* can be defined as the psychological state of maximum optimism and satisfaction that a person perceives during the course of an activity. It is closely related to the concept of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). The state of flow is defined as the optimal experience that results from the balance, perceived by the subject, between the challenges that s/he wants to achieve and the personal skills to achieve her/his goal.

In turn, emotion regulation may be defined as individuals' deliberate or automatic attempts to influence their emotions, when they have them, and how these emotions are experienced or expressed (Gross, 1998, 2014). Emotion regulation involves changes to one or more aspects of the emotion, including the eliciting situation, attention, appraisals, subjective experience, behaviour, or physiology (Mauss et al., 2007).

Allowing the matching up of qualitative data, as the one reported in the former two sections and qualitative data, the impact study involved 11 teachers and 225 students from primary and secondary school (100 primary school students, 8-9 years old and 125 secondary school, 11-13 years old) divided into class involved in the LINK activities and classes not involved.

The research protocol foresees data collection with students following four distinct phases: 1) individuation of participants/classrooms according to the protocol informed by ethics for young vulnerable people; 2) data collection (pre-test) through questionnaires and validated scales; 3) CBA carried out by the teachers in their classrooms with the collaborative reflection of the trainers together with some direct trainers' interventions in the classes; 4) data collection (post-test) through the administration of the same questionnaires of the pre-test phase.

Two validated questionnaires have been used: the Flow Questionnaire (Jackson, Eklund, & Martin, 2010) a self-report questionnaire to describe the characteristics of the Flow experience, adopted to evaluate the flow as a complete and coherent experience and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) (Balzarotti, John, & Gross, 2010), a self-report questionnaire to describe the characteristics of two emotion regulation strategies, reappraisal and expressive suppression. Reappraisal is a cognitively complex regulation strategy; it involves changing how one thinks in order to influence one's emotional response. Expressive suppression, as a regu-

lation strategy, involves expressive changes in order to influence what others are able to see of one's emotional response.

In particular, the students of secondary school filled in these two validated Italian versions: 1) the Short Flow State Scale (S-FSS), Italian validation (Diana, Villani, Muzio, & Riva, 2012); 2) The ERQ, Italian validation (Balzarotti et al., 2010). The children of primary school filled two adapted forms of the questionnaires for their age; the administration procedure was slightly modified from those one adopted with students of secondary school.

Moreover, two case studies were carried out in primary school classrooms in order to collect data about the level of the flow indicators with an observation schedule implemented during the project on the basis of a previous grid (Addressi, Ferrari, & Carugati, 2015).

In order to analyse issues and themes strictly related to their involvement in the LINK Project, teachers and trainers were required to participate in three focus group meetings to discuss their professional competences. These meetings were conducted by a researcher and were audio recorded in order to allow quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Moreover, teachers filled in the Italian validation of the S-FSS questionnaire (Diana et al., 2012) after an expressive experience realized both during the first and the last teacher training meeting.

Comparing the data gathered before and after the class based activities (pre and post phases of data collection), an increase of the Flow experience (in terms of occurrence and intensity), a reduction in expressive suppression and an interesting effect on cognitive reappraisal for both children and pre-adolescents were found. These differences are more evident for the students involved in the LINK activities than for the ones not involved. This data could be useful to reflect on the possibility that the multi professional approach adopted during the LINK Project has enhanced actions to help vulnerable young people using music to enhance «optimal experience» and to engage complex emotions. This is coherent with students' and teachers' reflections presented above and with studies that outline that young people are most likely to use music more frequently when they are distressed in order to regulate emotion (Brown & Bobkowsky, 2011; Bonfiglioli & Bitti, 2014). Moreover, data gathered from the focus group meetings, allowed us to understand adequate strategies to effectively integrate LINK activities and ease the transition to a participatory and motivational learning environment. It highlights that the students' perception of the educational practices integrated with the contributions of music and art therapy can yield significant and useful results if these experiences can be done daily as routines and adopted by all teachers of the same class.

Final remarks

Over the two year project, we would like to highlight the value of multidisciplinary and inter professional collaboration. The change of perspective, resulting from the integration of different professional competencies and focus of attention on «processes» as well as on «products» of the learning experience, was recognised as one of the main contributions of LINK to support active engagement and relational well-being in school. To pursue this aim a significant challenge for all of us was to implement a strategic approach in each occasion that could integrate the different perspectives on education, relations, therapy, expression, art, creativity, evaluation and research and not merely juxtapose them. How data allows emphasising these views may become essential resources only if they are unified in a coherent vision informing a new educational model that might include such new creative experiences in the specific context and curricula of each school.

The experience of LINK in Italy was a significant stimulus to continue to reflect and research on creative and relational potentials of music, arts and expressive body languages.

We believe that many more understanding and learning will certainly emerge from the analysis of the materials and the elaboration of all the experiences realized in the project. This process of elaboration, still on going in our inter-professional group, is essential to nurture a creative thinking about possible future developments of the educational model implemented in the LINK Project.

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***Contact:** Via Giovanni Brugnoli, 11, 40122 Bologna BO, Italy.
Email: barbara.zanchi@musicpaceitaly.it*

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