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*“ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL”  
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS*

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**International Association for Intercultural  
Education (IAIE)**

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## About Proceedings

This document contains 20 articles submitted from participants of the IAIE conference “Another Brick in the Wall” in Amsterdam, 11-15 November 2019. In total, the Conference content was divided into 8 strands. However, not all strands submitted papers for the Proceedings. Below are represented the following:

Strand 1. Intercultural Competence

Strand 2. Bilingualism and Multilingual Education

Strand 3. Cooperative Learning and other interactive learning approaches

Strand 6: Education relating to migrants and refugees

Strand 7. (Global) Citizenship Education

Strand 8. Miscellaneous

The Proceedings are organized as it follows:

First, all abstracts are displayed per strand. Consequently, the whole article, including abstract, main text and graphs, as well as notes and references, are included. All abstracts and articles can be found in the Content table below.

The Conference Proceedings were prepared by Ivona Hristova and Hana Alhadi.



## Introduction by The IAIE President

As President of the International Association for Intercultural Education, I would like to once again thank everybody who helped contribute to these Proceedings. A large amount of work went into this publication. But special thanks go to Hana Alhadi and first and foremost Ivona Hristova.

These Proceedings are the final outcome of the IAIE Conference ‘Another Brick in the Wall?’ that took place in Amsterdam from November 11- November 15, 2019. The conference itself represented a blend of inspiring field trips (e.g. Black Heritage tour in Amsterdam, a VIP visit to the Anne Frank House and a visit to the International Criminal Court), some 40 workshops and more than 150 presentations and panel discussions. Close to 400 educators participated from some 25 countries.

The conference allowed teachers, students and academics to share insights and experiences, and to be exposed to the state-of-the-art research on issues relating to diversity and education.

The Conference was a true collaborative effort between the IAIE and a number of other organizations active in the fields of Intercultural Education, human rights education, education about sexual diversity, democratic education, active citizenship education, global education, bilingual and multilingual education, and related fields. These organizations include the Denise School, the Hellenic Association for Intercultural Education, International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education (IASCE), the Rutu Foundation, Learn to Change: Change to Learn, the Korean Association for Multicultural Education (KAME), the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), Euroclio, and human-ed. We once again thank our partners and look forward to collaboration once more in our future conferences.

Recent events continue to highlight the importance of the work that everybody in this field is doing. The papers published in these proceeds will certainly provide clues and guidelines as to how we be better prepared for the challenges facing us in the coming years.

Warmest wishes to all,

Barry van Driel

President IAIE

[www.iaie.org](http://www.iaie.org)

# Giovanna Malusà. Playing as you learn. Facilitating an inclusive climate through the Findhorn games

## ABSTRACT

Creating an inclusive and trusting climate in multicultural and conflicted classrooms is an essential prerequisite for cooperative activities and the development of students' social and emotional skills, in a climate free of judgement and prejudice.

Based on the Experiential Learning Model of the *Findhorn Foundation* (learning by doing), in this paper I will present the key elements of a variety of games for different purposes, and cooperative games in particular, discussing their possible implementation in multicultural educational contexts to build trust in both new and established groups.

**Keywords:** *cooperative games; trust; inclusion; multicultural contexts; experiential learning model; teacher education*

La creazione di un clima inclusivo e di fiducia nelle classi multiculturali e conflittuali rappresenta un prerequisito essenziale per proporre attività cooperative e facilitare abilità sociali ed emotive negli studenti, in un ambiente libero da valutazioni e pregiudizi.

Basandosi sul modello di apprendimento esperienziale della *Fondazione Findhorn* (*leaning by doing*), in questo contributo presenterò gli elementi essenziali dei giochi cooperativi e vari tipi di giochi con propositi diversi, discutendo sulla loro possibile implementazione in contesti educativi multiculturali per creare un clima di fiducia in gruppi sia nuovi che consolidati.

**Paole chiave:** *giochi cooperativi; fiducia; inclusione; contesti multiculturali; modello di apprendimento esperienziale; formazione insegnanti*

## Introduction

Learning to live together in the understanding that difference is a resource and opportunity for growth for all concerned is one of the greatest challenges we face in our complex society, but allows us to avoid violence, intolerance (EU, 2015), and hate and racist incidents (CENSIS, 2018). Most OECD countries, in fact, recognise the need to develop students' social and

emotional competences, since these are key to the creation of their sense of belonging and, consequently, desire to be active citizens (Kankaraš & Suarez-Alvarez, 2019; OECD, 2015).

