



Symposium

Can we ethically inhabit our technologic time without the ancient ethic?





The overview of the symposium

1. the philosophical frame of the educative project

Luigina

2. the structure of the project

Marco

3. findings from the explorative activity in kindergarten

Lara

4. findings from the 'virtues diaries'

Federica



Symposium

*Can we ethically inhabit our technologic time
without the ethic of past?*

The essence of ethical education

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MelArete

Mel + Arete

melete [μελετε] = care

arete [αρετη] = virtue

Our fields



Roma

Our fields



Trento

Our fields



Bergamo

Our fields



Bologna

Our fields



Mantova

Our fields





The conceptual core

Presuppositional concept:

- education is the practice aimed at preparing the youths to the work of living

Primary question:

- to understand what is **the essence of the work of living**

and that question requires

to understand **what is the essence of life**



The argumentative core (1)

What is to be demonstrated:

- the essence of life is care
- care is ethical in its essence since *to care for* is practising virtues
- if education is prepare to do the work of life/art of existing then education is educating to virtues

The primary question:

- how to interpret education to virtues?

... ..



The argumentative core (2)

primary question: how to interpret education to virtues?

flow of reasoning: both from Plato and Aristotle

core concept: virtues are no habits,
but ways of being that continually
require to be the object of thinking

consequently:

- ethical education is improving the awareness of the existential primary of virtues

and then

- to develop the disposition to keep virtuous action under the analysis of thinking



primary question:

to understand what is ***the essence of the work of living***
and
that requires to understand what is ***the essence of life***

the essential qualities of human condition:

fragility: since we lack sovereignty on life

vulnerability: since we are dependent-beings
from the others and from the context of life

uncompleteness: we arrive in the world lacking
what is essential for life: the good
and for all the time we are searching for
what authenticates life: the good

ontology is ethics



consequently ...

the work of life is facing
fragility, vulnerability, uncompleteness of life
and this ontogenerative work is named care



The myth of Cronus (Plato, *Stateman*, 269 a- 275 e)

The myth of Cronus enunciates an ontological thesis about the human condition:

it theorizes that the condition in which the human beings are born and live is a condition in which they are

abandoned, without divine care (274 b 6).

and are asked to «care for themselves by themselves»

[την επιμελειαν αυτου] αυτων εχειν] (274 d 11-13).



Consequently...

Socrates:

- the work of life is to care for the soul (*First Alcibiades*)
- education is to care for youth (*Eutiphrones*)
- education is to care that the youths care for themselves in order they can be able to care for the community (*First Alcibiades*)

following question:



Progetto MelAre

what is the essence of a good care?

Socrates: «what is caring in the perfect way ?

[**ορθο**] **επιμελίσθαι**]

Through a phenomenological analysis of the experience of care

it resulted that the core of a good practice of care is made of ways of being that can be defined virtues:

respect, generosity, courage, temperance, justice



The flow of reasoning

(x) if the ontological rational of education is to prepare to the work of living

(y) and if the work of living is care

(z1) then education has to be an offer of experiences that improve the learning of the art of care for life

and

(y2) if the perfect care for life is acting according to virtues

(z2) then education has to be an offer of experiences that improve the learning of virtues



Education to ethics is education to virtues

consequently

to educate to care is educate to virtues

but

virtues are the object of that kind of thought that is defined ethics

consequently

educate to virtues of care is educate to ethics



How to educate to virtue ethics?

centrality of virtues:	Plato
	Aristotle
	Plutarcus

Socratic view (1)



According to Socrates, the art of acting according to virtue is learnt through a right *paideia* and the right *paideia* is the action that guides the soul to **think** on virtues.

In the 'myth of the cave' (*Republic*) , Socrates speaks of the travel of soul toward truth: Socrates adopts the metaphor of the prisoner that indicates the condition of the soul that cannot see the good things for life and to reach the good things means going near to the essence of virtues

In *Phaedrus*, Socrates says that soul must contemplate “the things that are worth of love”: virtues.



Aristotelian view (1)

- the good searched by human beings is *eudaimonia* (*Et. Nic.*, I, 7, 1097a 34);
- it is the most beautiful and good thing and therefore it is also the most pleasant (*Eudemian Ethics* I, 1, 1214a 7-8).
- The term *eudaimonia* means “living good”;
- and “living good” is one with the “acting good” (*Eud.Et.* II, 1, 1219b 1-2; *Nic. Et.*, I, 4, 1095a 19-20);
- to act good means to act according to virtue (*Et. Eud.*, II, 1, 1219a 28).



Aristotelian view (2)

As a continuation of the Socratic thought, Aristotle considers the life of the soul to be essential in the human condition, and affirms that “the good of the human being consists in an **activity of the soul according to its virtue**” (Nic. Et., I, 7, 1097a 12-18).



Socratic *with* Aristotelian view

central is the activity of the soul/mind

the soul/mind has to **think** on virtue:
to search for understanding

- the essence of virtue (Socrates)
- and
- how to model the action in a virtuous way (Aristotle)

The centrality of thinking

“Might the problem of good and evil, our faculty for telling right from wrong, be connected with our faculty of thought?”

