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# THE PIT QUESTIONNAIRE 2002
# PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERACTION IN TEACHING
# FOR TEACHERS
# APPLICATION AND ANALYSIS MODEL

**Fausto Presutti**[6]

**Abstract:** *The IPI Questionnaire - Interaction in Education is a psycho-aptitudinal test who can analyze and assess the skills and competencies of teachers docimology:during the teaching, iIn the relationship with students.*

*The IPI questionnaire consists of two versions: IPI for* <u>Teachers</u>*, to analyze the size and characteristics of how each teacher "thinks he is as a teacher"; IPI for* <u>Students</u>*, which allows you to analyze the size and characteristics of how students "evaluate teachers."*

**Key words:** *the ipi questionnaire,psychological interaction , education*

**Introduction**

### *A.* **Conception of ipi questionnaire**

The IPI Questionnaire - Interaction in Education was created, elaborated and structured by Fausto Presutti in 1988 ©. In 1990 the IPI Questionnaire was published in "<u>*Psycho-diagnostic Test for Teaching. Attitudes– Motivations and Skills – Psychological Interaction*</u>" ("*Test Psicodiagnostici per l'insegnamento. Atteggiamenti – Motivazioni e Competenze – Interazione Psicologica*"), Aleph, Roma. In 1990s the theoretical model of IPI Questionnaire was defined and published in- "<u>*Educational Psychology and Research Methods*</u>"*("Psicologia dell'Educazione e Metodi di Ricerca")*, ATLAS Edition, Bergamo, 1992 - "<u>*Psychological Analysis of relational dynamics and organization of roles in class"*</u> *("Analisi psicologica delle dinamiche relazionali e della strutturazione dei ruoli nella classe")*, IRRSAE Marche – Istituto Regionale di Ricerca Sperimentazione, Aggiornamento Educativi per le Marche, Quaderni di "Innovazione Scuola" n. 16, Ancona, 1993.

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## *B.* The validation of the ipi questionnaire

The validity, effectiveness, reliability and portability of content and results of the  IPI questionnaire was tested:
 1. From 1995 to 1997, the following update-two-years pilot training projects:
   - "**teaching metodologies and docimolgy**" with the  *Provveditorato Agli STUDI DI PESARO E URBINO*, aimed at teachers of all levels;
    - "**psycho-pedagogical metodologies e conduction of educative Communities**" with the *Provveditorato Agli Studi Di Pesaro E Urbino*, aimed at headmaster.

2. From 1996 to 1998, the update-two-years pilot training course "**didactical metodologies and docimology**" for teachers of preschool, primary and middle secondary school, organized by *AIMC (Associazione Italiana Maestri Cattolici), by CIDI (Centro Iniziativa Democratica Degli Insegnanti) And by MCE (Movimento Cooperazione Educativa) authorized by Provveditorato di LATINA*. For several years, schools have continued to pursue experimentation and methodological and pedagogical research made by ESRB Pilot Schools - Educational Centers of Research and Experimentation.

3. In the three school years 1996/99 in the province of PESARO and URBINO, a major pilot training course "teaching methods and docimology" involving school administrators and teachers of 18 pilot schools of all levels of the province. The courses were organized by the Department of Education of Pesaro and Urbino (protocol of 27.07.1995 and subsequent 8135/C12 No, no. No 3327/C24 of 29/04/1997) and funded by the Ministry of Education, on "the reorganization of educational innovation in the perspective of school cycles in recovery and in research methodology-disciplinary". For several years, schools have continued to pursue experimentation and research methodological and pedagogical quality made ESRB Pilot Schools - Educational Centers of Research and Experimentation.

4. From 2000 to 2002, the Project "DO SCHOOL", characterized by the professional training of teachers of preschool, primary and secondary school, through the implementation of courses in educational methodology and docimology. The project "Doing School" was managed by the Department of Education and CASERTA dall'ISPEF "Institute of Educational and Training Psychological Sciences" in Rome and was made in 48 pilot schools ESRB (Research and Experimentation Educational Centers) in the province of Caserta. The curriculum of the project "Doing School" examined the

scientific-theoretical models concerning the processes of teaching/learning in schools; the curriculum is characterized by realization of an update-two-year pilot training course in "Educational Methods And Docimology" that involved over 250 teachers of every grade school (preschool, primary and secondary school) of 48 schools in the province of Caserta. The course is also attended by headmaster (as tutors) and more than 600 teachers whose function is to provide operational support to the testing and design of the teachers who attended the course. The main purpose of the courses was the use and development of the professionalism of teachers and school leaders through the implementation of the Training Offer Plan (POF) and through the analysis of educational processes and outcomes of educational products during the school experiences in which are involved every day. During the four Territorial Groupings formed a network of pilot schools CERS (Centre for Educational Research and Experimentation), with the task of implementing and monitoring the quality of the educational service through the methodological and disciplinary activities of teachers and aimed to implement a contextualized and personalized instruction that meets the needs of pupils, the expectations of family and cultural needs of the territory.

