



Directorate for Education
Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), OECD

Innovative Learning Environments (ILE)

INVENTORY CASE STUDY

“Chiamale emozioni” (Call them emotions)

Switzerland (Ticino)

The whole school is organized around the promotion of life skills and socio-emotional competences, and the promotion of critical thinking and active involvement. It has adopted Mark Greenberg’s PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies). The school is part of the local teacher education college, and the design of the curriculum and activities has been part of this larger organization. There are two leader/coordinators, three assistant coordinators, and twelve teachers. The leadership/management structure with two coordinators and three assistant coordinators could, the ILE assesses, go well beyond the 250 current learners to up to 40 teachers and 800 learners. Improving climate and motivation is regarded as fundamental. The assistant coordinators work for an hour per week in every class.

This Innovative Learning Environment case study has been prepared specifically for the OECD/ILE project. Research has been undertaken by Giorgio Ostinelli from the Alma Mater Studiorum/Università degli Studi, Bologna, following the research guidelines of the ILE project.

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Report on the project “Chiamale emozioni” (Call them emotions).

Abstract

Chiamale emozioni (Call them emotions) is a project aiming at the development of socio-emotional skills in young children (kindergarten and first years of primary school), taking place in Canton Ticino, the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland.

Socio-emotional education is something substantially new in the panorama of Swiss-Italian schools – and, on the basis of the research team’s knowledge, also in Europe – since usually schools place the main accent mainly on rational learning. Through SEL, children’s education at school becomes more complete. Giving a first opportunity to each pupil to learn in practice how to recognize and master her/his own emotions can be a very important thing, since it can constitute a useful base for the following years in managing one’s behavior. The participation to the project can also help teachers in recognizing and managing their own emotions while interacting with their classes. It is also true that the emergence of phenomena like bullying and racism at the secondary school level prompts for some kind of preventive action in the primary school, and *Chiamale emozioni* can be part of this answer.

The following table gives some basic information about the experience:

Duration	Start Date: 02/01/2010	End Date: 31/12/2013	Duration: 48 months
Overall objective of the project	To utilize the educational system more effectively to build social and emotional skills in young people. that both create a more positive, caring society and reduces aggression and disruption, which will have the effect of increasing attention and learning.		
Number of beneficiaries	Total	Female	Male
	80 Teachers	60%	40%
	Up to 1200 children	48%	52%

Tab. 1: basic information about *Chiamale emozioni*

80 teachers from kindergarten and primary school are taking part to the project, globally about 4% of the teachers teaching in these grades in Ticino. Firstly, an e-mail was sent to every teacher (totally 2000 subjects), with an invitation to participate to the project. A first selection was done according to (1) their availability to follow an initial training, (2) their willingness to put into practice what learnt and (3) the subscription of a two years commitment. In the resulting group, a further selection was performed, based on the following criteria: (1) gender: planned target a share-out of 40% male and 60% female, representing the actual statistical distribution in Ticino; (2) age: planned target an average age as close as possible to 42.5 years, also representative of the population; (3) location of the school: planned target a balanced distribution between towns and rural areas.

Motivation of the project

In Ticino, acts of violence between young people are growing. Currently, there is a debate regarding the kind of measures to be implemented in order to improve school educational programs, as a contribute in the prevention of future occurrences. *Chiamale emozioni*, aiming at training 80 teachers according to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) principles is part of this trend. Its target is to implement a SEL informed curriculum and to create a SEL oriented school climate.

The study is expected to reach up to 1200 children, from pre-school (ISCED 0) to elementary school (ISCED 1), and will be conducted in partnership with the local educational ministry to ensure wide dissemination. Overall, the project's aim is to lead the educational system to develop a better performance in building social and emotional skills capable to reduce aggression and disruption amongst young people.

Development of the project

The guiding idea is the result of a collaboration between Luca Sciaroni and Davide Antognazza, two teachers and researchers of the Dipartimento della formazione e dell'aggiornamento (DFA) from the Scuola universitaria della Svizzera Italiana (SUPSI)¹ Some years ago, they agreed about the need to implement some key aspects of the emotional intelligence theory in the primary schools of Canton Ticino, and this led them to perform a first basic exploratory research, while working at the Alta scuola pedagogica (ASP)². This preliminary study led them to develop the key-idea of socio-emotional education.

Luca Sciaroni's main interests are focused on the individual basic aspects that help a pupil in establishing her well-being, while Davide Antognazza perspective is more oriented towards school changes sustaining the students in the above mentioned task.

