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Students' and Teachers' Feelings During the DAD Era. A Challenge Enlightened by a Psychodynamic Analysis of Traditional References in Education

Odczucia uczniów i nauczycieli w erze nauczania zdalnego. Wyzwanie podparte psychodynamiczną analizą tradycyjnych odniesień w edukacji

Abstract: This article presents an exploratory study about how the pandemic period impacted feelings of teachers, children and teens. We analyze the materials of a narrative from within, made up of words that tell of the experience as it happens. In particular, through these materials we present the feelings experienced by the students and the teachers at school in the DAD era. The validity of traditional references in pedagogy is confirmed by the fundamental roles of actors, i.e. teachers and students of educative action even in the pandemic period.

Keywords: feelings in education; online teaching and learning; COVID-19; psychodynamic analysis

Abstrakt: W artykule omówiono badanie wyjaśniające, w jaki sposób okres pandemii wpłynął na uczucia nauczycieli, dzieci i nastolatków. Analizie poddano materiały narracji od wewnątrz, składające się ze słów, które opowiadają o tym, co się dzieje. W szczególności poprzez te materiały przedstawiono uczucia, jakich doświadczali uczniowie i nauczyciele w szkole w trakcie nauczania zdalnego. Słuszność tradycyjnych odniesień w pedagogice potwierdzają fundamentalne role bohaterów działań wychowawczych, nawet w okresie pandemii: nauczycieli i dzieci.

Słowa kluczowe: odczucia w edukacji; nauczanie i uczenie się online; COVID-19; analiza psychodynamiczna

> There are three impossible professions:
> educating, healing, governing.
>
> Sigmund Freud

> The surprising thing was just how much I missed feeling
> how my students were thinking.
>
> Penny Vlies

SPRING 2020. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Before spring 2020, hardly anyone had ever heard or uttered the word "lockdown". Certainly, no one had experienced it. An unforeseen, unexpected event occurred and no one was ready to face a pandemic of this magnitude. Stunned, astonished, speechless, disoriented. Then we began to rally within the walls of the house and look out of the windows at the street, the world, empty of people except for so-called essential workers, those who enabled us to live by risking their lives on the front line. School, too, has taken on a new form, strictly at a distance.

There is too little discussion about children, their needs and their rights during the health emergency or too little is said about them without translating their urgent needs into shared practices. Certainly, it is not just a matter of guaranteeing children's education and instruction, but of providing conditions that can host and re-launch their social and relational life not only in the family. The sudden closure of schools deprived millions of schoolchildren of all ages of their usual contacts. Parents and children had to radically change their habits by redefining lifestyles capable of complying with the protection of minors which was suddenly completely entrusted to the family. The general unease accentuated the differences of culture, resources and tools and emphasized the disadvantages.

Italian schools were closed on February 25, 2020 as a precaution against the spread of the pandemic. To find a similar event in Italian history, it is necessary to go back to 1943–1944. In their homes, the children's DAD[1] was added to their parents' work: each to his own workstation! As for the COVID-19 pandemic, few weeks became months, the children did not return to class until the end of the school year, in June 2020. Reopening of schools would have involved the movement of millions of Italians with incalculable dangers to public health. Distance or remote learning became the way to give continuity to school and bring it into the homes thanks to the techno-

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[1] In this paper, "DAD" is an acronym for "didactics at a distance" that in English is also called "distance learning/teaching". We prefer the abbreviation "DAD" because it is currently used also in the Italian language.

logical means and devices that make use of computer technology; teachers reinvent themselves and take their place alongside their pupils once again. Nothing is the same anymore, but school is there in some way: supporting, teaching, listening, and reinventing teaching methods.

Even the 2020–2021 school year is characterized by a stop-and-go attendance for the 3–14 year old age group (kindergarten, primary and lower secondary school). And attendance at school is conditioned by keeping a distance and wearing masks. There was also a new short lockdown from March 15 to April 12, 2021 in which all Italian students and teachers stayed at home and met thanks to DAD. The implementation of DAD has experienced its ups and downs in teacher motivation related to conditions that changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes in the environment with an increase in the number of people affected by the COVID-19 virus have altered not only lifestyles but also the enthusiasm to carry out work-related activities. It is essential for teachers to be highly motivated during DAD because the complexity of instruction requires them to quickly overcome problems in virtual classrooms.