To know about the Do School Project see the website www.ispef.it up in the section "Teacher Professionalism". At the conclusion of the training-refresher course "Educational Methodologies and docimology", the book *"The Making School Project in the Province of Caserta"* ("*Il Progetto Fare Scuola nella Provincia di Caserta*") Conrad Publisher Zano, Sessa Aurunca (EC), was released in December 2001,

The trial of IPI Questionnaire in different orders and school levels has been useful to validate the effectiveness, validity, reliability and portability of content and results of the Questionnaire IPI, concerning in particular:
- the dimensions of analysis of the results of the Questionnaire IPI
- the items of the questionnaire, both in general as the coherence and significance within each dimension of analysis.

## The framework of the pit questionnaire 2002 - psychological interaction in teaching for teachers

The PIT Questionnaire was designed initially in 1988 as a single instrument addressed to teachers and also applicable to students, so that we can have a scientifically valid comparison.

Later in 2002 it was considered useful to have two versions of the PIT Questionnaire, a specification for teachers and the other for students, so we have a dual observation point compared to what happens in the classroom.

### A. The dimension of the pit questionnaire 2002 for teachers

The analysis of the PIT Questionnaire "Psychological Interaction in teaching" 2002 for TEACHERS is useful to understand the model "*I THINK I AM, AS A TEACHER*"  in the educational relationship with students.

To analyze answers of the PIT Questionnaire "Psychological Interaction in teaching" 2002 for teachers, in order to describe and delineate the model "*I think I am, as a teacher*" which defines  teachers' interaction with students, you must use the following 8 Dimensions:

TABLE 1

| I THINK I AM, AS A TEACHER |
| --- |

**8 DIMENSIONS OF THE PIT QUESTIONNAIRE
2002 FOR TEACHERS**

1. Consistency in didactic planning
2. Teacher's self-criticism
3. Attitude towards change
4. Self-efficacy in didactics
5. Motivation to autonomy  in students
6. Management of the classroom
7. Teacher's empathic ability
8. Creation of the communicative climate in classroom

**B. The areas of the  pit questionnaire 2002**

The 8 Dimensions of the IPI Questionnaire 2002 for Teachers, which define the model "*I think I am, as a teacher*", can be divided into the following 2 Areas:

\* **teacher in didactics:** refers to teacher's mode to manage and cope with his work. This Area includes 4 Dimensions: <u>Consistency in Didactic Planning,</u> <u>Teacher's Self-Criticism,</u> <u>Attitude towards Change,</u> <u>Self-Efficacy in Didactics.</u> More specifically, this Area defines the *structural skills* of teacher about his organizational, educational and didactic mode.

\* **teacher in relationship with students:** refers to the relationship teacher-students and to mode used by teacher to get in relation with students. This Area includes Dimensions: <u>Motivation to Autonomy   in Students,</u> <u>Management of the Classroom,</u> <u>Teacher's Empathic Ability,</u> <u>Creation of the Communicative Climate in Classroom.</u> More specifically, this Area defines the

*relational processes* in teacher-students relationship and modalities the teacher
uses to get in relation with his students.

**The 2 Areas are described by the following**

**TABLE 2**

| I THINK I AM, AS A TEACHER |
|---|

| AREAS OF<br>THE PIT QUESTIONNAIRE 2002<br>FOR TEACHERS |
|---|

| teacher in<br>didactics | teacher in<br>relationship<br>with students |
|---|---|

| *STRUCTURAL SKILLS*:<br><br>• Consistency in Didactic Planning<br>• Self-Efficacy in Didactics<br>• Teacher's Self-Criticism<br>• Attitude towards Change | *RELATIONAL PROCESSES*:<br><br>Motivation to Autonomy in Students<br>Management of the Classroom<br>Creation of the Communicative Climate in Classroom<br>Teacher's empathic Ability |
|---|---|

### C. The fields of the pit questionnaire 2002

The 8 Dimensions of the PIT Questionnaire 2002 for Teachers can be divided following two kind of Field:

- PROFESSIONAL Field: skills, methodologies and tools that the teache uses to manage and develop teaching in classrooms. This Field includes the following 4 Dimensions: <u>Consistency in Didactic Planning, Self-Efficacy in Didactics, Motivation to Autonomy in Students, Management of the Classroom.</u>
- PSYCHOLOGICAL Field: peculiarities, aspects of personality and psichic relation that the teacher acts during the educational didactics with students. This Field includes the following 4 Dimensions: <u>Teacher's Self-Criticism, Attitude towards Change, Teacher's Empathic Ability, Creation of the Communicative Climate in Classroom</u>.

