

Editorial

One Hundred Years Ago New and Original Way for Teaching, Learning, Going under the Surface

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It is the explanation and the unusual and special way through new and original ways for teaching and learning, also in very young ages, going under the surface, involving and how to create the interest and how to maintain it through the time. It involves active participation, creativity, imagination, looking from different points of view so to maintain this attitude lifelong and to maintain interest as well, sustaining interest for further discoveries. In teaching our medical students, we push and encourage and motivate them, for instance, asking how they feel about themselves in situations they have to face going under the appearances.

Children, even if so young, are very interested in anything in the world and can easily learn lots of information and attitudes. They can also appreciate Art in Museums and Exhibitions, provided you don't bare nor stress them with long inappropriate speeches or requiring too difficult performances.

If you are able to introduce them to the topic making them to participate actively, they'll amuse themselves and learn to look around them from many different points of view, that can make them become open minded, hoping they'll maintain this attitude lifelong.

F. went with his grandchild, three years old, to visit an exhibition concerning Chagall.

At the end, F. consider these questions: "Does this small example demonstrate that very young people can be introduced to, involved and interested in matters not usually considered suitable for them? Do we believe such young people are not interested in or cannot be introduced to great art? What, anyway, is "interest"? How can we be sure there is none? What signs of interest might we see in such a young person, and how can we strive to both induce it and maintain it over time? How to maintain memories to as to sustain interest for further discoveries?"

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F. tries to find an answer with a second round, a visit at an exhibition about Kazimir Malevich, introduced by a tale.

"One hundred years ago there was a wizard, with a little devil as helper. One day, the little devil suggested that the wizard could become a great painter. With his magic wand he put shapes and colors on the canvas, moved a red spot here, a yellow circle there, but notwithstanding his work, the final result was horrible! A disgusting bulk of colors contrasting one against the others! The angry wizard hid the colors into a black cube. Kazimir, a Russian peasant, found in his field a black square and inside it he found coloured circles, squares, rectangles, and started to put them together, studying which could be the best combination. So, he produced beautiful pictures that made him one of the most famous painters in the world".

This is the didactic introduction elaborated for a particular student, F's four years old grandson Matteo, during their visit to the exhibition "Kazimir Malevich one hundred years after the black square".

So, a method to teach is "Kazimir and the conquest of colors". Another method of teaching is to find the opposites: Kazimir painted the country, the workers. Among his most remarkable works is the isolated red house without doors and windows, also in this case he returns to the scheme of square. At the same time, we can speak about the ways, habits, ideas of the past and the new possible and future developments.

We must go beyond the appearances: in Malevich when look at "the black cross", we should understand that it is not more than the association or grouping of five squares blacks (or wishbones) and four white squares. When we look at a patient and visit and let him/her speak, are we able to see all these different aspects, to see all the components, all the different co-morbidities and concurrent causes realizing the uniqueness of that patient?

In teaching our students, we push and encourage and motivate them, for instance, asking how they feel about themselves in situations they have to face. Adapting this method to grandson M., observing Malevich's works, F. ask him: "what color do you feel today?" "Did you ever feel yourself a black square?"; "what would make you feel like a red circle?".

When we teach our students, we act to create "role- plays", to form groups in contrast each other, each other prepared to defend an idea or a position about what they are learning or seeing. So, for Matteo "Make square" (as the Malevich's squares) means joining forces to defend own ideas. We can divide into two, F. and M., create

square for defense, make a triangle or a wedge to go on the attack, join forces making a circle...or a solid defense through a new square, incorporating circles and triangles.

“The head of farmer” is a key opera for Matteo, from which he gets (and learn) the most of the philosophy of Malevich. Matteo has seen the work and take a white sheet with only checkerboard contours of the face where to put the coolers. Here, he is able to enter colors as he like or he have learned and understood. Then he is pushed to cut the work done along and, combining different pieces like a jigsaw puzzle, he is able to create new positions or new compositions (... creativity, imagination step).

At the end, Matteo goes to the great hall where is created, for the first time, the atmosphere of the opera “Victory on the Sun “one of the most important works in Russian Cubo futurist Theater”. Now, he is in front of the theatrical figures drawn and designed by Malevich, for the first time reproduced life-size in that great room. What was hypothetical, as seen in costumes drawn in pencil and seen in frames, now it is the reality, mannequins with the most fantastic costumes, each one different, as in medicine when the student sees for the first time the real patients, each with its own large and different problems.

Matteo is really involved all the time, even listening to the tape and do a lot of questions.

He has learned a lot. F. explain how the artist, at beginning painted figures, to switch to triangles, circles and squares, to return to the figures.... but many of these figures, for a time, were painted as empty faces. Without eyes and mouth and nose.

“But, why of that?” ask Matteo. “In this period, he went back to the figurative, but figures stand motionless in an elementary landscape, they are faceless, without beard, without arms, eyes, nose, and ears. Malevich doesn't see any more the man of the future, or better, the future for men has become an unfathomable enigma. There is dominating the bolscevic dictatorship. People become mutilated mannequins, prisoners in a criminal gulag, concentration camp; his peasants become robots with a metallic appearance: humanity in the throes of a nihilistic, apocalyptic destructiveness, stiff in anticipation of the end of the world.”

Matteo is impressed by the straight and long nose painted for the head of the farmer. Everything is going to create interest and memory in him. He has a lot of questions. He paints also at home. Two weeks later, he shows me to have created three similar “farmer heads” built with Lego plastics.

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