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CONCLUSION

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Currently, intercultural education is a topic which receives much interest. This is mainly due to the rise of cultural studies and globalization. Culture has become an instrument for social interpretation and communicative action. As it has been emphasised in this book, the main goal of intercultural education is seen as the development of intercultural competence, which is the ability to act and relate appropriately and effectively in various cultural contexts. Intercultural competence is generally thought to require three components on the learner's side: a certain skillset, culturally sensitive knowledge, and a motivated mindset. In greater detail, the skills, values, and attitudes that constitute intercultural competence include

- intercultural attitudes (like openness, curiosity, readiness)
- general knowledge (of the theoretical aspects of how social groups/products/practices work and interact)
- skills of interpreting and relating (a document of another culture to one's own culture)
- skills of discovery and interaction (like the ability to discover information about another culture and the ability to communicate in real-time interaction)
- critical cultural awareness (that there are different cultures next to one's own)

The teacher's task is to induce the learning of all in these aspects in the learner. Being successful, intercultural learning results in culturally competent learners.

In the context of intercultural education, our ex-cursus have taken us to recognize the importance of being aware of different subcategories of culture, such as "little c" and "big C" culture. While the latter one could be called "objective culture" or "formal culture" referring to institutions, big figures in history, literature, etc., the first one, the "subjective culture", is concerned with the less tangible aspects of a culture, like everyday patterns. In intercultural education, a mixture of these two is to be employed, but it is especially the apprehension of subjective culture that triggers the development of intercultural competence.

Now this takes us to think carefully about the teachers' actions: as we have highlighted in the first chapters in this book, pedagogical practices have been

frequently linked to the idea of transmission of knowledge, and the consequent development of cognitive skills by the students. The point here emerging clearly is how the teacher can enact learning processes that, being significative and authentic (from a constructivis point of view) can stimulate such a subjective and deep dimensions of culture.

Intercultural education requires educators to reflect to employ a mix of "little culture" and "big-Culture" approaches in order to address the larger issues of ethnocentrism, cultural self-awareness, because intercultural competence cannot be achieved by the single acquisition of knowledge about a specific culture or the pure ability to behave properly in that culture.

The idea that "(big) Culture" repeats itself, commonly taken as a statement about historical determinism, emerges frequently within liberal discourses when consensus fails, and when the consequences of cultural incommensurability make social contexts unbereable for those trying to live within them. At such moments, the past is seen as returning dressed as the Culture, as a "patrimony" of knowledge, representations, values, beliefs, that make the people feel confident with their realities of meaning and their interpretation. The narrative proposed by the Culture seems to be transparent and lineal.

The redifinion of nationalism, the claim for ethnicity and race, the idea of "national" identities and its institutions, take us to see just a Narrative of what has been the social engine of nineteen century.

Underlying the signs of Culture shows the anxieties that provoke the same distruction of that ideals, the age of identities and narratives, the age of cultures.

As Bhabba says:

> *"...Narratives of historical reconstruction may reject such myths of social transformation: communal memory may seek its meanings through the sense of causality shared with psychoanalysis, that negotiates the recurrence of the image of the past while keeping open to the question of the future. The importance of such retroaction lies in its ability to reinscribe the past, reactivate, relocate it, resignify it. More significant, it commits our understanding of the past, and our reintepretation of the future, to an ethics of survival that allows us to work throug the present. And such a working through, or working out, fress us from the determinism of historical invetability repretition wwithout difference..."* Bhabba, 1996:60.

This means that teachers and his students (and all the actors involved in a determined educational space) are to consider themselves as part of laboratories of culture, not as trasmitters of the Culture, but as creators of cultures, collective narratives that give shape to the personal narratives, being hence including.

This multi-voiced systems of human activity, as pointed out by Minello and Raffaghelli, are the engine of engagement, participation and inclusion. An inclusion that cannot wait longer, if we take into account the problem (and also the richness) of the second generations. As Lazzari puts we still see approaches of permanent discrimination, especially in Europe (US, Canadian and Australian contexts are proven more welcoming with regard to the permanent settlement of immigrants; Sweden is an exception in Europe) being the persistent discrimination of the children of immigrants in the work environment and the environment of education and training. Second generations aspire to social roles and

positions coherent with their education and training paths. Assimilation, as acculturation behaviour, implies the choice of not maintaining one's own culture of origin and to favour frequent contact with the hosting culture, and other groups that are in the environment.

We have also discussed here (Richieri and Raffaghelli and Minello) how teachers need to be prepared to tackle with such a complex learning process. It's not only about creating learning environments, but rather the creation of "enlarged" spaces that, starting from the own teachers' beliefs, deconstruct and reconstruct meaning.

