

Castagna, Vittoria (2018).

The kindergarten's teachers' self-evaluation process about gender education: a pedagogical research in intercultural contexts

Paper presented on the 28th EECERA Annual Conference, 29.8.2018, Budapest, Hungary.

Abstract

Reflecting through the process of self-evaluation, starting from a systematic observation of schooling contexts, can allow gender stereotypes and prejudices to emerge, through the staff-team discussions in an inter-subjective dialogue, leading to

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an improvement in teacher awareness and on adjustment of educational practices. My research is underpinned by Italian and international pedagogy studies about gender education and by the Italian model of formative evaluation (Bondioli, Savio 2015). This approach is characterized by reflexion and dialogue on experience (Shon 2006, Mignosi 2004, Mortari 2009). The path concerned educational relationships, language, symbolic play, motor ability, socialisation and relations between adults. In accord to the paradigm of complexity and to ecosystem theory (Bronfenbrenner 1986), I will describe my qualitative research developed through an intercultural process of co-construction of a self-evaluation scale about gender education: this took place in two state-run kindergartens in Palermo and in a municipal kindergarten in Brasil, in the city of Curitiba. Evaluation improves the capacity to build and share professional knowledge in the groups of teacher, valorises collaboration between school and families, and promotes individual potentials. This presentation discusses the self-evaluation of kindergarten teachers regarding the gender education implicit in educational practices. From an equal opportunities perspective, schools should offer children, whether male and female, the same possibilities for a harmonious and all-round psycho-physical development, facilitating socialization within the peer group. The work also regards Italian and international documents about gender education from the early childhood, and contributes to creating equal educational opportunities in early childhood.

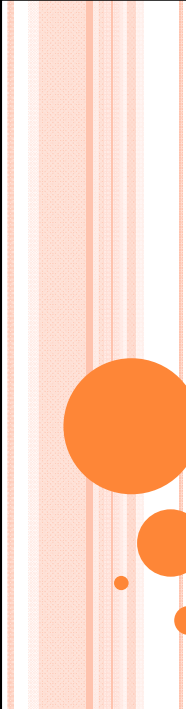
Keywords

evaluation, gender, teachers, kindergarten, awareness

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**THE KINDERGARTEN'S TEACHERS
SELF EVALUATION
ON GENDER EDUCATION**
A PHD PEDAGOGICAL QUALITATIVE RESEARCH
BETWEEN
PALERMO (ITALIA) AND CURITIBA (BRASIL)

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THE NARRATION OF AN EVENT, TO BEGIN...

- *One school morning in Curitiba, during the hour of play:
Two children are playing with construction blocks: the male wants a construction block with which the female is playing, and he says to her: "Give it to me and go to play with the kitchen!". She throws the construction blocks and says with anger "I will go to play with the kitchen!". Another child wants to play with the construction blocks, she is a female. The male child tells her to go and play with the kitchen. She comes to play with the construction blocks close to me, and shows with satisfaction what she has built.*
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SINCE '90, THE COMMERCIAL PHENOMENON OF RE-GENDERIZATION

Example of advertising in '70



Contemporary advertising



GENDER EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

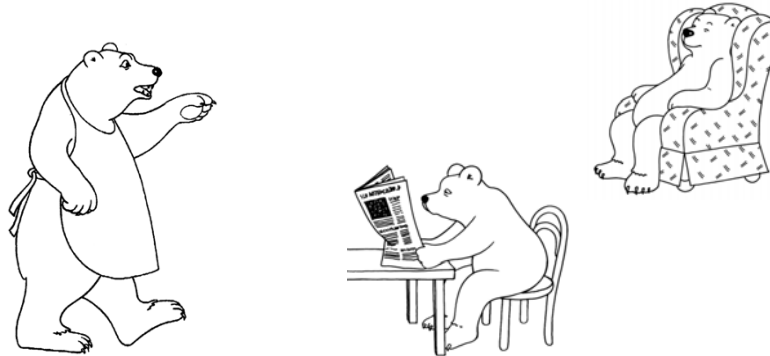
- The delicate and complex process of growing up: the building of gender identity begins at about three years and continues throughout life
- Educate for freedom, beyond stereotypes, with adult sensibility and listening, valorizing the relationship
- Educational co-responsibility between school and families

PROJECT OF GENDER EDUCATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TORINO IN 2006.

SOME SEXIST STEREOTYPES:

Who is? The mum (She has the apron, she cooks...)

Who is? The dad (Has time to relax, read the newspaper...)



SEXIST STEREOTYPES AND GENDER DISPARITY

- Sexist stereotypes in separate gender roles. For example:
 - the man works and lives in the open and public spaces
 - the woman takes care of house and children and lives in domestic close spaces

In education it would be necessary to offer a plurality of gender models and cultural representations of how a child can be a male and how a child can be a female

FROM AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PERSPECTIVE...

