“Pierino Wrote ‘Go Juve’ in the Class Padlet!” Playful Creativity in Managing Digital Tools With Off-Topic or Dysfunctional Contributions From Students

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Abstract

This study examines the pedagogical dynamics of managing divergence and error in technology-enhanced classrooms, focusing on a simulation conducted with 360 Primary Education students over four years. The case of Pierino and his off-topic digital contribution (“Forza Juve!”) serves as a springboard for exploring teacher responses to disruptions. The thematic analysis of student reflections reveals six clusters of action, highlighting the potential of humour, playfulness, and gamification in reframing error as a shared pedagogical resource. By balancing relational engagement and creative responsiveness, pursuing a strong drive for inclusion, fostering students’ comfort and well-being, and challenging them toward growth, self-awareness, self-efficacy and confidence, teachers can transform disruptions into opportunities for collaboration and meaning-making. This study emphasizes the constructed and contextual nature of error and its management, situating it within adaptive, human-centered practices that transcend prescriptive uses of digital tools. Reflecting on networked classroom interactions, it advocates for participatory approaches that foster emotional safety, curiosity, and imaginative exploration, aligning with broader goals of teacher education and reflective praxis.[1]

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1. Post-Pandemic Digital Education: Need for Pedagogical Mediation

Since the pandemics, the use of digital tools witnessed a sudden acceleration in primary education. What until 2020 had been a slow and resisted deployment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) suddenly became unavoidable (Bozkurt et al., 2022). In an emergency remote education climate, teachers had to adopt ICT abruptly, regardless of a lack of preparation or support, and younger generations of learners experienced a time of experimental trial, fatigue, and renewed divide (Bonavolontà et al., 2023). Pedagogical mediation was and remains essential to thoughtfully integrate ICT in meaningful, inclusive and interactive learning experiences, recognizing the value of technologies as opportunities for teachers to create dynamic and authentic educational interactions. Nowadays, it is no longer a matter of survival through digital means but of leveraging them to foster participatory, accessible, high-quality learning environments – a process that presents a long and complex path ahead.

2. From "Go Juve" to a Catalogue

2.1 Methodology

This essay reflects on an experimental activity carried out in the Educational Technology Labs (Labs) in the Primary Education Course at Milan-Bicocca University, involving 360 students between 2018 and 2021. As a Labs teacher I focused on digital tools as cognitive and metacognitive mediators – instruments that amplify, scaffold, and compensate cognitive processes; and vehicles for the development of teachers' methodological competencies, beyond mere ICT literacy – particularly addressing specific educational needs (Canarini & Bertozzo, 2008). Labs students participated in a didactic simulation designed to reflect on a real-life scenario which had recently occurred: a fifth-grade teacher, employing a digital class noticeboard (a Padlet), assigns students to post individual contributions on a specific topic related to the ongoing lesson. A student called Pierino posts "Forza Juve!" ("Go Juve!"), evi-

dently out of task. The class disunites, erupting in laughter. Pierino's message appears as disrupting the activity, breaking its thematic focus, challenging the teacher to manage both the immediate pedagogical objectives and the broader social and relational dynamics emerging in the class. Labs participants were asked: "How can the teacher handle this situation and the dynamics arising from it?".

The choice to propose this specific scenario to the participants stems from a long-standing personal and professional commitment to divergent thinking, lateral leadership, and pluralistic educational approaches.[2] I therefore considered drawing on one among the many classroom episodes I had encountered in my career. This was revisited through a reflective process involving peer dialogue and critical self-observation, in line with perspectives that legitimize the situated, elaborated use of professional experience as a valuable pedagogical resource – once appropriately de-personalised and analytically reframed (Schön, 1983; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). I discussed the idea with departmental colleagues: three out of four expressed strong support for the educational value and methodological soundness of the proposed simulation, for it to foster a deeper understanding of educational relationships, managing group dynamics, and the multifaceted role of the teacher as both facilitator of content and living model in navigating complex, situated interactions.[3]