(Hannah Arendt, *The life of the mind*, p. 5)



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The structure of the project MelArete

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MelArete
Center of Philosophy for Care



UNESCO Chair
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European Centre for Bioethics and Quality of Life - UNESCO Chair in Bioethics Italian Unit



An educative-research project

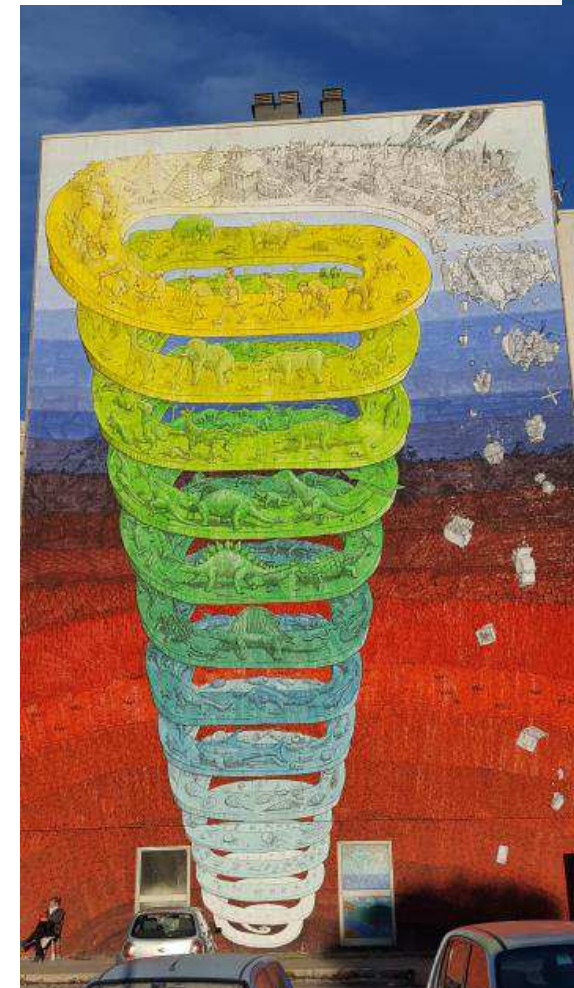
- the instruments we used has **both an educative and a heuristic aim** (Mortari, 2009a)
- It is a “**service research**”, i.e. a research whose methods and findings represent an answer to school’s request to be helped in improving practices (Mortari, 2017)
- “**Experiential-transformative**” research (Mortari, 2007, 2009): it is aimed at improving educative practice and promote participants’ flourishing
- “**Research *for* children**”: it is guided by the purpose to offer significant and positive experiences to children (Mortari, 2009b).



From an *educative* point of view...



1. MelArete starts from an **analysis of our contemporary society and its challenges**:
 - the necessity and urgency of ethical education.
2. Elaborates a well founded **theory** on ethical education:
 - a vision of **education**: The flourishing of every person in all his/her aspects
 - a vision of **ethics**: an ethics of care according to virtues
 - a vision of **education to ethics**
3. Elaborates an **educative project** suitable for kindergarten and primary school children, and useful for school contexts





From an *heuristic* point of view

- Every activity is planned having:
 - an educative aim
 - a research aim
- All the interactions and products of all activities are matter of research, and are subject to an analysis aimed at showing **the quality of children's ethical thinking** and **the effectiveness of the educative pathway**





The educative question and aims

At the base of this project is the following pedagogical question:

How can we orient the person to pay attention to virtues and to reflect about them in order to realize a good quality of life?

The specific educative objects of the educative pathway is to encourage children to **reflect** about ideas (Socrates) and experience (Aristotle).





The educative question and aims/2

- To **reflect about** ideas (Socrates):
 - the concepts of *good* and *care*;
 - the general idea of *virtue*;
 - and some specific virtues, such as *courage**, *generosity**, *respect** and *justice***.
- and **to look for** them in everyday experience (Aristotle), in order to **help children to orient their life** to the good.

*chosen because they had emerged to be the three more known virtues by the children who took part at an exploratory phase of the project.

** proposed by researchers, in an educative way, because of the relevance assigned to it by the Western ethical philosophy





The educative instruments

In MelArete the educative instruments are the following:
children are asked to:

- **be involved in conversations from narratives:** We use conversations to promote intersubjective thought;
- **invent narratives about virtues:** We invite children to create oral, graphical or written stories about virtues;
- **discuss vignettes and games:** through the playful language, we present children ethical dilemmas;
- write “**diary of virtues**”: we encourage children to reflect on everyday ethical experience.