During these first stages, they entered in contact with Mark Greenberg, from Penn State University, a well-known expert of the domain of socio-emotional education, who was subsequently invited to hold a workshop in Ticino. After this experience, they looked for a grant outside the ASP, submitting therefore a request to the Jacobs Foundation, relative to the project that they are currently developing, concerning pre-school and primary school teachers. After a visit, followed by the assessment of the proposal, the foundation agreed in financing the program.

Organizing the teaching in function of the learning aims

In the appendix are located some examples of activities practiced in the classroom. These are in relationship with the SEL skills of pag. 4. For instance, *Anger Soup* and *Emotion's Puppet* are addressed to the self-awareness; *Sweet Words Relay Race* to social awareness; *Traffic Light Inside Ourselves* to self-control; *You Are Special* to relationship skills, and *The Magic Wand* to responsible decision-making. The PATH's model guidelines were followed inviting the teachers to dedicate, in their timetable, the necessary resources (time, space) for the practice of teaching about emotions (systematization); moreover, they should try to manage conflicting situations arising in the classroom (generalization).

¹ This institution is in charge with the training of local school teachers.

² This was the former name of the DFA.

Planned activities

Soon from the beginning, the project proved effective and aroused much excitement in the teachers. At present, the activities are on time, except the teachers' training, that cumulated some delay due principally to the definition of the participants' group, that took place only during the month of August 2010 (for reasons outside the will of the researchers) and caused some delay also in the survey of the data. The following table depicts the project's schedule:

Introduction

23 August 2010	Leading the teachers to the knowledge of socio-emotional education and of the criteria and the contents for the obtainment of the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS). 30' Introduction 2 h What is socio-emotional education 2 h Teachers' socio-emotional skills 2 h Practice on emotions at kindergarten and primary school 1 h Information and conclusions
24 August 2010	Reflection about the importance of emotions in daily classroom life, in teacher's own emotional experience and towards pupils. Two parallel workshops: 6 h Emotions and care: taking care of himself and of the other 6 h Reflection about teacher emotions
Area meeting Sept. – Oct. 2010	Knowledge of the PATHS model and of its application. Retrieving of information from the 23/24 august meeting.
Visit 1 Sept. – Oct. 2010	Attendance and co-management of one socio-emotional activity in the classroom
Meeting 30 October 2010	Reflection about the socio-emotional skills required to teachers Understanding of function and use of the research log (diary) 3 h Teachers' emotional skills 3 h Diary and forum: tools accompanying the path to CAS

Early training

Visit 2 &3 Dec. – Mar. 2011	Visit to individual teachers, confrontations on the issues, feedback on the experiences A total of 4 visits for the first year and of 2 for the second one. The first visit's aim is to demonstrate to the teacher how the methodology can be practiced inside the classroom. The remaining three are more finalized in assisting the teacher. One of the latter will bear observational character (gathering of data): see the following case.
Visit 4 Apr. – May 2011	Observation about the teacher's style of conduction inside the classroom
Focus group (up to 10 teachers) Apr. – May 2011	Collection of data about the project and its functioning
Other possible meetings	Discussions and exchange of experiences

Final training

Meeting June 2011	Full day devoted to the comparison of first year's experiences Assessment of the formative requests expressed by the teachers Planning of the second year
30 June 2011	Delivering of the research log (diary) in its definitive format

Tab. 2: schedule of the project

At present, four researchers are working at the project. Antognazza takes care of the general organization and maintains the contacts with the Jacobs foundation, Sciaroni deals with the work on the field, performed with and by the teachers, and two junior researchers follow the teachers. Currently, the first cycle of visits (over four previewed during the current school year) was performed, and the second one is partly concluded. Since the participation to the project leads the teacher to obtain the CAS, teachers' engagement resulted more intense than in other similar experiences.

Targets, outcomes and evaluation

The first objective of *Chiamale emozioni* is to increase the teachers' skills in managing and effectively fostering socio-emotional learning at the classroom and school level. This should lead to the development of adequate skills (defined in tab. 3) by the pupils, like managing themselves, either individually and while relating with others, working successfully and fairly, recognizing and managing their own emotions, establishing positive relationships, and handling challenging situations constructively. At the end of the first year the teachers should possess a basic knowledge about social and emotional learning, its implementation and to the aspects related to it.

The second objective is, as said before, to improve the social and relational skills of the children. The data coming from this research will help in defining appropriate SEL interventions for children in Canton Ticino, in Switzerland and in other countries. The path will be subdivided in the following stages: documentation and analysis of the process of implementation of a SEL intervention; collection of "best practices"; definition of guidelines for successful SEL integration into the school curriculum and in the school context. At the end of the first year the children from kindergarten should develop self-awareness, and should be able to identify and manage their emotions, while the ones from primary school should develop self-awareness and self-management skills, and should be able to identify and manage their emotions and behaviour.

