Teaching a musical instrument to pupils with special educational needs

Inclusion in the Italian school model

edited by
Amalia Lavinia Rizzo

SCIENZE DELLA FORMAZIONE

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This publication was realized with the contribution of the Department of Education Sciences of Roma Tre University (ex 60% – 2020 funds).
The volume contains the results of the two-year research project entitled *Does Musical Instrument Teaching in Inclusive Education facilitate Learning and Involvement of Pupils with Disabilities and Specific Learning Disorders or rather impede it? National Research in Lower Secondary Schools.*
The project envisaged the participation of national and international realities that, in various ways, are committed to enhancing the use of music teaching in an inclusive perspective.

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Introduction

by Massimiliano Fiorucci*

The main purpose of the project entitled *Does Musical Instrument Teaching in Inclusive Education facilitate Learning and Involvement of Pupils with Disabilities and Specific Learning Disorders or rather impede it? National Research in Lower Secondary Schools* ("L'insegnamento dello strumento musicale nella didattica inclusiva: facilitatore o barriera per l'apprendimento e la partecipazione degli allievi con disabilità e con disturbi specifici dell'apprendimento? Una ricerca nazionale nella scuola secondaria di I grado") is making the approach to teaching musical instruments in Lower secondary schools with musical instrument departments (SMIMs) consistent with the educational and inclusive vision of schools of first-cycle education.

In accordance with the University's Strategic Plan and the departmental planning document, the project has been funded for 2020 and 2021 by the Department of Education Sciences of Roma Tre University in order to gain further knowledge, and achieve significant scientific, cultural, and social results, while understanding the complexity of educational and training phenomena.

Using music as a tool for inclusion, as an innovative area of research, has caught the interest of the Department, which has long acknowledged its cultural relevance and pedagogical value.

Faced with the new educational demands of contemporary society, the Department has considered research on inclusion as a priority from a deeply interdisciplinary perspective, in order to open innovative avenues for promoting each pupil's right to education.

In this framework, music is a privileged experience that must be used by the school system to promote inclusive educational practices and effective

* Chancellor of Roma Tre University.

educational experiences for personal development, with a close eye on those with special educational needs. Especially for these people, the learning environment must be properly organized and enriched with possibilities for involvement.

As is well known, for people with disabilities and learning disorders, music can be a very meaningful experience as it fosters their cognitive, motor, emotional, social-affective, expressive, and cultural development and, at the same time, makes learning communities more welcoming. There are several scientific studies that have proven that music promotes each person's integral development when regularly offered as a part of quality teaching practices. For this reason, the focus on developing the virtuous circle between music and inclusion has caught the interest of our Department, in a context of consistent and articulated interdisciplinary openings and training courses addressed to teachers in common and support positions.

It is with great pleasure that we presented in this volume the project's results. For the first time in Italy, this project addressed with great epistemological and theoretical-procedural rigor the topic of inclusion in Lower secondary schools with musical instrument departments (SMIMs), and it offered a multi-level contribution, whose repercussions go far beyond the specific context investigated.

Due to the complexity of the variants deepened in the project, which are related to the educational and evaluative issues and the inclusive processes that have been implemented, both the research methodology and the results are particularly relevant for improving training and educational processes.

The project was carried out in collaboration with the National Committee for Practical Music Learning for All Pupils, established by the Minister of Education and chaired by Luigi Berlinguer, who supported and trusted us and, therefore, we thank here, together with the technical and scientific collaborators inside and outside the Department. Special thanks go to the project coordinator, Amalia Lavinia Rizzo, who worked passionately and skillfully.

Our warmest thanks go to the teachers and school leaders who worked with us, sacrificing their time and sharing reflections, best practices, and proposals to improve the level of inclusiveness of SMIMs.

We believe that this volume and the papers attached, which are the result of joint work, can be a reference point and stimulate educational and research activities in this area, thanks to the variety of theoretical speeches, co-teaching and co-assessing proposals that were elaborated. We look forward to further and diversified developments both in our country and abrode.

1. Inclusive musical instrument education in the Italian school: A national research

by Amalia Lavinia Rizzo

1. Foreword

This research – entitled *Does Musical Instrument Teaching in Inclusive Education facilitate Learning and Involvement of Pupils with Disabilities and Specific Learning Disorders or rather impede it? National Research in Lower Secondary Schools* ("L'insegnamento dello strumento musicale nella didattica inclusiva: facilitatore o barriera per l'apprendimento e la partecipazione degli allievi con disabilità e con disturbi specifici dell'apprendimento? Una ricerca nazionale nella scuola secondaria di I grado") – was funded by the Department of Education Sciences at Roma Tre University, which has long been committed to investigating the use of music to improve the level of inclusion in kindergartens and throughout the 1st cycle of education (Chiappetta Cajola & Rizzo, 2016, 2019; Rizzo, 2014, 2018, 2021a, 2021b; Rizzo & De Angelis, 2019; Rizzo & Lietti, 2013).

The interest in this field of research stems from the Department's own desire to improve inclusive processes by providing Italian schools with useful indications to promote quality education, one that can prevent and address all forms of exclusion, disparity, vulnerability, and inequality in accessing and participating in education, as well as in learning processes and outcomes, as also called for by the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (UN, 2015).

This is obviously a great challenge which, in order to ensure that all learners – especially those with special educational needs – can develop their potential to the fullest, requires putting in place an educational approach that effectively meets individual educational needs. And it does so through the creation of a truly inclusive learning environment that allows access to train-

ing courses and a range of facilitating "environmental factors"[1]. Inclusive schools ensure the full accessibility of learning environments by responsibly organizing a curriculum that places pupils, their interests, and motivation at the center, and can successfully offer customized/personalized training courses (Baldacci, 2005).

As is well known, music is part of the existing dialogue between education and inclusion because it represents a meaningful experience of cognitive, motor, emotional, social-affective, expressive, and cultural development. This, on the one hand, enables and enhances the participation and learning of pupils with any type of special educational need and, on the other hand, makes the community of pupils more welcoming. Indeed, several scientific studies have proven that music promotes each person's integral development when regularly offered, also for those with severe disabilities (Adamek & Darrow, 2010; Darrow, 2016; Rizzo, 2018, 2019) and stands as a true "neuroprotectant" of language (Kraus & Chandrasekaran, 2010), while also improving working memory, concentration, and attention (Rolka & Silverman, 2015; Gordon, Fehd & Candliss, 2015; Hallam, 2015)[2] and overall levels of well-being and self-esteem (Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010; Rizzo, 2018). Moreover, as Édouard Séguin had already realized (1846), when the diversity of semiotic mechanisms is activated by music, which is a nonverbal language of connotative and non-denotative meaning (Lucchetti, Ferrari & Freschi, 2012), isolation and incommunicability problems that people with cognitive deficits or disorders often experience and that impair their language skills are more easily overcome.

As a matter of fact, at an international level, musical experience is considered an element of "human functioning" (WHO, 2001-2017) that allows for a real transformation of educational systems (UNESCO-Kaces, 2010) while also promoting responsible citizen education (Nussbaum, 2011).

As it is a universal type of experience that belongs to everyone, music provides the school community with privileged cultural and social places

[1] The interaction between environmental factors and the characteristics of pupils is crucial to the achievement of educational success (Bramanti & Odifreddi, 2006), as highlighted both by the most important pedagogues (e.g: Dewey, 1923; Vygotsky, 1934), as well as in the National Directions for the Curriculum for Kindergarten and First Cycle of Education (Miur, 2012), and in the bio-psycho-social model of "human functioning," elaborated by the World Health Organization in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health/ICF (WHO, 2001-2017).

[2] Currently, scientific research is well documenting the effect of near transfer i.e., transfer between similar skills. Further research activities are in progress to verify the promotion of far transfer related to distant skill domains. See: Rizzo & Pellegrini (2021).

where the richness of differences can be experienced (Barthes, 1985) and enables the community to awaken from indifference towards others, while triggering processes of cooperation and socialization and developing a sense of belonging and interaction between different cultures (MIUR, 2012). Thanks to ensemble music, therefore, all learners can develop interpretive paradigms centered on respecting differences and acquiring individual and collective responsibility (Ferrari & Santini, 2014).

Currently, the Italian first cycle of education includes Lower secondary schools with musical instrument departments (SMIMs) where pupils can study a musical instrument at no charge (Law 124/1999). In SMIMs, musical instrument teaching is rightfully part of the school's educational offering and completes the educational and teaching planning of the Class Councils and the teaching staff, at an interdisciplinary level. Musical instrument teaching was included alongside the "General Music" subject in the secondary school curriculum in order to enhance the educational opportunities offered to all pupils by providing them with additional chances for logical, expressive, and communicative maturity and awareness of their own identity (Ministerial Decree 201/1999). In an inclusive perspective – yet to be formalized in ministerial documents, but indicated by the legislator – since 1999, the educational aim behind the establishment of SMIMs has been to organize further opportunities for integration and growth also for pupils who were then defined as having "disadvantages". As also clearly stated in the *National Directions for the curriculum of kindergarten and first-cycle education* (MIUR, 2012) in which the subject "Musical Instrument" is obviously included, the study of an instrument "contributes – like the other disciplines – to put in practice the principles of inclusion by using music as an effective resource to facilitate the involvement and learning of pupils with Special educational needs (SEN) while respecting and enhancing their peculiarities and talents" (Rizzo & Croppo, 2021, p. X).

Given the regulatory, pedagogical, and scientific framework briefly presented, the nearly two thousand SMIMs in the country are an important resource for using music as an inclusive part of the school curriculum, and hopefully, they will work to transform the values and principles into practice, guaranteeing "the most favorable conditions for achieving learning objectives" (MIUR, 2011) and ensuring "the opportunity for everyone to achieve high cultural levels and to develop skills and competencies, through knowledge and skills (general and specific), that are consistent with personal attitudes and choices" (Law 53/2003).

As outlined below, in order to successfully contribute to enhancing inclusion in SMIMs by improving teaching practices and teaching-assessment

organization, the project described in this volume, whose results are being presented for sharing and dissemination, was launched[3].

2. Problem and research objectives

While the empowerment resulting from being able to study a musical instrument at school may be an opportunity to include pupils with disabilities and specific learning disorders (SLDs) and to broadly enhance inclusion in schools, there are however issues that make the approach to teaching musical instruments not always consistent with the educational and inclusive vision of the first cycle of education.

The first issue relates to a school-prepared "aptitude orientation test" (Ministerial Decree 201/99) that all pupils must take in order to attend Lower secondary schools with musical instrument departments (SMIMs) and how it is handled. This test was established due to the fact that the number of pupils enrolling in instrument courses is restricted by the instrument teachers available. In order to prepare the test, each SMIM defines how the test is to be organized and which evaluation criteria will be applied. Therefore, all pupils will receive a score and be placed on a ranking list that may exclude some from accessing, depending on the ratio between the number of applications and the placements available. Such a possibility of exclusion

[3] See Rizzo (2021, 2022); Rizzo *et al.* (2020, 2021); Rizzo & Croppo (2021). The theoretical-methodological framework of the research, updates, and some results were presented at the following international and national conferences. National Conferences: Didactics and School Inclusion – Inklusion im bildungsbereich (Free University of Bolzano, October 23, 2021); National Music Week 2021 (INDIRE, May 25, 2021); RESEARCH and TEACHING to promote intelligence, understanding, and participation (Italian Society for Educational Research/SIRD, April 9-10, 2021); The responsibility of pedagogy in the transformations of social relations. History, lines of research, and perspectives (Italian Society of Pedagogy/SIPED, January 14-16, 2021; Didactics and school inclusion. Not One Less (Free University of Bolzano, Nov. 21-30, 2020); National Music Week 2020 (INDIRE, May 27, 2021). International conferences: Faces of inequalities: citizenships, educations, and rights (University of L'Aquila, December 14, 2021); WHAT SCHOOL FOR CITIZENS OF THE WORLD. One Hundred Years since the Founding of the Ligue Internationale de l'Éducation Nouvelle (SIRD, Nov. 26, 2021); 4th Gran Sasso International Forum – Widening the Horizons of Charity for a New Social Planning (University of Teramo, Oct. 01, 2021); European Conference on Educational Research/ECER (University of Geneva, Sept. 09, 2021); Paideia 2020 Music and Knowledge (Scuola di Musica di Fiesole, Dec. 04, 2020. The concluding results were presented at the Conference Musical Instrument and School Inclusion held on Feb. 25, 2022, at the Department of Education Sciences, Roma Tre University, and at the European Conference on Educational Research/ECER (Yerevan University, 06.09.2022).

seems more likely for pupils with special educational needs who, although they may be able to benefit from the additional musical activity during secondary school, may be unable to "compete" with their classmates and therefore will not have access to the SMIM courses. Such a problem would obviously mainly arise if the test was not really "orientation-aptitude" based as required by the regulations, but was instead laid out to be "selective" and thus not consistent with the principles of inclusive assessment and the inclusive and equitable approach to teaching required by SMIMs (Rizzo *et al.*, 2020). As a matter of fact, according to standards and especially to the inclusive principles governing SMIMs, the admission test should be designed and carried out according to an equitable and effective assessment methodology (Aquario, 2015) that allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to "show their full potential, what they know, understand and can do" (Hockings, 2010, p. 2).

A test with exclusionary characteristics appears to be more likely to occur when the attitude of instrument teachers stems from cognitive, value and behavioral patterns typical of an elitist vision of music teaching, dating back to a Kantian matrix, which deems musical instrument studying not to be suitable for those who do not show specific talent and, therefore, only focuses on the most gifted pupils (Rizzo & Croppo, 2021). This risk has also emerged in a recent research in which evidence of the aforementioned vision was found in the first cycle of education (Rizzo & De Angelis, 2019). In this case, it seems clear how an inappropriate identification between the purposes of SMIMs and the professionalizing purposes of Conservatories can influence the organization (Schein, 2010) of SMIMs to be more "exclusionary", both in terms of the approach of the admission test and the teaching-assessment strategies. Given such a framework and the importance of recovering the value of cultural transmission for inclusive education, we understand that we need to take action in order to disseminate a teaching-assessment culture that is more inclusive (Corsini, 2018) within an approach designed to value differences and the need to make the musical instrument teaching accessible also for those with special educational needs and, more specifically, for those with disabilities and SLDs.

Besides these problems, it is worth mentioning that at the time the research was outlined, it was not possible to access statistics on the number of pupils with disabilities or with SLDs attending SMIMs. Moreover, there was not any real understanding, not even partially, of how instrument teachers approach assessing processes, nor of the organizational-teaching plan of individual and ensemble lessons of pupils with disabilities or SLDs who may have been admitted.

In this context, the research project set the following objectives:

- to explore the organization and assessment practices of the orientation-aptitude test for instrument courses in relation to pupils with disabilities and SLDs in SMIMs;
- to analyze the relationships between the teaching-assessment procedures implemented in SMIMs, the instruments used and the regulatory guidelines, identifying strengths and possible critical issues with regard to the school inclusion perspective;
- to identify, analyze and document the teaching-assessment methods implemented in SMIMs that facilitate instrument learning and involvement in ensemble music activities of learners with disabilities and with SLDs;
- to identify key recommendations/guidelines for building inclusive models of assessment and teaching of the musical instrument in SMIMs;
- to disseminate research outcomes nationally and internationally.

3. Timeline and research team

The project was funded by the Department of Education Sciences at Roma Tre University for two consecutive years and was carried out from January 2020 to December 2021. Despite a delay in the work due to the first lock-down during the Covid-19 pandemic, thanks to the expertise and willingness of all participants and, especially, the extremely positive feedback from schools, the planned timeline was met and the results were presented at the conference "Musical Instrument and School Inclusion" held on February 24, 2022, at the Department of Education Sciences, Roma Tre University.

The project, which I coordinated, benefited from the support of a prestigious multidisciplinary group of scholars who have been working on these topics for years[4].

The project was carried out in close collaboration with the Committee for the Practical Learning of Music for All Pupils (Comitato per l'apprendimento pratico della musica per tutti gli studenti), chaired by Luigi Berlinguer and

[4] The research group consists of Lucia Chiappetta Cajola (Roma Tre University), Barbara De Angelis (Roma Tre University), Cristiano Corsini (Roma Tre University), Ada Manfreda (Roma Tre University), Filippo Sapuppo (Roma Tre University), Marina Chiaro (Roma Tre University), Marianna Traversetti (University of L'Aquila), Federica Pilotti (Committee for the Practical Learning of Music for All Students), Annalisa Spadolini (Committee for the Practical Learning of Music for All Students), Cristiana Lucarelli (IRCCS Santa Lucia, Rome), Maria Teresa Palermo (Cesena Conservatory of Music), Ester Caparrós Martín (University of Malaga, Spain).

coordinated by Annalisa Spadolini, that became our formal associate.

At different stages, the project made use of additional valuable associates from different professional backgrounds, including the Third Sector, which we would like to thank for contributing to the research[5].

An integral part of the research activity was the Regional School Offices (RSOs), namely the Technical Managers and the Music Instrument and Inclusion Contact Persons[6], and the SMIMs, namely School Managers, the Music Instrument and Inclusion Contact Persons, who participated actively and skillfully, despite the fact that the years 2020 and 2021 were very difficult and challenging due to pandemic management.

4. Methodology, examples, and survey instruments

In order to be able to have an early understanding of the organizational-teaching methods implemented in SMIMs and of the numbers and characteristics of pupils with disabilities and with SLDs attending musical instrument courses, a theoretical/exploratory research study was designed (Lucisano & Salerni, 2012), which employed the mixed methods approach (Trinchero, 2002) for data collection and analysis. Indeed, this approach, which has already been tested in previous projects on the inclusive use of music, including INValSI's Valmuss and Valmuss 2 projects (Branchesi, 2003, 2006), allows for the combined use of techniques, methods, concepts, and languages of quantitative and qualitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In line with the objectives described, the total number of SMIMs in the country (No. 1,845) was identified as a reference, and the com-

[5] Several research associates are musicians and teachers: Anna Bonaldo (IC Fonzaso and Lamon of Fonzaso, Belluno), Maristella Croppo (Music School Musica incontro of Rome), Antonello Farulli (Music School of Fiesole), Mariateresa Lietti (IC Como Borgovico of Como), Marcella Maio (IC Luigi Nono of Mira, Venice), Maria Luisa Nicelli (IC G. Garibaldi di Fondi, Latina), Fabio Sebastiani (IC Madre Teresa di Valmontone, Rome), Adalgisa Serrecchia (IC Rizziconi di Reggio Calabria), Anna Maria van der Poel (IC Esseneto di Agrigento), We were also able to count on the cooperation of other experts such as: Franca Ferrari (professor of Music Pedagogy at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory of Music in Rome), Riccardo Lombardo (Headmaster IC Vigone, Turin), Luisa Lopez (Neurophysiopathologist and scientific consultant of the Mariani Foundation's Neuroscience and Music project) and Dario Lo Scalzo (journalist and writer). Very important was also the long discussion with musicians and experts in instrument teaching Gabriele Rubino and Francesca Vergani of the Sequeri-Esagramma Foundation, chaired by Licia Sbattella.

[6] The project to RSOs was presented in an online meeting held on the Teams platform on June 30, 2020.

plete database was provided by the aforementioned MIUR Committee for the Practical Learning of Music for All Pupils[7].

The quantitative survey made use of a web survey sent to SMIMs via the Lime survey platform.

The following steps were taken to draft the web survey:

– the research team fine-tuned the first version of the structured questionnaire[8], which was sent to the Regional School Offices in June 2020 to be shared with technical directors, music contact persons and inclusion contact persons;
– once the comments of the Regional School Offices[9] were received in September 2020, the final version (October 2020) of the questionnaire was drafted and sent by each Regional School Office to schools throughout the region in November 2020.

The qualitative in-depth study involved focus groups coordinated by the writer and attended by teachers and School Principals of SMIMs that set up inclusive teaching of musical instruments. Teachers and School Principals were selected following a discussion between the research team and the Regional School Offices and through direct contacts with SMIMs who, upon filling out the questionnaire, proposed to offer their input[10]. The work benefited from additional contributions offered by university teachers, conservatory teachers, musicians, Regional School Office delegates, and experts from the Third Sector[11].

Focus groups were divided into four full-day online meetings in the following order:

– presentation of the project, its objectives, methodology, and in-depth study of value, theoretical and regulatory aspects which were vital to the research (February 12, 2021);

[7] See Marina Chiaro's chapter for description of this example.

[8] Together with the writer, the questionnaire was developed by Marina Chiaro, Cristiano Corsini, Marianna Traversetti and Annalisa Spadolini.

[9] For their detailed contributions to finalizing the questionnaire, we thank Maurizio Piscitelli (USR Calabria); Chiara Brescianini (USR Emilia Romagna); Laura Crivelli, Marie Gouskos and Matteo Vecchio (USR Lazio); Maria Teresa Baglione, Giuseppe Manelli and Gianna Prapotnich (USR Marche); and Rossana Neglia and Loretta Rapporti (USR Umbria).

[10] For instance, this is the case of Adalgisa Serrecchia, violin teacher and inclusion contact person of the IC Rizziconi of Reggio Calabria, the group of instrument teachers of the Lower secondary school with musical instrument department IC carpi Centro (Manuela Rossi, Simone Valla, Matteo Ferrari, and Mauro Bruschi) and Riccardo Lombardo DS of the IC of Vignone (TO).

[11] We would also like to thank the following people for their contributions to the focus group work: Barbara De Angelis, Antonello Farulli, Franca Ferrari, Luisa Lopez, Federica Pilotti, Gabriele Rubino, Annalisa Spadolini, Marianna Traversetti, and Francesca Vergani. See the chapter by Filippo Sapuppo for an in-depth discussion of the focus group.

– planning of orientation-aptitude tests for pupils with disabilities and with SLDs. For example: how these are organized and carried out; facilitating elements that have been introduced; difficulties and critical issues; the relationship between fellow instrument teachers, relationship with the support teacher; emotional aspects; elements of continuity with elementary school; examples of tests for different instruments, etc. (March 12, 2021);
– instrument teaching for pupils with disabilities and instrument teaching for pupils with SLDs from an inclusive perspective. For example, organization of time and space of one-on-one lessons and ensemble activities; teaching materials in use; assignments and teaching strategies; compensatory and measures special requirements; additional facilitating elements; emotional aspects; difficulties and critical issues; planning documents such as Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), Personalized Teaching Plan (PTP), Plan for Inclusion, etc.; video documentation (April 12, 2021);
– how to assess the educational courses with the instrument for pupils with disabilities and with SLDs – e.g.: testing tests; compensatory and measures special requirements; evaluation criteria; emotional aspects; etc.; how to organize and carry out the state examination (instrument part) for pupils with disabilities and with SLDs – e.g.: how to carry out examinations and evaluation criteria; collaboration between support teachers and other teachers, including instrument teachers, etc. (April 23, 2021).

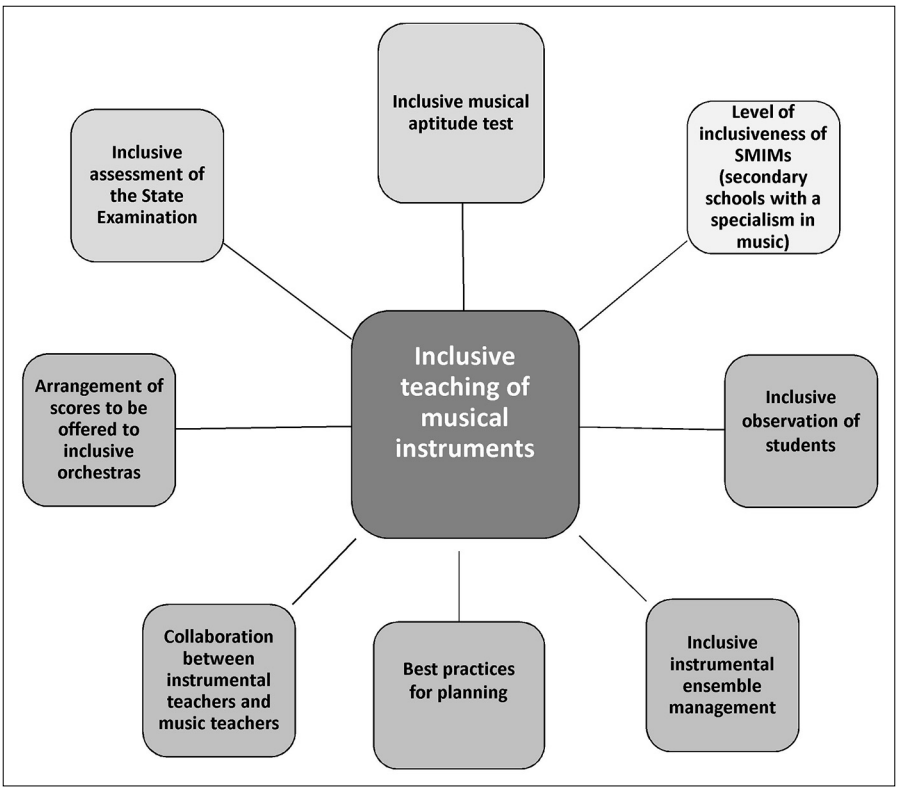
In order to deepen the cognitive objectives while taking into account the existing connections between the music instrument curriculum planning, the Individualized Educational Plans of pupils with disabilities, and the Personalized Teaching Plan of pupils with SLDs, a documentary analysis of curriculum planning was also carried out, IEPs, PTPs, Three-year plan of training curriculum, and Plans for Inclusion in the schools participating in the focus group, as well as online interviews with school principals of the aforementioned SMIMs in order to set forth policies and practices that enhance music for inclusive school-family-territory governance[12].

[12] A range of inclusive teaching practices of instrumental teaching has been collected through a structured form specially prepared and described in Federica Pilotti's chapter. The collected activities are available online at https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa/catalog/book/771.

5. Inclusive teaching of musical instruments: the research areas

Following this exploratory phase, the most crucial determinants of inclusive teaching of musical instruments were identified. Therefore, a map of relevant domains in understanding and promoting inclusion in SMIMs was created by comparing the theoretical, value, and regulatory aspects that had emerged in the research group and the variety of solutions/actions that had arisen in different contexts (Fig. 1). These areas (No. 8) were deeply debated in many working subgroups.

Fig. 1 – The research areas



By referencing further reading of the various papers in this volume, we briefly present the problems that were identified and the guidelines deemed most effective based on the relevant literature below. It must be noted that the guidelines that resulted at the conclusion of the research are not intended as unique models, but rather as a scientific and sustainable teaching reference

that may be appropriate to guide teachers in the complexity of their daily tasks (Rizzo, 2022).

6. The results: problems detected and guidelines

It should be noted that given the complexity of Italian schools and the variety of skills required for an inclusive teaching organization, the findings of this research should be read from a combined and multidimensional perspective so that SMIMs can be guided to truly be inclusive in terms of how pupils with disabilities and with SLDs access instrument courses, as well as in terms of teaching-assessment practices.

The results thus are related to the different areas of the project objectives and are briefly presented below.

6.1. Level of inclusion among SMIMs

While referring to the specific discussion related to the level of inclusion among SMIMs[13], it appears relevant here to point out that from a quantitative point of view, musical instrument courses are less inclusive than the rest of the school courses, thus confirming the rationale behind this research. Indeed, they turned out to be less attended by pupils with disabilities (2.5% SMIM vs. 4.7% for the rest of school activities) and with SLDs (4.5% SMIM vs. 5.8% for the rest of school activities) on average. Among other reasons, it should also be noted how hard it is to pass the orientation-aptitude test, and this often discourages families of the aforementioned pupils, who consider the musical course to be "too difficult", from even applying, as emerged in the focus group and interviews. In this framework, the lack of shared goals and methodologies between elementary school teachers and instrument teachers and the lack of a network of collaborative relationships with support teachers and the inclusion contact person is one of the most critical aspects. In order to improve instrumental teaching addressed to pupils with disabilities and with SLD, also as part of musical ensembles, schools expressed the need for training aimed at acquiring skills to manage teaching offerings based on specific body activities for supporting the development and psycho-physical awareness of pupils, and for employing technologies to facilitate learning.

[13] See chapter by Marina Chiaro.

6.2. Designing an inclusive orientation-aptitude test

After extensively discussing the pedagogical and regulatory grounds[14] for developing an inclusive orientation-aptitude test in SMIMs, a test model that can enable all pupils to best express their talents was defined, even for those with severe disabilities[15]. The admission test resulting from this research project aims to bring out the musical aptitude of all pupils. The methodological choice involved arranging the test as a real task, posing musical "problem-situations." These situations are *open-ended* (they admit multiple solutions), *challenging* (they motivate involvement and commitment) and *sustainable* (they can be tackled with the resources available to pupils) (Trinchero, 2017).

