Chapter 4
"School–Cinema":
A Research Experience That Combines Educational Theories, Educational Processes, and Educational Technologies

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents an educational and consulting path for the use of new technologies that support the improvement of learning relationships in groups (Parmigiani, 2009), the construction of knowledge (Lakkala et al., 2007; Kangas et al., 2007) and the ability to recognize and explore the experience of communication and relationship at professional and personal levels, for the individual and for groups in order to enhance abilities and professional skills on several levels: cognitive, affective, conative and practical (Paquay, Altet, Charlier, & Perrenoud, 2001). Through the report of the experiments carried out for two years and applied to two training projects for teachers of five Primary and Secondary Italian schools, the main objective is to describe and present the overall results. The approaches used were inspired by the method of participatory research and action research with a clinical and pedagogical approach. The methodology is based on the case study of the Clinica della Formazione (Massa, 1992; Franza, 2003) that increases the emotional, communicative and relationship dimensions and gives concreteness not only to the educational action but also to the process behind it, which then becomes the target of investigations.

INTRODUCTION

"School-cinema" is a project of research and intervention as well as a training devise started from the Master in *Development of Clinical Skills in Educational and Training Professions* at the University of Milano-Bicocca, developed by Dr. Daniela Tamburini under the supervision of Prof. Angelo Mario Franza[1] of the University of Bologna. The project has been applied widely in different educational and

training contexts such as, among others, the Laboratories of *Systems of Communication* (2007-2008; 2008-2009) and *Film Language* (2005-2006) in collaboration with Prof. Cesare Massarenti – University Professor, International Consulting Information Technology - and the Laboratory of Visual Sociology of the University of Milano-Bicocca, faculty of Sociology.

This chapter presents the application of the project within a training program that lasted approximately a year and involved 98 participants: 48 teachers and 50 students of a School District of Milan consisting of four Primary Schools and one Secondary Junior School. It describes the pedagogical premises and foundations of the project, the structure and model adopted and its main outcomes.

The Context: The School as a Complex System

The experience of teaching can hardly be understood and can, perhaps even less, be expressed in an exhaustive way, given the complexity of its essential features. To this regard, in "*Changing the school*" (Massa, 1997), Prof. Riccardo Massa insists on the concept of complexity and, at the same time, of collectivity, intended as "understanding" and identified as a fundamental element when educating referred not only to the relationship teacher-pupil, but also to the relationships teacher-teacher and teacher-parent.

Pupils: we see a transfer of expectations, also of the affective type, to the school, especially by adolescents and pre-adolescents who are unable to handle positively the recognition of the role of student, and perceive the school (especially the class-group) as a theater, a real stage on which to act a passionate scene of "mirroring tenderness" (Charmet, 2009), often disguised as apparently apathetic behavior. Nowadays the school is, therefore, faced with the task of developing the connection between reality and image, to help the young person live better the dramatic contemporary fracture, in which devotion to one's own representation generates cultural conflicts that hinder the educational process and the development path.

Parents: parents, too, have to go through the culture of role, undergo strong pressure on the role of father and mother and are often forced to behave as if in a "theater performance", without being able to find the real role of father and mother. Within this scenario there may be some attitudes that tend to differ greatly with the school (and faculty) aiming at symbolically rebuilding a well-defined role, or looking for common aspects (alliances) to the point of reaching attitudes of passive delegation. This means that the school possesses a sort of rituality, where the conscious dimension is in contact with a deeper part, which we will not call "unconscious" but which we can certainly indicate as "unaware" (Ugazio, 2012).

Teachers: Let's now think of the teachers and the problems associated with their role. We can define them "the characters": the school is also the theater of one's own emotions, a place where to develop, but also defend (as if in a trench) professional as well as personal ideas and values. Being a teacher means taking on a role of responsibility with increasingly blurred boundaries that are often pre-determined (Cerioli, 2002). This role often implies the absence of shared reference points (Riva, 2008) with an inevitable increase of conflicts, stress and effort to accept and understand each other, to meet for common projects and recognize oneself as part of them.

The above three elements imply that the school is increasingly considered a complex system, where the variables at stake are linked by relationships of interdependence: the hypothesis underlying this research project is that, in this context, technology is to take on the characteristics of a pedagogical tool, functional to the modification of teaching-learning practices to cope with the change taking place in our time.

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