THE CONDITIONS OF DEEP LEARNING

MIRA Notebooks

NOTEBOOK 4 · THE CLASSROOM'S DECISIONS

MIRA and Methodology

Which methodologies fit best, and in which stages

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MIRA model

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A teacher who hears about MIRA for the first time usually asks the same question: 'And what methodology is this? Do I have to stop teaching my lessons the way I teach them?' The answer is surprising: MIRA is not a methodology, and it does not ask you to change the way you teach. It asks for something else — knowing what you teach for and by what criterion you assess what has been learnt.

It is worth clarifying this from the start, because here lies one of the model's strengths and also one of its most frequent misunderstandings. MIRA does not compete with project-based learning, or with cooperative learning, or with a well-delivered lecture. It operates on a different layer: that of the what-for and the by-what-criterion. Methodology is the *how* teaching is done; MIRA is the *what for* teaching is done and how we know the student has learnt.

That is why one and the same model can coexist with very different methodologies. But that does not mean they are all equivalent. Some methodologies activate MIRA's four conditions more naturally than others, and — more importantly — each educational stage has methodologies that fit its developmental moment better. This document maps those correspondences.

MIRA is not a methodology: it is its framework of meaning

A methodology answers the question 'how do I organise activity in the classroom?'. MIRA answers two others: 'what dispositions do I want to develop in the student?' — the four conditions — and 'how do I assess whether I am achieving it?' — the instruments. They are complementary questions, not rivals.

This has a liberating consequence for the teacher: they do not have to abandon what works for them. A lecture can be the best vehicle for a particular content; what MIRA adds is the criterion not to stop there — to ensure that, beyond transmitting, metacognition is built, space is given to inner life, resilience is trained and the door to agency is opened. Methodology supplies the how; MIRA guarantees that this how serves something more than covering the syllabus.

> *Methodology is the vehicle; MIRA is the destination and the map. A good vehicle without a map gets quickly to nowhere; a map without a vehicle moves no one. You need both.*

Which methodologies best activate each condition

Although any methodology can coexist with MIRA, some have a natural affinity with particular conditions. Knowing it helps the teacher choose the right tool for what they want to develop.

Agency is activated, above all, by production methodologies: project-based learning, challenge-based learning and Service-Learning. They all share that the student produces something real with value beyond the classroom — which is, exactly, the definition of Agency in MIRA.

Metacognition is activated by methodologies that force thinking to be made visible: problem-based learning, design thinking, thinking routines and, in general, anything that asks for planning, monitoring and reviewing one's own process before handing in a result.

Inner life finds its ground in methodologies that connect content with the person: Socratic dialogue, debate, thinking-based learning and the dynamics that ask the student to take a position and argue from what they truly think.

Resilience is trained in methodologies that build error and retrying into the process: inquiry-based learning, well-understood gamification — the kind that rewards perseverance, not speed — and any approach that normalises trial and correction.

Which methodologies fit best at each stage

Affinity by condition crosses with the developmental calendar. Each stage has methodologies that fit its

developmental moment better — and forcing a methodology outside its stage yields little, just as happens with the conditions.

Early Years (0–6)

The native methodology is play: play- and manipulation-based learning, work in learning corners and very simple classroom projects. At this age knowledge enters through the body, direct experience and interaction, not through abstraction. The methodologies that respect play as a route to learning are the ones that sustain the budding Inner life and Resilience of the stage.

Primary (6–12)

This is the golden age of project-based learning and cooperative learning. The student can now sustain a real project with some structure — the garden, the podcast, the campaign — and work in a team with roles. These methodologies activate Agency (producing something real), Resilience (the project's problems) and Inner life (connecting with one's own interests) all at once, which is precisely the leading combination of the stage.

ESO (12–16)

Problem-based learning, design thinking and debate come strongly into play. The adolescent's formal thinking allows them to handle the abstract and the hypothetical, and these methodologies channel their identity-driven energy towards projects of social impact, while also demanding the rigorous metacognition typical of the stage. Debate, in particular, is a privileged vehicle for Inner life, the leading condition in ESO.

Bachillerato (16–18)

The mature methodology: formal research, community-scale Service-Learning and professional simulations. The student is ready to produce work comparable to that of the real world and to govern their own process with autonomy. These are the methodologies that best serve the sovereign Metacognition and high-level Agency typical of the stage.

A warning and an invitation

The warning: no methodology, however active or modern, guarantees on its own the development of the four conditions. A project can be pure activity with no reflection; a debate, pure noise with no inner life. What turns a methodology into MIRA is not its label, but that it is assessed with its instruments and oriented towards its conditions.

The invitation: the teacher does not have to reinvent their practice, but to look at it through MIRA's criterion and choose, for each moment and each stage, the methodology that best serves what they want to develop. MIRA does not take tools out of the drawer — it gives the criterion to know which one to pick up.