LOOKING FOR COVID-RELATED CONSEQUENCES. THE MAIN SIGNALS POINTED OUT WITHIN CURRENT RESEARCHES

During this COVID-19 outbreak, the children spend a considerable amount of their time at home without connect with other children. The World Health Organization (2020) has recommended assisting children to find positive ways to express their feelings, such as fear and sadness. It recommends engaging the children in creative activities, such as playing, drawing and painting. The children require a safe and supportive environment to express and communicate their feelings. Their familiar routines of daily life should be maintained as much as possible, or new routines should be established, particularly if children must stay at home. Parents can engage the children in age-appropriate activities such as learning, playing, and socializing with others. The children seek more attachment and depend more on their parents when they undergo stress and crisis. Parents can address the concerns of their children to alleviate their anxiety. The children see the adults' behaviors and emotions as cues to manage their own emotions during the outbreak.

The last Report of UNICEF (2021) points out that the pandemic caused the largest disruption of education in history affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries. Closures of schools impacted 94% of the world's student population, and up to 99% in low and lower-middle income countries. However, through virtual and home-based education programmes using Internet, apps, TV, radio, SMS and printed materials, and through the implementation of national guidelines and protocols for COVID-19 infection prevention and control (IPC) in schools, the majority of children globally were able to resume their studies by the end of 2020. Although, concerns still

remain, as data show that 7.6 million girls from pre-primary to secondary school are at risk of not returning to school as a result of COVID-19-related restrictions and consequences.

As schools closed and remote learning was not equally accessible for all children, the biggest education emergency in history widened the gap between countries and within countries, Save the Children (2021) said. The divide grew between wealthier and poorer families; urban and rural households; refugees or displaced children and host populations; children with disabilities and children without disabilities.

COVID-related consequences on teachers and their teaching

Teaching is often listed as one of the most stressful professions. Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have created a long list of new stressors for teachers to deal with, including problems caused by the emergency conversion to online language teaching. Some research (McIntyre, Gregersen, Mercer 2020) explored the stressful feelings and coping responses. On the one hand, all emotions, even unwelcome ones, have adaptive attributes and under certain conditions each of the feelings, including anxiety, anger, sadness, and loneliness has a role to play in successful functioning: anxiety alerts us to potential dangers, sadness is associated with preventing loss, loneliness promotes social interaction by motivating us to regain connections with other people, and anger is useful in removing obstacles thereby restoring pursuit of an important goal. However, each of the emotions, if sustained over a long period of time, can be problematic and maladaptive in larger doses. On the other hand, the conditions of uncertainty increase the need for teachers to be realistic and moderate in their expectations, especially when dealing with the present situation. We know that no teacher training program includes a topic such as "how to deal with a pandemic" and switching to online teaching was done under emergency conditions.

Teachers were confronted with the need to adapt to online teaching. Some researchers (König, Jäger-Biela, Glutsch 2020) explored how they maintained social contact with students and mastered core teaching challenges. A very important factor was their familiarity with technology in order to adapt their teaching to learning opportunities pertaining to digital teaching and learning. Information and communication technologies, particularly digital teacher competence and teacher education opportunities to learn digital competence, are instrumental in adapting to online teaching during COVID-19 school closures. Despite the early career teachers' status as belonging to the generation of "digital natives" they did not develop sophisticated digital skills in general. One reason for this may be that many schools are behind in the transformation process of educational systems. Digital instruments must first be systematically introduced to students and implemented into everyday teaching and learning processes. The pandemic situation showed that teachers had remained behind in the digital transformation process.

An interesting research explores the perceptions of primary school teachers of online learning (Rasmitadila et al. 2020). Teachers faced several challenges related to the emergence of obstacles associated with technical issues. Factors that create these barriers may be divided into internal and external factors. Internal factors are difficulties arising from the student's home environment, such as interference from family members (younger and older siblings). These factors cause students who are learning not to be focused on learning. External factors that arise are the disturbances from other students when implementing learning using an online application in a virtual classroom. Leading students' learning by teachers remains difficult during the DAD era, and a teacher must carry out conditioning activities in the virtual classroom so that learning can run smoothly. This dramatically determines the enthusiasm and motivation of students to learn. For this reason, a teacher must be able to ensure that all students are ready to learn and look for creative ways to hold their interest.