The two Fields can be represented visually as below in Table 3:

**TABLE 3**

| I THINK I AM, AS A TEACHER |
| --- |

| FIELDS OF<br>THE IPI QUESTIONNAIRE 2002<br>FOR TEACHERS |
| --- |

| Professional field | Psychological field |
| --- | --- |
| • Consistency in Didactic Planning<br><br>• Self-Efficacy in Didactics<br><br>• Motivation to Autonomy in Students<br><br>• Management of the Classroom | Teacher's Self-Criticism<br>Attitude towards Change<br>Creation of the Communicativ Climate in the Classroom<br>Teacher's Empathic Ability |

### D. The general model of the pit questionnaire 2002 for teachers

The 8 Dimensions of the Questionnaire can be described through the division on two Areas and Fields as below in Table 4:

**TABLE 4**

**AREAS-FIELDS-DIMENSIONS OF THE PIT QUESTIONNAIRE 2002 FOR TEACHERS**

AREA TEACHER IN DIDACTICS

AREA TEACHER IN RELATIONSHIP WITH

Consistency in Didactics
Self-Eficacy in Didactics
Teacher's

*PROFESSIONAL FIELD*

Motivation to Autonomy in Students
Management of the Classroom
Teacher's

Self-Criticism
Attitude towards Change

*PSYCHOLOGICAL FIELD*

Empathic Ability
• Creation of the Communicative Climate

We underline that with the terms:
"didactics" we refers to the path of knowledge of students;

"relationship" we refers to communicative modes and didactical relation between teacher and students;
"psychological" we refers to peculiarities and teacher's personality;
"professional" we refers to skills and specific abilities about teaching.

The two Areas and Fields, connected and combined, can be represented also on a Cartesian plan, that is divided in two axis, composed by 4 elements (Relationship-Professional, Relationship-Psychological, Didactics-Professional, Didactics-Psychological). It is described in Table 5

## TABLE 5

**AREAS-FIELDS-DIMENSIONS OF THE PIT QUESTIONNAIRE 2002 FOR TEACHERS**

AREA          FIELD
RELATIONSHIP-PROFESSIONAL

AREA    -    FIELD
RELATIONSHIP-PSYCHOLOGICA

**\*Motivation to Autonomy in Students**

**\* Teacher's Empathic Capacity**

**\*    Management of the Classroom Communicative**

**\* Creation of the**

**Climate in the Classroom**

**\* Consistency in Didactics**

**\* Teacher's Self-Criticism**

**\* Self-Efficacy in Didactics**

**\* Attitude towards Change**

**AREA    -    FIEL**
**DIDACTICS-PROFESSIONAL**

**………………**

**AREA    -    FIELD**
**DIDACTICS-PSYCHOLOGICAL**

## Dimensions and variables of
## The pit questionnaire 2002 - psychological interaction in teaching for teachers

The PIT Questionnaire "Psychological Interaction in teaching"-2002 for Teachers, allows to detect the methodological patterns of Teaching-Learning between Teachers and Students, through the analysis of the following eight educational Dimensions:

1) consistency in didactic planning- variable on the axis didactical determination – flexibility
2) teacher's self-criticism - variable on the axis bring himself into question– focused on his own decisions
3) attitude towards chang - variable on the axis openness to change – use of habits
4) self-efficacy in didactics - variable on the axis prudence - self-confidence
5) motivation to autonomy in students - variable on the axis promotion – control of autonomy
6) management of the classroom - variable on the axis equal – democratic – authoritative method
7) teacher's empathic ability - variable on the axis focused on the other – focused on himself
8) creation of the communicative climate in classroom - variable on the axis communicative welcome - strictness

Dimensions of the PIT Questionnaire 2002 for Teachers are:

### 1. Consistency in didactic planning

In the previous Model, the Consistency in Didactic Planning, refers to the Professional Field of Didactical Area, that describe the Psychological Interaction in Teaching according teachers' vision (see the Model, Table 4).