In our opinion, this proposal, which is highly contextualized as it refers to a situation that is clear, factual, and, above all, accessible to all according to their resources, allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to fully take part in the test, and enables them to draw out their diverse potentials to the fullest possible extent.

6.3. Defining criteria for inclusive assessment of the State Examination

Assessment in the State Examination was considered one of the issues to be explored from the perspective of inclusive assessment (Watkins, 2007), and is one of the theoretical assumptions of the entire research work (Rizzo *et al.*, 2020).

This issue was extremely problematic, especially during the last focus group, and was addressed by the valuable contribution of a group of teachers that defined guidelines and suggestions with us in order to successfully make the practical instrument test into an "educational"[16] evaluation as part of the state examination of the first cycle of education. Thus, a set of criteria were identified and detailed that, although they are not prescriptive, can be shared in the Class Council in order to properly carry out the evaluation of the instrument test within the final examination of lower secondary schools[17].

[14] See contributions by Cristiano Corsini and Annalisa Spadolini.

[15] See contributions by Maristella Croppo, Franca Ferrari, and Amalia Lavinia Rizzo.

[16] See Cristiano Corsini's contribution to further understand the notion of "educational" evaluation.

[17] See contributions by Anna Bonaldo, Marcella Maio, Maria Luisa Nicelli, Fabio Sebastiani, Adalgisa Serrecchia, Anna Maria van der Poel, and Amalia Lavinia Rizzo.

6.4. Identifying ways of inclusive observation of pupils enrolled in SMIMs

Being able to build meaningful musical instrument courses that are not homogenized, yet attentive to different needs, interests, physicality, and skills and inclusive of all pupils even in a group, ensemble, and orchestral activities while valuing them, is indeed a challenge, and has also led to deepening the theme of observation and listening: these are deemed to be essential tools for understanding and organizing courses and proposals that suit everyone. For this purpose and referring to the relevant literature, some guiding principles of instrumental teaching are specified, as well as a number of organizational and teaching proposals aimed at observing the elements that are crucial from an inclusive perspective[18].

6.5. Describing criteria and methods for managing inclusive instrumental ensembles

Given the focus on the empathic and relational dimensions of the musical experience[19], in order for the SMIM learning environment to be peaceful, fully inclusive, and enhancing for all pupils, we chose to delve into the ways of inclusive management of instrumental groups, which is considered in the relevant literature as an extremely effective strategy (Mitchell, 2014/2018)[20].

By suggesting to adapt inclusive music curriculum to those proposed by the Esagramma Method (Sbattella, 2013), we described a range of specific teaching activities that could be put in place by instrument teachers in order to build a safe educational space. This way, each person can feel free to express their own needs, points of view, interests, potential, and difficulties and, at the same time, be inclusive towards others, and value everyone's richness (Chiappetta Cajola & Rizzo, 2016). We also focused specifically on body awareness and active imagination, which it is essential to foster appropriate intervention methodologies for pupils with disabilities or with SLDs, not least in order to build an authentic relationship between pupils themselves and their teachers[21].

[18] See the contribution by Mariateresa Lietti.
[19] See contributions by Barbara De Angelis and Paola Greganti.
[20] See the contribution by Francesca Vergani.
[21] See the contribution by Maria Teresa Palermo.

6.6. Setting criteria for arranging scores addressed to inclusive orchestras

In order to effectively contribute to the creation of inclusive ensembles, the Esagramma experience was considered a valuable reference point so that musical instruments can truly be a means of expression instead of an obstacle for all pupils. With this in mind, several operational elements were developed to also allow pupils with cognitive and motor deficits to be protagonists in ensemble music performances, thus greatly contributing to rendering the overall arrangement, and bringing into play increasingly refined musical, interpretative and dialogical skills[22].

Criteria for scores to be arranged for inclusive orchestras thus have been set to enable instrument teachers to use their resources to create never-trivial musical situations that are of "aesthetic interest". On the one hand, these situations will be able to promote the highest degree of learning and involvement of all pupils and, on the other hand, evoke enchantment and wonder.

6.7. Good planning practices by focus group members

During the research, good practices and evidence of the solutions to carry out inclusive activities, which arose from daily experience and practice in those schools included in the focus groups, were listened to and highlighted[23].

Therefore, for the purpose of enhancing inclusive teaching techniques already in place in SMIMs, a "Project Sheet" was drafted: this way, activities carried out in a curriculum could be included and good practices disseminated. This form is consistent with the Teaching Framework of the INDIRE portal, Music at School (Musica a Scuola), which has been developed by creating a framework of musical competence (Ferrari & Pilotti, 2018), and is made available to schools as a planning tool for an inclusive organization of musical instrument teaching.

[22] See the contribution by Gabriele Rubino.
[23] See the contribution by Federica Pilotti.

6.8. Useful teaching materials to promote collaboration between instrument teachers and SMIM music teachers

Following the collection of data, a question of particular relevance has emerged: whether in music teaching the development of "phonological competence", understood as the ability of being in the musical flow, should be supported, while also acknowledging the articulation of individual phonological units, each of which has its own form and character, and is therefore also a unit of meaning. This contribution is intended for pupils with special education needs as a support to compensate their difficulties[24], also in terms of developing reading in rhyme and, more generally, instrumental performance, and it is organized as a Unit of Learning and proposed as a possible link between teaching activities in the morning, during music class, and those in the afternoon, such as instrument lessons. In face-to-face interviews, problems between music teachers and SMIM Music Instrument teachers to collaborate were also detected, so we not only aimed to focus on this aspect, but also on developing a teaching model for SMIM Music teachers. As is well known, their contribution, which is already very significant for developing musical literacy from existing acculturation levels, would be even more enhanced if they could share objectives and methodologies with fellow music instrument teachers[25].

7. Final remarks and prospects

This research project highlighted that SMIMs in the national territory are essential for spreading music in the school system and for enhancing curriculum inclusiveness, promoting genuine involvement of all pupils and creating those conditions of well-being that are necessary for building personal identity and a sense of belonging to the community.

Especially for pupils with disabilities and with SLDs, being able to play an instrument stimulates active psychophysical involvement in a joyful and constructive interaction with others. As made clear by experiences that are now well known in the international arena – for example, the personal and social development environment created by Abreu's Venezuelan *El Sistema* – instrumental performance further enhances the inclusive power of music

[24] See the contribution by Marianna Traversetti.

[25] See Ferrari (2022) and web content in the following volume https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa/catalog/book/771.

by developing potential, motivation and skills and by helping pupils overcome personal, cultural and social challenges.

As the first step in the instrumental teaching chain, with their spaces, repertoires, and cultural and educational opportunities, SMIMs meet pupils' need to study an instrument for free and during school hours, thereby allowing them to experience ensemble music's educational and transformative potential. More than 20 years after they were first established, SMIMs are still a very important asset and a great opportunity to create inclusion in and out of school, activating networks in their territories, and acting as places for developing citizenship and personal and social well-being.

Moreover, as a result of teachers' active contributions to this research, it has become clear that in recent years, very valuable teaching professionals have been trained and are capable not only of successfully organizing teaching-instructional activities, but also of establishing interdisciplinary links within the school, of opening up to the territory (local authorities, associations, etc.), and of using technologies to improve pupils learning and participation, including for those with special educational needs.

However, this work must be concluded by pointing out that there are still several critical issues that prevent pupils with special educational needs from both accessing instrument courses and benefiting from the best possible educational opportunities. With a view to continuous improvement of educational processes, despite having many inclusive and proactive SMIMs, it is argued that these weaknesses must be addressed and countered from a systemic and collaborative perspective in terms of first-level research, policy-making and active involvement of school principals, teachers, families and pupils themselves.

As a matter of fact, all those who are interested in spreading music at school are asked to make a contribution to prevent the great inclusive potential of this subject from being lost, given also that in Italy the study of music is excluded from secondary school education, with the exception of the Music high schools.

A major prospect to this end is to further and strengthen the collaboration between schools and universities, as part of a genuine exchange relationship that allows the teaching and assessment approaches resulting from this research to be fully tested for their effectiveness in the Italian inclusion environment.

With this in mind, we are committed to disseminating the results of this project and its guidelines, so as to continue to spark people's interest in this regard and to implement needed research and training while continuously and progressively improving the use of music in raising and enhancing levels of school inclusion.

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2. History, quality and perspectives

by Annalisa Spadolini

1. A regulatory history of schools with a musical instrument department

The starting point for my paper arises from the need to focus on lower secondary schools with a musical instrument department, which have gone through alternating events over the last 45 years, including the achievement of a strong identity, a considerable expansion in numerical and qualitative terms, the development of extremely interesting research activities, and a regulatory attention dating back to the reorganisation of the courses and the recent laws starting from the D.M. 8/2011, up to the Legislative Decree 13 April 2017 n. 60 and the Prime Minister's "Piano delle arti" Decree of 12 May 2021.

Four decrees have regulated schools with a musical instrument department which have been established starting from the experimental stage: the Ministerial Decree of 8 September 1975, that of 3 August 1979, that of 13 February 1996 and that of 6 August 1999 n. 201.

In the Ministerial Decree of 3 August 1975, the experimentation was authorised only in Lombardy. It aimed to "highlight the educational and formative capabilities of music". The first courses were authorised in the province of Milan. Later on, the experimentation was spread to the provinces of Bari, Catania and Rome.

That year a total of eighteen lower secondary schools activated courses, in addition to the curricular subjects, in which pupils learnt to play a musical instrument.

The 3-year courses were created "considering the opportunity to promote an experimentation in which general music education combined with the tuition of a musical instrument was integrated into the context of other disciplines". The decree highlighted "music's ability to train and guide" through

a study that is not strictly technical and notional, but mainly cultural, "preparing for any continuation in the study of music".

The experimentation provided for three hours of music education a week per class integrated with the study of a musical instrument, according to programmes and methodologies established by a Scientific Technical Committee (responsible for monitoring and verifying the experimentation).

The Ministerial Decree of 3 August 1979 extended the instrumental experimentation to the whole national territory. This Decree defined the new programmes "for all"; it aimed to change the assumptions and methods to adapt to new educational and cultural needs; music, hitherto reserved for insiders and considered from a predominantly technical and professionalising point of view, became part of and was fully included among the essential elements of an educational curriculum.

The decree had the purpose of rationalising the experimentation, it introduced elements of homogeneity on an organisational and structural level. The courses included from a minimum of three to a maximum of five instrumental specialties: piano, violin, cello, oboe, clarinet, recorder, horn and trumpet, classical guitar. The decree was the first measure towards the introduction of instrumental tuition in compulsory schooling.

The schools entitled to activate the instrumental courses were those lower secondary schools that provided the necessary educational and organisational requirements ascertained by the Ministry, i.e. availability of suitable premises and extended classes even in the afternoon as well as the professional requirements ascertained by a special commission, i.e. the availability within the province of particularly qualified teaching staff for the specialised teachings of the course.

With the **Ministerial Decree of February 13, 1996** "New discipline of experimentation in lower secondary schools with a musical instrument department", the instrumental courses "though not addressing predominantly specialist perspectives, did not exclude, due to their specificity, a functional and preparatory value to the continuation of musical studies", a new statement that clarified their orientative function.

It stated that the experimental courses "were an integral part of the methodological teaching project of the lower secondary school and were carried out within the framework of the educational plan set out by the board of teachers of the class". For the first time the "integration, on an experimental basis, of curricular musical education with the teaching of musical instruments" was mentioned.

For the first time, a precise pedagogical reference was attributed to playing a musical instrument, also seen as a tool for integration and personal growth. A precise reference to educational purposes was also made:

– contributing to promoting the overall education of the individual by offering the pre-adolescent, through a more complete application and musical experience of which the specific study of an instrument is an integral part, opportunities for logical, expressive and communicative maturation, for awareness of one's identity and therefore the ability to make choices for the present and the future;
– allowing pre-adolescents to consciously adopt the musical language in its entirety, understood as a means of expression and communication, participatory understanding of the heritage of different civilisations, development of aesthetic taste and critical judgement;
– providing, due to their high expressive and communicative value, further opportunities for integration and growth also for pupils with Special Needs".

In the Decree, "the same [courses], though not addressing predominantly specialist perspectives, do not exclude, due to their specificity, a "functional and preparatory value to the continuation of musical studies". The instruments were divided into keyboard, string, wind and percussion instrumental groups.

The experimental courses "are an integral part of the methodological teaching project of the lower secondary school and are carried out within the teaching planning of the classroom board meetings and the teaching staff meetings."

It was the first mention of "experimental integration of curricular music education with instrumental tuition". Room was expressly given to ensemble music. It was established that the commission that prepared and carried out the aptitude test be composed of both the instrumental and general music teachers of the school and chaired by the Headmaster, thus weaning the experimentation from the Conservatory.

Finally, it was article 11 paragraph 9 of Law 3 May 1999, n. 124 (Urgent provisions regarding school staff) that brought experimental musical instrument courses to regulation. As of 1999-2000 public exam categories for musical instrument teaching in the lower secondary school, the different instruments taught, programmes, tests, and the availability of teaching posts were defined.

In the subsequent Ministerial Decree of 6 August 1999, n. 201 (Establishment of musical teaching in the lower secondary school pursuant to law 3 May 1999 n. 124 art. 11 paragraph 9), the organisational and staffing criteria for music teaching were defined. Important principles of autonomy of the single schools were also asserted; instrumental tuition was defined as "interdisciplinary integration and enrichment of the compulsory subject of general

music". The main purposes were outlined for the "education of the person and citizen" and for future career purposes.

For the first time recommendations were made about the "programmes of musical instrument teaching". They were structured as recommendations, aims, objectives, contents, evaluation criteria and methodological indications.

In the context of its organisational and teaching autonomy, the school board could adapt its organisational model to the particular situations of the courses, in order to make the most of the resources, also by providing for in-depth study, additional and remedial activities.

Through this Decree instrumental training aimed to:

– promote the overall education of the individual by offering, through a musical experience completed by the study of an instrument, opportunities for logical, expressive and communicative maturation;
– integrate the curricular model with educational paths aimed at developing the practical-operational, emotional-aesthetic, compositional-improvisation dimensions along with the cognitive dimension in the pupil's evolutionary processes;
– offer the pupil, through the acquisition of specific skills, further opportunities for development and perspective about their own potential, a deeper awareness about themselves and their way of relating to society;
– provide further opportunities for integration and growth even for pupils from disadvantaged contexts.

In more recent times, the **Legislative Decree 13 April 2017 n. 60** (Rules on the promotion of humanistic culture, on the enhancement of cultural heritage and productions and on the support of creativity, pursuant to article 1, paragraphs 180 and 181, letter g), of law 13 July 2015, n. 107), having the value of ordinary law, established that a new ministerial decree be issued to solve the problem of the uneven dislocation of schools with a musical department on Italian territory, for the definition of new organisational models and for the inclusion of the subject "musical instrument" in the national curriculum recommendations.

2. The engagement of the National committee for the practical learning of music for all pupils – Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education and in particular the 'National Committee for the Practical Learning of Music for all pupils' chaired by Prof. Luigi Berlinguer (of which the author is the national coordinator), in the development of its strategic role of governance, guidance, coordination, promotion, support and evaluation

of the results achieved, has been working for several years to develop guiding criteria and training and organisational models for the planning and implementation of initiatives to disseminate music practice in schools of all levels.

In fifteen years of activity, the Committee has been providing useful advice as well as planning and organisational support to the schools. It currently activates and maintains relationships and interactions, on a national and international level, with the government and other institutional subjects and bodies in various capacities that are interested and involved in musical research.

In several national research and surveys promoted and carried out by the Committee, schools with a musical instrument department in Italy have contributed to:

– developing a level of professionalism that did not exist previously;
– generating new methodologies and teaching practices;
– drawing the attention of the world of research to teaching methodologies addressing pre-adolescents studying a musical instrument;
– the dissemination of a practical music culture accessible to all students;
– the presence of the musician-teacher within the school organisation;
– prevention of early school leaving and the need for inclusion of disadvantaged pupils;
– the production of new literature and publications for music education.

It was also noted how profitable and effective the professional commitment of musical instrument teachers was in the:

– need to define shared goals in the planning of the curriculum;
– need to diversify and highlight one's role and competencies within the curriculum;
– sharing of teaching methods and organisations;
– definition of system of organisational and teaching autonomy;
– communication with families;
– constant collaboration with the territory;
– flexibility in change and development;
– will to continue self-study and research.

Musical instrument teachers suggested:

– continuity activities with primary schools to guide the choice of the instrument for a first definition of vertical curriculum in musical education;
– new organisation in agreement with DPR275/99 on school autonomy;
– experimentation of open classes;
– the practice of ensemble music as a teaching tool;
– linkup with the school's local area.

In conclusion, I would like to mention some quality indicators of Italian schools with a musical instrument department and music and instrument

teachers, considering the extended collaboration which I have had as the coordinator of the Committee in these years with schools and school networks totally engaged in the development of inclusive instrument and music teaching practices.

3. Quality indicators of music schools

Structural and organisational resources:

– availability of facilities and labs;
– musical and technological instruments;
– flexible, efficient organisation;
– consistency in organisational decisions;
– extracurricular dimensions.

Professional resources:

– continual professional development for teachers;
– multiple competencies of the teachers (formal or informal titles);
– planning skills and promotion of projects, training activities, external consulting, research activity, etc.;
– ability to assess and review the teaching and organisational models.

Partnership with qualified music institutions:

– ability to build agreements, synergies with local institutions;
– collaborations with musical institutions (associations, institutions, AFAM, etc.);
– co-financing of other organisations.

Quality of contents and suggested methodologies:

– music practice areas (choir, ensemble music, preparatory)
– musical activities including current or new methodologies;
– innovative and sustainable methodological approach;
– quality of music repertoires;
– active engagement of all students;
– assessment methods.

4. Quality indicators of music teachers (both instrumental and general music)

Relational area:

– ability to negotiate, reflect on the search for a solution to the possible conflict between one's identity as a musician and that as a teacher;

– enhancement of one's own resources and communication skills with both colleagues and pupils;
– development of collaboration skills;
– acquisition of empathic relationship techniques for the resolution of conflicts and the motivation of pupils to develop more confidence, versatility and interpersonal skills for significant emotional growth.

Social educational area:

– ability to develop specific competencies to manage relations with the school environment considering the ties or opportunities provided by the relevant legislation.

Methodological area:

– ability to adapt one's knowledge and skills in different contexts;
– capacity for methodological research and flexibility in the choice of the methodology to be used, considering the pedagogical aspects of the age bracket with which one operates;
– awareness that musical activities must be understood in an inclusive, interdisciplinary sense and that society changes quickly so that technologies can be of great help in learning the instrument.

Technical area:

– development and elevation of the "artistic" and "aesthetic" sense in one's pedagogical work;
– widening one's own knowledge in relation to the changes of society and the musical interests of the pupils.

Repertoire area:

– capacity to choose high level teaching and artistic repertoires both for individual study and for ensemble music;
– originality in the production of new materials developing the pupils' creativity.

Professional development area:

– attention and care to one's continual professional development considering the most advanced international techniques of good teaching practices;
– interest in interdisciplinary and transversal professional development.

Documentation and research area:

– ability to elaborate a plan;
– research of models of good practices;
– ability to organise one's own documentation;
– ability to communicate your own research.

5. The path to follow

A new Decree regarding schools with a musical instrument department is expected soon, in replacement of D.M. 201 /99; it is expected to establish new organisations and, finally, more transparent criteria for a more homogenous distribution over the Italian territory.

In conclusion, it is my wish that music be finally recognised as a fundamental element in the education of our pupils. Music is today the background of any social activity and if we do not intervene in school through cultural policy actions in favour of a larger presence of musical practice and listening and in the critical knowledge of its history, we will have an increasingly passive audience, lacking tools to critically select the immensity of sounds and images that surround us, an audience looking for consumption rather than knowledge, experience, beauty.

In the context of the cultural policies of this country, a profound reflection on music as a space of belonging, citizenship and authoritative fascination is therefore necessary.

Citizenship as heritage, which means music as a resource where every community recognises meaning, proof of its own values, knowledge, traditions.

To create this type of cultural substratum it is necessary to be convinced that knowing and playing music is everybody's heritage, nobody excluded, that the educating community, families, society must be put in a position to know and appreciate the inclusive, educational value of music in school; that we invest in research and in the transmission of the knowledge of this research.

I am sure that only in the democratic dialogue between those that go to school every day – Headmasters, teachers, students – those that work in teaching research, those that are in charge at managerial, administrative, political level, the common people and society as a whole it will be possible to produce the synergy to create schools and society where music can be the place for citizenship, emancipation and well-being for everybody.

Normative requirements

Law 3 May 1999, n. 124, *Urgent provisions regarding school staff, art. 11 par. 9 brings experimental schools with a musical instrument department into regulation, establishes the new teaching qualifications and postpones the regulation of courses to the subsequent Ministerial decree*.

Legislative Decree 13 April 2017 n. 60, *Rules on the promotion of humanistic culture, on the enhancement of cultural heritage and productions and on the support of creativity, pursuant to article 1, paragraphs 180 and 181, letter g), of law 13 July 2015, n. 107*.
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Ministerial Decree 3 August 1979, *Regulating the experimentation of musical instruments in lower secondary schools*.
Ministerial Decree 13 February 1996, *Lower secondary schools with musical instrument department*.
Ministerial Decree 201 of 6 August 1999 (it regulates courses, establishes organisational methods, teaching positions, timetables and programmes).
Ministerial Decree 176 of 1 July 2022, *Lower secondary schools with musical instrument department* (it regulates new courses, establishes organisational methods, teaching positions, timetables and national didactic guidelines).
Ministerial Order 202 of 6 August 1999 (announces the reserved session of exams aimed at obtaining the qualification for teaching musical instruments in lower secondary schools).
Ministerial Order 203 of 6 August 1999 (reaffirms the regulatory structure of the courses and establishes the methods of adaptation to the Ministerial Decree 201).

3. The main findings of an Italian national research: statistics 2020/21

by Marina Chiaro

1. Research Methodology

In the perspective of a gradual improvement of school inclusion, music is considered a strategic experience to effectively respond to the needs of pupils with disability and specific learning disorders (SLD). In this framework[1] the national research "Musical instrument teaching and school inclusion: a national research" aimed to explore the practices of assessment and teaching for students with disability and with SLD widespread in Italian music secondary schools (SMIMs).

The research has been designed by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In particular, the quantitative survey involved a sample of 1,845 Italian SMIMs grouped in geographic areas, and was carried out according to the theoretical perspective of descriptive research using a structured web survey (Lombi, 2015). The questionnaire addressed five thematic areas: characteristics of Italian secondary schools; presence of disabled students; presence of students with SLD; instrumental tuition during the Covid-19 pandemic; professional training of instrumental teachers.

The questionnaire, composed of 54 questions, was directed to the principal of each participating school in the school year 2020/2021.

2. Characteristics of Italian secondary schools

From the whole sample (1,845 SMIMs), 1,060 complete questionnaires were obtained. These report that 4.7% of their students have a disability

[1] For more information about research methodology see the Amalia Lavinia Rizzo's paper.

(tab.1), a value similar to the 4.4% published by the Ministry of Education (MI) in the s.y. 2020/2021 (MI, 2020), while those with SLD are reportedly 5.8% (tab. 1), a value very close to the 5.7% shown in the statistics elaborated by the MI for students with SLD enrolled in lower secondary schools in the s.y. 2018/2019 (MI, 2020).

Musical instrument courses are attended by 2.5% students with disability and by 4.5% with SLD (tab. 1), thus highlighting that the musical curriculum is attended by a lower proportion of students with disability.

Tab. 1 – Distribution for geographic areas of musical courses students

Geographic areas	*% students of musical courses*	*% students with disability in school*	*% students with disability of musical courses*	*% students with SLD in school*	*% students with SLD of musical courses*
Abruzzo	19.6	3.7	2.0	6.3	5.2
Basilicata	29.6	2.9	1.4	5.1	3.6
Calabria	30.0	3.8	2.2	2.4	2.4
Campania	19.9	5.2	2.2	2.3	1.8
Emilia Romagna	18.7	4.2	2.3	8.7	6.1
Friuli	22.0	3.1	2.8	7.1	5.9
Lazio	19.4	4.8	2.7	6.9	5.5
Liguria	20.4	5.1	2.7	8.7	7.1
Lombardia	22.5	6.4	3.0	8.7	7.1
Marche	20.2	3.8	2.3	6.4	4.8
Molise	29.2	4.3	1.7	7.4	4.5
Piemonte	24.3	4.4	2.3	10.6	7.4
Puglia	23.6	4.0	2.5	4.1	3.5
Sardegna	24.1	5.8	4.1	9.0	7.6
Sicilia	22.0	5.2	2.6	2.8	1.9
Toscana	19.4	4.7	3.1	9.5	6.8
Umbria	18.5	4.2	4.7	6.8	6.3
Veneto	19.3	3.8	2.0	5.0	3.6
Total	21.8	4.7	2.5	5.8	4.5

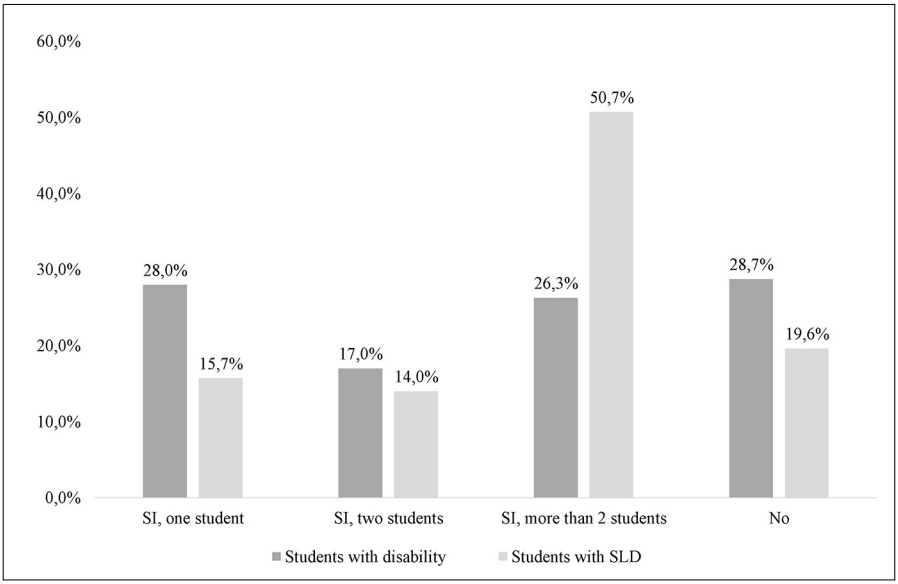
The presence of instrumental teachers specialized in support activities is not particularly high (only in 14.2% of the schools interviewed compared to 18.0% of the MI official statistics in the s.y. 2021/21).

Concerning the variety of musical instruments taught at school, it emerged that almost all schools propose the piano (92.4%), followed by the guitar (79.3%), the violin (61.4%) and the flute (60.1%); just under half of the schools propose the clarinet (44.4%) while a percussion instruments are taught in 27.2%.

3. Students with disability and specific learning disorders

The survey shows (graph 1) that in 28.7% of the SMIMs the students with disability do not attend instrumental courses, compared to 19.6% of pupils with SLD (statistically significant difference: $p < 0.001$, $\alpha = 0.05$); only one student with disability and with SLD attends musical course respectively 28.0% v.s. 15.7% (statistically significant difference: $p < 0.001$, $\alpha = 0.05$); higher values if the attendance of at least two students is considered: 43.3% (pupils with disability) and 64.7% (pupils with SLD) (statistically significant difference: $p < 0.001$, $\alpha = 0.05$).

