



Italian L2 Learners' educators toolkit

Tools concerning training courses for people who speak Italian as a second language, that need to increase their knowledge in the IT sector and that also need an education that focuses on orientation and socio-occupational inclusion



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INTRODUCTION

The Intellectual Output is made of two digital products, that can be distinguished for their technological features:

- a) an ebook that will be available for download on desktop and mobile devices and that can be viewed thanks to the huge number of ebook renderers that can be found on devices today.
- b) an online course in hypertext and interactive format that could be joined through web browsing using browsers on desktop and mobile devices.

These tools will include three different types of training and informative material that can be distinguished according to the tool users' category and the education/information addressees.

1. Methodological and educational guidelines. Tool users: cultural mediators and other operators; education/information addressees: cultural mediators and other operators.
2. Description of 'face to face Learning Units'. Tool users: cultural mediators and other operators; education/information addressees: vulnerable subjects that learn italian as a second language.

EBOOK- TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1.4 Social and territorial inclusion (relationship between rules, social barriers and territorial resources and services).

1.5 Understanding correct lifestyles (Introduction: the word "correct" is ambiguous: who decides that they are correct? The rule? Considered as law or statistical standard? Or does it depend on the culture? Or on the integration of the cultures that coexist in a territory?

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1.1 Active and conscious citizenship

Different disciplines have examined the concept of citizenship while studying society, and they have translated the term as the state of being a member of a particular country, with the rights and duties it entails. This concept has undoubtedly played a crucial role in people's history, in particular in the European ones (1), starting from the privileged status it provided in the Greek polis, till our days, in which the word citizenship is linked to adjectives



like european and global. In the legal field, european citizenship, that has been established by the Maastricht Treaty (1992) is the legal status of every person holding the nationality of a State of the European Union; according to the Amsterdam Treaty (1997), it doesn't substitute national citizenship, but represents a complement, because its aim is to promote solidarity between people belonging to the European Union and to facilitate the political integration process between Member States. EU citizens enjoy the rights, and are subjected to the duties, provided for by the Treaty: in particular every citizen of the Union has the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, has the right to vote and to stand as a candidate at elections to the European Parliament in the Member State in which he or she resides, under the same conditions as nationals of that State, every citizen of the Union shall, in the territory of a third country in which the Member State of which he or she is a national is not represented, be entitled to protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities of any Member State, on the same conditions as the nationals of that Member State.

From this we can understand the extent to which, in the juridical field, the concepts of citizenship and nationality are interchangeable, so you can either be a citizen or not. On the other hand, in the psycho-sociological field, this concept is discussed from a systemic-relational perspective, where society is considered as a system of functional contexts, made of interdependent individuals. So, together with the status of person-citizen with his rights and duties, there are also other important aspects to consider like, knowledge and civic sensibility, the sense of belonging, the ability to act, the personal inclination to get involved, the loyalty to institutions and community and so on. The concept of citizenship becomes global thanks to a socio-pedagogical point of view that intertwines world citizenship, life-long learning and local creation of knowledge (2). But it should be considered that the opening of borders, that of course is something positive and oriented toward the conception of globality as every human being's right, has also had a negative impact on the individual perception of personal security and on the trust placed in the other, both considered as an institution or as an equal global citizen. As a consequence, it's important to examine what is currently defined as the "Narcissism era": a time in which each citizen seems to care only about his rights and duties, as if he was unconnected to the surrounding reality, only looking for a fictitious personal gratification perceived as unreachable. In this scenario of scepticism, mistrust and competitive self-realisation, at the expenses of Community values, educating people to an active and conscious citizenship becomes an evolutionary challenge that involves the educator's self, the

subjectivity of the individual that takes part in the training, their relationship during the process, as well as the relationships between the actors and the external community systems.

So, first of all, it's crucial to consider citizenship as a concept that goes beyond the legal status, and that also concerns the ability to take care of oneself, of the others and of the surrounding environment, through thoughts, emotions and actions that should harmoniously contribute to the creation of a society based on cooperation and solidarity.

That implies not only the knowledge and practice (respect?) of the society's relationship of forces, but also the knowledge and the will to realise the common good of men, the ability to assess reality, to educate men, to bring out the best in everybody, to ask and attain everyone's free cooperation, for a human good that goes beyond individual profits.

In this sense, citizenship education focuses on people, giving them the competences and skills to face the communities' social issues. Dealing with citizenship during the narcissism era requires knowledge, awareness, responsibility, passion, readiness to act and, above all, an open-mindedness that the educator or trainer should possess and pass down to others.

Other than the qualities possessed by people who are performing this job, it is necessary to have in mind the final objectives, the educational process that is being carried out and to use a methodology that can adapt to the project's evolutionary phase.

The following proposal is made of three sections to highlight three key aspects (knowledge, belonging, conscious action), whose order reflects the individual's self-regulation process.

Promoting knowledge

Even if this first proposal can be also carried out individually, considering the subject matter, the type of educational setting considered more appropriate is the group activity. In fact, this process doesn't not consist in a sterile transfer of knowledge concerning citizenship from the educator to the educatee (even if it is always in favour of the user), but it also entails the in-



depth analysis and research of the informative contents concerning the topic. When the individual convinces himself he has a deep, or at least sufficient, knowledge of the topic discussed, he stops researching; this could lead to the strengthening of one's beliefs and opinion, sacrificing curiosity and the possibility to create new knowledge.

This can be particularly true for the most vulnerable population groups; in this cases, for example, the lack of resources and experimentation can lead to the reshaping of the living spaces and to a double perception of the self: one can consider himself competent and efficient in his own space, but its expansion might

put this perception at risk and lower one's self-esteem. Even though the individual that takes part in the educational process has already taken a step forward in this self-assessment phase, it's the educator that should consider the educatee's antecedents and, due to the fact that knowledge is linked to curiosity, he should get curious about the person he is going to train so that the latter get curious as well.

In fact, it is generally accepted that through personal example it's easier to bring about a change in other people; moreover, the relation between the two parts is really important: if it is true that the educator should be able to maintain a certain degree of asymmetry in this relation, it is also important that he fully understands the story of the individual to avoid judgments that can influence the relationship. So it can be stated that the first task of the educator is to use an empathetic approach to facilitate reciprocal knowledge.

On the other hand, citizenship education can be considered as a lifestyle, open to reality's problems, in particular the one related to social life, because what concerns society affects us directly and conditions our life.

Group education provides the opportunity to know other people without judging them, and also makes it possible for the educator to carry out a first analysis of the previous knowledge that can hinder the learning process or that can be used as a resource.

Group discussion will soon lead the education process beneficiaries to request clear and precise information concerning mainly the access to the territorial and community services of the place in which they live.

Then there are different options to choose from: for example, you can create informative material for the users, but this shouldn't be a decision to be taken lightly because it will imply taking into account the differences concerning the cultural and school level in each group and the known languages. Another possible educational path can consist in the involvement of all the group members in a work of cooperation and research, in order to answer their requests and creating an environment in which everyone can put into play his qualities, under the guidance and mediation of the educator.

In both cases it's possible the educator will experience a closed attitude, deriving from the subjective prejudice toward institutions; but when he manages to overcome this situation, he can start a cooperation and integration programme with the institutions closer to citizens, and in that way contributing to the creation of a community in which the different social partners (o players) interact with each other, in which information is the connection between resources, that will remain unused otherwise, and that will encourage the individual citizen to feel part of a community that works together to create a better future. The integrated use of the three educational approaches will create a fourth path, the best one but also the most difficult to implement. So it's advisable to choose the one that the educator considers more suitable according to the resources and his own limits as well as the ones of the social context and of the educational process' group members. In this phase it is already possible to give an active role to the individuals and this is really important, because they can see themselves acting as citizens, that passively acquire rights and use services, but that mainly will have the possibility to relate to the experienced context, asking for information and making their contribution.

Promoting the sense of belonging

Regardless of the culture, the school level, language and gender, it seems like the sense of belonging is something really personal and intrapsychic that is built mainly through the family (4). So it is something personal and relational at the same time (5), but it should be taken into account that not always the family, due to his systemic complexity, manages to perform this function and, as a consequence, not all the individuals possess this



background experience and cannot use it as a resource, adapting it to the other life contexts. Also in this case, getting curious about the subjects' background experiences, can be useful for the educator to understand the starting point and the direction to take during the educational process. It is clear how difficult it could be, but still not impossible, to work individually on this aspect, so it's always better to opt for group training.

We have already talked about the Narcissistic era, for this reason we believe it's fundamental to promote cooperation rather than competitiveness, in particular because people don't understand the impact of their actions on the global society. In this era it seems crucial to work hard in order to recall the importance of social cohesion through the regaining of the sense of belonging. Moreover, people are social beings and they feel the urge to belong to something bigger, in fact nowadays some people are defined as modern narcissists, due to the fact that they are not sufficiently satisfied with their appearance, and they ask for other people's approval. They sacrifice their inner part for their appearance. So also the modern Narcissus confirms the fact that men are social beings and the importance they give to relationships. The whole society should be seen as a network, so that there are no single individuals, each action is part of this network, and who gives, gets something in return. Actually this is the transposition of what should happen in the family in this process of creation of the sense of belonging. Furthermore, as in the family, society should give the possibility to the individual to express his individuality and to cooperate, feeling part of a community.

This transposition, that is already difficult in itself, becomes inadequate when there is a complete lack of common feeling, that can be defined as the ability to feel one's own and other people's emotions, and the ability to emphasize with what is similar to us and what is different. But there is no evidence that the people whose family lack this ability to develop the sense of belonging in the individual, will face more difficulties in this process, in fact, the group training, make them experience themselves as part of something, compensating for their need of belonging, that they couldn't satisfy through their relationships and family relationships. Even more so, the fact that they don't have experiences related to that, can also make them more enthusiastic about it, open-minded and prone to action both in the training group and in the community.

Moreover it seems necessary to work on perceptions and on emotion management; these activities can be presented to the group with the help of experts in the field. Working in group

on emotions and trust can give the opportunity to compensate for lack of development of the sense of belonging, but, once this is overcome, the sense of belonging should be projected outside the training group, in order to make the individuals feel part of a broader community, first the local one and then mankind. As it will be shown during the educational process, these three parts are deeply intertwined and transversely influence each other. As we had already discussed, also in this case it is fundamental to work on the sense of trust, not only in other members of the group or of the community, but in particular in the institutions, with whom it is possible to carry out active interventions, also voluntary activities, that can facilitate the sense of belonging.

Another way to promote the sense of belonging is linked to the possibility to freely express oneself and this can also be made in a creative way, by using books or historical documentaries or by researching information on the local history, or by using music, books and films that are so famous to be recognised worldwide in order to get closer to other people. When possible, it can also be interesting to analyze in group the surrounding reality issues, examining the history, possible solutions, the rules to respect, promoting the group's connection with the community.

The values highlighted by the education concerning citizenship, peace, solidarity, coexistence and human rights should be reflected in daily activities, and should be internalised and experiment it with the people around us (family, school, society) if we want to build a better world, especially in the present context, where they seem to lose their importance. The next step is more practical, in fact the participants will be guided in a programme intended to promote personal involvement in the social context, as members of a community, to develop and strengthen the sense of identity and belonging and an inclusive and responsible growth aimed toward a global citizenship.

Promoting and supporting the action

“If the condition of citizenship is something provided by institutions and received in a passive way by the individual, the actual performing of citizenship is the arrival point of a more complex process of involvement and integration in the community in which the citizen plays his role. Dealing with citizenship means analysing the individual’s ability to perform or the will to perform daily citizenship practices and to join civic activities. As a consequence the status of citizenship depends strictly on the economic status, on cultural resources, skills, but also on the gender and ethnic background of the subject” (6).

The features stressed by Baglioni lead to consider the lack of economic and personal resources that the educator should compensate by identifying and developing the positive aspects pertaining to the individuals and their personal situations.

Independently from them, it’s important to stress that the best way to be and identify as citizens, is having the power to act within the society, to make significant changes, to perform an active role in its history and the responsibility of the individual in this process. So citizenship education implies teaching how to consciously participate in the political and social life of the territory in which you live, an involvement that should be aimed to contribute to the protection of the common good and that, through personal initiatives, can lead to the community interest.

Usually the power to act is carried out through the creation of autonomous citizens' organisations, run by citizens themselves, whose civic participation consist in defending fundamental rights and the enhancement of democracy, citizens rights and/or the protection of the common goods through protection activities, service management and empowerment, and operating in the general interest through non-profit democratic structures. This should be the ideal ultimate goal to pursue, but it should be take into account that it's important to start from what resulted from the previous steps (that were focused on personal knowledge and knowledge of the individuals' background) in order to give start to operating procedures divided in easier steps, in order to better understand its meaning and to subjectively reflect it in the daily life.

The first step consists in planning projects that can pertain to a variety of topics linked to citizenship: for example legality, environment, sport, economy, health, solidarity and volunteering. The planning activity can increase the individuals' self-worth and self-efficacy, in particular when the relevance of the works will cause its practical implementation in the society, by the citizens undergoing training. As indicated also in the National Guidelines issued by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, "the educational process should look towards the development of a conscious acceptance of the shared values and of the cooperative and collaborative behaviours, that are fundamental for civil coexistence."

Active citizenship education aims to promote the involvement of citizens in creating and joining programmes and their active participation.

In this way the citizen becomes aware of himself and of his living conditions, processing the negative experiences that usually cause resignation, detachment, and in particular cases, anger towards society. They are encouraged to become best observers of themselves and of reality, to look at the problems of society with awareness, facilitating the development of a sense of integrity that can stimulate the search for solutions or improvement of the community.

As already said, the methodological approach should focus on a workshop and participative approach, for example some methodologies that could be used are the Cooperative Learning, Problem-based Learning or Service Learning; the latter, when dealing with programmes concerning citizenship, is particularly suitable because it combines the teaching of theoretical contents, the development of (intra and interpersonal) skills and the social commitment to meet the community's needs, bringing what happens in the microcosm of the training group, in the macrocosm of the territory.

Other than encouraging the citizen to play an active role, it's important to keep this feeling alive, in order to strengthen his decision to contribute to the society's wellness. As a consequence, it's crucial that the educators promote the creation and the maintenance of a network of relations that connects the group members and that can give start to a synergic cooperation with the territory's social public or private actors and that can benefit from the new human resources (the citizens more conscious of their active participation). It can be useful to look for agreements and partnership with the local services and the educational agencies

languages of Iran and Central Asia.

- Indo-Aryan: the many languages of South Asia including Sanskrit and its modern descendants like Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi and others.
- Tocharian: comprises only two languages, Tocharian A and Tocharian B, both extinct, recorded in Buddhist documents unearthed in some city-oases of the Silk Road in Xinjiang, China.

b) European:

- Germanic: German, Yiddish, English, Dutch, Frisian and the Scandinavian languages Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic, and Faroese.
- Italic: Latin and its descendants, including Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, Provençal, French, Italian and Romanian.
- Baltic: Latvian and Lithuanian, besides the extinct Prussian.
- Slavic: Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, and Serbo-Croat among others.
- Celtic: Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh and Breton as well as several extinct continental tongues.
- Hellenic: Greek, ancient and modern.
- Albanian: represented only by the Albanian language.

- c) **Uralic** is a very ancient language family prevalent in a vast area of northeastern Europe and northern Asia. Its ancestor, Proto-Uralic, was spoken 7,000 to 10,000 years ago in the vicinity of the Ural Mountains from where the precursors of the Samoyeds disseminated into Siberia, and the Finno-Ugrians into northern Europe and Hungary. The Uralic languages are typologically very diverse as a result of their antiquity, of the relative exiguity and dispersion of their speakers in very extensive territories, and due to their prolonged contacts with Altaic-speaking peoples to the east and Indo-Europeans to the west. Hungarian, Finnish and

Estonian are the largest Uralic languages. They are spoken in Northern Russia, Finland, Estonia, Hungary. Also some speakers in north Norway and north Sweden. Samoyedic languages are spoken in west Siberia. Uralic is divided into two subfamilies: Finno-Ugric and the much smaller Samoyedic, plus one unclassified language (Saami). Finno-Ugric is itself divided in two, Fennic and Ugric, the first one spoken in Estonia, Scandinavia and European Russia, the second spoken in two widely separated areas: Ob-Ugric languages scattered along the Ob and lower-Irtysh rivers, and Hungarian in Eastern Europe.

Languages are complex; over time, human evolution has involved enormous changes, and our methods of communication have developed with us. Human languages are socio-cultural entities and they are shaped by population, environmental and cultural influences. Languages

are maintained and transmitted by acts of speaking and writing, and this is also the means by which languages evolve. Languages differ in many ways, in particular in some aspects concerning phonology, morphology, syntax and, of course, lexicon. The language we speak also influences our perception of things, the way in which we process information, as well as the way in which we organise things and form categories. One theory that supports this idea is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, according to which individual's thoughts and actions are determined by the language or languages that the individual speaks. Their ideas can be summarised in the following statements:

"Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation." -Sapir, *The Status Of Linguistics As A Science* (1929), p. 69

"We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds - and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way - an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees." - Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf (1940:213-14)

These considerations are really important, in particular to understand the extent to which language differences influence and shape individuals. When teaching a L2 language many things should be taken into account, for example the person's mother tongue, its age, its level of proficiency, its ability to read and write, the cultural and linguistic influences, the context he lives in, the socio-cultural background, in order to be able to use the appropriate methodology and to plan a programme which can actually help him develop language competence.

Language competence is a broad term which includes linguistic or grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic or socio-cultural competence, and what might be called textual competence. The specific learning outcomes under the heading “Language Competence” deal with knowledge of the language and the ability to use that knowledge to



interpret and produce meaningful texts appropriate to the situation in which they are used. Language competence is best developed in the context of learning activities or tasks where the language is used for real purposes, in other words, in practical applications. The various components of language competence are grouped under four cluster headings: attend to form,

interpret and produce signed texts, apply knowledge of the socio-cultural context, apply knowledge of how discourse is organized, structured, and sequenced. Under each of these cluster headings there are several strands that show the developmental flow of learning from level to level. Each strand deals with a single aspect of language competence. Although the learning outcomes isolate these components, language competence should be developed through classroom learning activities that focus on meaningful uses of the language and on language in context. Strategic competence is often closely associated with language competence since students need to learn ways to compensate for low proficiency in the early stages of learning if they are to use language for authentic communication from the beginning.

The Common European Framework of Reference for languages is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and in other countries. It describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing at each level.

The CEFR grid consists of six levels from A1 (beginners) up to C2 (proficient users) and is now widely accepted as the European standard for grading an individual’s language proficiency. It has become a key reference document for validation of language competences.

The CEFR consists of three broad divisions which are divided into six levels:

A-Basic User

- A1 – Breakthrough or beginner: Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases. Can introduce myself and can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
- A2 – Elementary: Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of immediate relevance. Can read short and simple texts. Can communicate on

familiar matters using a simple vocabulary. Can describe in simple terms your immediate environment.

B–Independent User

- B1 – Intermediate: Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can read and produce simple text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
- B2 – Upper intermediate: Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics. Can interact with native speakers with a degree of fluency and spontaneity. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects.

C–Proficient User

- C1 – Advanced: Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express myself fluently and spontaneously. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects.
- C2 – Mastery or proficiency: Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources. Can express myself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely. You can differentiate finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

The first thing to do when dealing with L2 learners is to identify their language level. According to it, the trainer should use a different approach and method to develop their language skills and proficiency. In the specific case of this project there are two main target groups: adult migrants with low education and low level of proficiency in the L2 and with higher skills and with a B1 to B2 level in the L2, and this will require different types of language training. Types of literacy-level learners, the ability to read and write in the mother tongue, literacy in childhood vs. adulthood, second language acquisition are all factors that influence the approach to use.

The trainer should possess four knowledges:

- knowledge of teaching;
- knowledge of the immigrant experience;
- knowledge of language and language acquisition;
- knowledge of adult learning.

For learners that have a low education and are not proficient even in their own language, a critical fifth area of knowledge seeps into every aspect of this work: literacy instruction and development.

Language proficiency is a key driver of immigrant integration. It increases job opportunities and facilitates social and political participation. However, despite its vital importance, many immigrants never reach adequate proficiency in the host country language. Therefore, insights into the underlying processes and associated factors are crucial for designing measures to improve language acquisition. Empirical evidence shows that immigrants differ in their ability to learn languages, in their experience of everyday language usage, and their incentives to learn host country languages.

Being able to communicate in the host country language is one of the main drivers of successful economic and social integration of immigrants. Low levels of language proficiency create high hurdles to participating in the labor market, joining in the political process, and engaging in everyday social interaction. Having adequate language skills allows immigrants to progress along the job ladder, increases their employment probability, and eases their access to better-paying jobs.

Language skills are a vital part of an immigrant's human capital. The importance of language proficiency for successful labor market integration stems from at least two distinct roles of language skills. First, as the primary medium of communication, language skills are a productive trait in themselves, and employers are willing to reward the higher productivity of workers who are language proficient. This wage effect of language skills combines a direct effect of being remunerated for higher productivity and an indirect effect of having easier access to well-paid, communication-intensive jobs, thus preventing occupational segregation. Second, language skills are complementary to the education and experience acquired before migration and facilitate the transfer of these skills into the new job environment. Language skills also ease the acquisition of additional education and experience in the host country. The influence of language skills extends beyond the economic success of immigrants. In addition to helping immigrants integrate into the labor market, language skills also crucially affect such non-market outcomes as education, health, marriage, social integration, and political participation. Factors that affect immigrants' acquisition of the host country language act by influencing the ease or difficulty of learning a specific language, the degree of exposure to the host country language, and the incentives for acquiring the language. The ability to learn a new language is also affected by the immigrants' age at arrival, the linguistic distance between the native language and the host country language, reasons for migrating, and cognitive ability and education. Immigrants differ in their exposure to the host country language before migration and as a result of differences in home country foreign language education and exposure to foreign media. After migration, exposure to the host country language differs by location (whether in an ethnic enclave or not), family composition, and marriage to a native. Furthermore, differences in expected returns in wages and employment prospects and differences in the expected length of stay in the host country create different incentives for language acquisition.

Some migrants that will take part in this project may have not developed literacy skills due to interrupted or unavailable formal schooling in their home countries, and it's important to highlight that education programmes based on techniques and strategies that have been

successful with literate learners and those with formal education experience cannot work in these type of situations.

While schools, curricula, and individual teachers may vary greatly in their exact approaches to developing literacy, there is much agreement in the field around what should be included in effective literacy instruction. In 2000, the National Reading Panel (NRP) released its large and influential report, emphasizing five areas of reading instruction:

- phonemic awareness;
- phonics;
- fluency;
- vocabulary;
- comprehension.

While there is widespread agreement that these five elements are indeed essential, “they are by no means a magic bullet that will lead to successful literacy achievement by all students,” (Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni 2011: 15). The scholars Morrow & Gambrell argue for a more comprehensive literacy framework that pays attention to:

- motivation;
- opportunities to read and write;
- differentiated assessment and instruction;
- reading, writing, listening, and speaking for wide, authentic, and varied purposes (Morrow & Gambrell 2011).

Learners’ identities and cultures play an important role in the process of learning another language, so it’s important to be aware of the cross-cultural differences to establish an equitable, respectful learning environment. In this regard, it is considered useful to quote one of the standards devoted to identity and context established by TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages):

“Teachers understand the importance of who learners are and how their communities, backgrounds, and goals shape learning and expectations of learning. Teachers recognize how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. Teachers use this knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing.” (TESOL 2008: 65)

Language teaching is much more than a matter of knowing a language and knowing a bit about teaching. Using general education teacher knowledge as a starting point, the language teacher knowledge base recognizes that “learning to teach is affected by the sum of a person’s experiences, some figuring more prominently than others, and that it requires the acquisition and interaction of knowledge and beliefs about oneself as a teacher, of the content to be taught, of one’s students, and of classroom life”. (Freeman & Johnson 1998: 401).

In addition to the difficulties related to teaching and language proficiency, the ones pertaining to adult education should be taken into account as well.

Malcolm Knowles introduced the concept of andragogy, defined as the art and science of helping adults learn. While this term is not widely used, Knowles was instrumental in causing adult learning theory to emerge as a distinct field of study.

Does age matter, and if so, how? How does the nature of learning change over the lifetime? Is teaching adults inherently a different task than teaching children? How can teachers best approach their work with fellow adults? These questions have caused much debate and discussion in the field in the past thirty years.

Drawn first from his 1980 text and then evolving through his work in the 1980s, Knowles contends that the adult learner is someone who:

- 1) has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning;
- 2) has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning;
- 3) has learning needs closely related to changing social roles;
- 4) is problem-centered, interested in immediate application of knowledge;
- 5) is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors (Knowles 1978).

In the early 1990s, Knowles and his colleagues continued to tweak and re-package the basic assumptions of adult learning, that were defined as follows (Knowles et al. 2005: 64–68):

1. The need to know: Adults need to know why they need to learn something before setting out to learn it.
2. The learners' self concept: Adults believe they are responsible for their own decisions and lives. They need to be seen by others and treated by others as capable of self direction.
3. The role of the learners' experiences: Adults come into an educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from that of youths. Teachers can expect a wider range of individual differences among adult learners than among younger learners.
4. Readiness to learn: Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations.
5. Orientation to learning: Adults are life-centered, task-centered, and problem-centered in their orientation to learning. They are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that learning will help them perform tasks or deal with real problems. They learn best in the context of application to real-life situations.
6. Motivation: Adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries, for example), but the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, etc.)

All these aspects should be taken into consideration when dealing with adult migrant learners, to understand their needs and use the right strategies in order to guarantee the development of an adequate level of language proficiency to give them the tools and competences they need to improve their life in the host country.

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1.3 Job orientation training

Job orientation is one of the main topics in the educational field that can be introduced using a practical approach, and it is becoming more and more necessary in the current social framework, where working is no longer considered as the activity that dignifies men, or as a fundamental right, but rather as a necessary duty to perform in order to gain a status and some economic advantages that are indispensable to survive. As a consequence, in particular people who live in situations of disadvantage and distress, that can be of linguistic, cultural, economic, personal or social nature, can perceive the access to such duty as unattainable, which therefore is not considered a right anymore. This can make them poorly invest their efforts in the job-hunting. So it can be essential, from an educational perspective, to consider guidance as the process of making the person aware of the defining aspects of his self and also to promote the use of these features to choose the more appropriate course of study and career, contributing to the person's development, both as person capable of facing life's changing needs, and as worker that contributes to the society's progress. The task of the educator, as the one who guides people, cannot concern only the teaching of techniques and strategies aimed at seeking and upholding a job position; he has to accompany the person during the training that will make him focus on himself and on his choices.



Guidance is so intended as a permanent teaching method, aimed at promoting the person's development and the integration/reintegration into the labour market and into social life, respecting the freedom of choice.

The common meaning of the term (orientation) refers to the act of determining one's position in relation to the cardinal points, in order to define the right "direction of travel" towards a predetermined destination (an objective to reach). "Defined in this way, it already introduces the triple meaning? it acquires in the educational field: self-awareness; understanding of the relations with the external reality and with the variable socio-economic and cultural forms; identification of the most appropriate educational path to follow to achieve one's life goal" (1).

