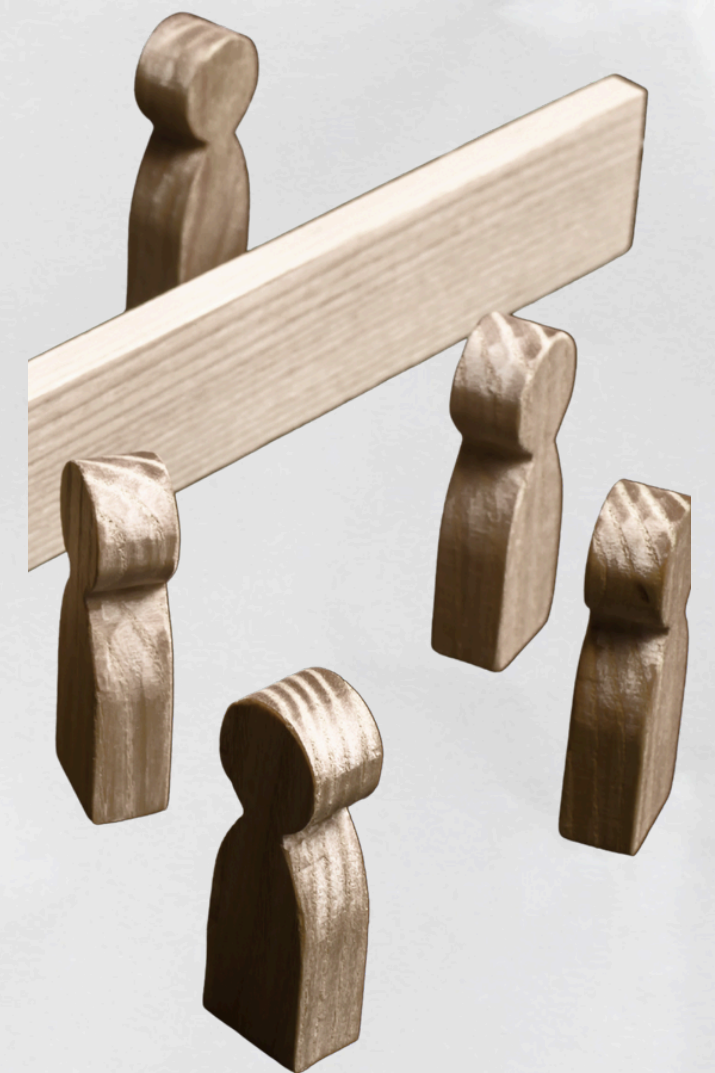


OVERCOMING GAME-BASED LEARNING TEACHING BARRIERS THE PRELIMINARY STAGES OF A TEACHER ACTION RESEARCH

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CONTEXT

A STUDY INVOLVING THE "FARO DIDATTICO"
TEACHER COMMUNITY IN THE PROVINCE OF
LECCO, ITALY (2024-2025).

THE TEACHERS ASKED FOR PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT ON GAME-BASED LEARNING



AIMS

EXPLORING HOW RICERCA-FORMAZIONE
(TEACHER ACTION-RESEARCH) CAN FOSTER
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO HELP PRIMARY
SCHOOL TEACHERS INTEGRATE GAMES INTO THEIR
DIDACTICS

DEVELOPING TEACHERS' GAME LITERACY WHILE
ADDRESSING PRACTICAL, SOCIAL AND
ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS FOR GAME-BASED
LEARNING



DEFINING THE FRAMEWORK

SOCIO-CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE - KNOWLEDGE IS CO-CONSTRUCTED THROUGH INTERSUBJECTIVE AND RELATIONAL PROCESSES

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (LAVE & WENGER, 1991) - FOCUS ON SITUATED LEARNING AND LEGITIMATE PERIPHERAL PARTICIPATION

LIBERATION PEDAGOGY (FREIRE, 1968) - INTEGRATED TO AVOID "BANKING EDUCATION" AND THE NEED FOR LEARNERS/TEACHERS TO BE ACTIVE SUBJECTS WITH THE AGENCY TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM THEY ARE IN

