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STEP
CITIZENSHIP PEDAGOGY
AND TEACHER EDUCATION



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"GIOVANNI MARIA BERTIN"



STEP

Citizenship pedagogy
and teacher education.
An alliance between school
and territory

TOOLKIT





CONTENTS

PART ONE

To start with...Self-reflection on own representations	pag. 7
Self-reflection on own representations	pag. 8

PART TWO

The STEP Project <i>School Territory Environment Pedagogy</i>	pag. 13
Introduction	pag. 14
Purpose	pag. 14
Objectives	pag. 14
Project stages: creating the Toolkit	pag. 15
Developing a transnational curriculum	pag. 15
Teaching trials: methods and tools	pag. 15
Case studies	pag. 17

PART THREE

The methodology: teacher professional development research (TPDR)	pag. 19
Teacher professional development research (TPDR)	pag. 20
Why would a teacher be interested in taking part in Teacher professional development research?	pag. 21
Why is it important for a researcher to work in the research field alongside teachers?	pag. 21
Doing Teacher professional development research therefore means...	pag. 21
Finding out more about Teacher professional development research	pag. 22

PART FOUR

The experiences	pag. 25
Introduction	pag. 26
The experiences in Preschool	pag. 27
ITALY	
University of Milano-Bicocca	
Scuola dell'infanzia "Don Sturzo" - Istituto Comprensivo "IV Novembre", Cornaredo (MI): Gemellaggio Creat(t)ivo	pag. 27
Scuola dell'infanzia "H. C. Andersen" - Istituto Comprensivo "Don Milani", Vimercate (MI): Caro Sindaco, il cartello dice che non si scrive sugli alberi!	pag. 34
Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna	
Scuola dell'infanzia "A. Negri", Bologna: Radici per crescere: l'incontro tra passato e futuro. La costruzione di relazioni nel territorio di appartenenza	pag. 40
Scuola dell'infanzia "A. Marighetto", Bologna: Stanze aperte sul mondo: educare alla cittadinanza attiva curando la quotidianità	pag. 45

FRANCE

University of Aix-Marseille

Ecole maternelle "Saint Just", Bouches-du-Rhône (Marseille): Droits de l'enfant pag. 53

SPAIN

University of Siviglia

Centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria (CEIP) "F. García Lorca",

Siviglia: El patio de mi cole es para jugar pag. 60

Centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria (CEIP) "P. Garfias",

Siviglia: La historia de mi barrio pag. 68

SWITZERLAND

Dipartimento Formazione e Apprendimento - Scuola Universitaria

Professionale della Svizzera Italiana

Scuola dell'Infanzia di Melano: Il gioco dell'acqua pag. 76

The experiences in Primary school

pag. 85

ITALY

University of Milano Bicocca

Scuola Primaria "A. Scarpa" - Istituto Comprensivo "A. Scarpa",

Milano: Quale accoglienza nella comunità: dall'accoglienza dei bambini di classe prima a quella dei rifugiati pag. 85

Scuola Primaria "Dugnani" - Istituto Comprensivo "IV Novembre",

Cornaredo (MI): Fare storia, crescere Cittadini! pag. 95

Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna

Scuola Primaria "San Pietro in Cerro" - Istituto Comprensivo "Terre del Magnifico",

Cortemaggiore (PC): La strada, punto d'incontro di diversità, ti porta a scuola pag. 104

Scuola Primaria "Don Milani" - Istituto Comprensivo n° 2, San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)

Vivere la strada come luogo di incontro di una comunità passando per la scuola pag. 113

FRANCE

University of Aix-Marseille

École élémentaire "A. Camus", Arles (Bouches-du-Rhône): Un colloque citoyen à l'école pag. 120

École élémentaire "La Salle", Bouc Bel Air (Bouches-du-Rhône): Le conseil de délégués pag. 127

SPAGNA

Universidad de Sevilla

Centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria (CEIP) "Príncipe de Asturias",

Sevilla: Vivimos con nuestros mayores pag. 132

SWITZERLAND

Dipartimento Formazione e Apprendimento-Scuola Universitaria

Professionale della Svizzera Italiana

Scuola elementare di Melano: Dall'acqua ai fossili pag. 140

Scuola elementare di Coldrerio: Coldrerio suona	pag. 147
Prompts for planning	pag. 155
Prompts for reflecting on my activities	pag. 156
 PART FIVE	
Documents and teacher's tools	pag. 159
Tools	pag. 160
Teacher's diary of the educational programme	pag. 160
Observation method with suggested prompts for the observation of activities and specific tasks	pag. 163
School-Territory alliance sheet	pag. 164
 PART SIX	
The e-Twinning platform	pag. 167
The use of e-Twinning in the STEP Project	pag. 168
SHEET 1: E-Twinning Group "Pedagogia della cittadinanza e formazione degli insegnanti: un'alleanza tra Scuola e Territorio"	pag. 169
What is the e-Twinning platform?	pag. 169
Why working on the e-Twinning platform?	pag. 170
SHEET 2: Virtual twinning "Giochiamo insieme? Jouons ensemble?"	pag. 171
 PART SEVEN	
Bibliography	pag. 175
Bibliography & Updates	pag. 176
Webography	pag. 178
 CREDITS	pag. 179



PART ONE

To start with...