Creating an inclusive climate thus becomes a prerequisite for any educational process and to provide a high quality, equitable and inclusive education is one of the UN's Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a resolution to which Italy has signed up. Education should play a strategic role in creating inclusive environments that embrace all aspects of difference (UNESCO, 2018). However, insufficient numbers of adequately trained teachers and the lack of a strong intercultural ethos are two of the main reasons for the ineffectiveness of inclusive education policies (Sleeter & Grant, 2009; Tarozzi, 2014).

In Italy, too, recent research evidences how the presence of motivated teachers, skilled in the management of complexity and difference, is a determining factor in the creation of inclusive learning environments (Malusà, 2015, 2019, forthcoming; Santagati, 2018). In fact, a great deal of national and international legislation (EU, 2013; MIUR, 2014; OECD, 2010) increasingly requires teachers to have intercultural competence (Portera & Grant, 2017), the attainment of which requires specific experiential training (Sharan & Sharan, 1987) to enable them to fully master the tools of mediation and leadership that are vital to the management of complex multicultural classes. To care for the other and oneself, to develop empathy, to allow time in which to get to know other and self... these are some of the competences necessary to the formation of authentic relationships that transcend individual differences and possible breakdowns of communication.

And how can teachers foster that emotional competence indispensable to the creation of an inclusive school environment?

### **Meeting the other: the bodily dimension**

Social psychology reminds us of the importance of taking all forms of communication into account, both verbal and nonverbal. But effective communication represents only a small part of the communicative processes: all too often, communication is “incongruent” – mixed messages are sent – and coherent and intentional transmission of meaning between sender and receiver fails (Burgoon, Hunsaker and Dawson (1994)<sup>29</sup>. Even in the absence of intentionality,

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<sup>29</sup> Their communication model is a matrix, with the *x* axis being the intention to communicate, and the *y* the observation of the communication. The coordinates are possible outcomes: communication, attempted communication, attributed communication and behaviour.

however, we cannot escape the fact that everything we do and say communicates something to the other. The first axiom of the pragmatic model of communication is that:

... one cannot not communicate. Every behavior is a kind of communication. Because behavior does not have a counterpart (there is no anti-behavior), it is not possible not to communicate (Watzlavick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1980, p. 48).

Non-verbal language, in fact, includes a wide range of communication behaviours that convey meaning: body posture and movements, gestures, facial expressions and eye movements, tones of voice, physical appearance, the use and management of space, and even ways of structuring time (Giaccardi, 2005).

The different dimensions of non-verbal communication play are a crucial element of intercultural dynamics.

People from different cultures not only speak different languages, but inhabit different sensory worlds, structured according to cultural conditioning. And so intercultural communication can often involve instances when a different way of perceiving creates opposing meanings and obstacles to communication (Minascurta, 2016, p. 145).

In educational contexts, moreover, awareness of non-verbal communication signals is vital to learning how to interact well with the other. And above all, we cannot continue *to leave our students' bodies outside* the classroom, acknowledging them only in the obligatory PE classes, or we have to intervene because students are rebellious, and exhibiting oppositional-provocative behaviours, often refusing to *stay in line*: in the fixed rows of seats that imprison them and are completely unsuited to active learning, or the acquisition of social competences.

Moreover, “*being-in-the-world-with-others*” (Iori, 2002, p. 14) – not just a simple “*being in proximity to*” – requires a bodily dimension in educational care, in a relation of reciprocal listening. But the taking care refers “*not so much to the things that are done, but to how they are done*” (Manini, 2007, p. 19), and this requires “*a body accustomed to being present, taught through reflective practices which do not separate doing and thinking, feeling and acting*” (Zagatti, 2009, p. 54), and include that metaphorical dimension of play which allows the creation of significant intersubjectivity (Dallari, 2018).