COVID-related consequences on students and their learning

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the governments implemented measures that usually involved restrictions on the movement of citizens which have had a profound effect on usual activities and timetables. As a result of school closures and strict restrictions regarding going outside home, children were one of the most disadvantaged population groups during the lockdown period. The alarm about potential health risk behaviours amongst isolated pre-school and school-aged children is increasing in an exponential way. A lot of surveys try to identify health-related behaviours in relation to social isolation and social deprivation of children without previous illness or conditions. The reviews depict the potential health-related behaviour, and put the focus on future short and long-term sequels of social isolation (López-Bueno et al. 2021). On the one hand, the early social isolation during primary school solely may not predict mental health problems later. On the other hand, school routines are important coping mechanisms for young people with mental health issues. The maintenance of a regular timetable and the parents following healthy habits have been remarked as effective strategies to minimize potential health damage in isolated children. Here we mention a qualitative study that employed an art-based method for data collection (Abdulah 2020). Art-based methods have been employed in research involving children in order to investigate the impact of COVID-19. Indeed, the drawings can act as a nonverbal stepping-stone into the world of experiences and emotions of people. They can convey the meanings, feelings, and experiences of the research participants (Søndergaard, Reventlow 2019). In Abdulah's study, 15 children aged 6 to 13 years old (7 boys and 8 girls) who were confined at home during the COVID-19 outbreak for at least 1 month express their perceptions of safety during home confinement. The children felt safe at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

They created a red line between the safe and unsafe environments. They were afraid to cross the safety line during their home confinement as we can see in Picture 1.

(a)   (b)

(c)

Picture 1.

Source: (Abdulah 2020, p. 5).

In the picture taken from the study we can see how a 9-year-old girl created two parts in her painting. She played with her friends on the right-hand side, while she was alone and watching TV on the left-hand side. She said: "This picture shows two moments of my life, before and after corona. I was playing games alone or with my friends outside the house before corona, but now I play video games after corona".

COVID-related consequences on parents and families

The research demonstrated that children's affective elaboration during the exposure to stressogenic situations is highly linked to their parents' emotional state. During the COVID-19 outbreak children's psychological difficulties were related to their exposure to stress, and their parents' regulation of emotion and playfulness (Shorer, Leibovich 2020). The most frequent stress symptoms in children such as nervousness, aggression, separation fears and clinging were fully mediated by parental emotion regulation and their stress reactions. On the one hand, parental playfulness was only inversely related to children's stress reaction in fathers. On the other hand, parent–child interactions were beneficial in terms of reducing children's psychosocial problems and parental stress during the pandemic with prolonged school closure.

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON HOW THE PANDEMIC PERIOD IMPACTED FEELINGS OF TEACHERS, CHILDREN AND TEENS

Online learning emphasizes Internet-based courses offered synchronously and asynchronously. Synchronous learning is a form of learning with direct interactions between students and teachers while simultaneously using online forms such as conferences and online chat. Meanwhile, asynchronous learning is a form of learning indirectly (not at the same time) using an independent learning approach. Students have access to the teacher synchronously, asynchronously, or both. Teachers must be able to manage all instructional components. These include instructional methods (media that will be used in learning), use of instructional time related to the time of application use, and psychological and social factors that significantly affect teachers' motivation when teaching.

The aim and procedure of exploratory study

In order to understand how the pandemic period impacted feelings of teachers, children and teens, we analyzed drawings, sentences and written compositions of students and teachers. The teachers listened and asked the children to tell about their experience – moods, feelings, thoughts – starting from the isolation in which they are forced to live. Commitment, fatigue, everyday life, intolerance, fear: together with adults, facing an invisible and threatening enemy that keeps everyone in suspense. Students were asked to describe with words and with drawings what they see and what they feel during the lockdown. Within their written compositions, they report their sadness and disappointment, but they also know how to think about things which allow them to stay active, and not to lose heart. Their descriptions, comments and wishes allow us to enter their life experience and their mindset: they allow us to understand how they are processing the difficulties introduced by the pandemic, suggesting the way in which we can help and support them. We chose to collect the materials of a narrative from within, in order to have the possibility to analyze the words that tell the experience as it happens. In particular, through these materials we present the feelings during the DAD era from the students' point of view as well as that of the teachers'.

The data of exploratory study

We collected materials while the experience was taking place, i.e. during the lockdown.

1. In order to analyze feelings of children, we asked one teacher of infant school and one teacher of primary school to collect drawings and written materials of their classes during the lockdown.

2. In order to analyze feelings of students of middle school, we selected written materials presented within a current study of a group of Italian schools (Mazzoni 2020). Involving students of infant, primary and middle schools, we can explore feelings of students aged 11–14.

3. In order to analyze the teachers' feelings we asked a group of primary school teachers to describe (in tree adjectives) their experience of online teaching during the lockdown.

The children's drawings, the words of the primary school students and the compositions of the middle school children were collected during the first lockdown (March to May 2020). The teachers' answers were collected during their most recent distance teaching experience (March 2021). Now we are going to present the data related to each studied group: the children of *infant school*, the students of *primary school*, the written materials of *teens* of middle school and the adjectives of *teachers*.