This Dimension evaluates teacher's tendency to stick the programming didactic and educational activities. Although programming didactical objectives, or educational and training activities are regularly held in the Italian School System, not all teachers have acquired a methodological skill and an adequate Psycho-Pedagogical mentality: in fact someone follows rigidly the programming, someone does it only partially and someone, during his work, has the tendency to improvise. In order to explain this interindividual variability, you must refer to some subjective dispositions that, of course, vary

from one individual to another, depending on his own educational and living cultural conceptions.

Regarding critical issues in programming, the school world is divided:
some teachers use fixed didactical plans that are distant from concrete needs and personal characteristics of students, but are mechanical and it pushes teachers and students to follow pre-defined, standard procedures (Gabriele Boselli, 1992; Paolo Calidoni, 1993);
other teachers use flexible and dynamic plans, thus creating custom educational itineraries following motivations and personal expectations of each student and by developing customized educational procedures, that are characterized by context and by teacher-students relationship (Michele Pellerey, 1985; Robert Gagnè, 1973).
The "Consistency in Didactic Planning" Dimension, therefore, assesses how the teacher, during his work, refers to what was previously structured and how many space he let for improvisation and spontaneity. In other words, it evaluates how much importance is attributed to the pursuit of educational and training objectives, rather than the need to cope with contingencies, which necessarily avoid any possibility of prediction and, therefore, require an impromptu speech.
Therefore this Dimension refers to the teacher's attitude to join/not adhere to fixed patterns in the management of previously established situations. This variable is commonly defined by psychological axis "didactical determination – flexibility".
The assessment of the Didactical Determination – Flexibility refers to educational situations, because they need some direction in order to give guidance to the whole training plan. At the same time, because of the age of students, we need an adequate ability of the teacher to put appropriate problem solving and decision making strategies into action. It is also important that the teacher can be focused on the task (that is to realize programming educational and didactical goals) and he must not be disorientated by unannounced.
This is possible only if the teacher is able to create a correct balance between adaptability to the context and consistency in fixed schema, and it refers to three aspects:
1. didactical planning
2. educational planning
3. training plan.

The two poles of this Dimension are:
the "determinated" teacher
the "flexible" teacher.

This two poles do not describe the teacher's profile in terms of right-wrong behaviour; in fact there are so many contexts, so many students, so many educational situations that it is not possible to standardize the teacher's attitude in an only one perfect planning. You need instead to identify an educational methods referring to the structure or the process (see previous Paragraph) linked to the teacher's action during didactical activities or in the relationship with students.

**2. Teacher's self-criticism**

In the previous Model, the Teacher's Self-Criticism refers to the Psychological Field of Didactical Area, that describe the Psychological Interaction in Teaching according teachers' vision (see the Model, Table 4).

The Teacher's Self-Criticism deals with the ability of the teacher to recognize his own responsibilities in a positive sense (i.e. his merits as a teacher) and in the negative (his limits as a teacher), attributing to himself the effects of educational actions. In other words it refers to the ability to face up to his responsibilities (A.H. Maslow, 1973; G. W. Allport, 1969; C. Rogers, 1974), to BRING HIS-SELF INTO QUESTION and to RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF HIS ACTIONS.

This capacity comes from achieving a good level of maturity, understanding how awareness of yourself, of your own act and of the consequences of that, in yourself, in others and in the class: This allows you to accept peacefully your strengths and weaknesses, potential and shortcomings, bearing in mind that infallibility is not the norm but the exception.

The Teacher's Self-criticism can be associated with the concept of Self-Esteem (Real/Ideal Self, H. B. Walcott and C. Rodney, 1968) and Motivation to Success (Need For Achievement, D. McClelland, 1951; Self-Fulfillment Ausubel, D. P., 1987). In fact, a teacher with a low Self-Esteem is unable to make a real self-critical of his work and he is not success-oriented.

The assessment of the ability to get in the discussion of the teaching staff is important because this capacity is the first step towards a new definition of the role of teacher, no longer understood as "holder of absolute truths", but simply as an "expert subject", able to transmit values and content. To admit this natural weakness means to be willing to give up part of that power the teacher was traditionally invested with, by getting a view to cooperation-exchange with students, in which the recognition of his limits is the necessary condition for personal growth and continuous improvement of training.

The opposite attitude to bring yourself into question, is to be focused on your own decisions. This means to be decided on your own choices and to not want to change frequently your working method or your teaching strategies. To be centered on your decisions also means to be  solid and sure of

your ability as a teacher and to seek nor a support nor a comparison with others.

These two attitudes do not describe the profile of the teacher in terms of right-wrong behavior; the multiplicity of contexts, students and educational situations does not standardize teacher's behavior to a single optimal mode.

