

CHAPTER 22

$$1+1=1$$

The path to the invisible

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CREATIVITY AS A PROCESS

The subtitle immediately refers to the core of the tool: the path to the invisible. The didactic practice we propose, in fact, does not foresee a predetermined final product. The goal is to encourage maximum creativity by the participants during the process, therefore it is not possible to predict the final outcome in practical and concrete terms. It is part of the educational game. The teaching methodology, on the other hand, is defined at each step of the work and it requires careful attention by the teacher, even from the setting and the working environment.

One and One - are One -
Two - be finished using -
Well enough for schools-
But for inner Choosing -

Emily Dickinson, All poems, J769 (1863) / F497 (1862)

This teaching practice starts from the theories on creative intelligence developed in Italy since the 1960s. From this point of view, a group of scholars were the guides and the pioneers. Maria Montessori, Gianni Rodari, Mario Lodi, and the designer educator Bruno Munari dedicated their analysis to the functioning of the creative and the atypical mind. The focus of our activity is represented by the object (One Thing Leads Into The Next, Bruno Munari) which is decontextualized but at the same time it does not lose its history and identity. Indeed, it is precisely from the stimuli that they offer that the creative and transformative path can begin to find new solutions, new functions and an original story.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

It is important that the teacher is aware of the methodology. Therefore, training is fundamental, and it must take place both through a theoretical approach (reading and keeping oneself up to date regarding the functioning of the mind in the creative field) and through first-person practical experience. The teacher

has the role of facilitator of the processes taking place both at an individual and group level. For this reason, no judgment must be formulated during the creative process: all responses to inputs in a serious and concentrated context of work by the student are to be considered positive. Everything is possible. The assessment will be possible only at the end of the activity and involves a dialogue between teacher and student in a self-assessment context.

The teacher becomes a “counselor”. A promoter of creativity. [...] he or she is an adult who is next to the children, so that they can express the best of themselves and develop an attitude to creation, imagination, constructive commitment through a series of activities that should now be considered all equal: that of pictorial, plastic, dramatic, musical, affective, moral, cognitive (scientific, linguistic, sociological), technical-constructing, recreational production [...] there is no hierarchy of subjects (Rodari, G. (1981). *La grammatica della fantasia*. Einaudi. pg.174).

The skills consolidated by the teaching practice concern:

■ **Critical Thinking:**

- Analysis of the input object of the activity, its History, and the natural context to which it belongs or in which its use is normal;
- Texture of the narrative;
- Identification of the most effective forms of expression in communications.

■ **Creative Thinking:**

- Decontextualization of the object;
- Interactions between the objects (by intuition too).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TOOL

Art has always consisted in the discovery of the new. Nineteenth-century Romanticism broke every barrier in search of the infinite, placing the artist's creativity at the center of a cognitive path that takes place outside a purely logical procedure. The most evident contribution to this development, however, lies in the provocation of the Dada movement and in Twentieth Century Surrealism. They identify the decontextualization of human objects and experiences as the beginning of both artistic making and the cognitive process. “The essential is invisible to the eye” says the Little Prince of Antoine de Saint Exupéry. Each object hides a mystery that allows us to go beyond the limit of what is known and to find new solutions. In an era in which artificial intelligence works according to standardized methods, in which the use of social networks favors a quick and often superficial approach to reality, we need to return to look at

everyday life in a different way and to train our thinking to solve problems with new strategies and to cultivate and follow intuition.

“As beautiful as the casual meeting of an umbrella and a sewing machine on an anatomical table”.

Isidore Ducasse, Count of Lautremont. *Songs of Maldoror*

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the American Psychologist H. Gardner there is not just one type of intelligence but a multiplicity of forms, that is biological potentials present from birth which in every human being assume a particular combination of levels of development, making his/her intellectual profile unique (Gardner, 1983). The educational intervention desired by Gardner is not that of a notional education but of a didactic mediation that, in face of the unpredictability of the adult of the future, favors the understanding of basic contents and above all the mastery of access tools to the various cultural spheres, so that the subject can build his/her personal knowledge independently also through the possibility of choosing that knowledge most similar to his/her nature.

Gardner uses as a point of departure his concept of seven “intelligences” ranging from musical intelligence to the intelligence involved in understanding oneself. He examines seven extraordinary individuals – Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso, Igor Stravinsky, T.S. Eliot, Martha Graham, and Mahatma Gandhi – each an outstanding exemplar of one kind of intelligence (Gardner, 2011). From there he draws the attributes common to the seven personalities and highlights the role creativity has played in defining their intelligence.