The educative pathway





The educative pathway_{/2}

- For every virtue we prepared:
 - 2 stories
 - 1 or 2 games
 - 1 or 2 vignettes
- The activities to propose to single classes are chosen together with the teachers

Specificities in kindergarten

- * Every activity refers to the narrative framework
- * The stories are told using puppets animation
- * Oral language
- * Drawings

Specificities in primary school

- * Reference to concrete real everyday life*
- Writing*
- Reading*

In common:

- *The object of reflections
- *The narrative framework (the Wood of virtues - Platonic names)
- *Kind of activities



This story represents the frame for all the project, because it focuses children's attention on **acting with care in order to search for what is good**. Through narration, the children are introduced to this fundamental concept of the educative project.

Educative aim

To introduce children to reflect on the fundamental concepts of the project: good and care

Heuristic aim

To understand children's conception of good and care

The frame activity

the concept of good and care



Progetto MelArete



- What is courage?
- What is generosity?
- What is respect?
- What is justice?
- How can we call all these “things”?
- Have you ever heard the word ‘virtue’?
- *In primary school also*: Is it possible to learn virtues? If so, how?



Educative aim

To accompany children to reflect on what are virtues and how they can be learnt

Heuristic aim

To understand children's preliminary ideas about the concept of virtue and of some specific virtues, and how they can be learnt (pre-test)

The explorative activity



Stories are set in the «wood of virtues», where animals act and reflect about ethical choices and behaviors, and invite children to do the same



Educative aim

To implement children's ethical thinking through the proposal of a narration and a structured reflection

Heuristic aim

To explore children's comprehension of the virtuous gesture narrated.

Question for kindergarten

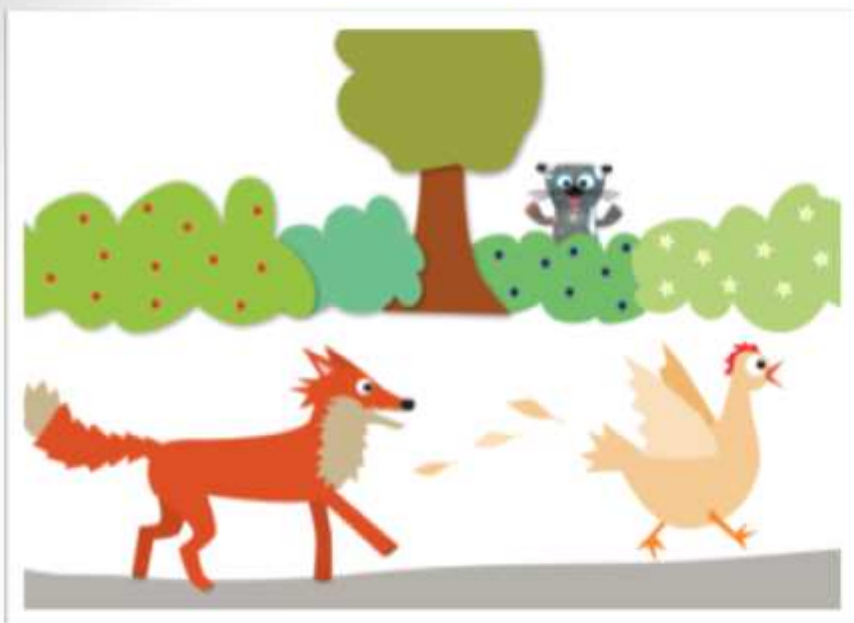
- What did the protagonist do?
- If you were the protagonist, what would you think?
- If you were the protagonist, what would you do?
- How do you call the gesture the protagonist have done? What name would you do to this virtue?

Question for primary sch.

- What is the virtuous gesture of the protagonist?
- Which is the thought that guided him/her?
- What are the effects of his/her gesture?
- After acting, how did he/she feel?

Stories

Example: the vignette about courage.



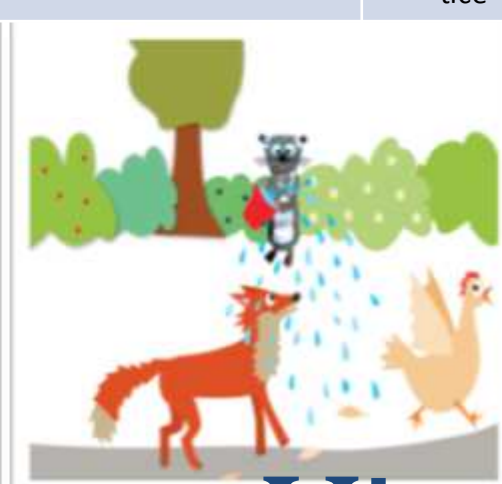
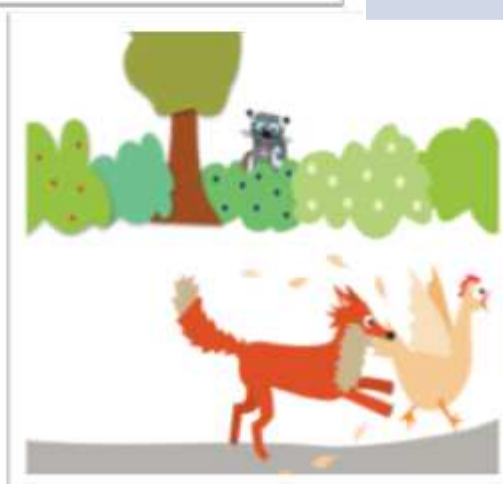
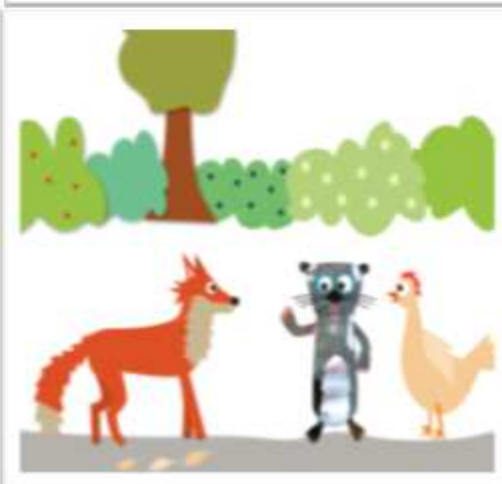
Educative aim