A) THE YOUNGEST CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS SHOWING THE WAY TO COMBAT THE VIRUS

The teacher of a kindergarten class asked 10 children (3–5 years old) to draw the answer to the following question: "How would you defeat the coronavirus?" Here we present their drawings with related comments. This group of children is convinced they are winning the battle against the virus, they are not frightened. They use colours, the sun, light, ice, a multi-coloured star and a shower of hearts, but also strength, medicine, laser and vaccine to beat the virus in battle on the field. These drawings are not scary, they transmit feelings related to the real experience, the words heard, and the desire not to be discouraged in order to get through it in the best possible way.
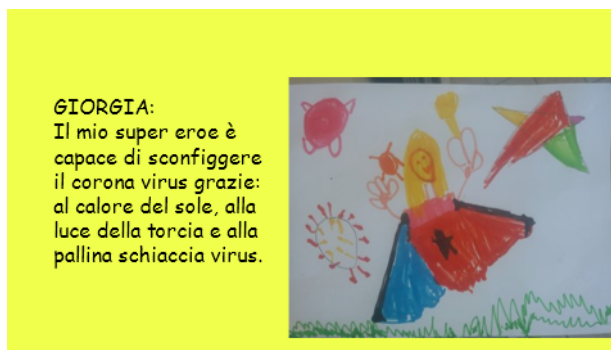
Picture 2.
Giorgia says: "My hero is able to defeat the coronavirus thanks to the warmth of the sun, the light of the torch and the virus-squashing ball" (Picture 2).
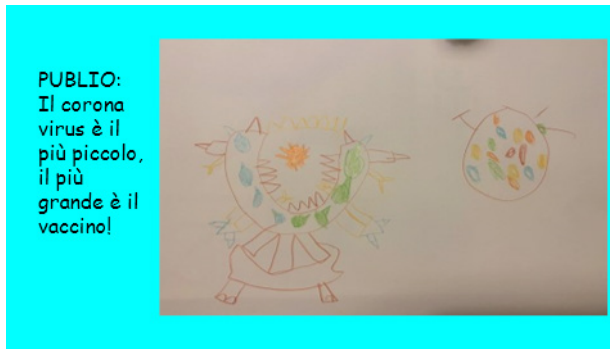
Picture 3.

Publio says: "The coronavirus is smaller, the vaccine is bigger" (Picture 3).

Picture 4.

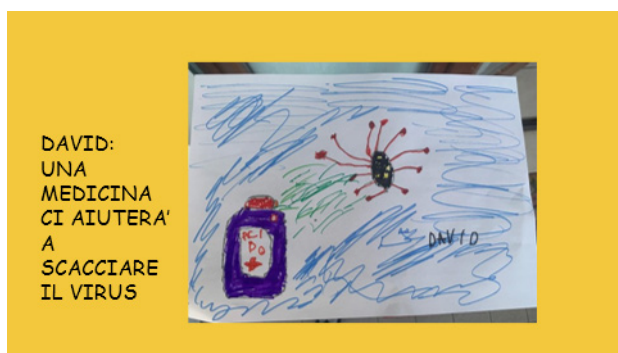Omar says: "My hero crushes it with all his energy" (Picture 4).

Picture 5.

Nicolas says: "A multi-colour star catches it and defeats it" (Picture 5).

Picture 6.
Riccardo says: "My hero stops the virus thanks to the ice" (Picture 6).

Picture 7.
David says: "A medicine will help us to banish the virus" (Picture 7).

Picture 8.
Lorenzo says: "As soon as the virus sees my hero it gets scared and runs away" (Picture 8).

Picture 9.

Giulia says: "My hero has a powerful laser and drives away the virus" (Picture 9).

Picture 10.

Christian says: "My super hero is big and chases it away" (Picture 10).

Picture 11.

Camilla says: "A rain of hearts will fall and the virus runs away" (Picture 11).

B) PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN'S WORDS IN FACING
THE LOCKDOWN SUPPORTED BY THE FAMILY

A third-grade teacher collected the experience of her 28 students (8 years old) through three written tasks during the first lockdown. The first task was proposed in the first weeks of closure. The teacher asked the class to describe how they spent their days during the lockdown. The positivity of the experience of spending more time with parents can be read in almost all the papers as well as the possibility of doing outdoor activities near home. Here are some example answers:

– "Yesterday I went for a walk in the woods".

– "On Sunday we went for a very long walk".

– "During these days I have a lot of fun with dogs, cats, chickens, turkeys, frogs, tadpoles".

– "With my dad I enjoy playing ball and watching movies on TV".

