

THE CURRICULUM IN KINDERGARTEN

Diana PENSO
Commune of Rome, Italy

ABSTRACT

The first objective of the course was formulated by Montaigne : a head well done is better than a head full well. What does " a head full well " is clear: it is a head in which knowledge is accumulated, crowded and does not have a principle of selection and organization that gives meaning . A head well done means that instead of accumulating knowledge is much more important to have at the same time a general ability to ask and deal with any problems , organizers of principles that allow you to connect the knowledge and give them meaning .

Knowledge is the ability to see something new every day. This is possible in a school that allows you to live experiences , the school as a place of life and suffering in which we learn from the occasions and meetings , in which you can explore and where life filters on all sides.

1. INTRODUCTION

About the idea of the curriculum in kindergarten, there are still differences of opinion, contradictions, and uncertainties: it is possible to speak of curriculum for children in kindergarten, which are fundamental knowledge of the smallest in the school?

How to reconcile the need for creativity, exploration and discovery, acceptance of the unexpected and the children lived, with the knowledge strictly formalized of the ‘disciplines’?

And it's possible to build curricula that take into account the needs of the game, listening, relationship with the need to organize knowledge in a structured path?

In some situations, though of course things are changing, the kindergarten is still experienced as a school- play and pastime.

For many families, professional, executives, kindergarten institution remains and is an institution of little importance and cultural significance, transition area waiting to get to the real school, the school of reading and writing.

Sometimes learning is still confused by asking children to acquire knowledge in a process of imitation of primary school (in particular for the last year of primary school) in a logic of scholastic exercises, compilation cards, to the detriment of relationships and communications that become (as opposed to what is said and written) distracted, hurried, without interest and warmth.

So in these situations, the curriculum is misunderstood by the learning's "formal" and structured, and build routes predetermined, reproducing shapes and patterns, the curriculum of the elementary school, looking for targets, meaning results to be achieved.

A curriculum for kindergarten should be incorporated in a project, taking into account the characteristics and uniqueness of children in front of him, the social environment of reference, the resources available, such as through state and explicit proposal, activities, experiences, educational strategies, aimed at ensuring that all children can strengthen the skills that appear to be essential aspects of development.

In kindergarten the paths do not have to follow a cognitive criterion, borrowed from other types of schools, but take account of the plot between emotional bonds and cognitive development in learning, among the small acts of everyday life and formal knowledge between the already and the unexpected.

The curriculum has to be reconstructed, uncovering a wealth of experience, knowledge, languages with which the children are at school, from their experiences, reception at their entrance to school, through the preparation of itineraries that gradually start towards the formation of thought itself.

2. THE CHILDREN KNOWLEDGE

What are the knowledge and the basic knowledge that children of kindergarten can acquire and how to integrate them?

Children today have the opportunity to access a lot of knowledge, of information, of knowledge, but often disconnected from each other and do not always have the opportunity to reflect, filter, re-interpret the information received, thus integrating them in their world and in their own reality knowledge.

The places of education have increased and each of them offers opportunities, opportunities, incentives, learning models, often contradictory to each other. In this overcrowded world of stress, children appear to us uncertain, disoriented, they risk losing the natural ability to contextualize their knowledge and integrate them into their sets and their multiplicity.

The school with its overly didactic planned and constructed, is likely to train boys and girls for whom the learning and memories are fragmented, shredded, reduced non- narrative backgrounds, but details of incidents or knowledge.

"There is an inadequacy increasingly broad, deep and serious disjoint between our knowledge, split, divided into disciplines on the one hand and reality or problems, more and more polidisciplinari, transversal, multi-dimensional, global, on the other. The intelligence who knows only separate breaks the complexity of the world in disjointed fragments, division problems, atrophies the possibility of understanding "(E. MORIN)

Our education system teaches us, starting from the primary school, to separate the disciplines rather than to acknowledge their solidarity, to isolate objects from their environment, to decouple the problems, rather than to connect and integrate.

The first objective of the course was formulated by MONTAIGNE: a head well done is better than a head full well.

What does “a head full well” is clear: it is a head in which knowledge is accumulated, crowded and does not have a principle of selection and organization that gives meaning.

A head well done means that instead of accumulating knowledge is much more important to have at the same time a general ability to ask and deal with any problems, organizers of principles that allow you to connect the knowledge and give them meaning.