### **Cooperative play as an educational tool**

*Ludendo docere*

Play is an essential *field of experience* for learning (Bertolini, 1982). Psycho-pedagogical research has clearly shown the didactic efficacy of play and its benefits to learning processes, in that the development of emotional intelligence and self-esteem supports cooperation, problem solving, creativity and cognitive development. In fact

learning by doing [...] does not mean simply and mechanically making learning “stick” by practical action, but the fact that play activates a synergy of thought and action, mind and body, intelligence and emotion, according to the process of embodiment that is widely discussed in phenomenology and cognitive sciences (Farné, 2016, pp. 36-37).

Play thus becomes an *experience that escapes conformism*, and allows three different dimensions to be experienced: risk, error and adventure (Farné, 2016). Through these elements, play enables us to better know both self and other, in an atmosphere of joyful discovery, often not found in schools (in the West, or anywhere else), which have, since the 17th century, overwhelmingly adopted transmissive approaches. Allowing space for play, and in particular for cooperative play, means that teachers can nurture students’ emotional competence (Goleman, 1996), which is necessary for the building of inclusive relationships, in other words:

it is a matter of recognising, naming, taking and managing own and others’ emotional characteristics. Being emotionally competent is, also, being empathetic (Dallari, 2018, p. 4).

And so, why not start the school day with a game? Or even with a series of games, not chosen randomly, but aimed at the steady building of a class group whose members are *open to knowing themselves and the other*, initially almost “*tip-toing around*”, but gradually more and more deeply, thus developing a sense of belonging and mutual trust. Games in which *time is legitimately devoted* to the building of positive relationships, transcending the hackneyed verbal codes, to encourage a sense that they are welcome, feelings of wonder, and a *desire to do things together*. Games which enable a collaborative class group to form, *step-by-step*, creating a joyful learning environment where teaching activities in which everyone can feel truly included can become part of the school day.

This is my vision of how the school day should begin. And it is a vision shared by others:

For more than thirty years, at Findhorn – a holistic education foundation in the north of Scotland – people have been coming together from all over the world to experiment with experiential learning models aimed at facilitating an “*integrated and balanced development of mind, body,*

*emotion, spirit*”, in the words of the organisation’s mission statement on the Findhorn Foundation website ([www.findhorncollege.org](http://www.findhorncollege.org)).

David Earl Platts<sup>30</sup> (1996), one of the first members of the community, was instrumental in developing a range of ideas designed to enable the steady creation of a climate of trust, mutual respect and cohesion within a group, thus creating a space in which all differences can become shared resources. Since 1974, his method has been used with hundreds of visitors of all ages and nationalities who participate every year in experiential personal growth courses at Findhorn.

And these play sessions are particularly suitable for the everyday educational contexts in which teachers operate.

### **Key elements of Findhorn’s cooperative games**

#### Mirroring

*(This creative and attunement game is a non-verbal musical exercise).* Choose a partner. Decide who is A and who is B and stand facing each other. [...] When the music starts, A, you slowly begin to move your hands and arms in gentle gestures, later moving your torso, head, leg and the rest of your body in any way you choose. B, you *simultaneously* mirror A’s action, replicating every movement in the same moment. Begin slowly until you have established good contact with each other. The object is [...] to establish a creative flow between you. Eye contact is helpful, but expand your awareness to include your partner’s entire body...[continue]

(Platts, 1996, p. 97)

What are the premises of the Findhorn games? According to the principles of psychosynthesis (Assagioli, 1988; Brown, 1983), they are cooperative (*win-win*) games; they encourage joyful engagement with others; facilitate the gradual growth of self-awareness, relationship, and teamwork competences; and, last but not least, take each person into consideration holistically, supporting educational (and not therapeutic) journeys.

This attention to *facilitating* – and not manipulating – processes informs all of these games, and can be understood, in this context, as an approach which

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<sup>30</sup> David Earl Platts, PhD and consultant is a trainer, writer, speaker and counsellor at the *Psychosynthesis and Education Trust* in London (<https://psychosynthesisistrust.org.uk/>). He works with the principles and methods of psychosynthesis, a wholistic approach to human growth and development.



helps, supports and allows something to happen; accepts any outcome as valid, useful and worthwhile; focuses primarily on people and their needs; respects people and accepts them as they are (Platts, 1996, p. 19)

To create a genuinely rewarding learning experience, play sessions need to provide for gradually increasing engagement (Fig. 1) to encourage participants to open up to others, to explore, to trust; and to enable conflict mediation and support group harmony. Each session is usually punctuated by at least one break.