To implement children's ethical thinking offering them different situations through which dialoguing and reasoning on the idea of a specific virtue

Heuristic aim

To understand:

- the idea of courage/respect/generosity/justice present in children's thought
- the reasoning that children develop in order to identify actions inspired by the virtue of courage/respect/generosity/justice



Vignettes



Progetto MelArete



- The games are activities that stimulate thought and/or move actions.
- Their structures and the related educational reasons are different, based on the specific virtue that is the object of the activity.



Educative aim

To stimulate children in deepening their conception of a specific virtue

Heuristic aim

To explore children's comprehension of a specific virtue.

Example: the game about respect.



Games



- What is courage?
 - What is generosity?
 - What is respect?
 - What is justice?
 - How can we call all these “things”?
 - What are virtues?
- *In primary school also:* Is it possible to learn virtues? If so, how?



Educative aim

To recall children to reflect on what are virtues object of the pathway and how they can be learnt

Heuristic aim

To understand children's final ideas about the concept of virtue and of some specific virtues, and how they can be learnt (post-test)

Ending activities



- During the educative pathway, children keep a “diary of virtues”, writing and/or drawing and describing – regularly– virtuous actions they carried out in first person or seen carried out by the others.

Educative aim

To reflect on everyday ethical experience
To share their reflections

Heuristic aim

To explore how children conceptualize virtues starting from their experience.
To understand if and how the quality of reflection and the conceptualization of experience changes during time.

Diary of virtues



Symposium

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The analysis of the results: the ideas

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The exploratory activity



The activity was organized during the second meeting with children and it was composed by three parts: a narrative introduction, a socratic group conversation and a final individual drawing activity.

Children were invited to answer to these questions:

- **What is courage? What is generosity? What is respect? What is justice?**



Collected data and analysis methodology

Collected data:

children's answers to the questions asked through the socratic conversations.

116 children (4/5 y.o.) from 12 classes within 6 kindergartens from Northern and Central Italy were involved.

Analysis method:

methodological crossbreeding (Mortari, 2007) between the phenomenological-eidetic method (Giorgi, 1985; Moustakas, 1994) and the grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Analysis methodology

SPEAKER	UNITS OF SENSE	LABEL	CATEGORY	DEFINITIONS STRUCTURE
18) R.	Courage. Have you ever heard this word? Courage			
19) B1	Yes, i have			
20) B2	Me to			
21) B3	No, i haven't			
22) R.	What is courage? What comes to your mind when you hear this word?			
23) B4	The courage is don't be afraid of nothing.	Do not be afraid	To be fearless	Simple
24) B5	No. Courage means that, for example, that you are not afraid of something and the other tells you: "Be courageous, go!"	To face fears	To become strong	Simple
25) R.	"Be courageous, go!", mmm. Anyone else?...courage.			
26) B5	For example, you are afraid about a dangerous street and the other tells you: "Be courageous, go!"	To face fears	To become strong	Simple
27) R.	Enrico, courage			
28) B6	To go fast	To go fast	To be reckless	Simple
29) R.	To go fast			



Some thoughts



- «Courage means that if you are scared you wait for a little while, then when the fear is gone.. you start again» (Ana, female, 5);
- «As in movies, where the prince saves the princess from the dragon and then defeats the dragon. He is brave because he loves the princess» (Michele, male, 5).