In order to be innovative a training practice that focuses on guidance should direct attention towards emotional, relational, cognitive as well as organisational and structural aspects,

and should create an educational setting that facilitates quality learnings such as "...the ability to elaborate and monitor one's own existential paths, that can modify the individual's ways of knowing and acting and... the acquisition of cultural and procedural tools that can be useful to

create a life plan, that facilitate the improvement/development of the existence's sense of the possible, core of a guidance training and in particular of an orientative education" (2).

The overall purpose of the guidance practices is to pursue the personal and social development of the individual and to promote his ability to make conscious choices as well as to face the transitions that characterise the evolution of his life, in particular the ones that concern the sectors of education and work. The actions of the educator engaged in these practices can refer to different theoretical and methodological approaches; here some methodological techniques' macro-typologies are examined: information, guidance, counseling, coaching and mentoring (3).

The Information, from a job orientation point of view, aims at giving users some information and some knowledge concerning an active job search.

For example this information can be about how territorial employment centres work and what to do there. This activity is not intended as a passive acquisition of the contents by the user or something that he can delegate to the territorial services; so it is necessary to structure the use of this methodology as if it was the result of a co-building (process) that involves both the educator, the users and possibly also collaborators that work in employment centres or associations that focus on supporting people and workers. In this way it is possible to build a social network to reduce users' fears and insecurities. It can be useful because in this way the person/user will feel welcomed and will perceive that he is not the only one who has to make a learning effort (it is particularly true for people that have experienced inadequacy) and this will automatically lead the person to play an active role in the guidance process. Other information that should be taught without using a passive approach concerns the knowledge of personal characteristics that are useful in the job field and the use of strategies, that will be discussed later, to facilitate an active job search.

In Italy the term "guidance" refers to the activities aimed at promoting self-guidance education.

This type of activities is intended to develop guidance skills aimed at: training people to autonomously make decisions; helping them to monitor their learning paths and job experiences to foresee the future achievements/successes; they can be useful in periods of transition between study cycles, education and work and job experiences (3).

In the activities presented so far the educator mainly plays the part of the teacher, in the following ones instead he becomes a facilitator that guides the person during the process of self development of his skills.

The counseling activity is structured as a "guided self-reflection" and its objectives are to accompany the person in the process of resolution of a guidance problem, and to activate a process of redefinition and/or reorganisation of the dimensions and factors that help the person handle the criticalities linked to the personal and professional development.

This counseling interventions are connected to decision making processes and to the structuring of projects of development and/or variation of the individual formative and/or employment

history, referring in particular to the relation with other spheres of life (personal, relational, social etc.) and to the consistency with the person's global identity.

In general the guidance and career counseling is defined as an intervention mainly aimed at promoting/supporting a redefinition of the professional self, starting from the personal experience and from its intended development. The ability of the consultant consists in listening to the person talking about himself and identifying possible recurring elements (concerning behaviours, attitudes, emotional experiences) and/or critical events that have affected the past educational and work experience's development. The project's development is linked to the identification and enhancement of the personal resources (characteristics, competences, interests, values etc.) in order to understand the past (intended as history and experience), to give value to personal and background resources (the present intended as opportunity and bond/limitation), and to facilitate decision-making (the future intended as project), from a subjective (according to the personal and socio-professional identity of the subject) and objective perspective (by researching information and empirically verifying it).

Even if it useful to know this methodology, its implementation by the educator should be carefully considered, focusing on the following observations: first of all it may not be suitable for all the types of users, because to join a counseling programme the person should be motivated and should actively interact with the expert that facilitates focusing on the subjective aspects; to make this experience it's important to be self-reflective and to deal, in an active and conscious way, with the personal formative and work history covering the individual's lifespan; moreover, due to the fact that this activity requires specific skills, the educator should be trained himself or should be helped or supervised by a certified counselor. And this can also be applied to coaching activities, even if, at least in Italy, there isn't a rule that outlines the profile and skills required to counselors and coaches, making it possible to use these methods to develop educational processes.

Mentoring instead is easier to implement. The educator can take advantage of the relationship between the user and a person that has more experience in the field to reach the final objective. Also in this situation the expert cannot be held responsible for everything, the process should be controlled and monitored considering that wrong aspects in the relationship between the user and the expert can lead to an educational feature.

Moving to something more practical, the job orientation programme has been divided into some crucial stages: the self-and hetero-directed evaluation of the personal resources and limits; the analysis of the criticalities of the environment in which the subject has lived; the promotion of the awareness, support and strengthening of the person's abilities; the development of skills concerning an active job search.

The above mentioned techniques mainly involve two people in an individual setting, but the educator can choose the type of setting (individual, group, small group) he considers more appropriate according to the users' characteristics and/or to the project's timespan and can modify and adapt it during the different stages of the educational path.

The self-and hetero-directed evaluation of the personal resources and limits

The self-and hetero-directed evaluation of the personal resources and limits can be made through the guidance meeting and by administering questionnaires. The guidance meeting is an individual meeting with a guidance counselor to help people correctly and exhaustively organise the required information to solve the specific problem related to job seeking. It is not simply an examination of the skills/inabilities, interest and lack of interest in something, in fact it should be considered as a way of supporting people, in particular when dealing with users considered “weak” in some respects, for whom it’s not sufficient to acquire knowledge and information to solve the guidance problem. The evaluation of resources and limits is only a stage of the meeting as well as the administration of questionnaires, that considering the possibility of problems of comprehension (of linguistic nature or due to learning difficulties) should be carried out as a guided activity and not individually as well as outside the educator/user relational framework.



The objective of this first phase is to identify and reveal the personal characteristics that can be useful to find a job; as already stated, it is about understanding, together with the user what are his abilities (or limits), what he is interested or (or what he dislikes) and why he believes so (sometimes this information can be an erroneous self-perception).

In this search for competences and technical skills it’s important to highlight where and how they have been acquired (school, training, previous job experiences, etc.) actively listening to the person’s life story, and asking questions like: What did you succeed at?/What are your best accomplishments? Why? What did you fail to accomplish? What did you like best? Why? What did you like less? Moreover the educator should search for the so-called “transferable skills”, so for the characteristics that can be useful in the job field, that usually manifest themselves in different life contexts (work, family, peers) and that belong to the individual’s personality. These characteristics are related to some psychological aspects of the individual (cognitive, communicative, behavioural, relational and creative skills) that, when necessary, can come to light also through specific conversation techniques and by making a professional psychologist (with which it’s possible to collaborate) administer tests relevant to the matter. Several studies have looked for a connection between personality and professional areas of interest, like the famous Holland’s RIASEC model, with which he identified 6 personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (4).

The psychologist, through his personality studies and the competent use of tools to determine its influence, can give the educator a better understanding of the person he is going to “guide/orient”. Moreover, in occupational psychology are used some tests like DAT (Differential Aptitude Tests) that analyse different areas/sectors like verbal reasoning, numeracy skills, abstract reasoning, spatial relations, mathematical reasoning, speed and

accuracy, use of language, and also GAT (General Ability Tests) that synthesise the general verbal, numerical and abstract and spatial reasoning skills; these tests have demonstrated their efficacy in foreseeing job performances, but they have mainly been used in the recruitment processes rather than in the guidance stage.

Another crucial aspect during this phase concerns the users' desires and job expectations, considering the importance he gives to different aspects like work purposes, modes of work (shifts, the use of tools, flexibility, etc.), context (job location, environment), relational and hierarchical aspects, the role performed and the responsibilities it involves, salary.

In this way, the professional sectors the individual may be interested in and that are consistent with the skill he claimed to possess, will be highlighted.

The analysis of the criticalities of the environment in which the subject has lived

Compared to the assessment of the personal skills/characteristics of the subject that should be “oriented”, usually the analysis of the environment, intended as the physical and in particular social (context), is considered less important and this can lead the educator to neglect this stage, risking to strengthen the idea of the individual of being disconnected from the surrounding reality and unable to enter the world of work and have access to the services it provides. In fact, as already stated in the introduction of the topic, the social and environmental characteristics and the way in which they are perceived can lead to the development of new values and beliefs that influence the self-perception and, consequently, the behaviour of the individual. So it's important to guide the person also taking into account the environment he lives in, distinguishing the objective and subjective features (5).



Focusing on this objective, the educator should carefully observe and make observations on the environment, as the place in which the individual performs and will perform his activities. For the objective features the educator can preemptively analyse some environmental aspects (if he lives in that environment), for example the normative and legislative aspects concerning the world of work, the level of precariousness, the current needs and offerings, the presence of facilities and job centres, the way in which they work, etc. Instead, the subjective perception of the environment (for example the personal view of society and its mechanisms, or the elements in the work environment or created by the family that are perceived as obstacles) can be so diversified to prevent the educator from making predictions for the lack of information, which could be detrimental for the users; so it's necessary to stay open (and not judge) to the

individuals' perceptions and observations of the environment, that are reflected in the guidance setting. Therefore, in the first case (objective aspects) we can say that the educator finds in himself, and in his abilities to observe and analyse the environment, a valid guidance tool, in the second case (subjectivity) he should also use reflection, communication and decision-making skills.

For example he should choose the methodology and the setting to use to promote the observation and discussion of the environmental criticalities. While in the most "diagnostic" phase of the evaluation of the person's skills it is not recommended to use a group structure that can create misunderstandings (for example "we are all being judged") and increase competitiveness, endangering the truthfulness of the answers (that will be modified to gain social approval); to analyse the criticalities of the environment in which the person lives, it is more productive to choose a group setting and to use methodologies that focus on cooperation and mediation. This (choice) gives users the opportunity to get in touch with different points of view, to share and at the same time become more aware of an environment in which they live together, and when possible, to promote the use of creativity that may lead to a different approach to criticalities, transforming them into resources. In this occasion the educator has to use his group management skills.

In general, during this stage, he should stay focused on the final objective that consists in establishing a connection between the person and the environment and more generally in his integration/reintegration into the labour market, trying to match the personal inclination and the characteristics required to practice a profession.

The environment is here intended as the general life context, but it is also possible to focus on a specific work environment, examining the objective (for example the physical place, the hierarchy, the competition, the cooperation, etc.) and subjective aspects (for example pleasant and unpleasant experiences related to specific circumstances, how people belonging to that environment perceive us/what is the perception that people have of oneself in that environment); in this sense, some authors consider necessary to use a multifactorial approach to study the person-environment consistency, which is aimed at identifying for each job a group of aspects whose level of correspondence with the person's characteristics anticipate the level of personal and job satisfaction (6).

The promotion of the awareness, support and strengthening of the person's abilities



Once the information concerning the skills and interests of the users, as well as the environmental elements that can compromise their feasibility, has been acquired it's important that the user becomes more aware of it to make an analysis that can be used as a starting point for a process of enhancement. It is like this phase is divided into sub-phases: awareness, support and development. For each sub-phase all the areas considered in the evaluation stage should be taken into account: skills, strengths and weaknesses, interests, motivations, values, working methods, work environment, personal style. To meet the implicit requirements of the three phases, three paths can be followed: the educator can help the individual develop a personal life and work project; can create workshops with specific activities and objectives; or he can switch and integrate the first two modalities. Of course the

last choice requires the employment of more resources but it's also the most complete compared to the objective.

To sum up, the individual is encouraged to create a project aimed at reaching the most relevant and satisfying job position after defining a specific objective, that can be professional or educational, and helping him plan the actions to take to reach it; the process consist in three steps: an analysis of personal characteristics, a clear, realistic and informed definition of the target, the actual planning of the project.

During the analysis, all the main personal characteristics that arose in the evaluation phase are reconsidered: abilities and technical skills, transferable skills, desires and interests; while in the first phase their existence had only been acknowledged, here are taken into account focusing the specific positive and negative aspects. It is possible to define an order of priority, asking the user to list the characteristics he considers more important, helping him to link them to specific types of job. To make the person aware of his resources and limits and to give start to a development process, short practical (or simulation) group workshops, focusing in turn on a specific competence can be carried out. The group can work as a small "learning community" where everyone teaches specific abilities to the others.

In this way the individuals can become aware of what they can or cannot do and can also discover hidden talents.

The person's interests support his motivation, so it's possible to make individual or group meetings, or ask for the collaboration of an occupational psychologist that can use tools like Kuder's Career Interests Assessment or similar tests. Both the meetings and the assessments

should not be an end in itself, in fact an analysis of whether the interests are realistic, according to the individual's skills, should be made. If the educator is not trained to do that, he can seek help from psychology experts that can bring to light emotional aspects in general and/or deriving from family's myths and burdens imposed on the individual that can affect the motivation, the choice and development of interests.

The next step is defining the professional objective, guiding the individual toward the harmonious integration of three components: what he likes to do, what he is able to do, what he wants to achieve. Saying "Any job is fine!" is not sufficient for an employer that needs to understand the skills of the potential employee. The individual should make a realistic comparison between the characteristics required by the selected working position and his characteristics (that he's now aware of).

Finally, the educator should help the individual to create a detailed project plan, with the descriptions of all the actions to carry out in order to actually perform the chosen job (for example choosing a course of study in a specific field, or committing to an active job search, etc.).

During each stage of the programme, the educator has to work simultaneously on two types of values related to work: the intrinsic ones, that focus on self-realisation, and the extrinsic ones centered on the instrumental value of work, that are becoming more and more important.

When the person has to make his vocational choice he should find a job that reflects his skills and needs. If in the work environment there is correspondence between personal skills and needs and expected rewards the person will make a satisfying and successful working experience for himself and for the society.

The development of skills concerning an active job search.

During this last phase of the educational path aimed at providing a job orientation to users, the focus is on the active job-search behavior to perform.

It is necessary to explain to users that the active job-search implies an actual mobilisation, in fact the job searching process can be considered as a job itself that requires the use of all the resources possessed by the individual.

To find a job it's important to learn how to seek for it, it's not sufficient to ask your immediate family or circle of friends if they have heard of some job vacancies, even if this strategy is really useful and should be analysed by the educator from different points of view so that the person can make the best use of it. A marketing expert will highlight the strategies that can be used to promote a professional image; but in general the research work can be summarised in four points: enrolling in job centres, looking for job offers, writing a curriculum vitae and the cover letter to send the application.



In this case, it's important to work on the individual's relational approach and on his ability to use technologies, that is now a necessary skill to possess, but the educator has to stick to the provided/expected methodologies, because it is a training to learn the know-how, to behave in a certain way and to produce something that can involve one individual or a group of people, also a quite numerous one, to save resources.

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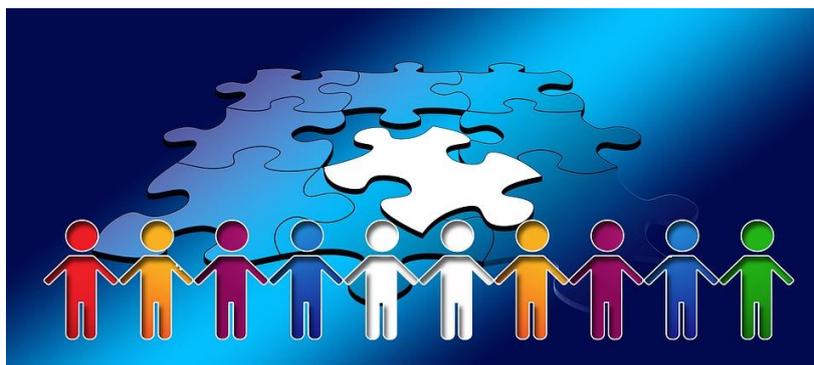
1.4 Social and territorial inclusion (relationship between rules, social barriers and territorial resources and services)

Fighting social exclusion is one of the main objectives of community policies. The European Council of Nice, held in December 2000, marked a turning point because it led to the acknowledgement of the multidimensional nature of exclusion (that doesn't concern only the economic and employment spheres), to the definition of common objectives and to the adoption of the "Open Method of Coordination". Thanks to the OMC, the Member States, which produce biennial National Action Plans (NAP) on Social Inclusion, share and exchange information on the adopted policies and procedures through National Operational Plans (NOP) funded by the EU. The European Commission's role consists in reviewing and evaluating, and it is performed also in the periodic publication and dissemination of "Joint Reports on Social Inclusion" (from the 2005 renamed Joint Reports on Social Protection & Social Inclusion" that summarise the national policies concerning social inclusion, pensions and health care).

The Reports' general points promote an active fight against poverty and social exclusion, and state that, despite the significant structural improvements in the European Union's job markets, the EU level of employment and participation are still insufficient and the unemployment rate in several Member States remains high, in particular for specific categories of people like youngsters, elders, women and disadvantaged people. Furthermore, the Reports require the involvement not only of Institutions and Ministries on a national level, but also of regional and local authorities, of non-governmental organisations and of the civic society, through the involvement of all the bodies and individuals that want to participate to contribute to the society's development.

The educator is involved in this process as well due to its projects/activities aimed toward the social inclusion of their participants. Also his job guidance activities can play an important

role, in fact unemployed people are more likely to face poverty and exclusion. Moreover unemployment affects negatively the condition of people that already live in a disadvantaged



situation and also contributes

to the development of problems that have an effect on the whole society.

The European Commission stresses the fact that "employment must be viewed as one of the most effective safeguards against poverty" and, consequently, that measures should be adopted to encourage employment "setting qualitative objectives for the jobs that are offered".

The fight against poverty and social exclusion should be supported and widespread, to improve the condition of the people at risk of poverty and exclusion as precarious workers, unemployed people, single parent families (that often is a woman), elders that live alone, women, families with a lot of members to support, disadvantaged children, as well as ethnic minorities, migrants,

sick and disabled persons, homeless people; Europe encourages the Member States to support the inclusion of disadvantaged people promoting education, the creation of new jobs, vocational trainings, career advancement, the conciliation of work and family life, the right to an equal access to healthcare and to a decent housing.

With reference to what has been issued by the Commission, through the study of the European social reality it is possible to identify the risk factors linked to poverty and that act as social barriers:

- Long-term unemployment;
- Low quality employment;
- Poor qualifications and early school-leaving;
- Belonging to a vulnerable family in terms of social exclusion;
- Disability;
- Poor health;
- Addiction problems;
- Living in an area of multiple disadvantages;
- Homelessness and precarious housing;
- Immigration, ethnic/cultural context and risk of racial discrimination.

This makes us understand the complexity of poverty, which is a condition determined and influenced by different variables and not by individual failure.

The educator should implement the best strategies aimed at raising the level of education, in particular concerning languages, cultures and new technologies, at facilitating the transition from school to work, at enhancing the access of disadvantaged groups to vocational trainings, including the older and less qualified workers, and at promoting a life-long education/training for everyone.

The reskilling of elder people, the support of families and, in particular, of women in order to achieve equality, and the support to youngsters' employment and entrepreneurship, can be important starting points for working toward inclusion. The condition of women has been emphasised because, despite its improvements from the '60 till now, they are still facing discriminations in terms of salary and status, and the maternity period is perceived as an obstacle to work productivity. With regard to this specific case, a training programme can inform users of the presence and functioning of childcare services; otherwise, if there aren't any, it's possible to carry out actions to implement the situation, finding solutions to the problems that take into account the needs of the subjects involved. Moreover, society is changing and the new rules concerning custody and adoption are also transforming the family structure, so it's highly probable that in the future not only women but also men will have to deal with this situation/will be a need shared by men and women.

The educator should be updated on these social transformations, because he works in close contact with people that belong to and live in the context in which these transformations occur; so he should develop skills concerning the observation and the study of social realities by using research methodologies. Furthermore, he should know which legal framework to refer to (and keep up to date with any changes), he should learn the national and international policies concerning inclusion, also to produce comparative studies and to bring creative innovations.

It should be taken into account that the users are disadvantaged people, that usually live in difficult social and environmental conditions.

The interventions to design will be directed at groups of people affected by poverty, or that are disadvantaged on different levels, or at homeless people that cannot look after themselves. In these extreme cases, the intended aim is to provide these people with support and information to guarantee them access to some local services (to find an accommodation and in particular health services). A simultaneous analysis of the individual resources and of their feasibility (in the education or working field) can be carried out, but it's inconceivable to ask a homeless person to undertake a training course if he is in poor health conditions. For this reason the inclusion process should follow a number of steps in order of priority and the educators' work should be flexible in adjusting to them. In this cases, to avoid limiting the tasks to the provision of information, and to avoid the risk of delegating the full responsibility to the local services, educational/training programmes aimed at developing the abilities to be able to look after oneself and other people can be carried out, promoting interventions of mutual solidarity in the society/system/between the users.

Today we don't talk only of social inclusion, but also of social protection, that implies the personal commitment to eliminate exclusions and discriminations of any kind, but also to enable people to be active citizens, included in the broader community with their rights and duties. On the other hand, the social changes caused by globalisation resulted in people's increased need of being protected by Institutions, to reduce the anxiety and fear of the individuals that feel "thrown" in a new world with new technological, social and multicultural structures.

As a consequence, the educator's work becomes crucial not only to guarantee the access to information and facilities, but also to increase social cohesion

through the creation of a network of relationships between people in need and people that, working in local structures, already use their knowledge and skills. Making the latter contribute to specific education phases will make them develop personal resources and will simplify the performance of their duties.

This is how the Lifelong Learning for everyone, promoted by the European Commission (1), can become a reality. The EC believes that the investment in knowledge should be one of the the Member States' main priorities. Indeed lifelong learning can be a very strong tool to fight poverty and social exclusion, as well as a major factor in promoting active citizenship and democracy. However, attention has to be paid to the fact that lifelong learning and access to training is available in a non-discriminatory way, in order to assure an opportunity of a new beginning for everyone.

The specific objectives are listed in the Lifelong Learning Programme (2):

- Contributing to the development of a quality lifelong learning and promoting high results, innovation and a European dimension in the field's systems and practices;
- Supporting the realisation of an European lifelong learning field/area;
- Helping to improve the quality, the attractiveness and the accessibility of the lifelong learning opportunities available in the Member States;
- Enhancing the contribution provided by lifelong learning to social cohesion, to active citizenship, to intercultural dialogue, to gender equality and to personal aspirations;
- Helping to promote creativity, competitiveness, employability and the development of an entrepreneurial spirit;
- Contributing to the involvement of people of all ages, including those with special needs and those belonging to disadvantaged groups, in the lifelong learning, regardless of the socioeconomic background ;
- Promoting language learning and linguistic differences;
- Supporting the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning;
- Strengthening the role of lifelong learning in creating a sense of European citizenship based on the understanding and respect for human rights and democracy and in promoting tolerance and respect for other peoples and other cultures;
- Promoting the cooperation concerning quality assurance in all the education and training sectors in Europe;
- Encouraging the best use of results, innovative products and processes and to exchange good practice in the fields covered by the Lifelong Learning Programme, in order to improve the quality of education and training.

The action lines should envisage some key points in order to actually realise an inclusive education. First of all, it is essential to create a positive, calm and empathetic atmosphere, so that anyone can feel free to fully participate in the training course, showing, without fears and anxiety, his weaknesses, knowledge and skills. It's always important to contextualise the interventions according to the set objective, taking into account the environmental and territorial background in which they take place and in which what has been learned will be put into practice. These interventions should be personalised as much as possible, according to the socio/economic/cultural environment of the users and in particular to the characteristics and features of each one of them, ensuring compliance with the group's diversity, regardless of the role in the educational path. Other important aspects concern the development of cooperation, a particular attention to metacognitive skills, and, when possible, the creation of workshops.

Culture is considered an important tool to fight social exclusion, so it can be useful to organise literature and poetry, theatre and art workshops, with the help of experts in the fields.

Some of the objectives of an inclusive education should aim towards:

- the enhancement of the ability to use one's resources;
- the minimisation of the weaknesses and learning difficulties' influences on the process;
- the promotion of the dialogue and the development of self-esteem and motivation.

Another objective could be reducing the use of more traditional and old-fashioned methodologies in favour of more innovative ones that facilitate multisensory learning, through the use of images, diagrams, video clips, audio books, records, etc.

So, from an inclusive perspective, very important are methodologies like: Multisensory Learning, Cooperative Learning, Problem Solving, Flipped Classroom or in general the use of learning technologies (for example pc, tablet or specific software).

Here some advice will be provided on key steps that can be applied to the education process. A possibility could be to start with Icebreaker activities to make people get to know each other, and then following with a warm-up phase, where users are encouraged to ask questions and make requests; in the following meetings, the warm-up phase can be also useful to summarise the contents previously learned, to avoid learning fragmentation and to guarantee continuity; it is also possible to include a Brainstorming phase and create a visual map of the focal points of the intervention.

It's important to vary the actions and contents in order to stimulate different knowledge, skills and abilities, so that anyone can find his dimension concerning action and interaction, facilitating also the motivation of the subject. Due to the fact that it is an inclusive education, variability is necessary to meet individual needs, but to make sure no one is excluded, the process should be stopped from time to time to summarise what has been said or made in the setting; it's important to return to and repeat multiple times the most significant contents so that they remain impressed in the mind and to use communication techniques aimed at testing their comprehension. To facilitate their internalisation and observe their feasibility, it's important to include at least a phase in which cooperative learning strategies will be used, like work in pairs or Cooperative learning. The choice of the methodology to use should be personalised as well according to the characteristics of the users, to the environmental resources, and to the educator's skills.

In particular during the final phases, practical to use materials involving the specific content of the training course should be provided to the users. To guarantee social inclusion, they should concern the enhancement of an equal access to facilities/services and should deal with healthcare and long-term care, social security, social services (including the consultation on social rights), services for children, transport and mobility services, inclusion or reintegration in the labour market services and vocational training services.

In fact the European Commission recommends the Member States to do everything possible to ensure the creation of social care services to provide reception, information, orientation, and accomodation solutions to anyone facing serious difficulties; the operator's work is part of this process, aimed at training the local population.

The educator is encouraged to embrace a systemic and transgenerational perspective, due to the fact that it has been proved that both the advantages and disadvantages have a cumulative impact both on the vertical and horizontal plane. Since disadvantaged people (whatever is the type of disadvantage taken into account) are more likely to experience some local realities' difficult life conditions (for example worse school, few job offers, inefficient transport system and lack of services, high crime rate), they are more exposed to health, academic performance, unemployment risks; that makes the situation of such local reality much worse and, most of the time, it turns this condition of unease in something hereditary that is transmitted from generation to generation.

These vulnerable realities are the most appropriate contexts in which to develop training projects; from that point of view, if it's true that the topic of inclusion will give more responsibilities to the educator, it will also give him more satisfaction because he has the opportunity to improve people's quality of life and, as a consequence, it will also increase his motivation in performing his job.

In addition to focusing on these more vulnerable contexts, the European Commission encourages to deepen the topics related to social inclusion in particular for immigrants that come from countries with different cultures, even if they cannot be defined as citizens in strictly legal terms. In these cases, the values and cultural traditions may not correspond to the behaviour considered acceptable in the EU, creating problems and misunderstandings that can hinder the inclusion process. Obviously in these cases, it is not possible to think of a project that involves only and exclusively migrants or native people, but both the groups should be included in a programme that is based on intercultural pedagogy (3).

