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Children and identity representation: two maps for Savona town

Marialessandra Signorastri

Reading historical and cultural values it's considered interesting to place side by side the traditional way of documenting, impressions and suggestions and a nontechnical audience, who attributes values to things that the common sense can recognize.
In particular recent studies highlight a specific expertise in analysis and project of space of children and show how they could become protagonists of new sharing experiences allowing a family's involvement.
The primary school's sphere is considered stimulating, because children are in a growth's phase and continuous learning and they are an appreciable group of a town's inhabitants; furthermore their training allows them to remove all the stereotypes of an almost consolidated culture, favouring a choice of element which are considered more exciting, assuring more freshness and spontaneity both in theme's choice and graphic representation.
It has been considered as fundamental maintaining the characteristic interdisciplinary approach of the "parish maps", involving children in an emotional way in order to let them integrate, review and even replace subjects in a different way from the one adult authors could choose.
From a teaching point of view the project constitutes an opportunity of disciplinary developing activities, enriching the specific skills and the ability in researching. Furthermore it is worth for the scientific point of view because the children's 'short' and instinctive knowledge could become a 'mature and skilled' with teacher leading (Tonucci, 1996, Paba, 1998).
During project's development different ways of thinking about things to add to the maps arose: whereas a group has realised a 'map of local identity', highlighting elements of the local history, the local culture and the local identity, the other attached more importance to emotions, so as to define their works an 'emotional map'. I would emphasize the difference of representing and content which emerges from the works of the two groups which had the same common starting knowledge. In fact, studying in depth the two works, it can be noticed that there are just apparent differences which are seen only if works are seen in a superficial way.
It is clear that, dropping the chosen procedure to realize the works, the deep knowledge of the history and the research of the town's local feature, two apparent discordant views, can throw light on the same elements, considering them as strata due to a long time process.
The different results are due to the fact that external interferences have been avoided, favouring local expertises and the experimental feature of each experience. The originality of each project is more evident considering that children are the protagonist: "involved expertises of these subjects are more specific, more local than the ones of adult participants" (Giusti 1998).