



More Opportunities for Every Child

DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT OF THE TRAINING

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Project brief presentation

The promotion of a high-standard pedagogical culture supporting pre-school education represents a top-priority within educational European policy issues. The EU Project *MOEC – More Opportunities for Every Child* is funded by the European Commission through the *Erasmus+ Program KA2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices*. It is connected with the aims of the European Agenda 2030 related to guaranteeing equal starting points for all children and reducing disadvantages and social inequalities.

Coordinator of the project is *Centro studi e Ricerche sulla Disabilità e la Marginalità (CeDisMa)* of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. The international partnership is relevant, because of the network between four European Catholic Universities (besides UCSC, l'Università Catholique del'Ouest, Anger, France; Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, Spain; Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II, Lublin, Poland) and five kindergartens (two Italian schools: IC "Falcone Borsellino", Offanengo, CR; Scuola dell'Infanzia "Gabrio Piola", Giussano, MB).

The project aims to sustain the achievement and development of competencies in pre-school teachers working in increasingly complex environments. This is possible by creating pedagogical tools for observing and detecting developmental difficulties in pre-school children. According to the last data survey issued by MIUR (source: MIUR - DGCASIS - Ufficio Gestione Patrimonio Informativo e Statistica - Rilevazioni sulle scuole- Maggio 2019), it is remarkable an increasing trend of disability declarations in the Italian schools: "there are twice as many students with a declared disability as 20 years ago (they were 123.862 in the school year 1997/1998). This growth, undoubtedly related to an improvement in the process of screening, is noteworthy considering the decreasing number of pupils attending schools in the last 20 years". Especially in kindergarten, between the SY 1997/1998 and the SY 2017/2018, the number of children with a disability has raised from 0,8% of the total children to 2,1%.

The Kick-Off Meeting of the project took place in Madrid between the 4th and 8th November 2019, and it was the starting point of the planning and discussion between the partners. The goal was to find tools essential in defining the needs experienced by teachers during everyday work.

During the three years of research, a toolkit will be implemented, to promote a professional approach oriented in identifying the many differences present in the educational environment. Together with innovative work strategies and collaboration, this will promote an inclusive school, founded on equity and personalization principles.

In line with the general and specific purposes of the MOEC project, the Italian teamwork has promoted educational training for both the colleagues involved in the research project and the ones not directly part of it. The focus was on detecting the educational needs of the teachers through a questionnaire.

The training has been designed according to the following topics:

- a. *Starting from us: the educational team as a primary resource at school (prof. G. Zampieri);*
- b. *Metacognition: strategies, activities, and tools for each and every one (prof. A. Conti);*
- c. *How and when to observe the child: for the creation of an operational tool (prof. L. Costantino);*
- d. *The development stages of pre-school children for an appropriate understanding of potential disorders and difficulties (prof. Dr. B. Brugnoli).*

Training description

➔ **Module 1. Starting from us: the educational team as a primary resource at school (in person).**

Building a close working team, able to work in synergy and unity, is fundamental for effective and inclusive educational interventions. It is important for various reasons, such as the complexity of relationships required for appropriate planning activity.

The training aims to offer the teachers the opportunity to think about the role of the educational team as a fundamental for the efficiency and sustainability in taking charge of pre-school children, especially in vulnerability conditions.

In particular, the goals of the training focus on three main topics:

- To reflect on the importance of effective team-work;
- To create the conditions for starting an improving process of the team-work;
- To create appropriate emotional, organizational, and management conditions to implement trust feelings within the group.

Methodology: The meeting has been led alternating practice exercises about each training topic with time for personal reflections and theoretical rationalization. Activities were carried out through individual, couple, and group work.

Time: 4 hours, February 2020.

Participants: 20 teachers and educators working with the kindergartens part of the project.

→ **Module 2. Metacognition: strategies, activities, and tools for everyone and each.**

Metacognition studies underline the importance of a metacognitive approach in didactics since pre-school, thanks to the development of knowledge about the mind and its functioning. The development of metacognitive thinking is a precondition for school success, and it is tightly interrelated with the emotional and motivational traits of child personality. However, very few studies are focused on these skills at early education and many pre-school teachers, while recognising the value of this approach, are not always able to adopt the educational guidelines of this perspective in practice.