### 3.    Attitude towards change

In the previous Model, the Attitude towards Change refers to the Psychological Field of Didactical Area, that describe the Psychological Interaction in Teaching according teachers' vision (see the Model, Table 4).

To be OPEN TO CHANGE in educational contexts means to be willing to change your own attitude and educational vision, your own habits and education and/or methodological, depending on  students' demands and needs.

This Dimension has a fundamental importance, because every day the teacher deals with individuals in evolutionary age, whose needs may change with remarkable quickness. When someone realizes that conditions have changed and a certain work method has not the right feedback in students, it is important to be able to change it and possibly to redefine it in order to adapt it to students' new needs.

In practice, to be open to change means not to think by strict schema, not to behave in a standardized way, but rather to maintain an attitude of openness and continuous assessment of stimuli that come from educational context.

The opposite attitude to the willingness to change is the HABIT (as the use of routine) and the resistance, that is expressed in individuals as a kind of psychic protection and/or closing from the cognitive, emotional and behavioural  point of view (S. K. Piderit, 2000; S. Oreg, 2006). The habit and the resistence reflect an attitude of security and defence that the teacher uses to preserve the positive aspects of the Self.

It should be pointed out that, even if to bring one self in question is functional to increase a better training, an extreme strict criticism highlights a certain insecurity and can pushe to a continuous self-blame that may not be an appropriate incentive to improve. So  intermediate levels of this Dimension are associated with greater skill and  an educational-didactical efficiency.

These two attitudes do not describe the profile of the teacher in terms of right-wrong behaviour; the multiplicity of contexts, students and educational situations does not standardise teacher's behaviour to a single optimal mode.

### 4. Self-efficacy in didactics

In the previous Model, the Self-Efficacy in Didactics, refers to the Professional Field of Didactical Area, that describe the Psychological Interaction in Teaching according teachers' vision (see the Model, Table 4).

This Dimension refers to the belief that everyone can behave successfully or not  successfully, in order to manage situations in an appropriate way, and in order to achieve planned  goals. In other words, in this context it refers to the teacher's perception of his professional skills, not only about the value that he gives to himself in the performance of his job, but rather to the belief "I can do it".

It is easy to understand how the assessment of the teacher's perceived Self-Efficacy is important. The opinion about the own Self-Efficacy and future expectations of the own success involve directly the motivation, one of determinants of behavior.

The way within the teacher assesses his own Self-Efficacy determines:

- how long he will engage in doing his work and how long he will persevere
- the decision about activities that will be chosen or rejected.

The stronger the perception of his Self-Efficacy, the more ambitious goals he will set (W. B. Brookover and collaborators, 1967; R. Rosenthal, 1972).

Relations with the environment are regulated by the sense of Self-Efficacy too: a positive perception of Self-Efficacy allows the teacher to pay attention to environmental requirements and to explain his forces, considering the obstacles as elements useful to stimulate a greater commitment; instead who have a low level of perceived Self-Efficacy, because of his fears, reduces the effort and desists in a short time.

A recent research argues that the perceived Self-Efficacy (specifically referred to educational strategies, management of the class and the involvement of students) is not linked in a direct way to years of experience of teachers, but it increases in the early years of their career and then it decreases over time. Also it appears from the research that women teachers perceive a most work-related stress, increased class behaviors-related stress and a lower sense of Self-Efficacy in the class handling (R. M. Klassen and collaborators, 2010).

To be self-confident is opposed to the PRUDENT attitude. Prudence is an attitude that correlates with the insecurity or low ability to SELF-CONFIDENT, but it correlates to a cautious attitude and to the belief that allows the teacher to reach his goals with more reassuring time, frames and procedures. As being a self-confident teacher, also being a prudent teacher can be functional, depending on situations and educational settings, for an improved students' learning and it can encourage a more relaxed climate.

These two attitudes (to be a self-confident teacher or a prudent teacher) do not describe the profile of the teacher in terms of right-wrong behavior; the multiplicity of contexts, students and educational situations does not standardize teacher's behavior to a single optimal mode.

### 5. Motivation to autonomy in students

In the previous Model, the Motivation to Autonomy in Students, refers to the Professional Field of Relationship Area, that describe the Psychological Interaction in Teaching according teachers' vision (see the Model, Table 4).

This Dimension assesses the teacher's ability to encourage the based-on-learning discovery rather than based-on-transmission of knowledge and descendant type. This assessment has a sense if you believe that the student has the ability to "anchor" the new concepts to those already acquired. This process is easier if the student him-self seeks new knowledge to add to those stored in memory, because he can chose methods and time by him-self. Therefore it is important to provide students with an active role in the learning process, considering they as the real protagonists of the construction of their knowledge.