For this reason the Italian State has provided itself with Territorial Councils for Immigration (TCI), collegial bodies headed by the Prefects of each provincial capital and whose members are representatives of the competent decentralised State administrations, the Region, the local authorities, the agencies and organisations active at a local level in migrants relief and assistance, and the worker and employers' organisations, with tasks of determining requirements and proposing actions to be taken at local level.

They carry out a strategic policy/action to meet in an innovative way the challenges posed by the changes in the social structure determined by the presence of immigrant citizens in the territories.

Their main activities consist in:

- Monitoring the migration phenomenon;
- Providing information to share awareness on regulations and services;
- Promoting integrated systems of intervention between territories and State, to cope with the different aspects of the migration phenomenon and to guarantee coordinated and structured interventions;
- Collaborating to use European funds respecting the needs of the territory.

The network of CTIs answers to the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration; it is the link between central government and local communities and ensures the coherence of all interventions (4).

Referring to the Italian context and in response to the EC requests examined so far, it's important to mention the SAI (Support for Active Inclusion), later replaced by the Inclusion Income, in turn replaced by Citizenship Income from 2019.



The Citizenship Income is an active labour market measure aimed to fight poverty, inequality and social exclusion; it is an economic support, combined with a work and social reintegration path. The monthly amount will be loaded onto a digital card, called citizenship income card.

The beneficiaries sign an Employment Pact or a Social Inclusion Pact; the Citizenship Income is deeply connected to the Statement of Immediate Availability to Work, made by the family members, and to the signing of the Work Pact at the Job centre. If in the family there aren't people unemployed for less than two years, or in a similar situation, the signing of the Social Inclusion Pact is foreseen. This replaces the Work Pact also when families have already signed a customised project with the Municipality (in accordance with legislative decree 147/2017), so when the job centres recognise some criticalities that make starting a process of job integration difficult.

The integration income assumes the name of Citizenship Pension when granted to families composed exclusively of one or more persons of the same age or more than 67 years. This can be also granted when the beneficiaries that are over 67 live with one or more younger people with serious disabilities or not self-sufficient, as recognised for ISEE (Economic Status Indicator) purposes.

The family units eligible to receive the Citizenship Income are the ones that, when submitting the application and during the whole period in which they receive the economic support, have specific requisites concerning the economic status, citizenship and residency.

The economic support, both for the Citizenship income and for the Citizenship pension, is given by the sum of an amount that is used to supplement the family income (sum A), and a subsidy for the rent or the mortgage (sum B), according to the information shown in the ISEE (indicator of equivalent economic situation). So it's linked to the family income which, as an essential economic condition for requesting the Citizenship Income, should be, at the moment of application and during the overall period, inferior to a certain threshold (6).

The citizen's income is granted after one month from the one of the application and it can be received continuously for 18 months, after which it is suspended for one month and a new application must be submitted. No suspension is envisaged for Citizenship pension that is automatically renewed and there is no need to submit a new application.

The families to whom the Citizenship Income has been recognised can receive the Pension Income (which replaces the first one) when the youngest member reaches the age of 67 while he is receiving the Citizenship income. This becomes effective the month after the person turns 67.

The Citizenship Income is aimed at those who are cumulatively:

- 1) In Possession of Italian citizenship Or countries that are part of the European Union, or Who is the proprietor of the right of residence or of the right of permanent residence, or From countries that have signed bilateral social security conventions, or Third-country nationals holding the EU residence permit for long-term residents;
- 2) Resident in Italy for at least 10 years At the time of submission of the application, of which the last two years in a continuative way.

Finally, the applicant should not be subjected to precautionary measures, also applied after the validation of the arrest or of preventive detention, and within the 10 previous years he must not have been sentenced for one of the crimes referred to in Articles 270280, 289-bis, 416-bis, 416-ter, 422 e 640 bis of the criminal code.

Applicants are required to regularly participate in employment-oriented programs or training courses and they must do eight hours' community service per week; they lose the benefit in the event of unjustified rejection of three consistent job offers.

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1.5 Understanding correct lifestyles



In today's difficult environmental and socio-psychological context there is a growing need to educate people to adopt "correct" lifestyles. One might suggest that the adjective "correct" is ambiguous: who decides that they are correct? The rule? Considered as law or statistical standard? Or does it depend on the culture? Or on the integration of the cultures that coexist in a territory? Furthermore, this term could imply that there's something

wrong; thoughts or behaviour partly or completely wrong, that should be modified to conform to external requests. For this reason it's important to focus on the individual, and help him understand that when we talk of "correct lifestyles" we refer to the acquisition of knowledge and consequent behaviour, aimed at improving his health and life. Even if there are several laws, as well as European and national measures, concerning health, to whom one may and should refer, it's necessary to highlight the scientific basis of human-studies, of men's organic and psychological functioning, to stress their common belonging to the human species.

This shapes the objectives of an educational process that cannot be intended as a training, but rather as a way of making people aware so that, having received the necessary information, they feel responsible for their life and for their state of health that is crucial to perform daily activities.

According to the definition of the World Health Organization (WHO), "Lifestyle is a way of living based on identifiable patterns of behaviour which are determined by the interplay between an individual's personal characteristics, social interactions, and socioeconomic and environmental living conditions. These patterns of behaviour are continually interpreted and tested out in different social situations and are therefore not fixed, but subject to change."

It is on people's ability to change that prevention measures of risk and health promotion factors are based, but sometimes it is necessary to create motivational programmes; in fact, very often people state that they want to change but rarely they do something to improve their situation or they are not constant in the practices; furthermore there is also ambiguity in many countries' policies that on one hand invest in programmes to promote health but on the other hand, for several reasons that will not be examined in this context, don't take appropriate measures to penalize harmful behaviour that very often escapes control and regulation.

Another definition of "lifestyle" has been provided by Alfred Adler in the psychological field; he defined lifestyle as "a way of interpreting yourself, in the reality you are part of". The result is a combination of thoughts, feelings, behaviour, aptitudes, objective values and the interaction between oneself and the environment; the reference is to an usual way of being, thinking, feeling and acting, where the adjective "usual" makes us reflect on the difficulties that are linked to the process of changing, taking into account three main observations: it is a semi-automatic modality of approaching reality; it interacts with settled bio-psycho-social substrata;

more the attempt to change is significant for the person in evolutionary terms, more energies should be invested in his maintenance, dealing with the threat of regression.

Thanks to psychology and social studies, there has been a shift from a medical-scientific model, in which the individual was interpreted according to his health and his patterns of behaviour, to a biopsychosocial model; in the biomedical model the general thought was that the psychosocial variables of the individual's behaviour didn't affect the fact of having a poor or good health, and this has highlighted, and also promoted people's adoption of a passive attitude that delegate their health to medical professionals; instead, with the biopsychosocial model the health condition of a person is contextualised in the psychosocial environment, through a systemic approach, that emphasises the importance of prevention promoting the idea that being healthy should be considered as a target to reach.

In fact, as early as in 1948, the WHO defined health as the state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The focus on these three aspects and their interconnection can be considered as a guideline in the training path, which will include practical and theoretical activities where different methodologies and skills will be used in a flexible way.

Concerning physical wellbeing, three macrocategories can be taken into account as content of the training, highlighting for each one of them wrong behaviours and changes to make: 1) food, 2) physical activities, 3) substance use. Furthermore, for each category, there should be an analysis of the physical health's risks and benefits as well as of the psychological and social aspects connected to them.

For example connected to the field of nutrition there are several activities that can be carried out and that can concern:

- A food education that provides information on the food's nutrients and on their physiological effects (What nutrients does our body need to stay healthy? Which food? How should they be cooked so that our body works correctly? Is there any food that should be eaten when performing a specific activity? etc.); with the help of a nutrition expert, the individuals can improve their knowledge and awareness so to choose what to eat according to their characteristics and needs in order to be healthy;
- Group activity game on the psychological meaning of food, on the personal cognitive and emotional aspects that are linked to eating habits, focusing on the fact that not giving the right importance to wrong habits can lead to the development of eating disorders; in this case it's important to ask for the participation of an expert that can give advices to the participants.
- Group and debate activities on the symbolic meanings that food intake can have in different societies and cultures, referring to the values and traditions linked to food, and to the environment's impact on its quality.

The trainer is free to choose how to develop these topics, as long as he follows a predetermined programme aimed toward one or more specific objectives.

Adapting this framework to the physical activity field, it is possible to:

- Carry out activities aimed at learning physical activity's benefits on the body and the illnesses caused by a sedentary lifestyle, keeping in mind that when talking about physical activity the reference is not only to sports, but also to simple activities like walking, which can turn on a set of physiological mechanisms that keep the body young and healthy and that satisfy the mind; walking can respond to the need for daily physical exercise recommended by the WHO (at least 8000 steps a day) and it's compatible with daily tasks, can be done anywhere, it's free and so it's considered as an useful activity for everyone.
- Ask for the participation of experts for practical/theoretical activities, providing examples of simple exercises that can reduce sedentary behaviour and can lead to the acquisition of a correct posture.
- Organise group activities like games or sport activities, followed by a debate on personal reactions (How do you feel after these activities? How did you feel while performing them? etc.) on the effects of physical activities on socialization.

Finally, for substance use, several risk factors should be taken into account, connected to substance availability, social influence and personality traits. Of course the trainer cannot directly modify these components/elements but, from a systemic perspective, his activities, aimed at giving the individual a sense of responsibility, can be useful to make him aware of the physical, mental, economic and social effects of using substances. Generally substances are divided in three groups: alcohol, cigarettes and drugs.

This division depends on the different physiological triggers, users' behaviour, legislative rules, but in particular to the level of social acceptability of the consumption of the different substances, as they weren't the biggest threat to human health. According to the current statistical reports, in Europe tobacco smoke is first cause of disease and death, followed by hypertension and alcohol consumption (other than on the medical aspects of the problem, the focus should be also put on the fact that alcohol is the cause of the majority of road accidents; and it's the same for the consumption of addictive and psychotropic substances).



In this case, both if it is a group or an individual training, it's important to highlight the potentiality of each individual, to demolish all the beliefs that minimize the risks and to promote changes and good practices. Of course, if there are people addicted to the above-mentioned substances, the trainer should keep his opinions and ideas to himself and should not become a detective; it is not necessary because, if he manages to

establish a relationship built on trust, it could be the person himself to ask for his help. The trainer should give the user all the information to receive help by the local services, with whom the trainer should cooperate with.

The trainer should not be judgemental about himself as well; in fact it's possible that sometimes he eats unhealthy food, or leads a sedentary lifestyle or that he is a smoker and this can result in unconvincing training practices due to a low self-esteem that is caused by the awareness of the inconsistency between the personal lifestyle and the advice given to other people. They should be honest, should forgive themselves if they don't comply with their objectives and try to behave in a more coherent way. This self-improvement process will result in a more effective training, because the users will appreciate the fact that the trainer is oriented toward a continuous personal development, in a perspective of lifelong learning.

Apart from focusing on prevention, and on the maintenance of body's health and well-being, also mental health should be preserved; even though several scientific, psychological and neurological studies confirm the power of the mind to influence the overall health of the individual (so also the physical one), not anyone acknowledge that; during the last 50 years there has been an exponential growth in the requests for psychological support and in the carrying out of activities for mind relief and strengthening, and yet it is common to consider the mind as a secondary element detached from the body, that should be taken into account only if there are psychological disorders or in the few moments of free time dedicated to reflection and relax. On this matter the training activity is even more urgent and necessary, in particular considering the beneficial self-healing effects (also at the neuronal level) demonstrated by neurosciences. Obviously the trainer is not required to become a psychotherapist, unless he is specialised in that field, so his knowledge can be a useful tool in his relationships with the individuals but maintaining his role and keeping in mind his task, the final objectives and the project development. His activities can consist in different moments and exercises, where he can:

- Provide information on local psychological services;
 - Organise groups to reflect and discuss topics like mind-body and mind-society, considering that very often mental distress manifests itself as a difficulty of adaptation to the internal/external and social environment;
 - Ask for the collaboration of psychotherapists and experts to address the evaluation, improvement or preservation of the state of mental health using different points of view (cognitive-behavioural, systemic-relational, mindfulness etc.); with their cooperation it is possible to carry out activities that consist in practical exercises, followed by moments of reflection and feedback;
- Organise individual works to make the users more self-aware and to make them list the daily instructions to follow in order to achieve their mental well-being;
- Organise group works (texts, posters, digital outputs) on social topics that are linked to the one of mental health.

The training, intended as the improvement of personal lifestyles, deals mainly with changes which can be challenging due to the fact that they are determined by several variables and factors. So, the training activities can be aimed at learning self monitoring techniques, explaining the different stages of the change process. The main objective of the self monitoring is making the user more aware of his behaviour and of the factors that promote it (cognitive, emotional, social). Usually, after the individual becomes more self-aware of his wrong behaviour, he goes through a contemplative moment (first stage- whose duration is variable) in which he is torn between the desire to change and the refusal to do it (due to the commitment required).

Then there is the resolution stage, that is the moment in which the person actually decides to change; at this point there are two possibilities, the individual can go back to the contemplation phase or he can move forward to the action stage in which he starts his path toward change (also if it consists in small steps forward and backward). The next step is the most difficult because it consists in keeping his resolutions and acting consequently, that requires perseverance, self control or to be able to ask for help and support. In the long run his behaviour can either become a mechanical habit or he can go back to the previous patterns of behaviour. In this case the procedure can be repeated if the wrong behaviour causes sufferings or cognitive dissonances.

Furthermore, in the training programme, it is possible to use methodologies aimed at learning coping or problem solving strategies, that will make the subject address his wrong behaviour as a problem rather than as a sin/mistake (being more indulgent with himself and believing in the possibility to change), improving resources and skills for its management and resolution, but also increasing his level of self-esteem.

The social determinants that affect health and people's lifestyles are usually divided in two categories: the structural determinants, for example the political and socio-economical context, the personal socio-economic status, and the intermediary determinants, that refer to living and work condition, psychosocial factors, social cohesion, individual behaviour, biological factors and local health system.

The training programme aims to increase the awareness and to shed light on the influence of social aspects, so it could be divided in different stages according to the three above-mentioned topics. So, for the aspects related to the context it is possible to carry out activities aimed at increasing the knowledge of the countries' policies and of the social and cultural values they pursue. When talking about socio-economic and political context, the focus is on the factors that pertain to the whole society and not to the single individual.

Even if their presence and effects can vary considerably from a country to another (for example religion will be relevant in some contexts and less relevant in others), the main ones are:

- Governance: this term includes several factors like needs assessment, involvement in the civil society, public administration's transparency and reliability, discrimination mechanisms;

- Macroeconomic policies: market rules, fiscal and economic development, organisation of the labour market;

- Social policies: welfare, labor policies, construction industry and right to reside;
- Public policies: education, health care, access to drinking water and environmental hygiene;
- Culture, values and traditions: the meanings people give to their life contexts;
- Epidemiological conditions: epidemiological characteristics of the reference context.

Instead, for the personal socio-economic status, the trainer should take into account the society's unequal resource allocation (money, power, esteem, knowledge etc.) considering the stratification, sometimes hierarchical that is determined by income, education, job, social class, gender, ethnic group etc. Social status is the individual's position in the social stratification according to the socio-economic and political context he is in. "Social stratification" is directly related to this concept, and it refers to the way in which individuals and groups of people are hierarchically classified according to some variables.

Each individual's position in society on the account of social stratification is associated with different levels of:

- Exposure to risk factors (psychosocial factors, unhealthy lifestyles, environmental risk factors and clinical susceptibility/frailty);
- Vulnerability: higher risk to get sick if exposed to the same risk factor or, if the person has a medical condition, to have worse outcomes (disability or death);
- Social consequences of the illness: the person's state of health negatively affects his social position, bringing about a vicious (and bidirectional) circle between illness and impoverishment.

To make the training programme effective, it's important that the educator knows the type of users he will work with and to whom he should adapt his intervention strategies and methodologies. Of course in relation to the social conditions connected to the state of health, he will mainly focus on the intermediary determinants, that seem to play an important role in the appearance of diseases or in hindering a sense of general well-being. Some of them are:

- The material condition, intended as daily life standards (access to water and food, sanitary facilities, heating, characteristics of the dwelling and of the neighborhood, economic resources to buy staple goods, etc.) that the trainer can consider a superfluous matter to address, instead very often some vulnerable categories don't have the knowledge and the resources to improve their condition, and for them it's a normal situation to live in;
- Socio-environmental or psychosocial conditions: linking the disadvantages caused by the socio-economic position with the acute or chronic stress that can derive from and affect the personal ability to handle difficult situations or that can lead, in the long run, to the development of different types of disease; the psychosocial conditions can be stressful situations and/or traumatic: negative life experiences, work-related stress, debts, lack of social support, etc.;
- Individual behaviour concerning smoke, alcohol, substances, food, physical activities, intended in this context as factors influenced by the socioeconomic status of the person; several scientific studies have demonstrated the connection between individual lifestyles and

socioeconomic status: the lower the person is in the social ladder, the more it is likely that he will assume risky behaviour for his health;

-Social cohesion that is a positive aspect of social relations and that consist in mutual trust and respect, mutual duties in the community, and that plays an important role in protecting people and people's health. It is shared knowledge that societies with a higher level of discrepancy in people's income tend to have a low level of social cohesion and more violent crimes, so it is necessary to organise training activities aimed at promoting cooperation in a perspective of active citizenship according to intercultural models;

-The biological factors that cannot be modified, as the genetic heritage, age, sex, should be taken into account to fully understand the users and to choose the most relevant topics to address in the training setting;

-The trainer should be informed about the health care system, to guide the individuals in the knowledge process through which they can have access to the services for prevention and personal care.

Finally, from a multicultural perception, it seems necessary to consider migration as a social factor that can influence health. The studies carried out in countries with a long migration history highlight some aspects that cannot be ignored when talking about health and general wellbeing; those are related to the health condition before the migration process and to all the physical, psychological and social events that it entails; for example some populations, due to biological or genetics traits, are more likely to develop specific diseases, or their health is compromised by dangerous modes of travel; furthermore it's important to consider also the psychological impact of trauma, the stress deriving from changing social context and adopting new rules, values, cultural elements without losing his own origins. In this case as well, a low socioeconomic status is the cause of health inequalities and inequalities in the access to services that characterises migrants' lives.

So it can be stated that generally poverty represents a factor of risk for the population's health, in fact in the poorest countries there is a deep relation between individual average income and life expectancy. This relation is also evident in the more developed countries: in the european ones, where the leading causes of disease and death are the non-communicable diseases, there is strong evidence that they are associated to the social environment and to the socio-economic inequalities, and that a better social context and the reduction of economic inequalities make social and public health initiatives more effective.

What poor people have in common is the fact that they are disempowered, so they are not in control of their life due to their low position in the social hierarchy. The condition of disempowerment is associated to the inability to fulfill three fundamental conditions, that can be referred to the above-mentioned social determinants:



- Material conditions: concern the possibility to have access to material goods to meet the basic needs and to live a decent life;
- Psychosocial conditions: the possibility to be in control of one’s own life;
- Political conditions: the possibility to speak out and to claim their rights.

The trainer can work on different dimensions of power: power over, power to, power from within, power with.

In contrast to the approaches focused on power over, whose aim is to increase excluded groups’ participation in the political and economic structures without questioning them, the other dimensions of powers are mainly focused on people and groups’ creative skills to offer new ways of redistributing resources and power.

A second possibility is represented by the interventions that can influence the intermediary dominants. This entails acting to reduce disadvantaged people’s exposure and vulnerability to the risk factors (for example reducing the number of smokers, improving working conditions). This is particularly important because the majority of policies and health intervention don’t take into account the role played by social position to modify the exposure and vulnerability to risk factors.

Very important for health are also the interventions that increase and give value to social cohesion.

So, to sum up, the useful interventions to reduce health inequalities should:

- be based on the approach of health social determinants (structural and intermediary);
- be “context specific “, so adapted to the different social realities;
- use an interdisciplinary approach, and not only a health one.
- promote social participation and community’s empowerment.

The educational and training action is crucial to facilitate the acquisition and the implementation of knowledge and competences that can lead to lifestyles aimed at wellbeing and prevention.

1.6 Understanding Health Services

The European Commission, even if stating that “the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care is the responsibility of the Member States”, it confirms its support for the three main objectives of medical care:

- guaranteeing the access to health services, regardless of the income or assets;
- guaranteeing an equal access to quality services;



-guaranteeing the continuity of long term financing.

Moreover, for health related issues, the national governments receive the support of two dedicated agencies: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, whose mission is to identify, assess and disseminate information on current and emerging threats to human health posed by infectious diseases in order to understand how to respond to it, and the European Medicines Agency which is responsible for the scientific evaluation, supervision and safety monitoring of medicines developed by pharmaceutical companies for use in the EU.

The EC highlights that special attention should be given to the individuals that need long term expensive medical care and to everyone that doesn't have access to health care stressing that, to promote and preserve health, health systems should be guaranteed to everyone and based on solidarity.

In a context dominated by increasing migratory flows and by several local realities characterised by poverty as well as physical, psychological and social disadvantaged, it is necessary to provide intervention guidelines to educators, in order to ensure an effective response to the need of health and persons' protection.

The training proposal cannot be limited to providing information but, in order to help the users enjoy their health care rights, it is possible to create theoretical-practical programmes which consist of different interrelated stages.

Having the right to receive healthcare means being able to benefit from prevention and health care services as primary care, specialised care or hospital admissions.

As stated above, this programme shall include an initial phase of knowledge, intended as the educator and users acquisition of information concerning healthcare, considering two fields: the existing legislation in the country taken into account and the personal situation of the individual considering his legal, economic, cultural, social position and his state of health.

Due to the fact that these training courses are dedicated to the more vulnerable groups of the population, it should be taken into account that those people have limited or no access to this type of knowledge (sometimes they rely on the few information they receive from the people they are acquainted to). Some procedures, aimed at promoting topics concerning citizenship and health, have already been submitted elsewhere, so the focus here is on learning the regulations aimed at guaranteeing access to the different countries' national health systems. Considering that the beneficiaries of the training/educational interventions can be both citizens of the country taken into account, or immigrants (legal, illegal or waiting for his residence permit) or people that moved to that country to receive political asylum, to work, or for a leisure trip, it is possible to train homogeneous groups of users but, in a perspective of inclusion and integration, it's important to organise at least a stage in which they all participate to promote interindividual solidarity.

Health is a complex topic, and it should be addressed using a "holistic" approach, in which the medical information is efficiently combined with ethical, psychological and cultural aspects. In addition to the conditions that mainly affect and threaten the health of vulnerable subjects (food, inadequate and unsafe dwelling, work and social relationships), there are other specific

factors that play an important role in determining the state of health of immigrants, for example the epidemiological framework of the mother country, cultural aspects (difficulties in communication and in social inclusion), psychological aspects (be far away from the loved ones, lack of a psycho-familiar support, migratory project's risk of failure) and possible discrimination and obstacles to services' access. Integration, in this sense, should be perceived as interaction, as a project carried out by people that live side by side and interact even if they come from different geographical and cultural contexts. It becomes a socio-cultural process in which the person, while maintaining his individuality, conforms to,

shares and takes part in the system that hosts him. To carry out this process there should be synergy between the Government and people's conduct and so it's necessary that the trainer, through his actions, mediates between the two parties.

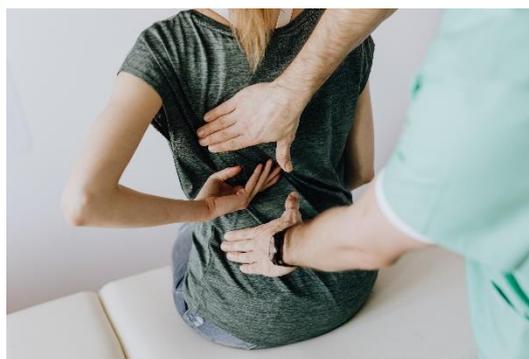
Going back to knowledge acquisition, it's crucial that the educator acquires as much information as possible on the national health care system of the country, with the help of local health services workers to create a knowledge and support network for the users.

Here some of this information will be provided, that should be considered as a starting point for one's own and other people's education/training.

The Italian context

The Article 32 of the Italian Constitution states that:

“The Republic safeguards health as a fundamental right of the individual and as a collective interest, and guarantees free medical care to the indigent. No one may be obliged to undergo any health treatment except under the provisions of the law. The law may not under any circumstances violate the limits imposed by respect for the human person.” It should be highlighted that this rule is aimed at everyone and not only at citizens, as a way of stating that the right to health is a right of the individual, because it is one of the fundamental human rights, intended as an individual's inalienable rights.



The registration with the Italian National Health Service is mandatory for Italian citizens and foreigners residing in Italy with a regular residence permit, for all the children born in Italy that automatically acquire the right to medical care; to enroll it is necessary to go to the nearest local health authority, bringing the following documents:

- A valid ID document;
- Tax code;
- Residence certificate or self-certification;

And, for infants, family status certificate (or self-certification), in which the newborn is included, and his tax code.

The enrollment to the Health service entitles the person to choose a general practitioner and a paediatrician in case of regularly staying under-14 children. This entitles him to undergo free outpatient and in-home medical examinations and to obtain prescriptions for medications and specialist services. Health care is guaranteed to every citizen (italian and legal foreigners) through a network of services (medical and pediatric, pharmaceutical, outpatient, hospital, domiciliary care)

These services consist in:

- Primary care: free choice of a general practitioner or pediatrician;
- Continuity of care: the citizen has the right to receive medical care, so when the general practitioner is not available, it should be provided by another doctor or by the Continuing Care Service (in Italy known as “Guardia medica”).
- Access to diagnostic performances: the citizen should be guaranteed the possibility to consult a specialist, to get laboratory and diagnostic tests;
- Public and private, accredited or operating within the national health service: the person is free to choose between a public and a private facility operating within the national health service;
- Hospitalisation: the citizens is free to choose the hospital he want to be hospitalised in, if the medical facility is outside the region of residence the person should ask the permission to the local health authority;
- Right to information: the citizen should always be properly informed before undergoing examination and operations.
- Access to medicines: the citizens have the right to receive the medicines prescribed by their doctors on the regional prescription pad, by paying just a little contribute (ticket); the exemption from charges is regulated by regional legislation and cannot be the same from region to region, usually citizens can be exempted from paying the ticket due to their income, chronic or rare diseases, disability, civil blindness and deafness.

People are issued with a health insurance card when they register with the Health Service. This electronic smart card has now been renamed as Regional Services Card and it is valid as:

- Health Insurance Card;
- European Health Insurance Card (EHIC);
- Tax code.

This card doesn't need to be activated and people don't have to enter a PIN when using it for the above mentioned services. It should be safely stored and shown when benefitting from the Regional Health Services or when going abroad. The PIN is a personal code because, thanks to it, its holder can be identified when accessing Public Administration's innovative services, ensuring his privacy. To request the PIN people should go to the qualified offices of the local Health Authorities.