In particular, the goals of the training focus develop starting from five main topics:

- To know the main metacognitive theories and practices;
- To encourage and provide tools for observation and implementation of metacognitive didactics in kindergarten;
- To increase awareness about the role of learning styles and the emotional and motivational features related to the learning process;
- To test and share practice exercises;
- To provide cues for thinking about metacognitive didactics, related to different experience fields.

Methodology: Two Webinars have been carried out on the Blackboard Ultra platform, supported by Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. In particular, the presentation has provided: slides, individual and group practice exercises, discussions; bibliographic and sitographic cues with operating tools for observation and intervention.

Time: 4 hours, May 2020.

Participants: 60 professional workers from the kindergartens involved in the project (teachers, educators, coordinators, directors, and administrators).

→ **Module 3. How and when to observe the child: for the creation of an operational tool.**

The ability to develop a correct observational attitude can undoubtedly be considered a fundamental competence for anyone working in the educational field.

Observing means opening oneself to the other in an attitude of unconditional acceptance of the new and the different. It is a question of assuming a willingness to listen purified of stereotypes, beliefs and personal judgments, in order to try to grasp in the other person his/her uniqueness and originality as a person. During the past years, the number of interventions related to observation activities has increased. On one hand, this has livened up the Italian pedagogical discussion, leading to increased quality-standards in pre-school. On the other hand, it has not always led to obtaining permanent competencies useful in everyday working life.

However, appropriate thinking about purposes, methods, potentiality, and limits of observation is an important opportunity for bringing it up and promoting its value for educators and teachers.

In particular, the discussed topics during the first meeting are:

- The observative approach;
- The systematic observation;
- The use of tools facilitating observation;
- The meaning of taking care of the child and its family.
- The first meeting has been a preparation for the second one, during which an early intervention tool has been analysed.

Methodology: Two Webinars have been carried out on the Blackboard Ultra platform, supported by Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. In particular, the presentation has provided: slides, individual and group practice exercises, discussions; bibliographic and sitographic cues with operating tools for observation and intervention.

Time: 4 hours, May 2020.

Participants: 60 professional workers from the kindergartens involved in the project (teachers, educators, coordinators, directors, and administrators).

➔ **Module 4. The development stages of pre-school children for an appropriate understanding of potential disorders and difficulties.**

It is reasonable to think that a deep understanding of the human mind is still a long journey. However, the last decades led to revolutionary achievements causing, on one hand, a paradigm shift of theory and practice in the pedagogical and educational field. On the other hand, new ideas and intuitions have provided a scientific basis.

This has underlined both the consequences that Neuroscience can have in teaching and learning, and the need to integrate the scientific approach with cognitive aspects and the mind-body relation, to provide a unified perspective on the person.

All this translates into important implications for pedagogical reflection and action. The quality of an educational environment, with all the complexity that this concept brings with it, is therefore not something that can be taken for granted, but requires, given the depth of what is at stake, constant attention and work.

The meetings of the module **“The development stages of pre-school children for an appropriate understanding of potential disorders and difficulties”** have taken place remotely on an online Platform. The two groups have worked simultaneously on the 5th and 11th June 2020, providing an appropriate amount of time for discussing the topic.

The high number of participants and the remote mode have not encouraged deepening of knowledge and active participation through discussion. However, a keen interest in the mentioned topics was detected.

The topics of the two meetings are:

- The perspective on “Special Educational Needs”: from a clinical to an educational approach;
- The reference models: ecological, biopsychosocial, family-centered, of participation; from evaluation of functions to observation of functioning;
- Multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity;
- Theoretical model of Neuroconstructivism: the neural network;
- Learning and teaching;
- Regulation and neurodevelopment disorders.

The topic has been presented through slides, and the questions of the participants via chat enabled a connection between theory and real situations. This showed the network experience between school, family, and services.