COURAGE



PRIMARY LEVEL CONCEPTUALIZATION	n.	CATEGORY
Do not be afraid	4	TO BE FEARLESS
Do not be afraid of ghostly-like characters	7	
Do not be afraid of scary animals	4	
Do not be afraid of the dark	3	
Do not be afraid of danger	2	
Do not be afraid of scary places	1	
Do not be afraid of shadow	1	
Do not be afraid of sounds	1	
To face fears	13	TO BECOME STRONG
To find the strenght in order to succeed in doing smt	3	
To overcome fears	2	
To outrun the fear in orde to start again	2	
To do something new	2	
To decide to fight	1	TO BE RECKLESS
To go towards the danger	2	
To fight scary animals	4	
To fight ghostly-like characters	2	
To go fast	1	
To ask for help when scared	2	TO FIND STRATEGIES IN ORDER TO FACE FEARS
To be always with friends	1	
To give a not scary meaning to an event	1	
To turn on the light in the dark	1	
To find help when scared	1	
To climb a tree	1	TO FACE CHALLENGES OR ADVENTURE
To go up the mountain	2	
To catch an insect	1	
To go a long way	1	
To rescue the princess from the dragon	1	TO FACE A CHALLENGE FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOMEONE
To help a friend to up the mountain	1	
To defend the family from an intimidating animal	1	
To fight against villains	2	



Some complex thoughts

- “When someone is sad you help him and then someone else is happy”(Gabriella, 5);
- “It means that someone does something good for another person because he wants to do some good for the world” (Michele, male, 5);
- “My mum is generous because when my sister asks her to bake a cake, she does it even if she is tired” (Adelaide, female, 5).

GENEROSITY



PRIMARY LEVEL CONCEPTUALIZATION	n.	CATEGORY
To give to whom does not have	1	TO GIVE THINGS TO THE OTHER
To make a gift	4	
To lend something	1	
To give something to whom asks for it	4	
To give a support	1	TO HELP
To help someone in need	1	
To help smb to do something he does not succeed	4	
To provide a gesture of care to whom is not well	3	
To say a prayer for somebody else	1	TO WISH WELL
To give gestures of affection	6	

Some complex thoughts



- “It means that i have to keep a secret because i know it and i don’t tell it to anybody because it is a secret and you don’t have to tell it, otherwise the other person gets angry and he is not my friend anymore” (Marco, 5).
- “It is me giving a toy to another kid who has lost his house because of the earthquake and was feeling bad just as the children in war zones, and i learnt to say thank you, and i was respectful because i have learnt that you have to love who is in need” (Michele, 5).

RESPECT



RESPECT

PRIMARY LEVEL CONCEPTUALIZATION	n.	CATEGORY
To recognize the value of people	1	TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE
To care for toys	4	
To recognize the value of nature	1	
To recognize the value of things	3	
To respect the law	1	TO APPLY THE RULES
To abide by the rules of living together	13	
To take turns	18	
To follow what is indicated	5	TO DO WHAT IS REQUIRED
To respond to what is required	2	
To obey	7	
Do not interrupt who is speaking	1	TO BE LISTENING AND TO PAY ATTENTION
Do not say what I cannot say	2	TO SPEAK CAREFULLY
To say others beautiful things, not ugly ones	1	
To be silent	1	
Do not be rude	3	TO BEHAVE WELL
To act in a suitable way	1	
To listen to the others accepting their decisions	3	TO RESPECT THE OTHERNESS
To save	2	TO RESCUE
To help	3	
To honor a commitment	1	TO BE LOYAL
To give something back	2	



Some thoughts

- “Justice is when a tree is about to fall down and somebody puts something underneath it and it doesn’t fall down” (Valentino, male, 4).
- “For example, you have to attend a swimming course but you don’t want to but it is your duty. Because duties and justice are the same thing” (Rocco, male, 5).

JUSTICE



PRIMARY LEVEL CONCEPTUALIZATION		CATEGORY
To respect the other's will	1	TO RESPECT OTHERNESS AND ITS RIGHTS
To respect the turn [to play] in order to give everybody the possibility to play	1	
To welcome	1	
To recognize the property	1	
To answer properly	11	TO SPEAK AND TO DO THINGS PROPERLY
To find the right fit	6	
To make the others happy	3	TO DO SOMETHING THAT MAKES PEOPLE HAPPY
To act with perseverance in order to be happy of yourself	1	
To rescue somebody	1	TO HELP SOMEONE
To rescue a tree	1	
To help someone who is in need	3	
To do your job	1	TO DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO
To respect the rotation in order to do a good job	1	
To uphold the laws	1	
To abide by the rules	2	
Do not have something taken from yourself	3	DO NOT BE DISRESPECTFUL
Do not pretend something	2	
Do not break things	1	
To give the others the opportunity to play	1	



Conclusions

- Children demonstrate great abilities in reflection and conceptualization
- The results of this research can be useful to teachers who are interested to promote effective activities aimed at encouraging children's ethical thinking



Symposium

*Can we ethically inhabit our technologic time
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To analyze the flow of ethical thinking: the diaries of virtues

