

# Early school leaving and educational poverty: how to respond effectively?

Assessment methods for learning in deprived urban areas



C.I.R.P.E.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mismatching between “disciplinary teaching” and the sphere of real interests cultivated by the pupils is a quite often reported issue, which experts (but even teachers, trainers, etc.) have been discussing for the last years.

During our experience we didn’ t try only to reduce the gap between the strictness and abstractness of learning goals prescribed by the ministerial programs (on one hand) and the urgencies of the pupils (on the other hand), but even to negotiate these goals with them by arranging specific workshops to carry out after the school time.

The target-audience that C.I.R.P.E. is used to deal with come from the most deprived areas of the city and is made up of all sort of drop-outs and neets.

So it is for this reason that the aforementioned “mismatching” becomes even harder to manage and, at the same time, crucial to overcome for the educators!



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“Using what they love  
for bringing them towards what we’ re interested into...”

“...which is what occurs to them for building up a future!”

Referent of the Observatory for  
School Absenteism n. 14,  
insisting on the district of  
Brancaccio



“assessing not for *sorting* but for *motivating*”

Formative assessment is a different kind of assessment method which implies a more involving participation from the pupils, not only in the process of learning but even in the choice of the learning targets and different ways through which they can be achieved.

# The simple idea behind our “neet workshops” ...

How to intervene in those classrooms which collect the most demotivated pupils?

How to fight effectively against the irregularity of school attendance?

How to respond effectively to the educational poverty, meant either as the scarcity or inadequacy of educational activities (formal/non formal/informal) and as the absence of a real culture of schooling?

## 1 BUILDING A REAL RELATIONSHIP

This means going beyond the prescriptions of the ministerial programs, more interested into an “ideal target” of pupil than a real one

## 2 STARTING FROM THE UNFULFILLED NEEDS

Learning goals prescribed by the programs (and education more in general) often miss the target and generate disaffection

## 3 KNOWING THE CULTURAL SETTING

Only starting from the socio-economic issues of the territory and the cultural milieu of who lives in it we can create some sort of *mediation*

## 4 ARRANGING SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS

After having defined the sphere of interests of pupils, we can find alternative ways to achieve or negotiate learning goals which are more “tailored” to their specific needs

## 5 REFLECTION UPON THE RESULTS

We have the necessity to constantly reinvent our teaching modes because of the great precariousness of the social context where we operate and the hard to manage pupils we deal with

# A VIRTUOUS CIRCLE

Diverting from the urgencies and abstractness of the conventional programs...



Declining the workshops as motivational workshops designed to recover the most “difficult pupils” who leak from the public schools...

Our teachers are required as more than simple teachers, that is to say they’ re considered more as educators who has to do a sort of “excavation work” into the life of our pupils and their social, psychological and anthropological background...

## SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- This is the approach coming from the public schools which introduces a strict distinction by making a ranking with “the best” and “the worst” .
- This model demolishes the self-esteem and the self-confidence of certain pupils (above all those guys coming from the most deprived areas) buy making them slide among the drop-outs/needs.

## FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- Our assessment approach aims at breaking up with every sort of distinction between “the best” and “the worst”. It aims at enhancing the skills of those pupils who lost the motivation and stopped going to the public schools.
- Our training centre tries to take charge of these guys by arranging for them tailored educational paths and specific workshops with a strong vocation for the motivational recovery.

**TWO (TOTALLY) DIFFERENT MODELS**

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## First results during the workshops

Usage of soccer as instrument to prevent early school leaving



### First step

- We chose some pupils coming from the most difficult but even challenging classrooms (our catering training courses).
- We built some groups, by taking advantage from a partnership with a soccer school involved with getting young people off the streets.



### Second step

- We assigned the direction of workshops to our Physical Education teacher, in order to create a strong link between the extra-curricular and curricular activities.
- During the school hours we gave the opportunity to our pupils of working on their own interests by diverting from the urgencies of the programs.