Methodology: Two Webinars have been carried out on the Blackboard Ultra platform, supported by Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. In particular, the presentation has provided: slides, individual and group practice exercises, discussions; bibliographic and sitographic cues with operating tools for observation and intervention.

Time: 4 hours, June 2020.

Participants: 60 professional workers from the kindergartens involved in the project (teachers, educators, coordinators, directors, and administrators).

Training assessment and participants' feedback

The face-to-face training (Module 1) has been appreciated by the teachers because it allowed them to bring out personal experiences and share aspects of their inner selves.

Asevident, the face-to-face training interface incorporates interpersonal interaction, and this means communicating and sharing more easily some important issues for professional practice, such as: how to really promote synergy in order to offer the maximum support to the child with a disability, or in the process of certification? how to make the personal characteristics and skills of the various teachers in the team interact positively.

Some couple and small-group practice exercises led to emotional moments and deep feelings. During the rationalization, high participation took place and enabled the teachers to arise more awareness about the importance of teamwork. In general, the training had a positive impact.

The remote training presented positive features: the practice exercises about the learning individual styles and the observation of the children, together with the adaptation to remote mode, have been appreciated. The teachers were well-organized through feedbacks carried out by contact people from each school. In this situation it was useful to divide the activity into two different moments, allowing the personalization of the intervention and the experimentation of an observative tool. The meeting has been registered; therefore, not only the absent teachers were able to review the video, but also those who participated had the opportunity to later review certain training passages they considered particularly important.

Besides the positive features, the remote trainings presented weaknesses as well: on one side, digital teaching helps the transmission of theoretical knowledge, but on the other one it hinders the practice exercise and the workshop part

(the face-to-face contact facilitates circular communication, feedbacks, reprocessing of contents and competencies testing). The physical distance and the great number of participants have reduced the discussion opportunities. Besides, due to technical problems, it has not been possible to watch videos that could have brightened up the training.



Project brief presentation

The training project is addressed to the 16 teachers of the Notre-Dame de la source school, attended by several students with special educational needs, according to the French model of inclusive school implemented thanks to the 2013 Orientation Law. The team educated these students with the benchmarks of initial training which for some of them dates back between 15 and 25 years, taking into account the legal texts relating to inclusive schooling.

It is clear from the beginning that teachers have developed various practices, paying specific attention to students with special educational needs. However, not all of them have the same references, the same methods, the same approaches, depending on their concept of teaching and the context.

Among the most important training needs, the teachers point out: definition of special educational needs, knowledge of disorders, identification of difficulties, evaluation, teaching methods, communication. In particular, the teachers expect to acknowledge benchmarks of pedagogical practice. The training program cannot be reduced to this and contains elements of knowledge and understanding of the meaning of inclusive education, to help the teachers place themselves in a new paradigm they have not identified yet.

The training program focuses on the general benchmarks of inclusive education, with a historical orientation on one hand, and a conceptual one on the other. The historical part deals with political and institutional orientations at the macro level, such as conventions and charters at the global level; the national legal arsenal in the field of health and education at the meso level.

On a micro level, this relates to the inclusive school management policy within the establishment: the definition of projects (establishment project, success educational project, individual project of specialized assistance, personalized schooling project). The conceptual part deals with the definition of disorders, special educational needs, learning difficulties, obstacles.

The second part of the program has been affected by the global pandemic that caused the confinement and the struggle to provide educational continuity. The training was oriented on the professional approach developed on this occasion, by a narration of the practices, a statement of questions, proposals for efficient practices, the consideration of students with special educational needs. The final

part of the program focuses on deepening the concepts, cooperative practices, support tools for students with special educational needs. In particular, the discussion concerns the identification of difficulties, the definition of learning problems, the elements of objective communication.

The teachers' request related to a particular qualification of the trainers. All the speakers were former specialist teachers who had deepened their course through vocational training or a doctorate.

Training description

Main aim / goal

To acquire the ethical and social issues of inclusive education; to get to know the legislative and regulatory framework of inclusive school and its implementation; to know the institutional environment, culture, and practices of education professionals, support, and care; to professionalize relationships and build the training course with families; to identify, analyse and take into account special educational needs; to design and provide pedagogical and educational answers.