– "Yesterday I went for a bike ride with my dad".

– "One day my father and I cut the hedge".

– "This morning I did my homework with my dad. Then I helped my dad working in the garden".

– "Today I helped my dad build a pen for Romeo, my playful donkey".

– "We have fun making cakes".

– "After breakfast we played with Lego in the sitting room together with my mother".

– "After playing for a while, I went home to help Mom cook".

– "These days I'm fine being with my family".

At the beginning of lockdown, the stories seem far from worries about the pandemic. Children seem to describe a holiday period in which they have pleasant experiences with their parents. On the one hand, they clearly express the advantage of having their parents at home with them, on the other hand, they appreciate the fact of living in an area surrounded by nature where going out into the open is not dangerous. There is also the willingness of fathers and mothers to do something with their children. In the second written work, after a month of lockdown, the teacher of primary school proposed expressing, with a single word, written in large capital letters, what they were experiencing. Each child showed his card to his classmates during a synchronous lesson. Here are the children's words:

bored	hope
boring	isolation
calm and creativity	medium
contact	memories
coronavirus	nice days
family	sadness

happiness	skates
home	together

Assuming that the word chosen synthetically expresses the feeling of the boys and girls, there is a slight increase in their apprehension. We can observe some words that indicate negative feelings (underlined). However, the expression of positive thoughts remains prevalent.

In the last weeks of lockdown, with two more weeks to go the children heard that the possibility of being able to travel again to visit relatives was highly probable. The teacher asked them about the first thing they wanted to do. Each of them had the opportunity to listen to the others and to express their own thoughts. Half of them (14 out of 28) expressed a desire to see their grandparents or cousins or a friend again: "going to my grandparents", "seeing my grandfather", "visiting my great-grandmother", "maybe my grandparents who live in Germany will be able to come to visit me", "I want to go and visit a friend of mine again", "to go to my friend's in a practical way, instead of having to go outside my gate, I go into my garden, open the gate and there is G".

About 36% (10 out of 28) would like to go back to school or see friends from school or write all together, write stories in their exercise books, "see my friends and go out and play with them". About 18% (5 out of 28) want to relive a good experience they had before the coronavirus: "I would like to go to a game room called »Sport Park«", "I would like to go back to the skate park, go to the pool, swim and get ice cream, do the things I used to do during spring times, go to the mountains with the whole family".

C) THE REFLECTIONS OF TEENS BETWEEN POSTPONED DESIRES AND FORCED ISOLATION

The responses of middle school children (11–14 year olds) were selected from a volume published by UNICEF which promoted interviews with school children in Bologna (Mazzoni 2020). We have selected 6 written contributions in order to represent the more common feelings of pre-adolescent students: the stress caused by an unprecedented situation, the feeling of isolation and suspension in time, the feeling of something missing, boredom in the family, anger and concern. In our exploratory study we compare the teens' compositions written during the lockdown with written materials of students of infant and primary schools. In this way we obtain a comparison between feelings of children and pre-adolescents.

Sophia: *stressful*

> I have reflected a lot on the path covered by all of us students in recent months and I admit that it is very tiring to study, do homework and oral testing in this "alternative" way. To be honest, I hate distance learning, because there are always connection problems, homework

doesn't arrive and you have to postpone it countless times, not to mention all the times that Wi-Fi comes and goes as it pleases. Even the oral testing is so strange, I mean: you speak in front of a screen and it is not the same thing as having the teacher and your companions in front of you. More than anything else I find it very stressful and it makes me anxious that maybe an assignment seems to be delivered late, when actually you have not been able to send it or when you are unable to take part in the video lesson because the connection is interrupted... it's all so stressful! (Mazzoni 2020, p. 64)

Raffaele: *suspended, isolated timeless block*

Dear Diary, today I will tell you about my considerations, reflections and fears about the coronavirus. This virus has changed the life of each one of us, because we can no longer do what we like best. Many people cry because they have lost loved ones and cannot even pay their last respects to them. I, in quarantine, feel a bit confined and isolated, even though I have a very large garden, because I miss my friends and relatives who live in other municipalities. I can no longer distinguish one day from another, because, since I no longer go to school, I am no longer aware of what day it is, whereas before, I was able to realize it, because that day there were certain school subjects and the following day they changed. I miss school a lot, because I'm starting to get bored and I'm sad that I can't see my friends anymore. I'm afraid of the coronavirus, not for me, but for my father, who as a farmer, has to work and is often in contact with other people. I am also afraid for my grandparents, because they are elderly and live near the red zone. The first thing I will do after quarantine is to meet my friends and go on trips with my family, in fact I am already planning this right now. My sister and I have thought about going to Genoa or Paris. Bye and see you soon. (*ibid*., p. 76)

