

Inclusion dans les Cités de l'Éducation

Défis, Cultures et Ressources

Inclusion in the Cities of Education

Challenges, Cultures and Resources

Jean Pierre Pourtois, Anna Pileri, Nicola Giacomini,
Roberta Caldin, Clara Silva (Eds.)



CONNECTIONS
DANS LES CONTEXTES
D'APPRENDISSAGE

CONNECTIONS
IN LEARNING
CONTEXTS

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■ CONNEXIONS ■ DANS LES CONTEXTES ■ ■ D'APPRENDISSAGE ■

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La collection "Connexions dans les contextes d'apprentissage" se consacre à la recherche et à l'étude de l'apprentissage ainsi que les connexions nécessaires pour le soutenir sur base d'actions partagées et coordonnées. La référence à la perspective systémique-écologique, suivant le modèle bio-psycho-social de la CIF (OMS, 2001), est donc privilégiée.

Cette collection met l'accent sur le rôle essentiel que joue la création de liens lorsqu'il s'agit de répondre aux besoins des élèves avec handicap et de leurs familles. Ces liens dépendent d'enseignants compétents et passionnés. Ils sont essentiels pour favoriser l'apprentissage individualisé et personnalisé, de même que pour guider les trajectoires de vie. En effet, les enseignants vont se montrer capables d'accompagner tous les élèves, de favoriser la réussite sociale, de soutenir les familles et de créer un environnement dans lequel tous les élèves peuvent s'épanouir, quelles que soient leurs capacités.

La collection accueillera aussi des travaux de recherches – de niveaux national et international - axés sur l'expérience d'apprentissage dans des contextes allant de la crèche à l'école secondaire. Dans ces contextes, il s'agit de la mise en oeuvre d'actions de planification et d'enseignement destinées à tous les garçons et à toutes les filles, à tous les élèves, est devenue incontournable, de façon à prêter attention à la synergie entre la participation spécifique et leur réussite, dans l'apprentissage, dans la vie présente et future.

Les thèmes couverts sont inévitablement interreliés : de la formation, des perceptions et des compétences des opérateurs scolaires (directeurs, enseignants, éducateurs) avec la collégialité, en utilisant outils multiples et innovants, y compris des outils technologiques. Cette collection porte également attention à l'impulsion inévitable à donner à l'apprentissage pour tous, grâce aux outils multiples et innovants, y compris des outils technologiques. L'espace offert permettra d'entrer en résonance avec de multiples réflexions scientifiques, des recherches et des projets centrés sur la pertinence et l'engagement didactico-pédagogique.

Concernant tous les élèves et ceux en situation de handicap, différents types de connexions s'avèrent nécessaires, afin d'assurer la coordination des actions structurées dans le cadre des projets individualisés et personnalisés. La planification et l'accompagnement de projet de vie apparaissent indispensables. De plus, ces connexions influencent les actions de soins et de réadaptation, les services à la personne, les services à la personne, les initiatives de participation sociale, ainsi que le soutien en matière de collaboration écolesfamilles- communautés.

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*En hommage à Huguette Desmet, son engagement
pédagogique reste pour nous une source précieuse d'inspiration.*

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2.6. ‘Making the teacher speak’ as a practice for building the family-school partnership in parent-child homework conversations

*Vittoria Colla*¹

2.6.1. Introduction

Building on Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological theory, a great amount of pedagogical research in the last thirty years has investigated the effects of parental involvement in children’s school education (see among others, Castro et al., 2015; Epstein, 1990, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001). Overall, these studies have indicated positive correlations between parental involvement and children’s academic results and motivation toward learning and schooling. In line with these studies, education policies in Western countries have been promoting the so-called ‘family-school partnership’ as the formula for maximizing students’ success and promoting social equality. In Italy, the idea that parents should get involved in children’s school life and ‘team up’ with teachers has emerged gradually but steadily, throughout the years. Since the delegated decrees in 1974 (DPR n. 416-420/1974), parents’ participation in school initiatives has been increasingly expected and encouraged. In more recent years, the introduction of the “educational pact of co-responsibility” (DPR n. 235/2007) has formally established the ‘family-school alliance’ as a moral benchmark for parents and teachers. Following these studies and policies, the collaboration between parents and teachers has become an “educational postulate” (Gigli, 2016, p. 135); home-school relations have increased along with expectations that ‘good parents’ should get involved in their children’s education (Contini, 2012; Milani, 2012; Forsberg, 2009; Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2013).