Graph 1 – Distribution of students with disability or with SLD attending musical course

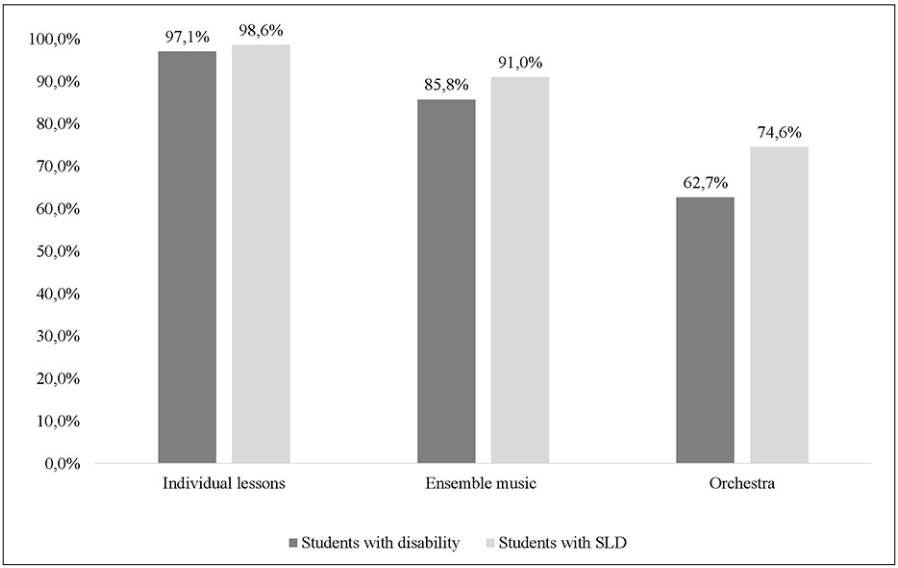


The absence of a specific request from families is the main reason for the low attendance of these courses by students with SLD (70.6% of SMIMs).

The importance of carrying out an inclusive educational planning involving instrumental tuition emerges from the survey data, also in order to facilitate the school inclusion of students with disability and with SLD (Canevaro, d'Alonzo & Ianes, 2009; Chiappetta Cajola, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2020; Cottini, 2018; Ianes, 2013). In fact, in addition to individual lessons, which are offered to almost all students considered (graph 2), group lessons and ensemble playing are often proposed both for students with disability (85.8%) and for students with SLD (91.0%) (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$,

$\alpha = 0.05$), as well as, to a lesser extent, participation in the school orchestra, respectively 62.7% and 74.6% (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$, $\alpha = 0.05$).

Graph 2 – Modality of lessons offered to students with disability and with SLD

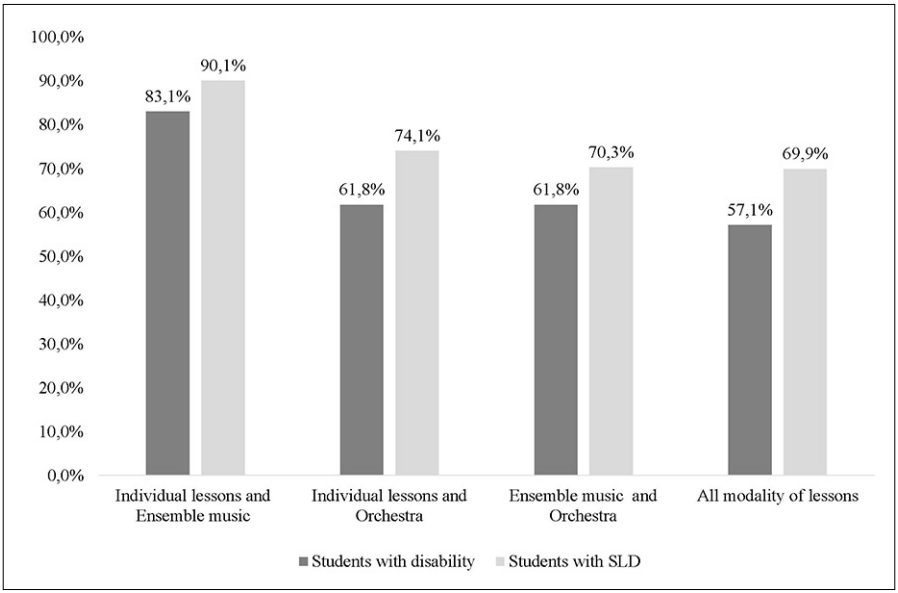


Furthermore, always in an inclusive perspective, instrumental tuition has also been organized integrating the different types of lessons, as shown in graph 3. It is interesting to note that the opportunity to use all three options concern 57.1% students with disability and 69.9% students with SLD (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$, $\alpha = 0.05$).

It can therefore be observed that the results referring to students with disability are always lower than those referring to students with SLD, also in relation to the type of instrument studied (all statistically significant differences) indicating, at least in SMIMs, greater attention to students with SLD.

By law, in order to access the lessons and to define the choice of the musical instrument, all students are required to take an orientation test, organized and developed by the SMIMs. The statistics show that the participation of the school coordinators for inclusion in the development and preparation of these tests is low: only 10.9% in the case of candidates with SLD and 16.8% for candidates with disability (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$, $\alpha = 0.05$).

Graph 3 – Integrated lessons proposed to students with disability and with SLD



The survey clearly shows a lack of communication between instrumental teachers and their colleagues specialized in school inclusion which already begins in the phase of the planning of the orientation test, even though musical instrument teachers are legally required to enhance inclusive education (CoE, 2018; Gwen *et al.*, 2017) and to take into account the possibility of using, as a facilitator of the inclusion process, the positive impact of musical activity on learning and on the socio-emotional development of students with disability or with SLD (Adamek & Darrow, 2010; Chiappetta Cajola *et al.*, 2017; Chiappetta Cajola & Rizzo, 2016, 2019; Rizzo, 2014, 2019).

Furthermore, almost 20.0% of the participating schools declare their dissatisfaction with their own level of school inclusion and the possibility of obtaining the personalized goals set for pupils with disability.According to the same schools, another area for improvement is the collaboration between school and family, in particular in the case of for pupils with disability (19.2%).

4. Support activities and technology

The organization of support activities specifically aimed at improving instrumental performance is carried out regularly by 45.0% of SMIMs for students with disability and by 38.7% for students with SLD (statistically signifi-

cant difference, $p < 0.001$, $\alpha = 0.05$), while just over 25.0% of the SMIMs takes them into account only occasionally. These activities vary and include the development of motor coordination (just over 80.0% of the schools), followed by attention for posture and anxiety management, respectively for two thirds of the students with disability and three quarters of the students with SLD.

Although these support activities play a considerable role in facilitating both the instrumental coaching as well as the participation of students with disability and with SLD in musical activities (Palermo, 2007; Palermo & Piccirilli, 2021), on average 40.0% of the instrumental teachers do not consider them necessary, 25.0% highlight a lack of specific training and 9.0% declare to have little time available for planning specific activities to propose during individual lessons.

Regarding the use of technology as a support for instrumental tuition, only 41.3% of the instrumental teachers declare to use it regularly for pupils with disability and 37.5% for pupils with SLD, despite the literature agreeing on the importance of its use as a facilitator for the participation and acquisition of knowledge and skills of students with disability and students with SLD (Calvani, 2012; Chiaro, 2020).

The limited extent to which technology is used is attributed to low levels of teacher training (18.9% students with disability and 22.3% students with SLD), the lack of hardware tools (15.6% vs 14.8%) and the limited availability of equipped classrooms (12.3% vs 12.7%).

The critical issues represented so far have been further amplified during the Covid-19 pandemic with the introduction of mandatory Distance Learning (DAD) which slowed down the implementation of inclusive educational planning, significantly reducing, in particular, the participation of pupils with disability (ISTAT, 2020). In this period (April-June 2020), in fact, a significant decrease in participation was registered: 21.0% of students with SLD and 25.8% of students with disability did not take part in online instrumental lessons. These statistics are confirmed by the general survey conducted by ISTAT (2020) which shows that, in the period considered, over 23.0% of disabled students were unable to attend lessons due, amongst others, to the lack of technological tools.

5. Teachers' training for instrumental teachers

Teachers' training is considered a key factor to guarantee the quality of education and to improve the general standard of education necessary for facing continuous social, technological and economic changes (UNESCO,

2009; CoE, 2018). Teachers are being asked to adopt more collaborative and constructive learning practices and to assume the role of coadjutors and classroom managers rather than trainers *ex-cathedra* (MIUR, 2016). Furthermore, the regulatory evolution within the international scientific community aimed at obtaining inclusive education for all students without barriers to learning and global participation with specific attention to "human functioning profile" (WHO, 2001-2017, 2007) cannot be ignored.

Today, only 30.0% of teachers consider the received level of training "very adequate" while just over 50.0% considers it "fairly adequate". Specifically they highlight the need of planning training activities in order to answer to the lack of sharing and collaboration among teachers, to improve the collective effort in the construction of shared responses adapted to all students, to acquire competences on new technologies (Information Communication Technologies-ICT), also for support teachers, and to participate in training activities aimed at the planning and implementation of specific support activities to be performed by the students in order to encourage their participation in musical instrument lessons.

In conclusion, for planning teachers' training it is necessary to also recall the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by ON. The 4th goal "Providing quality education for all is fundamental to creating a peaceful and prosperous world" specifies, in particular, three sub-objectives: "build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all […] (4.a); […] strengthen training on information and communications technology […] (4.b); […] by 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries […] (4.c)".

6. Conclusions

The results described so far seem to confirm the hypothesis that musical instrument courses are, both in general and from a quantitative point of view, not very inclusive: there is a rather low attendance by students with disability (2.5%) and with SLD (4.5%) and only very few instrumental teachers are specialized in support activities (14.2% of SMIMs).

As said previously, for the enrollment and the definition of the musical instrument to be studied at school, all students are required to take an orientation test which is organized and developed by the instrumental teachers of the SMIM itself. However, the survey has revealed that the very access test is

one of the most critical aspects of inclusive education, due in part to the lack of collaboration between teachers in the planning of the test.

Nevertheless, in the SMIMs considered, an inclusive perspective was evidenced by the integrated use of all three teaching methods: individual lessons, ensemble music and orchestra. Furthermore, support activities do play a noteworthy role in instrumental studies by promoting the inclusion and participation of students with disability and with SLD, although, as said before, on average 40.0% of the teachers consider them unnecessary and do not propose them, due mainly to the lack of specific and adequate training.

Regarding the use of technology in support of instrumental tuition, only 41.3% of teachers systematically use them for pupils with disabilities and 37.5% for pupils with SLD. The above-mentioned critical issues worsened during the Covid-19 lockdown as a consequence of the introduction of Distance Learning (DL), which represented a slowdown in the implementation of education inclusive planning, significantly reducing, in particular, the participation of pupils with disability. The analysis of the results shows that teachers express the need of training in an inclusive perspective in order to guarantee the quality of education and to improve educational standards. In particular teachers require to program specific training interventions related to the observed lack of sharing and collaboration, a training program on technologies for schools staff, the need of acquiring competencies and skills on support activities for improving students' instrumental performance, as well as the request of specific training related to skills for a planning inclusive education.

In conclusion, the findings of the survey are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals adopted by ON, where the 4th goal is clearly requires providing quality and inclusive education for all, especially with regard to need to build and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all, strengthen training on information and communications technology, and by 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries.

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4. Emotional Aspect as a Strategical Source

by Barbara De Angelis, Paola Greganti*

1. Introduction

This paper takes its starting point from the analysis of the psycho-pedagogical literature which, since the English Special Educational Needs and Disability Act of 2001, has been advocating the importance of education referring to the construct of emotional intelligence and social skills.

The intent, on the one hand, is aimed at identifying the topic of emotions as a useful topic for the enhancement of personal resources of pupil and learners with disabilities and with SLDs; on the other hand, it aims to deepen the role of emotions as an emblematic category, in order to initiate a reflection on the need to give more space to the emotional sphere and improve in an inclusive perspective the teaching of the musical instrument in Lower secondary school (Rizzo *et al.*, 2021).

Within the national research project on teaching the musical instrument in inclusive lower secondary school education, it is proposed to address and overcome the emotional discomfort that pupils experience at certain moments of the educational relationship, such as access tests, questioning, and assessment.

Despite developing a school subject (instrumental coaching) that by its constitution has strictly to do with the emotional-expressive sphere, the teachers participating in the Focus groups conducted within the research did not point out any particular concrete references to the emotional construct in their daily practice.

* This paper is a joint work of the authors. For the identification of the parties, where required, the Introduction, Paragraphs 1 and 4 are attributed to Barbara De Angelis, Conclusions, Paragraphs 2 and 3 to Paola Greganti.

In the literature on the emotional component of the educational relationship, the issue of good affective-relational practices supported by the teacher's emotional competence for the implementation of effective and sustainable solutions does not seem to have been examined so far for the purpose of inclusive teaching of the musical instrument.

Reflection and consequent research activity along these lines may help us both to outline general principles of intervention and to prepare tools that enable teachers to better master their own relational emotional functioning, a prerequisite for knowing, recognizing and controlling their own and others' emotions in carrying out educational, evaluative and relational planning practices.

As we shall see later, this gives value to the urgency of validating, even at the experimental stage, the musical instrument teachers' own need for training and the enhancement of their personal emotional resources in order to transform them into a valid device for the success of inclusive educational actions.

2. Adapting teaching action to learning needs: teachers' inclusive skills

In 2011, documents from the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, using previously outlined concepts (European Parliament and Council, 2006; UNESCO, 2009; EADSNE, 2009), outline the shape of a new educational and teaching culture that focuses on knowledge as a necessity for all, and as a resource for ensuring everyone's educational success.

In this perspective, the need to configure educational paths capable of enhancing personal experiences and the uniqueness of different learning styles becomes a priority, obviously acting on a multiplicity of intertwined elements: the inclusive professional skills of the individual teacher; didactics and educational strategies at the classroom level; institutions in their organizational and educational autonomy; and the relationships between institutions and the community/territory (Chiappetta Cajola, 2018). Moving toward such a view means wanting to actualize, in teaching practice, the fundamental concepts that characterize inclusive education, namely the principles of participation, barrier, facilitator, specific teaching strategies, and classroom climate.

In educational terms, a didactics focused on the analysis of real problems succeeds in detecting useful information for constructing appropriate designs and for determining those contexts of reciprocity that, in turn, strongly influ-

ence the teacher-learner relationship. Indeed, we could say that the quality of learning is closely related to the quality of teaching, and thus the teacher's action, through precise instructional design functions, enables the attainment of knowledge, skills, and specific competencies. Teaching action is therefore the crucial element in guaranteeing the right to learning and enabling each subject to achieve, according to his or her own characteristics and vocations, theoretical and practical mastery of learning content. Therefore, thanks to a precise professional commitment and inclusive responsibility of the teacher, it is precisely the educational relationship that is configured as the dynamic and affective sphere from which educational proposals can originate: the more we succeed in getting students to express their implicit needs, the more we will consolidate the prerequisites of an educational action aimed at the educational success of all (Chiappetta Cajola, Bocci & De Angelis, 2017).

Reference to the affective-relational perspective in which all learning is accomplished helps us to substantiate the following reflections:

– affective behaviors and emotions manifested by the teacher play an essential role in increasing pupils' motivation and readiness to learn;
– the emotional sphere of educational action concurs in producing positive or negative effects in the field of learning, as well as influencing the structuring of student attitudes and dispositions toward evaluative activities, tests, and questions.

3. Social-emotional dimensions and educational contexts: the teacher as facilitator of well-being

When it comes to investigating the emotional and affective dimension of the human from a pedagogical point of view, one of the major problems has been identified in the dichotomy established, from common sense, between rationality and emotions (Contini, 1992; Cambi, 1996; Rossi, 2002; Baldacci, 2008). This disjunctive and oppositional paradigm between reason and feeling, rationality and emotions, which has characterized the history of Western thought, has been challenged, if not explicitly overcome, both in philosophical and pedagogical reflections and in psychological and neuroscientific research. Within the humanities there is now widespread agreement on the assumption that the relationship between emotion and reason should not be understood in terms of conflict or primacy of one over the other, but rather by considering the two terms in a perspective of synthesis, integration, interdependence, dialogue, or by assimilating them into a single process.

Pedagogy as a theoretical reflection on formative processes has increasingly engaged in an investigation of the emotional sphere and has envisaged that between emotions and reason a dialectical relationship can emerge in which affectivity is no longer considered an irrational movement to be tamed or eradicated, but rather a fundamental dimension of being-in-the-world whose harmonious, balanced and integrated development with rationality is to be promoted. Contemporary pedagogy has initiated a radical transformation of training models in light of this new complexity involving the emotional, the "practical," and the affective. Today it is no longer possible to separate emotions and knowledge, to fall back into disjunction/contrapposition, devaluing the great cognitive capacity of emotions and the emotional density of every knowledge experience. This would result in an impoverishment precisely on the educational level.

Even in the field of neuroscience, the hypothesis that the ability to express and feel emotions is indispensable for enacting rational behavior is now widely accepted (Damasio, 1995), especially since it is considered neurobiologically impossible to construct memories, engage in complex thinking or make sensible decisions without emotions. So a paradigmatic revolution has emerged that has overturned the view that emotions interfere with learning, revealing, instead, that emotion and cognition are supported by interdependent and bidirectional neural processes (Immordino-Yang, 2017; Geake, 2017). Emotions, in their close interrelation with the cognitive dimension, are the prerequisite and the possibility of all meaningful, deep and lasting learning, as they promote memorization of experiences and information, improve attentional skills, facilitate internalization, increase readiness to learn and intrinsic motivation.

Studies on the subject have observed how some emotions such as curiosity, discovery, excitement, satisfaction and joy, contribute to success in learning by favoring the internalization and memorization of knowledge, while others such as fear, anxiety, frustration, anger, boredom, can, on the contrary, disfavor it and lead to educational failure (Buxton, 1981; LeDoux, 1998). Within this horizon, neuroscience today increasingly speaks of *warm cognition*, a construct according to which a person's learning is influenced by his or her emotional state (Villavicencio & Bernardo, 2013; McGaugh, 2015): when a subject learns, along with the storage of knowledge and information, he or she experiences emotions such as fear, anxiety, pleasure, interest, curiosity, boredom, and happiness. The information stored in memory will always be associated with the emotion experienced in the knowledge process, so if learning is linked to unpleasant emotions, the student will try to avoid experiences that reactivate these emotions to the point of turning away from learning or, even, from the school experience.

The emotional dimension is widely taken into account in schools only when it emerges in disturbing issues, such as with respect to teacher burnout or when students' oppositional behaviors explode.

Here we want instead to emphasize how the emotional dimension, in its integration with cognitive aspects, is a structural resource for the school. Not only because emotions are "foundational" for learning, in that, as we said, they mobilize cognitive processes and promote meaningful, *warm* and passionate learning; but also because, as Lucia Chiappetta Cajola (2008) states, teaching attentive to emotions can promote in students awe for knowledge, which is an extraordinary state of mind that arises from feeling involved in what is learned, and from the desire to continue to know and to know; therefore, it is possible to foster the pleasure of learning through the experience of positive emotions. Ultimately, if pleasure and positive emotions are the building blocks of well-being (Seligman, 2005), the emotional dimension is also an important resource for schools because it promotes well-being.

How can we in educational practice use the resources that potentially come to us from the emotional dimension? In the first instance, the relational sphere must be configured as a place of vital synthesis between the cognitive and the emotional (Loiodice, 2004), constituting that synthesis we have seen outlined in the reflections of contemporary philosophers, psychologists, neuroscientists and pedagogists. In the school, both the importance of the affective climate that characterizes every possible declination of the educational relationship and the affective culture of the entire school system that guides the way of proposing the educational offer, its functioning and internal dynamics becomes central (Riva, 2015).

In order to enhance this emotional dimension in learning, the role played by the teacher is fundamental, who can choose to be a facilitator of well-being in learning, a promoter and facilitator of "joyful passions" (Contini, 2009); able to create the conditions for happy learning; attentive to the insidiousness of the fear of failure and the management of error (Chiappetta Cajola, 2008); able to promote a confidential, collaborative, serene and positive affective climate that generates involvement and active participation (Morganti & Bocci, 2017); willing to inspire cheerfulness in his or her students using even humor (McGhee 1989); aware of how he or she is a fundamental element of the educational context and aware that the emotional life of the school is very broad, complex, full of a thousand facets, chiaroscuros, ambivalences (Morganti & Bocci, 2017); activator of his or her own and students' emotional resources; capable of structuring emotionally connoted places (Baldacci, 2008) that develop meaningful learning and life well-being. The teacher facilitator of well-being is, moreover, aware of the close link

between emotional processes and cognitive and learning processes, and thus can integrate these processes in a balanced way right from the instructional design stage by reflecting on how, rather than what to teach, not because the choice of content is not important, but because no content can be learned in an effectively formative way if it does not arouse involvement and curiosity (Sarsini, 1998) and if it is not embedded in a positive emotional and relational climate of well-being (De Angelis, 2017).

4. Scenarios for open reflection on emotions and inclusion

Below we point out some theoretical and practical insights on the link between emotional dimension and inclusiveness and outline some promising areas of research.

4.1. The emotional dimension as facilitator or barrier

Supported by the reflection carried out in the previous section, we open the perspective of reading the relationship between emotional dimensions and learning in the bio-psycho-social framework proper to the WHO ICF classification (2001). Attention to emotional aspects can be considered in its own right one of the environmental factors that condition functioning (Chiappetta Cajola, Bocci & De Angelis, 2017), and therefore an indicator to be considered in the observation of the school context in order to identify barriers and facilitators. Positive emotions enable meaningful learning, which is considered crucial in inclusive educational spaces (Chiappetta Cajola & Rizzo, 2019). The care of the educational context in relation to the emotional dimension becomes, therefore, a facilitator, not only for students with disabilities or SLDs, but suitable for each and everyone.

Instead, real barriers can arise in the school when the context supports or reinforces negative emotions that, as we have seen, inhibit and hinder learning and well-being.

Here is where teachers play an exclusive and fundamental role in inclusion processes at school to the extent that they assume, as specified in detail in the previous section, the professional role of facilitators of well-being, able to act on contexts to provide a place for everyone to feel at home (Gardou, 2016).

4.2. The emotional and relational difficulties of students with disabilities and with SLDs and the link between learning and well-being

Numerous researches point out that most students with learning difficulties and disabilities have difficulties in social relationships (Nelson & Harwood, 2013; Korhonen, Linnanmäki & Aunio, 2014; Cottini, 2018). Specifically for students with specific learning disabilities, three key skill areas in social-emotional learning are identified as the main source of these difficulties: recognizing emotions in oneself and others; regulating and managing strong emotions (pleasant and unpleasant); and recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses. This is a fact that can be easily extended to many students with disabilities as well. Adequate and in-depth teacher training on social-emotional skills and the relationship between the emotional dimension and learning would also allow more attention to be given to specific social-emotional difficulties and to respond to the specific emotional needs of each student. From this perspective, the ability to grasp and delve into affective issues completes that educational competence that empowers the teacher to deal with situations of disability or SLD, remembering that disability does nothing more than play a role as an amplifier of the general problems of humanity (Gardou, 2006).

We can also consider the quality of social relations as an indicator closely related to the perception of well-being. Therefore, it is appropriate here to broaden the discourse of malaise related to the relational difficulties peculiar to many students with SLD and disabilities, to the broader context of the condition of malaise in which many children find themselves.

4.3. The emotional characterization of inclusive values

The New Index for Inclusion (Booth, Ainscow & Dovigo, 2014) assigns ample space to "inclusive values" that should characterize the school system from a participatory perspective involving pupils, teachers, parents, principals, administrators and members of the local community. It was precisely the clarification of the role of values in designing for inclusion that was a new element of the Index compared to previous instruments for evaluating inclusiveness (Dovigo, 2017). The authors believe that inclusion consists in formally and consciously enacting specific inclusive values to be acted upon in teaching practices; therefore, they present the value dimension as an important predictor for the realization of a truly inclusive culture. In particular, they indicate empathy, joy, and love among the inclusive values.

5. Strategic resources for inclusive teaching

Let us try to summarize, also in an applicative sense, the elements that in the previous paragraphs outlined the figure of the teacher of the third millennium, synthesizing them with the contents that emerged in the focus groups, in relation to the need to take into account emotional aspects both in teaching practice and in the design of the evaluation criteria for the entrance exam and the final exam of lower secondary school.

Teaching professionalism – Surely one of the most significant challenges that today, according to educational research, characterize the identikit of the modern professional teacher is the full pedagogical awareness of one's discipline, that is, knowing the disciplinary content, and addressing the choices of method, the activities to be proposed, the strategies and tools to be used (De Angelis, 2016). However, the school and teachers are also required to have the ability to renew and differentiate teaching itineraries in a flexible and creative way, to make them more suitable to the characteristics of each person, personal needs, and individual needs.

Self-efficacy and learning motivation – In order to boost motivation, teaching action can refer to the application of specific methodologies that, alongside the detection of error, can also highlight, as Bandura puts it, the strengths of each subject in training, elements on which to focus in order to improve the performance that each one puts forth. Consequently, it becomes essential, both in the choice and presentation of curricular content and in the design of evaluative tests, to be able to promote the development of those skills that enable the student to self-assess and self-correct, thus to monitor his or her learning process.

Emotions, an educational and didactic investment – From a perspective of promoting well-being and school inclusion, it seems increasingly necessary to put the issue of affective and emotional knowledge at the center of the educational experience as a driver of many aspects concerning school success (De Angelis, 2014). From the perspective of the teacher, as well as for any caregiver, promoting student well-being means not only engaging in dialogue to foster communication, but recognizing a fundamental value to emotions, which are too often considered skills to be subordinated to cognitive needs, both in the curricular learning process and in the assessment process.

The role of assessment – The educational relationship always requires development time commensurate with the starting levels and potential of each pupil, and this coincides with the time needed to take into consideration his or her knowledge, cognitive styles, social-emotional and relational skills, observing them, examining them, taking note of them, and evaluating them.

The assessment moment, in fact, in order to be aimed unequivocally toward the inclusion of each subject in training, must identify the minimum threshold of competence that coincides with the ability to assess the specific needs of a subject who is in a particular problematic and/or complex situation to be solved. From this perspective, evaluation coincides with a moment of considerable importance for the implementation of inclusive teaching, as it does not simply highlight the achievement of expected results, but also allows us to know the quality of the processes activated for each subject in training.

6. Conclusions

We have seen in the preceding paragraphs how the socio-emotional domain is inescapably involved with learning; how it specifically and primarily concerns the professionalism and skills of the teacher; how it can orient the entire school system in an inclusive sense; how it influences the teaching and learning of every discipline, even the most technical. In particular, we found it essential to investigate the formation of teachers' emotional and relational competencies, in response to the reflections that emerged from the Focus groups around the inclusive teaching of the musical instrument, both in relation to the ways in which students with SLDs and disabilities gain access to music classes, and in the didactic-assessment practices that are used throughout. In fact, the socio-emotional issue is a dimension of the teaching-learning process that affects its entire unfolding, from the planning stage to assessment; and when the discipline requires creative and interpretive gifts, as well as cognitive and technical skills, as in the teaching of the musical instrument, it is particularly important to know how to imprint effective didactic and organizational actions, but above all to know how to choose sustainable relational modes for the purposes of inclusive teaching and assessment. In general, it can be well said that, from the planning stage of teaching, attention should never be lacking in the construction of educational contexts that are attentive to the well-being of everyone and everyone, through a positive emotional climate and a meaningful relationship between teacher and student. In particular, as far as music-oriented classes are concerned, these attentions could come into play right from the moment of the aptitude test, both by enhancing the assumption that music education is, and should be, a right for everyone, and that all individuals are endowed with an "aptitude for music" and also by arranging, through the use of methodologies such as active listening and participatory observation, an orientation-attitudinal-moti-

vational-relational interview to examine the student's motivation and interest in music, rather than focusing judgment on assessing technical aptitude and acquired content. Making ourselves interpreters of a debate that now invests the entire scientific community dealing with education, we emphasize the need to build an "expert professionalism" of the teacher based primarily on the ability to manage the educational relationship in its multiple characteristics: cognitive, affective, social. The starting point is given precisely by the need to equip professionals with emotional, reflective and self-awareness skills that can delineate relational teaching, characterized also by a marked affective responsibility. In conclusion, the need for our reflection was not only to define the characteristics of emotionally oriented teaching, nor to develop a professional emotional competence useful in solving some of the problems of teachers (such as burnout) that also appear frequently in the performance of the educational profession, but rather arose from the need to promote greater awareness toward the emotional and relational sphere of teaching professionalism, including through the activation of paths directed toward affective training and literacy.

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5. The need for an inclusive assessment

by Cristiano Corsini

1. Features of inclusive assessment

What are the characteristics of inclusive assessment?

In order to answer this question, it's useful to start with the essential features that have characterized approaches, devices, tools and practices of educational evaluation and their theoretical systematization in recent decades, highlighting their inclusive characteristics and dynamics. If we consider the elaborations which, departing from the Deweyan reflection on *value judgments* (1938, 1939), proceed with the *formative assessment* of Scriven (1967), the *authentic assessment* of Wiggins (1998), *assessment for learning* (Stiggins, 2002; William, 2000, 2011 *et al.*), *sustainable assessment* (Boud, 2000), and *assessment as learning* (Earl, 2013), we can easily trace converging features (Aquario, 2015) with the *inclusive assessment* of Watkins (2007), with the works of Mitchell (2014) on the effectiveness and equity of instructional practices – and specifically, on assessment – and Booth and Ainscow's *Index for Inclusion* (2011).