Ilaria: *feeling of something missing*

What I miss most in this period are my friends. In fact, every day we could greet each other, hug each other, laugh and play together, all gestures that we take for granted every day, just because they are part of our normality, but only when, due to sudden circumstances, they are forbidden to us, do we understand their real importance. I also miss my professors and their captivating lessons full of content and enthusiasm. To continue our course of study, an alternative method has been adopted: "distance learning". This has allowed us to continue the lessons online and to be able to see each other through digital platforms (...) it's not really like being in the classroom, but at least we have some sort of contact among us: we can see our expressions, our gestures and hear our voices (…) This year will remain forever in my memory: the measures put in place to limit the infection have changed the daily habits of all of us; not only that: we have had to learn to redefine priorities and give a different value to things and gestures. (*ibid*., p. 89)

Lorenzo: *boredom in the family*

You have to stay at home, I don't doubt that. "I'm bored", but you have to do it because it is necessary in order not to increase infections. I miss sports a lot, going out with friends, going to school, and above all I miss socializing with other people, I miss the old life; so I can't wait for everything to pass, but this situation has made me think a lot and discover new things, new lifestyles. I am spending a lot of time with my family which I had neglected a bit between school, homework and basketball. Personally, I have rediscovered things that I didn't think I was doing at all. In moments of leisure, for example, my mother and my little sister and I do some fitness exercises to let off steam and keep us in shape, I have become their personal trainer, and between fatigue and concentration, we have some good laughs. (*ibid.*, p. 91)

Manuel: *anger*

Dear Diary, I am very shocked, above all, by the fact that in one day the life of many people has changed radically; I still remember that Friday in February when we went out at 2 p.m. and I had to leave for Abano Terme with my uncles (…) that weekend they gave the news of the first positive case of coronavirus in Italy. I was calm, I was still not afraid, for two weeks everything went well but total lockdown was decreed throughout Italy: at the news I became very sad and angry. Now I have a tremendous desire to hug my classmates and teachers again and go back to school which, said by a student, is very strange; this year, in particular, for us in the third and last class of middle school it is very important, since we have exams, but we cannot sit them normally either, we cannot greet the teachers in person, cry in the schoolyard, make water balloons (…) I get tears when I think about all these things, things that I would have liked to remember all my life. (*ibid.*, p. 107)

Giulia: *concern*

Dear Diary, how are you? I am fine even if in this period, in quarantine, I am a bit down in the dumps, because it has been a month and a few weeks since I last saw my friends who I miss a lot, I do not see my classmates and I miss messing about with them, but I also miss the teachers, I even feel nostalgic for the scoldings they sometimes gave the whole class. During this particular period I have understood various things, including the value of friendship with my friends, which is really precious, but I have also understood the preciousness of school that up until now, I had been unaware of, but now I have opened my eyes and it is as if I were missing something inside myself. I am not very afraid of this virus for myself, but I am a lot for my maternal grandmother who lives in Imola and is alone, because we live in another municipality and we cannot go and visit her, but I am sure she is fine. I'm worried about my parents, especially my mom who works in a grocery store, so she is in contact with people. I can't wait to go back to school and to mosey around with my friends in the village: I can consider myself lucky compared to other people, because I live in the open countryside and I have a large

garden at my disposal, nearby there are many fields with dirt tracks, so in the afternoon and in the morning, after the video lessons, I go with my two dogs for walks that I would say relax me, I'm less stressed. (*ibid.*, p. 120)

D) THE FEELINGS OF TEACHERS IN DAD

In the most recent month of lockdown (15 March – 12 April 2021), 30 primary school teachers were asked to characterize their online teaching with 3 qualifying adjectives. Below there are the adjectives they used, divided into positive and negative, and the relative frequencies: 30 negative adjectives were used, only 7 positive ones. In two cases, they used significant expressions instead of positive adjectives (in italics). In between the brackets we can see the frequencies of adjectives that were quoted from more than one teacher.

Positive adjectives: adapted; complex (3); motivating; new; *revolutionary opportunity for improvement*; *source of school innovation*;

Negative adjectives: arid; challenging (11); chaotic (2); cold (8); complicated (4); difficult (3); discriminating (11); dispersive (8); heavy (5); hopping; inaccurate; inappropriate; ineffective (6); limited; limiting; not engaging (2); not inclusive (5); not very productive (2); problematic; reductive; slowing down; sterile; strenuous; stressful (7); tiring (5); tough; ugly; unnerving; unsatisfactory; useless.