In the building of the family-school partnership, two interactive activities are commonly attributed a crucial role: parent-teacher conferences

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(Caronia, 2021; Pillet-Shore, 2015) and parent-assisted homework (Colla, 2020, 2023; Caronia & Colla, 2024). Involving parents on a daily basis (Izquierdo et al., 2006), parent-assisted homework is a particularly relevant site for bridging family and school, and potentially building the partnership between parents and teachers (Montalbetti & Lisimberti, 2020; Pontecorvo et al., 2013). However, despite being an allegedly ‘good practice’ of parental involvement, parent-assisted homework is still little explored as an arena for the interactive construction of the family-school partnership (but see Forsberg, 2007; Kremer-Sadlik & Fatigante, 2015; Wingard, 2006). The present study contributes to this underexplored line of inquiry by illustrating how parents visibly orient to the golden standard of the family-school partnership and implement it in the unfolding of homework conversations. In particular, the study illustrates how parents deploy the practice of ‘making the teacher speak’ (which consists in reporting teachers’ claims) as well as how they respond to this practice when it is deployed by their children.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section delineates the contemporary debate on (parent-assisted) homework and discusses extant literature on the relationship between ‘good parenting’ and moral expectations concerning parental involvement in homework. After the description of the data and methodology of the study, the analytic section illustrates two sequences of parent-child homework interactions where parents and children deploy the practice of ‘making the teacher speak’, which consists in reporting teachers’ claims. The analysis illustrates the ways in which parents make the teacher speak and respond to this practice when deployed by children. Finally, the concluding discussion delineates how parents’ interactive conduct in the analyzed excerpts contributes to discursively creating a school-aligned moral horizon inside the home, thus achieving the sharing of values between family and school recommended by studies and policies, and commonly ratified as a moral benchmark for ‘good parents’. In addition, the final section reflects on the relevance of the practice of ‘making the teacher speak’ as an educational resource, which contributes to educating children into teachers’ authority.

2.6.2. Parental involvement in homework: debated issues and moral standards for ‘good parents’

Being a school activity to be completed at home, homework has a strong impact on family life in terms of ordinary routines (Izquierdo et al., 2006), time organization (Colla, 2020; Wingard, 2006), stress (Pressman

et al., 2015), and parent-child relationships (Wingard & Forsberg, 2009). Not surprisingly then, after decades during which homework has been a taken-for-granted educational practice, its effectiveness, suitability, and appropriate quantity have been increasingly questioned in recent years. Many books and articles have made the case against homework, arguing for the need to ‘free’ children and families from this ‘burden’ (e.g., Ben-net & Kalish, 2006; Kralovec & Buell, 2000, 2001; Parodi, 2016, 2018). Concurrently, a large amount of research has been devoted to investigating whether and how homework, especially when parent-assisted, can increase children’s learning and academic results (Cooper, 1989; Cooper et al., 2006; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001; Patall et al., 2008; Polito, 2013). While these studies have indicated mixed results and the “homework battle” (Cooper, 2006) is far from over, assignments continue entering the home of most pupils’ families, bringing with them a series of expectations and moral standards concerning parental involvement in this activity and the construction of the family-school partnership. Such moral standards are explicitly formulated in some studies and policies. For example, according to Walker et al. (2004), parental involvement in children’s homework should entail not only parents’ practical engagement in the exercises but also and more importantly the explicit formulation of school rules and the meeting of school requests. In a similar way, Epstein (1995, 2001) stresses that parents should make their homes “school-like”, that is they should “duplicate the school” in ways that increase the probability of students’ school-aligned learning (Epstein, 1995, p. 83). As emerging from these works, parent-assisted homework presupposes a precise model of ‘good parent’, one that is not simply available and willing to assist the child, but also competent in the school culture and able to reproduce school rules inside the home. In other words, parents are expected to be “pedagogicalized” (Popkewitz, 2003) and act like “quasi-literacy teachers” at home (Blackmore & Hutchinson, 2010, p. 503). Interestingly, this model of ‘good, involved parenting’ is consistent with the guidelines issued by the Italian Ministry of Education, which promote the family-school alliance and specify that it should be based on the authentic ‘sharing of values’ between parents and teachers (see Nota Miur 22/11/2012, “Trasmissione linee di indirizzo”). As we will see in the excerpts below, these moral standards concerning parental conduct are visibly assumed and pervasively put into practice by the parents involved in the present study. By ‘making the teacher speak’ and abiding by the teachers’ requests reported by children, parents display their orientation to meeting teachers’ expectations, aligning with the morality of the school, and making their homes “school-like”.