The people who can register to the National Health System are:

- Italian citizens: people residing in Italy, Italian pensioners residing abroad, family members that depend on a person that works in Italy;
- European Community's citizens: temporarily in Italy or residing in Italy;
- Foreign citizens that come from not affiliated countries: with or without residency permit.

In Italy the administration of the health system is exercised by the government, who determines the Essential Levels of Assistance (LEA), so the set of services that should be guaranteed on the national territory and by Regions, that are accountable for their provision and for the necessary assistance to health protection. The Essential Levels of Assistance (LEA) are the services and works that the national health service is required to provide to all citizens, free of charge or for a participation fee (ticket). The decision of which services shall be included in the LEA depends on the extent to which these services are actually needed, on their level of efficacy and pertinence and these services represent the essential medical care guaranteed to all the citizens. The LEA, established by the government, are based on the binomial "efficacy + solidarity" and include services that are considered essential and efficient and that are guaranteed to everyone, on three main levels:

- The collective healthcare in the life and work environment, that includes all the prevention activities aimed at people or single individuals (protection from the effects of pollution, from the risk of injuries at the workplace, Veterinary Healthcare System, food protection, prophylaxis of infectious diseases, vaccinations and early detection programmes, forensic medicine);
- District assistance, so the activities and health and public health services widespread across the territory, from primary care to pharmaceutical care, from specialized outpatient healthcare and outpatient diagnostics to the supply of prosthesis to disabled people, from home caring services for old and seriously ill people to local counselling services (family counselling, mental health services, rehabilitation services for disabled people, etc.), to residential and semi-residential buildings (care homes for elders and people with disabilities, day care centres, group home and therapeutic communities);
- Hospital care, carried out through first aid, ordinary hospitalisation, day hospital, day surgery, in facilities for long-term care and rehabilitation, and so on.

It will be the responsibility of each Region to provide the services included in the LEA using the appropriate modalities and regime. To register with the National Health System the payment of a contribution is required, but it is usually deducted from the taxes paid through individual income tax return; the foreign citizen, staying in Italy for study purposes, should pay a reduced fee through a postal order (that can be picked up at the Local Health Authority of the person's municipality of residence) headed to the region of residence and he should provide the receipt of payment when registering.

The registration is free when the foreign person is:

- Unemployed, with residence permit, and registered in the job seeker's lists or with a permit while seeking employment;
- A refugee with regular certificate that confirm his status of refugee or asylum seeker;
- Married to an Italian citizen and depended on him/her;
- A minor with a parent residing in Italy and belonging to one of the above-listed categories;

As mentioned above, in Italy if the immigrant doesn't have a residence permit he still has the possibility to receive the following services, in the public units of each Local Health Authority:

- Urgent and essential hospital care, also long-term one, in particular the one provided in day hospital and primary care regime;
- Urgent and essential outpatient care, also long-term one due to illness and injuries, including the programmes of preventive medicine and post injury rehabilitation, the interventions of risk reduction and prevention concerning risky behaviour, as well as programmes for the protection of mental health; urgent care refer to the treatments that if not provided could put the life of the person in danger or could damage his health; whereas essential care involves medical attention, diagnosis and treatment in respect of non-serious illnesses in the immediate and short term, but that overtime could lead to an increased risk of damage to health and life (complications, chronicisation or worsening); the urgency and essentiality should be certified on the clinical documentation and when requesting the provision of services;
- Minimum essential services, as the programmes of preventive medicine to protect individual and collective health.

In particular, are always guaranteed:

- Social protection of pregnancy and maternity, access to family counselling with the same conditions of Italian citizens;
- Protection of the minor's health;
- Vaccinations provided for in the health plans;
- Prophylaxis, diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases and its eradication;

Preventive are also considered the services provided from the services for drug addiction and the ones aimed at subjects with HIV.

In this case the person is exonerated from paying by filling the Declaration of poverty.

On the website of the Italian Ministry of Health (www.salute.gov.it) it is possible to consult an interactive guide called "If I'm going to..." which provide to all the beneficiaries (so people registered and dependant on the National Health Service) and the health workers the necessary information to know if there is (or isn't) the right to receive medical care during the stay or if the person reside in any country of the world and in particular it provides information on how to have access to medical care (who to turn to and how) and on how to ask for refunds.

People who have access to the health system of a European country can receive care in all the other EU countries, at the expense of the health authorities of their State.

The covering of the costs concerning medical treatments in another EU State is regulated by two community legislative instruments, that differ for the way in which the health system to which the person belongs bears the costs:

1. direct payment from the person's health system to the one providing care (direct care);
2. refund to the patient of the expenses incurred for the care received from the host country (indirect care).

Regardless of the State in which the training occurs, we can identify some obstacles, that sometimes can be defines barriers to the access to health services, that can be schematised as follows:

-Juridical-legal barriers: linked to the legal citizenship status of the user.

-Economic barriers: some policies aimed at guaranteeing medical care have been implemented to fight them.

-Bureaucratic-administrative barriers: despite the state policies, local administrations could oppose the cure of poor people whether the operators hadn't been adequately trained to guarantee a fair reception; furthermore the bureaucratic language could be difficult to understand also for people who are able to read and understand.

-Organisational barriers: that consist in the different way in which the local health services are organised and managed in different places for example the opening days and hours that don't meet the necessities of the population requesting the service, the fact that the operators

work shifts so people do not receive assistance from the same person each time, or a different quality of the services provided during weekdays.

Barriers in the availability of sociomedical services are instead the linguistic, communicative, interpretative and behavioural barriers.

The first barrier that the trainer is asked to eliminate is the linguistic one, so it's important to provide a translation for the informative materials, but also foresee interventions aimed at acquiring a medical vocabulary. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that the relationship doctor-patient is considered as a real contract/agreement, which guarantees compensation for damage in case of non-fulfilment. This contract is called health care contract, and it includes not only the main medical service, but also a number of accessory and organisational requirements (accommodation, auxiliary staff, interpreters or mediators/counsellors, medicines and protection and care for the patients).

For this reason, other than providing a translation of the documentation concerning the management of the patient into a known language (authorisations, agreements, declarations, etc.) it should be analysed to the extent to which it is understood by the users and when necessary provide explanation.

Most of the services present significant linguistic, communication and relational obstacles, and these barriers are increased when taking care of more vulnerable individuals. This highlights how complex the therapeutic relationship is, and how the concepts of health, illness and cure are affected by the one's culture and the symbolic values linked to it (sometimes, as for Italy, also the religious influence should be taken into consideration).

The trainer, through his intervention should be able to connect the individuals to the local health context and, by engaging them in programmes that do not simply provide information to the users but give practical demonstrations, he improves the quality of the work performed by health facilities operators, that usually reflects the same difficulties perceived by users. Helping the individuals, not only giving them a linguistic support, but also guiding them through the challenges of social reality, he will have the power to facilitate the care process and the therapeutic relationship, which could be hindered by behavioural barriers of the users and sometimes of operators, influenced by political-cultural prejudices and professionally inadequate approaches. The training should also promote an adjustment and an improvement in the subject's behaviour not only concerning the actions he should perform to receive medical care but also the way in which he relates to others, which can hinder them.

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1.7 Psychological and empathetic aspects in intercultural competence.

If we consider competence as the dynamic process that entails the selection, activation, organisation and coordination of the individual psychological resources, that result in the ability of the person to behave effectively and suitably to a specific situation, intercultural competence presents its own specificity and can be defined as the expert's personal sensitivity to put into practice and adapt the possessed knowledge in situations characterised by cultural difference (1). According to this interpretation, this competence is essential in the educational work of the current post-globalisation era, which is characterised by a growing development of technologies and communication and by the encounter between different cultures that, after migrations or due to transport development, have imposed necessity to deal with multiple diversities, of which the linguistic-cultural one is the most tangible sign.



In this age, this intercultural pedagogy can be defined as the best discipline to face the modern society's different challenges, translating them into opportunities for improvement and personal and collective growth. Unlike the other approaches, like the transcultural and multicultural one, the intercultural perspective require a shift in the teaching practices, focusing not only on cultural education (a pedagogy that should allow each individual to

have an identity in his social culture) but also and mainly on the resulting relational and balancing aspects, that give more importance to the encounter with the other, that is not based on mutual tolerance but on the acceptance of all the differences (a pedagogy that address the problem of the relation between members of different cultures in a constructive way).

According to the reconstruction made by Spitzberg and Changnon (2), the research area related to the study of intercultural competences was born in North America during the '50s; it is possible to identify five directional models: the compositional models, that list important traits and skills to efficiently interact in multicultural contexts; the co-orientational models, that focus on the method of communication as the tool aimed toward intercultural understanding (taking into account variables like empathy, clarity of expression, the ability to understand etc.); the developmental models, that take into account other models' intercultural competence's main features, but in an evolutionary perspective that follows specific maturation/improvement phases; the adaptational models, according to which a crucial aspect of interaction is flexibility, because they focus on mutual adjustment and on the interdependence of all the subjects involved; and finally the causal processes, focused on the interrelations between the different elements that determine an intercultural competence, in the process of its gradual development.

Fantini (3) refers to three main themes (or domain): the ability to develop and maintain relations; the ability to communicate in an effective and appropriate way; the ability to cooperate. These skills are important and necessary in every educational context, in particular when different cultures meet (and consequently, different perceptions of the world).

The author defines intercultural competence through different elements: traits (innate qualities) and characteristics (acquired) like flexibility, open-mindedness, empathy, curiosity, patience, tolerance for ambiguity, respect, motivation, interest, sense of humour and the ability to suspend judgement.

Another important model to take into consideration is the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), created by Milton Bennet, in the period between 1986 and 1993; it is structured in six phases, divided in ethnocentric stages (refusal, defence, minimisation) and ethnorelative stages (approval, adjustment, integration). During the first stage (refusal) it is experienced an inability to encounter diversity; the only way in which the subject deals with it is through a stereotyped behaviour or using tolerance, but also adopting an attitude of isolation and detachment (putting up physical and social barriers to increase the distance); its learning objectives concern increasing knowledge by gathering information on the subject and other people's culture, acknowledging diversity and enhancing trust and willingness to cooperate. The second stage (defence) entails a perception of diversity as a threat and, as a consequence, the will to denigrate others and the adoption of an attitude of superiority; during this stage it's important to work on the similarities and on the ability to control one's anxiety and responsibly self-regulate oneself. In the third stage concerning the minimisation of differences, it's important to become aware of oneself and of the others, moving toward an ethnorelative perspective; the aim is to promote a voluntary and deeper knowledge of oneself and of the others through non-judgmental interactions and an active listening.

The following stages are the actual ethnorelative ones, like: approval, in which the respect for diversity starts developing; it should be supported by promoting motivation and enthusiasm, for example organising periods of stay in the countries involved, or games and simulations with which to develop empathy; adjustments, that implies a development of cultural identity, that requires skills like cognitive flexibility, risks assessment, accountability, and empathy; finally integration, intended as the phase in which the previous stages are internalised to build a multicultural identity that accepts the different views of the world; this stage's objective is to learn skills as identity and roles flexibility.

The high number and the variety of the models and theories that dealt with the intercultural perspective and, more specifically, with the intercultural competence, is a proof of how complex is to develop this competence and to develop the necessary skills: in fact, it implies "cognitive aspects, linguistic and social skills, motivation and (individual/social) positive attitudes, as



well as a meta-reflexivity and a meta strategy that regulate the process and implement it ad infinitum” (3), even if in the different models there is a difference in the the level of importance given to each one of these aspects.

As outlined by Piazza (4), it is possible to define the intercultural competence as the sum of different knowledge/skills/competencies possessed by the educator; more specifically:

- (Political, economic, social and legal) knowledge of the causes and results of the migration flows and of the encounter of cultures (knowledge of the mother countries, of the living conditions and prejudices);
- knowledge of the social policy framework and of the social work , as well as of the working conditions in intercultural situations;
- linguistic knowledge and proficiency;
- the ability to reflect on the personal patterns of actions and of stereotypes and prejudices perceptions;
- the ability to identificate with others and to perceive things from a different culture’s point of view;
- self-critique, open-mindedness and willingness to learn;
- being familiar with diversity;
- conflict management.

Of course, it is necessary that the educator is open-minded in order to personally experience how difficult and complicated it is to establish proper interpersonal relationships, and to learn how to combine the intellectual aspects with the socio-emotional and experiential ones related to personal experiences. For an intercultural understanding, his educational needs cannot be separated from a constant reflection and critical relativisation of his prejudices, identifying and contextualising the phenomena in a historical, social and economic perspective. He has to be an intercultural mediator, so an educator that knows how to deal with cultural diversities, that questions himself, that plays an important role in facilitating the communication between different cultures, and that works in a preventive way, promoting the awareness, and the unmasking of racism and openness toward new paths of dialogue.

It’s important to highlight that to develop a curriculum aimed at interculturality it is not sufficient to add new knowledge and activities; these, in fact, should be transversely re-elaborated to modify the representation of the other considering his cognitive, emotional and physical aspects.

In addition to the three above-mentioned dimensions (knowledge, positive attitudes and skills) there is a fourth one that, according to Fantini (3), is probably the most important: awareness, which, if related to the self, affects the exploration and experimentation processes as well as the process of experiencing reality, in a reflexive and introspective way. Being aware makes the subject adopt a critical perspective on social context, modifying himself and his relationships with the others and making him critically and creatively interact with reality.

Melucci wrote: “...to encounter otherness we should be ready to change; we cannot communicate and deal with differences simply by remaining ourselves. The possibility of living together requires some skills and the will to encounter the other, and has a deep moral implication: the necessity to keep and to lose, to deal with fears and oppositions, but also to transcend our already given identities” (5).

Consequently, it’s crucial for the educator to develop skills and competences aimed at becoming critically aware of his stances, sometimes unconsciously prejudicial towards the other; at the same time, his way of relating to people and his methods and styles of teaching should be modified to make them more consistent and congruent with the cognitive, emotional and instinctual styles of the individuals with different cultural identities. He should also have the possibility to experiment different intercultural situations and test himself for two main reasons:

first of all because in these occasions he can give himself a challenge and evaluate himself in contexts that can be difficult and confrontational in terms of communication and interaction, and, secondly, because in these situations latent prejudices, that would have never been discovered if not directly experienced, can be revealed. These can be defined as a relational training ground, where the individual can interpret his experience according to a specific social context that, through his intervention, can be modified and oriented towards increasingly intercultural dimensions (4).

These considerations, as the ones who follow, are important in terms of implementing the expert’s curriculum, but also to give him some guidelines for the intercultural field work. For example, in both cases, he can use a methodology based on the conflict hypothesis (in the present case the conflict between the latent prejudice and the positive self-image), as a way of unveiling the prejudices of the subjects involved in the situation, facing them with greater awareness and then eliminating them or at least hindering them.



To be oriented toward interculturality, the educational commitment of the trainer should aim at the development of skills concerning open-mindedness and respect for the other; important aspects are empathy, cultural decentralisation, multiple perspectives, conflict management, multilingualism and intercultural communication.

If empathy is considered the ability to put oneself in somebody’s shoes to give a meaning to behaviour that otherwise will have no explanation, in this specific case the empathic ability does not consist in sharing cultural aspects but in respecting them as necessary elements to give a meaning to people’s histories and lives (6).

To build empathic interpersonal relationships, even during an educational process, it is necessary to be willing to know the other person and his “diversities” as well as to use active listening and to analyse the non-verbal language, giving the person the time and the space to communicate his point of view and to make himself understood. In order to be ready to accept the other it’s important to carry out a process of cultural decentralisation that makes the person acknowledge other cultures’ contributions, but that also makes him reflect upon his cultural conditioning; it is about examining one’s own cultural, professional and human reality from an objective point of view, to understand its relativism, considering all the possible realities (4).

For this reason, it is important to use a multi-perspective approach, intended as the ability to interpret the same problem using several points of view, highlighting the reality’s complexity and strength that is due to the existence of multiple perspectives through which examining the same events. As mentioned above, the management of intrapsychic and interpersonal conflicts helps dealing with the disputes that may arise due to the meeting between different cultures, values, behaviours and expectations; the conflict should not be intended as an episode that has a destructive nature but as a clash that becomes encounter through a dialogue based on respect, empathy and mediation.



Therefore, to work in the area of intercultural education, an important prerequisite is plurilingualism or at least an inclination to it, in order to communicate and discuss; moreover it’s also necessary to have a good control of non-verbal language (attitudes, gestuality and facial expressions). In fact, according to Franca Pinto Minerva (7) communicative competence cannot be reduced to linguistic proficiency. It is rather a socio-psychological ability to get closer to the other, to overcome the fear of getting in touch with other people and finding things in common.

It is linked to linguistic mediation, to dialogue and to the art of listening. Learning to listen to other people’s stories “helps us to enrich our views of life, to deepen the meaning of our existence, to feel emotions and make reflections that highlights the significance and, at the same time, the complexity of our history, to bring to life the strength of our plural identity by letting other people see through us... Listening gives evidence of the willingness to “cure/look after the other, that can become the cure of ourselves” (7).

The aim is developing an intercultural communication that can connect people and groups belonging to different cultures, making their encounter, and more generally the encounter with diversity, an occasion for personal growth and enrichment. As already stated, these exchanges may bring out conflicts, so it’s important to consider intercultural communication as a transition/path where none of the individuals involved, neither the educators, are required to give up their values and beliefs, but they should reflect on their cultural heritage and on how it influence their communicative methods that can cause misunderstandings”.

By developing the above mentioned aspects concerning the intercultural competence, it is possible to better address some contents like the description and comparison of past and present migration flows in the countries involved; the understanding of its causes (which difficulties may lead a person to leave his mother country?) and consequence, both from an individual and social point of view (identity, welcoming and adjustment issues); the effect that living in a new multicultural context can have on people belonging to specific social group (children, youngsters, adults and old people), to a specific gender (man/woman), or in specific moments of their lives (unemployment, retirement, pregnancy etc.); identifying the main reasons linked to the development of xenophobic and racist behaviours; the legal and administrative regulations concerning migration in the EU countries as well as the measures taken on a national and international level.

Another aspect to take into account is the effect of poverty, that if addressed from an empathic point of view will give the opportunity to the educators to understand the repercussions it has on the individual's life and on his abilities to concur to the improvement of society through himself and his personal development. Here lies the importance of knowing the pedagogical models, in particular the ones that derives from intercultural pedagogy, to define the forms of intervention and educational work that can be used to face and prevent personal discomforts that derive from different factor, one of which may be the phenomenon of migration.

From a methodological point of view, an educational project oriented towards interculturality can be outlined starting from the individualisation of the educational situations experienced by the educators and/or by the individuals being formed (conflict management, difficulties in communication, first encounter and welcoming, etc.) and then planning four modes of action for each situation; each one of them can be analysed alone or as part of a broader and more complex project: 1) a stimulus that can bring to mind at least some of the aspects of the situation/object involved, to make the subject experience its consequent implications on a psychological and educational/pedagogical level; 2) an analysis of the different theoretical contributions concerning the situation's implications from an emotional, cognitive and social point of view, that will give a broader interpretation to the experience linked to the activity/stimulus and that will make the individuals being formed behave like researchers observing reality, formulating and examining hypothesis, finding new innovative solutions; 3) a workshop activity to put into practice the consideration and suggestions resulting from the previous stage or pertaining to the topics/object of the trigger situation; 4) the collection or creation of tools (for example bibliographic material, reference framework, flash cards, action plans etc.) that can be useful in the management of the intervention and/or of the trigger situation.

The possible intercultural activities to carry out during the educational process can be divided in six main categories:

1. Activities that highlight different points of view or that focus on the places in which the subjects have lived, that can lead to a peaceful comparison of cultural aspects and differences;

2. Activities focused on identifying prejudices and more generally the subject's self-perception and perception of others;
3. Activities focused on different visions of the world, for example philosophical and religious visions of the world, differences in art, interior design, music, folklore, etc;
4. Activities focused on other people's discomfort/problems, for example on financial difficulties or on immigration and on its local and international implications, but also on losing one's roots and looking for a new identity;
5. Activities focused on similarities, for example on everything concerning rights and duties that makes us equal, on what makes us part of the humankind or on needs and objectives shared by groups of people who didn't think to have something in common. From a relational viewpoint this means paying attention to the transformation of the conflicts and group dynamics, highlighting the skills that facilitate the comparison and the encounter with diversity, and that require cooperative activities;
6. Activities focused on differences, in particular aimed at turning differences into positive personal qualities, that prevents people from becoming standardised subjects, and that can also be shared and used by others as a learning opportunity.

Piazza (4) highlights also what can be considered small mistakes to avoid in an intercultural programme, some misunderstandings that can compromise its evolution and reduce its effectiveness. A misunderstanding can be addressing culture as something standardised and belonging to a whole nation or ethnicity, in fact, even two persons of the same nationality can be very different from each other due to the fact that they might have different social backgrounds and belong to different generations; furthermore “each individual's identity is not determined by a single category, but it is influenced by a variety of cultural contributions, since no collective identity alone is sufficient to unify all the spheres of existence of the individual”(5).



Another mistake can be giving a static nature to culture and considering behaviours as “transpositions of monolithic blocks of a culture to another context” (6), because this will reduce individual behaviour to a linear cause-effect process that doesn't express and reflect human complexity: human beings are a system living within other systems from which they learn things but at the same to which they make some changes.

Believing that a single variable can be the cause for something is always dangerous and, in this specific case, the risk to give a fixed nature to individuals, to their cultures, should demonstrate how this fixity and generalisation of people's behaviour is actually a personal perception and cognitive construction.

In other words, if trying to understand the cultural schematas that could have influenced the person's way of life is necessary to establish a relationship with the other, it is not sufficient to

understand and explain his behaviour in general; the risk is to focus only on culture without taking into account the several factors (psychological, social, legal, economic, healthcare etc.) that contribute to personal, and sometimes unintentional, ways of behaving. Sometimes, to fully understand a specific culture, people involved in the educational process start studying books and traveling to that culture's countries of origin turning into real ethnologists and, sometimes, they are so fascinated by it that they start identifying with that culture. But if in the process of intercultural understanding it's crucial to neutralise the person's point of view (that is determined by his own culture, experiences and background) to have a perception of the other culture that is unbiased and as objective as possible, this entails the ongoing effort of understanding the inner workings of his culture. So it can be stated that to understand other cultures we should give the same importance to the exploration and understanding of our own culture while exploring the others.

Collecting information is still not enough to fully understand the other, there should also be a predisposition to dialogue: the persons that belong to that culture can better express their cultural and life conditions as long as all the people involved in the interaction and in the education/learning process establish a climate of trust, open-mindedness and empathy, respecting the roles. In this occasion it's important to highlight that sometimes during the educational process the person can express scepticism about the relation with the educator; he can perceive the educator as someone who provides help and can mediate between him and the society but, in some institutional contexts, it can focus on his control function/monitoring role. This stresses how crucial it is to work together on the relational aspects, because not always everything is due to communication problems and it's sufficient to refer to cultural codes for the relationship to become harmonious. It should not be forgotten that the relationship between the educators and the users is not egalitarian because they don't occupy the same positions. A "third space" of trust and mutual transformation should be created, in which everyone is open to change without losing sight of the final educational objectives and of the process built time after time to reach them.

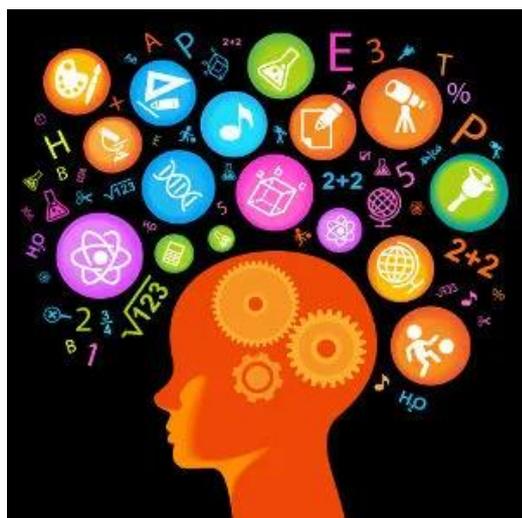
In conclusion, the acquisition and development of intercultural competences is a long and dynamic process that continues throughout life: intercultural education requires the educator to adopt the previously mentioned orientations of intercultural pedagogy, in other words, he should "be the bearer of a personal epistemology that makes him take part in the intercultural educational project with consciousness and active commitment, supported by concrete and efficient competences, which can be modified and constantly updated" (4).

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1.8 The role of metacognition in the education and learning processes

Using metacognition as a methodological ground in training and education, provides the opportunity to generate significant learning for every individual, even for people who have learning difficulties due to the lack of personal or socio-environmental resources, both cognitive or affective-relational. Metacognition was defined during the 70's by John H. Flavell (1), an American psychologist specialized in cognitive development, as knowledge and control of the cognition; later, countless studies have focused on the development and use of metacognition and, particularly during the '80s, it became/started to be considered an efficient intervention strategy for individuals with learning difficulties. But after, researchers realised that also in situations in which there were normal cognitive abilities the use of metacognition resulted in the strengthening of these abilities, so their interest was directed not only to the cognitive processes that were at first considered necessary to achieve some learning results, but also to all the aspects linked to the subject's awareness of his mental processes.



So other variables involved in the learning process were taken into account, like for example the motivational and situational ones, and it started to take shape what today is called “metacognitive perspective”, intended as the ability of the individual to observe and reflect on his general psychological functioning. This perspective takes into account not only the cognitive aspects of the individual but also the emotional, sentimental, relational and social spheres.

Therefore the term metacognition can be defined as the knowledge about cognition and the control of cognition, so as the ability to reflect on our cognitive behaviours, to be aware of them, to use strategies to learn more efficiently and to control our cognitive processes, modifying them according to the objects and contexts of experience” (2)

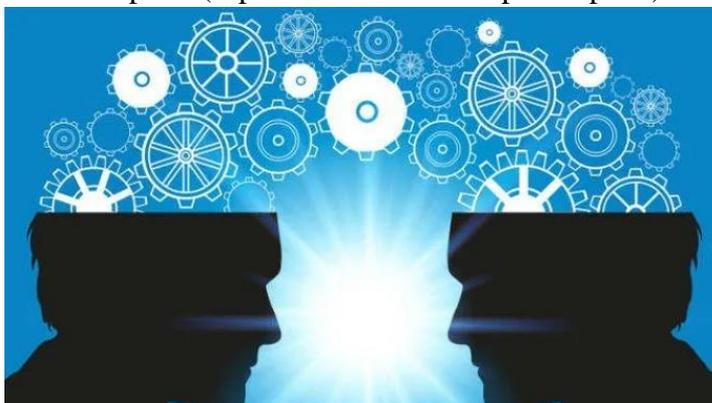
Metacognition can be translated as “learning to learn” and the processes of gradual acquisition of metacognitive skills involve both the strategies that the subject internalize and reiterate in education and learning processes, and the theories intended as the concepts and models he uses in his daily approach to reality and relationship with people. According to the European Council's Recommendations of the 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning “Member States should support the development of learning to learn competence as a constantly improved basis for learning and participation in society in a lifelong perspective”, learning to learn is therefore one of the key competence that the student should possess, so one of the essential and necessary competence for all the individuals that provide the basis for a lifelong learning.