Supporting autonomy means being able to use  not too directive educational techniques; this means that the teacher must provide the inputs needed to activate in students cognitive strategies that enable their "discovery" of links until that moment unknown, thus allowing the acquisition of new logical operations.

Promoting and motivating autonomy in students, therefore, does not mean to be "absent" teachers and to let students decide for themselves what to do; instead it means to try to guide learning with awareness and skill, in a very little intrusive way, but focused at the same time.

A recent research maintains that the motivation to autonomy, for example about homework decisions:     - increases  intrinsic  motivation  in doing exercises

- increases the perception of self-skill in students
- improves the performance, compared to students who do not receive the possibility to  take decisions.

The same study underlines a positive relationship between students who perceive to receive a support to their autonomy by teachers and the intrinsic motivation to do homework (E. A. Patall and collaborators, 2010).

Another study investigates the relationship between the effect of educational style that promotes the autonomy and a more structured involvement of students: the results show that both styles predict involvement from the behavioral point of view, but only the support-motivation to autonomy is the predictor of involvement actually received by students (H. Jang and collaborators, 2010).

The attitude that is opposed to being a facilitator of autonomy is to be an evaluator of educational processes of development and improvement of the educational action, so to be a support and a point of reference to the implementation of such processes.

These two attitudes (to be a promoter or a controller of autonomy) do not describe the profile of the teacher in terms of right-wrong behavior; the multiplicity of contexts, students and educational situations does not standardize teacher's behavior to a single optimal mode.

The peculiarities of each profile, the teacher can be described as a PROMOTER OF AUTONOMY and as CONTROLLER OF AUTONOMY.

## 6.     Management of the classroom

In the previous Model, the Management of the Classroom, refers to the Professional Field of Relationship Area, that describe the Psychological Interaction in Teaching according teachers' vision (see the Model, Table 4).

This scale assesses if the teacher uses an equal or democratic or authoritative methods of  classroom' management.

The term "Management of the Classroom" means:

methods used by the teacher during didactical activities to:
-   get in relationship with his students
-   maintain order and discipline
-   manage difficult situations
-   decision making procedures
-   work organization procedures.

One of the major difficulties of the profession of "teacher" is the ability to create a good relationship with students, but at the same time to be able to maintain control and prevent dynamics from degenerate. Therefore it is necessary that the teacher has the ability to modulate his "strictness", and step by step he must be able to change from an authoritative attitude, to one of greater openness, according to the particular moment.

The "decision making" is a very delicate moment. It is important that, in a student-dimension school, teachers can listen to and consider suggestions and requests of students themselves. If these demands are too far from what the teacher feels more correct, the teacher can use a good mediation and negotiation skills to prevent the emergence of inequality among students.

A solution to this problem can be not only the control of each student, but the creation of  learning and communicative contexts in which the diversity in the class can be enhanced. As M. Comoglio (2010) said:  "The recent reflection push us to a deep revision of the way of understanding the management of the classroom; there was a progressive replacement of the management, understood as skill set in order to control the students' behavior in the classroom, usually through the application of mechanisms of

gratification/penalty, with a wider vision of this concept in which the use of a good ability to reflection and decision of the teacher, the acquisition of higher levels of awareness of students as people capable of driving alone their own learning and their behavior, and the adoption of new methods and new ways of teaching/learning, they acquired an absolute centrality to determine and ensure an appropriate class context".

Another delicate moment of school life is the work organization. Also in this case there is some inter-individual variability among teachers; in fact someone "imposes" his work organization to the class, so that students have no say in matter, other one prefer an operating mode based on greater openness to the students' demands and wishes.

It is assumed that the ability to mediate with the class is more easily associated with intermediate levels of authority. In fact the importance of the rules does not necessarily imply an imposition to students by the teacher. Recent scientific research confirms that the attitude of zero tolerance towards students does not appear to be an effective approach (Russell Skiba and collaborators, 2006).

On the contrary, we believe that rules are more easily accepted and obeyed if they emerge from mediation between parties, and especially if the teacher is able to let student understand the sense and usefulness. Similarly, if decisions are taken by mutual agreement and the work is organized together, the task will have a more active participation by the class.

Of course the teacher must be careful to ensure that his helpfulness does not mean a total lack of authority that could, therefore, reduce his authoritativeness.

These different attitudes do not describe the profile of the teacher in terms of right-wrong behavior; the multiplicity of contexts, students and educational situations does not standardize teacher's behavior to a single optimal mode.