"We have to think about the problem of teaching from the consideration of the effects of increasingly severe compartmentalization of knowledge and inability to articulate to each other, across from the consideration that the ability to integrate and contextualize is a fundamental quality of the human mind." (E.MORIN)

The knowledge should not be separated from each other, but integrated with each other, through routes and motivating projects, built on the basis of affection, from experiences, from tales, from the observations of the children, in a continuous dialogue with the knowledge of adults and teachers.

Knowledge is the ability to see something new every day. This is possible in a school that allows you to live experiences, the school as a place of life and suffering in which we learn from the occasions and meetings, in which you can explore and where life filters on all sides...On the other hand already in many primary schools for several years through work projects: overcoming the logic of linear programming, scanned for each objective, teaching units, with pre-determined paths in progressive sequences, we created a design -type lattice of open situations, attentive to context, committed to programming backgrounds supplements, able to read the great variety and complexity of learning.

The teacher prepares situations, suggests and proposes narrative backgrounds (a fantastic background or social) which help the construction of shared meanings, motivation to learn, research and curiosity.

This approach assigns great importance to the motivation, curiosity, the processes of research and discovery, the organization of the school environment as a facilitator of the learning process on the part of children, in an interdisciplinary course that crosses multiple fields of expertise.

The basic principles of teaching that is necessary to keep in mind when organizing educational activities in kindergarten are given by:

- a) THE LIFE OF REPORT**
- b) LEARNING FOR DISCOVERY**
- c) THE GAME**

a) THE LIFE OF REPORT

Still weighs on kindergarten, reductive interpretation of Piaget's theory, with its emphasis on self-centered dimension of the child's thinking that would be capable of playing, working, talking, just next to the other and not together with others.

However, one must not neglect the most current research on the social construction of knowledge that recognizes a prominent role to the interaction of the child with peers and with adults.

For Vigotsky, what the child will be able to do tomorrow alone, can already do in cooperation today. Most functions that apply to mature, the teacher should stimulate the functions in the process of maturation, operating in the zone of proximal development (or potential) where it is possible for the child to be guided by an adult or a more experienced partner in tasks slightly higher than its current capacity.

The relationship with the adult work (according to research conducted by J.Bruner and other authors) as a social scaffolding of know, cognitive and affective, destined to be dismantled as soon as the child will acquired the skill you want.

So human mental activity is not solitary, nor is without help, the mental life is lived with others, is made to be communicated and developed with the help of cultural codes and traditions.

Communication is the experience mental well founded and most significant of the person. To communicate means to be sharing with others their thoughts - organized, made transparent and transferable - and knowing how to listen and interpret those who send us messages...

The life of the school is continually interwoven by relationships. It is within these relationships that we learn the rules of life are learned behaviours, comparing ways of seeing and understanding reality. Do not learn by yourself, our minds are not isolated; learning is an interactive process in which people learn from each other, the result of a reciprocal exchange.

In kindergarten social interaction in the peer group is an essential dimension for the development and education of children.

The characteristic of learning is given by the opportunity of a collective and cooperative learning that should be placed in a community of discursive and social practices.

Trough interaction with peers, sharing skills, interests and curiosity, kids reinforce the sense of his own identity; learn to recognize emotions, behaviours

and needs of others, to control impulses depending on the reactions of others and to develop strategies appropriate to the relational life with others.

The sharing of interests and curiosity about the environment and the others, favours the transmission of knowledge between children and the development of shared strategies and exploratory learning.

b) LEARNING FOR DISCOVERY

Dewey had already argued in the first article of “My pedagogic creed” the importance of starting from the experiences and social activities of the child to set the methodology on a close connection between action and thought, between life and school.

Direct action, the real experience, the elements of the present difficulties in problem situations of life is “the initial state of that form of experience which is called thinking.”

And the life of every day is full of problems, that every person is called to solve, often with strategies approximate and unaware.

From Dewey, through the achievements of active schools, develops a 'general theory of experience' that is enriched by the contributions of Piaget's cognitive (experience stimulates thought to assimilate new data, transforming mindsets already owned) structuralism of Bruner (action to the direct things is the starting point for most forms of symbolic representation).

The child, while achieving an exploratory behaviour (for example, in the game) gets to find out just features, meanings and relationships of the situations and make their own cognitive procedures that are then reapplied almost spontaneously in other situations that possess some similar character .

Only the ability to learn from experience is the foundation of true learning. The learning experience is significant not only because it involves the solution of a problem, but also because it allows you to learn what were the methods that are used to solve it.

The essential feature of learning through personal discovery, be it conceptualization or solution to a problem, is that the content to be learned is not given but is discovered by the child, before he does so precisely and checks its significant place in his cognitive structure The specific and primary task, in other words, you discover something, which path leads to the goal of the maze.

