

# The culture of sustainability in marginal territorial contexts: in search of new inclusive models.

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**Abstract:** The culture of sustainability today represents a form of social capital that indicates the degree of civic cohesion, institutional collaboration and bonds of solidarity (Malavasi, 2017) of the planetary community. A pedagogical approach to sustainability supports the ability to ally: a generative element towards a just and inclusive environmental, economic and social transition for the prosperous future of the majority. The paradigm of sustainability and the perspective of the capability approach find a point of possible convergence for pedagogical reflection also around the theme of community, especially in reference to territorial contexts. The investigation which is the subject of this article starts from marginal territorial communities, and by investigating the critical issues linked to the lack of essential services which generate inequalities, it aims to first design and then experiment with inclusive models which invite an education in participation and care of assets. relational (Donati, Solci, 2011; Donati, 2019), and to promote human potential such as to allow a dignified life (Nussbaum, 2012). The applicable model hypothesis is that of Flipped Inclusion (Corona, De Giuseppe, 2014) which has the objective of creating prosocial personalities in educational contexts by retracing the logic of computational thinking with an existential approach to systemic inclusiveness, from a of lifelong learning.

**Keywords:** Sustainability; Territorial Communities; Flipped Inclusion.



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## 1. Introduction- Inclusive sustainability, between subcultural decentralizations and existentialism in progress

Sustainability requires profound anthropological and ethical reflection that can cross the social as well as economic sciences, and not just a mere cultural adaptation to the evidence of data on climate change (and all the other dystonias), which today are often splashed on the front page even not always appropriately (Alessandrini, 2021). The culture of sustainability today represents a form of social capital that indicates the degree of civic cohesion, institutional collaboration and bonds of solidarity (Malavasi, 2017) of the planetary community. The effort to define sustainability as a pedagogical paradigm takes place in a historical period

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characterized by the weakening of relationality with others and with the environment. The theme of human development connected to the capabilities approach can be considered as a substantive point of reference for rethinking educational practices from a "generative" perspective also in reference to new educational values centered on the inclusive dimension and on the fight against inequalities, including those of gender (Alessandrini, 2021). An ideal model of society characterized by its ability to adapt to various natural and human crises, to face the challenges and negative impacts deriving from environmental, social and economic changes, while preserving natural resources and the well-being of people so that can live a full and creative existence, developing their potential and organizing a meaningful life worthy of their equal human dignity (Nussbaum, 2011). In the analysis of current society, the impact of the development of technologies and the historical-cultural change cannot be overlooked (De Kerckhove, 1996) which entail paradigmatic changes (Levy, 1999), from a trend of cold knowledge management, in its being the triad of need-technology-product (De Kerckhove, 1993), to an investment in a relational-systemic-ecological vision, with pedagogical missions implemented in the triad of person-personality-professionalism (Levy, 2002). The dark paradoxes of post-modernity (Bauman, 2003), characterized by a degenerative hypercomplexity, produce stages of fluctuating disconnection between being/representation, being/existence and being/relationship (Ciasullo, Giordano, 2017). Generative of perennial transits of fictitious certainties, they are the cause of existential instabilities which end up promoting stages of suspension of Being (Heidegger, 2015), located between the ontological and the relational. In the historical existential-becoming the choices of individuals and communities are manifested; as divergent convergences, intrapersonal decisions constitute the differential variables, achieved through processes of denuclearization and rescaling (Olson, 1979) of every categorized and historically contextualizable form. The anthropological degeneration of the sense of belonging, deriving from the activation of virtually interconnected and de-territorialized communities, is promoting subcultural decentralizations (De Kerckhove, 1996) which, although representing the most evident expression of a new democratization (Dewey, 1961), as direct participation in co-constructable knowledge, it produces floating identity processes deprived of consolidating rooting, due to the absence of constraints and contextual value reciprocity (De Giuseppe, Corona, 2020). It is necessary face these educational challenges through pedagogical paradigms of circular re-understanding of being subject/object (Merleau-Ponty, 1945) which, through a reconquest of existential concreteness in the original positive world-of-life, from which every perspective receives objectivity and sense, presuppose a phenomenological perspective of empathy as education in the management of authentic time and pro-social intersubjective relationships (Corona, De Giuseppe, 2020). Pedagogical research, therefore, in its being a propulsive factor of re-generativity and trans-active and transformative agency of a complex hypermedia society (Buckingham, 2006) (Galliani, Maragliano, 2002), must implement experiments aimed at prospectively manage democratic forms of cross-media remodulation (Masterman, 1997). It is in this scenario that the even more complex challenge of marginal territorial communities arises, where educational challenges arise in a context where the inequalities of individuals are exasperated, and only by looking at a pro-social educational community, through the application of models inclusive, sustainable development can be achieved in terms of regaining systemic ecological well-being (Bronfenbrenner, 2002).