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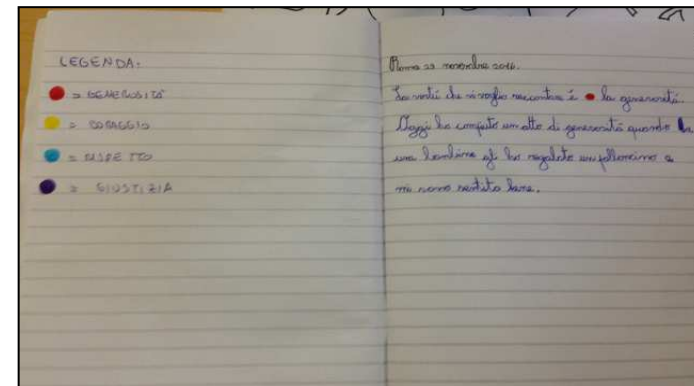
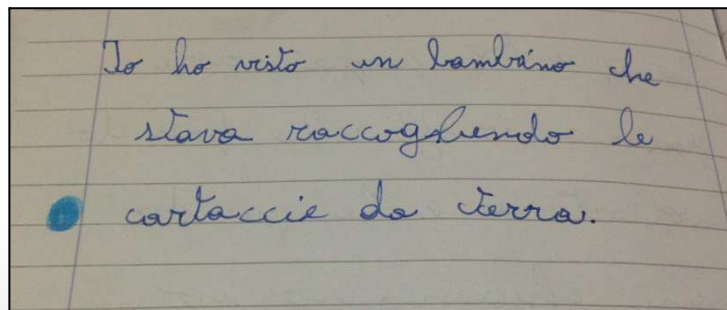


The Diary of virtues

A **reflective journal** in which the children write down virtuous gestures **they carry out** or **see carried out by others**

- **COURAGE**
- **GENEROSITY**
- **RESPECT**
- **JUSTICE**

"The virtue about which I want to tell you is generosity. Today I carried out an act of generosity when I gave a balloon to a child, and I felt good" (generosity)



"I saw a child who was picking up litter from the ground" (respect)



The educative valence

- In educating **to care for the life of the mind** (Mortari, 2013), the writing assumes a central role, because it facilitates the activation of a reflective process.
- The writing of a diary of virtues can be defined as an **experiential writing**, because it implies a reflection on the experience.
- In order to be effective, it is necessary that the reflective writing becomes a **regular action**
 - At least **once a week** for 6 months
 - In class, thanks to the availability of **teachers**



The heuristic valence

In the scholastic year **2016-2017**:

- **106 diaries**
- **8-9-10** y.o. children
- fourth grade classes of four primary schools
- in the **North** and in the **Centre of Italy**

To understand :

- how the children **conceptualize** virtues starting from their experience
- If and how, **over time**, the quality of reflection and the conceptualization of their experience **changes**



The **qualitative analysis** takes into consideration the following focuses:

- the ways in which the children conceptualize virtues in each one of their narratives (**content analysis**);
- the development of the children's thoughts considering their narratives over time (**longitudinal analysis**).



The content analysis

A **methodological crossbreeding** (Mortari, 2007) between the **phenomenological-eidetic method** (Giorgi, 1985; Moustakas, 1994; Mortari, 2008) and the **grounded theory** (Glaser and Strauss, 1967)

- **transcription** of all the narratives collected;
- **distinction** of the narratives concerning courage, generosity, respect and justice;
- elaboration of a label that expresses a **conceptualization of meaning (CM)** for each one of them;
- grouping the *CM* in **homogeneous categories (C)**;
- elaboration of a **coding system** for each one of the four virtues.

→ **Analyzed and codifiable narratives: 662**

Generosity: 349

Courage: 155

Respect: 98

Justice: 55

Justice + Courage: 2

Respect + Generosity: 1

Generosity + Justice: 1

Respect + Generosity + Courage: 1



The longitudinal analysis

- The method we used can be defined “**paideutic**” (Mortari, 2019a), because it analyses a phenomenon starting from **categories that are significant for education**.
- Only the diaries with **at least three codifiabile narratives**, excluding from the account those narratives that in the content analysis have been classified as unclear
→ **Analyzed diaries: 91**
- Three main typologies of conceptual development that concern the following elements:
 - α) the **quality of the description** of virtuous gestures;
 - β) the **idea of virtue**;
 - γ) the capability of describing the **flow of the mind**

The longitudinal analysis/2



Typologies	Indicators
α)	$\alpha 1$) the increase of the information included in the narrative
	$\alpha 2$) the clarification of the outcomes of virtuous actions
	$\alpha 3$) the clarification of the arguments supporting virtuous actions
β)	$\beta 1$) the capacity to see the complexity of ethical experience , that often includes different virtues and requires the use of different terms to be described
	$\beta 2$) the outbreak of an allocentric interpretation of virtuous actions
	$\beta 3$) the evidence of a personal interpretation of the concepts proposed by the project
ω)	an increase of the meta-reflective ability to clarify the thoughts underlying the virtuous actions



From the diary of C., female, 9 y.o.