The simulation-based exercise consisted of a 15-minute pitch task to foster immediacy, focused engagement and concise yet insightful responses. In small groups, students immersed in the scenario, drawing upon their own experiences as learners or educators. No limitations of length, structure or style were imposed, encouraging diversity of elaboration, expression and deliberation. I collected Labs participants' contributions and took ethnographic notes of plenary discussions held after the groups' short-pitches. I then

2 Over the past three decades, I have worked as an educator in early childhood settings, kindergartens, primary schools, lower and upper secondary schools – gradually transitioning to university-level instructional design. In coherence with this background, it was natural for me to planning to bring into the hybrid-learning lab setting a stimulus aligned with these thematic concerns, both as a pedagogical prompt and as a research-informed provocation.

3 It would indeed be valuable to explore how the original episode was handled within that specific school community, considering its unique situated dynamics. However, this lies beyond the scope of the present contribution.

thematically analyzed these materials to identify and categorize recurring patterns, central topics and underlying conceptual frameworks. Overall, 90 groups of four students each produced 440 responses to the question, averaging 4.89 responses per group. 363 answers (82.5%) were about 20 words-long or shorter and were composed of one to two relatively brief sentences. The remaining 17.5% – 77 prompts – exhibited greater structural complexity, consisting of multiple sentences of over 20 words, displaying wider elaboration.

2.2 Strategy Clusters

The exercise promoted an interplay between individual critical thinking and collective discussion, aiming at fostering participants':

- reflexivity and metacognition, to encourage future teachers to problematize off-topic contributions not as mere disruptions but as windows on deeper social, motivational, and communicative dynamics in the classroom;
- constructive management of divergence, recognizing and reframing it as opportunity for inclusive and dialogic pedagogical practices;
- agency and creativity, increasing knowledge of flexible and context-sensitive strategies, to address unexpected student behaviours in technology-enhanced environments.

A catalogue of action possibilities from the 440 contributions was collected, serving as a repository of responses and a mirror of the pedagogical tensions inherent in a teacher's role – between control and flexibility, immediate reactions and long-term reflection. Clusters are presented below, enriched by some illustrative responses:

1. Promoting dialogue. Here, the teacher reinterprets disruption as an opportunity to foster collective engagement and inclusive dialogue in the classroom, socializing Pierino's off-track:

   "I involve the class group, creating a discussion on this off-topic contribution."

   "I encourage the class to reflect on what off-topic means: has it always to be considered disruptive?"

2. Leveraging play and creativity. This cluster highlights strategies that transform the disruption in a playful, creative opportunity for learning, engagement and inclusion:

   "I propose a discussion-game: other teams? Other sports?"

   "We turn it in a creative writing exercise: 'What if Pierino's team had to solve today's lesson problem?'"

   "W Napoli!"

3. Ignoring or minimizing. Teachers chose to avoid or de-escalate the situation by minimizing its visibility or significance.

   "I avoid blatant reactions, showing that the provocation doesn't affect me. I ignore it."

   "I calmly continue with the lesson, addressing the incident indirectly in a later moment."

4. Teacher self-reflection and management. The teacher's reflexivity and relational awareness are at the core:

   "I take a moment to reflect on my own reactions: am I addressing the issue constructively or reacting emotionally?"

   "I use the incident as a chance to model reflective behavior for the class, showing how adults can respond calmly to unexpected situations!"

5. Understanding the student's motivations. Teachers attempt to explore underlying causes of the student's action, focusing on empathy and contextualization:

   "I talk to Pierino privately to understand his motives."

   "I observe his behavior in other moments to identify patterns, recurring triggers. I discuss with colleagues to understand his needs and motivations."

6. Authoritarian reactions and sanctions. Teachers react to maintain control, sometimes through punitive or reactive measures:

> "I tell the students 'The more inappropriate messages appear, or digital participation rules are not respected, the more homework they'll have.'"

> "I get angry, I lose it, I raise my voice, and that's it, Pierino!"

Table 1 summarizes the quantitative distribution of the clusters.