## 2. The Flipped Inclusion model: a review of the epistemological aspects

The term Flipped Inclusion (De Giuseppe, Corona, 2016), which was born as part of the pilot study experimented at the University of Salerno, tries to combine the concept of inclusion and the value of flipped logic in educational actions through design models (Margiotta, 2014) existential (Dewey, 1961) with the logic of reversal (Bergmann, Sams, 2012) of the investigation process, for a qualitative well-being of life (Lawton, Simon, 1968). The term Flipped Inclusion, a complex idiomatic phrase, constitutes a didactic model of transformation for the educational promotion of social and prosocial skills (De Giuseppe, 2016) and inclusive contexts that lead to ecological-systemic well-being. The model invests in forms of multiple multimodal re-literacy (Gee, 2008) with the involvement of different languages, from the iconic to the visual, with a view to inclusive reversal of vision and mission. In combining languages, formal, informal and non-formal learning, the Flipped Inclusion model promotes cooperative forms, learning communities, Circle Learning, multicultural integration (Calvani, 2001) aimed at encouraging a transformation of implicit knowledge into explicit and prosocial ones, changing into learning productive-creative communities (De Kerckhove, 1993) and pro-social communities. The pedagogical investment in the ecological-relational paradigmatic perspective is based on human capital and sustainable innovation through 1) theoretical and exploratory management and study phases, 2) empirical and ideational observation, 3) operational planning, 4) responsible experimental action, through formal, non-formal and informal spaces, of the mediation of knowledge (Sibilio, 2015), with an enhancement of technological-inclusive laboratory methodologies (De Giuseppe, Corona 2020). The flipped inclusion model, in its systematically systemic holistic approach to the permanent qualitative well-being of life, with assumptions of centrality in the pedagogical care of the Person, intends to promote educational paths for managing the challenges of postmodern cross-media paideia, which involve circular movements and retroactive feedback, multidimensional spheres from the individual to the collective and vice versa (De Giuseppe, 2020). Flipped Inclusion traces the Cartesian logic with a representability of its design architecture, which can be placed on the Cartesian axes. In the perspective of the Cartesian logic of Flipped Inclusion, Goffman's frame theory (Goffman, 2001) and Bronfenbrenner's thought (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) converge. The systemic development of simple processes (Sibilio 2019) of inclusiveness is achieved through four preparatory EIPS phases (Explore, Ideate, Design, Experiment) (De Giuseppe, 2018):

1. Exploring, to identify the challenge/problem, through inquiry learning (Kuhn, Cheney & Weinstock 2000);
2. Conceive, in order to discover (discovery learning) (Bruner, 1960), relevant aspects on which to hypothesize structurally shareable elements in the next phase.
3. Planning, to master tools and resources in a structurally organized manner, in compliance with goals to be achieved (mastery learning) (Bloom, 1994)
4. Experiment with planned actions on which to collect feedback to bring out key elements for the implementation of an inclusive model to resolve the identified problems (Experiential learning) (Kolb, 2014).

The Flipped Inclusion approach represents an integral (and integrated) approach to teaching (Rivoltella, 2013); the investment in the development of complex and proactive critical thinking (Berthoz, 2015), which guarantees multidimensional freedom and autonomy, represents the pedagogical antidote to authoritarian and

dogmatic forms that produce hybridization with dependence, alienation and social control (Pinto Minerva, 2011 ). We invest in overturning logics, which start from macro-actions of analysis, communication (Mc Luhan, 2008), design and evaluation linked to the system logics of the Web (Corona, De Giuseppe 2017). This approach in the educational field has led to extraordinary results, in fact pursuing the methodological-didactic approach of Flipped Learning (Bergman, Sam, 2012) in its reversal of work-at-home/school times and dynamic, interactive and creative learning spaces, the Flipped Inclusion existential design model makes use of Complex Blended Learning system learning forms (De Giuseppe, Corona, 2018). It is an advanced form of e-learning, complex learning and Byod model (Bring your own device), which was used in the experimentation of Flipped Inclusion through the Spiral platform, a complex software within a non-complex, sophisticated hardware from the point of view of the project structure, because it is organized by levels of complexity, mixed and interactive. In the experimentation of Flipped Inclusion, Spiral was used with the aim of promoting inclusive-accessible profiles and communities (De Giuseppe, Corona, 2020). Through an analysis of broken down problems (Berthoz, 2011) and progressive actions (Goffman, 2001) of identification (key), conceptualization (frame), focusing on the problem (framing), aimed at identifying the possible resolution (framework). Nor can we ignore the impact that the learning transfer can have in a local community (Corona, Cozzarelli, 2013). Learning is closely connected to all those changes that occur with respect to behaviour, ideas and knowledge through experience, changes that can have temporary effects or long-lasting effects over time (Corona, Cozzarelli, 2013). The theory of operant conditioning based on the principle of positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement and in reality the term shaping itself, originates from a cognitive-behavioral approach, and was born in reference to the modeling approach of responses or shaping capable of dealing with simple situations (Berthoz, 2011), linked to disability conditions and BES (Sibilio, 2013). It is clear that in marginal territorial contexts, situations of interactional, ecological, contextual and pedagogical disadvantage are experienced (Corona, Cozzarelli, 2013) in which modeling, through positive reinforcements, places the individual in conditions that allow him to acquire new skills, including pro-social ones, to be obviously reworked from a Flipped Inclusion perspective.