Further objectives are the identification of the key factors and features that result in effective SEL implementation and the introduction of SEL knowledge and skills in the curriculum of primary school and in teachers education.

SEL skills, as defined by CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, the world leading research institute on SEL³, are as follows:

Self-Awareness: Recognizing one's emotions, and identifying and cultivating one's strengths and positive qualities.

Social Awareness: Understanding the thoughts and feelings of others, and appreciating the value of human differences.

³ What is SEL - Skills & Competencies. Retrieved June 1st, 2008, from <http://www.casel.org/basics/skills.php>.

Self-Management: Monitoring and regulating one's emotions, and establishing and working toward the achievement of pro-social goals.

Relationship Skills: Establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation, effective communication techniques, conflict negotiation, and an ability to resist inappropriate social pressure.

Responsible Decision-Making: Accurately assessing situations and situational influences; and generating, implementing, and evaluating ethical solutions to problems so as to promote one's own well-being, and the well-being of others.

Tab. 3: Skills to be developed by the pupils

These abilities can be helpful in facing peer pressure, negative behaviours, bullying, ill-mannered behaviours, hazardous risk-taking which jeopardize children's safety and schools' regular working. Research shows that students with social skills and emotional awareness do better both socially and academically and are more motivated to engage in learning activities, in collaborating with other children and in handling both stresses and daily tasks more successfully.

At the end of the second year the teachers should become autonomous in teaching SEL, both using structured SEL activities and targeting SEL skills in their everyday teaching, while two years after the end of the project they should keep and strengthen their skills in using SEL in their actual educational practice.

The children are expected to use social-awareness and interpersonal skills learned during the first two years in establishing and maintaining positive relationships between themselves; to be able to recognize the feelings and perspectives expressed by others and to master communication and social skills when interacting with others. Moreover, they are expected to show decision-making skills and responsible behaviours in various contexts, and to be able to apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations. Two and three years after the end of the project the pupils should have developed a better than average ability in identifying and managing emotions and behaviours; they should also maintain positive relationships and communications with other individuals. Moreover, also their decision-making skills and responsible behaviours should be further improved.

The outcomes of this project are to be tested in various ways:

Teachers

- Acceptance and feedbacks relative to the training
- Creation of focus groups
- Two classroom observation for every teacher, performed by researchers, during each school year, lasting two hours each. The teachers will be assessed through the Teacher Behavior Rating Scale (TBRS), a specific measure for teacher support for social and emotional learning.
- Research log (diary) sent by teachers once in every month
- Every teacher will be interviewed twice during the two years of the project.

Pupils

- Testing the recognition of emotions, portrayed through the presentation to the student of human visages (before and after the teacher's action) through the Kusché Emotional Inventory (KEI, 1984)
- Testing the understanding of emotions through the Test of Emotion Comprehension (TEC; Pons & Harris, 2000), relative to nine aspects of emotions: recognizing facial expression,

understanding situational cause, understanding the effect of external reminders on emotions, understanding the link between desire and emotions, understanding the link between belief and emotion, understanding the potential discrepancy between felt and expressed emotion, understanding guilt, understanding the regulation of emotion and understanding mixed or ambivalent emotions.

- Problem solving short stories where children need to choose which reaction they would have in specific situations.
- Comparing the academic results obtained by pupils participating to the project with the global mean of Ticino primary schools

360 children (30% of the 1,200 taking part to the study) will be tested during two years, and 300 other children, randomly selected and not participating to the project, will be the control group. Dire che la vlautazine sta avendo luogo in questo momento, portata avanti da un'equipe indipendente e seguirà l'intero progetto.

Focus Groups

Three focus groups were organized, with the participation of the vast majority of teachers. Each focus group lasted almost 3 hours, and was also an opportunity for mutual confront and reflection on practices.

The activities were organized in the following way: Welcome and description of the activity; Evaluation of the process (positive and negative things); Brief description of class activities; Effects of the activities on the class; Initial expectations; Evaluation of the accompanying system (blog-forum-diary-visits); Evaluation of the training; Relation with the research team members; Suggestions to improve the process; General balance.

The level of involvement and motivation in the participating teachers is high, even if the workload is somewhat heavier than what originally expected by them. This fact can be problematic for teachers working part-time with colleagues not taking part to the project. This issue will be solved for the next cohort of teachers. The quality of the performed activities is usually perceived as good, but some teachers, while desiring a closer presence of the trainers, express also the wish to work on their own and to be visited during their classroom practice only by research assistants.