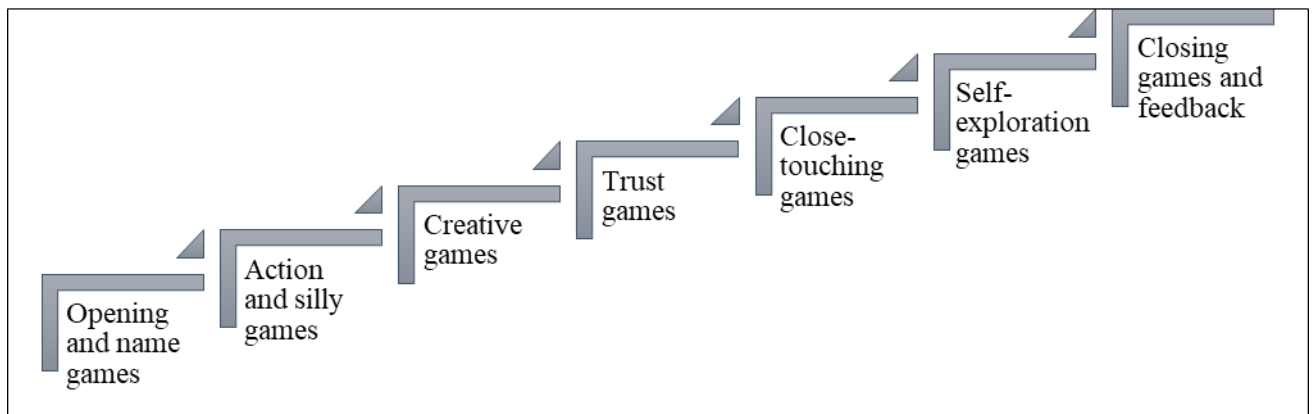


Figure 1- Step-by step involvement

The games vary, according to a group’s age range and other characteristics; each session thus requires detailed planning, and the flexibility to adapt to whatever may unfold. Each session lasts a few hours, and needs a suitable setting and a harmonious alternation of more dynamic activities with those more conducive to introspection and exchange – sometimes verbal (debriefing) – with one’s “playmates” (Table 1).

David Earl Platts (1996) advises, in the planning of a session, that one:

- includes more introspective games only if the group members have known each other for some time and all feel relaxed;
- establishes the games’ goals gradually: first facilitating awareness, then trust and/or group harmony;
- sets out, in detail, an schedule of the possible games, the time needed for each game, the materials necessary and the steps it involves.

Table 1- Purposes of Findhorn games

GAMES	PURPOSE	SOME EXMPLES
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<b>OPENING GAMES</b>	to bring the group together	Greating dance Awakening circle
<b>NAME GAMES</b>	to allow people to get to know one another, starting with learning everyone's name	Ice-Breaker
<b>ACTION GAMES</b>	to release tension and relax the group through movement	Everybody is it Freezing
<b>SILLY GAMES</b>	to continue to dissolve personal shyness and facilitate initial contact with the other	People-to-people
<b>CREATIVE GAMES</b>	to stimulate personal and group imagination through the creation of a shared production	Morning routine Energy shower
<b>REFRESHMENT BREAK</b>	A break between the first and second parts of the session, to help participants to integrate the experience; participants are asked to stay together in order to facilitate a natural, informal sharing of experience.	
<b>TRUST GAMES</b>	to guide the participants step by step to experience a feeling of trust in self and other	Shoulder massage The tired butterfly
<b>CLOSE-TOUCHING GAMES</b>	to deepen trust, through physical contact	People-to-people Shoulder massage
<b>SELF-EXPLORATION REVELATION GAMES</b>	to overcome prejudices, regarding both self and other	Free association
<b>EMPATHY AND CARING GAMES</b>	to allow communication (verbal/non-verbal) in harmony with oneself and with the group	Mirroring Hand-to-hand communication
<b>CLOSING GAMES</b>	to complete the journey	Group spiral
<b>FEEDBACK OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE</b>	to share, work through, integrate the experience	Post-it

A sensitive, experienced facilitator will be able to choose the games best suited to each group, and be flexible enough to respond gracefully to surprises.