Teachers need to become aware of the importance of managing complexity induced by diversity at any level of learning experience. Teachers' effectiveness depends on this awareness, which can generate appropriate educational actions.

Considering the positive impact on intercultural sensitivity generated by the PERMIT project by spreading international residential seminars blended with networked learning over rather long periods of time, similar experiences should be shared and disseminated, in order to let new teachers know the educational gains brought about by meeting otherness on the Net, and promote their participation in similar activities. Furthermore, academics, researchers and teacher trainers should help them investigate their own disciplines' epistemology in international networked learning activities both as pre-service and in-service training opportunities in which teachers can reflect on their discipline's dimensions that can be affected by intercultural sensitivity and competence.

For example, the European Commission is providing a policy context to promote teachers' professional mobility (Comenius Projects: Lifelong Learning Programme, Strategic Priorities, 2010). Thus, introducing a perspective such as the one explored in this book, can certainly improve the outcomes on teachers' professionalism.

Future research has several areas to develop an intercultural approach to education, from the reflection brought by anthropology and cultural studies to education, to the pedagogical reflection, to the analysis of teachers' training and professionalism; not to emphasize the important role of coherent research methods about such a complex field of educational research.

The agenda should take into account an approach that travels from the "technicalities" of teaching and training methods, to study learning outcomes, the emerging identities, and productions in hybrid learning communities.

From the other hand, it's interesting to see the use of resources and tools, depicting learners and educators' behaviors with regard to several "mediators" of learning and hence cultural constructions. Cultural meaning attached to tools (learning resources, spaces, interactions, within activity systems, as explained by Raffaghelli and Minello), could encompass a wide range of user's reactions, being them also holders of a cultural perspective. For example, the use of technologies or technological devices, as well as the use of certain literary or art works could trigger very different reactions by the students coming from diverse experience. Future research should hence explore those reactions, in order to find, together with the teacher, the better strategies to enact reflections with students

that encompass critical positionings, inclusion, and the openness to remix and create new resources.

In any case, where research into intercultural education does develop, it is important that researchers should include some who have an ethographic involvement in the communities being studied. It is a key implication of the position that we have taken hegemonic culture and difference in classrooms (and also on the centrality of language, that perhaps we haven't properly treated within PERMIT case). Research perspectives, in such a constructionist view, should incorporate "insider" views. This means that projects intending to research the construction of enlarged cultural contexts of learning should not be conducted entirely from an *etic* perspective, that is to say, entirely by researchers who share a particular cultural perspective and who are looking from outside. Projects should, in our view, be conducted by teams, which are themselves culturally diverse, for whom the construction of their own learning culture would be an acknowledgement outcome of research. This *emic* perspective was, wihtin PERMIT study, foreseen, but never implemented completely, and this should be an important concern, considering the important raise of international cooperation in education, launched for example through the Lifelong Learning Programme in Europe.

It does occur within all the developed countries' societies that classrooms are constituted by an increasing number of immigrants; but it also happen that learning communities are extended to several scenarios, by the use of Information and Communication Technologies. Hence, teachers and learners are already engaged in big "laboratories" of culture, that need urgently the sensitivity and intelligence of interventions aimed to explore and discover the richness of this spaces. This could be recognized as a plea for cultural awareness and expression; and the educational dispositive of PERMIT project, could just be considered one case among others, towards the exploration of significant instruments to promote such awareness.

L'IDEA ISPIRATRICE

Il **Centro Interateneo per la Ricerca Didattica e la Formazione Avanzata** nasce dalla volontà dei 4 Atenei del Veneto di assicurare un presidio unitario alla ricerca sulle didattiche disciplinari e alla formazione continua e avanzata del personale scolastico e formativo.

- L'Università Ca'Foscari di Venezia,
- L'università IUAV di Venezia,
- L'università degli Studi di Padova;
- L'università degli Studi di Verona;
- La Scuola di Specializzazione Interateneo per la Formazione degli Insegnanti della Scuola Secondaria del Veneto.

Sono inoltre invitati a farne parte la Regione Veneto e l'Ufficio Scolastico Regionale.

L'idea che ha ispirato l'istituzione del centro è strettamente connessa all'opportunità di promuovere:

- lo ***sviluppo della ricerca didattica e della formazione avanzata***;
- la ***collaborazione scientifica fra docenti e ricercatori*** degli Atenei del Veneto e la Scuola Veneta, per assicurare soglie di qualità nell'insegnamento e nella formazione;
- il ***coinvolgimento attivo di altri importanti stakeholder*** del sistema formativo e più in generale dei sistemi territoriali del Veneto

QUALI SONO I PRINCIPALI ORGANI DEL CENTRO

Sono organi del Centro:

- **Il Comitato di Gestione**: con il compito di definire le strategie di sviluppo, gli obiettivi e i programmi da attuare, nonché la verifica della rispondenza dei risultati della gestione alle direttive generali stabilite.

