

# STRUCTURING OF EDUCATIONAL PATHS AND AID INTERVENTIONS: CLINICAL PEDAGOGY IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

## STRUTTURAZIONE DI PERCORSI EDUCATIVI E INTERVENTI DI AIUTO: LA PEDAGOGIA CLINICA NEL CONTESTO SCOLASTICO

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### ABSTRACT

The School is increasingly defined as an institution aimed at promoting the general development of the student as a whole person, promoting the process of maturation in its complexity. If the school aims are not limited only to the didactic preparation but want to facilitate the overall development of the individual, it is necessary to ensure that teachers pay attention, not only with the didactic aspect in the strict sense, but also to the formation of the students, on emotional, cognitive, and socio-relational level. In this context, Clinical Pedagogy finds multiple and important fields of action to activate a whole series of reflections, interventions and experiences that favor an improvement in the quality of school life. To promote the above, this contribution intends to propose critical reflections aimed at implementing a pedagogical-clinical methodology based on methods and techniques designed to improve the well-being of the person, within the school context.

La Scuola si definisce sempre più come Istituzione volta a favorire lo sviluppo generale dell'alunno come persona intera, promuovendone il processo di maturazione nella sua complessità. Se le finalità scolastiche non si limitano alla sola preparazione didattica, ma vogliono arrivare a facilitare lo sviluppo globale del singolo, bisogna fare in modo che a scuola ci si occupi professionalmente, non solo dell'aspetto didattico in senso stretto, ma si dedichi uno spazio adeguato anche alla formazione degli alunni, sul piano emotivo, cognitivo e socio-relazionale. In questo contesto, la Pedagogia Clinica trova molteplici e importanti campi d'azione al fine di attivare tutta una serie di riflessioni, interventi ed esperienze che favoriscono un miglioramento della qualità della vita scolastica. Per favorire quanto premesso, il presente contributo intende proporre riflessioni critiche atte ad implementare una metodologia pedagogico-clinica fondata su metodi e tecniche volte al miglioramento del benessere persona, all'interno del contesto scolastico.

### KEYWORDS

Corporeality; Educational context; Pedagogy.

Corporeità; Contesto educativo; Pedagogia.

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In a complex and structured society such as today's, the school has a fundamental role in the process of formation and education of children and adolescents. The school, in a society that changes rapidly and where reference points are often lacking or emit conflicting signals and for these reasons able of disorienting both children and parents, as well as teachers, continues to question itself without finding concrete and incisive answers (Pascoe, Hetrick, & Parker, 2020). The school today is, at the same time, far away and close to children and young people: far away because it is structured in a bureaucratically static way and gagged in its creative potential by centralism, which dictates rules without knowing deeply the reality, by sometimes ineffective programs, but also by the loss of importance and respect for rules and values such as sharing, cooperation, the profound recognition of the right to one's own and others' individual growth, without something equally profound having replaced them (Biesta, 2021). Physically close because every day people meet each other, and clash on an arduous, but sometimes also constructive, ground. There have been numerous changes, especially formal, in the programs or refresher courses that have taken place over the last few years. Despite this, it is increasingly evident that they are not sufficient to respond to emerging needs and current educational needs. We have seen children increasingly distant and in situations of discomfort with respect to learning, commitment, interest, motivation, relationships, and human relationships between them and with adults (Longobardi, Settanni, Lin, & Fabris, 2021).

Since the profound need for change in the school world becomes increasingly evident and indications of solutions and criticisms, sometimes even constructive, are coming from all sides, it is a question of deeply understanding that the school is the mirror of social difficulties and contradictions. A place where people are together but often do not meet, where teachers transmit content and skills but where often they do not have very clear how to teach how to learn, where teachers train students but do not know how to pass from within what they are learning, in such a way that it becomes deep experience, growth, and transformation. It becomes necessary and urgent that the teacher returns to be the fulcrum and the builder of his pedagogical activity, which sets in motion his skills and strategies based on a creative methodology, to encourage learning in individuals with different characteristics and abilities, understanding that the student's boredom is the responsibility of the teacher and that it is necessary that the student recognizes

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in himself the desire to learn (Tröhler, 2020). Usually, we are used to living school as a place where cognitive skills are learned and where the psychophysical growth of the person seems to take second place and therefore not be relevant. The school should be, instead, a serene, quiet place where there are contexts of opportunity and satisfaction, and where there is no room for dejection or demoralization, much less the hunt for error, but a real process of growth of the individual must be guaranteed. The new curricula also place particular emphasis on the emotional variables involved in the educational process. All this makes it more likely that we will be able to make some progress towards a transformation of our educational system so that it becomes capable of promoting an integral development of the child, going beyond the simple intellectual dimension. An idea of "school for the person" is desirable, because the future of our school does not depend so much on structures and material means available, but rather on being a living and educating institution, capable of forming free, upright, solid, and open men, responsible and supportive of life and knowledge (Walker, & Graham, 2021).