- Schools should offer children, whether male or female, the same possibilities for a harmonious and all-round psycho-physical development, facilitating **socialization** within the peer group, and promoting **individual potentials**
- Reflecting through the process of self-evaluation, starting from a systematic observation of schooling contexts, can allow gender stereotypes and prejudices to emerge

THE FORMATIVE SELF-EVALUATION

- The model of evaluation was built by an Italian team at the University of Pavia (Bondioli, Savio 2015)
- Reflective approach, characterized by reflection and dialogue on experience, to improve the capacity to build and share professional knowledge in groups of teacher (Shon 2006, Mignosi 2004, Mortari 2009).
- To improve the quality of educational practices
- To valorize the childhood differences and the well being of children and families

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- **Learn to learn** through experience, for the adjustment of the quality of educational practices
- The contextual **observation** (considering material, symbolic, affective and relational aspects)
- Intersubjectivity of the evaluation process: the **dialogue** in equipes among different points of view on observed contexts
- The researchers/ evaluator/trainer facilitate the communication during the sharing of the collected data, **co-constructed interpretation** of the data in teams "heart of the evaluation proces" (Bondioli 2004)
- A "**quality**" concept not «objective» but negotiated through dialogue
- **Reflection** to cultivate awareness and educational intentionality
- The **meta-evaluation** gives more validity to the evaluation process and promotes teachers' empowerment

THE RESEARCH PATH

- Qualitative research
- During 3 years
- Schools involved in the research: two state kindergartens' school in Palermo (from May 2015 to June 2017) and one municipal kindergarten school in Curitiba (from April to June 2017)
- Different social and cultural contexts: specifics and aspects in common
- Partecipative research, in which teachers were active subjects

MAIN AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

- Co-construction of an instrument of self-evaluation to make more explicit ideas and gender models implicit in educational practices
- Share with teachers a model to learn to construct a self evaluation instrument

THE INSTRUMENTS OF THE RESEARCH

Avsi (Autovalutazione Scuola dell'Infanzia), Sovasi (Scala di Osservazione e Valutazione per la Scuola dell'Infanzia), a questionnaire about teachers' perception of male and female children's behaviour, questionnaires of meta-evaluation (about the path and about the instrument built on gender education), the narrative report (to describe and reflect on experience)

- The process concerned the areas of
 - educational relationships
 - language
 - symbolic play
 - motor ability
 - socialization
 - relations between adults, including collaboration between school and families.

These are also the subscales of the built instrument

AN EXAMPLE OF ITEM

○ 3.2 – Toys

Score 1. Toys are considered different, for male or for female, that are encouraged to play in different ways.

Score 3. There is a wide variety of toys, and all children can often chose and take them to play

Score 5. There is an educational project, based on experience, that includes an attention to the quality of toys, and to offer the same toys to males and females, valorizing individual specificities and potentialities

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- The excellent evaluation corresponds with a very good projectuality and organization of the group classes as well as the school of gender education and equal opportunities, in constant collaboration with families
- Neither judge nor prescribe teachers' behaviour, but favour reflection on practices



The «beauty salon» toys are quite common in the Kindergarten school in Curitiba. Sometimes, as in this case, are «accompanied» by images of models and famous actresses.

FOR HER, FOR HIM, FOR BOTH?



SOME RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

- In the survey, 80% of teachers declared to behave in the same way with male and female children
- By observation and the survey, emerged gender stereotypes in teachers, about emotions, play and creativity
- Almost all of teachers affirmed that males and females socialized among them daily or often, during the playful activities and during the routines and moments of transition
- There is a contradiction between the affirmed stereotypes and the spontaneous socialization among peers
- Factor of influence most expressed: society and family but **not awareness of the role of the school in the construction of gender stereotypes**

IN PARTICULAR...

- About **expressive-communicative dimensions**, most teachers declared that there are no differences among males and females; the others answered that there are differences using stereotypes: for example that females are more affective and "use" the cry to manipulate and male children express more angry and oppositional behaviour and have more language difficulties
- In the **emotional field**, 50% of Italian and Brazilian teachers declared that there are no differences between males and females
- Concerning **language**, just over 50% of teachers declared that male and female children have the same verbal capacity
- Concerning **play and creativity**, most teachers declared that there are differences in the play of males and females; the other teachers declared that preferences, way of playing and creative expression depends on the subject

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH

- The instrument will be trialed in Italian contexts and eventually adapted towards international scholastic contexts
- Define a instrument of self evaluation is an open process, for the continued adjustment of evaluation instruments

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