Table 1 – Response clusters

Cluster	No. of entries	%	Observations and dynamics
1. Promoting Dialogue	115	26.14	Dialogic-inclusive approach, transforming provocation in an opportunity for confrontation
2. Leveraging Play-Creativity	98	22.27	Use of creativity-play to reframe the situation
3. Ignoring, Minimizing	85	19.32	De-escalation-avoidance strategy, minimizing the impact of provocation
4. Teacher Self-Reflection & Management	58	13.18	Teacher's self-control and reflective management of own role
5. Understanding Student's Motivations	53	12.04	Exploring underlying reasons for the student's behavior
6. Authoritarian Reactions & Sanctions	31	7.04	Instinctive-punitive responses; human vulnerability; personal, temperamental, contingent idiosyncrasies

The exercise showed students that managing divergence in technology-enhanced environments requires not just digital literacy, but reflective, pedagogically informed praxis embracing unpredictability as a formative element of teaching. Cluster no.1 dominates (115 contributions, 26.14%), showing

how participants see communication, exchange and collective discussion as the most effective way to deal with divergent situations. No.2 (98 contributions, 22.27%), highlights participants inclination to value creativity and play as constructive pedagogical tools. Cluster no.3 appears interesting (19.32%), showing how neutralizing provocation is perceived as a practical and functional solution. As discussed with students in plenary, avoidance as an educational strategy – while at times an effective form of negative pedagogy – requires nuanced reflection. While potentially useful to de-dramatize the event, prevent unnecessary escalation, and subtly model restraint or composure – maybe intending to address the matter privately, or just to wait – ignoring a behavior can become an evasive response, a disengaged forfeiting a chance for constructive intervention, and an inadverted signal to students that certain behaviors or issues are not to be tackled, potentially shaping their understanding of conflict resolution and social accountability. Clusters Teacher self-reflection and management and Understanding the student's motivations appear quantitatively aligned – 58 and 53 contributions respectively, 13.18% and 12.04% – and thematically intertwined, representing reflective and problematizing structures of thought activated by Pierino's case. They diverge on the object of this reflection: a self-referential inquiry in the teacher's own responses and reactions, vs. an outward-oriented curiosity to understand the student's reasons and behavior's roots. I noticed the relative paucity of spontaneous curiosity toward Pierino himself – the possible web of experiences, forces, and meanings that may have led him to act – ranking only fifth out of six. In a program of study such as Primary Education, often driven by vocations of relational engagement, I'd rather had anticipated stronger instinctive inclinations to interrogate and empathize with the child's perspective. Though, when prompted in plenary discussion, participants quickly seized upon this line of inquiry, awakening their need to explore the interpretative possibilities of Pierino's post (see here, 3.3). Authoritarian reactions and sanctions represent the tail end (7.04%) – yet with a relevant qualitative significance. In this cluster, underlying elements of ideological stances, professional ethical values, and a somewhat dominant teacher's Superego were discussed, which can't be deepened here. In guided discussions, participants recognized this category as a human and real component of the teaching profession, often linked to contingent or temperamental fac-

tors. It enriched students understanding of the pedagogical role, stimulating reflection on the need for training in emotion awareness and management.

3. Conceptualizing Mistake and Divergence in Educational Dynamics

By almost all the Labs students and Pierino's real classmates, his act was classified as an error – albeit with varying hues and consistently regarded as a minor or light mistake.