This convergence is the result of the twofold drawing together of elements of educational processes that too often were (and not infrequently still are) thought to be separated. A rapprochement, fostered by the methodological and conceptual evolution operated in the evaluative and instructional fields, which concerns both the relationships between teaching and assessment and that between assessment and learning. Regarding the first process, we know that assessment is formative if it shapes teaching, in other words, if the teacher uses assessments in order to adjust subsequent teaching, thus coming to put his or her teaching and, with it, his or her ends and means to the proof of experience. A second process, which is grounded on the former, is played out between assessment and learning. It gives students increasing responsibili-

ties in the assessment process to ensure that they have greater opportunities for deep understanding, developing autonomy in regulating and conducting learning experiences, as the work of Earl and Boud highlights. From this perspective, assessment for learning and assessment as learning outline an evolution of formative assessment which takes on board research from developmental psychology. This is a fundamental step, also in the light of the ability of assessment processes to support participatory dynamics within communities. The items in the Index for Inclusion, with its guiding questions, represent an excellent operational definition of this passage. This is a choice which integrates reliability and equity, since it literally gives voice to a plurality of points of view, subjects and intelligences, allowing less biased and arbitrary judgments to be reached.

2. Features of educational assessment

It is useful now to define what we mean by educational assessment. It is a long-used and abused locution but probably never more so than in the last quarter of a century, that is, since, as an addition to the conventional assessment of learning, apparatuses, activities and institutes specifically devoted to the evaluation of the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of the work done by schools and universities have developed, giving the impression that educational evaluation was experiencing a remarkable period of development. And in fact, according to the analyses that the media generally make in occasion of the release of reports on national (INVALSI) and international (OECD PISA, IEA TIMSS) surveys, or rankings of schools and universities for the use and consumption of users, it may seem legitimate to employ the locution "educational assessment" to denote so much flaunting of numbers, "objective" indicators and rankings that claim to order institutions and contexts according to their quality. However, a more accurate analysis of the issue, which reconsiders the assumption that transparency in publishing and reporting on student outcomes has a positive effect on the quality and equity of education and, on the contrary, also takes into account the undesirable effects of certain decisions (in particular, on school segregation, as pointed out by Pacchi and Ranci, 2017, on the "white flight" phenomenon), allows us to question the use of the locution "educational assessment" to describe certain processes. However, if we examined reflections, experiences and analyses related to educational assessment over the last century, we would struggle to recognize anything strictly evaluative and educational in much of the processes related to the mass of rankings generated over the past twenty five

years. While taking into account the differences between schools of thought and objects of study (*assessment* and *evaluation* are not certainly totally overlapping terms), it is possible to find a common definition of educational assessment that cuts across the reflections and experiences fielded over the past decades. We can define educational assessment as a process for making a value judgment expressed on the gap found between goals and reality and useful for taking decisions aimed at reducing that gap. Thus, it is the usefulness in reducing the distance between goals and reality that makes the whole process actually "educative". Let us explore these three aspects-namely, value judgment, determining distance, and reducing that distance-by framing each of them from the perspective of inclusion.

3. First feature. Assessment as value judgment: the inclusion of other perspectives

All evaluative processes involve value judgments, and the origin and evolution of docimological research and reflections are largely related to the analysis of the unreliability of some of those judgments. In the last century, one of the founders of docimology, Piéron, analyzing the evaluations given by different members of French State Examination commissions, points out how the exact same performance corresponded to radically different ratings, with wide and significant gaps not only in the philosophy essay, but also in physics and mathematics. Later, theoretical reflections and field investigations on assessment unfairness, making use of the fundamental support of psychology, have explored the role that stereotypes and biases (including racist, classist, sexist, abilist) play in assessment, as in the work on the Halo effect, Pygmalion, Stereotypy and other biases summarized in Table 1.

Tab. 1 – Biases of assessment process

Halo	*Influence of irrelevant factors*
Contaminatio	Influence of others' assessment
Backlash	Changes in instructional teaching as a function of assessment
Assigned Distribution	Forcing individual differences within a predetermined pattern
Pygmalion	Adaptation of learning to the teacher's expectations
Succession/Contrast	Overestimation or underestimation based on comparison with other students
Stereotype	Strong impact of previous assessments

We quote De Landsheere (1971, pp. 30-31) on the stereotype effect "There had been reported to us (in secondary education) a case of overt stereotypy of which a pupil was a victim for Latin versions. By way of verification, we had the other assignments done successively by another pupil in the class, by a pupil of the same school level, graded excellent in another school, then by a graduate student in classical philology: the score did not change by one half point out of twenty".

Table 1 does not report mutually exclusive elements. In fact, as one can easily imagine, Stereotypy may often arise from an Halo and, in the long run, be introjected and resolve into the learned helplessness of a negative Pygmalion effect. More recent studies focus on "stereotype threat", that is, the process by which the importance accorded to given stereotypes affects performance and future learning choices. As Tomasetto (2013) highlights, according to the "stereotype threat" model, if a social group is the subject of a negative stereotype about its members' poor skills in relation to a certain subject (e.g., in mathematics), individuals in that group tend to perform worse in that same domain even because of the fear of confirming the stereotype by their own failure. In fact, when stereotyping is made explicit within an assessment task, such as a test or a classroom assignment, members of groups subject to stereotyping tend to experience excessive physiological activation, anxiety, intrusion of negative thoughts, self-focused attention, and in addition, efforts to suppress the stereotype consume cognitive resources, thus making it more difficult to perform the task. The paradoxical result is that regardless of their individual skills, members of stereotyped groups actually perform worse in stereotype-threatening situations, thus ending up confirming the stereotype that damages them.

The response suggested by docimological research to the problem of the unreliability and unfairness of evaluation processes does not involve any removal of the subjective component of assessment. Instead, methods are proposed in order to keep subjectivity in check by preventing it from erupting into arbitrariness. Intersubjective exchange between different stakeholders aimed at making explicit functions, objectives, assessment criteria is recommended. Making these elements explicit and including different viewpoints within the process makes assessment both fairer and more reliable. Fairer, because the assessment takes on the point of confronting the views of traditionally excluded subjects; more reliable, because biases affecting the judgment-making process are greatly reduced.

This dimension of assessment is intimately related to the idea of evaluation as a device of inquiry and to the idea of inquiry as a democratic process. For Dewey (1939), values and the resulting evaluations emerge where there

is reason for them, that is, where we perceive problems and we work for the purpose of hypothesizing possible solutions. Evaluation is, always, a form of power management, meaning the possibility of affecting individuals, and can be managed autocratically, excluding individuals themselves (with the paradox of objectifying learning subjects) but paying a high price in terms of reliability and validity, or shared, including learners in the evaluation process as is the case in self or peer assessment.

In summary, we can say that this first feature of assessment, framed from an inclusive point of view, contrasts any top-down or external imposition of assessment goals and tools with the need for dialogue or negotiation with assessed individuals and contexts. An educational assessment is also a radically inclusive and democratic assessment: peer and self-assessment represent highly effective forms of assessment (Restiglian & Grion, 2019).

4. Second feature. Assessing, measuring, assessing: the need for criterion tools

We have seen that in educational assessment the value judgment is made on the distance measured between a desired situation and one actually encountered. From this we can outline the role of measurement in the assessment process. Measurement is understood here as a process of linking abstract concepts to empirical indicators (Lucisano, 1989, 2018), an operation centered on our ability to shape goals and objectives by making them empirically testable in order to verify their achievement. According to Dewey (1939), there is always some observation of the achieved result in comparison and contrast with the expected one, so that the comparison sheds light on the adequacy of the things used as means.

The place of measurement within evaluation is intermediate, between two evaluative acts. In 1955, recalling Dewey, Visalberghi stated a dialectical relationship between measurement and evaluation in the educational process ("measurement is born in evaluation and flows into it", p. 21), referring to the habit of balance and discretion that an attitude lacking any sense of measurement risks losing. There are no objective evaluations, since even so-called objective measurements, obtained through structured tools, are preceded and then followed by value judgments. Indeed, before measuring, we establish that the situation needs an evaluative judgment, and then we make value decisions about functions, objectives, instruments and criteria of the evaluation. After measuring, we finally develop a judgment about the information gathered.

This means that the information gathered through measurement (the data) is not hypostatized, but must be assumed within the interpretive hypotheses that produce it and that should direct the following actions. The need for guidance affirms an oft-repeated need from an inclusive perspective as well: to describe fullness, not emptiness, i.e., to use tools that can provide a criterion-based assessment and account for each individual's progress in terms of mastery.

From this point of view, the distinction between criterion-based and normative assessment deserves to be explored further, since, as we shall see, reasoning in terms of the inclusion and quality of the assessment process, the former is to be preferred to the latter. A norm-based test allows students' performance to be compared with that of a reference group (e.g., school average, regional or national average, IEA or OECD average). Standardized tests have their own usefulness, since they make it possible to gain information for assessing the effectiveness and equity of educational actions and to obtain information on the performance of given target groups or individuals. This is the case of a female student who scores significantly higher than average in mathematics but not in reading: detecting such a finding can help to control evaluative bias such as the halo effect. Or, we can see if the same student gets lower scores than the class average at the beginning of the year and higher a few months later: detecting such a finding can help to control an evaluative bias such as the stereotype effect. However, these tools risk telling us little or nothing about the development of this student's learning, since in this case the assessment is not based on a measurement of the distance between goals and evidence, but on the distance between the student's achievement and reference groups. The risk, well known in the literature, is that of enhancing competitive mechanisms that negatively affect the development of intrinsic motivation toward learning (Ames, 1992).

In contrast, a criterion assessment places the performance of a student within an established scale of mastery regardless of the average performance of the other students. Criterion tests, while clearly indicating the assessment objectives, require that the different levels of mastery are predetermined, without relying on the average score of reference groups but, on the contrary, on the basis of analytical criteria, defined through indicators and descriptors, which clearly indicate which level of the mastery scale it is possible to place a student's performance at. A criterion is in fact defined on the basis of dimensions (indicators) to be considered in the assessment of a performance, guidance for recognizing these dimensions (descriptors), and an ordinal scale for assessing the achievement of certain levels of mastery. Due to the analytical and incremental type of feedback they offer, criterion assessment

– if supported by valid and reliable tools (grids, rubrics) for controlling the subjectivity of assessment-are one of the most effective tools in educational assessment.

The plethora of numbers and scores toppled by teachers over students or by the media over an audience eager to draw up rankings does not necessarily have anything to do with educational assessment: in fact, the latter must take on the responsibility of reliably informing strategies for improvement. Knowing the distance between a student's score and the average score of his or her class, school, region, OECD average, Finland or Saturn in itself does not help to inform instructional processes or guide one's learning. On the contrary, it guides toward mastery a judgment made about the learner's position within his or her learning journey, a distance that can be closed if intermediate goals are made explicit in terms of observable behaviors, such as those that Mitchell recommends in his outline of effective inclusive assessment. Thus, a formative assessment becomes inclusive if it recognizes and values differences (as in dynamic assessment, see Aquarius, 2015) without tracing them back to a norm, giving voice to different intelligences and different abilities.

5. Third characteristic. Communicating evaluation to shape the future

We have observed how work on motivation to learn, on the need to develop intrinsic motivation to achieve mastery goals, highlights that a totally top-down administered assessment which discourages collaboration and focuses judgment on comparison with the performance of others has unintended consequences on the development of positive student attitudes toward learning. What makes evaluation really educative is not the use of certain instruments, but the use of the information gathered through them, and the function attributed to the process is decisive in this respect. The third feature of educational evaluation, the fact that it has the purpose of reducing the gap verified through measurement, shifts attention to a key moment in the entire process, which is the communication of evaluative feedback.

Often, assessment tends to be perceived and conceived as a purely bureaucratic chore or as a means of dispensing rewards or punishments. However, the literature regarding attitudes toward assessment by teachers (Harris & Brown, 2009) attributes educational effectiveness only to those conceptions that assign to assessment purposes of improving teaching and learning processes. From this perspective, an inclusive evaluation culture is based

on the proactive use of error (which is never a stigma) and on feedback that is as analytical as possible. The role of feedback is essential in the various forms of assessment (heteroassessment, peer assessment, self-assessment): in an assessment that effectively guides action, the development of judgment should be linked to the development of specific knowledge and the ability to provide directions for improvement consistent with the purposes and criteria of the assessment, as shown in Table 2.

Tab. 2 – Characteristics of educational feedback

Written feedback comments should be:
understandable: expressed in a language that students will understand
selective: commenting in reasonable detail on two or three things that the student can do something about
specific: pointing to instances in the student's submission where the feedback applies
contextualised: framed with reference to the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria
balanced: pointing out the positive as well as areas in need of improvement
forward looking: suggesting how students might improve subsequent assignments

Source: repurposed from Nicol (2010); Restiglian & Grion (2019)

6. Conclusions

The dimensions that underpin the development of an effective educational assessment openly recall inclusive processes. First, educational assessment must include multiple views. Sharing purposes, content and criteria for making judgments, in other words sharing evaluative power, makes the process more valid and reliable and helps to reduce the risk that the assessment will result in an action that reproduces and legitimizes the inequalities of opportunity which characterize the school and extracurricular experience of students.

Second, inclusive assessment must use a sense of proportion, meaning it must account, with an awareness of the margin of error which inevitably characterizes any measurement process. This implies explicitly including in the measures goals defined in terms of observable learning, that is, ends in view, things to be done and learned to do, not positions to be occupied within a ranking of submerged and saved, in which distance from the norm is conceived as a deficit. In the *narrative assessment*, the production of stories about highlighted progress allows the focus to be on what students progressively learn to do rather than on goals set in terms of distance from average performance: "the teacher increasingly sees the learner, not the disability" (Dunn, 2004, p. 126).

Finally, an educational assessment must include the future in its judgments. In the Index for Inclusion, an item asks "Is it clear that assessment of pupil learning always also involves reflection on learning?" In *The Theory of Valuation*, Dewey makes it clear that the authentic time of assessments is the future, because value judgments are about things that have yet to be put in practice. An evaluation is effective if it involves future engagement, a alteration of our routine consistent with the things we have learned by assessing.

None of this configures any escape from the present or from one' s own past experiences of individuals who have too often been passive objects, rather than active subjects, of assessment processes that are little or not at all educational. And it is the Index itself that proposes, not surprisingly, the following item, "Do teachers draw on their own personal experiences in which they have been evaluated in the past to improve their evaluation?". Assessment educates if it engages those who teach and learn in a reshaping of the context and a reorientation of one's point of view that allow, like any good narrative practice (Batini, Bertolucci & De Carlo, 2017), to make sense of past and present experience in order to shape future experience.

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6. Music education and Specific Learning Disorders (SLD): opportunities for prevention, compensation and learning how to play a musical instrument

by Marianna Traversetti

1. The phylogenetic relationship between musical language and verbal language: what contribution to teaching from research findings?

In the context of learning design and inclusive processes, music can make an important contribution to the development of learners' perceptual-kinesthetic, gross and fine motor and cognitive skills: in addition to having a strong interdisciplinary character, it solicits the transfer of learning by mobilizing acquired knowledge and skills from one cognitive domain to another, while facilitating the increase of specific skills. Furthermore, besides being considered as a fundamental and universal component of human experience, music represents a tool that stimulates communication and knowledge of reality and that solicits reasoning (Miur, 2012). In fact, "the increase of research on the transfer of musical learning allows a glimpse of the musical language not only as a valid experience itself, but also as a vehicular tool of cognitive attitudes, otherwise difficult to assume and to be accepted, in subjects whose cognitive styles are far from the traditional vision of our scholastic learning" (Scaglioso, 2008, p. 210). It is well known, after all, that music learning, full of emotions and rich in cultural traditions, combines well with learnings derived from other disciplines, proper to the school curriculum and to the different cognitive-applicative fields. Moreover, it creates in particular a positive influence on reading, logical-mathematical and space-time reasoning skills (Marzano & De Angelis, 2014), which can be developed through teaching activities that employ music as a vehicle for the improvement of deficit skills, because of the stimulation music offers to the acquisition of perceptual and reasoning skills concerning the Italian language. Appreciable outcomes, in fact, can be traced in research related to the phylogenetic rela-

tion between musical language and verbal language (Moreno *et al.*, 2011): both music and language make use of symbols that represent information such that it is communicated to others in a linear and sequential manner. "Further parallels can be made regarding sentence structure: just as the verbal one can be composed of two or many words, in the same way musical 'speech' is made of phrases and periods. Words and music then combine in singing: after all, language as well has its own intrinsic melody that can be lost in focal brain lesions, as in the case of dysprosody" (Marzano & De Angelis, 2014, p. 67). This relation therefore directs to employ, in the context of inclusive education, methodologies suitable for the development of rhythm perception, aural working memory and phonological awareness, starting from verbal and musical listening, motivated by focused attention on different acoustic stimuli and phenomena, as part of educational enhancement paths of a recreational-practical-experiential character.

1.1. Music education for phonological awareness of learners with specific learning disorders

Rhythm education constitutes one of the parameters by which pupils distinguish their language from others. Taking into account the fact that the rhythm of a language depends on the organization of syllables, it follows that syllable and pre-alphabetical thinking are important tools for stimulating the pupil's rhythmic beat and its consequent bodily-gestural transfer: it is through body movements that children perceive and realize rhythms (Dalcroze, 1907). For pupils with Specific Learning Disorders – SLD (L. 170/2010; APA, 2014), or the ones that show signs of it (ISS, 2021), for example, the experience with rests of a musical rhythm, conducted in a practical-motor manner, can help pupils make associations with the subdivision of words into syllables accompanied by bodily gestures, such as clapping hands and/or feet with each syllable heard, discriminate sounds and noises, recognize different timbres (produced by people, animals, objects, etc.), as well as the length (long/short sounds), pitch (higl/low) and intensity of sounds (piano/forte). Such practice on rhythm, therefore, also on the capabilities to discriminate and classify sounds, syllables and words perceived in the echoic memory is crucial for pupils at risk of SLD, who need to reiterate and manipulate word sounds through working memory and, in particular, to store them in the phonological loop. This is where acoustic traces are stored and this allows perceived stimuli to be classified through sub-vocalic repetition (Baddley *et al.*, 2011). This process activates the processing of an

actual *phonological score* (Indefrey & Levelt, 2000) that monitors internal language and prompts appropriate adjustments before the word, if it were to be pronounced incorrectly, is pronounced entirely. Such a mechanism preludes the possession of phonological awareness, that is, the ability to identify the phonological components of language and to be able to manipulate them.

2. Music and prevention of specific learning disorders

The "Guidelines for the Right to Education of Pupils with Specific Learning Disorders" (Miur, 2011) and the "Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Specific Learning Disorders" (ISS, 2021) urge the early recognition of the pupil's difficulties, through the observation of atypical performance, i.e., risk factors for SLD, as well as through the planning of appropriate enhancement interventions" (ISS, 2021, p. 4). This calls for actions of secondary[1] prevention (Caplan, 1964), intervening on pupils at risk and obviating symptoms of disorder, or situations of distress. In fact, an accurate prediction of the onset of a disorder can be anticipated in preschool from early childhood and it is precisely in this perspective of action that prevention should be understood, that is, as that opportunity for pupils, to re-dimension present and future learning difficulties, and to arrive at an adequate compensation of these before the appearance of the disorder. In this sense prevention is of great importance, where music education pathways are promoted, pathways that can help prevent and reduce the level of severity and that can help carry out activities, especially through the application on the musical instrument, wherein difficulties can manifest as less limiting to the activity and participation of pupils. Some research shows, in fact, that the absence of early intervention causes an average delay of at least one year in the learning development of pupils with difficulties, during primary and secondary school. In this regard, it is also worth highlighting the relevance of early intake on the reduction of possible secondary psychopathological emotional difficulties: pupils with SLD present three times the risk of developing emotional problems than their neurotypical peers (Penge, 2010) as well as

[1] According to the scheme elaborated by Caplan (1964), there are three types of prevention: 1. primary prevention, aimed at preventing the onset of disorders in healthy people or social situations that can undermine the psychological balance and social condition of the people; 2. secondary prevention, aimed at people at risk in order to eliminate/reduce the symptom of a disorder or discomfort; 3. tertiary prevention, aimed at preventing the progression of an overt disease or discomfort so that the person develops behaviors functional to a positive reintegration.

school dropout[2] (MI, 2021). In this area of intervention, it is clear that prevention also represents a fundamental objective of educational-didactic continuity between preschool, elementary school and secondary school, which considers, as a *conditio sine qua non*, the synergistic collaboration between school and family, such as to foster the knowledge of preconceptual elements on the basis of which to integrate *ad hoc*, for SLDs, class design and activate enhancement educational pathways, capable of making it possible to establish, over time, whether it is a temporary and generic learning difficulty or, rather, what will turn out to be a real disorder, for which the more timely the early intervention, the more effective the encounter with curricular design will prove to be.

In Italy, a number of investigations have been carried out through screenings targeting pupils in the first grade of elementary school (Belocchi, 2011; Rizzo, 2021) and five year old pupils in kindergarten (Usai *et al.*, 2007; Rizzo, 2021), which have highlighted the close relationship between certain specific individual characteristics and a higher percentage of risk to manifest learning difficulties, including in terms of logitudinality.

3. The observation of risk factors

The most common precursor symptoms refer to language delays or deficits, difficulties with rhyming or counting, or fine-motor coordination in writing. Risk factors that may be observed in preschool children include, in particular: a lack of interest in practicing language games (e.g., repetition, rhyming), difficulty learning nursery rhymes, use of a childish vocabulary, mispronunciation of sounds and words, difficulty remembering both the names of the letters that compose their names and the names of numbers and days of the week, difficulty in dividing words into syllables, or in recognizing words that rhyme with each other and the initial sound of a word. More generally, the teacher can "observe the emergence of grapho-motor difficulties [...], space-time orientation and integration [...], oculo-manual coordination and general dynamic coordination, inadequately acquired lateral dominance, difficulties in visual sequential discrimination and memorization, difficulties in orientation in school time (and) in the independent performance of

[2] Referring to data provided by the latest Eurostat Report on early school dropout for quantifying the phenomenon, in 2020 it stands at 13.8% and places Italy at the bottom of the European ranking, surpassing Iceland (14.8%), Romania (15.6%), Spain (16%), Malta (16.7%), and Turkey (26.7%) (MI, 2021).

daily activities, difficulties in orienting in proximal time (yesterday, today, tomorrow)" (Miur, 2011, pp. 10-11). In addition, memory, attention and language, constituting the main bases of learning to read and write, are other fundamental aspects to be taken into account in the systematic observation of possible SLD risk signals. Moreover, the teacher may observe: slowness in writing, weak or excessive pressure of the pencil on the paper, discontinuity in the graphic gesture, retouching of the sign already drawn, difficults in assumption of the body schema, and in linguistic manipulation. These are, on closer inspection, deficit skills that, through music education, can be well compensated for, as illustrated in the following paragraphs.

4. The role of music for phonological enhancement: educational paths for dyslexia and dysorthography

According to the Clinical Recommendations (Consensus Conference, 2011; ISS, 2021), SLD risk factors, in addition to prior or concomitant familiarity and language disorder, include severely deficient performance in tests on meta-phonological skills. The relevance of the use of music in education has been highlighted by extensive experimental and quasi-experimental research, which has pointed out the positive and facilitative results that musical activities can bring to the development of linguistic-phonological skills (Piro & Ortiz, 2009). In particular, for the school-based treatment of dyslexia and dysorthography, the combined use of linguistic-phonological activities and musical activities, by leveraging the sonority of words (Dehaene, 2007), validly contributes to reeducating the areas of the brain underlying the processing of phonemes, activating new learnings capable of transforming neuronal circuits[3]. In fact, on the perceptual-phonetic level, such combined use simultaneously stimulates both *categorical perception and phoneme restoration* (Aiello, 1994). The former allows perception in units (words, phonemes, notes) in an aural, linguistic, or musical continuum; the latter causes a missing information to be reconstituted, should a sound or verbal stimulus be interrupted or segmented, making it perceived as a continuum. Phonemic restauration, therefore, allows semantic-lexical or musical meaning to be attributed to information. This highlights the reasons why it is argued that

[3] Ksenjia Marinkovic has shown that the temporal planum, a higher region of the brain's temporal lobe, reacts to compatibility between letters and sounds: hearing a letter-compatible sound increases the activity of the temporal planum, while letter-sound conflict reduces its activity (Beltrami, 2010).

"children seem to have a natural ability to learn the rules of language and music through exposure to examples (and that) for music, as for language, the natural medium is aural-verbal" (Sloboda, 1985, p. 51). This argument leads to consider that an intervention to reduce language difficulties and of dyslexia or dysorthography, through a music-based educational enhancement course, aimed at the acquisition and progressive linguistic-phonological development, is effective when language and musical learnings occur through the use of perceptual-aural[4] channels, such as those conducted in schools with a musical instrument department. Phonological awareness, in fact, consists of two areas, one involving the reflection on the syllabic structure of words, typical of the pre-school age, also known as global phonology; the other relating to the structure of phonemes and their manipulation and classification, which occurs at school age. Analytical awareness is preliminary to the encoding and decoding of an oral or written text; therefore, it is to be developed during the preschool years and it is predictive of success in learning to read and write (Rizzo, 2021). It is known, in fact, that a malfunction of the neurofunctional structures that mediate the learning of written language may be among the causes of the later manifestation of a reading-writing disorder (Boewey, 2005). Didactic paths of phonological enhancement, also implemented with the use of the musical instrument, based on linguistic-musical games carried out in an ongoing and structured manner, and intended as compensatory intervention tools for the reduction of difficulties in the course of structuring the learning process of these skills, therefore, allow us to observe the analysis of the developmental trajectory, with effective outcomes in the early stages of acquisition of the written code. The phonological ability of pupils with dyslexia and dysorthography should therefore be monitored and developed throughout the different segments of schooling and then be enhanced in secondary school.

5. The role of music for visual-time-space enhancement: teaching paths for dyslexia and dysgraphia

Intentional human behavior rests on executive functions, the development of which enables progress in perceptual-motor, emotional and thinking, as well as linguistic-communicational act. In pupils with dyslexia and/

[4] Given these considerations, it is safe to assume that "if children start learning music very early, before they begin to read -positive element for cerebral plasticity – they might follow the same sequences as when they learn to speak" (Parnucutt, 2006, pp. 90-91).

or dysgraphia, difficulties related to these functions can generate disorder, in particular, in the organization of time and space, and of the right sequences, causing developmental disharmony (de Ajuriguerra, 1979). In fact, the Cerebellar Deficit Theory (Nicolson & Fawcett, 1999; Nicolson, Fawcett & Dean, 2001a, 2001b) argues that the deficit in the automation of executive functions is determined by "a basic cerebellar dysfunction that would more generally impair the automation of skills, not only of reading, but also of motor sequences and implicit learning in general" (Stella, 2011, p. 7). The lack of automation is detected in the difficulty in voluntarily focusing attention and in performing one task or activity within another, especially if it is of a motor and coordinative nature with involvement of lateral dominance and time-space organization. According to Stamback, the ability to integrate in time and space information received at the perceptual level to perform a task or activity can also be developed through the use of musical teaching modalities and trained through activities carried out with the use of easily available tools, in which spatial attention is solicited and facilitated in the selection of one piece of information at a time (serial procedure) related to the expected position, while inhibiting any disturbing elements that may be present. This also allows for the development of the ability to exclude noise (Sperling *et al.*, 2005) or, more generally, distracting stimuli and thus to process information. It is therefore crucial for pupils with dyslexia, above all, as a function of grapheme decoding segregation during reading and, for those with dysgraphia, above all, as a function of managing space on the paper and distances between letters and words in writing.

