

In-service Teachers Training

A proposal from Turin¹

Basic principles

The training model we present is the one prepared and chosen for the intervention within Turin's schools. It is a dynamic methodological model, within which theory and practice are helped to meet. Here the attention towards knowledge interweaves, with equal dignity, with attention towards practical knowledge and towards knowledge related to being, as should occur in all the training programmes that teachers prepare for or with their pupils.

Within the approach of the training program to be proposed to schools, the model's constitutive elements can be summarised in the following **principles**:

1. providing support and training to teachers means choosing to make them responsible for the implementation of activities aimed at children's and youths' social development. This method is preferable to, for instance, sending "experts" into the class. Indeed it is teachers who are in touch with students every day and can therefore observe and understand any dynamic in their class better than anybody else can.

2. providing the theoretical and practical tools the teaching group needs to start preventive actions inside classes. For this reason, it is important to try and arrange training programmes for teacher groups belonging to the same school. Sharing the reference context facilitates confrontation and sharing of experiences, making it easier to set up practical preventive routes.

3. starting from individual teacher's motivation to explore the problem in depth
The commitment of a group of teachers, motivated for exploring the issues of violence in schools, both that "brought back" from the socio-family environment and that actually enacted within school itself, is necessary.

A training-research group often arises from the particular sensitivity of some teachers on the subject of violence among contemporaries in schools and on the problems this phenomenon creates with respect to attaining students' educational goals. It implies being willing to read, study and discuss, to research within one's school reality to reach a better understanding of the phenomenon, to intervene for prevention, but also in the management of relations characterised by intimidating-imposing-bullying within the class and the school, getting involved personally. In the attempt to answer the need, so often expressed by teachers, to conjugate more adequately the individual inner world with the work activity, inside the group there will be the opportunity to reflect on the expectations and wishes connected.

4. Building a non-rigid, evolving and co-designed itinerary: the aim is to increment the educational skills and the technical-experiential knowledge of teachers, and more specifically to strengthen their mediation and intervention capacities to develop positive relations in the group with children.

¹ Prof. Franco Prina, Filippo Furioso, Adriana Pavese, Elena Fabris: Working group on violence in schools, Ithaca Project, Youth sector, Turin Council

5. Facilitating the encounter with people who have different kinds of knowledge and experience with whom to relate on a confrontational and cultural exchange level as well as to collaborate with for finding resources.

6. Arriving at shared assignment of meaning as a fundamental element for the pedagogic intervention of teachers-educators. This consists in committing oneself to forming collective thoughts so that knowledge becomes a goal shared by the group confronting itself with the existing literature or with what colleagues who've acquired expertise say. This is possible if one is able to:

- Re-evaluate the experience: favouring the creation of a shared knowledge, starting from verbalising problems and experiences of participants, and by sharing individual productions, one can ...
- Contemporarily pursue knowledge and action goals to reach the goal of building common pedagogic and didactic tools

Goals

- Incrementing teachers' knowledge on the phenomenon of bullying at school with reference also to European experiences which are put into the context of their work environment.
- Making everyone more able to grasp and "read" the signals of suffering present in the school context
- Favouring especially preventive intervention skills, through familiarisation and use of the diverse material produced for classroom use.

The training process

The teacher training process develops along a **route of activities** that can be summarised in three fundamental stages:

- **Presentation on the problem and self information**

The process articulates in stages which aim at studying the following contents (the order isn't rigid and some activities may be done at the same time):

- *a definition of bullying behaviour;*
- *protagonists: aggressors, victims, and witnesses;*
- *forms of violence;*
- *intervention models (improvised or emergency, tactic and strategic);*
- *participants' experiences of approaching the problem with students in the class;*
- *the most significant experiences within the Italian and the international context;*

- **Research**

To get to know the phenomenon better in the given context, the training programme includes a part of research on the field, limited to the school teachers work in, where help is given to prepare the necessary tools, to design questionnaires and interview students, teachers and parents, to process the data obtained, to draw conclusions and return results.

- **Start up of pedagogic -didactic actions**

Following on from the theoretical aspects proposed initially, and the research on the phenomenon within the context teachers belong to, the final stage is identifying and using with pupils those activities and games chosen for an initial approach to the theme, experimenting and preparing activities appropriate for a didactic project with classes, using

more complete and complex educational programmes for socio-affective development. This section is composed of three stages:

- a. Teachers themselves try out different appropriate activities that can form a possible approach to the problem in classes;*
- b. The experimenting is monitored;*
- c. The school as a whole is given the result of research data processing and of reflections, the experience is made widely known.*