The high prevalence of negative adjectives illustrates the teachers' deep concern. Few of them report the possibility of renewal of the educational action that DAD represents. Many teachers, on the other hand, emphasize DAD as a source of stress since it is demanding and prejudiced. They feel that the effort is not matched by success and they feel limited in the practice and in the ability to evaluate results. The urgency to achieve results and maintain the educational experience that the school represents remains very important.

DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN RESULTS

The presented materials of exploratory study were produced by the children during the first lockdown – from March to May 2020 when the schools were closed and only remote teaching remained. The teachers invented a new way of giving continuity to schooling. They did not fail to give a voice to children and youngsters, allowing them to narrate what they were experiencing. When uncertainty was the daily "affective" bread, children were able to add proactive thoughts, see glimpses of satisfaction, slight opportunities to continue their lives before the pandemic. Above all, they know how to rely on relationships so as to draw as much security as possible and they know in whom to place their trust and where to start to share their feelings. We can summarize the results of our study on children's and teachers' feelings during the DAD era.

– The drawings of the *infant school children* (3–5 years) show us their willingness to face the emergency with a view to success and possible victory. Their feelings show a marked aptitude for the success of human beings' actions and interventions in fighting the virus.

– *Primary school children* (6–10 years) maintain this positive orientation, but enrich it with greater realism. Their feelings become more complex, they acquire shades of light/dark where sadness coexists with hope, and boredom with happiness. They focus on this more complex realism not immediately at the beginning of the lockdown, but step by step, paying attention to the passage of time and to the urgency of the situation. However, they remain ready to start again, eager to return to embrace their dearest loved ones again as well as those who have constantly supported them in their family.

– It is the group of *young adolescents* of middle school children (11–14 years) who illustrate all the emotional complexity of the emergency. They feel forced into mandatory isolation by which they feel penalized: they describe an uncomfortable tension, timeless isolation, feeling of something missing, boredom in the family, but also anger and worry. However, they do not let themselves be discouraged and continue to cultivate their desires with which they replenish the restart of an imminent future. They cannot wait to resume meeting friends and professors, to get out of the family shell that has become too tight.

– And the *teachers*? They feel the full weight of the institutional role that allows the school to face the emergency. Their worried feelings reflect an image of adults overwhelmed by responsibility, but they are not resigned. They remain alert and eager for their students to receive an education, denouncing the discrimination and discrepancies caused by DAD. They carry the weight of a school forced to reinvent itself, but perhaps they are also beginning to sense that a radical renewal is taking place. If this is the dawn of a revolution, they are the pioneers of a new school. Indeed, certain aspects of schooling will never go back to the way they were before! Teachers know that DAD has forever changed the connotations of educational experience and professional practice actions.

We can use two main lines to interpret the main results of our exploratory study: one related to the *students* and another one related to the *teachers*:

1. The realism of children and teens. With reference to the children, we can interpret their responses based on the feeling of *realism*. They do not resort to fantasy. They are descriptive and affective. Their feelings are real, sincere. Feelings that speak, and in a certain sense, put us in the first place. Feelings become easy to be grasped, even showy. They are not only noticed by those who observe the children, but also by the children who are experiencing them. The children, in particular, tell us that not only the school experience has been turned upside-down, but also the one inside the home. The children speak of an interrupted experience and the cause of the interruption were the necessary measures taken to deal with the virus. Thoughts are on two tracks: from the

difficult reality, the unexpected that we were unprepared for, to the attempts to shelter, to build bridges, to the desire to keep life as it was before as long as possible.

The written papers become a certificate of esteem for friends and especially for school which for middle school children, on the threshold of puberty, has become the most important educational institution as far as interpreting their stages of growth is concerned. It involves a loss and its processing. Should we compensate them or should we ask how they resisted? They cannot wait to go back to school, they cannot wait to go back to life before the pandemic.

2. Creativity and determination of teachers. The teachers' motivation during DAD was influenced by the creativity in carrying out online learning and by their determination in their affection towards the students. Firstly, the teachers had to overcome a new uncomfortable feeling caused by online teaching, i.e. the lack of sensing students' engagement. "The surprising thing was just how much I missed feeling how my students were thinking. This was more than just how the relationships changed online. This was how my senses were stimulated in different ways and how this altered my capacity to feel the group was together and who was thinking" (Vlies 2020, p. 2). Secondarily, the duties of teachers were supported by the collaboration among colleagues that helped teachers in finding solutions to adjusting the subject matter. They shared the ways in which they motivate students and overcome student boredom during instruction by sharing online learning experiences.