Having first-hand experience of cooperative play themselves naturally makes it easier for teachers and educators to work skilfully with the multiple dimensions involved in these activities, and to be flexible and considerate in holding the space – a welcoming environment of mutual trust – in which each can meet the other.

### Educational experiences aimed at teachers

For all of the above reasons, I always include one or two play sessions during my workshops for teachers, to create a harmonious work team; or in the first months of school, to encourage an inclusive, non-judgemental, classroom climate. And even if I do not have much time, I always prefer to balance my contribution in such a way that I give a short theory-based introduction and then follow it up with an experiential workshop (as at this IAIE conference, and elsewhere) (Figure 2), because it's impossible to *talk* about play without *playing*, at least a little.

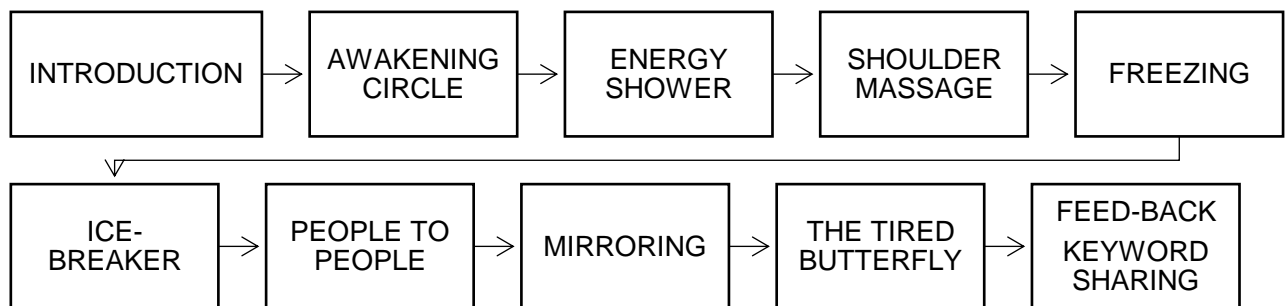


Figure 2- Example of a short play session (Amsterdam, IAIE Conference 2019. Workshop)

Sometimes short (c. 90 minute) workshops are enough to experience a dimension of listening and trust and to motivate people to bring these experiences into the educational contexts in which they work (Fig. 3).