FIRST NARRATIVE	TIRTH NARRATIVE	I.C.D.	FIFTH NARRATIVE	I.C.D.
<p>"A.'s courage. Who else would have come to rescue me!</p> <p>It was Sunday, the 27th of November and I, cub of the BoD [of the Scout Group], was playing together with: S, F., D. and G. on a fallen pine but.... HELP! I was almost falling, but A. gave his hand to me and rescued me ".</p> <p>Name of the virtue: courage</p>	<p>"How cold!</p> <p>The first day of the scout camp it was not only cold, it was freezing!</p> <p>I was covered with a jumper, but one of my besties was freezing to death, then I lent her a jacket of pail.</p> <p><u>She was so happy</u> that she also slept with the jacket and the day after she was in top form".</p> <p>Name of the virtue: generosity</p>	α2	<p>"What a pain!"</p> <p>A long time ago, really a very long time ago, I was playing with C., my best friend at the kindergarten.</p> <p>One day, she hurts herself and so I took care of her. I lent her my yellow patch and attached it where the blood flew".</p> <p>Name of the virtues: <u>respect, generosity, courage</u></p>	β1

Findings from content analysis



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CM	C
To lend something (178)	TO SHARE
To share something with the other (29)	
To donate something of your own to the other (18)	TO DONATE
To renounce to something of your own/ to something that you would like for yourself in order to give it to the other (13)	
To give a present (27)	
To donate one's own feeling to the other (1)	
To help by doing something for the other (62)	TO HELP
To help the other to do something by him/herself (27)	
To be available (7)	TO BE THERE FOR THE OTHER
To welcome the other (6)	
To comfort the other (4)	
To donate time (8)	

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Findings from content analysis



Progetto MelArete

CM	C
To overcome a fear (41)	TO FACE DIFFICULTIES
To face difficult situations (11)	
To persist despite the obstacles (1)	
To keep calm in difficulties (1)	
To overcome disgust (5)	
To rescue/help an animal in danger (10)	TO INTERVENE TO HELP SOMEONE
To protect/rescue the other (18)	
To overcome a fear in order to help the other (2)	TO FACE DIFFICULTIES TO HELP SOMEONE
To face difficult situations in order to help the other (9)	
To do something demanding (32)	TO BE RESOURCEFUL
To do something new (2)	
To do what you want (1)	
To say something difficult (8)	TO FIND THE STRENGTH TO SAY SOMETHING
To tell the truth (7)	
To urge to carry out a virtuous behaviour (1)	
To urge to interrupt a negative behaviour (2)	
To face someone verbally (7)	

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Findings from content analysis



Progetto MelArete

I D E A S O F R E S P E C T

CM	C
To take at heart the other who is in trouble (13)	TO HELP THE OTHER
To help old people (4)	
To invite the other to play (2)	
Do not exclude the other (3)	TO BE WELCOMING
Do not disturb (1)	
Do not reply badly (3)	
Do not say bad things (1)	TO HAVE CONCERN FOR THE OTHER
To react with patience (3)	
To give precedence to the other (3)	
To apologize (1)	
To seek peace with the other (1)	
To devote time to the loved ones (1)	RELATIONSHIPS
To use the words of good living together (2)	
To clean the environment (11)	
To defend the environment (2)	
Do not spoil the plants (1)	TO DEAL WITH THE ENVIRONMENT
Do not waste paper (1)	

CM	C
To listen to the other's indications (2)	TO PAY ATTENTION
To obey to adults/to family members (7)	
To recognize the authority of the parents, even when they reprove us (1)	
To follow the rules of a context (4)	TO BEHAVE POLITELY
To demonstrate fair play (4)	
To behave well (2)	
To be polite (2)	
Do not treat the elderly badly (1)	
To treat well/do not spoil the other's things (4)	TO RECOGNIZE THE OTHER'S ALTERITY
To accept the other's decisions (2)	
To consider the other's ideas (2)	
To consider the other's needs (2)	
To consider the other's feeling (1)	
To keep into consideration the cultural differences (1)	
Do not judge the other (1)	

Findings from content analysis



Progetto MelArete

CM	C
To punish a misconduct (3)	TO REACT TO A MISCONDUCT
To reproach someone because of his/her misconduct (7)	
To highlight a misconduct (6)	
To react politely to an offence (1)	
To repair an injustice committed by others (2)	
To forgive the other (2)	
To repair an injustice acted firsthand (2)	
To report a crime (4)	TO REACT IN THE FACE OF A CRIME
To punish a crime (3)	TO HELP THE OTHER IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION
To intervene in order to make somebody stop fighting (3)	
To move against a friend in order to defend the other (1)	
To rescue someone who is sick (1)	
To defend an animal in danger (4)	
To intervene to defend the other (5)	

CM	C
To halve something (1)	TO BE FAIR
To divide something taking also account of the others (5)	
To worry about giving something also to someone who arrived unexpected (1)	
To give precedence to the other's necessities (1)	
To help the other according to his/her needs (1)	
To treat all people in the same way (1)	
To please everyone (1)	
To return a received kindness (1)	TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE
To recognize the value of the other (2)	
To recognize the value of things (1)	
To recognize the value of the other's propriety (3)	
To recognize the value of a commitment (1)	
To recognize the value of the truth (1)	

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Findings from longitudinal analysis



Progetto MelArete

a1) the increase of the **information** included in the narrative

a2) the clarification of the **outcomes** of virtuous actions

a3) the clarification of the **arguments** supporting virtuous actions.

