BOOK REVIEW:

Educare nei mutamenti by Maria Luisa Iavarone (ed.)

Alessandra Passaretti
Università di Napoli "Parthenope"
alepassaretti@live.it

ABSTRACT

Review of Maria Luisa Iavarone (ed.), *Educare nei mutamenti. Sostenibilità didattica delle transizioni tra fragilità e opportunità*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2022, p. 184.

In a time when all is rapidly changing, the real risk for those involved in education is to be "overwhelmed" by changing contexts and scenarios, places, and actions of intervention.

The aim of the volume "*Educare nei mutamenti*" – edited by Maria Luisa Iavarone – is to outline innovative educational models useful for governing the changes of the present time, departing from the well-established approach of civic and wellbeing pedagogy.

This book was born in fact from the strong urge that the education system in its complexity is facing, to understand the changes of the present time. As we all know, the outbreak of digital technologies in the beginning of the new millennium has radically affected the organization of societies, determining, among the others, an innovation of the forms of knowledge acquisition and construction. As the authors stress, in the past two years, this process was even accelerated, consequently to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has imposed a forced reorganization of many systems: from health to socioeconomic, from work to education. The latter, that is the focus of the volume, has undergone a profound "genetic mutation" manifested through the distance learning tools, that have modified the traditional coordinates of space and time, shaping the era of "post-didactics" (p. 11).

As the authors point out, pupils, teachers and even many parents have experienced discomfort in recognizing themselves within a system that was

deprived of its essential components. For example, the absence of the classroom and the lecture hour, which always represented the base structure of the educational experience, inevitably produced a sense of disorientation. In fact, the mixture of possibilities offered by these places with strong bodily deprivation, has often generated advantages and opportunities, but also confusion and fragility. These considerations persuaded the authors to reflect on the need to physically *re-inhabit* emotional spaces in the educational work, re-think its parameters taking account of these times of global crises that have made the body "fragile, hypersensitive and renunciatory, obsessed with an implicit idea of survival filled by communicative and socio-relational *over-experiences*" (p. 12).

The volume analyzes these changes in three sections, pursuing three different levels of analysis, concatenated one to the other, providing the reader with a full picture of the contemporary educational system read through multidisciplinary lenses.

In the first section, "Spaces and backgrounds," we can find a description and interpretation of the complex and fragmented scenario of contemporaneity, in which the authors drawn a map that can enable the reader to move with awareness within the described boundaries.

In particular, the first level identifies some "educational focus" related to the contexts produced by the pandemic and the related overuse of technologies, the socio-emotional alienation perceived by young people and the consequent deficit of psycho-body and motor experiences. The observed critical aspects, according to the authors, reiterate the need for research and actions oriented to transform technologies into an *educational tool* that can assists, and not hinder, the processes of emotional literacy, development of empathy and communication, and the healthy and responsible exercise of daily peer relationships.

The authors, consequently, claim that it is crucial at this point for schools to stop reasoning about its loss of social value and begin to invest in its authentic modernization: train students to be capable of selecting from technologies the best data needed to understand and learn how to live in the present. For these reasons, the educational goal in the coming years will be to teach how to use technologies in a way that is functional for learning, and, according to the suggestion in the volume, it can be realized by raising the quality of their use.

Much focus is also given to the role that the physical activity can have as an educational tool and as a complementary to the technologies, especially if centered on the mind-body relationship. It constitutes, in fact, in a recognized way, an important tool for educational accompaniment, especially in adolescence, an age typically urged by powerful psychic and physical changes and often traversed by complex questions related, for example, to one's gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Motor activity must become, therefore, a gymnasium not only for sociality and relationships but, above all "of bodily intelligence and self-construction, where to teach how to *inhabit corporeity*

(Iavarone, 2013) to help learn to accept oneself in a stable, serene, self-designed, responsible and critical way" (p. 36).

In the second section, the authors describe some trajectories and innovative approaches useful for operating within the same boundaries identified in the first section. The second level of analysis proposes pedagogical research and educational intervention approaches with the aim of impacting the sustainability of human, social and economic development of communities. To do so the author talks about "wellbeing pedagogy" (Iavarone, 2008) and its use through the contribution of neuroscience and the *Embodied Theory model*.

The proposed methodological and research trajectories, in fact, place at the center the role of relationships and corporeity within hybrid educational settings that bring together both natural-biological and artificial-technological factors, stimulating a "conscious acting out in subjects, for singular and collective co-growth in re-interpreted and, therefore, re-transformed spaces and times" (p. 12).

To the readers becomes apparent as one continues reading the volume, how we are faced with decisively changed educational scenarios that require the strengthening of studies and research useful in identifying new systems of educational and didactic. To do so, the authors stress the need to improve the training skills, in particular, of teachers. As hybridization of human beings with technologies radically alters communication and relationship, it promotes the illusion that being connected is enough to be in relationship. This process consequently would require for adults with an educational role, to compensate for its effects through "competent parenting" also on the terrain of the relationship with technologies.

Additionally, the authors describe in this section the implementation of a master's program designed to achieve this goal. The master in "Experts in motor and sports education for the prevention of risk and the promotion of social inclusion," born from the urge to deal with the critical issues described in the first section of the book, was in fact created by combining knowledge and skills in the pedagogical, psychological, social, legal, economic-managerial, and organizational areas with tools for educational and training planning and coordination.

Finally, in the third section, some concrete examples are given within which the theories meet the actions in the territories and educational experiences implemented.

The applicative evidence is brought to the reader with the description of prototypes and practices implemented and viable in real contexts of educational action in which the authors have explored, consolidated, and still experiment with. The territory is described as the field of action for educators. In this third e final section we find, in fact, clear didactic, operational, and experiential indications aimed at designating possible ways for educators to trigger virtuous and sustainable educational processes, generated in the environment in which the subject lives and grows, for a development of one's well-being within the context.

The text will provide its reader with a broad view of the education system and its complex relationship with technologies, serving as a useful toolkit to draw a map that proves to be an essential tool for teachers, educators, pedagogists, psychologists, socio-educational and cultural professionals, working in formal, nonformal and informal contexts and Media Education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Iavarone M.L. 2018. "La sfida dell'educazione e della didattica nella generazione dei post-millennials", in S. Ulivieri (a cura di), *Le emergenze educative della società contemporanea. Progetti e proposte per il cambiamento*, Lecce: Pensa Multimedia.

Iavarone M.L. 2008. "La genitorialità 'competente' come contenitore di benessere", in Iavarone M.L. (a cura di), *Educare al benessere*, Milano: Mondadori.

Iavarone M.L. 2013. *Abitare la corporeità. Nuove traiettorie di sviluppo professionale*, Milano: FrancoAngeli.