

Abstracts

The state of the art of best practices

Colette Dufresne-Tassé

A series of domains like administration, engineering, new technologies, social intervention, agriculture or medicine have dealt very fully with the “best practices” subject matter. An analysis of these domain’s publications in French, English and Spanish reveals that the definitions adopted are numerous as well as the means used to evaluate applicant practices to the “best” title. Therefore “best practices” appear as a constellation that should be studied in depth in order to draw the matrix of their categories. This would greatly help new fields like museology to choose amongst the variety, the type that best fits its expectations.

Keywords

Best practices, definition, means of evaluation, matrix, museology.

The signs of a code. Lorenzo Lotto’s saints

Emma Nardi

During the exhibition on Lorenzo Lotto that took place in Rome at the Scuderie del Quirinale, an experiment was organised for secondary school students. The educational activity focused on the specific iconographic features of some saints represented by Lorenzo Lotto, that can be found in the works of other Renaissance artists as well. Hence, an iconographic code was identified and then connected with aspects of the linguistic code, notably synonymy and

metonymy. The article discusses the underpinned theoretical aspects, the characteristics of the tests used in the experiment, the results of the activity.

Keywords

Museum education, iconography, temporary exhibition, Lorenzo Lotto, linguistic skills.

Content analysis and critical thinking. An assessment study

Antonella Poce, Laura Corcione, Annalisa Iovine

An important passage in the 2010 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) report *Investing in Human and Social Capital* underlines the need for formal education to enter the workplace:

In the nations where work is organized to support high levels of employee discretion in solving complex problems, the evidence shows that firms tend to be more active in terms of innovations developed through their own in house creative efforts (OECD, 2010, theme 1, p. 10).

The key point is in fact that new skills are needed, because traditional skills learnt at school or at university are disappearing and are not deemed useful in facing the needs for innovation and growth that society today demands. The concept behind our project, *Contributions for the Definition of a Critical Technology*, is therefore that of verifying the effectiveness of a model constructed to increase critical thinking skills, which are essential in environments such as those described by the OECD, in the above-mentioned document.

The present contribution aims to describe the results of the study carried out at DIPED – Dipartimento di Progettazione Educativa e Didattica (Department for Educational Design) – Roma Tre University, where the levels of critical thinking skills of students were assessed through an ad hoc content analysis protocol.

The different sections explain why content analysis is considered a valid and reliable technique in the assessment of critical thinking skills and how the procedure was used in the above-mentioned project.

The research is set within this context and, though being implemented in higher education, aims to project its results into different settings, in order to improve other areas, such as lifelong learning, and enhance development in various fields of knowledge.

The project principally aims to assess the hypothesis that, in providing further cultural insights, according to well-defined models on which to undertake guided discussions coordinated by an experienced tutor, critical thinking skills of students increase. This is made possible through the development of an ad hoc online module, *Critical Thinking Skills and Reading of the Classics*, available to students in Education (Faculty of Education Sciences).

In order to assess critical thinking skills, the students' written productions were treated with a lexicometric analysis using the Taltac software, and with content analysis, through an adaptation of the Newman, Webb and Cochrane (1997) model. The main categories of the analysis include relevance, importance, introduction of new ideas, information and solutions, reference to personal experience and opinions, clarification of doubts, new knowledge, elaboration of new solutions, critical evaluation, practical use of new solutions, width of understanding.

The ability to think critically and therefore to make functional use of what is learnt is what the OECD report itself mentioned as vital if wanting to enhance the development of new skills and in particular skills that are effective for growth and innovation in complex organisations.

Keywords

Content analysis, critical thinking, assessment, innovation, critical technology.

Is it possible to define a more effective profile? A comparison between French and Italian teachers

Francesca Corradi

Kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward immigrant children and children of immigrant families is the subject of research conducted between 2009 and 2010. The study compares teachers in the public schools of Avignon, France, with state school teachers of Reggio Emilia, Italy. The analysis conducted mainly considered relations between two variables. However, the research tools used (participant observation, Likert type-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews) also allowed for the triangulation of data. The intent of this article is to elaborate on the methodological contribution to the research using multivariate analysis. This analysis provides both three-dimensional representations of the teachers' attitudes as well as individualized representations of relevant relations between variables. The statistic test of the null hypotheses, the "chi-square test" is

used. The analysis points out attitude and behaviour differences between Reggio Emilia teachers and Avignon teachers. Differences are mostly observed in the synchronic dimension data analysis. Nevertheless, if the point of observation is changed and data are studied in the diachronic dimension, that general view demonstrates how a current historical period influences educational choices within a particular educational system and consequently influences teachers' attitudes.

Keywords

Bivariate and multivariate analysis, intercultural teachers' attitudes, diachronic dimension, France, Italy.

Educational profiles of inmates

Teresa Savoia

In western countries, prisons exist with the aim of educating, or rather re-educating, offenders.

In time, the concept of prison and the aims of penalty have significantly changed, and the role assigned to education has progressively increased. However, as central a goal as it is, education is far from being an accomplished result or a recognised right to offenders everywhere.

Nowadays more than ever, with overcrowded prisons and economical crisis, the debate on these themes is important, also to avoid the risks of ignoring it in the name of higher priorities. In this sense, educational research is crucial, since it represents the fundamental link to connect the outcomes of theoretical debate in historical, sociological and juridical studies, in the light of concrete proposals of intervention.

The following article presents an overview on the reflections and contradictions about education in prison. It first introduces the main aspects of the field of research, then it motivates the reasons why prison education is, or should be, considered a fundamental objective in contemporary society and, finally, addresses the problem of what education can be applied in the prison context. In the second part, it shows the first results of an ongoing research on the educational profiles of the inmates in an Italian prison.

Keywords

Re-education, recidivism, total institution, prisonisation, educational profiles, cultural habits.