6. The method for practicing musical instruments: the role of compensatory tools

Acquiring a method for studying music and applying oneself to the study of the musical instrument is indispensable for all pupils, but it is even more so for those with SLD: in fact, due to deficit abilities inherent in such disorders, they cannot afford to use the most common methods, such as reading the material to be studied several times, memorizing sheet music, using verbal and technical-instrumental information referred to the instrument in a combined way, and resorting to the use of compensatory strategies. Sector studies on learning processes, moreover, highlight how pupils with SLD fail to profitably employ skills connected to the study method (which concerns both the theoretical formal aspects of music education as well as the practical ones of the instrument) presenting, in particular, "difficulties in focusing attention,

developing working memory, processing information, and automating executive procedures" (ivi, p. 34). For music education, the study method, specifically, requires not only the use of specific techniques, but also and above all, the control and management of multiple skills of both cognitive, regulatory and emotional-motivational character, which can be favorably developed in school, through teaching actions considered among the most effective from an evidence based education perspective (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2022), including: aiming at clear objectives, providing feedback, integrating direct instruction with metacognitive strategies, alternating roles and mutual attention. In this regard it is interesting to point out how, in order to develop the organizational component, which is of great relevance to the study of the musical instrument, the teaching actions considered most effective for the pupil with SLD are those that favor the sharing of the study objectives pursued between teacher and pupil and between pupil and pupil, connecting them closely to the use of feedback for an adequate formative assessment that can act on the affective-relational and motivational factors that are determinant in fostering the study itself. Hence a truly inclusive didactics, aimed at the promotion of the study method for musical instrument, needs to be characterized by the proposal of a multiplicity of modes of teaching strategies selected from the most effective ones and by the use of a plurality of compensatory tools through which pupils with SLD can more easily exploit their potential in many ways, succeeding in enhancing their strengths and, therefore, in developing and manifesting their talents. The teacher of the musical instrument who, as part of his or her didactic design, offers such methodological richness and a vast instrumental repertoire, enables the pupil with SLD to access the musical and educational activities he or she proposes in a gradual, flexible and personalized, even highly intensive and structured way, putting him or her in a position to consciously employ forms of compensation prepared *ad hoc* for the pupil and to build an appropriate and successful modality for knowing how to structure and master them as he or she plays and practices the musical instrument. A teacher with didactic expertise of this nature contributes to limiting the risk of exclusion from organized musical education in the classroom, as well as of demotivating and renunciatory attitudes to the study of the musical instrument, which would keep the pupil in an already tendentially low self-esteem and low motivation, without possibility of further development. In essence, it is possible to say that an inclusive design of the study of the musical instrument does not merely translate into providing the pupil with SLD with those compensative and dispensatory measures that facilitate him/her with application-type study tasks, but rather translates into the real possibility of assuring him/her, also precisely through music education, the right to enhance, to the

maximum extent possible, his talents, productively employing his/her own internal resources of cognitive, organizational and emotional-motivational character, allowing him/her to modulate the management of these and enhancing intelligence, creativity, critical thinking to acquire greater confidence in the operational procedures related to the study of the musical instrument.

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7. Body awareness and active imagination

by Maria Teresa Palermo

1. Foreword

Instrumental coaching has always been considered a very delicate and complex activity, so much so that specific didactic treatises were written in times when the same attention was not yet paid to the teaching of other subjects.

Learning took place in the same way as in the art workshops, where the Maestro took care of each specific pupil and their particular inclinations, bringing attention, in times not yet ripe for reflection on didactics, to the unique relationship between teacher and learner and the centrality of the corporeal aspects.

Learning to play an instrument is, after all, a kind of sport and it is not possible to separate the more strictly physical aspects from the learning and affective ones.

When it comes to children with disabilities or specific learning disorders, the care and theoretical/practical preparation of the teacher should be even more thorough, precisely in order to creatively resort to the enormous range of possibilities offered by musical practice; at times, musical learning can almost take the form of a rehabilitation practice and, for this reason, interdisciplinary work between different professionals would be necessary.

2. Breathing techniques for posture and performance effectiveness, tailored to the specific difficulties of the pupil

It is not only those who sing or play a wind instrument who have the inescapable need to work on their breathing; for these musicians, it is one more technique to learn, like the use of the bow for violinists, but all those who choose to play a musical instrument will have to deal with breathing dynam-

ics. A pianist, for example, will not be able to sit on a stool moving his hands and arms for a long time if he is not helped – through correct breathing – to make posture and movement fluid.

Also from a musicological point of view, breathing has a fundamental function in performance: the phrasing itself requires specific attention that cannot disregard the physiological dynamics of breathing, similarly to what happens with phonation and language (Giubileo, 2007). Therefore, an effective pathway of any professional learning for an instrumentalist integrates knowledge and control of breathing. One could then turn the point of view upside down, to the perspective of a musical training designed for youngsters and children in the developmental phase, placing correct breathing not as a means to achieve a performative result but as a resource in itself in the harmonic growth of the individual.

Once specific difficulties of the pupil (due to physiological or functional disabilities) have been focused on, it is possible to use respiratory awareness techniques to address these difficulties in a "musical" way. In particular, the posture and specific movements required for each instrument can be continually corrected in a gentle and also fun way in both the static (shifting the respiratory focus to resting the body on the floor or chair) and dynamic (movement in space following the input and output of air into the lungs) parts.

2.1. A concrete example

A child with neuromotor coordination difficulties, of whatever nature, can be helped to play a drum with clappers by following the musical phrasing with the breath, coordinating it with the path of the arm in order to hit the instrument at the exact moment when the musical phrase requires it. This is a process of anticipation and motor planning which, as we know, strengthens the brain areas involved.

3. Breathing techniques for controlling anxiety and muscle tension

Since time immemorial, human beings have used breathing to induce states of calm and concentration; prayers and mantras are one of the demonstrations of this. Sportsmen and musicians, before a performance, instinctively (or consciously, which would be even better) concentrate with a few deeper breaths to improve tissue oxygenation. One can help, for example, young music pupils before a recital to perceive their internal emotional state by closing their eyes

and concentrating on their breathing; in any case, the study of a wind instrument or singing is in itself preparatory to correct breathing, which will sooner or later become automatic at any time of day. There is no need to introduce complicated techniques, especially for children, because breathing is an innate natural skill (like being able to swim) that is disrupted during growth and that can always be recovered with simple exercises. The help of creativity and images is very useful, as well as showing videos describing the movement of the lungs and diaphragm to children. In the case of disabilities involving the respiratory mechanisms, it is necessary to coordinate with the health personnel looking after the child and perhaps plan a series of effective and non-threatening musical/vocal/respiratory activities together.

As far as muscular tensions are concerned, it is clear that total distension is desirable in a relaxation course, but it is not at all functional to instrumental training, which requires a specific motor commitment, – in other words, well-defined muscular tensions. The very act of standing with the arms raised (any instrument requires this!) is in itself a continuous exercise of static and dynamic balance. Breathing can be used to pursue a weight awareness goal: how much do I have to counteract gravity to hold a flute up? How much do I have to contract my forearm muscles to grip a clapper? How much force must I exert for this beater to produce a *fortissimo* on a drum? This process of acquiring neuromotor awareness will have a positive impact on the entire training and teaching process.

3.1. A concrete example

Those suffering from myoclonus, coordination or lateralization problems (such as confusing the right with the left) will benefit greatly from sound/musical support. One can play or reproduce a very schematic song (e.g. a song with verses and refrain) and help the child to turn his hand or arm in a certain direction – according to his visuospatial possibilities – when the refrain starts again or when certain words appear. In this process, he/she will be guided by the breath necessary to undertake the action, like a levare.

4. Body awareness in relation to different tools and disabilities

Body awareness techniques can also be used in the exploration of different instruments, the materials they are made of and the unconventional use that can be made of them. It is possible to help pupils with motor difficulties

– without any rehabilitation intent, but only functional – to approach the different instruments, depending on the categories they are divided into: there are some instruments that can only be played standing still (piano, cello, harp, double bass, timpani) and many others that can be played sitting, standing still or with some movement (all wind instruments, violin, viola, small percussion instruments, etc.). The possibility of adapting the instrument to the pupil and his or her motor skills is almost unlimited; of course, as long as the training is not aimed at the musician's academic profession, propaedeutic teaching allows for a great deal of creativity, including relational creativity. A course of ensemble music based on inclusivity allows children to approach both music and other children, for example by using a single instrument (a drum with two beats) in twos or threes and by having everyone participate in sound production, each with his or her own abilities. We also consider that motor difficulties are the most varied, from lack of coordination and lateralization to hyperactivity, slowness of reaction, reduced joint range, poor flexibility, etc. Depending on the age of the children, experimentation is a central element of musical education. Instruments are often made of washable plastic materials that can be manipulated and placed in the mouth; this type of experience, for young children and the disabled, is extremely valuable, a way of getting to know the world and oneself. The bodily awareness that comes from even the unconventional use of an instrument is particularly profound and instinctive because imagination and the absence of performative judgment allow the child to explore and get to know his or her own body in complete freedom.

4.1. A concrete example

Ask the child to feel the weight of an instrument (or one of its parts, such as a bow or a clapper) and to feel the small variations depending on distance and resistance to gravity. You can assign each movement a color or the cry of an animal and perhaps get the whole class group to participate.

5. Using active imagination for sound production, articulatory dynamics and pieces of music analysis

Imagination is a human activity that has been much studied by neuroscience in recent years because it brings along an enormous transformative power. Just think of the vast amount of studies on placebo and our self-healing

abilities activated by internal images and not by active molecules (Benedetti, 2012). In learning and musical performance there is an endless repertoire of metaphors, associations, guided fantasies. "Imagine that..." is a phrase that is uttered very often by music teachers or conductors. This occurs mainly for two reasons: the first, of a musicological order, concerns musical performance and assimilates phrasing to a visual-spatial experience (e.g., the waves of the sea); the second, more strictly physiological, enhances the development of a technical-body skill through images perceived at a muscular level (e.g., a smile in the case of singers). Sometimes the pieces of music themselves provide precise and imaginative captions, but more often it is the musician himself who finds useful correspondences for his own performances. In the case of didactics, besides making the lesson less boring, the use of images – suggested by the teacher or stimulated in the pupils – often allows a "shortcut" when facing technical difficulties. Creativity, in this case, literally knows no bounds. Finding ourselves working with children with disabilities or with SLD it is necessary to know the real physical possibilities of the pupil so as not to have to face useless frustrations, while leaving room for exploration and small challenges; within an imaginative path, such as a musical fairy tale or a game about the sounds of nature, we get out of the rigor of performance and each child can experiment in a new way. Singing can prove to be an excellent support in the case of language difficulties (Patel, 2016) precisely because it circumvents articulatory difficulties by entering the extended aesthetic and creative area.

5.1. A concrete example

With young children, it is easy to suggest musical images related to nature (birds, horses, etc.), whereas with older children, we enter a more personal and private dimension. It is perhaps a good idea to stimulate the production of images that help the instrumental training, by asking questions such as: What does the sound of this instrument make you think of? How would you describe this rhythm? Where in your body do you feel the movement you are making? Etc.

6. Body awareness, breathing and active imagination for wind instruments musicians

Playing a wind instrument involves one of the most delicate areas of the human body: the mouth. From Penfield's depiction (Schott, 1993) we know that the somatosensory surface dedicated to tongue and lips occupies an in-

credibly large space on the cerebral cortex and in psychodynamic theory it is explained how the construction of one's psychosexual development passes through the so-called "oral phase". Therefore, teaching a wind instrument involves very complex processes that are good to know, at least in broad terms. In general, since practicing an instrument tends to provoke more or less slight muscular tensions, the great initial work is precisely that of making movements and posture fluid in order to avoid problems; tensions in the muscles of the face are particularly problematic because they can create serious complications in a developmental age (Kostes & Miller, 1997). Breathing, as mentioned above, plays a valuable supporting role in the harmonic development of the musician's body, and body awareness can become more and more profound as the instrumental technique is perfected. Unlike, for example, other musicians, the dynamics of sound production of a wind instrumentalist is, for the most part, concealed: the way the tongue moves, the internal tension in the throat or the correct expansion of the diaphragm are not visible to the outside world, but these movements are just as important as the use of the bow for a violinist or the articulation of the wrist for a pianist. A teacher's only means of decoding is his or her own ear or external physical feedback (position of the pupil's jaw, shoulders or abdomen) but these are always indirect observations. It follows that the pupil should provide as much cooperation as possible: imagination is an excellent way of communicating precisely because the pupil will have to build up an internal proprioceptive body framework on which to confront the teacher.

6.1. A concrete example

Musical articulation follows very similar paths to the articulation of language (e.g., the position of the tongue in the staccato), thus any play on pronunciation can prove useful both for the performance itself and for correct rhythmic scansion. It is no coincidence that phrases aimed at the clear and fluent articulation of difficult syllables and words are called "tongue twisters". Nowadays, among other things, immediate access to videos and photos allows children to clearly illustrate their internal articulatory and respiratory mechanics: in this way, their internal image in instrumental technique can be strengthened and dysfunctional paths avoided.

7. Construction of the learner/teacher relationship in relation to body awareness and physical contact

That said, the real didactic tool is the building of an effective relationship between pupil and teacher. The music teacher's own body is a very important didactic means of communication; the pupil watches and learns directly from the movements, fluidity, stability and energy that the teacher's body embodies. As mentioned in the introduction, music study in ancient times was equated with the workshop learning of all other art forms, i.e. a craft and empirical type of learning. It is evident how this process must take into account a strong psycho-affective component, to be handled with awareness and great respect. Although a good relationship is always fundamental in teaching any subject, in the case of music, the direct observation of bodies is inseparable from the teaching itself. In this day and age, this is a very thorny subject because it is assumed that no teacher – after kindergarten – is allowed to touch pupils in any way, and this principle has been made even more unassailable since the coronavirus epidemic. However, teaching music without proximity, without approaching (and being approached), is quite impossible (Palermo, 2007); it may be conceivable in an academic course where the repertoire is tackled at a professional level, but certainly not during the teaching of the basic technique in the early years. Therefore, a balance must be found, and this balance can only be dynamic and specific for any given moment and pupil. It necessarily starts from the teacher's awareness, not only didactic but also – perhaps above all – personal, from the good management of one's own communicative, relational, bodily styles, from the knowledge of one's own musical and didactic path. All the so-called mind/body techniques would be very useful in school, of low cost and very high evolutionary impact, as well as fundamental to the study of music itself. This applies also to children with disabilities and SLDs, where maybe a little more caution at the beginning of the learning process is required, but the bodily relationship may paradoxically prove to be more fluid precisely where non-verbal communication is the preferred channel of contact: the presence of the support teacher is very precious, and working in synergy for a good relationship can only have positive repercussions on the entire educational system (class, school, parents, etc.).

7.1. A concrete example

All approaching musical games can help: for example, listening to a violin and piano sonata and "assigning" the pupil one of the two parts to

follow with movements in which he moves towards the teacher and vice versa (depending on his physical possibilities of movement, the game can be creatively modified). The different musical parameters offer the possibility of modulating the approach styles (rhythm, melody, dynamics, etc.). Each instrument, with its peculiar technical characteristics, will require a different spatial and proxemic approach, perhaps to be explored together with the pupil in order to stimulate his or her imagination and the construction of an effective internal body image.

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8. An access test for all

by Maristella Croppo, Franca Ferrari, Amalia Lavinia Rizzo*

1. Musicality and musical aptitude

In order to better understand the criteria that have guided us in developing this inclusive access test, it is useful to dwell on the concept of musicality and the consequently related concept of musical aptitude. Before exploring it from a theoretical point view, let's simply imagine, for example, a child aged one or two years listening to some kind of musical stimulus: it could be a music played on the radio or on the tv, or a song sung by the parents, or an instrument played in front of him. Whatever the musical input, he or she will respond with movements, sometimes very noticeable, sometimes minimal and these movements may also be accompanied by vocalizations, more or less relevant to the musical content. The body is set in motion, naturally and without instruction or teaching, simply in response to a song or music. We can draw another example by thinking about the role and presence of music in our everyday lives since we were born: from the radio to TV, via advertising jingles, soundtracks, background music in commercial activities, and those used to calm us down before we go to sleep, music in video games and those used in the ringtones of our phones, summer catchphrases and the songs of our love stories.

Music is ubiquitous and pervades every aspect of our lives, taking on different roles depending on its use, acquiring symbolic meanings that are not always unambiguous, and enriching social, emotional, and affective lives. If music is ever-present, and has been present since even very remote ages, and if everyone can enjoy it to some extent despite not having taken part in formal and specific educational paths, this is because it is part of us. Such observations make it easy to understand what Isabelle Peretz, a psychologist

* The chapter has been developed jointly by all the authors. In particular, Croppo wrote paragraphs 1 and 2, Ferrari wrote paragraph 3, and Rizzo wrote paragraph 4.

and researcher in the field of music psychology and neurocognitive processes, means when she defines musicality as a *natural trait*, which develops spontaneously and is defined and regulated by biological factors and cognitive mechanisms (Honing *et al.*, 2015). Indeed, musicality turns out to be for all intents and purposes a biological endowment, present in all humans and not necessarily related to other abilities (Peretz, 2002).

Such a definition has been confirmed by the results of many researches carried out in various fields, which have led to the categorization of certain common and widespread traits in every human culture. Musicality can also be defined as musical intelligence (Gardner, 1983): a human ability to create mental representation of the world through the auditory channel and to understand musical discourse. This ability is common to most individuals from early childhood. We are all musical, respecting individual differences: these differences lead to individual musical behaviors, influenced by the naturality, quantity, quality, and context of musical experience (Welch, 2005). While for a long time it was believed that musicality was a capacity possessed only by those who were particularly talented or gifted, this view can be said to be largely outdated. It is still difficult, however, to eradicate this misconception from the common imagination and there is no scientific evidence supporting this supposition. On the contrary, the most recent discoveries in the field of neuroscience have shown, thanks to neuroimaging techniques, how the music process engages different brain areas in both hemispheres, involving them in simultaneous and rapid activations, especially in the visual, auditory and motor cortices. This activation occurs even when music is simply heard, or even only imagined (Collins, 2014). Furthermore, neuroimaging has shown neural circuits that are specific to musical activity and distinct from those dedicated to other abilities. Although there are areas in common, some of those activated for music are different, for example, from those activated for language, as if to say that musical experience is accessible even when deficits affecting verbal expression are present. Building on these studies, even the concept of musical aptitude is redefined: this should not be regarded as a gift or reserved talent but rather as a measure of each individual's own musicality. In this regard it is important to recall the words of Edwin E. Gordon, musician and researcher specialized in music education: "music aptitude is a measure of children's potential to learn music; it represents inner possibilities" and that "every child is born with at least some music aptitude" (Gordon, 2003, pp. 13-14). So, that potential ability to understand music is not a special aptitude granted to a select few: all persons have the potential to achieve in music. According to the author, this aptitude is innate and able to develop, depending on personal experiences: thus, each of us is

born with a certain degree of musical aptitude, which can be influenced by the quality of the environment. This means, on the one hand, that it can develop in the presence of a rich and varied musical environment and, on the other hand, that it can decrease in the absence of it. Individuals who are born with a similar musical aptitude, therefore, may develop it differently, or not at all, according to the musical surroundings and the musical experiences, just as individuals with low aptitude at birth may increase it and "outperform" others possessing a higher initial potential. Like many other individual characteristics, musical aptitude is evenly distributed in the population, with a majority of individuals with average potential ability, and a minority with above and below average potential (Gordon, 2003). Underlying this potential are also genetic predispositions that define the child's receptivity to music as early as prenatal age, which in turn is influenced by the musical environment in which the mother lived during pregnancy and the sound and musical stimuli she herself produced. Musical aptitude thus takes the form of a potential possessed by every human being which is variable, measurable and susceptible to development. It is, as already mentioned, an inner possibility and, as such, does not coincide with performance, nor even with skills: these can be learned through specific educational paths, also structured on the basis of and respecting the individual characteristics of each person, and cannot be considered the basis from which to start. With this in mind, it is important that the lower secondary schools with a musical instrument department give every individual, including those with disabilities or other special educational needs, the opportunity to access instrumental education through an inclusive assessment, within the framework of which everyone can best express their musicality regardless of performance and any prior knowledge.

2. Articulation of the access test

The proposed access test is structured from the considerations that have emerged so far. It is very important to note that it is based on authentic tasks, which are also open to different answers and do not have a unique and rigidly defined solution (Trinchero, 2017). The teacher, rather than being an examiner who assesses answers through the right or wrong dualism, is therefore invited to be a guide who plays with and for the learners and proposes the activities with an attitude of openness to the different possible solutions that can be implemented in response. In this sense, the teacher stands as a musically competent adult who himself shows firsthand what is required, even before asking the pupils. From the perspective of inclusive assess-

ment, therefore, it is recommended that the access test be conducted in small groups of pupils, in order to create a climate of serenity and collaboration that helps to manage the emotional aspects (often connected with this type of activity) that could distort the responses of pupils with special educational needs. In order to make the test inclusive and empower each pupil to carry it out, pupils will be invited to express themselves in relation to the teacher's proposals with the use of the body and the voice. The goal is to engage them in a practical, authentic and meaningful musical experience that also arises from peer interaction and not only with the teacher. As will be seen in the detailed description of the test, one of the teachers on the committee, sitting at the piano, will play, or even better sing while playing, two simple pieces, different in meter and form and, if possible, even mode.

For each piece, activities designed to assess rhythmic and melodic aptitude will be proposed separately. For example, candidates will be asked to:
- follow in movement;
- follow with a beat (or two, as desired) on a drum;
- improvise short rhythmic sequences;
- repeat by singing, at the end of the song, the chorus phrase;
- complete the suspended melodic phrase by singing the missing last note;
- sing an answer phrase in response to a given melodic question;
- play an answer phrase on a rhythmic instrument in response to a given rhythmic question.

During the test, the other teachers on the committee will observe the pupils' responses by filling out a grid. Although pupils will take the test in groups, it should be remembered that the assessment will be individual. In addition to the test, an interview will also be held with the candidate on the motivations for taking up the study of an instrument and on whether he or she has chosen an instrument.

2.1. Description of materials provided

More specifically, the materials provided for the access test consist of the following[1]:
- listening and rhythmic performance:
  - description of requests to pupils for the rhythmic listening and performance test (see chart No. 1);

[1] All resources necessary to the set up of the access test can be found among the online attachments, on the website https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa.

    - description of pupils' actions for the rhythmic listening and performance test, (descriptors for observation with related score) (see grid No. 1);
- listening and melodic performance:
    - description of requests to pupils for the melodic listening and performance test (see chart No. 2);
    - description of pupils' actions for the melodic listening and performance test (descriptors for observation with related score) (see grid No. 2);
- materials and examples for organizing the test:
    - suggested tracks (attachment No. 1);
    - score of an example track (attachment No. 2);
    - score of a track/example performance for request No. 1 (listening and rhythmic performance test) (attachment No. 3)
    - rhythmic performance example for request No. 4 (listening and rhythmic performance test) (attachment No. 4);
    - rhythmic improvisation example for request No. 5 (listening and rhythmic performance test) (attachment No. 5);
    - melodic performance example and accompaniment example for request No. 1 (melodic listening and performance test) (attachment No. 6);
    - melodic performance example for request No. 2 (listening and melodic performance test) (attachment No. 7);
    - melodic performance example for request No. 4 (listening and melodic performance test) (attachment No. 8);
    - melodic improvisation example for request No. 5 (listening and melodic performance test) (attachment No. 9).

3. Asynchronous access test in case of severe disabilities

The presence of a musical instrument department in the lower secondary school is an opportunity for the detection, enhancement and development of pronounced expressive-communicative resources present in pupils, even those with severe disabilities, where said resources may be vicarious to others that are impaired. Since the "definition and implementation of educational and didactic strategies must always take into account the singularity and complexity of each person, his or her articulated identity, aspirations, abilities and frailties" (MIUR, 2012) it is considered possible, in case of severe disabilities in which the family has noted marked musical expression skills, including in the manual handling of sound objects and/or instruments, to also provide for an access test carried out in asynchronous. The family that

has observed in the pupil outgoing from elementary school evident aptitudes for musical communication should be given the opportunity to produce, at the time of pre-enrollment, six videos, of max 1 minute each, in which the candidate realizes, with the support of two pieces of music, different from each other in movement and measure, the trials described in points 1-3 (1. follow music in movement; 2. follow music by playing with a clapper on a percussion instrument; 3. improvise sequences on an instrument). The resulting tests will be observed with the same indicators used for those of other candidates, regardless of whether the school decides to reserve quotas for students with severe disabilities. With this in mind, it is believed that the school with a musical instrument department should nevertheless have an inclusive music laboratory, designed in accordance with the students with disabilities interested in musical activity who attend the school, whether or not they are enrolled in the courses at the address.

3.1. Activation of inclusive music laboratories

"As an educating community, the school educates a widespread relational conviviality, interwoven with affective and emotional languages, and is also able to promote the dissemination of those values that make members of society feel part of a real community. Schools flank the task of teaching to learn with the task of teaching to be" (MIUR, 2012)[2]. The typical mode of being in music was well captured by the aforementioned DM 201/99, which put into order music-oriented courses in middle school, with reference to ensemble music. In point 1 of Annex A, in fact, it can be read "adequate attention is given to those aspects of making music, such as choral and instrumental ensemble practice, which place the preadolescent in a conscious and active relationship with other subjects". The call for this attention derives from the observation of how musical practice, especially in ensemble music, has obvious implications for the person's social and psycho-emotional intelligence: musical language becomes a mediator and channel of privileged expression of emotional states and vital affects in the construction of a social phenomenon based on active experience. In this perspective, learning is recognized as a process characterized by the participation and involvement of the individual within a given context of action in which he or she is operating. The individual, in fact, experiences cognitive enhancement whenever he or she relates to others in a context of productive

[2] Translation by the authors.

socialization, as in the case of ensemble music ensembles. Whether it is a small instrumental ensemble, or a large orchestra, or a choir, or a mini-musical theater company, or ethnic or historical dance accompanied by live music, socialization always responds to a collaboration between individuals in order to pursue, build and achieve a common purpose. It is highly desirable, therefore, that within each lower secondary school with a musical instrument department, inclusive music laboratories of an integrated type be activated, to complete and enrich the school's educational offerings, through the construction of one or more communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). In order to do this, the school could involve the musician support teachers on the school's staff (Ferrari & Santini, 2014; Rizzo, 2014) or the music and instrument teachers able to devote an hourly package to these projects. These laboratories should also accommodate students with disabilities who are not enrolled in the music instrument course, who can thus be involved in processes of cooperation and collaboration. The community of musical practice, in this sense, can come to configure itself as a safe space, a place for peer interaction, in which participants can manifest themselves within sound dialogues in which to convey symbolic and emotional content that would otherwise be difficult to express.

4. Ensuring accessibility of instrument courses in case of many applications: possible criteria

One of the crucial issues that emerged in the focus group discussion concerns the accessibility for pupils with disabilities or Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) when the number of applications exceeds the number of places available. With a view to ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to avail themselves of an enhanced musical activity, it is considered important first of all to involve the school's collegial bodies and, for example, following a discussion within the school board, to indicate in the school's regulations what access criteria will be referred to. Listed below are some criteria that emerged in the course of the research and that can be taken into consideration in the context of the discussion:

– establish a reserved quota for pupils with disabilities and with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) (for example 1:10);
– arrange a flexible time schedule for instrumental teachers, allocating a quota of their time to additional lessons;
– engage other instrumental teachers who may be enrolled in the school to conduct additional musical instrument lessons;

– engage support teachers who may have specific musical skills;
– allocate additional funds to instrumental teaching for extra lessons, either from the school fund or on projects funded by private entities.

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9. Musical performance assessment in school examinations

by Anna Bonaldo, Marcella Maio, Maria Luisa Nicelli, Anna Maria van der Poel, Amalia Lavinia Rizzo, Fabio Sebastiani, Adalgisa Serrecchia

1. Introduction

The instrumental course taught as an optional subject in Italian lower secondary schools comes to its natural conclusion at the end of the third year and is examined within the context of the lower secondary school State Exam. The State Examination consists of three written tests (italian language, mathematics and foreign languages) and an interdisciplinary oral test. The latter is specifically aimed at the demonstration of practical skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and the discussion of general topics connected to the various school subjects. It is mandatory for all pupils who have had instrumental training at school to demonstrate their practical musical skills, either individually or in small groups, during the oral test by means of the performance of a piece of their own choice. In the absence of clear prescriptions for the assessment of instrumental performance, the need has arisen to provide practical indications and suggestions for teachers faced with the arduous task of assessing their pupils within this specific framework.

Before considering more technical details such as assessment criteria it is important to underline some fundamental aspects regarding the practical part of the exam which are often ignored by the very components of the examining committee. First and foremost, the instrumental exam should not be considered as a sort of "exhibition" between one paper and another, aimed at "cheering the committee". It is a practical test which is to be considered as a fully-fledged component of the examination and should be evaluated as such. Furthermore, just as the other tests scheduled during the exam session, the instrumental test should be considered a "snapshot" of the skills acquired by the candidate in that subject. It is important to emphasize that, at the moment of the examination, the learning process

which has led to the acquisition of these skills has already been assessed and expressed in an end-of-term grade and should therefore remain "out of the picture". Last but not least, special arrangements should be made well in advance for pupils with special educational needs preparing for their State examinations.