3.1 Pedagogical Perspectives on Error

In broader social discourse, error has long been framed as a defect to correct, a deviation to eliminate, a shortcoming to avoid. Pedagogically, it can be discussed from multiple perspectives (Binanti, 2022) – e.g., as a critical reflection and knowledge acquisition gateway, an opportunity for inclusive and creative pedagogical practices (Benes & Cellie, 2018), a cognitive and affective phenomenon demanding nuanced management in digital education (Gegenfurtner & Hagenhofer, 2020), or a methodological tool for developing professional and metacognitive skills through gamification, serious games and active learning strategies (Giampaolo, 2021). Notoriously, "error" roots in Latin errare ("to wander", "to stray"): embarking on a movement of precarious exploration and recalibration. Experience itself denotes a journey outward (ex) and through (per), emphasizing going (ire) – in absence of a predetermined destination – . Mistake thus bases on divergence, as an ontological condition of human experience and an opportunity to explore alternative cognitive pathways and foster resilience. Its management stands as a dynamic, context-centered, cultural and pedagogical process, stimulating creativity and learning; and relationally, as a dialogic moment inviting participation and shared meaning-making. This conceptualization echoes Popper's critical rationalism, positioning error as an essential component in the iterative refinement of knowledge, as well as Taleb's (2012) notion of antifragility, where diversity and disruption become sources of strength and adaptability in educational ecosystems. Two threads deserve further mention from Labs discussions. The first one highlights the importance for teachers to acknowledge the

emotional undercurrents of their role and engage in self-reflection on its complexities, balancing rational management with relational awareness and empathy (Larocca, 2008). Secondly, any error, phenomenologically, has always already occurred. It's a chronologically irreversible, completed event: once it occurs – Pierino's "Go Juve!" – its management cannot undo what has already transpired. Teachers don't manage the act in se, but its consequences – the ripple effects it generates in the classroom environment. Furthermore, the adult's response is an intrinsic element of the error's aftermath. It is not neutral, but an active agent in shaping the social and pedagogical outcome of the situation – be it its resolution, amplification, or transformation. As a teacher acts in front of students, she's not merely performing that action; she is simultaneously modeling how an adult can approach and manage things. Rich with formative potential, the teacher's response – whether reflective, dialogic, creative, or normative – shapes the classroom culture, modeling approaches to conflict, divergence, and growth. Integrating emotional awareness and a relational focus on their practice, teachers transform dysfunctionality in opportunity, fostering a classroom environment where students are shown that mistakes are to be valued as essential components of learning.

Elaborating on Sterponi and Santagata's comparative perspective on pedagogical responses to errors (2000), mistake management reveals a transcultural distinction between its socialization and its individualization, corresponding to broader ethical and moral frameworks rooted in different normative traditions – e.g. the Catholic and the Protestant-Calvinist ones. In Catholic-influenced, Neo-Latin-speaking societies – e.g., the Italian classroom model – error tends to be treated as a collective opportunity for communal experience of reasoning and learning – sharing its burden, diluting its stigma. This reflects an underlying social logic: as there exist far more individuals than types of error, socializing mistakes optimizes their collective prevention and the construction of a communal understanding of their consequences. By contrast, the individualization of error, more characteristic of contexts influenced by Protestant-Calvinist ethos, aligns with a cultural orientation toward introspection and "personal virtue". Mistakes are treated as private failings, managed through intimate correction. Avoidance of public acknowledgment aims to mitigate social embarrassment, yet the solitary burden placed on the individual can amplify the emotional and symbolic weight.

One cannot help but recall familiar scenes from Anglo-Saxon films in which a teacher, as the bell rings to mark the end of a lesson or school day, asks a specific student to stay behind. In those moments, an almost palpable collective understanding goes, that no one in the class would wish to trade places with that particular Pierino.

3.2 From Habitus to Antiprograms

The concept of habitus theorized by Bourdieu (1980/1990) provides a compelling framework for understanding the interplay between the teacher, the student, and the classroom dynamics when faced with divergent behaviors. The habitus – a set of internalized dispositions shaped by social and cultural experiences – mediates between structure and agency, influencing how individuals perceive, act, and respond in specific situations. In a hybrid physical-digital classroom, any cluster of teacher's response to an off-topic contribution reflects not only their professional training and pedagogical values but also their habitus, embodying underneath frames tied to broader cultural and institutional norms. Pierino's provocative action can itself be viewed as a manifestation of habitus – as a "symbolic rupture" (Bourdieu, 1992/1993) of the expected order, requiring the teacher to reframe it through interactive performance.