The first phase of this type of learning involves a completely different process from that of the receipt pure and simple. The child must rearrange the information, integrate it with existing cognitive baggage and reorganize or transform this set, so as to give the desired end result or to discover the missing link between the means and the end.

To transform the school into a place of research and discovery, space where you can "look up" and see the world, you must:

- Always ask the children rather than giving answers:

What does it mean? - or - what do you think?

- Leave space to imagine, fantasize, and think about events that occurred inside and outside the school... The responses of adults hamper the ability to think, if you do not answer, was born more thought,

- Allow your child to observe phenomena and events inside and outside:

The weather today? Who is and who is not? That has happened to our plans?

- Build places and opportunities for discovery: dens, shelters, angles, materials laboratories with structured and unstructured, making it possible to look up, look, look ...

- To promote the formulation of hypotheses, solutions, forecasts and their verification, always through the formulation of questions:

What do you think, what will happen?

- Facilitate the transition from exploration to the sense - perceptual symbolic representation of the facts and circumstances: we can draw or represent what we saw, felt, imagined

3) THE GAME

In the historical tradition of pedagogy and theories of the great educators of developmental psychology, the game is a necessary evolutionary stage, oriented to explore the environment, to experiment with the novelty and complexity, to test emotions and feelings through substitute objects and simulated behaviour, to anticipate the future commitment, to face reality with confidence and mastery, to carry out well-defined tasks, aimed and socially shared.

"The game is in this age, a prime resource for learning and relationships."

In fact, it promotes active and creative relationships both on the cognitive level, both in terms of relational, allows the child to transform reality according to his inner needs, to achieve its potential and to prove to himself and to others in a variety of aspects of desires and functions.

In kindergarten all activities should therefore be playful and all the experiences, cognitive and social, should be closely intertwined with gambling activities.

Game function

As ethological and observational studies have shown higher animals and small children, the game has a crucial evolutionary function and in a sense is the most important activity in which children are involved, especially prior to entry into primary school.

The game is constitutive activity, reason and experience background in the process of child development: in the first stage of life - notes Mauro Laeng - every child cross a preparatory period, evolutionary, in which the body tends to completeness, taking behaviours adaptive to external situations and learning schemes operating in unforeseen situations.

The educational function of play is almost at birth: the child immediately responds to environmental stimuli, building itself, in an active and original, developing the mental and physical balance, taking possession of the outside world, assuming the ability to create and decide.

Great pedagogues such as Owen, the Froebel, Dewey, Decroly, Montessori, had sensed in the "seriousness" with which the child plays, the psychological foundation of self-education.

The child engages in the activity play, his whole being, intelligence to the physical component, the affective dimension to relational skills, expressive and communicative.

Immersed in the game globally, the child perceives and moves, feels and reacts, fantastic, imagines, manipulates and builds, thinks and speaks, living the playful dimension with intense emotional reactions.

He senses solutions, try and try again, with the intention coordinates physical movement, organizes the relationship eye -mind- hand, represents and reproduces situations that come up from memory, creates desires. Through imagination and fantastic not only performs real actions, the game allows him to transform into other objects you want: a chair becomes, then, a train, a cloth turns into a doll with which you speak or download symbols.

The situation playful constitutes a protected space in which to experiment with expectations of results, skills, rules, in which face difficulties, risks and frustrations.

In a family and social context that neglects the child, in which the size of the movement rewarding, exploration and discovery is overwhelmed by the compulsion to immobility, even entertained by stereotyped toys and sophisticated deniers of creativity, you can tell that the baby needs, but also anxieties cannot be resolved, so that the childhood game becomes a method of re-appropriation of the human dimension must.

The game takes on value so liberating, therapeutic conflicts, fears, anxieties: mimicking the world of adults, children playing down the real comparison with adults.

But whatever the motivation to play, it is indisputable that it is a way to know, is playing you create premises to discriminate, to associate, to arrive at general ideas of things and behaviours of individuals, because the child is, among other things, an observer of the surrounding reality , transferring and editing as needed.

This activity is thus presented as a powerful tool for development, which makes possible the acceptance of the limits to the needs and desires, the acquisition of the first rules of social and moral values, the expression of positive and negative feeling, adjusting emotions through verbal exchange and the relationship.

The symbolic play

In everyday life, the child has to adapt to the behaviour of adults, who sometimes do not understand and do not always have a way to meet their own needs.

Is therefore necessary to have a space to measure one's own identity: that framework "container" is made from the game.