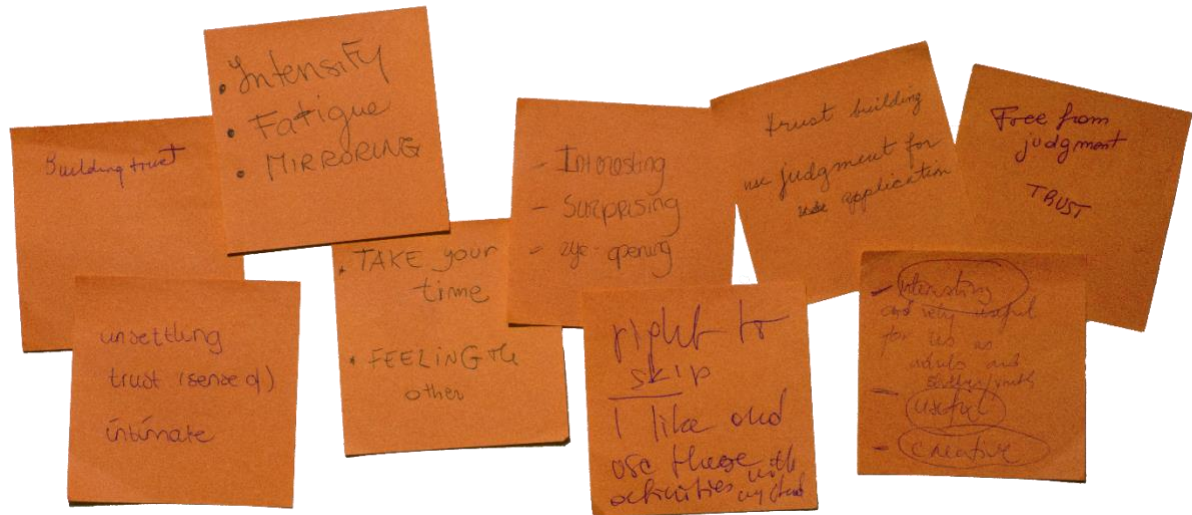


Figure 3 – Workshop at the IAIE conference, Amsterdam 2019. Debriefing

But what do participants report after one or more play sessions? I will now give a brief outline of the results of three studies on experiential learning paths (Kolb & Fry, 1975; Kolb & Lewis, 1986) with primary and secondary teachers in two regions of north-eastern Italy.

#### **a) Exploratory study**

An initial, exploratory, study (Malusà, 2016a, 2016b) was conducted in 2013-14, involving a total of 98 teachers<sup>31</sup>. I monitored 5 training courses on the Findhorn Foundation’s cooperative activities and games. In each (10-16 hour) module I collected data through an educational needs questionnaire, a feedback questionnaire and a follow-up meeting. The results underline how, in a climate of mutual trust, this approach enables the development of relational competences and the creation of a collaborative team. Initial analysis of the debriefing meetings reveals the value of the training for the personal and professional growth of the teachers: it was immediately transferred to their teaching methods.

#### **b) A mixed-method study**

A second (mixed-method) study (Malusà, 2018) examined the impact of a training experience involving 142 teachers<sup>32</sup> in 5 state comprehensive schools (Istituti Comprensivi) from 2014-2017. Again adopting the *Experiential Learning Model* (Kolb, 1984), each 10 hour module

<sup>31</sup> In the first study the sample (91 females and 7 males) consisted of teachers from 22 different countries, teaching in primary schools (65%), middle schools (27%) and high schools (8%). Each course had an average of 21.6 participants.

<sup>32</sup> In the second study the sample included N=88 primary teachers, N=18 secondary teachers and N=6 in-service educators (10,5% from 1-10 years; 25.2% 11-20 years; 64.3% >20 years).

included experiencing cooperative play (Platts, 1996), Kagan structures (Kagan, 1992) and cooperative learning models (Cohen & Lotan, 2014; Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1994). In each (2-4 hour) work session, role play (concrete experience) was used as a starting point to stimulate reflection on one's experience, followed by a theoretical reworking of the experience to facilitate its transferability to the classroom. Using *Convergent parallel design QUAN + QUAL* (Creswell, 2015), I monitored the 7 (non-obligatory) courses through:

- i) a self-evaluation report at the beginning and the end (open questions, on a 5 point Likert scale);
- ii) a follow-up meeting, participant observation, the materials generated and photos.

Using *SPSS21*, the response frequency (mode and mean) in the self-evaluation reports, and the relationships between professional descriptors (years of service, qualifications, discipline(s) taught) and the observed variables (methodology, transfer, competences) were investigated.

All the qualitative data collected in *ii*) were transcribed and a thematic analysis (Mortari, 2007) was carried out, using *NVivo10*.

The games introduced proved highly popular ( $\mu=4.62$ ;  $Mo=5.00$ ;  $Ds= .643$ ), participants' motivation to use active methodologies increased during the course, from  $\mu=3.59$  to  $\mu=4.25$ , and they felt that their professional competence had increased ( $\mu=4.17$ ;  $Mo=4.00$ ), with a greater positive effect expressed as having been experience by primary teachers (61.4%) than by secondary (38.9%); and by teachers who had been working for 11-20 years (58.6%).

The thematic analysis confirmed the rapid creation of collaborative teams in a climate of mutual trust, but suggested a need for longer periods of experiential training. The key elements that come up in the follow-up meetings with the participants were:

- the value of sharing with colleagues;
- the capacity to empathize with the experience of others;
- the opportunity to experience and to experience oneself, to put oneself on the line (personal growth);
- increased motivation on the part of the participants;
- a joyful, tranquil and welcoming work climate;
- the rapid creation of a close-knit work team (an “amalgam” of the participants);
- a good balance between experience and reflection;
- a compelling, hands-on, approach readily transferable to the classroom;
- creative input for the development of new ideas;

- requests for more experiential training spaces in which to further explore the method;
- the difficulty of introducing these methods into middle schools.