Teachers say that the work performed into the classroom has some effects also on the parents. Emotions and feelings have become a theme of reference in the discussion between teacher and parents. The children's use of some techniques (for instance the turtle) at home has proved useful also for their parents.

All the teachers would like to meet more often, and the desire of improve the exchange between colleagues is regarded as an issue to be solved among teachers. The organization of meetings with colleagues working in other places has been shown to be a solution to avoid conflicts and to help teachers in sharing and managing their problems.

All the teachers reports an evolution in their attitudes towards children and in their habits. Usually, more the teaching experience of the teacher, more the advantage in working with the PATHS methods. Teachers with less experience report more difficulties in organizing activities, planning them and following the rule of at least one hour a week dedicated to the learning of Path. The evaluation of the training process is completely positive.

With reference to the "side activities" the teachers reports some difficult with regard to the forum and the blog, that are seldom used. They express a greater preference for physical encounters, saying often that electronic instruments are rather "cold".

If the diary is to be used correctly, the activity is actually tiring, because the teachers don't feel to have enough time to write and to explain what they do in a satisfactory way. The visits are perceived as extremely agreeable and useful. The explanations of the activities performed by the research assistants are perceived as very useful, but also the presence of the coordinator observing the lessons and giving ideas and suggestions is really appreciated. The e-mail is used currently, every message receives a quick answer. When necessary, the phone is also used.

To improve the whole process teachers suggest to increase the number of meetings, organizing them on a geographical basis and to further develop contacts with the research coordinators.

Dissemination

One of the main targets of the project is the stable inclusion of the development of emotional competencies into the primary schools' curriculum of Cantone Ticino. The results stemming from the experience will also be submitted to scientific journals and will lead to the organization of an International meeting on the issue of the development of emotional skills in school. Since the experience is also evaluated by a number of universities located in other countries (Milan, Florence, Bari and Zagreb), there is also a chance that it will be replicated also elsewhere. At a more "micro" level, a blog and a forum are at present operative, and some meetings with authorities are planned.

Moreover, all teachers, principals and school personnel in Ticino receive the magazine "Scuola ticinese", where a report about the experience will be published. A meeting with the teachers participating to the project is also previewed, whose aim is the sharing of experiences occurred during the project's implementation. Two publications are also planned, a technical report and a summary about learning from practitioners and politicians, with guidelines for an effective SEL policy. The former will be written in Italian, while the latter also in German and French. The participation to meeting and conferences in Switzerland is also forecasted, and the lessons learnt from the whole experience will lead to the introduction of new issues in DFA's curricula. Davide Antognazza takes account of the international networks, Luca Sciaroni of the national relationship.

Feedback

Two interviews were conducted, the first with Vania and Tamara, two teachers acting at the pre-school level, and the second with Fabrizio, a primary school teacher. The following is a synthesis of both.

Vania and Tamara

How did you choose to participate?

We liked immediately the project. We had a strong interest for emotions, and we found that this issue could engage very effectively the children.

Can you tell something about the introductory stage?

After receiving a first global information about the experience and following some dialogues with colleagues that practiced something similar during the past years, we submitted the inscription form, and after some time we received the confirmation of our enrolment. We were asked to participate to a workshop during the month of August.

How was this first stage?

The experience was very positive, the project is focused not only on children's emotions, but also on teacher's ones, and we appreciate a lot this feature. The given information was very clear and effective. The exchange of experiences, impressions, ideas, etc. with other colleagues was also quite enjoyable, they provided a lot of concrete details about their own practices.

How did the experience pursue?

The start-up was managed by a researcher that illustrated, while interacting with our children, an example about how to apply the methodology. Then she introduced the use of the diary.

After this introduction, we started to plan our first experience with our pupils, firstly involving their parents, who, after a global explanation, were asked to choose an emotion and to portray it through a drawing. All the drawings were exposed on the walls, and the children had to choose a particular emotion, in order to work on it. We opted for the joy, and this was the first theme. In reality, since in the classroom of Tamara the pupils showed a little bit more aggressiveness than in Vania's one, she resolved to deal firstly with the emotion of anger.

Can you explain how you integrated the emotions theme in your daily school activities?

Usually, we introduce the work on emotions during activities that are particularly suitable for it. When we deal with emotions, some other factors emerge: for instance, the role of praises when we have a feeling of joy, or of respect in avoiding anger. At present, Tamara's class is working on fear, while Vania's one is ending the issue of anger and our reactions.