According to different methods of management of the classroom used by the teacher, we can identify three profiles:
– the EQUAL teacher
– the DEMOCRATIC teacher
– the AUTHORITATIVE teacher.

### 7. Teacher's empathic ability

In the previous Model, the Teacher's Empathic Ability, refers to the Psychological Field of Relationship Area, that describe the Psychological Interaction in Teaching according teachers' vision (see the Model, Table 4).

This scale assesses the teacher's attitude to "get into students' the shoes", to immerse himself in their reality, by trying to catch as much as

possible not only their modes of learning, but also their actual needs and motivations.

The teacher needs both cultural and educational skills to transmit cultural contents, both emotional and relational skills, indispensable for interacting correctly on interpersonal relations and, in particular in order to deal with the emotional and relational dimension that intersects every scholastic activity and the transmission of knowledge (Declaration of principles and commitments of teachers and headmasters about the discomfort and the mistreatment of students, 1999).

To be an empathic teacher means to have the ability to really understand the cognitive functioning of each student and adapt it in education, in order to facilitate an easier and faster learning (L. Boella, 2006). We can not demand that students must adapt to teacher's teaching style, because it would be an unnecessary extra effort and it would limit energy for the learning process.

To be empathic also means to contact the student's emotional state, not only through the observation and the active listening, but also and above by "feeling" others' emotions (D. Goleman, 1995, 1998; Polito, 2003).

This is particularly important when we work with subjects in evolutionary age; in this period, in fact more than in other, affective aspects are, linked with great ease to cognitive ones, making it easier or thwarting them. If the teacher manages to really grasp students' needs and motivation, he will also be able to pay his action in that direction, thereby by facilitating the learning process (R. Skiba and collaborators, 2006).

An interesting aspect that emerges from research on Emotional Intelligence, a complex construct in which some authors include also empathic ability (D. Goleman, 1995), is the fact that this ability does not appear to be fixed and costant in time but it is a skill that can be really improved, thanks to specific training (Cooper, 1997; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000; Steiner, 1997). In other words, beyond the personality's traits, which are generally stable (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1990), we can increase skills related to Emotional Intelligence to improve business performance, individual well-being and the quality of life (Vakola and collaborators, 2004).

An empathetic teacher therefore is basically FOCUSED ON THE OTHER, i.e. by putting himself in the students' shoes, observing them and listening to them, in order to improve the relationship.

A teacher FOCUSED ON HIMSELF does not consider important to understand the emotional state of his students, but he focuses attention only on activities in the classroom, decreasing affective-relational aspects' weight.

These two different attitudes do not describe the profile of the teacher in terms of right-wrong behaviour; the multiplicity of contexts, students and

educational situations does not standardise teacher's behaviour to a single optimal mode.

### 8. Creation of the communicative climate in classroom

In the previous Model, the Creation of the Communicative Climate in Classroom, refers to the Psychological Field of Relationship Area, that describe the Psychological Interaction in Teaching according teachers' vision (see the Model, Table 4).

This Dimension evaluates the emotional-communicative climate in Classroom. The type of communication between teacher and students depends largely on how the teacher is able to adopt a permissive attitude, by allowing students to freely express opinions and feelings.

Having a chance to say what they think, it allows students, not only to feel free to express themselves, but also makes them feel accepted and understood.

So the climate that origins from this is calm and quiet, and that favors:

a better learning by students

a less hard and stressful work for the teacher.

A serene environment allows free energies that can be used productively in educational activities (C. Rogers, 1974; A. Tausch, 1973).

For this it is important that the teacher is able not only to stimulate students to express their opinions, but make them feel free also to talk about themselves, their difficulties, even those which do not relate strictly to the school life.

An interesting aspect about the Climate and internal communication in the class is the relationship between the teacher and nonverbal messages sent by students, or between the teacher and the "immediacy" of students. "Transparent", explicit, clear students are evaluated more positively by teachers, and the same happens in teachers to students. From some researches it emerges that the nonverbal behavior affects the climate and perceptions within the class: the physical proximity, choosing a desck rather than another, the established eye-contact, the face expression, nodding, speaking with clarity, are all communicative modes that promote a positive attitude and they improve learning by students and motivation of teachers in their work (Baringer & McCroskey, 2000).

Therefore there are two ways used by the teacher to create and influence the communicative climate in classroom, and both they reflect a specific attitude of the teacher in the relationship with students.

A welcoming teacher in communication has as objective the creation of a psycho-social well-being, while a STRICT TEACHER has as its objective the achievement of pre-established goals through the use of efficiency (achieving the best and/or greater result with minimal effort or with minimal

use of resources) and productivity (Productive Thought of W. Wertheimer, 1965).