The school, as an institution of the greatest educational and social importance, remains a privileged place where it is possible to carry out that preventive commitment necessary to offer each subject the opportunity to develop in a condition of total balance. Clinical pedagogy offers a contribution to this feasibility with its technical-methodological approaches that allow to closely follow the evolutionary process of the personality of each child and to take into account his natural needs (Pesci, & Mani, 2022). Clinical pedagogy recognizes the individual teacher with his human potential and his need to feel good at school, recognizes students who ask to be seen even and especially when they are not aware of them. Clinical pedagogy, exploiting the laboratory spaces or the area of some projects that aim at the search for global and active involvement of the student, could be an answer and an attempt not to lose the heritage acquired over many years of experimentation and research in many schools and to move forward in an educational and training approach rather than instructive (Fabbri, 2023). Clinical, in fact, does not mean "health" or "pathological", but individual, attentive to the singularity of people or situations or processes, detectable up close and appreciated in the totality of their manifestations. The primary objective of Clinical Pedagogy is to help the person aimed at promoting harmonious growth: the meaning of clinical defines the educational purpose as a human action of help to the person and the group (offering opportunities for development of their potential). It does not stop to see only the discomfort, it does not have a sectoral and limited vision of the subject, but it sees the person in his entirety and psychophysical globality. It uses strategies capable of opening a bridge between the person's potential, resources, possibilities and difficulties and discomforts, to develop, improve and bring out his skills, abilities and availability.

## **1. The key role of Clinical Pedagogy in School context**

The school of autonomy has set as the primary objective of its function the educational success of each student. The traditional school approach has long conceived the figure of the teacher as the one who had to be responsible exclusively for his own discipline (Palmieri, & Palma, 2019). He also embodied the image of a very authoritarian figure, using the "weapon" of evaluation as a tool to gain respect and as an expression of his judgment.

Today, in the new framework of school autonomy, each teacher is required to assume the traits of a true professional with socio-cultural skills, able to perform roles and functions of cultural mediator and promoter of socialization, evaluation, orientation and learning processes. In the first instance, we could define the teacher as a "facilitator" who, thanks to his pedagogical skills, must be able to build useful interpersonal relationships and create contexts of collaboration where the ultimate goal is the harmonious development of the person in a framework of "serene learning". Promoting formation in values and encouraging learning processes constitute the fundamental task of the current school, in which learning is not only memorizing, but also, storing information and notions, and learning, preparing itself for the execution of certain tasks. Learning rather means being able to equip oneself with new attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, it is necessary that the traditional static vision be replaced by dynamic approach, and that the superficial knowledge is flanked by greater operation (Farahi Sarabi, 2022).

Within these dynamics, the figure of the teacher does not stand as a direct cause of learning, rather it will favor learning opportunities, facilitating them, soliciting them rediscovering themselves skilled in knowing how to organize them. From these reasons it is easy to understand how the role of a teacher is particularly delicate. Teachers today are required to have different requirements, such as didactic preparation, communication skills, competence in the psycho-pedagogical field, continuous updating, organizational skills, problematic and critical attitude towards what is taught, knowledge of social problems, sensitivity of mind, willingness to compare with others. It is therefore natural to ask whether clinical pedagogy options can be developed in the school community. If a school raises the only problem of the level of culture or the quality of teaching, it is Clinical concerns are likely to be unfounded. Instead, they find an audience in those situations in which one wonders about the ways and causes of diversity, about the knowledge of the pupils or about the general meaning of education, as well as about its quality (Mirone, Radice, Ratotti, Riva, & Santoro, 2021).

Clinical Pedagogy, as a discipline dedicated to prevention and intervention to help the person, plays a key role in the training of the teacher. For clinical pedagogy, the knowledge of the individual is the essential condition of the educational work, since it must adapt to the needs and possibilities of each person (Viviani, & Pesci, 2021). The clinical pedagogical path concerns different age groups, and the

intervention is aimed at: (i) organizational-motor skills; (ii) apprenticeship skills; (iii) expressive-elocutionary skills; (iv) affective-relational skills; (v) behavioral skills. In collaboration with schools, Clinical Pedagogy is able to structure courses and workshops aimed at making teachers acquire communicative and scopic skills (Sirignano, & Maddalena, 2023). In the school it carries out teacher training, leading groups in ways suitable to make everyone express their thoughts, the conveyance of ideas to allow everyone to build new knowledge and experiences and to feel protagonists. These skills are also suitable for conducting groups on parenting to stimulate and encourage comparison, mutual communication, circulation of ideas, exchange of experiences (Manici, 2022). The intervention is convenient in schools of any order and degree to act a valid prevention that requires the identification of skills and potential, as well as the discomforts and possible difficulties, in order to structure pedagogical-clinical paths essential to offer the opportunity to live suitable maturational experiences. Multigenerational workshops in which participants are activated in dynamics aimed at integrating sensory-perceptive skills, developing kinetic-gestural expression and any other opportunity that guarantees the development of awareness in their semiotic production and the willingness to manifest it. Experiences that translate into trust, esteem, and availability.