Specific aims

Knowing how to collectively draw up an analytical portrait of a communicable pupil which leads to making effective and well-argued decisions about his schooling path here and now in the school establishment; Initiate collaborative work around the construction of a team-specific repository (common culture and common thread of questioning about a student); Construction and/or enhancement of support tools specific to the collective; Adopt an analytical posture of personal and team practices; Promote the professional actions developed during the period of confinement and the first phase of deconfinement; Strengthen the collective dimension of professionals at the Notre-Dame de la Source school; Conduct a reflection on the teaching profession and its different aspects; Locate, characterize the different geographic spaces: school, classroom, living/working places (teachers, students) and identify the relations they maintain between them. Identify their institutional dimension; Identify the tools and practices that have enabled pedagogical continuity; Name the obstacles and how they may or may not have been overcome; Question what can be transferred to a face-to-face practice.

Contents

Philosophy and anthropology of inclusive education. Law, equality, fairness; Knowledge of institutional texts; Classification of pathologies; Medical concep-

tion / social conception: Deficiency, incapacity, disorder, handicap; Environmental, contextual, personal factors; School structures and systems; Educational posture: segregation, integration, inclusion; The dilemmas of inclusive school learning; Obstacles and difficulties; Special educational needs; Relational and instrumental mediations; Co-teaching; Learning project and learning issue.

Methodology

Focus groups modality. A collective study of the situation of pupils with special educational needs; Analysis of the tools and practices in place; Notional contributions; Development of documents and tools; Putting into perspective the use and evaluation of these documents and tools.

Participants

16 teachers from Cycle 1, 2 and 3.

New Aspects of this training

- The training process is part of the practice of vocational training. It has the particularity of taking place in two places: the school, the Notre-Dame de la Source school, and the Catholic University of the West in Angers. Therefore, it involves different profiles of stakeholders, such as teachers, conference researchers, teacher trainers, and specialist teachers. The alternation between places makes it possible to enhance the elements of a culture of practitioners.
- It should be noted, because the fact is quite rare, that the whole team joins training actions, thanks to the research carried out by kindergarten teachers. The practice of training through research is done by communicating the objects worked on by kindergarten teachers and by conducting focus groups (situation analysis of students with special educational needs) by teachers in each of the three cycles. The aim of this approach, besides continuity of learning, is the establishment of cooperative practices for the entire team and the support in defining the position of a specialist teacher for pedagogical assistance and remediation.
- Another innovative dimension is the theme of inclusive education, which has never been discussed with all the school teachers. It suffices to reread the articles requested on the issue of inclusive education. If we find elements relating to ordinary education, we can note the inclusive assessment, the identification of obstacles that are expected, and elements specific to inclusion. However, we must agree that these elements take more time than we have allowed coming to fruition.

Training assessment and participants' feedback

The evaluation of the training by teachers depends on several factors: the moment when it is carried out, the modalities, the duration, the relational skills of the speaker, the place.

Concerning the moment, it should be noted that the teachers have a very dense schedule. The training schedule was drawn up in collaboration between the teachers and the head of the establishment, then with the researchers. Times were taken on pedagogical days or on vacation time. The availability was more productive during the holidays.

The analysis of practice or focus groups does not initially give the impression to teachers that this method is formative. They feel like they are performing a task that could be done without educational significance. It is only over time that they perceive that understandings are formed and that forms of cooperation are built up. Group cohesion and acceptance are built on the reflection on a student with special educational needs from other classes or a different Cycle.

Notional contributions do not seem useful to them when they are exposed as a mere transmission. On the other hand, when the trainer makes comparisons and associations between work and notions, the teachers integrate better the content and this favors the training.

The training took place with two different time arrangements: spot meetings and intensive training. The first modality is appreciated if it is related to a concrete concern (for example, the analysis and modification of observation tools). It is not if it is a question of elements of acculturation not directly useful in daily practice. The intensive training (two consecutive days), due to the detachment from the place of exercise, is appreciated because it offers space for reflection and questioning. However, the duration (5 hours) is appreciated or not, depending on the training climate created by the trainer, and on the feeling that they are learning something new and effective.