In Latour's work, programs of action – planned, prescribed uses of tools – are constantly met with counterforces, competing trajectories, or antiprograms that disrupt, resist, or reorient the intended flow of action. The case of Pierino's off-topic is an antiprogram, a counter-use destabilizing the teacher's pedagogical design, inviting her to dialectic or dialogic exploration. As such, it reveals the constructed and negotiated nature of "functionality. The Padlet rises as a pedagogical device, exemplifying Latour's idea that non-human mediators are never neutral but are implicated in complex webs of agency. The teacher becomes a facilitator tasked with renegotiating relationships between program (the intended educational activity) and antiprogram (Pierino's divergent use). The latter introduces a pedagogical tension: how does an educator respond to divergence without defaulting to authoritarian control or disengagement? Latour's actor-network framework and concept of "irreduction" (Latour, 1988) suggest that human and non-human agents co-con-

stitute meaning in networks that remain contingent, fluid, and open to reinterpretation, against both traditional views of human interaction – e.g. Goffman's micro-social focus – and linear theories of power. Order is not inherent but must be constantly performed, maintained, and reconfigured in the face of resistance or divergence (Latour, 1986). Through these lenses, Pierino's apparent disruption is a part of a network interaction between the technological mediator, whose affordances enable and facilitate unanticipated, divergent uses; the teacher's pedagogical agency, called upon to dynamically reinterpret such an antiprogram as a potential formative opportunity rather than a mere deviation; and the habitus subtly informing both Pierino's act and the teacher's reaction via a broader system of cultural norms, relational dynamics, and educational expectations.

3.3 Through Fun and Humor: Consciousness Matters

From this paragraph onward we'll focus on Leveraging Play and Creativity cluster. In Labs discussions, discernment and awareness were stressed as deontological values for teachers and as learning goals for Pierino. Teachers should or would be able to integrate in their practice lighthearted, humorous, divergent and playful types of action, to foster trust, connection, and a sense of safety for the children – a teacher's quality of the utmost importance for students. Yet, Pierino's capacity to bring divergence, humor and light-heartedness in the group through a witty remark, a playful joke, or a moment of comic relief needs to be recognized as a gift as well. Far from trivial, his ability to create joy, provoke laughter, and lighten the collective atmosphere, when nurtured, holds immense social and relational value. Moreover, it may serve as a barometer of Pierino's level of attention and workload experience, but also that of his classmates, potentially signaling a collective need for a break. Here lies an essential responsibility for the teacher: to support Pierino in cultivating discernment – teaching him to recognize this capacity but also to exercise it with intentionality and care, through a process of personal growth and skill development anchored in self-awareness, self-esteem and self-efficacy, for the group's well-being, self-respect and confidence, and for his own too. Can Pierino be led to realize his worth independent of performance – that his "gift" does not define his value, and he is appreciated and

accepted regardless of the laughter or attention he may bring? At the heart of Pierino's off-track behavior may lie one of humanity's most profound and universal needs – to be loved and to belong – and a deep pedagogic principle: as the mediator undergoes epistemological and structural shifts – e.g., is digitalized – the foundational pedagogical actions – such as including, supporting, and fostering growth – remain intrinsic and irreplaceable. Here, teaching is called to embody a deeply transformative, essentially unwavering message, no matter how context, language, relational dynamics and variables at play may shape its specifics: Pierino, I want to see you – and so I do see you. I want to recognize you – and so I do recognize you. You are loved as you are – unconditionally, with no need for any performance, including humor or provocation. This pedagogical affirmation carries immense weight – not only for Pierino, but for all learners who seek connection and meaning through their actions. Guiding Labs students through this reflective itinerary allowed me to witness their growingly aware emotional resonance and sobering sense of purpose about this teacher's function in every Pierino's path.