Componenti
Fanno parte del Comitato di Gestione due rappresentanti per ciascuno degli Atenei convenzionati, il Direttore della SSIS o un suo delegato, due docenti del Consiglio SSIS.

IUAV: Prof. Fiorenzo Bertan; Prof.ssa Donatella Calabi;
Università di Padova: Prof. Luciano Galliani; Prof. Cesare Voci
Università di Verona: Prof.ssa Luigina Mortari; Prof. Enrico Gregorio
Università Ca' Foscari: Prof. Umberto Margiotta; Prof. Paolo Balboni
SSIS: Prof. Carmelo Majorana, Prof.ssa Ester Piccinni, Prof. Ferdinando Luigi Marcolungo

- **Il Presidente:** è eletto dal Comitato di Gestione e nominato dal Rettore dell'Università sede amministrativa del Centro, presiede il Comitato stesso e la Giunta, rappresenta il Centro ed è responsabile della sua attività scientifica;

Il Presidente nominato per il triennio 2009-2012 è il Prof. Umberto Margiotta.

- **La Giunta**: coadiuva il Presidente nel predisporre le proposte operative nelle materie di competenza del Comitato e nel curare l'attuazione delle Deliberazioni del Comitato stesso.

Componenti
La Giunta è composta dal Presidente, dal Vice Presidente, dal Direttore della SSIS o da un suo delegato e dai tre responsabili di Sezione nominati dal Comitato di Gestione tra i suoi membri

Presidente: Prof. Umberto Margiotta
Vice Presidente: Prof. Ferdinando Luigi Marcolungo
Sezione Formazione Avanzata: Prof. Luciano Galliani
Sezione Alta Formazione Continua: Prof. Enrico Gregorio
Sezione per la Ricerca Didattica: Prof.ssa Ester Piccinni
Direttore SSIS: Prof. Carmelo Majorana
Segretario Amministrativo: Sig.ra Simonetta Polo

THE INSPIRING IDEA

The **Interuniversity Centre for Education Research and Advance Training** started out when the 4 Universities of Veneto decided to grant a unitary benchmark to research on learning and teaching and also on continuous and advanced education of teachers and school personnel

- University of Ca'Foscari in Venice,
- IUAV University in Venice,
- University of Padua;
- University of Verona;
- Interuniveristy Specialisation School for Secondary School Teachers' training of Veneto (SSIS).

The Veneto Region and the Regional School Bureau are also invited to join in.

The idea that inspired the constitution of this centre is tightly bound to the chance to promote:

- The ***development of learning research and advanced education;***
- The ***scientific collaboration between the teachers and researchers*** of the Universities of Veneto and the Veneto School to grant high quality teaching and learning;
- The ***active involvement of other important stakeholders*** of the educational system and, more generally, of the local systems in Veneto.

THE MAIN BODIES OF THE CENTRE

The Centre's bodies are:

- **The Management Committee**: it has the task to define development strategies, set objectives and programmes to be implemented as well as to assess that the management results achieved are in line with the general guidelines established.

Members
Two representatives of each associated University, the Head of SSIS or a delegate and two professors of the SSIS council are members of the Management Committee.

IUAV: Prof. Fiorenzo Bertan; Prof.ssa Donatella Calabi
University of Padua: Prof. Luciano Galliani; Prof. Cesare Voci
University of Verona: Prof. Luigina Mortari; Prof. Enrico Gregorio
University of Ca' Foscari: Prof. Umberto Margiotta; Prof. Paolo Balboni
SSIS: Prof. Carmelo Majorana, Prof. Ester Piccinni, Prof. Ferdinando Luigi Marcolungo

- **The President:** s/he is elected by the Management Committee and the chancellor of the university where the administrative offices of the Centre are located. S/he chairs the Committee itself and the Council and also supervises its scientific activities;

The Presidente elected for the three-year period 2009-2012 is Prof. Umberto Margiotta.

- **The Council**: it helps the President in working out proposals for action in the fields of competence of the Committee and in the implementation of the Deliberations of the Committee.

Members
The Council's members are the President, the Vice President, the Head of SSIS or a delegate and the three section managers chosen among the members of the Management Committee.

President: Prof. Umberto Margiotta
Vice President: Prof. Ferdinando Luigi Marcolungo
Section for Advanced Education: Prof. Luciano Galliani
Section for Lifelong Advanced Education: Prof. Enrico Gregorio
Section for Learning Research: Prof. Ester Piccinni
SSIS Head: Prof. Carmelo Majorana
Administration: Sig.ra Simonetta Polo

CONTATTI

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