The aim of this paper is not to provide a set of specific assessment criteria for candidates with special needs but to describe an inclusive approach to instrumental teaching and testing. In the first part of this paper some suggestions are given for the preparation of pupils with special educational needs for their practical instrumental exam. In the second part a grid with assessment criteria is proposed. It is a general grid which is adaptable to pupils with different needs and playing a variety of instruments.

2. Preparing pupils with special educational needs for their instrumental exam within the framework of the State Examination

In order to ensure an inclusive approach to the examination, and indeed to the entire preparation process prior to the exam, the instrumental teacher can draw on a wide variety of strategies and implement numerous tools. The following section lists a selection of possible strategies which have proven to be precious allies in the case of pupils with disabilities, with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) or other special educational needs (SEN)[1].

2.1. Personalized planning

In compliance with the specific laws on the management of pupils with specific disorders in the school environment, the preparation of the test for pupils with disabilities must take into account what is specifically indicated for them in their Individualized Educational Plan (PEI). Likewise, the Personalized Teaching Plan (PDP) is the document of reference in the case of pupils with SLD. In practical terms, that would imply that the teacher should:

– adapt the preparation for the final exam to the specific difficulties of the candidate, taking into account what has been planned for him/her by his/her team of teachers;
– choose pieces that are not too long, taking into account the timespan of concentration and attention of which the pupil is capable;

[1] See, in particular DL 104/1992 and DL 170/2010.

– choose pieces that are not too difficult, taking into account the practical difficulties as well as the emotional energy that its execution entails in order to facilitate a satisfactory performance;
– plan and organize the timing of the instrumental test with the examining committee, in agreement with the student, in order to limit unnecessary stress or fatigue caused by bad timing, long waits or procedural drag.

2.2. Compensatory tools

For students with disabilities and SLD, the following compensatory tools are widely used in teaching and, if the candidate is familiar with them, can perfectly well be used during the exam:
– adapted stave scores (e.g. simplified, enlarged, colored);
– scores with non-traditional notation;
– tables, tabs and other forms of specific notation of instrumental positions;
– glossary of technical terminology;
– IWB/projection of the score with various facilitating functions (e.g. scrolling, highlighting the note to be played, metronome, audio guide tracks);
– educational software (e.g. for reading and/or writing a score);
– scanner/OCR to digitize paper scores;
– computer, tablet, iPad.

2.3. Strategies

Both the relationship between teaching and assessment as well as numerous strategies for teachers assessing students with disabilities and/or SLD have already been illustrated by the authors of this volume and other experts in the field[2]. In the specific case of the preparation of pupils with special needs for instrumental performance during their State examination, the following strategies have proven to be particularly effective:
– the teacher should discuss and illustrate the structure of the chosen piece with the pupil in order to help him/her understand its semantics (rhythmic, melodic, harmonic and formal aspects); it may be useful to summarize or highlight sections or particular aspects with the help of colors, graphic organizers, tabs, diagrams, etc.;

[2] Many tips and strategies for the development of instrumental skills are described in the present volume. See also Calvani & Trinchero (2019) and Chiappetta Cajola & Traversetti (2017).

– the chosen piece should be proposed in sections: divide the task into subtasks and establish with the pupil how to organize the time and setting for home study;
– studying the piece together with the teacher or a fellow tutor offers the pupil a positive role model for both mechanical and cognitive aspects; in particular, studying with a positive peer is often the best way to overcome small technical difficulties;
– it is important to enhance the role of error as a useful tool for conscious learning ("we learn from our mistakes");
– the teacher may make a video or audio recording of (parts of) the lesson or difficult passages of the piece in order to support the pupils in their home study;
– the emotional impact of the performance should not be underestimated: both the teacher and the pupil should be aware of the emotional aspects that are activated during an instrumental performance in a formal setting and discuss strategies to manage them.

Of course the list could be much longer and all instrumentalists benefit from strategies based on the common sense and organizational skills of their music teacher when preparing their performance at the State exams. In some schools a teacher-tutor is assigned to each candidate in the period prior to the exam. The tutor offers individual counseling, supports the candidate in the choice of the main topic to discuss with the examining committee during the interdisciplinary oral test and acts as an intermediary between the pupil, the class coordinator and the music teacher. It is good practice to allow the pupil to participate in the choice of the piece to be played during the practical exam in order to enhance the pupil's awareness of his/her skills and difficulties as well as his/her musical growth in the course of the three years.

Ideally, the performed piece should be connected to the main topic which the candidate has chosen to discuss with the examining committee; the pupil should be able to discuss the piece and make links and cross-references to the various other subjects so that the performance contributes to the enhancement of the pupil's interdisciplinary oral presentation. It is therefore important that the choice of the main topic should be made well in advance (preferably a few months) in order to permit the pupil and his music teacher to choose and prepare a suitable piece which can be "embedded" into his/her oral presentation. It goes without saying that an accurate preparation of an exam performance might require several weeks, if not months, in order to acquire not only the technical mastery but also the sense of security and emotional stability required. To facilitate the pupil's discussion of the piece within the framework of the chosen topic, a short

presentation should be foreseen: the pupil can introduce the piece by illustrating some of its formal aspects and its relevance to the topic (e.g. title, composer, period, style, curiosities and peculiarities etc.) or his/her own personal experience.

2.4. The Exam

During the exam itself, there are some general observations to be made concerning the organization of the instrumental test and its assessment by the examining committee:

- it is important to distinguish the admissions grade expressed by the teacher (which assesses the learning process and the skills acquired in the course of the studies, prior to the exam) and the grade of the exam itself (which assesses the performance on the day of the exam): as already stated in the introduction, the examining committee should only assess the pupil's performance within the framework of the examination, without considering external factors or other circumstances;
- the piece can be performed either at the beginning or at the end of the session, as deemed appropriate; of course the instrumental teacher, the pupil and the committee should agree on the best way of organizing the session well before the exam, considering all aspects involved;
- there are no requirements limiting the choice of the piece or its accompaniment: candidates may choose any piece, from classical to rock or pop and beyond. It may be a short solo, a study or a piece accompanied by the teacher in duet, by a friendly accompanying pianist or even by a recorded track or a small group of fellow students. In the case of an accompanied piece, it goes without saying that the examining committee will only consider the candidate's performance and the accompaniment will in no way influence the assessment of the pupil's skills. The pupil's participation in the end-of-year concert and/or in the school orchestra can not be considered a practical instrumental test in the lower secondary school State exams.
- the implementation of an objective marking scheme with clearly defined marking criteria is strongly recommended. A sample marking scheme is proposed in the following section.

3. Assessment: the marking scheme and a glossary

The marking scheme developed as part of the research is set out below and is based on three specific areas:
– rhythmic and melodic precision;
– performance and musical interpretation;
– oral presentation and relevance to the main topic.

Each area has its own set of criteria which guide the examiner in awarding a single mark out of 10 under each one of the three headings. The average of the three marks awarded provides the final grade out of 10[3].

In Italy, marks out of 10 are interpreted as follows:

10 Excellence;
9 Distinction;
8 Full Merit;
7 Merit;
6 Sufficient/Pass;
5 Insufficient/Below Pass.

The number of assessment areas (three) has been reduced to a minimum and the criteria have been designed to maximize consistency and clarity in the assessment of the practical exam. Furthermore, special attention has been paid to ensure that all parts of the marking scheme are appropriate for the assessment of all candidates, including those with special needs and/or with a personalized educational plan.

The criteria under the first two headings regard selected aspects of instrumental playing ("rhythmic and melodic precision" and "performance and musical interpretation"). They are specific enough to cover the different aspects of playing and at the same time are general enough to be applied to all instruments and all types of pieces.

The third category, "oral presentation and relevance to the main topic", is specific for the structure of the Italian examination in question. As set out previously, at the lower secondary school State exam instrumental candidates are required not only to perform a short piece of their own choice but also to be able to contextualize it, motivate their choice and discuss any relevant aspects; some cross-linking to topics studied in other school subjects is

[3] The marking scheme can be downloaded in Word format on the volume's webpage, on the website https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa.

expected. Of course this requirement goes beyond what is expected of candidates in "traditional" instrumental examinations such as end-of-year exams in music schools, access tests to music academies or other kinds of graded exams in general. A glossary is proposed to clarify the intention behind some terms used in the description of the relative criteria.

Rhythmic and melodic precision	
Confident performance, with excellent rhythmic and melodic precision	10
Accurate performance, with good rhythmic and melodic precision	9
Substantially correct performance of both rhythmic and melodic aspects	8
Generally correct performance with some rhythmic and/or melodic errors	7
Insecure performance with both rhythmic and melodic errors and imperfections	6
Poor and discontinuous performance with substantial rhythmic and melodic inaccuracies	5
Performance and musical interpretation	
Expressive performance, with full mastery of phrasing, articulation, dynamics and intonation; assured and flexible control of tempo	10
Committed performance, with good mastery of phrasing, articulation, dynamics and intonation; sustained tempo	9
Pleasant performance, with only minor slips in phrasing, articulation, dynamics and/or intonation; suitable tempo	8
Generally correct performance, with partial mastery of phrasing, articulation, dynamics, intonation and tempo	7
Poor performance presenting little phrasing and dynamics and some difficulties in articulation. Unstable intonation and/or tempo	6
Inadequate performance with insufficient control of dynamics, articulation and tempo	5
Oral presentation and relevance to the topic	
The oral presentation describes the performed piece clearly and comprehensively, contextualizing it correctly; the candidate makes coherent and sophisticated interdisciplinary links which highlight the relevance of the performed piece to the topic	10
The oral presentation describes the performed piece clearly and comprehensively, contextualizing it correctly; the candidate makes coherent interdisciplinary links	9
The oral presentation describes the performed piece clearly, contextualizing it correctly; one or two coherent references to other linked subjects are made by the candidate	8
The oral presentation of the performed piece is clear but superficial; an attempt of contextualisation is made, as well as some weak references to linked topics	7
The oral presentation of the performed piece is simple but sufficient; contextualization and reference to linked topics are poor or lacking	6
The presentation is confused/superficial without contextualizing the performed piece in any way	5

The glossary:

- **contextualization**: the candidate may refer to a variety of elements in order to motivate the choice of the piece within the exam framework. These may include the more obvious historical and/or cultural links required by the multidisciplinary approach to the exam, but reference to personal aspects and/or experience as well as to relevant current issues are equally pertinent. The relevance of the context should be interpreted with flexibility and includes the candidate's personal and private sphere;
- **coherent**: the set of ideas is clear and carefully considered and each part of it connects in a natural and reasonable way;
- **sophisticated**: demonstrating a good understanding of the various aspects of the topics discussed and a good knowledge of the social and cultural aspects. The candidate may demonstrate this by expressing a creative and well-balanced personal opinion and/or sustaining an open dialogue with the committee;
- **comprehensive**: complete and including all relevant aspects.

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10. The three magic words for an inclusive approach to musical group activities: listen, observe and relate[*]

by Mariateresa Lietti

1. Why observe and listen

Living musical experiences is a *right of all people* and playing a musical instrument should be possible for anyone who wants to.

The problem is how schools can respond to these rights and wishes in the best possible way and I believe that the Lower secondary school with a musical instrument department (SMIM) is an *important resource*.

Musical studies and, in particular, playing an instrument, are particularly useful because all three essential components of the person are involved: body, emotion and thought. In the current school the logical-rational aspect prevails, neglecting the other two, but as we well know by now these aspects are inseparable and one cannot learn if they are not treated in a balanced way.

However, it is necessary to know how to prepare potentially different, flexible and personalized courses, adapted to the needs of students (not only in the case of students with disabilities, SLD – Specific Learning Disorders – or other Special Educational Needs, but also in terms of personal interests, learning methods and goals). When teaching music in the SMIM, this is facilitated by the fact that there is no standard programme and instead, even in the ministerial indications, there is an emphasis on the fact that teaching must be individualized, for everyone. The possibility of organizing timeta-

[*] This and the following two contributions are the result of the exchange of ideas and experiences between Mariateresa Lietti, Gabriele Rubino and Francesca Vergani. In particular, the collaboration took place in the context of "Music: tools to grow together", a project carried out by the Istituto Comprensivo Como Borgovico in the 2021-22 school year and which led to the establishment of an orchestra made up of pupils attending the music course, pupils with severe and slight disabilities both internal and external to the school and teachers (both music teachers and other specialists).

bles in a flexible way also facilitates the possibility of structuring different types of itineraries by providing individual tuition as well as group teaching, according to specific needs.

An initial observation and analysis, also based on specific and well-structured admission tests, can provide an indication of what kind of musical studies are the most suitable according to individual aptitudes: for some, a general music course might be preferable – there may be various proposals, even with the use of a variety of musical instruments – whereas for others a more specific instrumental course that also focuses on the study of a particular instrument could be better.

In the first case, the school could prepare special projects using both the human resources available within the school (music teachers, instrumental specialists, support teachers or other teachers with musical skills) as well as collaborative externals and local associations.

In the second case, which will be further discussed in this paper, the 'beginning instrumentalists' might be offered an introductory course in order to experiment with different instruments before choosing one in particular, when a clear preference emerges.

Subsequent moments of listening and observation will therefore be indispensable in order to conclude the initial exploratory phase with the *definition of a suitable musical itinerary for each prospective pupil*: itineraries that are themselves subjected to continuous observation, verification and change according to the specific needs that emerge over time; itineraries that include individual tuition, group teaching, ensembles and orchestral music in a flexible combination suitable to each pupil; itineraries that will be tailored for each student and that will obviously be all the more complex and specific, the more serious personal disabilities are.

These moments of observation and listening can also give us continuous feedback on the quality of our teaching proposal and on how much and appropriate it is to the needs and skills of our pupils.

Often, however, especially in the case of students with SLD, no particular activities or materials are needed, just simple "good teaching". Which is really what everyone needs, with or without specific disabilities. In this regard there are some basic principles that I would like to reiterate here, although I would like to believe that they are common knowledge.

The first is that *the musical aspect and the instrumental technique must always be considered together*. The one without the other makes no sense and both need to be taken care of when planning activities. A perfect technique is useless to me if I don't have music to express; at the same time, however, the most beautiful music in the world and highly original ideas are

useless if I can't let them emerge with my instrument. How many people have stopped playing, even after years of professional studies because they have lost one of the two elements?

A second principle is that *it is essential to experience practically (both physically and emotionally) a concept before arriving at its theoretical explanation and comprehension*. For example, it is useless to study scales and the circle of fifths if I have not looked for them, built them, tried or listened to them on my instrument or used them to build dialogues and musical games. Theoretical learning, without the necessary experience, will be merely mnemonic and will last very little, as well as being very unrewarding. This also applies to reading and writing music: it is easy to attribute signs and a name to a rhythmic pattern (or a melodic interval) that I have sung and danced, that I have reworked and modified and that I have "played with". For the same reasons it will be easy to recognize it both when listening to it and when seeing it written because it will bring the previous experience to the mind, body and emotions of the pupil. Conversely, without practical experience, theoretical notions will have no deeper meaning and will therefore soon be forgotten.

The last element I would like to underline is *the importance of proposing activities from all three fields: imitation, invention, writing*. Traditional instrumental teaching has always paid attention almost exclusively to performance by reading, instead it is essential also to deal with imitation (which entails listening skills and intonation) and with invention (for the development of creativity). The fields of imitation and invention are not "easier", but require different types of skills: everyone has an area that he/she is better in and another that he/she finds more difficult. It will be the teacher's task to propose activities, starting from the easiest and gradually exploring the more difficult as well as mastering them. It is therefore essential that teachers are able to organize activities in all three fields and know in which of the three their pupil is more comfortable.

In the case of pupils with SLD it may be necessary to use compensatory measures (enlarged and well spaced parts, the use of colors etc.), but this is not always the case. It is, however, always necessary to bear in mind the three principles set out above, not only for "special" learners but also for all other pupils and components of the group.

In **box 1** (on the volume's webpage, on the website https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa) some examples are given of various group activities, based on the well-known popular song *Fra Martino*, which illustrate the above mentioned principles. Obviously, these are just some of the infinite possibilities; the activities do not necessarily have to be proposed in this order and can be intended as inspiration for inventing others.

2. Who to watch and listen to

Obviously, teachers should constantly observe and carefully listen not only to their pupils with disabilities or SLD but also to all the others.

At the beginning of the year, every school arranges staff meetings to discuss *indirect observations* regarding the new first-year pupils, including information received from families, primary school teachers and evaluation forms as well as clinical documents, in the case of students with disabilities. It is certainly an important phase to which perhaps more attention should be paid, as it prepares the way for the second phase in which each individual teacher directly observes and listens to the pupils in order to plan the course of studies and tailor the related activities. Ideally the exchange of information within the Class Council should be continuous and constant over time and is even more important when everyone concerned has had the time to directly observe their pupils and acquire new elements, thus leading to the truly collegial drafting of documents such as IEP or PTP. Unfortunately, however, these documents are often considered mere formalities, exclusive domain of the support teacher or class coordinator, and thus an important opportunity for exchange and growth of the teaching group is wasted, not to mention that the planning itself is destined to be less effective when it is not shared by all teachers involved.

This first phase of indirect observation (Sbattella, 2013 p. 245) is followed by a second phase, which represents a fundamental part of the work of a teacher: *direct observation* of the class. All pupils are different from each other, including those with disabilities or SLD. Two students with the same diagnosis are not necessarily the same and no diagnosis can ever represent all the characteristics of the pupil. *Although it is of fundamental importance to know the clinical diagnosis of each individual pupil, it is even more important to look beyond in search of the person*.

Creating new contexts centered on music and on the relationships that are established with it can reveal unexpected elements.

The analytical skills linked to listening and observation, indispensable in working with disabled students, are more than useful for observing the other components of the class, too. A pupil with a disability or SLD in a class can therefore, beyond the rhetoric, truly represent an *opportunity* for everyone involved.

However, this attention should not end in the initial phase or be limited to first acquaintances, but must be *constant throughout the course* in order to notice even the smallest changes, not only for assessment purposes (an aspect that unfortunately often haunts teachers) but especially in order to

enable the teacher to plan new activities and prepare suitable materials, modifying the course if and when necessary.

To facilitate observation, various options can be considered: it may be appropriate to adopt forms and data collection tools tested and proposed by various authors (Pozzo, 2007; Sbattella, 2013), use personally adapted observation tools or discuss impressions with colleagues. In some situations it may be useful to have another person, external to the activity, charged with the observation of the class. Last but not least, the presence and participation of the support teacher would be appropriate, just as it is essential in facilitating the exchange between teachers of different subjects working with the same class or pupils.

In conclusion, it is of fundamental importance to stress that observation should be constant and continuous in time, also over a longer period, in order to be able to register the real and significant growth of the young musicians.

3. How to listen and observe

The approach to listening that I have experienced in years of teaching the violin in the SMIM, even to pupils with serious disabilities, is that of *active listening* (see **box 2** on the volume's webpage, on the website https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa) proposed by Marianella Sclavi. A listening technique in which *the observer is a participant in the process* and a component of the relationship. This implies an emotional involvement which is, however, not considered an impediment to objective vision but rather an essential tool for grasping the different aspects of the situation.

It is an ethnographic approach that requires an emotional self-awareness (Sclavi, 2000, pp. 135-255) which may be unfamiliar, but which can be learned. In school it is usually thought that one should observe in the most neutral way possible, excluding emotions and feelings in order to perceive reality "objectively". Instead, it is quite possible (and with much better results!) to observe while aware of being part of the process itself and by using emotions to acquire information about reality. "Emotional self-awareness has nothing to do with sentimentality, with intuition or even with spontaneity. It has to do with body language which speaks in a different code than the verbal one" (Sclavi, 2000, p. 126). Knowing how to adopt a non-verbal code while listening also allows us to get in touch with those who do not master the verbal language and, in this sense, music is of great help.

It is therefore a matter of listening to/observing our pupils in different contexts (individually, in groups, in more or less structured moments), aware

of the fact that we too are part of what we observe and willing to change point of view and to be displaced outside our familiar "frames" (Bateson, 1972/1976; Sclavi, 2000). A kind of listening that requires the sensitivity of the whole person: the unity of body, affectivity and thought which music, unlike school, brings together so well.

"Emotional self-awareness invites us to relate to our body in an attitude of listening and dialogue and to consider emotions as the expression of a more overall intelligence and of a mind of which we are an active part, but which does not reside solely or mainly in our head, nor in our bowels" (Sclavi, 2000, p. 133).

Thus we emerge from the impasse determined by the objective/subjective duality that many authors highlight when addressing the topic of observation (Sbattella, 2013).

This modality is particularly useful with pupils with disabilities who often place us in situations that we do not understand because they are beyond our regular thought patterns and therefore require us to be able to "change the frame" (Bateson, 1972; Sclavi, 2000).

These skills are not "innate" or spontaneous but we can acquire them by seeking familiarity with others (meaning "other" people, but also thoughts, experiences, ways of working). It is necessary to proceed in small steps, without letting ourselves be overwhelmed by the situations that our pupils present us and by which we might feel threatened or inadequate. Precisely these moments of difficulty and disorientation are often a turning point and pave the way to change.

Teachers, even highly trained ones, often consider musical interaction with pupils with intellectual disabilities and autism to be the almost exclusive competence of music therapists and not of the instrumental or music teacher, regardless of the needs and potential of the person. The challenge is therefore to find and disseminate didactic strategies to help teachers prepare appropriate educational musical itineraries suitable for everyone, starting from the individualization also called for by school legislation. The request for help from music therapy, however, is not to be ignored and deserves reflection. On the one hand, perhaps, the difficulty of entering into a relationship with psychic difficulties still induces us to seek the protection of rehabilitation specialists, frightened by the difficulties rather than focusing on potential resources. Working with a pupil with great limitations in thought, speech and movement also requires the teacher to question a traditional-technical approach (Chiappetta Cajola & Rizzo, 2016) which is perhaps more familiar, but which does not necessarily respond adequately to the pupil's needs. Hence the limits challenge the educational relationship (Sbattella, 2006).

This encounter could be an opportunity for each teacher to rethink and deepen their teaching, meta-cognitive and empathetic skills, but also to broaden the horizon of what making music means. It is an opportunity to re-read musical conduct (Delalande, 1993), focusing not only on technical-instrumental and motor aspects, but also grasp their symbolic, affective and interactive components. Components that, moreover, a good musician never ignores.

Since our field of interest is that of music and instrumental tuition and the relationship we build with our students passes through sound, it is essential that we pay attention to the quality of this sound, to its authenticity. We are involved in a musical relationship and we must know how to put our skills and our musicality to good use, rediscovering parts of ourselves and establishing meaningful sound dialogues and creating rich learning contexts, meaning by this term above all a didactic proposal that contains in itself different access options. The Universal Design For Learning (Savia, 2016) suggests, in fact, that offering our students the possibility of accessing content, participating in or presenting what they have learned through different communication channels (which could be, in music, for example that of reading, listening, inventing or imitating) is an effective way to ensure that our didactic proposal becomes a facilitator to learning for everyone, rather than a barrier. A rich learning context therefore also means a multi-faceted proposal which allows students to choose between different contents and different ways of working, or allows them to propose topics of their interest. A rich learning context is based on complex instruction, in which the teacher's requests and deliveries are not "closed" but "open' and in which students do not have a single possibility of delivering a correct response but numerous options with which to express their musicality.

Music also requires adequate time and space and we must therefore also be prepared to adapt ourselves to our pupil's pace; we must know how to be patient, without pressing in order to quickly get results and be willing to listen and constantly change our point of view. Often the situation may appear to have ground to a halt only to suddenly jerk off in a non-linear progression or, as is more often the case, proceed along a spiral path.

4. What to listen to and observe

There are some specifically musical elements that should be considered with particular attention, including nuances and minimal signs of change, the evolution of which should be observed and described in order to contribute to the planning of an appropriate educational itinerary (Sbattella, 2013).

Some of these concern behavior in the musical field:

- attention span;
- acceptance of proposals;
- interest shown;
- willingness to be involved;
- ease and pleasure in the relationship with the instrument;
- ease and pleasure in carrying out the activities;

Others are more specific musical skills:

- search for sound gestures, ability to repeat and vary them, ability to use them in sound dialogues and in different contexts;
- sense of rhythm: identification and maintenance of pulsation, pleasure in the rhythmic aspect, ability to repeat, type of rhythmic response, invention;
- melodic sense: willingness to use the voice, ability to emit sounds at different pitches; intonation of sounds, intervals of melodies; ability to repeat, answer, invent; pleasure in the melodic aspect;
- fantasy in timbre exploration, pleasure in timbre exploration;
- dynamic gradients, pleasure in using dynamic gradients.

In order to observe different behavior traits it is useful to create interesting musical contexts, for example by inserting the "spontaneous" sound gestures proposed by a pupil into a musical situation. In box 3 (see **box 3** on the volume's webpage, on the website https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa) a description is given of a similar experience with a student with severe disabilities which might help to illustrate this point. During the activities it will also be important to observe the prevailing musical conduct of each individual child. As Delalande taught us (Delalande, 1993), the three stages of child development identified by Piaget correspond to three musical conducts: somatosensory, symbolic and ruled. Everyone has a dominant conduct and knowing which one it is allows the teacher to use it as a starting point from which to explore and develop the other two as well (see **box 4** on the volume's webpage, on the website https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa). I think it is useful for each teacher to create a collection of repertoire, activities and materials for each one of the three musical conducts, to draw from as needed. Obviously there are no situations in which only one single conduct is brought into play: all three are always present, but to varying degrees and on this "different degree" we can construct some interesting paths (see box 5 on the volume's webpage, on the website https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa). However, it is of course important to know how to enhance the strengths of the individual students to use them as solid foundations on which musical pieces can be built that also develop the instrumental technique, or ensemble repertoire in which all students can be fully involved.

Once again the proposal is to invert the point of view: not training the individual pupil (as it is normally done, often with great difficulty) to play a given orchestral part, but creating an orchestral score based on the sounds and/or gestures that he/she can make in an expressive and engaging way and that he/she will gradually be able to perfect thanks to the awareness of its central function within the group. Again we are faced with the need to explore other worlds, with all the energy and willingness to take risks, but also with all the fascination, richness and, ultimately, all the music that that exploration entails.

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11. Group management for inclusive music education

by Francesca Vergani

1. Why group management as an inclusive strategy

Alongside the observation skills mentioned in the previous chapter, the management of the group was identified as a second crucial competence for the development of inclusive music education. The literature has recognized it, in fact, as one of the most effective strategies for the creation of an inclusive learning context (Mitchell, 2014). Moreover, from a practical point of view, nobody can deny the specific effort teachers have to make if they want to make the musical learning space to be perceived as safe. Finally, on the basis of my experience as a teacher within inclusive music courses using the Esagramma Method (Sbattella, 2013; Sbattella *et al.*, 2013; Vergani *et al.*, 2018; Vergani *et al.*, 2020), I believe that the group can be a specific resource for the enhancement of the instrumental potential of any person, even in the case of novice pupils or pupils with SEN. In fact, the group can be an immediately rich and gratifying context and is able to protect from the point of view of self-exposure, to enhance technically simple gestures to be significant for the composition, and to provide occasions to work on a relational and expressive level[1].

This chapter will open with a brief and general discussion of the principle of plurality, followed by five specific actions that can help teachers to delineate the workspace as safe, so that all its members are free to express their needs, interests, potential and difficulties. I will try thus to suggest some attentions and actions that apply in general to group lessons, accompanied by examples focused on instrumental teaching.

[1] As a musical example of the potential of the group, you can find here one of the most recent performances of the Esagramma Inclusive Symphony Orchestra: Verdi, Overture "Un ballo in maschera" – Orchestra Esagramma.

Furthermore, in the next chapter several compositional strategies that can contribute to the same objective will be described and discussed.

2. Recognizing and valuing plurality

As a general principle, it is essential here to define an 'inclusive group' as a group that is able to value all its members for their competences and peculiarities and that recognizes the plurality of styles, approaches, and capacities as a resource. This definition will allow each teacher to overcome the conception of an inclusive group as a group containing people with SEN. Then, it will help them look at the personal differences of their pupils (in learning processes, interests, culture of reference, and skills) with the aim of focusing on them in order to structure rich and multi-modal learning paths without marginalizing anyone (Murawski & Scott, 2019).