On the contrary an authoritarian teacher in communication strives for creating a psycho-social distress in interpersonal relationships, as well as a non strict teacher strives for creating confusing or inefficient relationships compared to the objectives that the same teacher and class  planned.

These two different attitudes do not describe the profile of the teacher in terms of right-wrong behavior; the multiplicity of contexts, students and educational situations does not standardize teacher's behavior to a single optimal mode.

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**Appendice**

**THE PIT QUESTIONNAIRE 2002**
**PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERACTION IN TEACHING**
**FOR TEACHERS**

This Questionnaire consists of a series of item about the relationship between teacher and students in school.

Indicate for each of these items, what kind of interaction, in your opinion, you strive for building with your students.

There are no right answers or wrong answers, only personal opinions. We therefore ask you to respond spontaneously and with great sincerity, paying attetion to not neglect any questions.

The mode of response for each statement is very simple: you have to give
each one of them a score, using the following scale:

| Totally agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

It is important to give just one answer to each question.
Furthermore we inform you that data will be used just for scientific and social research, so the test is anonymous.
Time available is 30 minutes.
Each item must assign one of the following scores:

| Totally agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Totally disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Good job

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I work so that no unexpected prevent my students to achieve the planned learning goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | I am helpful when someone asks me to change my way of working | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Even when changes occur, I finish fixed activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | I avoid situations that seem risky | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | I do not advance answers before I am asked questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | I usually establish rules and regulations with my students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | It is difficult for me to understand the emotional state of my students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | I always allow my students to say freely what they think | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | If the situation requires it, I redefine educational goals during the school year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | When someone criticizes my work, he does it to hit me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | Activities in classroom do not change over time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | If I can't reach a goal, I do not give up and try again | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | I always tell my students their mistakes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | Only by using the severity I can maintain order within the classroom | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | I listen carefully to my students when they talk about themselves | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | I encourage communication between students about school activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| 17. | I stick strictly to the project lines in carrying out the training | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18. | I compare myself with my colleagues when I am not sure to perform well some of my tasks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | Changes within the classroom are problems for me in carrying out educational and didactical activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | When I do not reach a goal, I need time to overcome the disappointment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | When students are doing an exercise, I let them work independently | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | I allow my students to express their disagreement with decisions I made alone | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | I can't fully understand my students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. | When I am with my students, I talk freely about me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. | During the school year it happens to redefine educational objectives because the situation needs it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. | When students have difficulty, it depends on how they learn | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. | I think changes that can occur in my work environment are exciting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. | Usually I set ambitious goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. | When I assign a task to my students I want everyone to follow the same procedure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. | When problems arise in the classroom, I decide what to do about them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. | I can understand the real needs of my students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. | It is difficult for me to establish a good dialogue with my students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. | I observe fixed time for the achievement of educational goals, even when conditions make it difficult | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. | Criticism motives me to work better | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| 35. | When situations change, I have a hard time finding new ways of working | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 36. | When the situation is critical, I am aware that I can't cope | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. | I let each student perform his works following his own methods | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. | I allow my students to complain if they do not agree on activities I propose | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. | To talk with students it does not help me understand them better | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. | I  let students feel free to talk about themselves | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. | After I plan the training, I can help but stick strictly to the  project lines to get results | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 42. | When someone gives me suggestions, he does it to interfere in my work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 43. | It annoys me to give up my methods, even if it is necessary | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 44. | I think that difficult situations are challenging | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 45. | Sometimes I tell my students in advance the answers to the questions they could ask me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 46. | I decide alone activities that will be conducted in classroom | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 47. | I observe carefully my students to understand them better | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 48. | Listening to students problems, I risk of neglecting other activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 |

The personal answers you have given will be used exclusively for statistical and sociological elaborations. I.S.P.E.F.  guarantees the confidentiality of collected data in full respect of privacy. You are pleased to provide your personal information by placing a tick in the box

**Qualification** : _____ **School subject** :_____

Teacher with less than two years of temporary

Teacher with more than two years of temporary

Teacher with less than five years of role

Teacher with more than five years of role

**Sex:**  [ M ]  [ F ]  **Age:**  under 30  from 30 to 39  from 40 to 49

from 50 to 59  over 60

**Name of the School**: _____**Country:**_____ _

**Level:**  PreSchool  Primary School  Secondary School 1 st grade

Secondary School 2 nd grade

N.B:  - PreSchool for children between 3 and 6 years
   - Primary School for children between 6 and 11 years
   - Secondary School 1 st grade for students between 11 and 14 years