## **2. The pedagogical-clinical approach and the configuration of the expressiveness of the body**

Any learning must pass "from one's own body" and the structuring of the body scheme is fundamental to any knowledge and experience. The pedagogical-clinical approach allows the subject to achieve a figuration of the movement of the expressiveness of the body in a succession of motions in space, to perceive shapes and rhythms, to orient himself figuratively in the multiplicity of topographic codes in which he can represent himself (Pallonetto, Perrone, & Palumbo, 2021). Encodings and decodes of a body that speaks with different figurations attenuated in moving on its axis, in promoting itself in posture and with the movement in space, a dynamic body to read on itself every kinesthetic representation and leave a trace. Playful experiences on a proprioceptive basis supported by respiratory dynamism, rhythmic construction, the execution of spatial forms and spaces of relationship, repertoires that from self-awareness, find an opportunity to enrich non-verbal and verbal communication (Flores, Rodrigues, Copetti, Lopes, & Cordovil, 2019).

Clinical Pedagogy has specific methods and techniques, which allow it to accompany the person along a path of personalized and effective help as it is based on its uniqueness and authenticity. With a view to enhancing inclusion, it should be understood as a process that uses educational intervention strategies and contents to be privileged to promote the psycho-physical well-being of all, as well as learning. This approach represents the beginning of a reading of corporeality that allows

schoolteachers to act on the educational process by enhancing inclusion as a "way of thinking and acting on relationships" (Fornasa and Medeghini, 2011).

The corporeality plays, therefore, the role of mediator, as well as relational fulcrum thanks to which it is possible to facilitate personal dynamics during the processes of learning cooperation, typical of inclusive teaching (Faggioli, & Schenetti, 2020). This function concerns not only the student, but also the teacher. It is in the concreteness of relationships acted and lived, of signals really exchanged, that identity and belonging are defined. In addition to cognitive processes in the strict sense, the school has as its primary educational objective the development of an inclusive way of acting and thinking of the trainers first and then of the students, an action that knows how to integrate the body, emotions and cultural devices and is capable, with its inclusive function, of reading and promoting interactions and respect for and between differences, people, culture (Mariani, 2020). Furthermore, the body does not assume a static-functional conception, but a dynamic and relational conception, strongly linked to the emotional aspects inherent in the person: the body-emotions relationship is functional not only to growth and learning, but also to the inclusion of the same within the various contexts of daily life. The body expresses moods, feelings: a language, the bodily one, which cannot be ignored for the overall development of the person (La Rosa, & Piccolo, 2020). In this sense, education cannot fail to consider the interdependence of the cognitive aspect with the bodily aspect of the person. Our sensorimotor dimension is the gateway to the ability to think, reason and act.

Corporeality and non-verbal expressiveness play a fundamental role in bringing to light a cognitive awareness: to this bodily dimension we must recognize the function in knowing how to perceive our body not as a set of parts in relation to each other, but as a unity in a space-time dimension. The strength of the clinical-pedagogical approach lies in the reciprocity between education, consisting of an interweaving of variables that influence the action of the same subject (Gamelli, 2019). Not to be confused with a health pedagogy or with special pedagogy, the clinic is a way of facing the professional themes that leads, in this case the teacher, to place in the background the theoretical frameworks and experiences to face, with strong dedication to the singularity, with proximity to cases and with a total look at the phenomena, professional situations and commitments. Therefore, educational action, especially in an inclusive perspective, must be able to cope with the bodily dimension that offers all individuals the possibility of being able to express themselves freely starting from the concept of uniqueness and singularity. Among the functions of the body is recognized that the body is a producer of meanings. It is through the body that man determines the meaning of everything that surrounds him (Digennaro, 2021). The school, in this perspective, takes the form of an educational entity, whose objective is to promote the construction and

growth of skills, abilities and knowledge of the subject functional to the construction of his life project.

## Conclusions

The educational offer of the teacher trained according to the approach of Clinical Pedagogy, conducted in respect of his potential, ability and availability, pursues the educational success of all students, with positively creative attentions that are transformed into experiences capable of enhancing individual attitudes and ensuring a favorable emotional and affective climate.

The pedagogical-clinical training allows the teacher to free himself from any mechanism and to break that paradigm that prevents him from seeing beyond the intellectual value also the affective one, to prevent the student from feeling colonized by didactic objects, to get out of the grayness of instructing for an educational chromaticity fostered by an authentic exchange of experiences. Such an approach allows the creation of dynamic paths that, starting from the unitary and integral conception of the person, are capable of polymorphic situations and experiences originating from a mosaic that leads to the consciousness of the body and to the constant mastery of every expressiveness in a creative and social sense.

In the light of these reflections, it can be concluded that teachers able to promote that complex of effective activities, pleasant, stimulating, welcome, rich in potential, susceptible to variations and capable of creating a living environment, constitute the necessary response to the educational needs of the pupils.

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