2.6.3. Data and methodology

The data used in this study are drawn from a corpus of 62 video-recorded homework sessions collected in nineteen Italian families between 2018 and 2020. The families involved in the study live in Northern Italy and are composed of two working parents and at least one child attending primary school (i.e., aged 6 to 10). Only three families have an immigrant background; in all families, parents and children speak Italian when doing homework. Participants were recruited by the author through her personal and professional connections. To minimize the potential impact of the research setting, video recordings were self-administered by the parents; participants' consent was obtained according to Italian law n. 196/2003 and EU Regulation n. 2016/679 (GDPR 2016/679).

The selected excerpts have been analyzed according to the principles of conversation analysis (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013), which is particularly suited to analyzing the situated and inherently interactive unfolding of morally dense educational events like homework (Colla, 2021). In line with the multimodal approach to the study of interaction (Mondada, 2016), transcripts have been enriched with notations for gaze directions, gestures, and body movements when ostensibly relevant for the participants in unfolding the conversation. Transcripts are presented in two lines: the original Italian transcript is followed by an idiomatic translation in American English. For the sake of anonymity, all names have been fictionalized and references to places and people have been removed.

2.6.4. Building the family-school partnership in parent-child homework conversations: 'Making the teacher speak' as an interactive practice

The data feature various sequences where parents and children 'make the teacher speak', i.e., report the teachers' claims. These sequences are extremely relevant for studying how parents and children co-construct the family-school partnership in and through homework conversations. Below are two examples (examples 1 and 2).

Example 1 - A mother making the teacher speak

- 1 Mother la maestra Martina vuole che scrivete in stampa-in:
corsivo.
**teacher Martina wants you^[plur.] to write in lower-in:
cursive.**

Example 2 - A child making the teacher speak

- 2 Tania a me la maestra mi dice sempre di far così. guarda
the teacher always tells me to do it like this. look
((starts leafing through the math notebook))

The analysis focuses on the ways in which parents a) deploy the practice of ‘making the teacher speak’, and b) respond to this practice when deployed by children. As the analysis will show, parents’ interactive conduct displays their pervasive orientation to enacting the moral standard of ‘parents as school partners’. At the same time, it discursively creates the sharing of values between family and school recommended by education policies and studies.

2.6.4.1. Parents make the teacher speak

The following excerpt (example 3) illustrates how a mother ‘makes the teachers speak’ in the unfolding of an interactive sequence where she problematizes the child’s homework-related conduct.

Example 3 - A mother making the teacher speak in problematizing the child’s conduct

Mother; Ludovico (7 years old, second grade)

- 1 Mother *((looks closely at the homework page))*
2 °puoi scrivere un po’ più piccolo e ordina:to?°
°can you write a little bit smaller and ti:dier?°
3 Ludovico (o)k*((stretching toward the eraser))*
4 5 turns omitted: mother and Ludovico discuss whether he should erase his writing
5 Ludovico *((starts erasing his writing))*
6 >> Mother ti han chiesto di scrivere un po’ più piccolo,
they asked you to write a little bit smaller,
Ludovico *((erases his writing, then takes the pencil and rewrites it))*