The proposed modalities corresponded to the teachers' requests. We effectively respected: face-to-face, active/practical, group / theoretical work, case study (focus groups), sharing of good practices. While the masterful/theoretical form is not requested, teachers regret that it is not more developed during certain training actions. Excessive group work can become boring and unproductive.

The following report includes brief descriptions of the training conducted by the Polish team of MOEC comprising of the academic staff of KUL and the expert in the area of child development. The main objectives, the content of each training along with its relevance to the project requirements are presented. In addition, a summary of the feedback provided by the trainees is also included.

Prof. Edyta Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska

The aim of the meetings was to diagnose and support the children's mathematical abilities, with a particular focus on diagnosis.

The training included 2 meetings and took place on March 7, 2020 and June 27, 2020. The subject matter of the first training was related to discussing the pedagogical and social justifications for fundamental changes in assessing the mathematical maturity of kindergarten children aged 5 and 6. In detail, it included the following issues: the scope of failures in learning mathematics and their destructive consequences, determinants of maturity for learning maths, and scientific evidence that children with such maturity achieve success in learning mathematics at school.

The topic of the second training was the presentation of the model of assessment of children's maturity for learning mathematics at school (assessment assumptions, diagnostic procedures, and methods used). It also included the demonstration of an assessment procedure with the participation of children themselves.

The following persons took part in the workshop: Dr. Barbara Borowska (project manager in the Polish team), Iwona Chmurzyńska (the director of Kindergarten No. 5 in Puławy participating in the project), Paweł Szabłowski (Vice-President of the City of Puławy), Danuta Smaga (Starost of Puławy County), Prof. Krzysztof Szulowski (MP), Monika Suchodolska (Visitor, School Superintendent in Lublin), Marzena Klimek (Deputy Head of the Department of Education, Sports and Social Affairs in Puławy), Agnieszka Zamojska (Inspector of the Department of Education, Sports and Social Affairs in Puławy), 3 directors and 20 teachers from kindergartens in Puławy and two 6-year-old boys taking part in the real-life assessment presentation and their parents.

The first meeting was conducted using the lecture method with numerous didactic tools. The second meeting had a character of a presentation workshop, in which the children took part. The second training was filmed on TV, recorded and presented in the regional radio station. The recording was also posted on the MOEC website. The workshops were also attended by journalists from the local radio and magazines, who commented on the event on their radio stations and in the local press.

Positive aspects of the training – based on the evaluation done by the participants:

1. Learning about basic principles of helping children - how to work with them, how to help them to overcome difficulties.
2. Detailed analysis of the existing child development observation tools in different spheres of child development and a comparative analysis of the existing sheets with the proposal of the Erasmus+ sheet.
3. Implementation of Prof. E. Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska's program into the kindergarten regular program.
4. Broadening and consolidation of acquired skills of working with a child in the field of mathematical competence.
5. Expanding the teachers' observational field directed at special educational needs of the child.

Dr. Barbara Borowska

The main goal of the training conducted by Dr Barbara Borowska was to discuss developmental changes related to the speech of preschool children. Another important aim was related to getting familiarized with innovative methods and forms of working with children on speech education, especially with the glottodidactic method. The training also included an indication of psychophysical conditions determining the development of readiness to read and write and the acquisition of reading and writing skills by pre-school children. Following that, some discussion over difficulties occurring in the language education of preschool children and ways to prevent them was conducted.

The contents of the trainings concerned language education in kindergarten. The trainings focused on the skills of preparing a child for reading and writing through aural (phonemic and phonetic), visual and articulatory diagnosis, i.e. pronunciation of sounds in isolation among children. The focus was placed on the innovative method of "glottodidactics" developing reading and writing skills among

preschool children and the ability to detect difficulties related to auditory, visual, and articulatory perception in preparing children for reading and writing.