While for this year we will maintain this approach, for the next we are planning to construct all our school program around the theme of emotions, since we think that this issue deserves a more continuous approach.

What do you feel about the diary?

Even if not ever exciting, we think that writing the diary is useful, in particular when we reflect about what was performed and how, it helps in focusing more clearly our experience.

Fabrizio

Fabrizio is a primary school teacher. At present, he is teaching to first grade pupils.

How did you choose to participate?

First, I know very well a person who is actually working at the project, a member of the research staff. Moreover, in our school we participated to a previous experience, with Luca Sciaroni and Silvia Ruggeri (from the research team), consisting in some information conferences about the theme of emotions. Then, following a school policy, I worked on other projects, but I regretted somewhat not to have prosecuted the experience with emotions. So, when I had the opportunity, my choice was to participate. In addition, there is the chance to obtain a CAS.

And after your enrolment?

In reality, I involved other colleagues (3), so that the experience is at present performed by a little group. We followed the workshop during the past month of August, we received some materials, and the research team asked us to perform some activity. At the end of October we participated to another workshop, and during the last month of January we had other training sessions. We exchange e-mails between ourselves – and there is the forum, where I don't participate too much – but I fill regularly also the personal diary.

What about your practice in the classroom, from August on?

Our first aim was to led the children to discover their fundamental emotions – and to identify them, with reference to the seven basic ones (fear, sadness, anger, joy, surprise, disgust, contempt). Through some pictures portraying other children, some drawings, etc. , the children had to speak about the depicted emotion, name it, try to tell some story related to it. This is a journey that is going on until today: at first, the children don't distinguish very well between the various emotions, so we decided to start with the more intuitive ones, like joy or sadness, and we followed with the more “difficult” ones, covering them one at a time.

How many lesson time do you use for “Chiamale emozioni”?

Usually, one hour and one half each week, but it depends from the other arguments. For instance, during the first weeks, since the main objective was the building of the classroom climate, emotions had a huge importance, and the project took more time, extending itself over other areas.

Do you find in the behaviour of your children some signals of the effectiveness of the project?

Firstly, some children care more for others' emotions, and try somehow to understand them. Secondly, I find that the children start to show some more self-control skills. In this, the turtle's story – where a turtle doesn't like to go to school, is ever angry, doesn't like to work, lose all friendships – was quite important. The solution, suggested by an old turtle, is to better control your behaviour, trying to keep calm.

So, some children master the situation in a more satisfactory way. And the others?

The more problematic children are not very able to listen to other persons. While, already from the first school day, some children display good skills in recognizing others' emotions, other children are more closed into themselves and somewhat emotionally “illiterate”.

For these children, do you find links with their school performance?

Yes, at least partly. I don't have any scientific evidence, but my perception says yes. It is probable that these children, beyond not being able to listen to others, are also unable to listen to themselves.

Did you find differences between males and females

Usually, females show more sensibility for emotions, but some males do have it, too.

Were you able to create links, “bridges”, etc. between this project and your everyday school practice?

Yes, in particular through the reading of auto-biographic stories, where a strong link with the narrative skills of everyone emerges. In this, they became more “specific” in finding inside the story the traits linked with their emotions.

How did you collaborate with your colleagues?

Even if we started together, at present everyone of us follows a more individual path. It depends also from the “type” of class you have. For instance, my one is somewhat “lively”, while other are more quiet: when we come back from recess, I have ever some emotional question to deal with, whilst my colleagues don’t have so much “themes” at disposal.

And what about the cooperation with the research team?

I fairly agree with the project, as a whole (aims, methodology, etc.). The visits are ok, but at the start I expected more support and contacts; however, it is also true that I didn’t ask for more support, since I tried to solve the problems autonomously.

Perhaps is also matter of resources by the research team

Out of doubt. I teach from more than twenty years, and I find correct to save the resources for the younger colleagues.

Did you have contacts with teachers from other schools?

Yes, we meet with some regularity. It is useful for the sharing of problems, cases, difficulties, and so on, and for the research of better solutions. Moreover, we can meet with Silvia Ruggeri. With her we can speak of our experience in doing this project, recognizing our emotions. In fact, one of my motivations in participating to this experience is the fact that I think to the somewhat emotionally “illiterate”. I am happy to participate to this project also because I become more able in understanding myself: really, you can’t ask the children to better understand their emotions, if you aren’t able to do it with yours.

A lesson about emotions

Fabrizio shortly introduced the theme, speaking about the preceding lessons devoted to the theme. Then he tried to led the pupils to correlate some pictures of young children with the correct emotion depicted. In fact, some children were more able in recognizing them, while other had more difficulties, speaking essentially in terms of joy and anger.