In this exchange, the practice of ‘making the teacher speak’ is deployed by the mother in line 6. Yet, before focusing on this turn, it is worth describing how the interaction unfolds up to that point. After observing what Ludovico has written (line 1), the mother asks him to write “a little bit smaller and tidier” (line 2). With this request, she problematizes the child’s handwriting, discursively constructing it as sloppy and therefore unacceptable. Ludovico immediately provides a positive answer to the mother’s request (line 3) and finally complies with it by erasing his writing (line 5). At this point, the mother makes the teacher speak: she recycles part of her previous turn (“write a little bit smaller”) and retrospectively frames it as the teachers’ request (“*they asked you* to write a little bit smaller”, line 6). By making the teachers speak, the mother brings their voice inside the home, conveying that she shares the teachers’ request and point of view on the issue at hand. Furthermore, she demonstrates to know the school expectations concerning the child’s homework-related conduct and stages herself as entitled to problematize the child’s handwriting based on such knowledge and shared school rules. A partnership between parent and teachers is thus subtly constructed and conveyed through the reporting of teachers’ request. The teachers’ voice is legitimated inside the home and the mother conveys her alignment with their request.

2.6.4.2. *Parents respond to children making the teacher speak*

To describe how the family-school partnership is interactively produced in parent-child homework interactions, it is particularly relevant to observe not only how parents make the teacher speak, but also how they respond to this practice when it is deployed by children. Interestingly, whenever the children in the study ‘make the teacher speak’, parents stop problematizing what they are doing. The following excerpt (example 4) provides an example.

Example 4 - A mother responds to her child making the teacher speak

Mother; Virginia (8 years old, third grade)

- | | | |
|---|----------|--|
| 1 | Mother | perché lo hai trasformato in sei?
why did you turn it into six? |
| 2 | | (3.0) ((Virginia stares silently at the calculation)) |
| 3 | Virginia | °dopo devi fare quattro per ^no:ve°
°then you must do four times ^ni:ne° ((pointing to the numbers)) |
| 4 | | ^((turns to mother)) |

- 5 Mother no:,
 no:,
- 6 Virginia °si:°
 °ye:s°
- 7 Mother l'operazione è cinquanta per nove
 the calculation is fifty times nine ((pointing to
 the calculation))
- 8 >> Virginia me l'ha detto il maestro Marco
 teacher Marco told me that ((pushing the mother's hand away from
 the photocopy))
- 9 Mother va bene. se te l'ha detto il maestro Marco,
 ok. if teacher Marco told you that, ((with a smiling voice))

The excerpt is opened by the mother problematizing the homework done by the child. In this case, the mother uses a request for account (Sterponi, 2003) asking Virginia information about how she has done the exercise (“why did you turn it into six?”, line 1). After a three-second gap, Virginia explains the procedure for the problematized calculation (line 3). With this turn, the child justifies the procedure adopted, thus resisting the mother’s problematization. However, the mother bluntly rejects the procedure described by Virginia, then she provides an account explaining the reasons why the procedure described by the child is wrong (line 7). While talking, the mother points to the calculation on the homework page (line 7), thus making visible the specific calculation under discussion.

Facing the mother’s persistent problematization, Virginia makes the teacher speak: she reports what teacher Marco said at school. By attributing her previous claim to “teacher Marco” (“teacher Marco told me that”, line 8) and concurrently pushing the mother’s hand away from the homework page (line 8), Virginia multimodally rejects the mother’s problematization and constructs the homework exercise as her exclusive territory of expertise. By reporting what the teacher said at school, the child evokes her first-hand knowledge of school life, which the mother lacks, and presents her work as aligned with the teacher’s requests. At the same time, making the teacher speak is a way for the child to reduce her own agency in contradicting her mother. By “ventriloquizing” the teacher (Cooren, 2010), Virginia shares with him the responsibility for rejecting the problematization. Interestingly, in response to the child’s deployment of the practice of making the teacher speak, the mother stops problematizing her work: after the child invokes teacher Marco’s words, the mother aligns with the child’s claim (“ok”, line 9) and ratifies teacher Marco’s speech as an authoritative source of knowledge (“if teacher Marco told you that”, line 9). Even though the prosodic contour of the mother’s turn demonstrates her skepticism about the child’s claim (see the rising intonation and

smiling voice, line 9), she does not cast doubt upon teacher Marco's statement evoked by the child; rather, she closes the problematization sequence.

