

FOREWORD

- Like every Thursday Giacomo e Davide (two adolescents with autism) are making maccheroni which will be served in the restaurant. The others are doing the same.
- Everybody knows that this is their aim. What happens is the output of a year work.
- The smoothness of the operation conceals the complexity of cognitive and social competences underneath.



SPACE

- Giacomo e Davide are at each other's elbow in a very narrow space.
- Also Anna (a psychologist) is making pasta on the other side of the table. She doesn't look at them. Her attention is on the task.
- We can guess that they have no problems to be near and that they are able to work even in a very narrow space.
- It must be said that Giacomo doesn't speak and utters only sounds.



ACTIONS AND ROLES

- Anna does the whole operation by herself, while, for Giacomo e Davide, it is splitted in two actions.
- Their actions are reciprocating: turn the handle and cut the pasta. Giacomo turns the handle Davide cuts. Therefore there are two roles which imply an alternation: one acts, the other one watches, waits and viceversa.
- There is a shared attention on what they are doing, on the same object. The shared attention lasts for the whole operation.



THE PROFESSIONAL'S ROLE

- Anna's visual attention is on her task not on the boys.
- Anna's whole posture shows that, in this case, working together means doing the same task not acting together on the same object. Therefore her role is not to support, help the boys but to be a job partner. It's an example of "relation of contiguity".
- Indirectly she underlines that the operation "pasta" is not for the sake of them, but for the farm's restaurant. This helps them to be less self-centred.



TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES

- Davide's timing of his action (cutting) is regulated by Giacomo when he stops turning the handle. This is a cue that Giacomo knows which is the right length of maccheroni.
- Therefore, turning the handle is not a mechanical action, but it is a sign both of an ability acquired and memorized and of a steady attention to the product.
- While turning the handle, Giacomo presses the pasta into the machine. It is an action helpful to the aim: if he doesn't press, the pasta has trouble coming out or it will not come out at all. This means that Giacomo knows all the steps of the operation and understands the link cause-effect..



OVERALL ATTENTION

- Davide moves the pasta on the tray to make room for the pasta coming out of the machine. He does an auxiliary action, useful to the main one (cutting).
- Giacomo fingers the pasta to prevent it glues. In a certain way he corrects or completes Davide's action. It means that his attention (and abilities) is on the whole operation including his partner's action and the quality of the pasta.
- Giacomo looks at Mariangela (a therapist): His face has a questioning expression, then he smiles. It's a characteristic of him to ask with a look if what he is doing is ok. His smile is a sign of the approval received.



COOPERATION

- Mariangela helps Anna making pasta. This confirms the role chosen by them in this context: there are two pairs at work and not two professionals helping or assisting..
- Giacomo stops turning to press the pasta before the maccheroni reach the right length, but Davide doesn't cut. Therefore his action of cutting doesn't depend only on Giacomo's stop. Davide too knows what is the right length of maccheroni. It means that act on a stimulus-response mechanism.



ROLE AND RYTHM

- Till now the right time of cutting has been chosen by Giacomo. Now it's Davide who takes the initiative, deciding when to cut the pasta. So he carries out a change of roles.
- This happens with an only action: raising slowly the kinfe. The change of roles is immediatly seen and accepted by Giacomo who slows down his movement and stops. All this without any verbal or look exchange.



TO SUM UP

- Shared attention.
- Reciprocity of roles.
- Continuity of the operation “pasta”.
- Roles of professionals: working as partners.
- Attention to the whole operation not only on the single action.
- Shared rhythm
- Change of roles proposed and accepted.
- **The strange thing is there is nothing strange.**