In the particular context of music education, orchestras and musical ensembles are particularly valuable as groups capable of valuing differences and enhancing the capacities of all their members. Within such groups, in fact, pupils can choose different instruments enhancing their skills and their style (Sbattella, 2013). Moreover, the beauty of a group performance is specifically based on the technical, timbral, harmonic and expressive variety of its parts. Their dialogue is able to create a common product that goes beyond the sum of the parts. Therefore, my suggestion is to exploit this feature of music making to create supportive and inclusive groups for everyone, keeping in mind that heterogeneous and interdependent groups have also been defined as capable of offering pupils more effective and lasting learning. Elizabeth Cohen (1972), in fact has long since clarified that within them pupils not only devise creative responses to the teacher's assignments, but they also integrate skills and learn how to support and collaborate with peers.

3. Five strategies for inclusive group teaching

Once this general principle has been assumed, the five strategies set out below can concretely help instrumental teachers to shape the style of their group work towards inclusion.

3.1. Fair involvement

The first crucial point concerns the involvement and participation of each pupil. In order for a musical group work to be truly enhancing for all its members, it is first necessary to be attentive so that all pupils are actively involved in the learning process. There are two levels of involvement to which it is important to devote attention. They can be considered as successive learning steps, with the aim of progressively acquiring new skills for inclusion.

The first level distinguishes involvement from non-involvement. The first goal is in fact not to "lose pieces". What does "losing pieces" mean in a musical group work? It may mean, for example, concentrating for too long on a single section during an orchestral rehearsal, leaving the rest of the ensemble to wait without a task. Within a musical literacy lesson, it may mean leaving the answer to questions to the purely voluntary initiative of the pupils, allowing the lesson to be directed only towards those who make an autonomous effort to stay engaged. This task could be more or less difficult depending on the number of teachers and pupils in the group, on the type of interaction that the proposed work envisages and on the role the teacher has devised for themselves within the session.

In this regard, I would invite readers to observe some of their own lessons with a specific focus on involving all participants equally, because in my experience as a teacher trainer this is less obvious than it seems. For those who, on the other hand, find this task particularly complex, I suggest looking for allies as support teachers and educators. They could share the responsibility for equal involvement by giving suggestions and feedback in real time.

The second level aims at an involvement that is tailored to each individual's needs. In this case, the goal for the teacher is to engage their pupils with challenges that are appropriate to their prior competences, interests, preferred ways of learning and perceived effectiveness (Tomlinson, 2003). Providing each learner with suitable objectives and modes of engagement will enable them to work within their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1934) and experience challenges with the perception of having adequate skills to solve them. This will help determine what Csikszentmihalyi (1975) identified as optimal experience or *flow*, a state of well-being characterized by high concentration, involvement, situational control, clarity of purpose, positive affective state and intrinsic motivation. What might this mean in the context of musical group work (Ferrari & Santini, 2014; Chiappetta Cajola & Rizzo, 2016)? For example, it could mean assigning personalized instrumental parts, that push each pupil towards their goals with the graduality that suits them best. Please refer to the next chapter for a specific discussion on the process of customizing parts.

It should also be considered that an appropriate challenge is not only characterized by an appropriate level of difficulty, but also by the fact that pupils can choose different ways of acquiring the content or exposing their knowledge (Murawski & Scott, 2019). You can refer to the box "Value differences in the group" for some brief examples in this regard.

Sometimes, however, it may be difficult to set up different ways of working simultaneously within a group. In the box "How can I work simultaneously on different contents?" you can find two examples that can help you without creating unbalanced or exclusionary situations.

When talking about appropriate involvement it is crucial to cite the respect and calibration of work time. Although it is now acknowledged that attention follows peak-fall-recovery cycles and that it is essential to design teaching activities with frequent breaks, special attention must be paid when the group includes pupils with intellectual disabilities, autism or a diagnosis of hyperactivity. The teacher, in fact, must offer everyone the opportunity to experience performance fulfillment even when their pupils have troubles in maintaining prolonged attention. In these cases, allowing the pupils who need it to rest (or go outside, if possible) for a few minutes every 10 to 15 minutes, or to suspend the lesson before the agreed time, could be a crucial strategy. Thus, it will be possible to end the lesson with a sequence that has seen all pupils as effective, before tiredness can trigger oppositional or musically irrelevant behavior. This will facilitate the experience of individuals, enabling the construction of an effective self and progression in learning, and the acceptance of each pupil into the group.

3.2. Being transparent

The second inclusive strategy I want to suggest is being transparent with pupils about teaching choices, objectives and mistakes. The first example may relate to the general principle I set out earlier. The desire to promote a vision of everyone's interests, abilities and points of view as an enriching element of the group, in fact, is not shared in all contexts nor by all people. Thus, pupils may sometimes fail to understand the teacher's attempts to offer different proposals, choices and possibilities.

Think, for example, of the suggestions just cited on the modulation of working time. Being transparent, in this case, would mean involving the group in this regard, explaining to the group why it was proposed to some classmates to rest or to finish the lesson before the others. It would also mean making explicit the fact that it is normal to have different attention spans and

that your objective is to work with each one based on their own peculiarities and preferences, perhaps inviting them to make explicit their struggles and desires so that these can be embraced.

Another challenging example for teachers might concern assessment. Within a group music lesson, the teacher might be required to assess competencies. Assuming the value of formative assessment, widely established in literature, how is it possible to be explicit with pupils about the process so that they understand your fairness? Some pupils might complain or murmur, spreading the idea that preferences have been made, that the assessments are unfair because "my part is much more difficult" or other similar comments. It is therefore crucial that the teacher explains the reasons behind their choices and the criteria that lead them to act in a certain way to their pupils, so that the group can understand. For example, the teacher could explain in advance what the criteria determining the evaluation are (which, for example, could be: technical precision, expressiveness, observed improvement, responsibility, and autonomy in performing one's part), followed by the specification that individual objectives have been set for each of them, based on their prior skills, style, interests. In doing so, the teacher will be able to explain that it is normal for each of them to be assessed differently. I know that this topic is very sensitive and that for many teachers it is a conceptually difficult knot to untie. I believe, however, that discussing it with the pupils can be of great help in building an open climate of dialogue and trust with them. It can also contribute to creating an increasingly shared perspective. With specific attention, of course, to the words and methods used, so that this act of transparency does not turn into an act of labeling or marginalization, nor does it expose the characteristics of pupils and students when it would not have been their wish to share them.

In this regard, it is very important to specify how transparency in the explanation of one's criteria and actions must be marked by sincerity. Indeed, it is crucial to constantly respect the intelligence and aesthetic taste of pupils: a climate of dialogue, openness and trust will never be created if the teacher's actions and comments are not marked by sincerity.

I believe that at this point an example is due, with reference to a problem which recurs in many schools. The aggregative, social, and relational value is certainly strong in group musical practice, but it cannot be sustained by a teacher who does not seek the highest possible musical and aesthetic quality with their pupils and who does not push everyone to seek beauty. No teacher will be able to win the confidence of their classes by classifying a performance as 'extraordinary' when it is not, because their pupils will realize the untruthfulness of their claim. In the box "Dealing with an unsatisfactory per-

formance" an alternative strategy is proposed that could lead to a better result and a deeper appreciation of the group.

Having briefly explained and exemplified the concept of transparency related to pupils, it is important to remember that the same transparency would also be of great value in the relationship with families and colleagues. A dialogue based on transparency, explanation, and calm reasoning would lead on many occasions to a more open confrontation. This, however, can be particularly difficult to apply, especially in the case of teachers who are not yet very experienced, so it could be considered as a further step once they have mastered the strategy with their pupils.

3.3. Co-constructing standards

The third strategy, which is very closely linked to the previous one, is the sharing of norms and rules that help the group to get along well and work effectively (Cohen, 1972). This practice is essential if a teacher wants to build a welcoming climate in which everyone (pupils, discipline and support teachers, educators) feels at ease and can flourish to their full potential (OECD, 2021). Moreover, the creation of a system of shared norms contributes to their respect, since the responsibility for their establishment does not fall exclusively on the teacher, but is shared with the group.

In several schools, this practice is used daily by class coordinators, but it is more rarely applied in the context of instrumental lessons. Therefore, it is also suggested here for music and instrument teachers who find themselves working in groups to take the time (possibly at the beginning of the year) to discuss with their pupils which rules could make coexistence more serene and work as effective as possible. Remember, then, that the group's rules could be used not only to discipline the group, but also to imprint the group dynamics with a style that is, for example, welcoming, enhancing and inclusive for everyone.

In the box "In the classroom we are comfortable when" you can find a "decalogue" of shared rules, drawn up in the form of a poster with a group of a lower secondary school. As you can see, some points are of a more disciplinary nature, which will help to create a physically quiet environment in which the group can work calmly (No. 1 and 3), others aim more to encourage plurality and transparency in interactions between people (No. 2, 4 and 5). Moreover, in this case the group decided to explicate the reasons that led them to express these needs, aligned with the principle of transparency outlined above.

Finally, it should be noted that the example of the poster was used to draw attention to the importance of keeping these norms always visible in the class, so that everyone can be constantly reminded of the rules the group set up for itself.

3.4. Being flexible

The fourth strategy concerns the teacher's flexibility. It can be declined on two fronts: a more literal flexibility in the structuring of the proposal, which allows the teacher to adapt their strategies and assignments based on the response that is observed as the group progresses, as well as a more metaphorical flexibility which consists of broadening our own horizon in assessing what is considered right, acceptable or satisfactory as a response to our requests.

In interpreted literally, flexibility would be the teachers' ability to modify their teaching proposal in real time based on what they observe, hear, or receive as feedback from their pupils. Some call this flexibility *improvisation*, but I believe that the concept of "structured improvisation" which derives from the "Esagramma approach" (Sbattella, 2013) may be more appropriate because it emphasizes not only the extemporaneous and creative dimension of improvisation but also the link with the structure from which it is generated. A more detailed and purely musical explanation of this practice will be given in the next chapter, so it will not be dwelled on further here.

A frequent problem encountered pertains to timing: it might happen that an activity that you expected would take 30 minutes, takes much less time (or, more likely, more time than expected). In the first case, it is crucial to be able to elaborate an additional proposal or explicitly allocate the remaining time to rest, chat or else. In the latter, equally crucial is the ability to efficiently and logically cut or reschedule planned activities based on the available time, without leaving out, for example, anything that could be significant for learning.

Another problem could be that the part composed for the violin section of the school orchestra is, at this moment, beyond the possibilities of our violinists. It will be necessary, thus, to quickly suggest an alternative while rehearsing, so that the violins have the time to study it carefully, while the orchestra has the opportunity to perform the piece fully and without being hindered by technical errors.

This flexibility in the adaptation of proposals, if based on the vigilant and constant observation and listening of pupils, will further contribute to shaping each individual's learning experience as an optimal *flow* experience.

When speaking of openness (or flexibility) in the evaluation of pupils' responses, it is important to define the term precisely in relation to the recognition of plurality of styles as a resource for the group. Recognizing, in fact, the possibility of answering to your requests in a varied but pertinent way, rather than valuing exclusively the answer that you are expecting, can guide you towards an appreciation of the differences of your pupils, an openness to unforeseen possibilities and creative proposals and towards the inclusion of all.

During an orchestral rehearsal, for instance, it might occur that a pupil modifies their assigned part (more or less consciously) to suit their readiness to perform it at that moment in the ensemble or simply because they believe that their version may be more interesting and beautiful. Being flexible permits the teacher to evaluate that modification in terms of its relevance and pertinence to the musical context rather than its correspondence with prior expectation. Thus, the pupil's creativity and resourcefulness can be encouraged rather than sanctioned.

This statement leads us to the need to redefine the concept of error within the musical framework of reference. The broadening of the teacher's horizon from a right-wrong binomial to a wider horizon contemplating coherence and possibility will certainly make it more difficult for their pupils to 'make a mistake'. In the case just described, in fact, instead of judging the pupil's intervention as wrong with respect to the part previously assigned to them, the teacher recognizes their interest in composition and, consequently, accepts their changes.

Although in the above mentioned example the pupil's modification was considered relevant, it cannot be said that this flexible approach eliminates the possibility for pupils to make errors. It might well occur, for example, that one of the pupils gives a conceptually wrong answer or proposes something that is not coherent within the group's performance, even if considered with the utmost flexibility. It is important in such a case, recalling the principle of transparency, to recognize sincerely that it is an error and to explain to the group why errors are precious rather than disappointing or stressing factors. First, it must be made clear that within the group "making mistakes is permitted and normal", promoting an attitude which is both courageous and fallible rather than vulnerable or inflexible in the quest for 'perfection'. This explanation will obviously be enhanced by the attitude of the teacher, who should be sympathetic and interested without mortifying nor punishing the pupils that make mistakes but encouraging everybody to face the challenges positively.

The second trait that needs to be made explicit regarding error is its formative importance. Analyzing and understanding an error can, in fact,

provide many suggestions for future learning and can develop pupils' metacognitive skills. It is crucial, though, that the teacher spends some time to understand and clarify their dynamics, reasons, and possible explanations. Particularly significant, then, could be the involvement of the teacher himself within this lucid and encouraging perspective on errors: to reassure the pupils that making mistakes happens and is normal, examples could be given from the teacher themself, regarding their conduct. Transparency, together with a lucid analysis of the possibilities for improvement that an error opens up, will further fortify the teacher's authority in front of the group, providing a further model of adult and responsible management of one's own actions.

3.5. Paying attention to emotions

The last strategy mentioned here is the need to consider the emotions of all those involved in group work (pupils, teachers, educators). In fact, they have been widely recognized as a components that can strongly influence learning processes (Lucangeli, 2019).

Again, observation and listening skills are the basis for effective action. A teacher might observe, for example, that in some pupils anxiety about doing well or fear of a bad grade might prevail, while others can be bored during lessons whose usefulness they do not understand and others might experience excitement or fright at the idea of learning something new. Without going into a specific discussion of the influence of positive or negative emotions on learning, it should be considered that two factors are currently recognized by research as being particularly relevant in influencing each individual's emotions (and thus learning): self-confidence and recognition of the value of what is learned (Pekrun, 2014).

How is it possible to shape group music teaching in a way that supports these two factors?

First, I believe that an explicit acknowledgement by the teacher of the acceptability of fears, insecurities and differences in individual desires and adjustment strategies is a fundamental step. Once this is acknowledged, the strategies proposed in the section on equal involvement can support educational planning so that it reinforces pupils in terms of confidence and interest. Modulating requests based on pupils' possibilities, preparing alternative contents or modalities, making explicit the value of teaching suggestions and choices, while accommodating the activities according to pupils' needs can certainly provide a solid basis for work along these lines.

On the other hand, regarding the recognition of value and interest in what the group learns, it is important to cite how valuable a general reflection with the group on the value of learning music (and studying an instrument) can be for their life project and the education of the whole person. Furthermore, I believe that spending some time to get to know the reasons that have led pupils to choose a school with a musical instrument department, to reflect with them on what the study of music can give people and why it is proposed within the school can make a very interesting contribution.

Having mentioned these two crucial factors, it is important to remember how the specific attention of teachers in recognizing emotions, fears and desires of their pupils will make them able to reassure them and to offer their help and support to everyone, according to their needs. Furthermore, from a specifically musical point of view and with particular reference to the following chapter, the teacher will be able to give relevant suggestions for the preparation of customized parts for each pupil, considering both their technical skills as well as their perception of efficacy and skills in emotional self-regulation and stress management.

In conclusion, declaring this attention explicitly will help the pupils to recognize their teacher as a competent model capable of supporting them in the conscious and serene management of their emotions and suggesting strategies for dealing with their fears and insecurities.

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12. Tailoring scores for an inclusive group

by Gabriele Rubino

1. Introduction

During a teachers' training course, a music teacher once expressed his desire to learn how to "make the pulse less exclusive" for his pupils with cognitive and motor difficulties. Although, as a teacher, I agree with the necessity to help all learners improve rhythmic competence, for the purpose of inclusive participation the challenge for a teacher is rather to *make music less exclusive* so that even pupils with coordination difficulties can experience rewarding participation. Our approach is framed in personalized teaching within a flexible inclusive curriculum that promotes each pupil's potential, including residual skills, and ensures a meaningful musical experience (Chiappetta Cajola & Rizzo, 2016). This chapter will outline some operational proposals that come from the experience of Esagramma® pathways (www.esagramma.net) and which were discussed in the focus group of the present research. Esagramma is a non-profit organization based in Milan that has developed an original approach to make orchestral music practice accessible to all, moved by the conviction that it has significant educational potential. Esagramma methodologies have so far enabled thousands of young people with disabilities and autism to mature musical and interpersonal skills by making music a passion for life. They have been applied in a variety of contexts: with hundreds of schoolchildren with and without Special Educational Needs (Vergani, Rubino & Sbattella, 2018; Sbattella, 2015; Sbattella *et al.*, 2015), with inmates in French penal institutions (Lassus, LePiouff & Sbattella, 2015) and with teachers and professional groups in training (Vergani, 2020; Vergani, Sbattella & Bourgraff, 2020). In the year 2021/22 the Lower Secondary School of Como Borgovico, in collaboration with Esagramma, activated the project "Music: instruments to grow together". The purpose of the project was to include several learners with psycho-physical disabilities from the school and its surroundings

in the orchestra of the school's Musical Instrument Department. Among the project actions, which will be further described in future publications, a short preliminary course was provided for a small orchestral group of pupils with disabilities, followed by a series of rehearsals with the entire ensemble and a concluding concert. In addition to the group's working mode and organization strategies, the scores were a strategic device for enhancing everyone's competences and promoting increasingly refined musical skills throughout the group.

2. The features of the inclusive ensemble

Starting from the Esagramma approach and considering it according to the UDL Guidelines (CAST, 2018), it is possible to describe some of the methodological and operational principles that characterize this inclusive ensemble model.

2.1. Multiple skills and learning levels

The ensemble integrates musicians with different abilities and autonomies in instrumental technique, in rhythmic competence, in music reading-writing and in fitting into polyphonic patterns. There are musicians who can perform complex themes as well as musicians who can play only a few notes as well as those that are not rhythmically very precise. The more experienced musicians in the group, even through reading and playing independently, help shape the piece from the first rehearsal: they sketch out the musical phrases, the rhythm, the *sound* (macro-features such as intensity, speed, melodic profile, interaction between parts, etc.). This helps everyone build a mental idea of the music, it allows one to learn the song faster and particularly facilitates the access for those who do not read (with difficulty or not at all) the score. If the flow of the music remains persistent and engaging, it will be a "secure base" even for those who cannot hold the emotionality of the performance for an extended time or those who cannot keep their attention focused on the activity. Within school ensemble music groups, the instrument teacher may play the role of an expert musician (at the rehearsal piano or at his or her own instrument) especially in the early stages of study. The support teacher, particularly if confident with music, can also be a resource for the group (Rizzo, 2015; Rubino, 2022a). Later, when pupils have learned their parts, teachers will be able to let pupils play on their own (*fading*). Experienced learners, because of their technical and instrumental mastery, will continue to "shape music" to accommodate even the less confident sounds of fellow less-trained musicians; over the course of

rehearsals they can reinforce specific skills in interpretation, ensemble music, and performance confidence. Even in the Italian territory (Branchesi, 2006), the co-presence of pupils with different skills is a widely spread and documented feature. This ensemble setting allows the activation of dynamics attributable to *peer tutoring* (Webb, 2015; Heron *et al.*, 2006). For the purpose of greater accessibility in the score, it will be necessary to provide customized parts that consider progressive levels of required skills (Sbolci, 2014; Hammel, 2017). As we will see in the following paragraphs, it is crucial that these parts are equally important and appreciable in the overall economy of the performance.

2.2. Multiple strategies for song learning and expression

Several studies (Hammel, 2017; see a review in Concina, 2019) point out the importance of offering alternatives to the written score for the transmission of instrumental parts in an ensemble and ensuring different modes of involvement in the musical action.

2.2.1. Imitation

Imitation procedures (teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil) can be activated in real time during the performance, or a preparatory study time can be provided for learning the part, possibly even through *modeling*, that is, asking the pupil to repeat the sequence he or she has first heard from the teacher or a partner (cf. Concina, 2019, p. 62). Real-time imitation requires *shadowing* a more experienced partner or teacher: sitting side-by-side and demonstrating the sound intervention as they perform it with the group. While the initial result may be somewhat inaccurate, after a few repetitions the imitating musician is able to mentally anticipate his or her intervention and performs more independently, showing that he or she is acquiring the part. The additional advantages of this mimetic approach is that the musical flow in the rehearsal is not interrupted and that each musician can immediately establish a correlation between his or her own part and those of the others.

2.2.2. Expressive unconventional conducting

The conducting can adopt intuitive and expressive gestures through which to imitate the movement necessary for performance: for example, the

extension of the arm to mimic a bow, the movement of the forearms to indicate timpani strokes, the use of the index finger to guide pizzicati, etc. This strategy is very effective with pupils who do not read the score and who do not perform such melodically complex parts. This gesture is also useful and understandable to experienced musicians because it can communicate the expressiveness and the "color" of sound with great clarity. As a first verbal indication, the teacher will first emphasize expressiveness ("let's try a softer sound", "this way is too croaky", etc.). Only after that will he or she give a technical-instrumental suggestion if the pupil cannot independently find ways to improve the sound.

2.2.3. Use of co-constructed and graphic notation

To help learners who have less reading ability and rely mainly on imitation or memory, supports such as a co-constructed textual or musical code can be created to help retrieve the note sequence of a passage. A graphic score can be also used to illustrate the polyphonic interaction of the voices with symbols, allowing each person to quickly visualize the formal structure of the piece and the reciprocal relationships between his or her part and the others without over-defining the details. This approach enhances global visual-spatial perception skills that are often a potential of pupils with DSA (Armstrong, 2010), the reinforcement of which is useful for all musicians.

2.2.4. Structured improvisation and pedagogical centrality of interpretation

We consider the score as a solid and flexible instrument at the same time. The arrangement, in fact, provides solidity because it constitutes a narrative structure. Themes, phrases and motives are related to each other in variable ways (call and response, accompaniment and exposition, solo-tutti, etc.), harmonic and agogic features, etc. constitute an alternation of emotionally connoted scenarios. They are recomposed by each listener or performer into a mental macrostructure of the piece (Imberty, 1986, 2004). Within the "sound scenes" of the piece, each performer is nonetheless invited to participate by means of an expressive interpretation, even those who can't play a precise rhythmic melodic fragment (even with some degree of variability and extemporaneity in different performances): an empty string bow or a single cymbal stroke, for example, can be performed by dosing the intensity

differently, using different timbres, but also by choosing the exact moment at which to perform the sound, in relation to that of others.

> We are interested in meaning and value rather than in the facts of mere production of sound objects or instrumental manipulation for its own sake. We are interested in the creation of a network of relationships that generates musical effects. And only when one interprets we are sure that the author of such intentional creation is there: with his/her intention of intersubjective communication (Sbattella, 2016, p. 348).

And this is possible even for those with cognitive and relational difficulties, since the ability to interpret (i.e., render) an emotional experience through musical gesture occurs on the basis of general pre-verbal codes (Sbattella, 2006, 2013; Stefani, 1998) available to all. A complex gesture, invited to pose relations between other sound gestures, constructs a complex mind through a process of "embodied cognition" (Sbattella, 2016, p. 341. See also Corbacchini, 2019). These gestures within a context rich in relations between parts such as a symphonic piece, therefore, allow for logical connections to be established even in people with impairments in logical-verbal thinking. Thus, we are not talking about tabula rasa improvisation because, according to this pedagogical purpose, it's likely to be inefficient for learners with cognitive disabilities who have less vocabulary (musical and verbal) to share and reinvest. This is why we use a work-in-progress arrangement (Sequeri, 2019) in which each person is called upon to evaluate the pertinence of his or her gesture to a sound context: in the study of each musician's part, attention will first be paid to the interpretation of the gesture within the framework of the piece and then to the search for the precise note or the most articulate rhythm, that can be progressively improved. The score sketches the outline and traces the interaction between the voices but leaves space for extemporaneous proposals or variations a bit like a theatrical scenario. It can also be modified in real time to adjust the complexity of the challenges to each learner's perceived or attainable abilities: it promotes the flow (Csikszentmihaly, 1990) and thus the well-being in the learning context.

3. Participation: musical scores to enhance everyone's voices

Making inclusion also means adapting the context (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). The score is a device that organizes the interaction and relationships between the parts and thus influences the orchestral context. The arrangement therefore has to be designed in such a way as to offer everyone spaces for active participation, personal fulfillment, and valuing of differences. Not

only it have to provide parts for musicians with different skill levels, but each of these parts must be perceived as substantial *by everyone* (performers and audience) for the entire piece of music (Rubino, 2022b). Perceiving the importance of a well-performed melody is fairly straightforward. But in music, a less technically articulate part can be valued according to the relationship it takes to the others. Within Esagramma inclusive music paths, violins, cellos, double basses, percussions and harps are used with different technical and timbral solutions that allow even people with cognitive and motor difficulties to be prestigious protagonists in the performance of a piece (Sbattella, 2013)[1]. To achieve this, it's necessary to focus on the potential of musical syntax, that is, the mutual relationship between the sound elements of a piece, their hierarchical and linear recombination, and their characteristics. Some examples of orchestration that take the stated principles into account are proposed below. In order to illustrate the proces, an arrangement of the *Soldiers' March* from Robert Schumann's *Album for Youth* (op. 68) was chosen[2]. It is a piece that is frequently studied within piano programmes and is often the subject of educational transcriptions for other instruments or ensembles. The instrument list includes the instruments which are most common in lower secondary schools with music a department in Italy.

3.1. Designing the scenario, tailoring the form of the music

In the early steps of a music group programme (especially if inclusive), it is useful for the music to have an easily understandable structure and *sound*. Sections should be of appropriate length, not being too long so as not to create habituation to a particular expressive climate, but also not so short that it cannot be mentally processed. A simple piece in ternary form ABA, or AABA', as in the case of the *Soldiers' March*, offers an effective starting point precisely because it contains two distinguished formal sections or themes (A and B). For the arrangement of this piece, it was useful to develop the second section further (see Excerpt n. 1 or rehearsal letter from C to E): its function of melodic and harmonic variation is expanded by extending its duration, so that it is also

[1] Wind instruments are generally more complicated for people with coordination difficulties since the sound emission is less immediate, but there are a number of Italian and foreign experiences that have gone to great lengths to create facilitative pathways of using these instruments (i.e. Bruce Pearson, 1993; Orchestrando Project by Yamaha; Lautenbach Blaskapelle, https://lautenbach-ev.de/blaskapelle/).

[2] Please see the original version in the attachment on website. The arrangement is available in full score on the volume's webpage, on the website https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa.

more accessible to those who need more time to tune into another interpretive landscape. The intensity and mood of the theme have been varied from the original, which is loud and peremptory, in order to create more perceptual contrast with the previous A section and encourage an exercise in interpretive modulation of gesture. The dialogical relationship between the two phrases of which A theme is composed was highlighted by changing the orchestration (soli-tutti, see Excerpt n. 2). It provides a variety of interactions and timbral solutions. The main melodic line can be given to more experienced instrumentalists. Even those who have accrued limited instrumental range, however, have been given moments of glory in the instrumental section. The sax lines, for example, adopt a few notes in an easy register. The sparse harmonization and timbre mixture of the woodwinds with the percussion contribute to the impression of an incoming military band to which the entire ensemble responds.

The narrative structure of the proposed arrangement is summarized below. It will be noted that the overall form of the piece is different from the original: in addition to the extension of the B theme, an introduction, a variation of the first theme, and an expansion of the final phrase have been added. The thematic materials of the original work are developed and expanded, new sections (introduction and finale) are added, and the alternation between sections with a well-characterized sound is emphasized.

Tab. 1 – Outline summary of the arrangement of Soldiers' March

Section	*Feature*
Introduction	Expectation. Progressive introduction of the elements that constitute the piece
Theme A (twice)	Alternation between sections and the orchestral tutti – 1st phrase: "military band echoes" – 2nd phrase: all, solemn – 1st phrase: grotesque march, "out-of-tune music box" – 2nd phrase: all, solemn
Theme B	Relaxation, dialogue between thematic elements
Resume Theme A (varied)	Resumption of the theme, a little melancholy
Final	Con brio Expansion of the last original phrase and final cadences

3.2. Creating original sections for dialogue and mutual listening

Schumann's *Soldier's March* is a very short piece; it is a condensation of ironic and sagacious music in which the composer plays with a few recurring rhythmic-melodic elements that give the marching style and characterize the

piece, for example the dotted-quaver semiquaver rhythm and the sequences of short notes that proceed like soldiers' steps. These technically simple "generating motives" can be performed even by musicians with minimal technical potential. It is useful to set up original sections in which these elements, combined and highlighted in a mutual interaction, also give visibility to their performers.