The training comprised 6 meetings which took place in February 2020. The participants included 8 teachers from Kindergarten No. 5 in Pulawy (the project partner), along with Iwona Chmurzyńska, the headmaster of this kindergarten. Additionally, 8 teachers from Kindergarten No. 16 in Pulawy and the Director of this kindergarten were invited. The meetings were conducted using the following methods: lecture with the use of presentations, demonstration workshops and discussions.

Gaining knowledge about the process of reading and writing is a starting point for teachers in undertaking educational activities aimed at preparing a child to learn to read and write. The teachers are primarily responsible for organizing the content of this process which is specific for each child, once they begin attending kindergarten. Success in learning to read and write and the achievement of these crucial skills requires from the teacher an integrated, operational and up-to-date methodological knowledge. It is possible to prepare children for learning to read and write providing the preschool education includes developmental support in each of the above-mentioned functions.

Selected positive aspects of the training for the MOEC project based on the feedback given by the trainees:

- 1.** Acquiring new skills and knowledge and gaining different perspective on work issues;
- 2.** The trainings have stimulated our creativity and willingness to look for unusual solutions for problematic situations;
- 3.** Implementing and planning creative games for everyday activities;
- 4.** How to stimulate the child's development through appropriate exercises, development of linguistic and listening functions, development of listening attention and thinking;
- 5.** Detailed analysis of existing observation cards for the child's development in different areas of development and comparative analysis of existing cards with the proposal of the Erasmus+ solution.

Dr. habil Ewa Domagała-Zysk

The aim of the workshops conducted by Ewa Domagała-Zysk was to introduce teachers to issues connected with:

1. Assessment of social and emotional competencies of kindergarten children;
2. Principles and methods of functional assessment of children's needs and strengths;
3. Assessment of special educational needs of kindergarten children;
4. Application of the universal design model into everyday education in diverse groups.

The training, though delivered via the online mode, included as many interactions and listening to the teachers' voice as possible. Participants were equipped with a worksheet that guaranteed more active participation. The content of the workshop was oriented not so much on learning new pedagogical theories, as on sharing examples of using the knowledge in regular everyday situations.

Special attention was devoted – in the context of accustoming the participants with a Polish adaptation of the ABAS-3 method (Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System-3, Polish adaptation by Otrebski, Domagała-Zyśk, Sudoł 2019) – to the significance of pedagogical observation of everyday children's emotions and behavior that enables profound assessment and preparation of the post-diagnostic remedial plan. As the training took part in the lockdown time, a significant part of the discussion time was devoted to naming ways of assessing the severity and type of children's needs connected with the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The training was conducted in a form of 5 online workshops, according to the agreed timetable. There were 9 participants, including the director of the partner institution (Municipal Kindergarten nr 5 in Puławy). The teachers reported in their feedback that there were many valuable elements of the workshop, in particular: they got to know a new assessment tool that might be used by kindergarten teachers to screen the children's needs; they understood better the significance of supporting not only cognitive but also social and emotional development of children; they got accustomed with the model of Universal Learning Design and possibilities of introducing it into their regular work; they enhanced their digital skills using the internet communicators and platforms and they had a chance to prepare themselves for direct pedagogical work with children after lockdown.

Dr Klaudia Martynowska

The main objective of conducted trainings was to develop the skills of teachers in the area of emotional management directed towards children in kindergartens. Primarily, the trainings focused on providing knowledge to participants related to the emotional development of children at the age ranged from 2 to 6. The empirical-based information were derived from the field of psychology, pedagogy and neuroscience. By developing the understanding of how children express emotions, how they perceive and react to the surroundings via emotions, teachers are able to address any difficulties their pupils may experience in a learning process. The trainings enhanced skills of participants in the realm of an early educational intervention for emotional and relations development of children – which in turn stands in line with the general objectives of MOEC project.