### Third step

- We used the instrument of interview to stimulate our pupils in the ability to self-assess and reflect upon the effects of the workshops (Positive? Negative?).
- We used the results of their interviews for assessing our action on the territory and understanding better how to modify our educational offer.

# How did we stimulate (and monitor!) the effectiveness of our action?

- We asked our teacher to organize the workshop once a week, in order to accompany better the school and encourage the attendance.
- We asked her to organize more moments to discuss week by week with the pupils on their behaviour and school performances.
- Obviously we also created a strong and steady channel of communication between her and our tutor, in order to assure the right synergy between the two fields of intervention: the curricular and extra-curricular one.



- We could make a first gathering of the results by receiving the positive feedback of our tutor, who saw week by week a stabilisation of the attendance and a revival of the motivation.
- We organised some meetings every week for taking the stock of the situation and applying corrective measures where needed: tutor, teachers, pupils and the coordinator charged with facilitating the process.

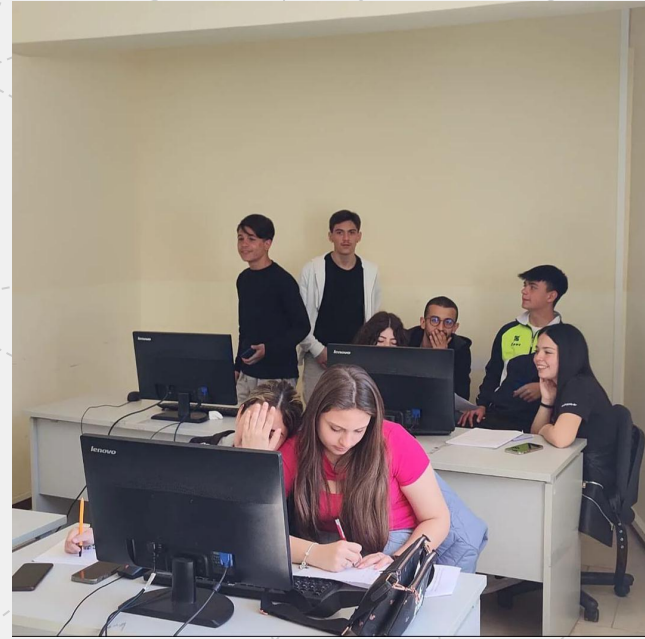


# Best results...



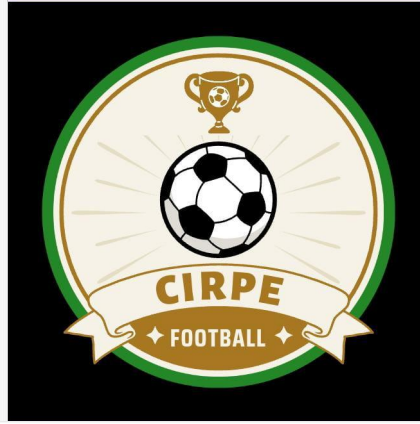
- One of them (Gabriele), who was the most shy, began to take the initiative by heading some training sessions and creating training schemes for his teammates as a sort of homework, etc.

- We noticed a renewed interest with the pupils coming from our catering training courses. During the hours of informatics they've dedicated themselves to creating some logos for the representative of the school, that took part in a final tournament with other training schools at the end of the workshop.



CIRPE







## ... and limits of the action

- the difficulty in making pleasure and duty go together
- the difficulty in giving continuity to the revival of motivation and interest of the pupils gained through the workshops, by extending its effects to the school hours
- the negative perception whom our guys have of the training institutions that makes them think about the training courses as a sort of “second class school” or school that is not a “real school”
- the lack of specialized resources for the building of an effective “drop-outs/needs staff”, devoted to the taking charge of their special educational needs
- the lack of specific infrastructures designed to give the right care and attention to the drop-outs/needs





# THANKS FOR THE ATTENTION

Hope we gave a useful contribution!

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