In both the introduction (Excerpt n. 3) and the theme B of the proposed arrangement, each musician is called upon to take part in an interaction that, as a whole, offers a more interesting overall effect than the individual interventions taken individually. Both the musicians and the listener can perceive the dialogue between the different instruments as a unitary event endowed with meaning. The bass drum, the triangle, the mallet percussions and the guitar are the main interlocutors in this dialogue and it matters little that the guitar has to play bichords and that the bass drum note is a simpler gesture: both acquire equal importance in the joint action since they are perceived to be mutually indispensable. Their strategic role will remain well imprinted throughout the narration of the piece. The other musicians in the orchestra remain listening, which helps emphasize the sense of anticipation and attentiveness to the ongoing dialogue. It is suggested to note the use of rallentando and rubato (Excerpt n. 1, bar 46 and following). The suspension given by the harmony with dominant function makes a tempo alteration plausible and expressive, which facilitates learners with coordination difficulties: they can take care of the sound interpretation without being too constrained by the beat.

3.3. Using an "inclusive reharmonization"

In arrangements for educational purposes, it is common practice to modify the original key so as to make the instrumental parts more affordable in terms of register and technical difficulty.

We can choose a key in which the strings can use the open strings to play pivotal notes (the tonic, the fifth, etc.), or possibly placing easily the first and second fingers on the keyboard. In this arrangement you can identify several points where violins II and cellos II sustain important parts for the success of the piece (see Excerpts 1, 2, 3), using only the open strings. Harmonic pedals are one solution to entrust a fundamental role – really, it has to be said! – to musicians who are not yet able to articulate several notes on their instrument, and can be realized by bows with open strings, or percussions with repeated notes in ostinato (see Glockenspiel in Excerpt n. 6). Pedals can

also be performed with different timbral effects (tremolo or pizzicato), which have the added advantage of perceptually smoothing out any harmonic incompatibilities. The use of a harmonic pedal implies some care in part management, but it provides new insights into revisiting the original material. Note, for example, the co-presence of the notes A and G in the piano chord in bars 29-32 and 37-40 (Excerpt n. 4): this voicing gives greater harmonic suspension and smoothes the harmonic transition, entrusted to the woodwind voices, between the tonic chord (G), the secondary dominant (A) and the dominant chord (D). However, this reharmonization strategy allows the most technically trained musicians to perform, in this case, the original harmonic progression that is a key feature of the piece. The experienced listener will be able to recognize the references to Schumann's work and will be aroused by the element of novelty brought by this harmonic revision.

Among reharmonization procedures, the use of polytonality or atonality is effective in accommodating random interventions by musicians who do not yet have the skills to perform fast sequences with precisely articulated notes, but who may be able to characterize their timbre expressively. In bars 33-66 (Excerpt n. 5), Schumann's phrase is transfigured into a kind of "out-of-tune music box" that responds ironically to the preceding orchestral *tutti*. A further reharmonization strategy is to superimpose descending chromaticisms. A chromaticism is so recognizable and clearly perceivable that any other note or phrase will sound pertinent. In the Interlude section (Excerpt n. 6 – bar 64-71), for example, the marimba will double the melodic figure of the clarinets with random bichords, which, if executed with the right mysterious and somewhat melancholy timbre, will contribute to an evocative sonority.

4. Seven notes for an inclusive scoring

The proposed orchestration strategies do not claim to be exhaustive or binding, but are an expression of the methodological principles outlined above. The intent is to suggest some solutions for designing a score that takes the pedagogical and methodological principles expressed above into account. Indeed, it is meaningless to distinguish more or less inclusive repertoires. It is more useful to reflect on the didactic and compositional procedures that make music more or less inclusive. These are summarized below for clarity.

– If an arrangement is to be produced, choose a piece that contains a varied articulation of musical sections, sound events with a clear overall *sound* and a narrative structure that can be supported by the ensemble's average skills.

– Research the syntactic and semantic elements in the piece that are fundamental to the composer and identify what can be performed in an enhancing way even by those with minimal instrumental resources.
– Do not be afraid to set up new sections in which original elements are reworked by adopting novel compositional strategies. Such musical events will become an opportunity for discovery for the performers, for all kinds of audiences, and... for the arranger!
– Adopting a principle of structured improvisation helps to consider scores as a solid, yet flexible tool. Customize them based on each learner's current and proximal skills.
– Should it be necessary to simplify the technical challenges of some parts, it is important to maintain a sufficiently complex structure of the piece: rich in different sound events, relationships between the parts, expressiveness and emotional charge.

These features enable:

– the transformation of minimal instrumental gestures into key elements of orchestration through various compositional procedures that are based on musical syntax;
– the encouragement of each musician to modulate his or her gesture, however simple, making it increasingly technically refined and, first and foremost, pertinent to the changes in expressivity required by the piece. By requiring all musicians to interpret the music the group is performing, the real aim is to overcome a sensorimotor exploratory conduct motivated by the sheer pleasure of movement and sound exploration in order to mature a symbolic conduct or following the pleasure of organization (Delalande, 1993). That is an expression of a mind that has developed a complex musical thought and does so by connecting different sound events. .

The challenge we propose to the teachers is to take care of the sound and visual "image" of the group in front of them because the score (and its performance) will reflect the specific idea of inclusion that the group itself has matured. The work objectives will be visible (and listenable!) as well as the strategies employed to enhance everyone's voices, even the most fragile, and the group's ability to listen to itself and support itself. The commitment that each person makes to consciously attend to his or her own sound for the sake of the collective outcome should be perceptible. This intentionality – before the right or wrong, virtuosic or minimal notes – is immediately perceived by the listeners as well, and everyone benefits from the effect of the overall beauty. If the arrangement is constructed in such a way as to arouse aesthetic interest while employing all means available to the ensemble, then enchantment and awe will be generated both in the musicians and in their audience.

The beauty of the music will coincide with the beauty of the ensemble that produces it and our orchestra will have achieved its goal: to excite because of its own making and not because of its being "special".

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13. The qualitative aspect of the research: the focus group

by Filippo Sapuppo

1. The theoretical framework of the focus group

Although it originated in the 1940s, the focus group technique has been employed more extensively in social research from the 1980s onward.

In 1941, sociologist Robert K. Merton was approached by his colleague Paul Lazarsfeld to assist him in fine-tuning a way of surveying the influence of the media on people. He then suggested interviewing several viewers at once, after they had listened to a radio broadcast.

Later, Merton applied this technique during World War II to study how propaganda films impacted soldiers, while Lazarsfeld implemented it in market research (Corrao, 2000).

In later years, Robert Merton rejected the authorship of the focus group, claiming that the technique he developed involved focused group interviews, rather than a peer meeting coordinated by a moderator.

However, this technique gained widespread interest in market research while it was mostly forgotten in communication research.

Since the 1980s, this type of qualitative technique has been undergoing a return to its origins to a certain extent. As a matter of fact, focus groups have been widely adopted in the field of cultural studies, in investigating the relationship between mass media and political power or, more generally, when studying the influences of the media on society (Baldry, 2005).

What characteristics make focus groups effective?

Many factors should be considered, and here are a few of them.

The starting point for identifying potential participants is clearly setting what goals are to be achieved. It is usually recommended to choose people who do not know each other in order to avoid previous mutual influences, but if the subject matter of the research belongs to a narrow sectoral area, it is unlikely for experts not to know each other.

Moreover, in some cases, it is appropriate to form homogeneous groups as it may be important to encourage a ''peer'' relationship, in order to foster both the exchange of information and personal experiences as well as to promote the willingness to change one's beliefs after listening to others.

The number of participants in a focus group is not universally agreed upon by researchers, and it ranges from 3-8 for small groups to 9-14 for large groups (Frisina, 2010). There is no such thing as a ''right'' number for everything and everyone. Large groups allow for a more diverse range of perspectives, although they can be more difficult for moderators to lead. Small groups may bring out dominant characters that would "cover" skills of rather shyer personalities.

Moderators can assume greater or lesser roles depending on the degree of organization (Corrao, 2000).

Within highly organized focus groups, meaning those based on a set of specific questions, moderators have a key role in guiding and directing the discussion.

For loosely organized, nearly self-directed, focus groups, moderators guide all discussions by presenting topics and introducing participants.

The way focus groups may be analyzed and fed back can vary widely: from fully transcribing all speeches and analyzing them in detail, to just transcribing highlights that are deemed most consistent with the topics being discussed.

2. The survey

The core question that we try to answer is whether enhancing schools with musical instrument departments would successfully provide "disadvantaged" kids with more tools for inclusion (Ministerial Decree 201/1999).

The thesis that music, its study, and practice, can be a valuable opportunity for inclusive teaching, is well established (Coe, 2018; Gwen *et al.*, 2017), yet recent research by the Department of Education Sciences at Roma Tre (Chiappetta Cajola & Rizzo, 2019; Rizzo, 2017, 2018; Rizzo & De Angelis, 2019), accounted for a common perception among teachers in schools with musical instrument departments about an elitist view of music knowledge that somehow results in Conservatories "parallel paths". This focus group consisted of instrument teachers, school principals, teachers seconded from Regional School Offices, inclusion liaison teachers, teachers from the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome, and teachers from the Fiesole School of Music. Represented regions were the following: Basilicata, Calabria, Emilia

Romagna, Lazio, Lombardy, Marche, Molise, Piedmont, Apulia, Sicily, Umbria, and Veneto. The focus group was also attended by Fondazione Sequeri Esagramma Onlus, with Gabriele Rubino, coordinator and director of the Esagramma Symphony Orchestra, and Francesca Vergani, a doctoral student at the Free University of Bolzano and Esagramma[1] expert trainer. Esagramma was involved with the belief that sharing their decade-long experience in the field of inclusive music orchestra could make a valuable contribution to achieving the research objectives.

Luisa Lopez, a neurophysiopathologist, an expert in music-mediated cognitive processes in research that were carried out by the Mariani Foundation, as well as a member of several GLOs (*Gruppi di Lavoro Operativi*, Operational Working Groups for Inclusion, Leg. Decree 96/2019) in Lazio, also participated in the focus-group work.

The four focus group meetings, held from 12 February to 23 April 2021, investigated how Lower secondary schools with musical instrument departments organize the following: the orientation-aptitude test for pupils with disabilities and with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD), instrument teaching for pupils with disabilities and with SLD, ensemble music activities for pupils with disabilities and with SLD, avenues of cooperation between support teachers and instrument teachers, how to assess educational courses with an instrument for pupils with disabilities and with SLD, and the state examination for the part involving the instrument, for pupils with disabilities and with SLD. The focus groups were held on the Teams platform, were video-recorded, and verbatim transcripts were made.

2.1. First meeting

After a welcome introduction by the moderator, Prof. Amalia Rizzo, several participants took the floor and presented examples of inclusivity within orchestral activities as well as the regulatory framework in which we move.

The role of musical instruments in educational settings for pupils with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) was emphasized and the four most relevant aspects, already well-established in international studies, were identified: music and playing (music) facilitate the development of thinking and the learning acquisition; through playing, nonverbal communication channels are enhanced, and this is crucial in language mediation; making music

[1] See Sbattella (2013) for an in-depth discussion of the theoretical-operational principles of Esagramma. Esagramma's activities are described on their website at https://esagramma.net/.

helps to overcome relational difficulties, thus supporting socialization; the recreational aspect of playing an instrument encourages pupils with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) to actively engage in it.

Within this context, the need for a strong collaboration between the music teacher and the support teacher to identify the best teaching methodology to adopt emerged.

Federica Pilotti, a Technology teacher in Lower secondary schools, outlined a web-based tool for those participating in such work to detect strengths for promoting inclusion in schools with musical instrument departments.

The main elements that emerged from this first day were the importance of exchanging experiences in developing shared paths and, also, despite its difficulties, the need for a strong focus on training, and primarily cultural training: so as to develop truly inclusive educational thinking. An important element is providing everyone with the opportunity to access an instrument starting from aptitude interviews.

2.2. Second meeting – morning session

Introductory session focused attention on accessing schools with musical instrument departments: addressing the problem of limited enrolment schools, and arranging appropriate orientation-aptitude tests.

The role of facilitators for string instruments was discussed in order to make music together more quickly and to create true music inclusiveness.

The focus is on a few criteria to be adopted for candidate selections: personal interest of kids (not parents), technical-rhythmic-melodic proficiency may not be a requirement, and theorizing real personalized goals.

This focus group proceeded with several speeches outlining the different experiences of the orientation-aptitude tests and exams.

A lively exchange of opinions revealed how difficult it is to rely on Bentley's test, a tool that is perhaps obsolete by now, and emphasized the interest in the Esagramma model, which puts learners in a "real" context, a space in which different instruments are provided, and where children are immersed in an authentic environment. In this space they can express themselves without any differences between able-bodied individuals and people with disabilities. However, this testing model must be accompanied by a reflection on what kind of assessment should be put in place: what should be assessed? And according to what criteria?

2.3. Second meeting – afternoon session

During the session it was pointed out that we often only learn about disability-relaed problems long after the admission test.

It was stressed how the traditional type of evaluation usually results in kids with disability being given less opportunity and so, provocatively, we ask: is it really fair to let in the high achievers?

The evaluation of the admission test was identified by many as the central issue to be tackled.

At the end of the day's work, a number of elements came up: if the tests became group tests, the 15 minute allocation per candidate would be added up and this would allow the observation time to be extended, or it would possibly lead to a month's rehearsal so as to make more thought-out choices. Also, other elements are: trying to be more flexible on schedules and focusing on continuity starting from childhood. Concerns are that the very selection would exclude those who benefit most from the relationship with music.

2.4. Third meeting

This day's work was devoted to the practical aspects of teaching: what experiences can be shared and exported to different schools?

Strategies and methodologies were shared: time management with space for socialization; attention to common spaces besides safe liminal space, where pupils can encounter each other and experiment freely; multiplying teaching materials, using alternative sources; always having open-ended assignments; emphasizing the creative value of activities; valuing coaching, which translates into eliminating physical barriers; playing together rather than just helping each other; working with people, without labels; using simplified sheet music; using video tutorials.

In the afternoon session, reference was made to socio-constructivist education, the theories of John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky; focusing on process rather than outcome, prioritizing ensemble music, using facilitators and compensatory and dispensatory measures and using the Paul Rolland method.

In the course of the day and the conclusive discussion, the following elements emerged: kids with disabilities are a resource, especially since they offer the opportunity to think about teaching strategies that are useful for everyone. Starting with their musical tastes to choose repertoire, trying to play with instrument expressiveness, getting to know the pupils, working on reinforcing the idea that music is for everyone, working on inclusion with

an integrated approach, involving students and all teachers, establishing the need for ongoing teacher training.

2.5. Fourth meeting

The meeting focused on giving feedback on the suggestions brought up in the previous focus groups and additional suggestions and considerations that emerged from the discussion.

Cross-referencing the data that emerged from the questionnaires submitted to teachers and principals in schools with musical instrument departments with the insights gained in the meetings, led to a number of conclusions and recommendations:

1) music is a resource for inclusion that enables overall development and growth;
2) pupils with disabilities and with SLD are entitled to make the fullest use of the musical experience because they are the ones who need it most;
3) lower secondary schools with musical instrument departments are contexts in which music is strongly present and the orientation-aptitude test should make it easier for pupils to enjoy this right rather than exclude them from it. Possibly the test could consist of a musical experience proposed by the teacher and involves pupils ian in-situ task. In addition, pupils would be asked to do a motivational interview and self-produce a video in which they show what music is to them.

Real inclusion occurs when the classroom curriculum is modified to be accessible to all rather than when the course for a single pupil with disabilities is changed.

If there is a surplus of applications, the school will have to address the problem and compensate by deploying strategies to allow everyone to access them, such as enhancement services, and flexible schedules.

Training of teachers, also within networks of schools, including at the national level, is crucial.

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14. Good practices in inclusive education

by Federica Pilotti

1. Planning of educational actions, music and inclusion

Every day, the school is required to implement, according to its staff's professionalism and to the pacts with the territory, strategies and ways to achieve inclusive learning environments, also on the basis of the educational co-responsibility actions undertaken by the entire school community (DM 182, 29th December 2020) for the satisfaction of the identified educational needs and indications of the pupils with or without disabilities.

In Lower secondary school with a musical instrument department (SMIM), instrumental tuition opens an additional communication channel through which it is possible to get in touch with pupils; the power that the musical instrument gives, by its nature, leads to work also on the socio-emotional development of pupils with special educational needs (Rizzo, 2020). It facilitates the observation of the pupil from many points of view, thus contributing to an integral understanding of the person, from his cognitive processes (Patel, 2010) to motivational and relational ones (Rizzo, 2018).

The observation of inclusive good practices in lower secondary schools with a musical instrument department necessarily starts from the theoretical and scientific points of reference: neuroscience has demonstrated, with respect to cognitive development, that the neuronal network of linguistic skills is closely connected to that of the musical skills (Patel, 2010) and other studies have underlined the positive effect of music on reading, on memory and on attention (Rolka & Silverman, 2015).

Musical instruments are authorial objects: "things with which you can do things" (Rivoltella, 2017). The advantage of this aspect is that it can be used to promote personal experience and laboratorial learning. Making music develops critical and aesthetic thinking (Romano, 2021; Mado Proverbio,

2019); listening to oneself and others stimulates pupils to think about their performances, about the choice of how and what to play or sing, and is a great tool for self assessment.

Making music together with others develops a sense of responsibility and autonomy.

Listening to oneself and others, learning by imitation (Rizzolati, 2006), develops empathy. Furthermore, the child singing in a choir, playing in an orchestra or in an ensemble becomes aware of his role and of his importance both as an individual and as part of the group, without hierarchy.

During the course of the research, in the focus groups held in remote calls on the MF Teams1 platform, particular attention was paid to listening to good practices and testimonies of solutions found for inclusive musical activities as a result of the daily experience of many instrumental teachers in numerous schools.

Due to the pandemic emergency, communication and meetings have been affected by a proactive climate; when in difficulty, everyone needs to share ideas and inclusive strategies. We find ourselves in front of the barrier of no-presence and we feel the need to look for a respectful and empathetic communicative register.

Each school, through the voice of the teachers, wanted to testify and document their inclusive activities by showing documents, storyboards, videos of final performances or studies and ongoing developments.

In order to enhance and promote the inclusive teaching methods already applied in the lower secondary schools with musical instrument departments, it was decided to create and distribute a "Project Sheet" (Attachement 1, online) designed to collect positive models of educational teaching planning with particular regards to facilitators and barriers (WHO, 2007), but also to goals and musical skills to be developed during the three-year instrumental course (Ferrari & Pilotti, 2018). 13 Project Sheets were received from 15 teachers, representing 7 different geographical regions: Basilicata, Calabria, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Puglia, Umbria, Veneto:

– IC "G. Leopardi", PZ (Basilicata), professor Antonio Cinefra, professoressa Elena Taricco;
– IC "Falcomatà", Arci, RC (Calabria), professoressa Grazia Barillà;
– IC di Rizziconi, RC (Calabria), professoressa Adalgisa Serrecchia;
– IC di Carpi Zona Centro – Scuola "Alberto Pio", Carpi, MO (Emilia Romagna), professoressa Manuela Rossi;
– IC "Garibaldi" di Fondi, LT (Lazio), professoressa Maria Luisa Nicelli;
– IC "Bovio-Mazzini" di Canosa, BA (Puglia), professoressa Lucia Carmela Cioce;

– IC "Santachiara Pascoli" di Altamura, BA (Puglia), professoressa Mariolina Goduto, professoressa Lucia Petrucci;
– IC "A. Volta", TA (Puglia), professor Andrea Martina;
– Scuola statale di I grado "Gesmundo-Moro-Fiore" di Terlizzi, BA (Puglia), professoressa Antonella Rutigliani;
– IC "G. Marconi", TR (Umbria), professoressa Manuela Saveri;
– IC "E. Betty Pierazzo", di Noale, VE (Veneto_1_2), professoressa Silvia Grigolato, professor Alberto Saccon;
– IC "L. Nono", di Miram VE (Veneto_3), professoressa Marcella Maio.

2. The tools: description and motivation of the choice

2.1. The Project Sheet[1]

The form is one of the products produced by the team specialised in designing inclusive learning units as teaching support of pupils with disabilities (Roma Tre University, Department of Education), based on research on the experience of inclusive teaching in remote (Rizzo, Pilotti & Traversetti, 2021) and on a tested framework of instruments dedicated to musical planning.

This tool has allowed us to collect the projects presented in the course of the research in a structured and standard way.

The form is built vertically and organised for learning planning to allow the reading of the development of disciplinary and transversal skills. It lets teachers tell their activities, long- and medium-term objectives and the development of pupil's learning.

2.2. The Compilation

During the research, teachers were asked to describe individual teaching actions in which students with disabilities or Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) were also involved, thereby collecting good practices so that they could be scaled[2] or replicated[3] with the aim to enrich the repertoire of teach-

[1] See online attachment on the website https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa.

[2] "Scaled activities" are those that can be increased in size horizontally (number of pupils involved) or vertically (grade of school), without the use of proportional resources.

[3] "Replicable activities" means a model that can be repeated in different places and in different periods without being revolutionised and only by making small changes.

ing strategies for teachers and to enable them to disseminate, to the maximum extent possible, the promotion of metacognitive teaching, also applied through the use of technology. It can lead pupils with disabilities to the pursuit of basic and more complex school skills, as well as to increase their autonomy and communication skills (Rizzo, Pilotti & Traversetti, 2020).

As initial parameters, teachers were asked to indicate the special educational need (disability or specific learning disorder)[4], the class and the musical instrument played.

2.3. Educational framework of INDIRE portal, Music at School

The main reference model is proposed by the Educational framework of INDIRE portal, Music at School, based on the creation of a framework concerning musical competence, with reference to the goals of the national indications in 2012 (Ferrari & Pilotti, 2018).

The scheme helped teachers in the description of the processes and therefore in the observation of the chosen competences. Three relevant areas in which the musical competence is expressed have been identified: listening, producing, reading/writing. For each of these areas of competence aspects (dimensions) that constitute it and the individual long- and medium-term objectives followed in each project presented by the teachers (Figure 1) are registered.

The activities presented were intended to affect all three areas of competence expected. They were complete and provided, for each action, targeted training objectives, in other words: the "specific learning objectives" contextualised, part of the school, in the section, in the concrete group of pupils, taking into account the personal skills of each.

For this reason, to each stated objective by area of competence, it was asked to associate the activity of the concrete, accessible learning action personalised for the pupil.

The declared long – and medium-term objective, to be stated, had to be measurable and should denote an observable action, it should describe the definition of a class of stimuli, a class of correct answers and the conditions under which the student is expected to manifest the desired behaviour (Trinchero, 2017).

[4] Law 104/1992; d.leg. 96/2019; law 170/2010.

Fig. 1 – Music at school – The didactic framework. Guidelines edited by Franca Ferrari and Federica Pilotti

Competence	*Aspect (dimension)*	*Description of the aspect (dimension)*
#Listening	Sound perception	Development of sound perception in relation to specific didactic targets (e.g. distinguishing timbre among the timbre/sounds of a specific natural or musical environment, identifying rhythm, melody, harmony, etc.
	Interpretation	Development of the ability to "give meaning" in many ways to sound/music (or to the score), re-expressing it (translating it) with sounds/music, words, images, gestures, etc.
	Analysis	Development of breaking down capacity (which parts make up the total?) and identification of linking points (what is the common thread through the parts?); ability to identify the appropriate interpretations among those instinctively provided by the students, in order to give meaning to the music listened to (which/how many aspects of the structure and the piece execution justify the interpretation instinctively provided by the students?)
	Comprehension	Development of the capacity to identify key music concepts in the music piece which can be transferred to other situations of listening or production; connecting the information included in the piece of music with knowledge deriving from other sources; evaluating the piece on the basis of the music concepts it expresses
#Production	Execution	Development of the capacity to reproduce an already existing piece of music reflecting its characteristics and referring to written sources and different executive traditions; manage one's own cognitive/body/emotional/ relational dynamics in the public execution
	Improvisation	Development of the capacity to improvise music, generally using a backing track, or in the case of a music ensemble using shared rules
	Composition	Development of the ability to express music ideas grouping together and giving shape to sound effects, rhythmic and melodic motives, music chords etc.
#Reading and writing	Use of a non- conventional music notation	Development of the capacity to read music sequences using a notation code, agreed by the group or proposed by the composer, where the shape of the sign has analogies with that of the sound, so that one refers to the other; read and intervene on the waveform using an audio editing programme or a video graphic notation
	Use of conventional music notation	Development of the capacity to write, read and transcribe music using the western rhythmic and melodic music notation and the symbols in use for the notation of dynamics, agogic and chord notations, manually or using a video writing programme

The musical activity, according to all the planned ones, does not develop just the disciplinary skills (MIUR, 2012), therefore, teachers were asked to highlight which aspects of "transversal skills" were possibly developed by the student with the proposed activity, in particular those related to the research survey:

– personal, social competence (emotional awareness/emotions recognition, own and others, prosociality, respect for the rules…);
– digital competence (Information and data literacy, Communication and collaboration, Digital content creation, Security, Problem solving).

The first of the two highlighted the persistent improvement that the activities have brought the pupils in the interaction in groups in order to understand the different points of view, to manage conflicts, to contribute to common learning and to realise collective activities demonstrating their effective inclusive intent.

2.4. DigComp 2.1: the reference framework for citizens' digital skills

For digital competence we refer to the European document DigComp 2.1, the reference framework for citizens' digital competences (European commission, 2017). Teachers were asked to choose among the aspects of digital competence implemented in the activity (if provided in the learning plan):

– competence Area 1: information and data literacy;
– Competence Area 2: communication and collaboration;
– competence Area 3: digital content creation;
– competence Area 4: safety;
– competence Area 5: problem solving.

In particular, the last competence was closely linked to the use of devices such as assistive technology (online tuner, editing software, LIM, tablet …) or compensatory tools (note indicator, Augmentative Alternative Communication…) demonstrating that technology is a source of many different skill training devices.

Many activities showed a strong impulse towards the creation of digital contents; the authorship of the tool was a valid support in achieving set goals and offered pupils the possibility to "create" a product.

At this point, considering the possibility of integrating "tele-teaching" (video-teaching at a distance) with "live" teaching in presence, it is useful to reflect on teaching pupils with disabilities. Teaching is not exclusively conditioned by the use of technology but also by the context in which it is used and the general and peculiar effect that its use involves. It is therefore essential

to contextualise and reflect on these aspects, directing teachers in the most appropriate and targeted educational-learning choices, both in relation to the type of disability and the characteristics of the pupil (not only the age and the class attended, but the learning potential and behaviour), as well as to the technologies themselves, in order to guide them towards a coherent (Laurillard, 2012) individualised learning plan (Rizzo, Pilotti & Traversetti, 2020).

A synoptic table which assembles and summarises the contents of the submitted Project Sheets (containing the developed competences, the disabilities and specific learning disorders, the classes and the compensatory instruments) is available online[5].

3. Conclusions

The activities presented by the teachers were consistent with the framework of musical competence and the two key competences of citizenship.

Therefore, they represent a good starting point formed by experiences and good practices chosen and organised also in the contents to be shared, with the accurate identification of the educational objective to be achieved.

The Project Sheets also provide the starting point for new activities through the planned scheme provided by the form itself. This form is available to schools as a working tool to be used for an increasingly inclusive educational organisation.

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La passione per le conoscenze

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TEACHING A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT TO PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In Italy, the presence of music-oriented secondary schools (SMIM) represents a valuable opportunity to enhance the use of music in order to raise the level of inclusiveness of each institution. Music fits positively into the dialectic between education and inclusion as it is a significant developmental experience that enhances the participation and learning of pupils with all types of special educational needs and makes the entire community more welcoming. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that musical activity promotes the integral development of the person even in the presence of severe disabilities and acts as a true "neuroprotector" of language, improving working memory, attention, well-being and self-esteem. Within this framework, the volume presents the results of research funded by the Department of Educational Sciences of Roma Tre University and carried out in collaboration with the National Committee for the Practical Learning of Music for All Students of the Education Ministry. Using an integrated methodology, for the first time in Italy researchers have investigated the level of inclusiveness of SMIMs and, starting from the identification of the problematic nodes, elaborated a series of didactic-assessment proposals for improvement which have been shared with schools and are described in this volume. Some attachments are available for downloading and printing on the volume's web page, which can be accessed from the website https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa.

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