4. From Humor to Playfulness and Gamification

4.1 Practices of Humor and Playfulness

Amongst the approaches oriented towards socialization of mistakes, the role of humorous playfulness and games warrants closer examination. Humor, in its performative and dialogic applications, may help defusing the emotional charge of error while fostering relational trust and cognitive re-engagement. Relational agency emerges as a critical competency here. Made of a set of intertwined qualities – empathy, situational awareness, dialogic sensitivity, adaptive creativity, and capacity to hold space for others' individual and collective expression – it enables teachers to encompass divergence as a network act, with which to relate by facilitating inclusive habitus in the classroom community, especially at the intersection of digital technologies and pedagogy – which demand specifically nuanced strategies for fostering a constructive and inclusive learning environment. In general, digitalization of class interactions turns in a lasting document – posted on the Padlet's social arena – what in a non-digital classroom could have been Pierino's ephemeral

and aleatory spoken contribution. Digital technologies afford new pathways for emotional and cognitive self-regulation, encouraging reflective engagement with errors through the platform. Empirical studies underscore the significance of socially regulated emotional dynamics for effective learning in digital contexts (Panadero & Järvelä, 2015): virtual environments can transform errors in collective opportunities for collaborative reflection and problem-solving, by leveraging group discussions, shared forums, or peer interaction. Nonetheless, asynchronous feedback mechanisms, while offering flexibility, may unintentionally exacerbate students' feelings of isolation or frustration, as the delayed response deprives learners of the immediacy useful to address errors with emotional and cognitive support. In physical settings or synchronous ones – webinars and live virtual classrooms – teachers are better positioned to provide immediate, dialogic, and constructive feedback, mitigating risks of emotional discomfort. Thereby, teachers' relational agency paves the way for relational playfulness as an attitude, which – drawing on Berti's vision of school as a ludic space (2023) – emerges as a performative and relational posture that enables teachers to respond with curiosity, flexibility and emotional lightness to disruptions like Pierino's off-track. Rooting in the work of Huizinga (1938/2008) and Bateson (1955) among others, teachers are invited to integrate humor, divergence and creativity – favoring a climate that celebrates collaborative connection, putting in second place direct control. Relational playfulness emphasizes the teacher's attitude rather than formal game structures. As an interpersonal stance, it values spontaneity, dialogue, and inclusivity. It balances pedagogical goals with emotional well-being, affirming the centrality of pleasure, curiosity, and mutual recognition in learning processes. Labs' discussions emphasized the educated nature of playful approaches (Ligabue, 2020): play is not a talent reserved for the "naturally creative", but a professional area of competence that can be trained.

4.2 Gamification and Design in the Light of Digital Pedagogy

Conversely, gamification represents more a formalized, structured, design-driven pedagogical strategy, applying game mechanics in non-ludic educational settings. Labs' discussions highlighted the importance of balancing digital or physical gamification's dual dimensions. I suggest referring to the first one as "enjoyment and divergence": the playful elements of gami-

fication are fun, pleasure, playful exploration and creative divergence – all promoting engagement and emotional investment in the learning process (Moyles, 2014). We may call "competition and agonism" the second pillar – triggering achievement and performance. It became central to digital gamification since individualistic values and capitalistic ideas of agency and personhood gained power in our society (Reeves & Sinnicks, 2024), and since leaderboards, points, and badges got more and more digitalized and present in learning platforms – a historical turn far from being politically neutral, as it speaks of rationalization and processualization of play as a whole (Ekbia & Nardi, 2017). All learning platforms embed competitive tools and goal-oriented functions, that cannot often be deactivated by the teacher. A healthy competition can foster resilience and drive, encouraging goal-setting and perseverance (Burke, 2016) – world records are broken through competition. However, its pedagogical value in school settings requires careful calibration: it should remain a secondary element, applied in age-sensitive measures and inclusive ways. Overemphasizing competition in gamification risks alienating students who may not be prepared, willing, or inclined to engage on competitive terms (Hung, 2017). A classroom – unlike the Olympics – is not a stage for records but a space for inclusive, sustainable learning.