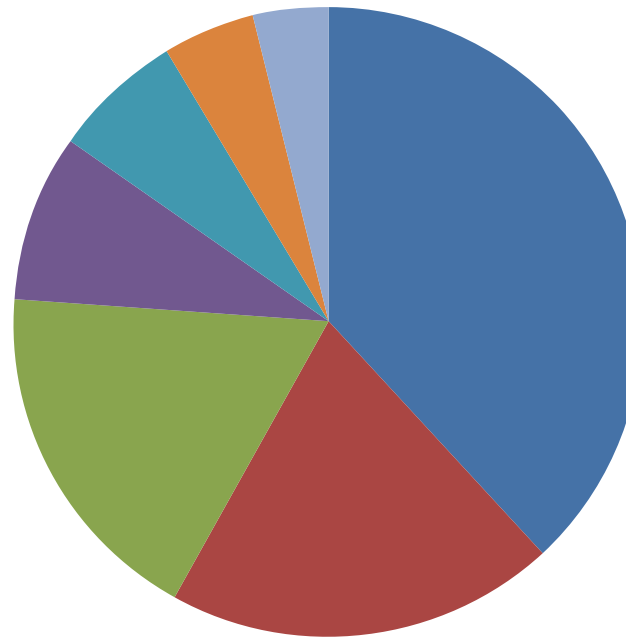
β 1) the capacity to see the **complexity of ethical experience**, that often includes different virtues and requires the use of different terms to be described

β 2) the outbreak of an **allocentric** interpretation of virtuous actions

β 3) the evidence of a **personal interpretation** of the concepts proposed by the project

ω) an increase of the **meta-reflective ability** to clarify the thoughts underlying the virtuous actions

Indicators of conceptual development (ICD)



α 1 = 40

α 2 = 21

α 3 = 19

ω = 9

β 3 = 7

β 2 = 5

β 1 = 4

Analyzed diaries: 91

- Diaries with **at least one** ICD: 52
- Diaries with **more than one** ICD: 28



THE OUTCOMES OF VIRTUOUS ACTIONS (α2)

- **Emotional** outcomes:

«Today, teacher Federica came. When she arrived, we gave her a letter [to wish her] Merry Christmas and **she was touched**; this is an act of generosity» (M. female, 9)

- **Relational** outcomes

«The day before yesterday I have been courageous as I have caught with a stick the ball of some children which was in the middle of the pond; afterwards **they have asked me to play**, we have played football and have had a lot of fun. It is an act of courage» (F., male, 9)

- Outcomes **in the context**

«Yesterday at the trainings, an episode of courage took place. At a friend of mine, while we were playing a match among ourselves, happened that: he unintentionally touched the ball with his hand in the penalty area, all of us said that there was not the penalty kick, but he admitted he had touched the ball and that the penalty kick should have been kicked. And my cousin Manuel has scored the advantaged goal, and **the final result is of 2:1**» (G.male,9)



THE OUTCOMES OF VIRTUOUS ACTIONS (α2)

- Specifically **ethical** outcomes (a virtue gives rise to another virtue)
 - **Generosity → generosity**
«Yesterday, **I was generous with an old lady** by carrying her shopping bags to her house. **Then, the lady gave me some candies.** It is an act of generosity» (F., male, 9)
 - **Generosity → courage**
«Yesterday, with my mum, after the school I went to accompany a friend of mine to skating for the first time. Nevertheless, she was afraid to go and I, **to make courage to her, I went with her**, because I can skate. **She had courage, learned to skate and then we went away.** According to me, it is an act of generosity» (J., female, 9)
 - **Respect → generosity**
«On the 15th of April, I saw an old lady, who would like to cross the street, but the cars did not stop; then **I helped her** and **she, thanking me, gave me a candy and € 5,00.** According to me, this is an act of respect» (P., female, 9)



THE OUTCOMES OF VIRTUOUS ACTIONS (α2)

- **Courage → respect**

*«One day, outside my house, a friend of mine and me were eating some candies, but he kept on throwing the wrappers on the floor. I kept on watching him, but he did not understand that he had to throw them in the trashcan; **at a certain point, I stood up and said him: “Wrappers must be thrown in the trashcan otherwise you will pollute the environment”**. He stood up, took the wrapper and threw it into the trashcan. The following days he always threw the wrappers in the trashcan. This is an act of respect» (G., male, 9)*

- **Virtue → gratitude**

*«Yesterday, while I was entering the supermarket, I saw an old lady who had some difficulties in crossing the street, with her shopping bags, to get to her car. Then, as I saw her like that, **I went to help her**, and **she has thanked me a lot**. In my opinion, it is an act of generosity» (J., female, 9)*



Conclusions

- Findings show both:
 - the **richness of the children's ethical thinking**
 - the **development of their reflective writing**
- This educative research confirms the **effectiveness of writing** in fostering the reflection on the experience
- Findings confirm the opportunity to propose to the children to keep **an experiential diary** and integrate this instrument in an educative pathway, where they are also encouraged **to examine the meanings of virtues**



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Thank you for your
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