### **3. Experimenting inclusiveness in Flipped Inclusion in the territorial contexts of marginal communities: The new pilot study**

The complexity of the nature of the transformative processes that characterize the digitalized society of the knowledge economy (Marchesini, 2014) highlights the need to synergistically integrate both quantitative and qualitative educational research models. We are in the presence of a new pedagogical paradigm that requires an awareness of intentions and actions to educate in new forms of political and digital eco-sustainability (Benanti, 2021), to be rooted in education, in order to encourage the adoption of models of lifelong learning aligned with social needs for collective well-being (De Giuseppe, 2018). In this regard, retracing the transformative logic of postmodernity and accepting the suggestions of the Index for inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 1998), the proactive commitment that the educational community (school, family and civil society) must assume is highlighted in terms of implementing empowerment processes (De Giuseppe, 2016), aimed at the "proactive participation of context resources, for a transformation of socio-educational fabrics into inclusive ones" (Dovigo, 2007), also strategically making use of models of media education to implement inclusive system learning (Alberici, 2002). In this regard, it cannot be

overlooked that the fusion between culture and digital tools can generate pro-social and economic value, with a concrete impact on people, communities and territories, such as to break down stereotypes deriving from unconscious processes generated by digital practices (Sibilio, 2023) and promote generative cultures of systemic inclusiveness (Calveri, & Sacco, 2021). The word inclusion comes from the Latin *inclusiono-onis*, der. to include literally indicates the act of including an element within a group or set. In the social sphere it represents the condition in which all individuals live in a state of fairness and equal opportunities (educational, work and economic), regardless of the presence of disadvantage. Inclusion promotes the improvement of the quality of life of individuals, runs through all vital and social spheres, conceptual and spatial places, to become a cultural and mental process, aimed at promoting the productive coexistence of differences (Gardou, 2012). The concept of inclusion is rooted in the establishment of synergistic relationships, of mutual influence and adaptation, and in the awareness of the importance of the context, a central element and priority key to understanding the co-evolution process (Canevaro, 2009). The construction of inclusive communities in the era of post modernity, digital innovation and artificial intelligence appears to be a challenge that requires an effort in terms of sustainability and human capital, especially when talking about communities in internal and/or marginal areas. The territorial areas furthest from essential services are affected by the migration phenomenon of young people and at the same time by an aging of the resident population, with consequent demographic decline. In this context, in which essential, socio-welfare and infrastructural services are sometimes lacking, such as to exacerbate inequalities, the work of local authorities is to create a modern welfare system, with a deeper approach compared to past social policies, which creates situations of equity, i.e. equal opportunities. In fact, territorial rebalancing and the development of internal areas must aim not only at ensuring better opportunities, but at intervening on disparities, creating an inclusive model. The general objective of the research project is to investigate the migratory phenomenon of young people and at the same time support the aging of the resident population, to experiment with an ideal inclusive model through the combined action of different needs which however have the same objective: safeguard the survival of internal areas while intervening on reducing the territorial gap with urban centres. The exploratory-descriptive, multi-method research project is proposed as a pilot study to investigate whether within a well-defined reference context, i.e. the territorial communities of marginal areas, it is possible to act pedagogically to form an active citizenship dedicated to inclusion. The project aims to apply cooperative methodologies, and in particular the Flipped Inclusion model (Corona, De Giuseppe, 2015), an existential planning model with a universal perspective, which has the aim of contributing to the formation of personalities with prosocial-inclusive, thanks to simple (Sibilio, 2014) modular and recursive paths (EISP), organized by project and intervention levels of increasing complexity (micro-meso-exo and macro).

The research question is divided into the following points:

- Investigate whether the Flipped Inclusion model (Corona De Giuseppe 2015) already experimented in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts, starting from democratic education for territorial contexts, can be applied with similar transformative results up to a conscious active participation to promote inclusive communities;
- Therefore promote a focus on the evidence of practices, policies and pedagogical actions implemented in the Benevento area, collect evidence, analyze data and identify possible implementable scenarios, according to

the perspectives of the Index For Inclusion, in order to trace and act pedagogically on the inclusive quality of a community.