In play you mimic the adults, take on multiple roles, you will discover what behaviours are more congenial to themselves, they mediate emotions, you acquire self-control, it checks the feasibility of what you have planned, you manage rules and roles especially one experiences the interpersonal dynamics (the game is for the child, in fact, a good opportunity to socialize) .

In pretend play, children imitate the behaviour of adults, the representation offers the possibility to verify the social success of his action; at the same time the child knows he can hide behind a screen in character as reassuring and even out of it, if he is not gratified, since only a game.

The games are presented symbolic since the age of two years and introduce the child into the world of imagination play "as if", which is typically human and originates from the action.

The game, at this time, should be interpreted as the imaginary realization of desires, the objects in it are considered not only for what they are, but as symbols of other objects do not exist, which allows the evocation of past situations and the imagination of events in which you express the wishes of the child.

This stage of the game requires an activity of thought, full of self-centered and subjective elements, which allows small to satisfy their fantasies through asset replacement which is, for example, an object, a pillow to make the bed, where one usual pattern, such as sleep, it adapts to a new situation.

Later in the age of kindergarten, symbolic play acquires a great importance in the various games of "pretend", relating to situations of family life or the environment, the children not only develop the capacity to symbolize, which is the basis of each path of conceptualization, but, with the mediation of the teacher, even beginning to approach, with a critical sense, structures and problems of the community.

Being the game of make believe transformation "magic" in the world, encompassing activities in which mixes the real with the fantastic, it can become a teaching tool of great importance.

In symbolic games Piaget distinguishes those in which the child is an actor, pretending that is sleeping, eating, fall, those in which he is a director that does sleep, fall, eat others, and those in which the child turns in another person viewing the other self, this thing that prepares the transition from individual to group play.

A next phase is one in which the child accepts some rules of play together, as the alternation in turn and of 'imitate who knows how to play. It comes, therefore, collective game with clear rules and mutual recognition of diverse and complementary roles. In this advanced stage, the child discovers that the control of their behaviour is suitable to the satisfaction of his desire to play.

The game in kindergarten

When he gets to kindergarten in three years, the child is oriented to assert one's self, to acquire certain autonomy.

Initially then play alone, or is interested in what educationalists call parallel play (a game of solitaire phase) characterized by a certain ambivalent conflict: the child feels they want the toy companion, but in reality it aspires to relate himself to his companion.

Subsequently overcoming the egocentric stage, the child opens the game together with peers, gradually taking awareness of the need to respect the rules of the relationship.

The recreational activity develops social consciousness and the affective balance: when everyone talks about his game with each other, they form pairs, which become open groups in which even a "difficult " child can find a place operational and affective.

In the years of primary school the child learns to share the game socially, to plan a plot, to manage roles and rules of a certain complexity, to address and resolve conflicts, to give more of a symbolic meaning to the same object, to represent and integrate emotions, anxieties and fears.

The game as a transversal activity

As we've seen the game is one of the essential dimensions of childhood experience and should be taken, therefore, among the defining elements of the didactic taking into account the developmental needs of children.

The playful activity should be considered as one of the components inside the pedagogical design: in fact, it is a real business "cross " that is interwoven in all aspects of a child's life.

For example, the development of the body can be achieved through individual and group play: games from functional to symbolic and imitative or rules, free games, imitation, outdoor games.

The game is a tool for the development of language, especially in the form of symbolic play and fiction (the game of the house, mom and daughter)

in which children engage in two, three or in a small group. It is also a tool of exploration, improvisation, combining, processing rules, you can play a complete story, edit it...

The manipulation of objects and situations, construction activities, life skills, observation of the environment, of simple phenomena, the cause-effect relationship can be experienced as moments of play and discovery, so reaching real learning outcomes.

The dramatization activity and figurative - expressive, which are intended to lead the child to order fancy and imagination, to use materials and tools, to learn techniques to use, can be made in a playful dimension.

In the game - play the child can express themselves freely and find forms of expression and communication personal and effective.

And it's possible to start the child gradually to problematization, reasoning through games: do think and talk, ask riddles graduated, discuss how to resolve a situation of joint work, to classify, structure sets...

The use of structured and non- structured material, equipment for the directed movement outdoor, game-gardening work, construction of a toy, the design of a labyrinth, games are engaging activities that develop the mental, motor, perceptual -representational and symbolic of the child, and brought him to observe, reflect and express themselves ...

The game therefore, is essentially:

- collecting information on the characteristics of the objects and the "behaviour" of materials;
- knowledge and discovery of things and phenomena that surround the child, their characteristics, their organization;