So, if on a theoretical level “metacognition is an important topic of the pedagogical reflection” (2), on the one of educational practice it is highlighted the importance of training and didactic planning aimed at developing metacognitive skills, to help students become independent learners. Being a form of mind self-regulation (3), metacognition makes the individual monitor

and control his cognitive processes, but unlike simple cognition, that is part of the individual's mental baggage, metacognitive skills (intended as the person's awareness and knowledge of the way in which his mind works) are developed going beyond rote learning. A training course aimed at this development and at the development of the above mentioned skills should take into account different elements like the role played by experience in renewing/re-elaborating prior knowledge, the motivation to learn, cognitive and strategic individual styles, modes of communication. During the educational process individual differences, teaching methodologies, educational flexibility, the role of experiences and mistakes, cognitive plasticity and the social/relational dimension of learning should be constantly taken into account and monitored.

If we combine the theories of Ashman and Conway (4) and Ianes (5), to promote metacognitive skills education should be focused on 4 specific dimensions: cognitive functioning, self-awareness of our cognitive functioning, cognitive self-regulation strategies, psychological variables.

So the first educational objective concerns acquiring information on the way in which human cognitive processes work, to make the individual more conscious of their variety and complexity. For example, it can be useful to explain (if possible with the help of experts) how cognitive operations concerning memory, research, the storage and retrieval of information, perception, attention, the different types of learning, the self-observation of one's own performances, the emotional influences, imagination and the creation of study plans are carried out. Also in literature they talk about "metacognitive knowledge", that refers to the individual's understanding of the mental functioning according to its impressions, intuitions, knowledge, feelings and self-perceptions/observations.



By using this knowledge, that doesn't take into account only cognitive processes, the subject knows why people forget things, how people learn things, what is the effect of time on memory, etc.

The second dimension makes the individual move from this general theoretical knowledge to the one that mainly reflects his subjectivity, identifying strengths and weaknesses. We acquire metacognitive knowledge by working on ourselves and through other people's feedback concerning our performance. This awareness should be accompanied by a climate of acceptance, because otherwise negative opinions can affect the person's self-esteem.

The aim of the third dimension is to turn the individual into an autonomous learner, who takes control of his own cognitive processes and of the consequent behaviour. The metacognitive processes defined as "control processes" involve the ability to check our mental activity as it takes place and to use specific strategies. The control part consists in evaluating the level of

difficulty of the material, in understanding to what extent you possess the knowledge related to that field of interest, in using strategies appropriate to perform the task, in verifying if the undertaken learning activity can lead to the intended results.

This can be done through the development of abilities like: setting clear and specific targets, comparing and evaluating. Usually people use these abilities everyday, but they do it quickly and mechanically: “the difference between cognitive and metacognitive processes consist in this dimension, in making the person aware of the self-regulation processes that are involved while acting, making it more consistent and conscious itself.

Therefore metacognitive education should be able to combine the monitoring of cognitive resources with moments dedicated to the control of planning and evaluation of what has been learned. According to a self-regulative approach, individuals should not only be helped to identify the necessary skills to solve a problem/complete a task, but should also be encouraged to evaluate and choose which of the possible operational strategies is more suitable/appropriate, learning from their mistakes and questioning them to be able to self-regulate themselves in a more autonomous and efficient way when needed.

According to Ianes (5) a “control” process can be articulated as follows:

- setting a clear objective aiming at giving the process an optimal functionality, both in terms of results and operating method (example: the procedure to use to remember names or to write a summary);



- giving instructions to carry out the process’ typical procedures (for example, writing 5 times the list of words to remember on a piece of paper);

- observing the process evolution and gathering data concerning the results;

- confronting data to the objectives;

- evaluating the carrying out of the procedures.

The fourth dimension makes the educators and the individuals reflect on some psychological variables that are linked to the perception they have of themselves as people who are able to learn. They can discuss the factors, that can be internal or external, that contribute to the development of this self-image, the sense of self-efficacy, the abilities to spur themselves. The factors/aspects linked to their perceptions as students can positively or negatively interfere with study activities and with the metacognitive approach’s chances of success.

From this we can understand how crucial intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, trust, self-esteem, and the different emotional variables are. Many learning difficulties are due to a lack of intrinsic

motivation, that is the ability to understand the importance of learning, that results in the students spontaneous choice to learn. The extrinsic motivation, on the contrary, is based on the use of positive reinforcement (the person studies not because he understands the importance of learning but to receive rewards and gratifications). Very often extrinsic motivation is used to stimulate intrinsic motivation, sometimes without success. This happens in particular when the individual presents low levels of self-esteem; in these cases, the subject should not only be reassured but his sense of self-efficacy should be increased, giving him trust, highlighting his individual potentialities, making him experience his success through activities adapted to his limits and resources. So it's important that the educator manages to create a climate in which the self-esteem of the subject is not threatened, characterised by openness toward the other and lack of judgement, decreasing the level of anxiety often experienced by the "student" that of course doesn't have the same cultural level of "the person who is teaching". If this anxiety is not processed it can affect the cognitive performances of the user.

Compensation strategies are then used, so the set of procedures, expedients and education/learning styles that can make it more significant and efficient. As already said, it's important to create a calm, cooperative, co-responsible atmosphere, to motivate everyone and make them aware; it's crucial to focus on the person and on his peculiarities rather than mainly on his performances; it would be ideal to establish an interpersonal relationship based on mutual respect and on the willingness to improve oneself; the interaction should be founded on true benevolence that can promote the will and motivation of the subjects; moreover it is necessary to develop communicative skills, the ability to listen and to focus on oneself and on the other and strategies and materials (schemes, maps, images and videos) should be used to facilitating the learning of contents.

The four above-mentioned dimensions, that are considered useful for metacognitive education, are deeply intertwined: for example, giving information on how memory works can make the person pay more attention to his methods of memorisation, and experiment new strategies. Their success can increase his self-efficacy and self-esteem, making the subject more curious and motivated to learn.



This interconnection can lead to a global and combined approach that deals with the four levels, but it is also possible to use more focused approaches if it is thought that for a single person or for a group of people it is more productive to mainly work on a specific dimension; this can happen when, for example, some dimensions are already sufficiently developed or when a single dimension prevent the subject from learning the others.

The metacognitive educational approach's significant change consists in the fact that the educator's attention is focused on going beyond the cognition, so on making the subject aware

of what he is doing, how and why he's doing it and when and to what extent it is appropriate to do it and under what conditions.

The metacognitive approach gives an important role to the educator: he becomes the “facilitator” of minds’ structural changes; this term is used to refer to a complex process that doesn’t consist in compensating specific behaviours, skills or competences, but that directly involves the mental processes’ structures and that, for this reason, lasts over time.

What has been discussed above can seem difficult to carry out, but actually it’s important to highlight that if the person constantly trains his metacognitive abilities, this knowledge will become so ingrained in the individual that he will use it automatically, without thinking about its mechanisms. As a consequence it can be stated that metacognition can be used in several educational contexts, regardless of the topics covered.

According to Cunti (6), metacognition can be considered as the meeting point between learning and education, that is characterised by the “abilities to stimulate, guide and support’s training modalities, performed by the educator. During the first phase, in which the relationship between the members involved in the education process is structured, the educator should mainly commit himself to knowing the person in front of him, making him explain his modes of cognitive, emotional and physical functioning, so that he has a more complex but at the same time clear picture of himself, of his characteristics, limits and resources. Later, in the building phase, the educator should promote a positive redefinition of the thought of the person involved in the learning process, to make it more flexible, so that he can meet the environmental needs.



For this reason, the educator should not only focus on reaching the set objectives, but he should also use specific “methodologies, strategies and procedures as well as organise activities and select cognitive and socioemotional behaviours to make the educational situation evolve in a specific direction” (6).

“Metacognitive education requires the use of different methodologies, since a typical aspect of metacognitive activity is constant monitoring, evaluation and self-evaluation of the learning-processes” (2). But the favourite options are Learning Organisation and group work.

When using these methodologies it should be always taken into account that the group work is systemically more complex than the individual one (that is complex in and of itself, especially from a metacognitive perspective) and that the learning effectiveness is directly proportional to the ability of the educator to handle the exchanges in the groups, stimulating, observing and managing team dynamics. The educator will have to create “a context that is emotional and relational, spatial and temporal, instructive and based on research, ludic and socialising” (6), to give an educational meaning to the events of the day, meeting the group’s needs.

Working in group means understanding that, in every moment, each group member can have a specific learning requirement, also a metacognitive one; this means that the educator should be aware of his metacognitive value and of the one of his actions as an educator, and he should use it to develop the educational programme. At the same time he should also be aware of the metacognitive value of the group members to stimulate and guide it during the process.

The educator should work on two fronts: he should build a knowledge that on one hand is subjective, so linked to the metacognitive features, and to his own emotional-relational features and to the ones of the learners, on the other objective, analyzing and verifying in the context the metacognitive needs of the group.

Both if it is used by a group or an individual approach, formative intentionality should always be made explicit and mediated, and the subjects involved in the education process should aim toward the same objectives as the educator. “This is necessary to motivate them, to support them during difficult moments, to give them a term for comparison. The opportunity given to the subject to pre-represent himself in a different situation, where he masters the ability, gives start to a self-evaluation procedure that, if correctly promoted/supported, has positive effects on the emotional and cognitive sides” (6).



In a metacognitive perspective intentionality is not referred mainly to the results, but to the process/method which requires clear and accurate references/information: the knowledge of and the ability to analyse one’s learning modes, as well as the knowledge, analysis and variability of the strategies used time after time. Making intentionality explicit means making it part of a mediated

learning that has been changed in the process; the resulting significant learning will be the outcome of a self guided activity, with an intrinsic motivation to learn and explore. Expressing the learning intentionality entails a higher ability to guide the cognitive processes, controlling and orienting not only the cognitive aspects but also the affective-relational ones.

“The individual learns to face the learning problems and his learning problems, through a method based on “estrangement” that can make him overcome difficulties on different levels, not just the cognitive one; this implies an increase in the level of self-esteem and an improvement of the mental abilities that mutually strengthen each other because giving legitimacy to our way of thinking and studying represents an enhancement of the heuristic self that provide the subject a positive approach toward the cognitive task, optimising his chances of success” (6).

For this to happen in a relation between two people during an education programme, pay attention to the benefits that experience has on a group, as long as there is a peaceful, non judgemental and non competitive atmosphere.

So, to sum it up, the metacognition field can become the meeting point between education and learning if the educator is able to take into account the two elements at the same time (education and learning), as two aspects of the same problem-objective, during all the phases of the formation process (planning, carrying out, evaluation). The problem-objective consists in sketching out, actualising and verifying the favourable condition to develop metacognitive abilities.

This structure can reflect a strategic choice that can be used to educate all the individuals, not only the ones that present learning problems and not only in situations of support and assistance, to improve weak and inadequate metacognitive skills; infact, on one hand, the importance of the feedbacks and information provided by metacognition to the educator that can facilitate an understanding of the subject should not be underestimated, on the other the educator can make the individual acquire the ability to stay focused on the learning objective and on the intended cognitive path.

The aim is to contextualise the content; the individuals should understand and appreciate, not only the cultural validity of the content and its social usability, but also the intended final performance and the itinerary/programme to realise it, that if revealed, makes it possible to carry out a constant monitoring and to make adjustments accordingly. A metacognitive approach requires, other than planning work units in which the different parts/elements (objectives, contents, methods, tools, verification/evaluation methods) create a network structure, also the prevision of the activities that will engage the individuals and the educators; the activities to perform should be consistent with the objective and the context should be designed to achieve it.

For this reason, also the sequence of the activities is crucial, because it meets the need to gradually improve the cultural acquisition/elaboration during the process; that means that the activities in which individuals and educators are involved, in addition to their rule in enhancing, improving and upholding the competences, are so intertwined that the efficacy of each one depends on the relationship with the others.

So it's important to organise the educators and individuals' activities and to adopt and make people adopt relational and cognitive behaviours from a constructivist and interactionist perspective. The logic of the first perspective is about enhancing the processuality of the education and the gradualness and subjective specificity of learning; it focuses in particular on the importance given to the cognitive modalities of learning, themselves resulting from teaching-learning.

The individuals involved in the education process should become aware of their own metacognitive and operational modalities concerning problems-tasks, the comparison between the individual and other people's cognitive paths should be facilitated, and appropriate strategies required time after time should be introduced and used.

The interactionist approach focuses on "learning together", in particular on discussing as a way of developing a common view. Under the methodological guidance of the educator, that if needed can also provide cognitive support, the group proposes, verifies and modifies

hypotheses, learning to reason more properly and to constantly challenge their ideas and paths, thanks to the constant stimulation of the guide and of the other members.

The metacognitive approach, as multi-purpose and cross-cutting approach (due to the fact that it is a method that can be applied to different learning contexts) represents a favoured modality to teach contents to people belonging to all age groups, because it aims to a functional and structural growth of the subject.

In conclusion we can state that “learning to learn” is not only a competence, but today it should also be considered a *modus vivendi ed operandi*, that involves everyone who is learning; a group of abilities concerning the “knowing how to (be)” that affect everyone’s development process, looking toward a continuous and lifelong education, and an inclusion process.

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1.9 Intercultural mediation as a support activity when the language level is B1 or B2

“Mediation process is a unique convergence that can (re)shape participants’ lifeworlds, namely values, beliefs and principles forming new social spaces of engagement through reciprocal communication and understanding. In this context, mediators assist parties from different cultural contexts to understand one another by becoming aware of (own) biases towards processes, persons, behaviors and outcomes and to engage in effective communication and action (Arvanitis, 2014; Sani, 2015).”



Globalisation and modern mobility affect societies both structurally and culturally. They challenge social cohesion and national identity building. However, cultural identities are highly shaped by diversity. Intercultural dialogue and mediation can build a balanced relationship between people of different cultures and a new social space where cultural transformation may occur. The role of the “intercultural mediator” is really complex and comprises many factors that are deeply intertwined; many scholars have provided definitions for it, some of them will be shown below to analyse and give an overall and broader description of his tasks and responsibilities. When talking about intercultural mediation the first things that comes to mind is the language and communication barriers, which are considered the main obstacles to socialization and integration, but difficulties in communication and mutual understanding may not only result from the lack of proficiency in the other language, in fact they can stem from:

- different language or terminological correspondences;
- cognitive gaps, i.e. unfamiliarity with certain concepts or processes;
- lack of relevant information (e.g. about how to apply for housing);
- cultural customs and traditions (e.g. relating to concepts of politeness or punctuality);
- or also disability (e.g. partial sightedness, hearing impairment).

We can understand that the majority of these factors are mainly determined by cultural differences, rather than by the lack of language competence. That’s where “mediation” becomes more complicated.

The migratory experience is in herself a difficult experience, since it entails considerable changes in the lives of the individuals and inevitably arouses a series of contrasting reactions and feelings. In fact, the parting from the land of origin and from the affective relations, as well as the change of lifestyle and the resulting sense of loneliness, of lack of certainties and cultural references, can cause strong disorientation and affect negatively on the psychophysical level

as well. In this respect, it is easy to understand the importance of “promoting a valid intervention of mediation that aims, on the one hand, to foster the dialogue among different cultures and, on the other hand, that considers the intrinsic value of the people and of the fact that each individual –independently from one’s own culture- perceives and experiences such changes in a totally subjective way and, therefore, needs and active and participating listening more than methodological and organizational procedures based on the mere knowledge of the culture of origin” (Dusi, 2000, pp. 175-178).

Mediation is therefore very important for migrants and for anyone who is new to a country, its language and its culture. An aspect that should be highlighted is that, from an intercultural point of view, mediation can be also considered a determining factor in social integration policies and it is necessary both to allow foreign citizens to exercise their rights and to be able to avail themselves of the same opportunities of the native citizens, and to foster cultural integration through the reciprocal knowledge and the exchange between different cultures.

The role of the intercultural mediator



An intercultural mediator (also called ‘community interpreter’) facilitates communication between domestic, ethnic and migrant individuals, families and communities in general (Catarci, 2016). The role of intercultural mediators is both to support migrants and refugees to settle in the new country and to liaise with social actors and institutions so to understand

migrant settlement needs and communicate with respect to their diversity (Cohen-Emerique, 2007:8). Acting as an intermediate between refugees/migrants and the society, intercultural mediator tackles cultural and language barriers and fosters inclusion and the development of a culture of openness. Intercultural mediator deals with beneficiaries and assists them to deal with the complexities of social citizenship. It facilitates refugee/migrant needs and collaborates with public servants in supporting them to design, implement and evaluate social and civic interventions (Cartaci, 2016). In general, intercultural mediation is considered as a “systemic response to secure access to public services” (Arvanitis, 2014:1).

From this definitions we can understand that the role of the mediator is to guide the migrant after his arrival in the new country, giving him all the necessary information and tools to understand the host culture and traditions, how to find an accomodation, a job, how to have access to health and social services, so to enable him to live like a local citizen, helping him develop the required skills to reach this condition. He should also promote a dialogue between the different cultures to enhance the process of acceptance and integration. The linguistic support is just a small part in the mediation process.

Being an intercultural mediator is not an easy task, because it implies having several competences and a deep knowledge of cultural, language and social differences. More specifically, Sani identified some skills and attitudes that an efficient intercultural mediators should possess, such as:

- good migrant language skills, both spoken and written;
- a solid knowledge of both the migration population and the mainstream culture, ensuring that refugees/migrants have the right and space to express their needs and that mainstream society understands the situation and handles it properly;
- a good grasp of the social context and of all the regulatory aspects related to mainstream healthcare, national social service, education, work, etc;
- he must be able to foresee the possible conflicts that could arise from the encounter of different cultures and traditions. Thus, management skills and handling obstacles to the integration and access to education and medical care is required.

The above skills can be summarized to the model of intercultural competence that is used to look for evidence of specific attitudes, skills and knowledge that shape an intercultural speaker (Byram, 1997:58-64).

In brief, the model of intercultural competence consists of five elements with the first two functioning as preconditions for successful intercultural/interlingual interaction and the rest as necessary skills:

- attitudes: relativise self and value other; suspend belief in own and disbelief in others' behaviours, beliefs and values;
- knowledge: of own and other's behaviours, beliefs and values; of how each is seen by other – comparative methods;
- of interpreting and relating 'documents'/'texts' based on existing knowledge and attitudes;
- of discovering (in own time or in interaction) new behaviours, beliefs and values;
- of interacting in real time based on other preconditions and skills;
- the responsibility of the teacher to develop 'critical cultural awareness'.

But the most important aspects to establish effective social relationships are personal disposition and respect. Intercultural mediators should support both migrants and native populations to understand their differences from an interpersonal and an intercultural perspective, and to collaborate towards common goals.

Analysing mediation

Intercultural mediation is really complex and, as we have seen, it doesn't consist only in providing language competence to enable migrants to communicate and carry out basic daily

activities but entails several factors that all contribute to the integration into and adjustment to the new context, in particular all the peculiar cultural aspects that hinder mutual understanding. Since it has also been defined as “a social process through which different standards of conduct blend in: the words, the gestures, the looks, the mimicry, the interpersonal space that it determines”, it is easy to understand why, sometimes, it is difficult to give the right interpretation to the messages that we get from the other (Kbati, 2004, pp. 79-80). It is therefore a matter of helping the speakers to relate to each other in a balanced way, that is, to alternate themselves “according to an equilibrium grounded on reciprocity” (Fiorucci, 2003, p. 90).



In his definition of mediation, the French scholar J.F. Six describes it with four adjectives underlining four fundamental characteristics:

- first of all, mediation is “**creative**” in the sense that one of its purposes is to create new connections, which did not exist before, between people or groups, from which both parties benefit”;
- secondly, mediation is “**renewing**” to the extent that it allows to improve the existing connections between the mediated parties, connections that had been deteriorated or loosened before the conflict”;
- moreover mediation is “**preventive**” in the sense that it foresees and prevents the conflicts that might occur between people or groups”;
- lastly, mediation is “**therapeutic**” every time that a mediator comes into play when the conflict is already existing and has to assist and help the people and the groups to find solutions, and to choose ways out of the conflict” (Six, 1990, p. 44-54).

Essentially, according to the scholar, these four forms of mediation tend to create or re-create the communication thanks to the intervention of the mediator, whose role is crucial, as he acts as a **bridge between different cultures**. In its broadest meaning in fact, mediation can be described as a practice aimed at solving problems due to communication barriers that can originate from the lack of knowledge of the language and culture of the interlocutor .

Considering what has been said till now, we can identify four different types of mediation: linguistic, cultural, social and pedagogic. The linguistic one will not be further analysed since the focus of this unit is on the other aspects mediation consists in, despite all of them being linked to language.

The linguistic mediation that tries to facilitate understanding is also unavoidably a process of cultural mediation. Passing from one language to another necessarily involves passing from one culture to another. Deeply connected to intercultural mediation is the concept of **cultural awareness**, which entails being aware of the cultural differences and their impact on people’s behavior, values, beliefs, and judgments. It includes:

- Having a firm grasp of what culture is and what it is not;
- Understanding how people acquire their cultures and culture’s important role in personal identities, life ways, and mental and physical health of individuals and communities;
- Being conscious of one’s own culturally shaped values, beliefs, perceptions, and biases;
- Observing one’s reactions to people whose cultures differ from one’s own and reflecting upon these responses;
- Seeking and participating in meaningful interactions with people of differing cultural backgrounds.

By understanding the cultural genesis of our own and others’ beliefs and behaviors, and by remaining open to the idea that other people’s cultures guide them in the same way that ours guides us, people in general, but in particular educators, health and mental health professionals and policy makers, will have a better chance of interacting positively with, and appropriately serving, people of varying cultural backgrounds.



Culture can be defined as the learned and shared knowledge that specific groups use to generate their behavior and interpret their experience of the world. It comprises beliefs about reality, how people should interact with each other, what they “know” about the world, and how they should respond to the social and material environments in which they find themselves. It is reflected in their

religions, morals, customs, technologies, and survival strategies. It affects how they work, parent, love, marry, and understand health, mental health, wellness, illness, disability, and death.

One way to understand culture is to think of it as the “software” of the mind. Essentially, individuals are “programmed” by their cultural group to interpret and evaluate behaviors, ideas, relationships, and other people in specific ways that are unique to their group. Another excellent analogy for understanding the cultural process is to see culture as the “lens” through which people in a specific group view the world.

Social mediation seems to be limited, at least at first sight, to the idea of helping two or more persons to communicate who are unable to communicate alone because they cannot understand each other. But language is not the only reason why people cannot understand one another. The difficulty may be caused by different perspectives or expectations, different interpretation of behaviour, of rights and obligations, lack of knowledge or experience, to a lack of familiarity with the area or field concerned – the ‘mediator’ may help to bridge these gaps and overcome these misunderstandings. However, the concept of social mediation is normally interpreted far more broadly than in the above discussion. The multifaceted nature of social mediation requires further thoughts. Zarate helps us navigate this rich notion by proposing three complementary conceptions of mediation:

- ▶ mediation as an area for bringing together new partners. Mediators make intelligible to newcomers the cultural and linguistic contexts which the latter inaugurate;
- ▶ mediation in situations of conflict or tension, where languages and cultural references lead to exclusion and social violence.
- ▶ mediation instilling specific dynamics into third areas as alternatives to linguistic and cultural confrontation. In this plural area difference is pinpointed, negotiated and adapted.’ (2003: 95)

The third instance Zarate gives picks up on Kramersch’s (1993) notion of a ‘third space.’ In discussing the concept of ‘third space’ she says: ‘Understanding someone from another culture requires an effort of translation from one perspective to the other that manages to keep both in the same field of vision (ibid: 237).

The ‘third space’ is a ‘heterogeneous, indeed contradictory and ambivalent space in which third perspectives can grow in the margins of dominant ways of seeing’ (ibid: 237). It is a space in which a user/learner might take some distance from his/her cultural norms by ‘reading against the grain’ (ibid: 238) and becoming more aware of loaded connotations and biases. This last



aspect of what Kramersch is describing is very close to Byram’s skill: Critical cultural awareness / political education: An ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries. (1997: 53 and 63).

The last type of mediation is the pedagogical one. Essentially successful teaching is a form of mediation. Although countries and languages differ considerably in their pedagogic cultures, they usually present some combination of collaborative learning with teacher-centred approaches. Teachers and parents try to mediate knowledge, experiences and above all the ability to think critically for oneself – which together constitute cognitive mediation. However,

a lot of time in a classroom context is spent establishing relationships and rapport, organizing work, integrating certain individuals, keeping people on task, preventing trouble, resolving problems – etc. Thus, pedagogic mediation encompasses the following actions:

- ▶ facilitating access to knowledge, encouraging other people to develop their thinking (cognitive mediation:scaffolded)
- ▶ collaboratively co-constructing meaning as a member of a group in a school, seminar, or workshop setting (cognitive mediation:collaborative)
- ▶ creating the conditions for the above by creating, organizing and controlling space for creativity.

Conclusions

Many are the differences between people of different nations and cultures as well as between people that belong to the same nation and culture. Education, social standing, religion, personality, belief structure, past experience and a myriad of other factors will affect human behavior and culture. There are also differences in approach as to:

- what is considered polite and appropriate behavior;
- length of pleasantries and greetings;
- level of tolerance for being around someone speaking a foreign (not-understood) language;
- politeness measured in terms of gallantry or etiquette (e.g., standing up for a woman who approaches a table, yielding a seat on the bus to an older person, etc.);
- manner of expected dress.

All these cultural aspects define who we are. We are shaped by our culture and in turn we shape it. Cultural encounter and exchange should not be seen as something negative, but as an occasion to enrich ourselves and to acquire a broader perspective on the world. That's why intercultural mediators are an important resource.

Resources

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1.10 Information Technology taught to disadvantaged people to strengthen social and labour inclusion



There has been a growing attention to the use of digital and communication technologies in daily life, leading to the development of increasingly updated and “powerful” tools and of the internet.

In the last few years there has been a growing spread of the ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) in all the aspects of life causing a structural change in

society that on one hand has created new patterns of behaviour in different fields and new types of social, cultural, politic and economic interactions, and on the other hand has promoted the redefinition of these interactions, characterised by horizontality and by the development of reticular relationships between the different actors/subjects (1).

The new information technologies and in particular the development and spread of the telematic networks have provided new opportunities to communication, to the spread of information and, as a consequence, to the education sector; the constant changes of the means and ways of communication due to digital technologies have determined and

still determine changes in our everyday actions and in our relationships, to the point that this era was first referred to as “era of communication” and then “digital and narcissism era” (in particular due to the use of social media to attract attention).

In the education field, the introduction and the development of the ITC has lead to research, studies, considerations and debates; generally speaking it can be stated that a training to learn how to use technology is required for every educational project, independently from the subject, and in particular for the ones intended to teach the basics of information technology.