Then, the teacher proposed for each child to choose one of those images, and to hang it up at the blackboard, under the category “feeling good” or “feeling bad”. After this first choice, he asked the children to discuss and revise the outcome. So, some pictures were transferred from one side to the other, until to reach, after some discussion, a shared disposition.

Then, speaking about some portrayed emotion, the teacher asked the pupils to tell an auto-biographical experience or story related to it. The conclusion was the creation of drawings by the pupils, depicting those experiences.

Conclusion

Chiamale emozioni is a project whose target is a quite important domain of the individual's personality, namely the emotions that every person experiences during her/his life.

Emotions are not, by themselves, good or bad, but their role in influencing our behaviour is very important, and an educative action that can help the individual in mastering them is at the same time innovative and important.

The relevance of emotions during the early childhood is strong, and this can be the better age to start a similar form of education. *Chiamale emozioni* gives the chance to a group of teachers to introduce an innovative approach in their teaching, and all the teachers interviewed in this report showed a good appreciation of the project.

What said and practiced by the teachers "on the field" corresponds to what is defined in the theoretical framework exposed in the preceding pages. Even if it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions about the experience, since a scientific assessment of it is at present running, the pupils of the visited classroom appear to actually have acquired some important skills in better recognizing and managing their emotions.

Even if it is difficult to draw a definitive conclusion, since "Chiamale emozioni" is still undergoing an evaluation process conducted by external agencies, at least in reference to what seen inside the classrooms, the project seems to reach effectively its targets, and, from my point of view, it is also fairly desirable for this approach to become institutionalised through its implementation in the curriculum of the primary school of Canton Ticino, and to be further extended to its upper grades.

In terms of transferability (at various levels), it can be said that the pupils, through the knowledge of the real meaning of the key-words and to the use of a range of techniques are in condition to recognize various "emotional" signals and to deal with them. The same thing holds, in a more complex way, also for a large group of teachers.

In terms of transferability to other schools/classes, at present the initial training of the teachers taking place at the Dipartimento Formazione e Apprendimento of the Scuola Universitaria Professionale in Locarno includes 18 hours/year of tuition on the theme of the management of emotions for the primary teachers and 12 hours/year for the secondary teachers. The project team is also negotiating with the political authorities an extension of the project to a wider number of teachers: while the methodology is transferable without particular changes, its aims are really innovative and needs to be introduced to political and administrative authorities, in order to gain their sustain and involvement. In similar forms, this approach is also practiced in other countries (USA, Canada), and, as said, some foreign universities are following what done in Switzerland. The conditions for a real extension either of this or of similar methodologies are therefore present.

A questionnaire about the well-being inside secondary schools is at present being submitted to 800 subjects. A similar questionnaire is being contemporarily submitted to some Canadian teachers in Vancouver (British Columbia) in collaboration with Kimberly A. Schonert-Reich, of the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education of the University of British Columbia.

Giorgio Ostinelli

Addendum

a) Here it is possible to find three description sheets, whose content will be briefly outlined:

Title	Sweet words relay race
Target	Training in praising Doing some bodily exercise
Length	20 min
Materials	Baton Circles or poles to define the start points
Age	4 - 11
Description	This is a classical relay race, where each child have to praise sincerely and originally the team-mate to which s/he passes the baton. The praise has to be honest and original (no repeats). The fastest team wins.
Remarks	Should be performed in the gym.

Title	Anger soup
Target	To reflect about what let us angry and what helps us in finding again our quietness. Performed in form of play.
Length	Appr. 30 – 40 min.
Materials	
Age	4 – 10
Description	The pupils, seated in circle, mime to stir a soup. In turn, each of them tells about a situation where s/he feels angry, and throws one of her/his carpet slippers to the centre of the circle. All pupils speak, and then each of them drinks some soup and becomes angry, showing this feeling through her/his expression. Then, everyone says what does s/he feel better when angry, throwing the other carpet slipper to the centre of the circle. Then, everyone drinks some soup, miming a better feeling.
Remarks	

Title	Emotions' puppets
Target	To personalize some emotions, giving to each child an expert interlocutor for each of them. Letting every child express what s/he feels inside, using the puppet as example (how do you think the puppet feels if...) or as interlocutor while speaking of some emotion.
Length	Anytime when a new emotion is introduced or reviewed.
Materials	A puppet with expressive facial traits for each emotion.
Age	3 – 5
Description	The puppet speaks about one emotion and discusses about it with the children. The pupils or the teacher can give to it some name (like "Little happy", etc.). The puppet can give answers to some questions about the emotion, or she can receive some hints from the children (for instance an angry puppet).
Remarks	This approach works very well with the little pupils of the kindergarten (up to 5 years).