2.6.5. Concluding discussion

The analysis presented above has focused on two interactive sequences where the practice of 'making the teacher speak' was deployed by either a parent or a child. As the analysis has pointed out, this practice was deployed in the unfolding of sequences of problematization and performed specific functions. When deployed by parents, the practice of making the teacher speak was used to problematize the child's work ("they asked you to write a little bit smaller," ex. 3, line 6). By making the teacher speak, parents increased their own authority insofar as they displayed their knowledge of and alignment with the teacher's requests. At the same time, this practice allowed the parents to stage themselves as merely reporting the teachers' claims, thus downgrading their own responsibility for the problematization. In contrast, children deployed the practice of making the teacher speak as a response to parents' problematization of their work, as in example 4. By reporting what the teacher said at school ("teacher Marco told me that", ex. 4, line 8), children made relevant their direct knowledge of school life, thus increasing their own authority vis-à-vis their parents. At the same time, by making the teacher speak, the children could share with their teachers the agency in contradicting their parents, thus reducing their personal responsibility for it. For the aims of this study, it is particularly important not only to notice that parents made the teacher speak, but also to observe how they responded to this practice when deployed by children. In this corpus, whenever children reported teachers' utterances, parents stopped problematizing the children's work and acknowledged the child as competent and authoritative over homework (see ex. 4). In other words, using the teacher's voice to support children's claims had the effect of increasing children's authority and making parents give up the problematization. The practice of making the teacher speak therefore appears to be an interesting resource through which parents and children negotiate and establish their respective authority in interaction (Nasi & Colla, 2025).

Beyond the strictly interactive function of this practice, it is crucial to stress that the ways in which parents deployed and responded to this practice demonstrate their orientation to establishing a partnership based on the sharing of rules, values, and expectations between family and school. The idea that the micro contexts of family and school should share the same moral system was visibly assumed by the parents in the study. By echoing

the teacher's voice at home (ex. 3) and abiding by it when evoked by the children (ex. 4), parents ratified the teacher's authority and reproduced the normative system of the school inside the home. In this way, they discursively created the "school-like homes" theorized by Epstein (1995) and implemented the family-school partnership based on shared values and active collaboration proposed by education policies and research. Interestingly, the family-school partnership visibly assumed, evoked, and implemented by parents through the practice of making the teacher speak had the effect of reinforcing both parents' and teachers' authority. By interactively constructing family and school as partner institutions sharing values, expectations, and rules, the parents in the study contributed to creating a mutually supportive relationship between family and school as well as an interactive landscape where parents' and teachers' voices authorize and reinforce each other.

The practice of making the teacher speak is particularly interesting for a further reason: it displays parents' culturally informed understanding of what it means to be a 'good parent' during homework. By making relevant and complying with teachers' claims, the mothers in the study performed the role of 'school partners' recommended by pedagogical literature and policies, and commonly held as an unquestionable moral benchmark (Forsberg, 2009; Gigli, 2016). The fact that parents reported teachers' claims and did not dare question them when they were evoked by the children demonstrates that parents were deeply oriented to performing the role of school partners and took for granted the moral imperative of supporting teachers and collaborating with them.

In concluding this article, it is worth reflecting on another point that has to do with the educational valence of micro, parent-child exchanges like the ones analyzed above. Undoubtedly, despite their ordinary and contingent nature, sequences where parents and children make the teacher speak are extremely rich and powerful from an educational point of view. Clearly enough, these brief exchanges constitute not only occasions for parents and children to locally manage their own and each other's authority over homework; they are also precious, culturally dense means for educating children into specific moral orders. As a matter of fact, in the excerpts presented in this study, the idea that 'the teacher is always right' is pervasively assumed and "talked into being" (Heritage, 1984, p. 290) by both parents and children. By taking part in everyday conversations like those analyzed here, children are exposed to this idea as a totally self-evident and indisputable principle, and they are gradually educated to the unquestionability of teachers' authority and school rules.