Our results are consistent with other study about how online learning/teaching challenged the schooling during the pandemic period (Ciarnella, Santangelo 2020; Santagati, Barabanti 2020). The pandemic period offered the occasion to reflect about unexpected ways to support the two aims of schooling that are transmitting knowledge and guaranteeing socializing for students as the future citizens. DAD showed how schooling relationships can emerge from the intertwining between *online* and *offline* in which closeness and distance are integrated. During the pandemic period, the schooling was crucial in terms of rethinking socialization processes through digital mediation centered on the digital competence of students. Indeed the student-centered approach supports opposing the *information overload* related to online schooling and confirms that the school is a place for renewing educational models and creating the shared resilience.

It remains uncertain about how school closures last spring impacted student achievement, as well as how the rapid conversion of most instruction to an online platform will continue to affect student achievement. It will be very important to collect data on how the virus impacts student learning in order to make informed institutional decisions to return to in-person instruction (Kuhfeld et al. 2020).

CONCLUSIONS. WHAT REMAINS OF THE
SCHOOL IN A TIME OF EMERGENCY

It is time to rethink the role of school after COVID-19. The pandemic-related crisis gives us the opportunity to re-assess what type of school we want for the future. The pandemic highlights that school fulfils not only an educational mission of knowledge acquisition, but it also satisfies the socialization needs of young people. With students at home, the school community is absent and despite the virtual interactions and learning opportunities provided by the Internet and social networks, a barrier is created in the educational relationship between pupils and teachers (Colao et al. 2020).

On the one hand, the COVID-19 crisis highlighted serious drawbacks of today's education system. The drawings of the pupils, the words of the older children, the thoughts of the pre-teens, the feelings of the teachers. These are the materials used by the author of this article to explore the psychological characteristics that have allowed the educational institution to withstand the difficult situation that the pandemic has brought into our lives. On the other hand, there is a peculiarity of the educational relationship that remains intact both in the case of traditional teaching/learning and in DAD. When Sigmund Freud (1937) wrote that educating, together with caring and governing, is an impossible profession, he had in mind all the creativity necessary to maintain a relationship, such as the educational one, based on the freedom of the actors, i.e. teachers and students, and their mutual influence, although it maintains the asymmetry of the relationship. Freud claims that "there are three impossible professions – educating, healing, governing" (1925, p. 273). His statement does not describe a "failure", as misinterpreted by his numerous followers, but an exercise doomed to remain in progress never definitive (Gori 2016). To describe why education is "impossible", we have to examine the purposes of education that consist in being tasked with teaching children and adults to conform to a normative set of socially approved behaviours. It is impossible to give children the liberty to carry out all their desires without restriction. However there is "a gap between the intentionally given and its reception" (Philips 2004, p. 787). In other words, education remains an exercise that includes unpredictable aspects (Berry 2014). One aims to teach, but one can never really set up in advance what the student must learn or has learned. Educators must tolerate to live with the uncertainty of the outcomes of their practice, maintaining the mastering of ways of education (Felman 1982).

Even in the DAD era it is education that has always seen the actors, i.e.:
– the teacher offers his educational proposal,
– the student takes the proposal, which means to learn the materials offered to him with greater or lesser enthusiasm,
– the family supports the educational process.

During the DAD era, teachers and students were more recognizable due to the possibility of mutual influence on each other but also due to their mutual independence and autonomy in contributing to the educational process.

Emphasis on the autonomy of the students in their learning process which, during the pandemic, escapes the strict control of the teacher in the classroom, could become a perfect opportunity to correct a wrong attitude of educators (that is often a general attitude of adults) towards thinking about children or teens as immature, weak, minor and fragile. Consequently, they are perceived as jars of clay to be filled, passive containers. We can take the difficult reality of the pandemic as an opportunity to change our knowledge about children and correct our conception of them: The pandemic has forced us to think of them as active, processing their difficulties, competent and resilient partners in creating the educational and creative partnership in which two freedoms meet: offering and taking become an opportunity to share and overcome the difficulties of this pandemic and to repair, rebuild and invent where difficulty and grief have carved deep wounds.

According to Giacomo Contri, "hope is the memory of the future". It is the effective synthesis with which he[2] re-interprets the Freudian work as a promoter of civilization, cultivating realism without ever yielding to the temptation of pessimism. Summing up, even the period of the pandemic, conditioned by the emergency, can become the field of hope for schools and education based on the memory of practicable and shared solutions.

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[2] See https://societaamicidelpensiero.it/wp-content/uploads/971212SC_GBC3.pdf (access: 3.12.2020); see also http://www.giacomocontri.it (access: 3.12.2020).

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