Title	Traffic light inside ourselves
Target	To transmit the idea that the traffic light is inside ourselves
Length	30 min
Materials	Paper sheets with the picture of the traffic light Whatever needed to write, color, etc.
Age	6 - 8
Description	Firstly the teacher explains that this traffic light isn't at the crossroads, but inside ourselves, and works like an ordinary one. Every child will receive a sheet of paper with the picture of the traffic light, and will be asked to do a portrait of her/himself around it (head, arms, legs, etc.). The traffic light will be the trunk of the figure.
Remarks	This activity presupposes a previous introduction to the traffic light methodology (see PATHS model)

Title	You are special
Target	Discussing with the children how we feel when someone is mocking us or about the various ways of laughing/smiling, through the reading of a story
Length	20-30 min
Materials	"Butterfly ears" (a book of L. Aguilar) Pictures to be projected on a screen/wall
Age	6 - 7
Description	<p>The teacher tells the story of Mara, a little girl with protruding ears (or "butterfly ears", as her mother says), rebel hairs, etc. All these features are object of mockery by her classmates, but they differentiate also her in a positive way from the others.</p> <p>During the story, all the (mischievous) laugh/smiles of her classmates are analyzed, together with her one, uncontrived and happy.</p> <p>Some questions can be asked, to stimulate the discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are these children Mara's friends?... Usually your friends don't mock you - Are their laugh/smiles equal? Why are they different? (It can be asked to imitate some laughs/smiles) <p>In conclusion, the teacher can ask the children to draw a happy face, individuating the traits characterizing happiness in it.</p>

Remarks	Every pupil could be asked to define her/his “uniqueness” trait, to find a name for it (like Mara) and to portray it
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Title	The magic wand
Target	To find a strategy for the management of conflicts
Length	30-40 min
Materials	“Diventare amici” from the book “La scatola delle meraviglie” (F. Andreoni) Pictures from the story
Age	6 - 7
Description	<p>The teacher reads the story “Diventare amici”. Three musical instruments don’t get along very well between themselves, everyone doesn’t like the music of the other. One day, a musical director’s wand give a suggestion to them: if they play together the same music, they will produce a beautiful melody. With the help of the wand, they realize how beautiful is to play together.</p> <p>When the story ends, the teacher asks the pupils to summarize it, with the help of the pictures, and to clap their hands, choosing a rhythm. Without a director, the experience is unfair. Then, they are asked to play with a director.</p> <p>After these activities, the teacher asks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are you able to play together well, without quarreling? - You were never left off from some play? How did you feel? - What did you in order to solve this situation? <p>During the discussion it can become evident that often, in order to solve a quarrel, the children ask for the help of some adult (mother, teacher, etc.)</p> <p>At this point the teacher can ask “How could you do in order to avoid to ask for the help of some adult? Think to the story of the three musical instruments.”</p> <p>So, the class usually ask for instituting a wand, like in the story, that can help the children in playing without quarreling.</p>
Remarks	The teacher created this approach after observing that the pupils, while playing together, often fight between themselves, excluding some classmates.

- b) This is an extract of the record of the meeting of the 23th-24th of August 2010, relative to some practical experiences in the primary school :

CAS Education social-emotional Teacher Training 23 to 24 August 2010

Workshop on the practical experiences Elementary School (14.30 - 16.00)

Omar Balmelli, primary school Caslano

Omar replaces Matteo Negrini, who has been an impediment to the last minute.

Presentation: "Educational programs on emotional literacy." Powerpoint presentation created by Omar Balmelli and Stefano Galeazzi to present the work done between 2007 and 2010 in parallel classes.

Starting point of the work Omar and Stephen: What are the conditions in which a child enters a classroom and learn in an optimal way?

First grade: the autobiography, graphic and pictorial work.

1. "Journal of Memory." Divided into 16 weeks (beginning of school until Christmas), collects all the important moments, to remember, selected by the whole class. On Friday, we chose the moments, and Monday morning 2 / 3 children drew them, and then paste them on the poster. Towards the final weeks of the children could even remember what emotions they felt at certain times. Feedback of children: they liked the idea of keeping this diary, but sometimes doing a little 'hard to divide between school and leisure / home.

2. Personal diary. Second part of the school year (after Christmas): The children received a notebook, where they could describe the most significant moments for them, with their drawings. At the end of the year everyone had his first autobiographical book. The idea came from teachers, not by students.