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CONNECTIONS
IN LEARNING
CONTEXTS

Directors:

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The collection "Connections in learning contexts" assumes as its object of research and study learning and the necessary connections that are able to support it on the basis of shared and coordinated actions. The reference to the systemic-ecological perspective, in line with the ICF biopsychosocial model (WHO, 2001) is therefore crucial.

The collection emphasizes the vital role of fostering connections when addressing the needs of students with disabilities and their families. Connections dependent on skilled and passionate teachers. These connections are essential for coordinating individualized and personalized learning that are crucial for guiding life trajectories. Teachers who can educate all students, enable social achievement, and support families, create an environment where all students, regardless of ability, can thrive.

The collection will therefore host also research - both national and international - focused on the learning experience in from nursery to secondary school: reference is made to contexts where the effort to implement planning and teaching actions aimed at all boys and girls, at all pupils, is inescapable because they are able to pay attention to the fertile synergy between their specific participation and their success in learning and in life, present and future.

Inevitably intertwined with the themes of training, perceptions and skills of school operators (managers, teachers, practitioners), with collegiality, by using multiple and innovative tools, including technological ones.

The collection intends to focus attention on the inevitable impetus that learning must take on in relation to a continuous orientation for all, by offering a space to resonate with multiple scientific reflections, research and projects that recall their relevance and pedagogical-didactic commitment.

With reference to students with disabilities, the connections indicated as necessary for the coordination of the actions structured within the framework of the individualised and personalised projects that need coordination indispensable for the accompaniment of the life project appear crucial. These connections are intended to coordinate care and rehabilitation actions, personal services, social participation initiatives, possible support for the family unit, as well as school-family community collaboration.

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Ce livre s'inscrit ainsi dans une perspective critique, engagée et interdisciplinaire. Il vise à mettre en lumière les tensions, les résistances, mais aussi les leviers possibles pour faire de la Cité de l'Éducation un véritable espace de coresponsabilité, d'apprentissage mutuel et de justice sociale. La société dans son ensemble est appelée à repenser ses représentations de la réussite, de la normalité et de la valeur de chaque individu. L'inclusion éducative ne peut être effective sans un changement culturel profond, qui valorise la diversité comme une richesse et non comme un obstacle à contourner. Cela implique une mobilisation collective, un dialogue constant entre les institutions, les citoyens, et les acteurs éducatifs, pour bâtir une cité où chacun trouve sa place et peut s'épanouir. En croisant les regards des familles, d'experts, de praticiens et d'acteurs de terrain, cet ouvrage plaide pour une éthique de la coéducation fondée sur la reconnaissance, l'équité et la participation. À travers ce travail, nous espérons ouvrir des pistes de réflexion et d'action pour que l'émancipation inclusive devienne, enfin, une réalité partagée, en sachant que rien ne se construit sans une passion collective, celle du partage des ressources afin de créer une véritable éducation émancipatrice.

This book adopts a critical, engaged, and interdisciplinary perspective. It seeks to illuminate not only the tensions and resistance encountered, but also the potential levers for transforming the City of Education into a genuine space of shared responsibility, mutual learning, and social justice. Society as a whole is called upon to rethink its notions of success, normality, and the intrinsic value of every individual. True educational inclusion requires a profound cultural shift—one that embraces diversity as a strength rather than a barrier to be overcome. This calls for collective mobilisation and sustained dialogue among institutions, citizens, and educational stakeholders, to build a city where everyone can find their place and thrive. By bringing together the voices of families, experts, practitioners, and field actors, this book advocates for an ethic of coeducation rooted in recognition, equity, and participation. Through this work, we aim to open pathways for reflection and action, so that inclusive emancipation can finally become a shared reality—knowing that nothing can be achieved without a collective passion for sharing resources and fostering truly emancipatory education.