The research hypothesis is that the application of the Flipped model within territorial communities can promote an inclusive culture, social cohesion, sustainability and active citizenship, welfare and employment by acting on the education of inclusive personalities for build an educating community. The flipped inclusion model (De Giuseppe, Corona 2016), organized with a view to reversing the vision and mission of the educational system, must be placed ethically in its being an experimental-democratic, formal, non-formal and informal space of culture (Dewey, 1981 ) of the person and inclusive contexts. The new research perspective aims to promote integrated system empowerment, an integration of services between local authorities, social areas and territorial associations. We intend to promote this empowerment also by applying the theory of operant conditioning, through positive reinforcements, forms of shaping, but also through platforms based on artificial intelligence that have the aim of promoting inclusive-accessible profiles and communities. The objective is to create an educating territorial community through simple paths (Sibilio, 2014) with interventions of increasing complexity that take into account the four EIPS phases (De Giuseppe, 2020) which recall the Bronfenbrennerian vision of macro, exo, meso and micro systems of systemic ecological development (Bronfenbrenner, 2002), to protect and guarantee individual and collective well-being and quality of life. In particular, starting from small reference contexts, the territorial communities, and breaking down the identified critical issues (problem finding) into sub-problems, we will tend to devise inclusive interventions (conceiving is the problem setting and analysis phase). Therefore the analysis, investigation and sequentialized discovery of a significant relationship (Ausubel, 1987) of complex mental representations allows, starting from an insight approach, based on intuition, a conceptualization, aimed at a shared purpose, (Mead , 1973) of building problem-solving models (Argyris and Schön, 1966). The experimentation of the Flipped Inclusion model in marginal territorial contexts will allow the development of a reference model applicable, and therefore replicable, in all those contexts that are similar and/or in any case compatible with the critical issues that emerged in the problem finding phase. In this way, the research can become a pilot study, to be replicated with a view to resolving the socio-economic-cultural-pedagogical gap, both within the same community between different individuals and between marginal communities and urban centres.

#### **4. Conclusions- The prospective multidimensionality of Flipped Inclusion research**

The Flipped Inclusion model was born, developed and tested in the school educational context, to encourage educational paths for managing the challenges of post-modern cross-media paideia, which involve, with circular movements and re-troactive feedback, multi-dimensional spheres from individual to the collective and vice versa (De Giuseppe, 2020). Therefore, the importance of educational institutions cannot be overlooked, which even following the pandemic period, have started a reflection on the critical issues of a model of school as a "public good" that is anything but democratic, but reveals and amplifies poverty and inequalities. The choice to assume a collective sense of responsibility for the interest of the community and to enhance the principle of horizontal subsidiarity in taking care of education leads schools and universities to rethink the relationship between the different educational agencies, in a systemic and with a view to mutual validation

(Biondia, Nadeau-Tremblayb, Faggiolic 2023). Cultural heritage has also taken on a crucial role in the education system, becoming a tool capable of intertwining knowledge, connecting formal, non-formal and informal learning and strengthening the alliance between educational institutions, the territory and other educational agencies (Schiavo, Di Tore, 2016). And it is still the territory, the place in which to enhance what already exists, transforming it into a learning environment capable of generating self-care and social development (Garista, 2023). It is clear that the applicability of the Flipped Inclusion model to local contexts, in creating an educational community, cannot ignore the valorisation of educational institutions on the one hand and the recovery of cultural heritage on the other. The alliance between school and territory manages to strengthen civic education as a public commitment and common good, training active citizens who are aware of their being in the world (Calzone, Mazza, 2022) and encouraging dialogue with pedagogical approaches capable of also cultivate the values and principles of interdependence and solidarity. From this perspective, together with the experimentation of the Flipped Inclusion model, the interest in continuing the research arises which takes shape in the need to experiment with interventions and resolutions that deal with the intersection of technological and life logical plans, in their mutual contamination, unprecedentedly original, which produces and multiplies unexpected transformations and perplexities. It involves conceiving new sensorial-perceptive and value categories, interpreting what exists and its transformative potential, directing it towards hypotheses of sustainable development through pedagogical-didactic interventions (Corona 2020), with interpretative coding and decoding actions of the processes educational (Olson, 1979) and socio-identity hybridization (Pinto Minerva, 2011). The concept of sustainability on the one hand, the achievement of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda on the other, trace the path of post-humanism (Pinto Minerva, Gallelli, 2004) of educational research, through a multidimensional approach, in which the scientific community must rewrite new social, pedagogical and cultural models, also redefining the fundamental question of the relationship between education and democracy (Dewey, 2018), explored in depth a century ago in the controversy between John Dewey and Walter Lippmann, namely whether citizens become more aware through education that is, they must necessarily be guided to add social objectives not obviously chosen by them (Chomsky, 2005).

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