Question: It was difficult to differentiate between the first and the second part? → (The difference between personal and common experience)?

O: Yes for some it was not immediately clear, since it was a process.

3. Sadness Graphic-pictorial activity. After a listening of the songs with closed eyes, the class agreed on what made them sad, everyone could describe the emotions s/he felt. Then each wrote what had occurred on a card, doing a sketch. These were then glued together on all of the posters. Reflection of Omar: The management of the evocation of sad moments is rather delicate. The teacher has a very important role because he must "channel" the stories that come out. The nice thing, and surprising, is that there is a lot of solidarity, mutual understanding and very much support among the children themselves.

How parents react when they know that in class we talk about so personal and family-related facts?

Earlier this year, we explained to parents that we would have done this type of work and why we did it (objectives to be achieved). Some parents have asked for explanations, we have reassured them that there was any type of judgement on what said, and in this way it worked. This is often because the benefits of being able to vent are clear, even for the parents (for example, better school performance).

I prefer that such delicate things remain personal. → My students had a personal collector where to store their drawings etc.. This is also because we do not have any professional training to deal with what could get out.

It's a personal choice, it depends on the teacher if you feel up to face such situations in the group.

But there isn't a risk that the children then begin to bring upon you their problems, looking for help that we can not give?

I think that we can help children in feeling good in the classroom. If we are able in doing this, very good, but we must understand clearly that our expertise outside the classroom ends. I think the teachers in these cases may also be a resource, can activate the services needed, when necessary.

Davide: working in this way, we give some extra chance to the children to go out, to express one's own experience, and this is a good opportunity. But why do not take care of everything we hear! We can accommodate a part of what we get, and if we see that it begins to go beyond our competence, we need to activate other recourses. The most frequently mentioned situations are quiet, very manageable in the classroom (bullying, fear of failure, etc..). Only in some cases we are confronted with "difficult to manage" issues. Of course, opening the door, giving this space and this opportunity, this can happen easily, but there are also resources to deal with such situations.

Second grade: decentralization (from me to others), interpersonal relationships. Path lasted about ¾ of a year.

1. Personal Diary: Collecting personal data (age, hobbies, etc..).

2. Reflection on gender: differences between males and females.

- Billboards with stereotypes (the males are ... / females are ...)
- Who looks more alike the father / mother? What I look alike my father / mother?

3. Reflection on the roles of brothers and sisters in the family: the role of my big or younger brother, then reflection on relations with other people who care for them (aunt, grandmother, nanny, etc..).

- Work on detachment from oneself to take care of the people around us. First in the family, then beyond.
- Even through the role play.

4. Outside the family: friends, acquaintances, etc.. Activities on the compliments (who complimented me? From who would I like to receive compliments?)

5. The group - class: with whom do I spend more time? With whom would I like to spend more time? With whom do I spend less time? Why? Who is more like me?

6. End result: the map of one's socio-emotional world.

In a parallel way: "the heart of the class" (Cooperation Council) every child could put a note on the heart every time a situation provokes an emotion to her/him (in the right place, depending on the emotion he felt: anger - joy - surprise - sadness) and at the end of the week this issue was the object of a common discussion.

Anger	Joy
Surprise	
Sadness	

Special situations during the year:

- Two little girls come into class crying very loud, no one speaks, no one knows what to do. A child, usually rough and rowdy, approaches them holding out a handkerchief and saying he's sorry.
- Children writing more and more often their emotions on the heart located in the classroom.

Third grade: from myself to the other, the current self-image of others. The thermometer of the classroom climate.

Abstract: During the third grade is more difficult to introduce moments of this type because the curriculum is more dense!

Basic idea: Johari window.

1. Interviews with parents (or other reference): the children had to question parents about their behavior and their own qualities or defects.

2. "Which grade do I attribute to myself today?": Ask yourself how you behaved.

3. Rules and symbol of well-being: eg. the key (located in strategic places to remember).

4. Thermometer of classroom climate: the heart of the Cooperation Council has become a thermometer: "how's the climate of the classroom?" (it is hot: well-being; it is cold: malaise) Pleasant emotions - unpleasant emotions = classroom climate.

During the first week was always below zero because the children forgot to put inside the pleasurable emotions! After some time, they started to put them more often. Interesting: the thermometer, since he started working well, is a great mirror to understand the class feeling!

5. Traffic light: works primarily on stopping himself and acting in another way; the yellow light's understanding is still a bit difficult (objective for the fourth grade).

6. Album: posters on the wall where every child can put the emotions of the day. It worked very well: the children changed spontaneously the hanged emotions.