Labs participants were accompanied throughout a reflective discussion about how – from the cognitive perspective of communication pragmatics and cybernetics – a teacher has multiple dialectical possibilities to harnessing logical divergence and convergence to interact with Pierino's post, managing it in the relational and situational flow of the class dynamics and the learning moment at hand, to inclusively ludicize situations using a range of communicative and cognitive techniques – e.g., collaborative storytelling, exploratory tasks, creative or imaginative re-framings – whether to further extend the divergence, redirect it in the figurative walls of the classroom, or reintegrate it in the shared We of the group, which is continuously being formed, reformed, and maintained through each network interaction. All these options can be conceived of as forms of playfulness or gamification. For instance, one direction a teacher could take would be that of expanding the semantic context of Pierino's Forza Juve!, to include the group: "Ok, class, but here do we only cheer for Juve? Who supports Napoli? Inter?". Such a kind of question normalizes Pierino's comment; diffuses its impact; invites the class to a

broader, shared processing. Another type of playful or gamified management of Pierino's diversion could aim at diversifying and extending the play: "Who cheers for volleyball? Figure skating? Running?". The teacher here recognizes Pierino's comment preventing it from stigma; reframes the moment exploring diverse interests; relativizes "Go Juve" to more radically other preferences in the class. Even further, the teacher might opt for a stronger re-centering of the class learning community – yet including Pierino's contribution: "That's a good one, but let's cheer for Class Five! Forza Quinta!". Here, the teacher acknowledges Pierino's initiative; playfully reaffirms a shared purpose; redirects attention back to the collective identity of the group and the classroom walls. Examples (same soccer team, other sport, the class identity) are a powerful resource for teachers to drive students' imagination away or close to the classroom. Many other examples might illustrate how playfull approaches or gamification techniques – centered on inclusion, balancing emotion and cognition – allow teachers to transform disruptions in opportunities for play, creativity and dialogue, to empower their relational agency to include divergence, and restore the nature of play as a catalyst for connection, emotional safety, and co-constructed meaning.

Pedagogically managing designed resources and built environments – their use and interactive appropriation – regains centrality. In contemporary digital education discourse, in fact, the design of resources and tools has garnered priority. Platform pedagogies (Menegola, 2024) tend to highlight the object-centeredness of the digital product as a reified mediator, often eclipsing how teachers and students, as network actors, dynamically use – sometime counter-use – digital tools in real-world contexts, leveraging on relation-focused interplay processes, and on adult facilitation, scaffolding and recognition of learner agency. There exists life beyond design – in the form of lived processes of educational mediation (Maccario & Garibaldi, 2023), usage and interaction, transcending the boundaries of pre-conceived instructional frameworks; of explorations and creativity emerging from the participant's agency (Whitton, 2009); of learner-driven appropriations of mediators. This perspective situates error and divergence at the heart of educational innovation, emphasizing that learning environments must balance design intent with adaptive, human-centered practices. Let us re-in-habit ICT, since attention and engagement are shaped not merely by tools per se, but by their in-

teraction with spatial dynamics, emotional well-being, and educator facilitation. Pedagogical management involves fostering flexibility, relational engagement and exploration by learners, moving beyond static frameworks to a dynamic, context-sensitive horizon of practice. Enjoyment and divergence – integrated with carefully dosed drive for competition and achievement – require educators to consciously navigate playfulness and gamification, for them to serve inclusion and collaboration, to encourage students to express their creative abilities and knowledge and foster a culture of mutual respect.

5. Conclusion

This essay draws in a nested way on Pierino's case and the Labs discussions around it, suggesting that teachers be studied and trained as active intermediators, balancing design intentions with the divergence and fluidity of class interactions and pedagogically facilitating learner agency. It discussed inclusively cultivating learning environments where students can experience cognitive and intellectual stimulation while simultaneously feeling embraced and at ease, fostering a sense of belonging and emotional security. By gamification or playfulness educators can enhance attention and engagement, favoring wellbeing- over competition-driven frameworks.

Finally recognizing the contextual and constructed nature of "error", Labs participants reframed the unpredictedness of Pierino's ludic provocation and its aftermath dynamics, as openings for shared exploration, navigating imaginative opportunities and encouraging students to include non-prescriptive uses of digital tools, through adaptive reflection and participated flexibility. The classroom, its network interactions and its mediators thus become dynamic spaces for learning games to be played – and meanings to be constructed – together.

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