Rodari highlights that it takes great imagination to be a great scientist, to imagine things that do not yet exist, to imagine a better world than the one we live in and get to work to build it. Rodari is convinced that imagination has its place in education, he claims the importance of developing creativity and imagination in the classroom (Rodari, 1996). Fantasy helps to uninhibit the mind, to get it out of preconceived patterns.

Nursery rhymes and stories in the name of error: distracted pupils, boring professors, athletes who are not up to date with their spelling... “Often mistakes are not in words, but in things; we must correct the dictates, but above all we must correct the world” (Rodari, 1964). Rodari takes us into a broken down and disordered linguistic universe, but it is not a text of boring grammatical exercises because the magical Rodari gives rise to laughter from every oversight, changes the rules of our grammar at stake, opens a dense and very rich dialogue with the readers.

Gaita, in an essay that can be read as a novel, explains the story of a psychoanalysis and a musician, using simple language in evocative territories of our mental functioning: the way in which music makes us think about something without being able to say it with words; the mechanisms by which a perfume irresistibly triggers a memory: or the profound patterns by which a fantasy, a landscape or a melody sets our minds in motions.

Pitruzzella developed a survey on creativity born from the field of Arts Therapy, a discipline having a growing diffusion in Europe. After a general definition of creativity, Pitruzzella analyses its importance in the healthy development of the person and its value as a resource in the educational, therapeutic, and social fields (Pitruzzella, 2009). Next, she proposes a detailed description of how the creative process works and the possibilities activating, governing and evaluating it.

Munari is a great Italian artist, known throughout the world for the whimsy and lightness of his creations. He demolished the myth of the artist-star once and for all to replace it with the figure of the 'designer'. Through a compelling analysis of works and themes, conducted with clear and enjoyable drawings and images, Munari provides an extremely comprehensive presentation of design and mental strategies in the design phase (Munari, 2008)

EXPLANATION OF THE TOOL

Preparing setting:

- Open space;
- Objects chosen with care: the teacher can ask students to bring an object with a symbolic value or that reminds them of a particularly pregnant and meaningful memory. Each object is accompanied by a card that reconstructs its 'history';
- The teacher prepares other objects to interact with in the activity – two of them for each student: the choice can be random but done with care;
- The teacher prepares a series of questions aimed at facilitating the decontextualization of the object;
- The teacher prepares a series of questions aimed at finding new relationships between objects;
- Colors of various types and materials for artistic manipulation (for example clay);
- Sheets and drapes.

All the objects will be made available to students who will then make their choices. The basic rule is to take care of both the tidiness (each object must be

shared and therefore must be stored with care) and of each phase of one's work, as well as of the work environment.

1. **ESTRANGEMENT:** decontextualize objects from their everyday life function.
2. **TO ARRANGE TOGETHER DIFFERENT THINGS:** unexpected combinations.
3. **THE BENEFIT OF A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW: FRAMING OPEN QUESTIONS.**
4. **LEARNING BY DOING:** the intelligence of the hand. Experimentation phase of the multiple potential interactions between objects. The final choice is the student's.
5. **TRANSCODING INTO SOUND AND MOVEMENT:** each work can then be presented and in turn generate a musical, dance, theatrical performance.

Expected outcome

Students:

- Promote the emotional and emotional aspect of studying;
- Promote intuition as a resource in problem-solving;
- Encourage flexibility when applying procedures to interpret reality;
- Integrate logical intelligence with the intelligence of doing (rediscover the playful dimension of learning);
- Open possibilities for integration between the various disciplinary fields;
- Support effective communication of one's work;
- Manage self-assessment.

Teacher:

- Acquire new data for the skill assessment by observing the process and the final interview with the student;
- Encourage collaboration with teachers from the team and other disciplines.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the authors outline the essentiality of creativity. They break the existing stigma that creativity is a skill that should only serve the 'artistic' professions. The authors go through the literature review to prove that in all great professionals and personalities analysed, creativity is a common constant.

In order to bridge the gap between the lack of creativity in schools and the importance this skill plays in personal and professional development, '1+1' becomes an effective solution. This innovative pedagogy presents students with the right scenario to find imaginative solutions to 21st century problems. Our societies no longer require problem-solving but rather problem-analytical skills. Our societies have become interwoven, sophisticated, and complex and without developing creative minds, we will not be able to face the myriad of challenges our future lies ahead. The authors outline the importance of teacher training and preparation to nurture creativity in the classroom and they provide the readers with detailed guidelines to effectively use '1+1' in any learning setting.

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