The core of the trainings content related to emotional intelligence and mental resiliency of children at pre-school age. The participants were provided with theoretical framework of each construct along with practical tools designed to diagnose children and assist them in developing emotional intelligence. Any empirical evidence derived mainly from psychological and educational studies was presented with a strong emphasis on practical implications. The teachers had an opportunity to discuss real-life cases of children who experienced major difficulties which hindered their emotional development. In-depth analysis of extreme situations allowed teachers to gain a better understanding of how crucial and powerful role early-life experience plays in child's future life, especially from the cognitive and behavioral perspective. Some ready-made scenarios of activities stimulating child's emotional development were presented (in accordance with child's age).

The trainings were conducted in a form of 4 online workshops. 9 teachers took part in the trainings including the director of the partner institution (Municipal Kindergarten nr 5 in Puławy). Based on teachers' feedback it may be concluded that they valued discussion on real-life cases supported by theoretical explanations. The participants were satisfied with the form of trainings which stimulated open communication. As a consequence, they could share their experience and reflect on their behaviour in a professional and sometimes personal context. Altogether, the teachers agreed that the main objectives of the trainings were met: they acquired knowledge and skills which they would definitely apply in their work with children.



During the months of October and November, 2020, two training actions were carried out by the Spanish MOEC team, in which the professors of the Universidad Pontificia Comillas and the teachers of the Institución Profesional Salesiana participated, both of them members of the Spanish MOEC team. The first course, taught by Prof. José Antonio Fernández Bravo, was about “THE DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT IN CHILDREN FROM 3 TO 6 YEARS OF AGE”. The complete summary about this course can be consulted on the project’s webpage. 37 teachers attended this workshop, which was held on-line due to the impossibility to do it in person because of the social distancing rules imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second course was, at the same time, divided into four 2-hour-long workshops and was taught by Mrs Marta Fernández Sánchez. This course dealt with the evolutive development of children from 3 to 6 years old and indicators of risk of alterations in the neurodevelopment. In the first three workshops, we dealt with the evolutionary characteristics of children between the ages of 3 to 4, 4 to 5 and 5 to 6 respectively, together with the most significant indicators of risk for each age range. The fourth and last workshop dealt, in a monographic way, with the indicators of risk, and a complete study of cases was carried out, using instruments which exist in the market. This training activity’s content will soon be available to be consulted on the project’s webpage. Also due to the necessity of keeping social distancing, these four workshops were carried out virtually through the Teams platform. In total, 31 teachers signed up, attending at the same time an average of 25 teachers, while the rest of them did it in an asynchronous way.

Course on the development of thought in children from 3 to 6 years of age

This course's presenter was prof. José Antonio Fernández Bravo, who is a Doctor in Education Sciences in the speciality of Didactics and one of the most influential people in Spain in the topic of the development of thought in general and the mathematical one in particular. His participation was asked for because the mathematical area is usually one of the most conflictive one in what it refers to difficulties in learning in all the courses of compulsory education.

Main objective

The objective of this training activity was to foster, among those attending it, the reflection on everyday situations that can give place to discrepancies between what the teacher wants their student to learn and how they want them to learn it, and the way in which the learner –no matter their age– can interpret it, bringing them to providing answers deemed wrong by their teachers.

A second objective was to present those attending the order in which, from the perspective of thought, one learns: comprehend, enunciate, memorise and apply.

Specific objectives

We can point the following specific objectives:

- Reflection on the way of teaching in relation to the different evolutionary moments of the child's thought;
- To detect frequent methodological errors;
- To get to know the evolutionary development of the thought and the comprehension of the mathematical concepts;
- Analysis of situations to detect methodological errors.

Methodology

The course was carried out on-line and in a synchronous way, with the active participation of those attending, both in the different situations which were posed to be analysed, and in the formulation of doubts. This was carried out in one single session.

Participants

In the course, 37 teachers participated, being these teachers of the Institución Profesional Salesiana, members of the Spanish MOEC team and teachers who were collaborators in the evaluation of the initial version of the observation tool.