Furthermore, also in this case it is important to adopt a systemic point of view, because in the digital era teaching could not consist only in the mere transfer of knowledge and information, but the internet approach should be used, so a reticular approach where networking provides the opportunity to improve personal and social decisions and behaviour (which are deeply intertwined) (2).

Giving a broader meaning to the term “networking” it could be defined as the ability to create a network of professional relationships that last over time and that are based on mutual trust, so every IT training should be based on the acquisition of these skills, which are mainly relational.

The use of technologies founded on the development of social skills provides the opportunity to interact with other people, to network and cooperate with them, increasing independence and inclusion.

A “thought reform” to “keep up with times” is required (1): “today we have a higher education, more technological skills, more opportunities to communicate than ever. We are at the peak of our chances of personal improvement, thanks to an unlimited access to information...Now the most important thing, from an educational perspective, is to learn how to reprogram oneself” (2).

The trainer, while teaching the appropriate use of technologies, should not only be informed on the technological innovations but also to translate these knowledge in practical terms concerning personal growth and the improvement of different aspects of life.

The new technologies’ ability to improve the quality of life, reduce social exclusion and increase participation is internationally recognised, as well as the social, economic and political obstacles that the lack of access to the new technologies can produce; the new technologies should be considered an important tool to promote equal educational opportunities, having access to them should be considered a right and the educators’ training in the use of the new general and specialist technologies should be perceived as a priority.

Also in the European recommendations, concerning the key competences for lifelong learning, a special attention is given to the digital competence, defined as “the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication.



It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT (*Information and Communication Technologies*): the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet."

The training cannot exclude the necessity to personalise the projects according to the types of users; all their characteristics should be taken into account in order to adapt the programmes to their individual needs; important aspects are the gender and the age of the people who take part in the training.

In fact, generally, men have always been more interested in technological development compared to women, so today we are still experiencing a gender gap in the skills concerning the knowledge and use of the tools. Another gap, which is quite evident in this field, is the one pertaining to people of different generations; nowadays the younger the person is the higher is the need to learn how to use technologies, even if they often do it on their own and this leads

to a partial learning that only reflects temporary personal interests. The people taking part in the training programme will possess different knowledge and skills according to their age group: for example today it is highly probable that a fifty years old man will have more knowledge concerning the IT's structural part, that a thirty years old man is no stranger to commonly used software, and that an adolescent possesses more digital competences. Obviously this general assumption, cannot be considered as a certainty while starting the training programme, also because there are other factors that play an important part, like the cultural influences that can reflect different needs and, as a consequence, different knowledge and skills, concerning the use of technological tools and their application in everyday life.

This is the reason why, before starting the training, it is necessary to make an assessment of the users' possessed knowledge and abilities, to plan and carry out a suitable programme.

Obviously the topics addressed during the training should reflect not only the users' characteristics and needs, but also and in particular the goals and objectives it aims to reach. Goals and objectives are defined according to the technologies' application contexts, for example: the work and training contexts and the one concerning social inclusion in its broader meaning.

So, if the aim of the person/user is learning how to use technologies to seek and hold a job, the theoretical and practical topics addressed should be more specific in that direction, and the same applies to the other cases.



In the employment sphere the need to develop digital competences is more urgent, but these are mainly based on some essential computer skills. So, although the teaching of IT doesn't imply anymore being a computer technician, for each application context it is still essential to provide basic knowledge concerning hardware components.

In the ICT training the theoretical and the practical-experimental parts should go at the same pace; moreover, for learning purposes the mere experimentation is not sufficient; practice is necessary to actually acquire each specific skill concerning the use of the pc/tablet/smartphone.

A digital competences training should comprehend, through different stages of the process, the five areas in which they are usually divided:

1. Information and data literacy;
2. Communication and collaboration;
3. Digital content creation;

4. Safety;
5. Problem solving.

In this way it is possible to take into account, learn and strengthen both hard and soft skills.

The Digital Hard Skills are the digital competences learned through training and education courses or at work; they can be quantified, should be included in the curriculum vitae and define a professional figure.

Are examples of digital hard skills: knowing how to use computer programmes and packages, knowing programming languages, knowing how to use specific devices and production tools.

Instead the Soft skills are the cross sectoral skills concerning people's relationships and behaviour in every working, educational or social environment. They are mainly learned "by doing" and are difficult to quantify: they depend on the individual's culture, personality and experiences. Some examples of digital skills are: solving complex problems, dealing with changes, cooperating and establishing relationships, being flexible and communicating effectively. Usually soft skills are divided in four categories: Knowledge Networking, Virtual Communication, Digital Awareness and Self-Empowerment.

The modern communication and information systems have become part of contemporary society to the point of becoming lifelong tools. Of course it's not impossible to theoretically teach basic IT and digital rudiments using classical methodologies, but at the same time it would be more useful for the training programme to include the users' practical experimentation of the basics, which will consist in tinkering with the technological tools and which will take into account the right feasibility of the digital competences in everyday life. To do that it is possible to use different new teaching methodologies; some of them will be mentioned below.



For example it is possible to use Service Learning, whose pedagogical-educational basis consists in reducing the distance between learning and daily life problems. This methodology is deeply linked to the territory and strengthens the relationship between the protagonists and problems of the community, which are solved through a consistent, homogeneous and shared project; in fact the activities to carry out should meet an actual need of the community and should be completely integrated in the learning process.

Let's take the case of a small community of immigrants that has difficulties in feeling included (in terms of work and social life) because they don't have access to the digital world and don't have means to develop their competences in this field; these problems will become discussion and learning objects and the training will be centered on finding their solution, focusing for

example on the availability of tools and of free IT training courses. Through this methodology and keeping in mind the objectives, knowledge and skills will be acquired using a practical approach, solving personal problems and the ones pertaining to the community the individual belongs to.

The same applies for Teaching workshops; through this methodology the users are actively involved in the learning process, giving value to the different abilities and social skills.

Nowadays, the emerging technologies present important challenges, but at the same time they offer several opportunities to increase the access to and the participation in the inclusive education. For example there has been a growing number of experiences, experimentations and implementations concerning the new digital technologies aimed at providing e-learning educational products/processes.

There are different ways of interpreting e-learning, some of them focus on the provision of electronic contents, others on interaction and learning groups, still others on the integration of different models.



Today we don't recognise the extent to which IT technologies improve education and life in general, unless when we find ourselves experiencing a global pandemic so we become aware of its functionality and potentialities.

The communication mediated by computer/tablet/smartphone, and more specifically by internet, has provided the opportunity to overcome some logistical and time constraints, and has increased the possibility of cooperative interactions, learning, and work, resulting in changes in the work and education sectors. A current topic is how to better use these technologies in education.

This digital educational/training process is particularly suitable for adult education: in the perspective of a lifelong learning, an indispensable prerequisite for its success is the pupil's ability to independently and responsibly manage himself in the teaching/learning process. But providing an online educational offer doesn't mean creating the digital version of a course: it is important to envisage a consistent set of training that will lead to the development of the competences to adequately use the new technologies' huge potential.

“The risk to avoid is thinking that the ICTs can become educational technologies without any intervention. Believing in that means underestimating the importance of the educational intent and of a responsible management of the processes without which the communication technologies remain so, and can't influence the educational processes” (3).

If the ICTs can be included in the training based on their usage, its focus should be teaching how to use technology as a tool to protect rights and to build an active citizenship. In particular after the development of social networks, it seems crucial to carry out a *media education* intended as a methodology aimed at protecting human values which envisages the “media languages literacy, the critical analysis of the messages and of their communicative strategies, the consumption analysis according to the social and cultural contexts the subjects belong to, the creative and conscious use of the different media and of their languages’ expressive potentialities (4)”.

Concerning the training processes, the implementation of always new e-learning modalities through online courses has determined the establishment of a new relationship between the training processes’ subjects and their sensory and cognitive reorganisation creating a new approach to knowledge.



The active participation in learning is in fact linked to the possibility to re-elaborate knowledge cooperating with the other interlocutors, which can be students, colleagues of the course or teachers; interacting and collaborating means conceiving learning as a social phenomenon: it is possible to learn only if it is possible to communicate and, for this reason, the telematic

network becomes the place in which the interactive communication takes place. For this to happen, the communicative process should be guided so that the interaction between the members of the network is oriented toward the building of a distributed or shared knowledge between a group of agents; this process can’t be left to chance or to the spontaneous development of the started processes, but it should be planned in detail, defying the objectives in a specific and controllable way. This planning activity requires a specific know-how that concerns not only the methods to build virtual learning communities, but also the preparation and the configuration of the organisational, methodological and technological apparatus.

In the online training the communication between the users takes place thanks to the use of tools that, in a synchronous or asynchronous way, provides the opportunity to exchange experiences, materials and information which is the prerequisite of the cooperative learning: the individual, thanks to the interaction with the other participants, develop his competences, acquiring the information from the others and re-elaborating them (5).

This opportunity is facilitated by the hypertextual modality of interaction, which characterises the interactions though the network, that foresee the presence of texts (but also of images, videos, music or every other multimedia elements) organised as a net of “knots” connected through “linking words” that lead the reader from one part to another. Hypertextual is the

modality through which it is possible to communicate via internet; “the net can be perceived as a huge and boundless hypertext whose pages can be leaf through, going from one text to another (on the same website), or from a chapter to another (moving from one website to another), searching, exploring, playing and learning” (1).

Reaching these objectives is subject to the fact that the trainers are capable of facing this task, which is characterised not so much from the transfer of specific technical knowledge, but mainly from the shift in the training methodology and from the ability to efficiently use technology in this context.

If till now the trainers’ skills could be identified as belonging to one of two main categories: knowledge or the ability to plan, organise and manage learning processes aimed at guaranteeing the pupils’ cultural development, today a third category should be included: the use of technologies. It is important to understand that the ICTs can be intended as:

- Support tools for the organisation and management of the personal professional activity; tools that can make the activity inside and outside the classroom more effective;
- Support tools for the cultural activity, because internet provides the opportunity to find useful information and materials, to profitably communicate/collaborate with distant people, to take part in debates and seminars on relevant topics without leaving the classroom or the house;
- Tools to improve and facilitate the learning process, in particular for disadvantaged people. So the ICT teaching should have the same relevance of knowing the local language for a foreigner, because through the use of these technologies the users can apply these competences in different subjects.

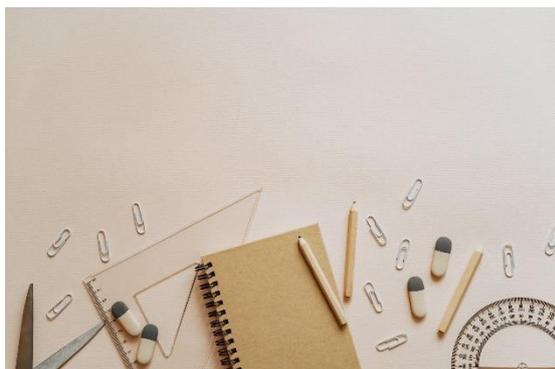
A methodology that envisages the integrated use of the ICTs is the Technology-Enhanced Active Learning (TEAL) pioneered at MIT in 2003. Due to the fact that frontal learning is often experienced in a passive way from students, the TEAL intent to: merge frontal lessons, simulations and workshop activities with technologies; design spaces with specific features and modular furnitures which can be reconfigured according to the needs; connect technologies with different tools; promote the dialogue among peers, web searches, discussion on several topics, their re-elaboration through a summary shared on the internet. So it is a structured methodology that combines lectures, workshop activities and pedagogical activism to create an improved learning based on collaboration.

Microlearning instead entails the division of the content in short and limited units, and can be applied to all areas of learning, but in its latest stage it is mainly used in distant learning and e-learning, in different contexts of use, from corporate training to professional training, to skills and soft skills testing. Its use in education makes it possible to organise flexible, innovative and multi platform learning paths, in conformity with a lifelong learning perspective.

In the Flipped classroom methodology, the teachers upload all the teaching material on a website: they collect educational videos and plan activities in pairs or in groups that will be

proposed to the class. The activities can be creative or authentic, are based on challenges and can be assessed thanks to checklists provided to students. The pupils learn the lessons at home through the videos of the website, so they learn in advance the contents, then in the classroom they carry out the activities they find on the website in small cooperative groups; at the meantime the educator/trainer establish an empathetic relationships with the users/students, he assesses them and encourage them, avoiding a lack of participation from the less motivated students.

When talking about Tinkering the reference is to a type of informal learning in which the user learns by doing: he is encouraged to experiment, developing the ability to solve problems. All the activities are structured as a game or a challenge and should be carried out in groups. The main activities that can be performed consist in assembling and disassembling objects, in designing machines that can move, fly, draw, stay afloat, in exploring materials or mechanical elements, in creating original artifacts or chain reactions.



The aim of tinkering is creating different types of objects using recycled materials that can also be found at home. Boxes, cups, pieces of paper, pieces of wood, metal wires, plastic casings are some of the needed “ingredients”. And there are several things that can be created: electrical circuits, small robots, mechanical toys, tracks for marbles, chain reaction mechanisms, sculptures, etc.

Other two methodologies that imply the use of technology are TwLiterature and Storytelling.

TwReading consists in reading literature, arts and culture books and divulging them: the group chooses a book, reads it and makes some comments, according to a shared calendar, rewriting it on Betwyll, the TwLiterature App for social reading, or on Twitter. Each user submits his interpretation using a twyll and/or tweet:

the rewriting can be a paraphrase, a variation, a comment, a free interpretation and can be made using different media (videos, songs, drawings). The use of different stylistic registers makes it possible to experiment unlimited combinations of deconstructions and reconstructions of the original text. Storytelling is described as the art to tell stories using technologies and now it is a well-known practice; even if with the shifts in technologies also the means of communication and engagement have changed, the emotional and narrative emphasis remains unaltered in particular to protect humanity from a world full of machines.

All these methodologies facilitate the teaching of ICTs and of every other subject; furthermore they provide an important support for the education, employment and social inclusion of people belonging to the vulnerable sectors of society. And they also help users to believe in their abilities and in the possibility to share what they create with society and the world.

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2.1 Computer Science Learning Units

Nowadays software plays a crucial role in education, as a support for teaching and learning. It creates more personalised, interactive educational experiences for students and teachers alike, and it is also an efficient way of managing information and data in an organised way. Software involves students in the learning process because it integrates multimedia contents and also creates a productive learning environment, moreover it's useful to gain and sustain students' attention due to the high level of interactivity provided.

Teachers can create virtual classrooms where they can add their students and also upload materials like lessons, videos, articles, tutorials or assign homework, create quizzes to test the pupils' comprehension of a topic, so they will know if they have to come back to a specific content and will identify the most effective teaching methods. Some software also



enables educators to chart the results and progress made by their students so, at the end of the academic year, it will be easier to evaluate them. It also allows teachers to better connect with their students due to the fact that they will use tools and devices that pupils consider more appealing and that they master instead of traditional methods, and also because, through these virtual classes, they can get in touch more easily, using direct messages for example. In this paragraph we decided to focus on educational software because of the benefits that it will provide to migrants (underemployed, newcomers), and other disadvantaged subjects like women, who do not have a high level of proficiency in the L2, that are not fully integrated in the society and that are not familiar, not only with the language, but also with the culture of the host country. Using software in education will lead to the development of some competences like problem solving, cooperation and digital skills. Problem solving is one of the key skills for people that move to another country and that will inevitably have to face a lot of problems, in particular during the process of adjustment to the new context. They are far from home, in a place where they don't know how to communicate and with different rules and implicit norms that regulate what is considered the "acceptable behaviour" and social relationships. The use of a different approach will help them to develop a different way of dealing with difficulties, and will give them a method to overcome problems. Moreover the use of devices like computers or mobile phones will also enhance digital skills, so the ability to, confidently and critically, use ICT (Information and Communications Technology). ICT skills refer to one's ability to converse with people through various technologies and also to use technology for regular, everyday tasks: sending an email, making a video call, searching the internet, using a tablet or mobile phone, using social media and more. The creation of virtual classrooms will

also promote collaboration because the students will have the same objectives to reach and will also have the opportunity to share their knowledge and doubts with the other members of the class. The materials are easily accessible to everyone and each student can ask for help from the other classmates. This method is deeply connected to Tinkering, that is an approach based on using what you have around, usually everyday or recycled material, to create something completely different, for instance creating a robot with bottle caps, toilet rolls, plastic and so on. It can be considered an example of tinkering because it is characterized by a playful, experimental style of engagement, in which makers are continually reassessing their goals, exploring new paths, and imagining new possibilities. In fact the aims are to develop critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, problem solving, communication etc. In this case the connection is not related to the practical transformation of objects, but on the creative re-use of abilities and contents to achieve a specific result. Another positive aspect of software is that it promotes inclusion. As we have said before, the addressees of this programme are disadvantaged people who don't have significant financial possibilities, so they can be discriminated also in the education process due to their economic status. Instead, using this method, everyone can have the same opportunities as the others in fact, in order to join a class or to have access to its contents, it is not necessary to own a computer, a mobile phone with an internet connection is sufficient. Smartphones are not as expensive as computers, actually there are a lot of brands that sell phones with several features at an affordable price. Furthermore, attending a lesson in a language you are not proficient in is not that easy, whoever uses his mother tongue will naturally speak quite fast, in a way that for a foreigner can be difficult to keep up. Instead, having all the materials written down or, at the least, the possibility to listen multiple times to the same audio content can be extremely helpful. In addition, the addressees can use the support material whenever they want to, so if they can't attend a class because they are committed to doing something else or simply because they don't have the same free time as normal students, they won't fall behind schedule. Usually migrants feel lonely and depressed, mainly because they feel they don't belong to anything.

The process of integration is long and, sometimes, difficult and of course migrants experience higher degrees of social isolation because they are not accepted or welcomed. Making them feel part of a class, of a group that can help them if they are in need, letting

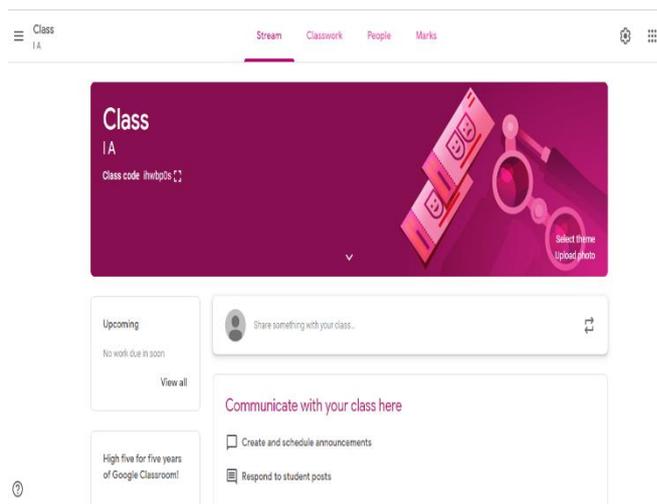
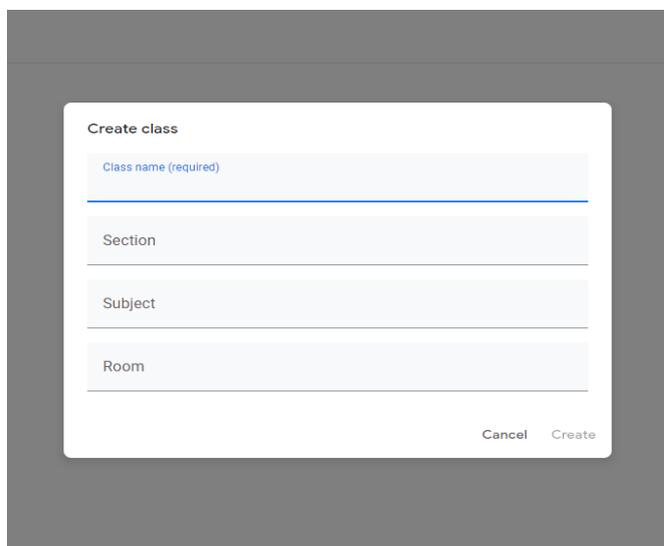


them know there is someone who shares their condition and that understands them, can be really helpful in reducing their sense of unbelonging and uneasiness. One of the software we want to introduce is Google Classroom, an easy-to-use tool that helps teachers manage coursework. With Classroom, educators can create classes, give assignments, grade and send feedback, it is free for schools and both teachers and students can sign in from every computer

and mobile device, in addition educators can track their pupils’ progress. Its main purpose is to facilitate the process of sharing files between students and teachers.

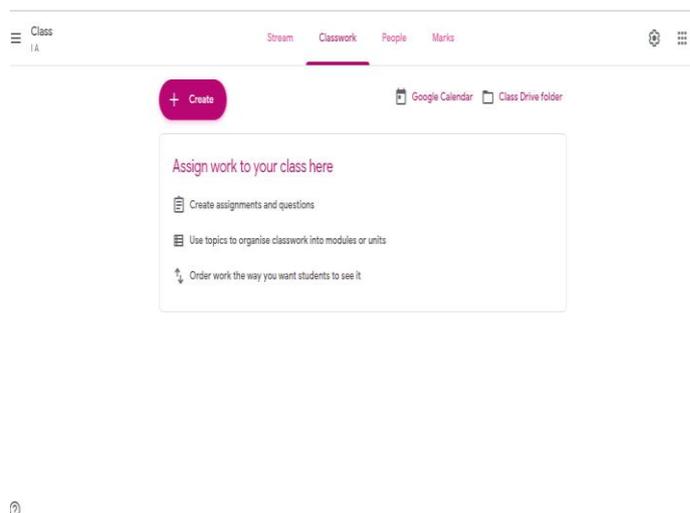
2.1.1 Google Classroom Tutorial

Click on this [link](#) to start your registration on the website. You will only be required to enter your gmail account and you are ready to create your class/es by clicking on the icon “+” in the upper right corner of the screen, where you can join or create a class.

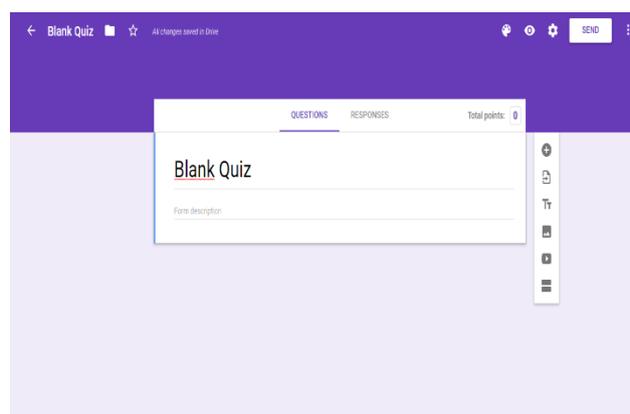


Add your Class name, section, subject and room.

Under the name of your class there is a code that students can use to join in. You can select a theme for your class or upload a photo. You can use the bar to create and schedule announcements or to respond to student posts, you can add links, files and youtube contents. On the left box “Upcoming” you will see the work to review and, if you click “View all”, you will also have access to the one that has already been reviewed.

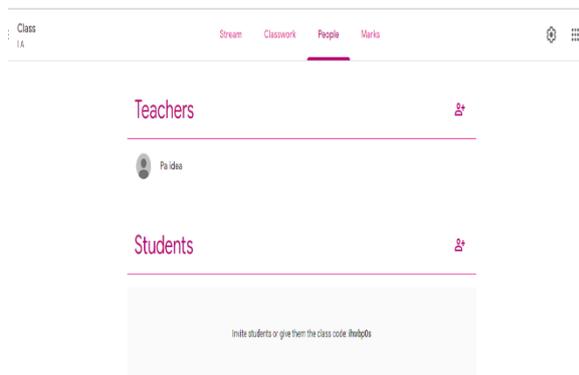


If you click on “Classwork” at the top of the screen you can assign work to your class, you can create assignments and questions, use topics to organise classwork into modules or units, and order work the way you want students to see it. Classroom is connected to Google Calendar and Drive, in this way you can set deadlines for the assignments, and a folder where to store the students’ files will be automatically created. By clicking on “Create” you can create an assignment, a quiz, you can make a question, can add materials or topics and reuse a post. For the assignments you have to write a title and a description (optional), to decide if you want to give points for the exercise or to leave it unmarked, you can set the due date, the topic and upload video and files.



For the quiz you have to follow the same procedure and, in addition, you can use a Google form to edit the questions. You can choose between different options: short answer, paragraph, multiple choice, checkboxes, drop-down and you can also choose the layout, for example: linear scale, multiple-choice grid, tick box grid. The sidebar gives you the chance to add and import questions, add sections, video and files.

You can use the settings to customise your test, for example you can decide whether students can see summary charts and text responses, to shuffle questions order or to release marks right after each submission. It is also possible to create an excel file with all the answers, to download it and to get email notifications for new responses. After that you can send the quiz via mail, using a link or an HTML.



It is also possible to invite teachers by sending them an email, they can do anything except deleting the class. Students can be added both sending them an email and giving them the class code. The last section is “Marks” where you can see your students’ results and progress.

Objectives:

- Developing abilities like problem solving, digital skills, cooperation, that can be useful in everyday life.
- Using innovative teaching methods to facilitate learning.
- Encouraging inclusion and equality through the use of software.
-
- Learning to adapt and use one’s knowledge according to the situation and context.
- Giving migrants the tools to integrate themselves into the new society.

2.2 Learning Unit (8 hours): brainstorming teamwork with Lego® Serious Play methodology.

Lego® Serious Play methodology is an approach generally used in companies to facilitate communication and problem solving through the use of manual skills and creativity. The process is guided by a facilitator, that is the person who has to enable the participants to reach the final objective. He launches a challenge asking a specific question, that has been previously set according to the aim of the workshop, and all the participants have to answer by creating a model (and so a story) with the traditional Lego® bricks. The aims of this methodology are, not only to enhance participation and inclusion, but also to teach how to put our ideas into practice and how to describe them. In fact, the following phase consists in making each participant explain his model. The role of the facilitator is very important because he shouldn't intervene or influence the meaning that the participants give to their creation, his task is to make them reflect on the choices they have made. In fact, it may happen that the models are metaphorical representations rather than realistic ones and, therefore, that have a specific meaning to that person.