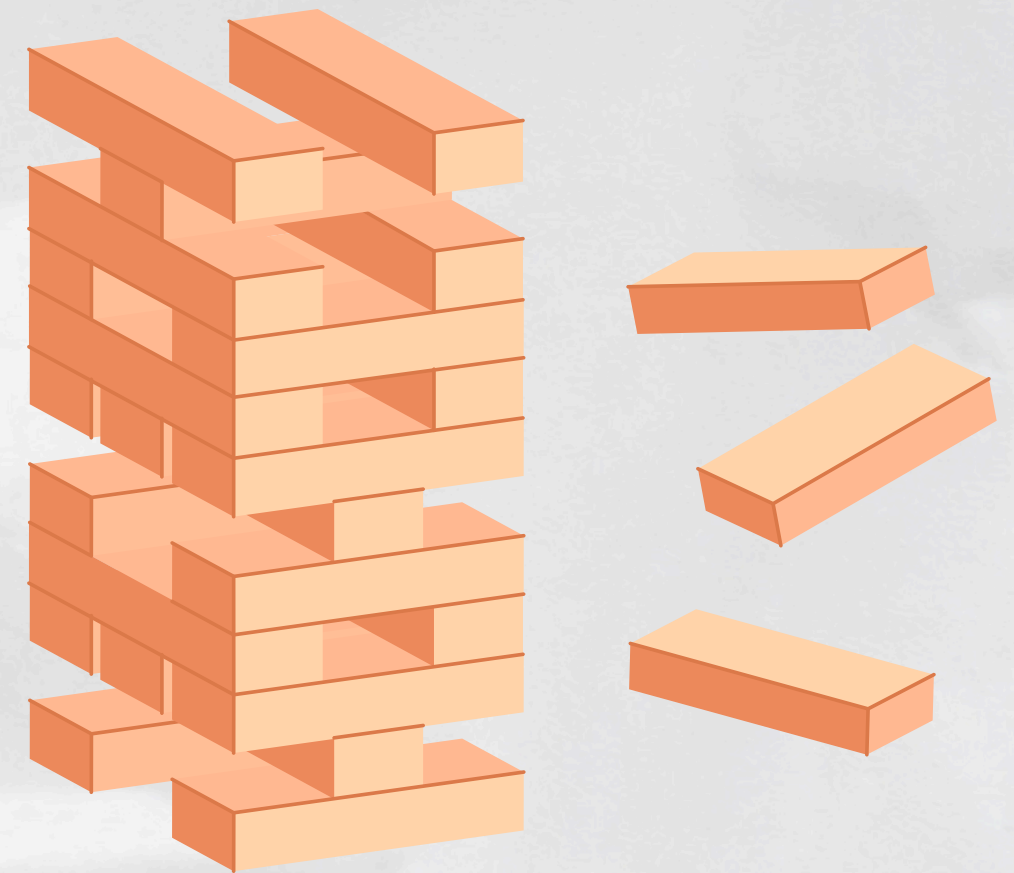
DEFINING THE FRAMEWORK

COMMUNITY OF THOUGHT (MICHELINI, 2017): A SYNTHESIS OF COP AND LIBERATION PEDAGOGY THAT SHIFTS FOCUS FROM SHARED TASKS TO CRITICAL REFLECTION AND INTENTIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF SELF AND SOCIAL REALITY

ALL DRAW FROM TO VYGOTSKY'S THEORIES (CULTURAL-HISTORICAL, ZPD)

WHAT IS GAME-BASED LEARNING (GBL)?

A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH THAT LEVERAGES GAME AFFORDANCES AND INTEGRATES GAMING WITH OTHER SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES TO FACILITATE LEARNING EXPERIENCES AIMED AT SPECIFIC OUTCOMES. (PLASS, 2019, RYE ET AL., 2025)



GAME-BASED LEARNING BARRIERS

Game Literacy

**Attitudinal and Behavioural
(Teachers, Students,
Parents)**

**Technological
and Material**



School Policy

METHODOLOGY

RICERCA-FORMAZIONE (R-F): A SPECIFIC ITALIAN TRANSFORMATIVE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH THAT FALLS WITHIN INTERNATIONAL TEACHER ACTION RESEARCH

NORMATIVE ISOMORPHISM: TEACHERS MUST "MEET, LIVE, AND EXPERIENCE" GAMES AS LEARNERS FIRST TO UNDERSTAND THE POTENTIAL OF GAMES AS MEDIATORS FOR LEARNING



CORE PRINCIPLES OF R-F

1. TEACHERS AS CO-RESEARCHERS WITH NEGOTIATED ROLES.
2. CREATION OF A RESEARCH GROUP/COMMUNITY
3. FOCUS ON THE SPECIFICITIES OF THE TEACHERS' ACTUAL SCHOOL CONTEXTS.
4. CONTINUOUS DISCUSSION BASED ON DIDACTIC DOCUMENTATION.
5. TRANSFORMATIVE AIM, CHANGING STUDENTS' LEARNING, TEACHERS' DIDACTICS, AND SCHOOL CULTURE.



THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD) PROCESS

- PARTICIPANTS - INITIALLY 80 TEACHERS FOR 2 PRELIMINARY GBL TRAINING SESSIONS
- 8 TEACHERS CONTINUED FOR 3 MONITORING SESSIONS IN-BETWEEN CLASSROOM EXPERIMENTATION
- HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES - GAMING SESSIONS (BOARD GAMES, OUTDOOR GAMES, DIGITAL), GAME ANALYSIS, AND GAME MODDING FOR INCLUSION AND LEARNING GOALS
- DEBRIEFING FOCUS GROUPS TO REFLECT UPON HOW GAMES CAN BE INTEGRATED IN ONE'S DIDACTICS

DEFINING THE MOST COMMON GBL BARRIER

LACK OF
COLLABORATION
AMONG COLLEAGUES



OVERCOMING THE BARRIER WITH BOAL'S FORUM-THEATRE GAME

- A PROBLEM IS STAGED IN AN UNSOLVED FORM BY SOME OF THE TEACHERS. TEACHERS STAGED A CONFLICT BETWEEN A GBL ENTHUSIAST, A DISMISSIVE COLLEAGUE, AND A NEUTRAL BYSTANDER.
- THE "SPECT-ACTORS" MEMBERS SUGGEST OR STAGE SOLUTIONS PERSONALLY TO ENACT IMAGINED CHANGES.
- THE STAGE FUNCTIONS AS A SAFE SPACE TO ACQUIRE TACTICS FOR BREAKING CYCLES OF PROFESSIONAL OPPRESSION.

THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

- REFLEXIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS (BRAUN & CLARKE, 2022), WHICH EMPHASIZES THE RESEARCHER'S ACTIVE ROLE IN INTERPRETING THE DATA.
- DATA SOURCES - TRANSCRIPTIONS OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS, THE STAGED SCENES (THEATRE-GAMES), AND THE SUBSEQUENT DEBRIEFING SESSIONS.



THE ANALYTICAL PROCESS

1. INITIAL ENGAGEMENT: THE RESEARCHER (MYSELF) IMMERSSED IN THE DATA TO CAPTURE PRELIMINARY INSIGHTS.
2. CODING OF THE SOURCES TO IDENTIFY KEY FEATURES. CODES WERE DEVELOPED BASED ON THE DATA AND THE RESEARCHER'S INTERPRETATION OF MEANING.
3. CLUSTERING AND CONNECTION OF THE CODES INTO DISTINCT THEMES, EACH DEFINED BY A CLEAR CENTRAL ORGANIZING CONCEPT.
4. SHARING OF THE INITIAL THEMES WITH THE PARTICIPATING TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS.
5. CONSTRUCTION OF 5 SPECIFIC THEMES AND ONE OVERARCHING THEME

THEMES

1. SELF-WORK: INNOVATIVE TEACHERS MUST OVERCOME INEXPERIENCE AND IDEALISM
2. UNDERSTANDING THE "CONSERVATIVE" : TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGY IS USED AS A SHIELD AGAINST THE PERCEIVED "CHAOS" OF PLAY FOR FEAR OF LOSING CONTROL
3. STRATEGIC ALLIANCES INNOVATORS SHOULD FIRST BUILD A "UNITED FRONT" WITH "BYSTANDER" COLLEAGUES.
4. THE ACCOMMODATING APPROACH: DIRECT, ASSERTIVE PERSUASION OFTEN FAILS WHILE "EXTENDING A HAND" AND ACKNOWLEDGING THE CONSERVATIVE'S POSITION WITHOUT BELITTLING IT FOSTERS A "GLIMMER OF AVAILABILITY"

CONCLUSIONS

- THE STUDY SHOWS HOW IMPORTANT COLLABORATION COMPETENCES ARE FOR TEACHERS WHO WANT TO DO GBL
- THE R-F STARTED CHANGING TEACHERS' ATTITUDES FROM POWERLESSNESS TO BECOMING MORE AWARE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS
- THEATRE GAMES ALLOW EDUCATORS TO ENACT AND ANALYZE PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES WITHIN A "MAGIC CIRCLE"
- THE R-F HAS CONTINUED IN 2025-2026 WITH FURTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS AND MONITORING.
- FUTURE RESEARCH SHOULD SHOW THE LONG-TERM EVOLUTION OF GBL PRACTICES AND PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES AND THE IMPACTS ON STUDENT LEARNING AND SCHOOL CULTURE

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