Similar points also appear in the open responses to the final self-evaluation questionnaire. The terms most frequently used to define the strengths of the course referred to a particular aspect of the group - the active personal engagement, which allowed participants to share experiences enjoyably, directly experiencing the games that they could now introduce in their classrooms.

Criticism of the course, on the other hand, mostly related to organizational and time factors: the teachers said that they preferred training events to take place in September, because doing in-service training at the end of a day's work with students was very demanding<sup>33</sup>.

The 10 hour course, moreover, was not considered long enough to properly develop the requisite social and methodological competences. The participants' growing awareness showed them how necessary to pursue this training. Chiara and Victoria (not their real names) wrote: *"I definitely need more training to make me more confident about using this approach in class"*; and *"I would like to have more training like this, so as to have more input and maybe some replies to the 'thousands of' questions the children ask me everyday in class"*.

### ***c) A qualitative study***

A third (and on-going) case study is focused on how to make the classroom an inclusive place, analysing the dimensions of trust; it has adopted a qualitative design (as most suitable for picking up on the other relational and emotional factors involved in the educational process)<sup>34</sup>. The sample currently consists of 47 teachers who attended a short in-service course (1-2 sessions of 3-6 hours) on cooperative play in 2018/19<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> The fact that 21.13% (N=30) of the original participants did not attend the last winter session of the course evidences how difficult this is, due - according to the teachers who did come - to over-tiredness or other, clashing, school commitments. Three people (2.1%), however, decided to withdraw from the course because they considered it to be too demanding.

<sup>34</sup> The teachers work at 3 institutions in the Veneto (a region in the north-east); 15.4% work in nursery schools; 61.5 % in primary schools and 23.1% in middle schools.

<sup>35</sup> The sample in 2020 will include a group of classroom assistants and 3 groups of teachers from 3 cities in northern Italy (Trento, Padua and Vicenza).

The teachers' comments in the debriefing meetings are analyzed, beginning with Post-it notes on which they were asked to sum up, using key words, "What I learnt" and "What I experienced" during the course.

Here too, the preliminary results (Fig. 4) show that the common denominator is the discovery of self and other in a relational atmosphere of joyful fun, complicity, collaboration and trust.

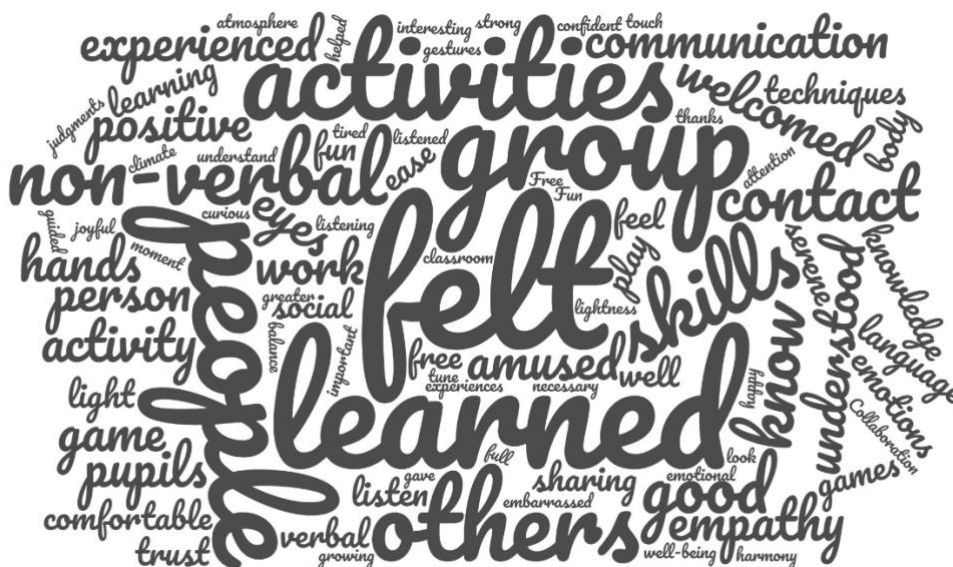


Figure 4 – Wordcloud of most frequent words (at least 2 frequencies)

As two participants wrote:

Today I learnt that to enter a state of well-being it is first necessary to work on oneself. I felt relaxed because I gave space to my emotions without censoring or judging them.