The facilitator will ask questions to the members of the group, to make them justify choices



that seem random but that actually reflect inherent or unconscious reasons and problems, for example why they have chosen that colour, why the brick has been put in that position or is not connected to the others, in which direction the Lego® men are pointing and so on. During this phase of sharing, all the participants can intervene and comment on the answers given by the other members of the group. Sometimes the final task is to create a model that contains all the models that have been built, to develop collaboration and teamwork, because common decisions concerning the model's arrangement, dimension, etc should be made. It's

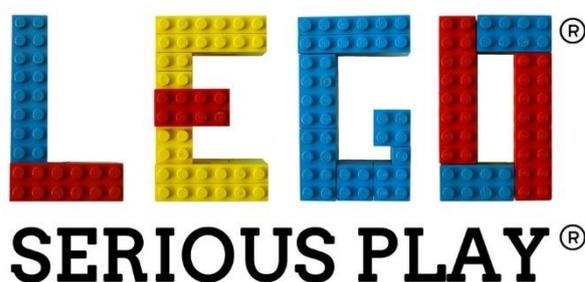
important to understand that there are no wrong answers, the main objectives are to teach the participants to open up and to share their ideas, to make them feel part of a group and to bond with the others. This is carried out through the "learning by doing" methodology and through game, that makes our creativity grow and breaks down our mental barriers. Recently this

approach has also been used in schools for the same purposes. Lego® Serious Play is based on the ideas of Seymour Papert, which built in turn on the Constructivist theories of his colleague Jean Piaget. Papert argued that learning happens exceptionally well when people are engaged in constructing a product, something external to themselves such as a sand castle, a machine, a computer programme, or a book. This methodology teaches people to think with their hands and better communicate their ideas, allowing a greater flow of information, and is deeply intertwined with storytelling. Storytelling with Lego® models makes a situation come alive before it occurs in real life and allows us to test what might happen if we make certain decisions. Another crucial aspect is the use of metaphors that leads us to perceive reality in new or different ways. Using our imagination to describe the world can help us create completely new perceptions that can alter or challenge assumptions and beliefs, revealing new possibilities. Metaphors are also an easier way to express what is difficult to communicate with words.

2.2.1 How to structure a Lego® Serious Play session: a practical example.

As we have seen before, this methodology consists of different phases that aim to make the participants more aware of the reasons behind their choices and to teach them how to express their ideas and to communicate with other people. Each exercise is made of four steps:

1. The facilitator poses a question that should be clear yet very open-ended.
2. The individuals build their models in response to the question that has been posed.
3. Each participant shares his or her model's meaning and story with the rest of the group.
4. The facilitator and participants crystallise key insights and ask clarification questions of the model.



The first activity will concern the building of a tower, and it's just a way of familiarising with the bricks. The facilitator will give the participants no further directions, in order to unleash their creativity, the only restriction is that they will only be given a reduced number of bricks to choose from. The key of this exercise is not giving access to all the

pieces. In our minds we have a specific perception of how an object, in this case a tower, looks like and we are prone to thinking that it is the same for everyone, instead, through this activity, we will understand how we perceive things differently. In fact, even if the instructions are the same for everyone, we will never come across identical models. Some people prefer to make realistic and accurate reproductions, others stylised and metaphorical ones, moreover in the description they will focus on different aspects of their models, for example a part of them will point out the colours they have chosen, others instead will also include other details, like what is inside of the tower, where they are located in the tower, and so on. The second activity

consists in representing something more personal, for example “me in my family”, “me in the new social context”, “me in my class group” and then describing it, without restrictions concerning the number and types of bricks to use. In this phase the participants will reflect on their role in different contexts and will analyse their social relationships. Building models with the Lego® bricks is perceived like a game by the people who are engaged in the activity, so in the meantime they are not examining or observing their own mental and emotional processes, they will only discover at the end, by answering specific questions asked by the facilitator, what are the reasons behind what seemed to be natural and random choices. The other participants should listen to the descriptions made by their group members and should pay attention to the questions asked by the facilitator. During this phase there are two crucial moments: the first one is when the participants are asked to change, add or take off something from their model in order to turn it from negative to positive, or the other way around. The aim here is to show how the change of perspective makes us see things differently, how a single element can turn the situation around, and also to understand which are the works’ strong and weak points. The second key point refers to the identification of the core of their representation, so the most important element they can’t give away (that can also be the model as a whole). In the third phase the participants have to build a single model as a team, or to combine their models into one, to learn how to cooperate and to effectively communicate in order to reach a shared goal. There are other activities that can be carried out using the same method, each one with a specific objective that can promote inclusion, communication, integration, introspection. The participants can also represent the most unpleasant episode that happened to them in the new country, a situation in which they felt excluded or misunderstood, or also what are their objectives for the future. This methodology is really useful for migrants for whom sometimes it is hard to get integrated in the new context, to feel part of a group, express their emotions, to have future objectives or to commit themselves to studying. It is an occasion for them to talk about themselves and their family, to understand some aspects of their behaviour or of the reality they didn’t take into account, furthermore it contributes to the development of some necessary skills to deal with contemporary society’s challenges.

Objectives:

- Fostering creative thinking through building metaphors of problems and experiences.
- Unlocking the participant's hidden knowledge and constructing their new knowledge through self-reflection.
- Develop collaboration and teamwork.
- Learning how to communicate and share individual and personal experiences with the group.
- Enhancing participation and inclusion.
- Developing problem solving skills.

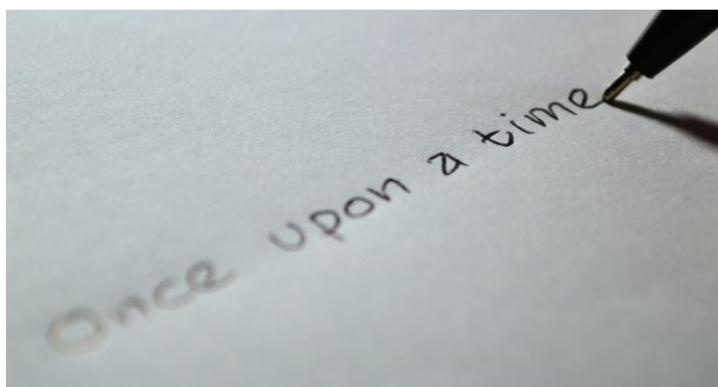
2.3 Learning Unit: digital storytelling



Storytelling is the art of sharing stories that meets our need for communication, expression and socialisation. Since the beginning of time, human beings have shown the desire to share their experiences, to establish social and religious values, to entertain, to explain phenomena as well as natural and historical events, but also to educate and to preserve knowledge. From petroglyphs, to stories of heroes accompanied by music in Greece and religious poems, storytelling is a special form of communication, both for passing

down the traditions and cultural identity of a community, and to build and share values, symbols, ideas. Every culture has its own stories. A story is a narrative account of an event or a sequence of events, it can be true or fictional, but every story has a message to convey. It is made of five elements:

- Setting: the physical location but also the time (past, present, future) and the social and cultural conditions in which it occurs.
- Characters: each story has a protagonist that can be a person, an animal or anything personified. The main character determines the way the plot will develop and is usually the one who will solve the problem the story centers upon. For each protagonist there is an antagonist, and also secondary characters that supply additional details, explanations, or actions.
- Conflict: every story must have a conflict, a challenge or problem around which the plot is based.
- Plot: it is the sequence of events that take place. Usually there is an introduction, a climax, the falling action and a resolution.
- Theme: it is the underlying message the author is trying to convey.



Moreover each story has a specific point of view, tone and style. Storytelling is important for several reasons, in particular to familiarise with other cultures and their customs, to live something that we haven't actually experienced in order to understand and accept diversity, or also to feel less alone because other people have gone through what we

have gone through, to inspire innovation and social change, to reduce prejudices and discrimination, to give hope and purposes. Given the role it plays in our lives, the support of technology has led to the development of **digital storytelling** as well, that consists in creating

a story using digital tools. Besides the traditional ones, additional elements can be used, for example photos, images, video or audio clips to create interactive contents. The subject can enjoy and learn from these stories or he can use his knowledge, skills and creativity to create innovative multimedia presentations, ebooks, graphic novels, cartoons, digital stories, tutorials and so on. Digital storytelling develops transversal skills due to several processes like learning by doing, problem solving, cooperative learning and critical thinking. As we have seen for the Lego® Serious Play methodology, it is based on using creativity to represent and share our ideas, it facilitates the connection between different meanings and themes and it represents an easier way of dealing with abstract and complex concepts. Furthermore it simplifies the learning process thanks to the stimulation provided by the different digital contents, it increases the level of engagement of the subjects, it promotes inclusion and collaboration and offers new perspectives and interpretation to problems and to the surrounding reality. The aim of this Unit is to enable the subjects to learn how to effectively communicate and to help them understand how to deal with and metabolise their emotions and feelings, in particular during these moments of change and instability. The Lego® Serious Play session is the first phase of this process, that is dedicated to brainstorming. The resulting ideas can be put into practice and analysed through the creation of digital stories, using several sites and Apps as a support. [Powtoon](#) is one of them, it is an online tool to create animated presentations and animated explainer videos by manipulating pre-created objects, imported images, provided music and user created voice-overs.

2.3.1 How to use Powtoon



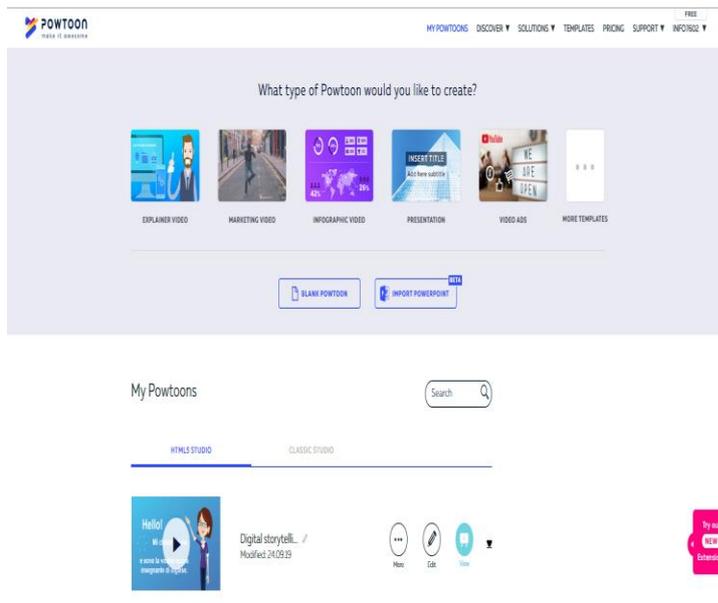
Powtoon is a really intuitive tool that allows users to quickly and easily create animated presentations. It is actually very similar to Microsoft PowerPoint. You can choose between a free version and three paid ones for schools. The first one includes only the free contents, 100 MB storage, the maximum length of the video is 3 minutes and all the video will contain the Powtoon logo, but it is sufficient unless you want to make professional videos.

To get started, first go to the Powtoon website and then sign up for a free account, or you can directly login using your existing Gmail, Facebook or LinkedIn account. You'll be directed to your Powtoon Dashboard, there you'll see a few types of video templates to help you get started, or you can start a project from scratch. You will also find a list of history videos you've made, if any.

Pricing & Plans

FREE	STUDENT	TEACHER	CLASSROOM
			
\$0	\$4 /mo	\$6 /mo	\$10 /mo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to free content only • 100 MB storage • Includes Powtoon branding and more... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Pro & free content • 2 GB storage • HD video (720p) and more... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5GB / billed yearly • Classroom Management • 10 Classroom students • Unlimited access to all content • 10 GB storage • Full HD video (1080p) and more... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5GB / billed yearly • Classroom Management • 60 Classroom students • Unlimited access to all content • 10 GB storage • Full HD video (1080p) and more...
START NOW	GET PLAN	GET PLAN	GET PLAN

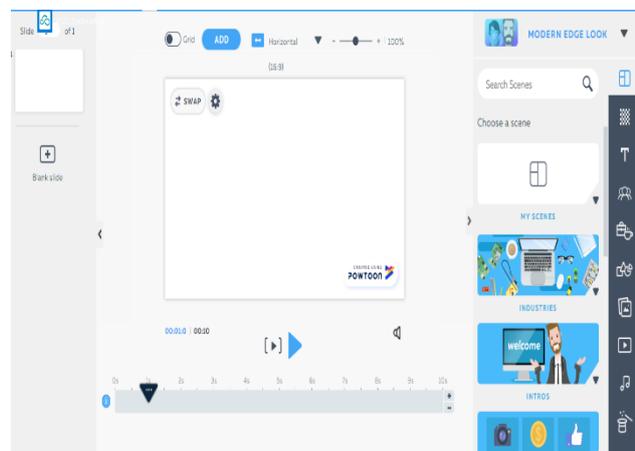
ALL PLANS INCLUDE: Powtoon EDU branding | Download as MP4 | Full privacy control | 24/7 priority support



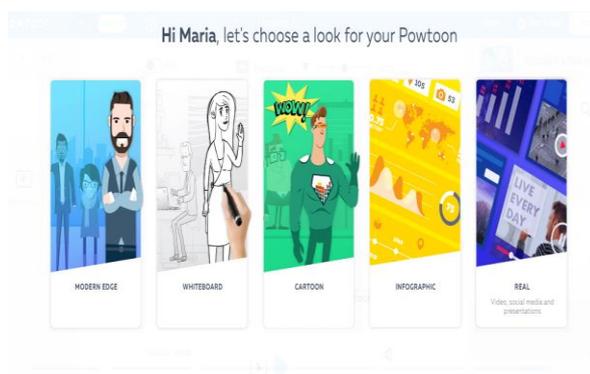
To create a new project, you have three options: you can either continue editing a Powtoon you had already made, choose a type of video to get started, or you can click on “Blank Powtoon” to start one from scratch. In this tutorial, we will show you how to create a Powtoon starting from scratch because, in this way, you will also be able to realise projects by using pre-made templates. After clicking the “Blank Powtoon” button, you will be asked to select a look for your project. There are typically 5 types of looks: Modern Edge, Whitboard, Cartoon, Infographic, and Real.

Cartoon, Infographic, and Real.

After selecting the look, the following screen will appear:

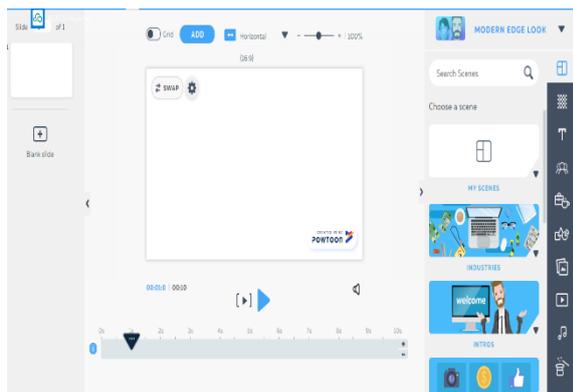


Our working area is made of:



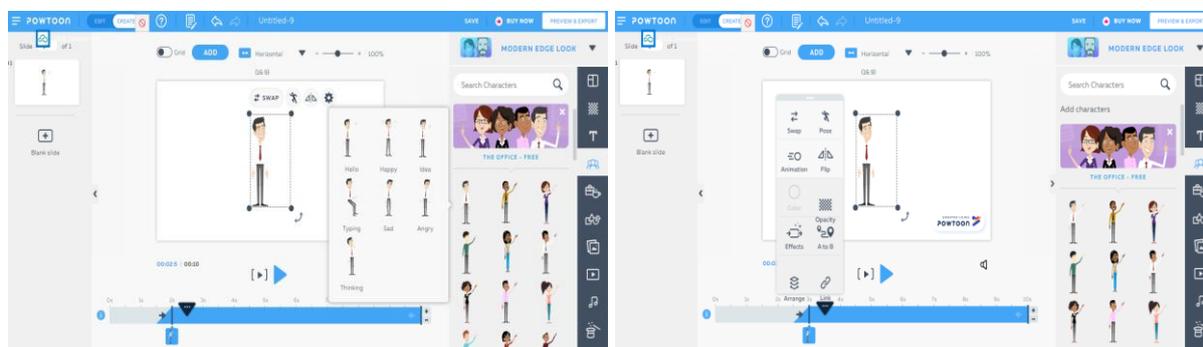
- the **left column** where you will see all the slides you have created, that can be modified, repositioned or eliminated. To add a new slide click on the “Add slide” button.
- the **main screen** where all the items you select will appear.
- the **right column** where you can find scenes, backgrounds, text, characters, props, shapes, images, videos, sound, special contents.

- the **timeline** at the bottom of the screen. Timeline gives you full control over any objects, entrance and exit effect time on stage, and overall length of each slide.

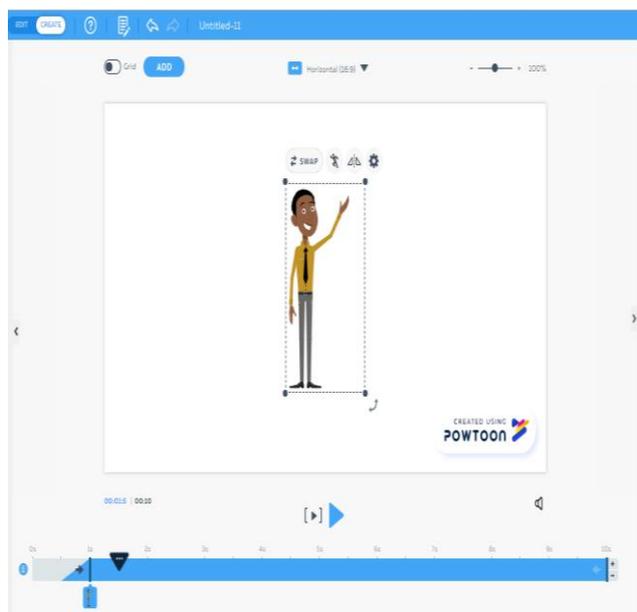


There will be different scenes in your projects, such as intro, situation, outro, call to action etc. The first thing to do is to navigate to the right column, where you will find all the editing tools. At the top of it, you will find the Scene tab, there you can select an intro template to start your Powtoon slide. Then you have to choose the

slide's background, you can either select one of the backgrounds available, use colors clicking on "Pick a background color" or upload an image. If you switch to the Text tab you can add plain Title, Subtitle, Body text to the Canvas. Once a text effect is added to the canvas, you can further customize the text content, color, font, and you can rotate it. Furthermore you can add characters. After adding a character to the canvas, you can choose one of the default poses and positions, swap it for another character or object, add an animation as well as entrance and exit effects, flip it, move it from a point A to a point B and bring it backwards or forward.



You can also add props, shapes and specials. If you are using the free version pay attention not to use paid contents. With Powtoon, you will be able to upload your own background music or voiceover, or select a music track from Powtoon's library. Adding a soundtrack is simple, you have to click on the "Use" button, after a sound control editing panel will come up, you can edit the volume, add or record voiceover. As we have said before, the timeline can be used to set the entrance and exit effect time and also the length of each slide. It's important to master its use to create perfect animated videos. Each slide's duration is 10 seconds but it's possible to add or remove seconds using the plus and minus buttons on the right. All the characters and props that we have added will automatically appear on the bar. To decide the duration of an object on stage you have to click on its small icon on the timeline, a blue line will appear, you can grab its left or right edge and drag it to where you want the object to appear and disappear.

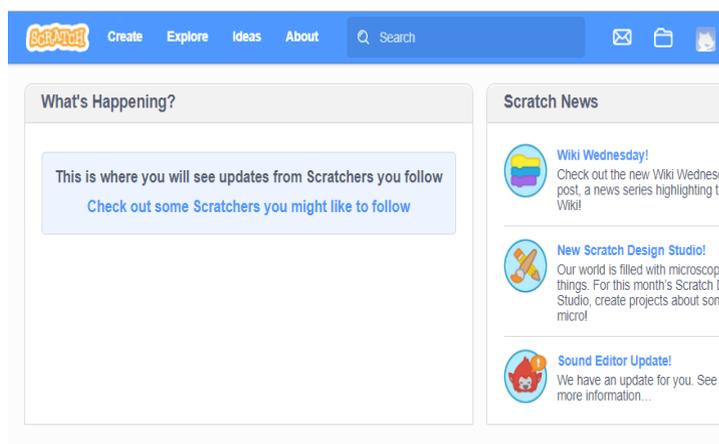


The small arrows on the timeline show how the element enters or exits. If you click on them you can choose one of the effects from the Enter Effects library or Exit Effect library. When you have finished making your Powtoon video, you have four options to save your project:

- Directly upload the video on Facebook, Youtube, Slideshare.
 - Export it as an Mp3, MP4, PDF, or PPT file.
 - Share it via Twitter, Google plus, email etc.
- Save it on “My Powtoon” area.

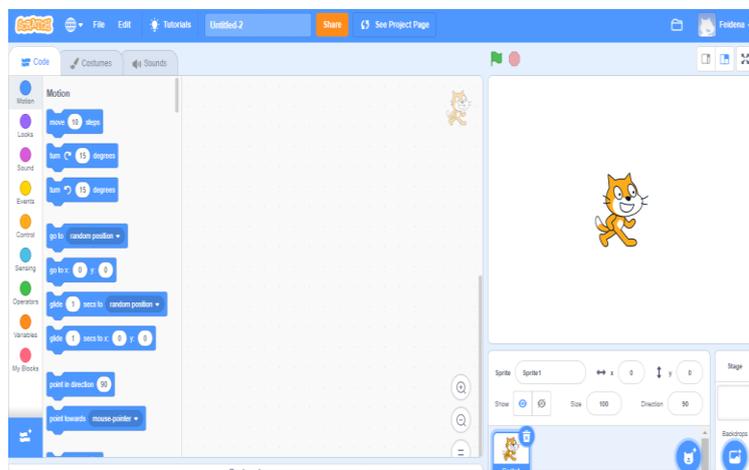
Objectives:

- Learning how to communicate and share personal experiences or ideas using digital tools.
- Using storytelling to familiarise with other cultures and their customs, to live something that we haven’t actually experienced or to support people who have gone through the same things we have gone through, to understand and accept diversity, to inspire innovation and social change, to reduce prejudices and discrimination, to give hope and purposes.
- Learning how to effectively create a story.
- Learning how to put our ideas into practice creating digital videos.
- Helping migrants understand how to deal with and metabolise their emotions and feelings, in particular during moments of change and instability.



When Scratch starts up, you will see a screen similar to the one below:

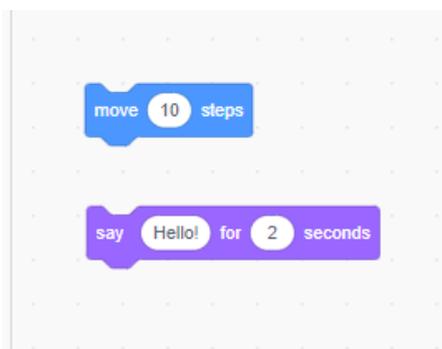
At the top of it, on the left, you will find the **Menu**. Here you can choose the language, start or save a new project and run a tutorial. On the left we have the **Block Description Area** that lists the eight categories of blocks including motion, looks, sound, events, control, sensing, operators, variables plus “my blocks”, where the ones created by the user are stored. Each one has a specific colour, to make it more easily recognisable, and represents a functionality, for example you can control the sprite’s movements with the motion blocks. Next to it, there is



the **Blocks Palette**, that shows all the blocks available to programme. Note that the blocks palette will change depending upon the current block category. In the middle there is the **Scripts Area**, where you can create and view the scripts pertaining to the current sprite. On the right we have the **Stage** where all the sprites will appear and carry out their actions. Click on the “Green Flag” to run your project and the Red Stop to end it. On the panel below the stage you can set the sprite’s position, size and direction, moreover you can control its visibility. If you click on the small icon of a cat at the bottom right of the screen, you can choose, paint, upload or select a random sprite (and you can do the same for the backgrounds clicking on the symbol next to it). You can use the “Costumes” tab to modify the costumes adding text, shapes, colours and putting the different elements in the foreground or in the background. Each sprite can also make a sound, if you click on the “Sounds” tab you can select one of the default sounds, as well as record, upload or pick a random sound and add some features. To create a script, you simply drag a block from the Blocks Palette onto the Scripts Area. To run it, you can double-click it and observe what happens on the stage. The blocks are shaped like puzzle pieces, so not all of them can be put together. In fact in Scratch there are different blocks :

- **Cap blocks:** that are the blocks that end scripts. They are shaped with a notch at the top and a flat bottom, this is so you cannot place any blocks below them. 
- **C blocks:** are the blocks that take the shape of "C's". Also known as "Wrap blocks", these blocks loop the blocks within the Cs or check if a condition is true. C blocks can be bumped at the bottom, or capped. 
- **Hat blocks:** are the blocks that start every script. They are shaped with a rounded top and a bump at the bottom, this is so you can only place blocks below them. 
- **Stack blocks:** are the blocks that perform the main commands. They are shaped with a notch at the top and a bump on the bottom, this is so blocks can be placed above and below them. 
- **Boolean blocks:** are the conditions, they are either true or false. 
- **Reporter blocks:** are the values, they can hold numbers and strings and can also report a variable. 

So to create a script you need to put first an Hat block, because it determines the action that gives start to all the others. The first block to use is , in this way all the other actions will be performed after you press the flag button, that gives start to the project. To cancel a block click on it and drag it on the left, or right-click on it. Some blocks have white editable spaces, where the user can add the text or numbers he needs.

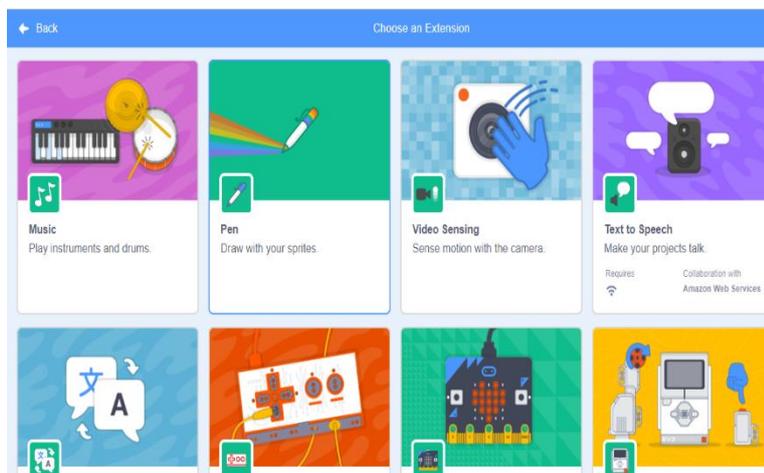
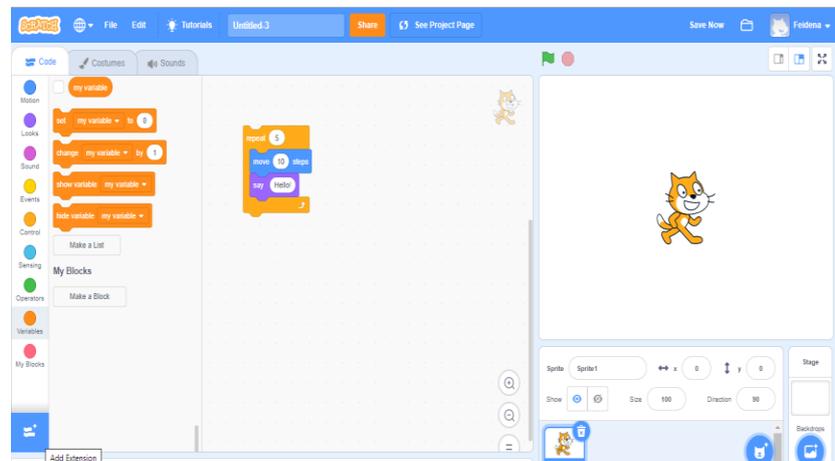


For example, if he wants the sprite to move 20 steps rather than 10 he only need to cancel 10 and add the number 20. He can also substitute “Hello!” with another word or sentence. Scripts are executed from the top to the bottom so you need to add the blocks accordingly. If you want the new block to execute first, add it on top of the existing block. If you right-click on a block or script you can duplicate or delete it and add a comment. You can separate or move a whole script (as well as reposition its blocks)

clicking on it and dragging it where you wish. If you want to repeat an action, instead of writing the steps several times, you can use the repeat block from the control category, and then move the block/s inside of it.