Timing and training surroundings

The course was implemented on the 22nd of June, 2020, and lasted 4 hours. Due to the circumstances derived from the pandemic situation and, specifically, the incredibly high numbers of infection in Spain, the governmental recommendation was to restrict as much as possible in-person meetings, by teleworking or training virtually whenever it was possible. For this reason, the course took place via the app Zoom, which turned out to be an optimal tool, both for the transmission of the contents and for the teachers' participation. In fact, they were accustomed to these tools because they had to use it in the last 6 months of the previous schoolyear due to the confinement of the entire Spanish population due to COVID.

Contributions of the training

In a summarised way, the most significant contributions were:

- To reflect on the importance of the method as pillar in the didactic activities, from which the methodological actions are later derived;
- To show the importance of the "methodology of respect": respect for the child's way of thinking, for their needs, for their individual evolutionary development, for their way of understanding our teaching demands...;
- The importance of being able to listen to the answers the child gives us and afterwards analyse if, when they are not the ones we expected, this is due to the fact that they did not understand it or that they do not know how to do something, or that we, as teachers, do not formulate the ideas properly;
- Development of the C-E-M-A (comprehend, enunciate, memorise and apply) as the natural way of learning, which determines the order in which people acquire new concepts in an understandable way;
- The reiteration of the presentation of the concepts to learn them in a way they are understood and applied in different contexts;
- The importance for the teachers of understanding the child's brain, for in their answers are kept the clues of how they think ("Let the children teach you how to teach them");
- To listen to the children, their logic, their explanations.

All these aspects have a very direct relation with some of the problems which, already from the Stage of Preschool Education, can appear in children. Particularly, it is important to have this into consideration in the mathematical area, in which traditionally arise the biggest number of students with diverse comprehension and application problems. In this way, it was a very productive course regarding the development of the MOEC Project.

Course on the development of thought in children from 3 to 6 years of age

This course was taught by prof. Marta Fernández Sánchez, Doctor in Evolutionary Psychology and Psychopedagogue. She is currently working as a counsellor in the public network in the Team of Educational and Psychopedagogic Guidance and (EOEP); giving advice to Primary Schools and school Centres of preschool and Primary Education.

She has participated in the publishing of two books whose titles are: *Pensando las emociones: Programa de intervención para educación infantil* (2013) and *Pensando las emociones con atención plena. Programa de intervención para educación infantil* (2017); also, she has published several scientific articles on this branch of knowledge.

Main objective

To acquire new competences for the preventive observation in the classrooms of preschool education.

Specific objectives

- To revise the most relevant indicators of the normotypical evolutionary development in the three courses of preschool education (3-4 years old, 4-5 years old, 5-6 years old);
- To reflect on the possible atypical indicators of risk in the three evolutionary stages regarding the disorders in neurodevelopment;
- To compare different psychometric scales of development to evaluate the diverse items used.

Methodology

The methodology has been online and synchronous, with the possibility of constant spontaneous communication during the videoconference to answer to the practical cases formulated, to ask doubts or to share personal reflections.

Participants

In this course, 31 professionals belonging to different contexts who are connected to the Project participated: Institución Profesional Salesiana, Spanish MOEC team, Universidad Comillas and collaborators from different school Centres.

Timing and training surroundings

The total duration of this course has been of 8 hours, divided in 2-hour-long four sessions during the days 27th and 28th of October and 3rd and 5th of November, 2020.

The digital training surroundings has been the platform Teams in order to be able to easily record and edit the four training sessions. The recording of this course will be shared in the webpage of the international MOEC team.

Contributions of the training

The most relevant conclusions of this course are:

- It is very important to activate the conscience towards the necessary preventive observation in order to offer the necessary support resources in time;
- The development of the basic psychological processes (perception, attention and memory) permits developing fundamental pivotal competences for the general evolutionary progress;
- The acquisition of skills in theory of the mind, fosters the development of social cognition;
- The skills in communication and language foster the development of thought and a good behavioural adjustment;
- The psychomotor development is a very important precursor for the scholar learning;
- The competences in autoregulation and identification of basic emotions have a great influence in the social development.

This training course has enabled the Spanish professionals participating in the MOEC Project to start from the same evidence and theoretical premises to collaborate in the construction of the observation scale. On the other hand, this training opportunity has allowed them to reflect on their daily educational practices.





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