I've learnt that we all have a joyful, childish side... that makes you feel good. Sometimes you need to know how to free it! I felt welcome, accepted, strong, secure, at peace, entertained.

## Conclusions

Although their sample sizes are small, the studies presented here give us some useful pointers towards ways in which a more inclusive classroom climate can be fostered.

- a) The results highlight the importance of experiential learning which enables teachers to acquire the skills necessary for effective classroom management (Sharan & Sharan, 1987). Through the direct experience of games and cooperative activities, followed by reflection on these experiences and their theoretical reelaboration, the participants said that they felt their professional competences had strengthened, and that they were more

motivated to use games and participative methods in the classroom, confirming the hypothesis that the fostering of students' social competences requires socially competent (Malusà, 2016b; Malusà & Tarozzi, 2017).

- b) The processes of *accepting self* and *other* (Caddy & Platts, 1992) require carefully considered timings and spaces (Malusà, 2019), in order to be able to create the kind of inclusive school climate that fosters effective learning processes. My analysis indicates that it appears to be easier to introduce active teaching methods into primary than secondary schools: in the latter many teachers complain that the organizational structure is more rigid, leaving few opportunities for shared planning with colleagues. However, by building a cohesive, collaborative work team which plans together, this obstacle can be partly overcome (Malusà, forthcoming), and cooperative games are a valuable tool for this purpose.
- c) These courses proved to be opportunities for emotional growth for the teachers, allowing them to deepen their awareness of the many – often implicit – messages involved in non-verbal communication, and to foster their emotional competence in a joyful, pleasant educational environment, which included a wider vision of relational well-being.

A short experiential training course, however, cannot fully develop adequate relational competences, and the teachers highlight the need to organize longer, more regular experiential in-school programmes, to enable them to gain the solid foundation of social competences required to work effectively in multicultural classrooms.

- d) Lastly, the Findhorn games integrate bodily, relational, metaphorical and meta-cognitive dimensions which allow the playful experience of the encounter with oneself and other(s) to be elaborated and re-elaborated, involving ever-deeper inner levels, and ever greater balance within the mind-body-spirit continuum (Assagioli, 1988). And the “*felt*” integration of bodily experience, defined by someone as “*embodied educational practice*” (Francesconi & Tarozzi, 2012), plays a crucial part in self-development as a facilitator of increased awareness. Thus understood, cooperative games afford opportunities for self/other-knowledge and the overcoming of stereotypes and prejudices through effective – i.e. *active, collaborative, intentional* and *reflective* – learning (Novara & Di Chio, 2013), in which bodily experience is accorded the attention it deserves.

Cooperative games are not, however, a panacea which can miraculously melt the tensions within a group, but a tool which, when used consistently, contributes to the creation of a



peaceful learning environment and equips people with the emotional competence necessary for successful mediation in conflictual situations, an attribute which, in fact, has been required in schools since 1997, when the OECD launched its DeSeCo (*Definition and Selection of Competencies*) Project, where we find Competency Category 2: *Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups*, which includes the abilities to: (a) *Relate well to others*; (b) *Co-operate, work in teams*; (c) *Manage and resolve conflicts* (DeSeCo, 2005, p. 12). The wide-ranging OECD study on *Social and Emotional Skills* is still on-going, aimed at providing policy-makers, educational institutions, families and communities with a tool kit for facilitating students' social and emotional learning, because

developing these kinds of skills is also increasingly important for communities and nations as a whole, as they have links to increased levels of civic engagement, volunteering and social integration, better interpersonal trust and tolerance, and a decrease in anti-social and criminal behaviours (Kankaraš & Suarez-Alvarez, 2019, p. 10).

And all teachers, of course, have experience of how a harmonious class group can tackle even the most challenging educational offers. In both primary and secondary schools, therefore, co-operative games can be an effective tool for building or redefining a climate of acceptance in which everyone feels valued – or at least accepted – as their (unique) self, without prejudice or discrimination.

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