We also have pen blocks, with which you can draw on the stage. Click on “Add Extension” and then select “Pen”.



Use pen down to begin writing and pen up to stop. You can also change the color of the pen and explore other options as well. In order to make a decision about what should be done, you need to use an if-else statement. As Boolean blocks are conditions (and report if they are true or false), they are used whenever a condition is needed. Conditions are used with some C blocks and

some Control Stack blocks. A common use for conditions is the If-Then block, if the condition is true, the blocks held inside the C block will activate.

Scratch will automatically save your progress but, if you want to do it manually, you can click on the “File” tab and then on “Save” or “Save to your computer”. Once your project is over, click on the orange button “Share”. You can give your project a title, you can give the other members of the community instructions on how to use it, and also add some notes and comments. When you share your work, other people can try it out, give comments and remix it. A **remix** is a modified and shared version of an uploaded project. Note that when remixing, you should always give credit to the creator of the original project.

Now that you have some of the basics, you can create your own projects or modify the existing ones, to attract interest on some topics, to share ideas or just to do something creative.

Objectives:

- Learning how to use coding software.
- Learning basic programming concepts to understand how technology works and to create things.
- Developing some skills like: **critical thinking**, to train the subjects to analyse the surrounding situation before coming to a conclusion; **problem solving** and **creative thinking**, to train the subjects to analyse the different options and form creative answers to complex challenges, **resilience**, to train subjects to respond and adapt to adversities.
- Improving communication skills because, by understanding how to communicate with computers, the subjects will learn how to clearly express their opinions and questions.

2.5 Linguistic proficiency

The first obstacle migrants have to face when moving to another country is the language barrier. It hinders effective communication and possible interaction with people. Usually they decide to leave their homeland and settle into a new country to improve their life's condition, to find a better job, to have a future. However, they meet a lot of challenges upon their arrival: they have to get a job, find a house, deal with legal issues, adapt to a new transportation system, a new currency, a new culture and traditions, new values and rules and so on, and sometimes they have to do that without speaking the language.



We should also take into account the effects of living in a culture different from our own. Everything from hygiene routines, to food choices, to personal habits must be relearned. This process of adaptation, and the drastic lifestyle changes, can challenge who we are as cultural beings and can be stressful for the newcomers. Usually we are led to think that everything that pertains to our culture (norms, beliefs, values) is universally right and shared, but the encounter with another reality will subvert this assumption, causing confusion and instability. Communication will be hindered not only because migrants don't master the language, but also because, when interacting with other people, they will refer to their culture's values and implicit norms, that may collide with the ones of the new context. Having adequate language skills is crucial to perform everyday tasks, like buying groceries, paying bills, managing the house, budgeting or, more generally, dealing with everything that concerns home economics. All the basic actions we perform everyday can become insurmountable difficulties if we don't know how to express basic concepts. For example, to go shopping, we need to know how to say numbers in that language, we need to understand the local currency, and the average price of consumer goods and services.



To move around the city it's fundamental to learn how to ask for directions, to understand which means of transport can be used to reach a specific destination, where to buy tickets and how to read timetables. So, even carrying out a simple task such as buying food, requires a set of skills that take time to develop. Furthermore, a better language proficiency improves migrants'

employment opportunities and economic integration. Of course, fluently speaking and reading the local language provides access to a broader spectrum of jobs, as well as a larger set of possibilities to occupy better paid positions. The migrants are encouraged to learn the language also to reduce the risks of exploitation and vulnerability. As we have said, the jobs a person who doesn't speak the local language can aim for, are few and poorly paid and, sometimes, even when migrants are required to perform the same tasks of the other employees, they are given different compensation just because they are foreigners. Having an employment contract can also increase the opportunity to rent a house, in fact landlords usually require a proof of employment, and it gives migrants economic stability and the possibility to manage their



expenses. Another risk related to not speaking the language, is to give poor explanation of health problems and symptoms, that could lead to wrong diagnosis, and also to not be able to comply with treatment regimens, putting our life in danger. Language proficiency also facilitates social and political participation, it allows foreigners to express their needs and concerns, to be recognised as society members and, if they need

to, to stand up for their rights. Moreover, joining community activities like religious services, or voluntary activities for example, will promote inclusion and social cohesion by giving the opportunity to nurture durable, cross-cultural acceptance, dialogue, and ties. Sharing interests and being committed to something is important for the migrants' psychological stability, mainly in the period right after their arrival, when they need to be assimilated in the new society and to build solid relationships. For all these reasons, learning a new language can be considered an investment that requires time and effort, but that will improve migrants' personal, working and social conditions. The ability to learn new languages lowers proportionally with age. The migrants that arrive in the host country during their childhood will acquire the host country language almost effortlessly, having almost the same or the same proficiency of native speakers. Instead, the ones arriving at an older age, will face more difficulties due to the fact that they are not in the critical phase for language acquisition. Another important factor that influences language acquisition is the degree of dissimilarity between L1 and L2 in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and other elements. Usually migrants tend to move into areas with a higher number of people that have their ethnic background, to benefit from existing networks and to have easier access to goods and products from their country. If this on the one hand makes things easier for them, on the other hand it makes learning the new language more difficult because they will tend to speak only in their mother tongue. The easiest way to learn the host country's language is through daily exposure and through involvement in day to day activities, in fact not all the migrants have learned it at school, but they have perfected their language skills month after month. Of course, people who plan to move to another country can start their learning process by reading books, watching films and tv-series, as well as songs in the L2, and they can attend courses to learn the basics.

Many countries have institutions that provide free courses for migrants (some of them also issue a certificate), for example schools, universities, non-profit organisations, voluntary organisations and so on. Most of these courses are for adults because, during the compulsory education period, children and youngsters are supposed to be enrolled in school, where they can learn the language.

For example in Italy we have CPIAs (Provincial centers for adult education and training) that are state schools established by the Ministry of



Education, Universities and Research. They offer Italian and foreign citizens adult education services and activities. Every citizen over 16 years of age can enroll. The Educational Offer of CPIAs is mainly focused on three areas:

1. Language and social integration courses for foreigners (Italian L2);
2. Programs aimed at acquiring a diploma at the end of the first cycle of education (middle school diploma);
3. Functional reading and writing courses (foreign language courses and basic information technology).

Generally language courses for migrants aims to increase their communicative competence in the language of the host country while meeting their perceived needs, to make them familiarise with the host culture, to help them develop the skills they need to live and work in the new country, and also to organise activities to enhance socialisation and cooperation. In facts, they focus on five skills:

- **Literacy skills:** vocabulary, awareness of speech sounds (phonology), spelling patterns (orthography), word meaning (semantics), grammar (syntax) and patterns of word formation (morphology).
- **Numeracy skills:** knowing numbers and figures, understanding relationships between numbers, interpreting mathematical information, ability to remember, calculation skills, ability to organize information, argumentation and logical thinking, scheduling or budgeting.

- **Digital skills:** using social media, sending, replying and forwarding an email, uploading a document, attaching a file, using Microsoft Word to create a document, searching job sites, writing a CV and the accompanying letter.
- **Critical thinking skills:** identifying problems, gathering data, opinions and arguments, analysing and evaluating data, identifying assumptions, establishing significance.
- **Problem solving skills:** creativity, team working, risk management, decision making, communication.

Objectives:

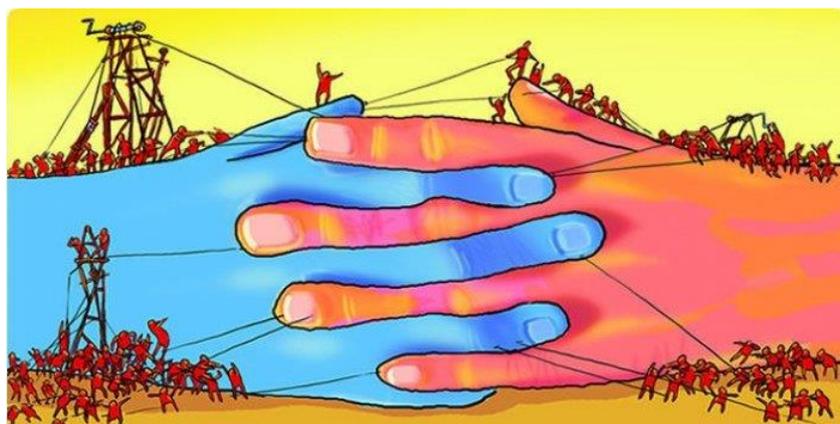
- Being able to have basic conversations, to perform everyday tasks, to manage the household.
- Developing literacy, numeracy, digital, critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Learning how to communicate and interact with people in the L2 according to the new cultural context.
- Learning how to acquire and improve linguistic proficiency in the language of the host country, and understanding what institutions provide courses and support for migrants.
- Understanding the importance of improving the language to gain a better job, to facilitate social inclusion and integration, to actively participate in social and political activities.

2.6 Learning Unit: Active citizenship and social inclusion

Citizens play a crucial role when it comes to building a better and democratic society. In order to make them develop the skills and attitudes of active citizenship, it's important to create educational programmes that aim to impart fundamental values and intercultural competences, as well as to promote democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding. An active citizen should



commit himself to activities to make his community a better place, to improve the lives of people and to face social and cultural issues. This process is deeply intertwined with social inclusion because it provides the opportunity to meet other people to share interests with and it brings together people with different beliefs and perspectives to learn from, promoting acceptance and integration. Moreover it gives people a place in society, increasing their level of self-realisation within the society, and making them feel part of something. It has a particular meaning to those people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and live in precarious conditions, as well as to migrants and minority groups. Furthermore there are several factors, such as gender, health, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and sexual orientation, that constrain social integration. That is why it is important to support projects in the fields of education and training, in order to facilitate social engagement and integration. The first step is giving everyone the possibility and the tools to participate in community activities, in fact usually, due to social circumstances, to the lack of education or money, people tend to isolate themselves because they don't feel at ease, sometimes the problem is that they don't know how to relate to others or that they don't feel accepted. Since elementary school, curriculum should be competence-based, aiming to equip students with democratic attitudes and social, civic and intercultural competences, and should also enable them to think critically and creatively, to let



them make their own decisions without the influence of cultural biases and prejudices. Children and youngsters attend school and, generally, they have more occasions to socialise; even if they are not fully integrated in society they have their family, or a group of close

friends to spend time with. For adults, in particular migrants, it is not that simple. Sometimes they arrive in the new country by themselves, without their family, furthermore some of them don't speak the language fluently, and if they have a job, the best occasion to meet people is their workplace. Moreover they will naturally tend to bond with people that have their own cultural background. Adult education courses can reduce this problem, in fact they help learners gain more self-confidence, experience personal growth and have better contact with others. Attending those courses also increases the possibility of gaining a job and improves their physical and psychological health condition, decreasing the rate of depression and dissatisfaction. One of the main obstacles to social inclusion and active citizenship is having low skills in literacy, numeracy and technology. As we have said in the previous unit, there are institutions that provide free courses for adults. Those courses should tailor learning practices, tools, materials, as well as curricula, to their beneficiaries, that have different needs from the ones of ordinary students. They should aim to the development of skills needed in everyday life, like problem-solving, critical thinking, cooperation, and of basic competences related to literacy, numeracy, digital skills and so on. Effective inclusive practices should take into account the relation between the individual and social environment and should balance emotional sphere and functionality. The act of moving to a different context has repercussions

on our identity and behaviour. Migrants suffer emotional distress and loneliness so they can decide to join adult classes as an opportunity to socialise, but also to acquire the skills they need to settle into the new



environment. For example, they may want to learn how to send an email to get in contact with other people, but also to apply for a job, to receive medical prescriptions or to ask for information. Together with the courses intended to give disadvantaged people the knowledge and tools to be included in society, it's important to carry out projects, initiatives and debates to raise awareness on sensitive topics and controversial issues, like migration and refugees, racism, discrimination, climate change, environmental issues, nutrition and healthy lifestyles, and so on. Promoting youth participation is fundamental, to get young people involved with decision making and acting for change, and to give them the opportunity to represent their own interests and fears. These activities should be supported by government measures aimed at:

- creating new centres for social inclusion;
- promoting tolerance and diversity while combating discrimination;
- addressing homelessness, housing and financial exclusion;

- providing access to quality social, health and transport services;
- assisting people in need;
- supporting the integration of excluded and marginalised people;
- ensuring people's equal access to decent living conditions as well as to cultural, sporting and creative activities;
- encouraging intergenerational and intercultural dialogue and solidarity;
- organising educational workshops and practical activities addressed to youngsters and disadvantaged people, to make them socialise and to engage them in formative experiences.

Another vulnerable group is represented by women, some of them are marginalised because of the conditions of social disadvantage they live in.

We are talking about immigrant women that don't have a job or that work in precarious conditions, women with disabilities, single mothers, women with an unstable economic situation, elderly women without relatives or in economic difficulties and so on. Sometimes they have to face multiple discrimination, like gender



discrimination, economic discrimination, racial discrimination. Urgent measures are required to increase women's employability, to ensure equal employment and education opportunities for women and men and equal wages for work of equal value, to promote specialized skills development programmes for women and girls, to promote gender equality and women's access to high positions. Economic independence is the first step to enable them to improve their condition, together with the recognition of their needs, issues and rights. Social norms and beliefs play a crucial role in the restriction of women's political participation and influence over issues and decision-making, both in the public and private sphere. The perception and role of women has been constructed by the society and the culture we live in, confining them to domestic and family life, and giving them access only to particular sectors and to certain jobs. Sometimes this stereotype is so strong that it lowers their self esteem, and makes them think they are inferior to men. Excluding women from society's political, economic and societal processes, and preventing their full participation in the society in which they live, is not only a denial of one of the fundamental aspects of human rights, but it also hinders society's development, because not all its members contribute to its functioning. That's why it's

important to focus on education, first of all to make women aware of their rights and that they are human beings with needs, desires, and objectives that should be respected. Their empowerment should focus on four aspects: assets, knowledge and know how, will and capacity. The concept of assets refers to the fact that women should be enabled to be economically independent, so they should receive a proper income and all the tools and training to become competitive in the labour market. Knowledge and know how is the ability to develop practical and intellectual skill and to use and translate one's knowledge into action or resources. Will is the most important aspect, because it refers to our self-confidence and self-perception, becoming aware of what we want and what we want to achieve, learning how to face difficulties and how to cope with changes. Capacity, instead, is linked to the ability to make our own decisions without being influenced by the external world and according to our life plans, and to take on responsibility. Decision-making includes not only the ability to make one's own decisions but also to take part in decision-making. In conclusion, to facilitate their inclusion, it is required to act on three fronts simultaneously: increasing their engagement in social activities, carrying out gender-equality trainings and making them develop skills and knowledge they can use in their professional and private lives.

Objectives:

- Empowering marginalised and weaker subjects like women and migrants, identifying the tools and the training they need to improve their condition.
- Promoting equality and integration as well as educational programmes aimed at developing democratic attitudes and social, civic and intercultural competences.
- Learning how to foster active citizenship and social inclusion and why it is important.
- Learning how to contribute to social and political change.
- Changing our behaviour according to this new perspective and becoming more committed to social activities.

2.7 Learning Unit: Job orientation



The first thing to do when you move to another country is looking for a job, but each country has its own norms, that regulate the dress code and the right behaviour to perform during an interview, moreover has different evaluation parameters and requirements, as well as different ways to submit an application and to write a resumè. Even if some qualities are universally valued, like being punctual or having problem solving skills, others vary

from place to place. In Italy, for example, flexibility, in particular in terms of shifts, working hours and holidays, is one of the first requirements. It's important to inquire about the companies you want to apply to, not only to identify the type of candidate they are looking for, but also because each one of them can have different policies concerning the application process (some may want the resumè to be hand-delivered, with a cover letter and references, other could prefer the online submission). Migrants have to learn these dynamics and familiarise with the culture and customs of the host country if they want to successfully apply for a job. It can be helpful to find examples of resumes written by people that live in that country, to understand the style to use and to tailor it to that specific context. For example, resumes in the U.S. and U.K. don't include a photograph or personal information, because they focus mainly on professional experience and education, instead in Italy we use to attach a photo and also to give a brief description of ourselves and of our interests. Before looking for a job, migrants should make sure to have the documentation required for employment, in fact, depending on the country they go to and on the one they come from, they may need some work permits, like visa. To get a visa, they should contact the specific country's embassy in their home country. Furthermore, it's important they understand all the different tools that can be used to look for job advertisements or to facilitate the job seeking process:

- they can enroll in **job placement companies** that create databases with the resumes of all the members and, according to the partner companies' vacancies, select the ones that fulfill the requirements. They act like bridges between employers and employees, but sometimes they require a registration fee or they withhold a percentage from the salary.
- they can look at the **job openings on the companies' websites**. Usually there are open positions candidates can apply to, sending their resumè and filling some forms, otherwise, if currently there aren't vacancies in the position they are interested in, they can also send an unsolicited application, that will be saved in the company's database.
- they can search for **job postings on job search websites**. Each country has its specific websites, for example in Italy we have [subito](#), [kijiji](#), [bakeca](#),
- [infojobs](#). They are really easy to use, candidates can find job offers using keywords, and can apply filters concerning the place and the category of the job they are looking

for. In most cases when they register on the site, they have to add personal information, work experiences and upload their resumé, so that they don't need to do it each time they want to apply for a job.

- they can use **social media** to look for positions and to promote themselves. Usually companies use the platform to collect information on the job applicants before inviting them in for an interview, to verify the experiences on the resumes, to check out knowledge and attitudes expressed publicly, and to evaluate communications skills. In particular Facebook, Twitter and Instagram help recruiters have a more clear idea of who they are and what they have done in their life. LinkedIn is particularly useful when job searching, it is a tool that can be used to enhance professional networking and job seeking activities. Many people use the site to create new contacts and find career opportunities, and it is also used by companies to find new candidates and to post job openings. So it's important to keep the profile always updated and to learn how to effectively use this tool to build a network of connections and have more opportunities to get a job. Facebook can also be useful, in particular because there are several groups aimed at helping people find a job or helping employers find possible candidates. The positive aspect is that it puts people in direct contact, they can interact and ask for information.
- they can also attend **job-fairs** to meet people that work in the job field they are interested in, to meet new people and to gain a better understanding of what employment opportunities are available to them.



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For some positions a crucial requirement is being fluent

in the language of that country. Migrants in particular, before applying for a job, should attend language courses, in order to have more opportunities and to become more competitive candidates, taking advantage of their being bilingual. They can practice the language by interacting with native speakers, watching movies and, especially, reading books in the host country's language, not only because they should know how to write properly as well, but also because reading facilitates the acquisition of foreign languages, as it provides exposure to natural language. Books contain a wider range of vocabulary and grammar, correct language structures and use a richer and more refined form of expression. The repetition of the same words and sentences will facilitate the learning process, making readers gain language skills much faster than other people. After they've perfected their linguistic proficiency, they can start looking for job openings and apply to them. At this point they should also work on their interviewing and video conferencing skills. It's becoming increasingly common to make video conferencing interviews, so it's important to practise speaking in front of a camera, to look confident and calm. There are several ways migrants can prepare for an interview at home, for example they can write a list of possible questions and then answer them

out loud, they can do it by themselves, or ask a friend or a relative to play the part of the recruiter, they can do it in front of the mirror or record themselves practicing, focusing on body language, gestures and on speaking slowly and clearly. It will help them reduce stress during the real interview, when they will have to follow several rules, in order to make a good impression. First of all, the clothing they choose is going to have a considerable impact on the impression they'll make on the interviewer, and so on the outcome of the interview. They have to dress formally, more or less depending on the context, for example if they are going to have an interview in a big firm or in a law firm they should wear a suit, but if they have applied for a job in a store they can simply wear a shirt. Also they should make sure their handshake is firm, in order to make the interviewer understand that they are confident, but not to the point of being perceived as arrogant. Eye contact is very important while interacting with the employer, as well as listening carefully to what he is asking, without interrupting. Following all these practices will help them succeed in their job interview, but to get one it's important to learn how to write an effective resumé, in order to attract the recruiter's attention. The resumé can be considered a marketing tool, it's the candidate's opportunity to convince the recruiter that he could be a great asset to the company. Sometimes, even if his qualifications and work experiences match the requirements, he doesn't get a positive response because the way in which the resumé is presented and written plays an important role. There is not a set length for it, but it should be concise and should include only the necessary information, because recruiters have to examine tons of CVs every day and, of course, don't have time to read everything. Sometimes, with the support of software, they select information using keywords. The CV should be adapted to the position the candidate applies for, highlighting the skills and knowledge that better correspond to that job. It should contain the following information:

- contact details: make sure to include name, email address and a contact phone number.
- a brief paragraph in which the candidate's best professional accomplishments and capabilities are described, and the work/life experiences that make him qualified for the position he is applying for.
- Personal attributes and career overview.
- Educational qualifications.
- Employment history.
- List of key skills: both hard skills, so the technical qualifications the candidate has for a job, and soft skills, his interpersonal talents, can be included.
- List of technical/software skills.

The order of these sections can vary, in fact the most useful information should be put first, for example, if the applicant's education history is not related to the field of the job he is interested in, he should put it at the end of his resumé, highlighting instead the skills and experiences that meet the job's needs. When providing his employment history, he should include the position

title, the name of the company and the dates for each job, in reverse-chronological order, so he will have to put his most recent job first. Furthermore he should explain his tasks, his responsibilities and successes, and what skills and knowledge he has acquired doing that job. If he hasn't had any job before, for example because he just graduated from high school, he can prove to be qualified adding other experiences, for example the ones he has done through school, voluntary work, internships or work placements. In his education section instead, he should list his most advanced degree first and work backwards.

Objectives:

- Learning how to prepare for a job interview and the correct behaviour to perform.
- Learning what tools to use to look for job advertisements and to facilitate the job seeking process.
- Learning how to structure a resumè and what are the main information to add.
- Learning the importance of knowing the norms, the evaluation parameters and the requirements of the companies you are interested in, before applying for a job.
- Learning what skills to develop to be more competitive in the world of work.

2.8 Learning Unit: Lifestyles and healthy choices

Pursuing a healthy lifestyle is no easy matter.

You should exercise regularly, drink plenty of water, eat fruits and vegetables and get enough sleep. It can be challenging while performing daily duties and combining work and family commitments. As a consequence, very often we end up neglecting ourselves, harming our health and well-being. There is a strong link between physical and mental health, that is influenced by lifestyle choices such as physical activity, diet, smoking and alcohol consumption. Other factors that contribute to our health condition are our socioeconomic and occupational status, which summarise the level of prestige, authority and power that



give us access to a broader range of resources. Of course, people with a stable financial situation, that have the possibility to satisfy their needs, will have a higher level of self-satisfaction and self-realisation. Moreover, wealthy people also have better access to health care, as well as better treatment, and can afford higher-quality food and products. There are also other variables, like race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status and acculturation, that affect our wellness. Due to social prejudices and social constructions some categories, like migrants, illiterate people, women and minority groups, experience isolation, marginalisation, violence and abuses, and so are more likely to develop depression and to be frustrated and dissatisfied with their life. Sometimes they don't have access to the same education and job opportunities that are granted to the other citizens, and that affects their possibility to afford a decent standard of living, and to provide for their and their family's essential needs like food, housing, education, health care, transport, clothing. Migrants and minority groups in particular, face greater difficulties when socialising and interacting with others, the former mainly for communication problems, and sometimes, even when they have been staying in the same place for several years, they are not treated equally and their inclusion is hindered by natives. But social integration also plays a crucial role when it comes to our well-being, as well as the extent, strength and quality of our social connection with others. Having a lot of friends and joining social activities positively affect our health, as social relationships provide emotional support, entertainment and a sense of belonging. Our physical and mental condition is linked to the culture we belong to, for the values and ideas it pursues, and to the external environment, in fact, for example, the quality of air and water can affect health through physical exposures. Keeping a healthy lifestyle is even more difficult for the people who settled in another country, in fact, the mental, physical and social adjustment related to moving to another place, causes stress that affects different levels of their personal well-being. They should adapt to a different

climate and different hygienic standards, moreover it is possible that they don't have the necessary antibodies against common local diseases. The period right after their arrival is the most crucial, because it is likely that, due to the high level of stress, they have a weakened immune system. For this reason, before moving to another country, it's important to find out if you should get any vaccination, to understand how the health system works in the host country and, in case you have a medical condition, to make sure you will find the medicine you need there as well as that you are able to describe your symptoms in the local language. But the physical environment is not the only thing an expat should adapt to, in fact he should also adjust his habits related to culture, cuisine, interactions and relationships, accommodation, and so on. Every place has its own traditions, in particular when it comes to food and recipes. You may come across new foods, flavours and ingredients, and changing your daily diet can give



problems to your intestine. The local cuisine can have different ingredients from the ones you were accustomed to consuming back home, as well as minerals and substances your body is not used to. Sometimes expats find it difficult to adapt to the new cuisine, maybe because they don't like the taste or simply because they are not used to that kind of dishes, and they end up eating junk

food in fast food companies and restaurant chains they can find in their country as well, when they should eat in a healthy manner instead, ideally in the way they have always previously been accustomed to. A solution can be searching for proper stores that sell the healthy food which they previously ate back in their home countries. The attitude and practice of maintaining the eating habits of the home country in a new settling country is influenced by many factors, like maintaining connection with home. Because of this strong relation between food and identity, for most of the immigrants, losing traditional culinary practices is associated with the abandonment of community, family, and religion. It is important to consider that, another reason to stick to what is familiar to them, is that migrants may not be able to prepare the typical new country's food, and also that nowadays it is really easy to find ingredients from all over the world in any supermarket.

Besides eating healthy and following a balanced diet, another important aspect is having an active lifestyle. Physical activity has a lot of benefits:

- it will give you more energy and will make you feel better because of the endorphins that are released in your brain.
- it eases stress.

- it increases your level of self-esteem, in fact, when you feel good about your body and how you look, you feel more confident. And it can have a positive effect on different areas of your life, like your relationships, career, goals and aspirations.
- it will help you deal with problems differently; thanks to discipline development and motivation, you will learn how to face everyday challenges.
- being engaged in some activities, in this case sport, can give you a sense of achievement and satisfaction.
- it is an opportunity to meet new people, that may share your interests, and to build social relationships.
- hiking, running or getting around by bicycle can be a great opportunity to exercise and also to discover new places in your new home.

Migrants usually experience loneliness, depression and isolation, due to the sudden loss of everything they were familiar with and due to the culture shock, but adopting a healthy lifestyle can positively impact their mental well-being, reducing their symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Objectives:

- Learning how to lead a healthy life.
- Understanding the deep connection between mind and body.
- Learning what factors can influence the state of both physical and mental health.
- Engaging in social activities, to improve psychological and physical health.

(Document as of May 9th, 2020)