Self-reflection
on own
representations

Self-reflection on own representations

This Toolkit is the product of the research project entitled *Pedagogia della Cittadinanza e Formazione degli Insegnanti: un'alleanza tra Scuola e Territorio* (Citizenship Pedagogy and Teacher Education: an alliance between School and Territory) - STEP, which was funded by the European Union in 2015.

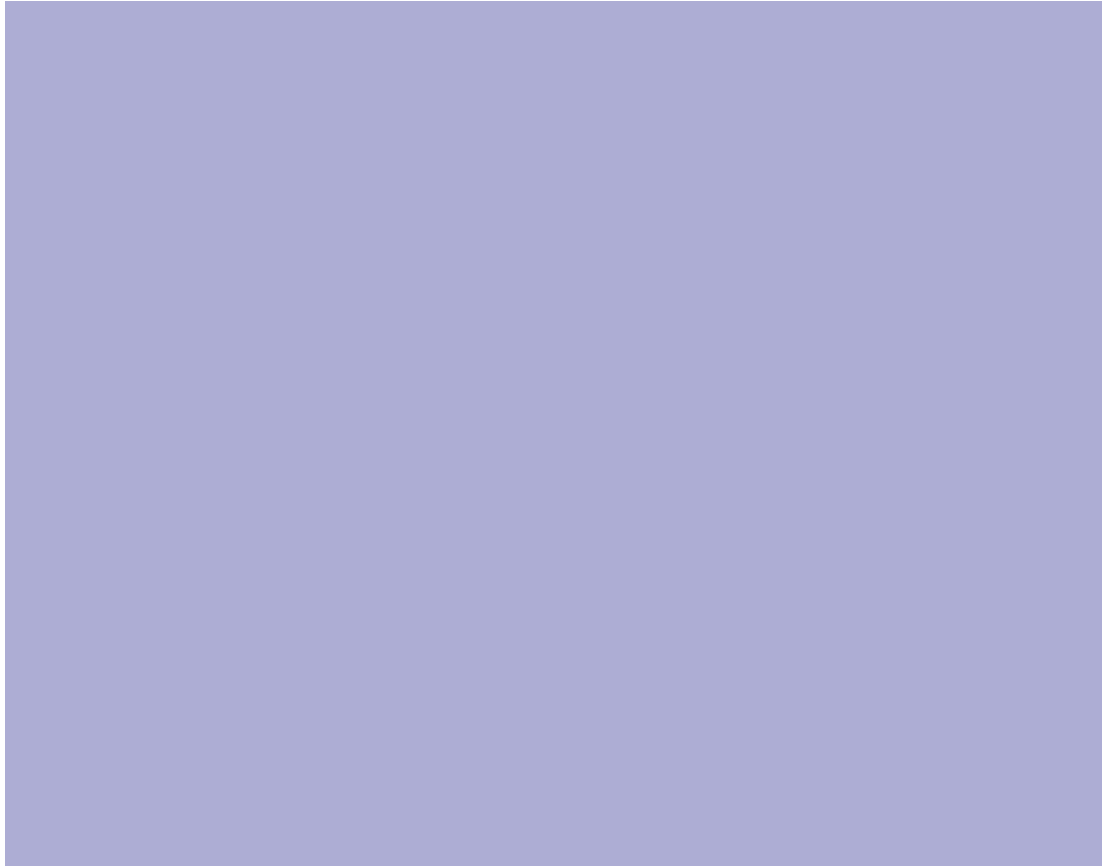
The project partners were the University of Milano-Bicocca (primary partner), the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, and the universities of Aix-Marseille, Seville, and Locarno.

The project faced two key challenges: on the one hand, creating teaching programmes able to systematically integrate the topic of Social Harmony, Heritage and Sustainability Education into pre-school nursery and primary schools in the various countries involved, following a long and collaborative research process; on the other hand, realising these programmes with the teachers involved in the research project itself, with a design approach shared with university researchers and local stakeholders.

This complex research project gave rise to this Toolkit, which aims to be a tool for teachers to plan integrated programmes that involve Social Harmony, Heritage and Sustainability Education following the general strategy of the project derived from the Teacher professional development research.

The first step of Teacher professional development research is to come up with good questions. For this reason, below are some of the initial questions used to start personal reflection.

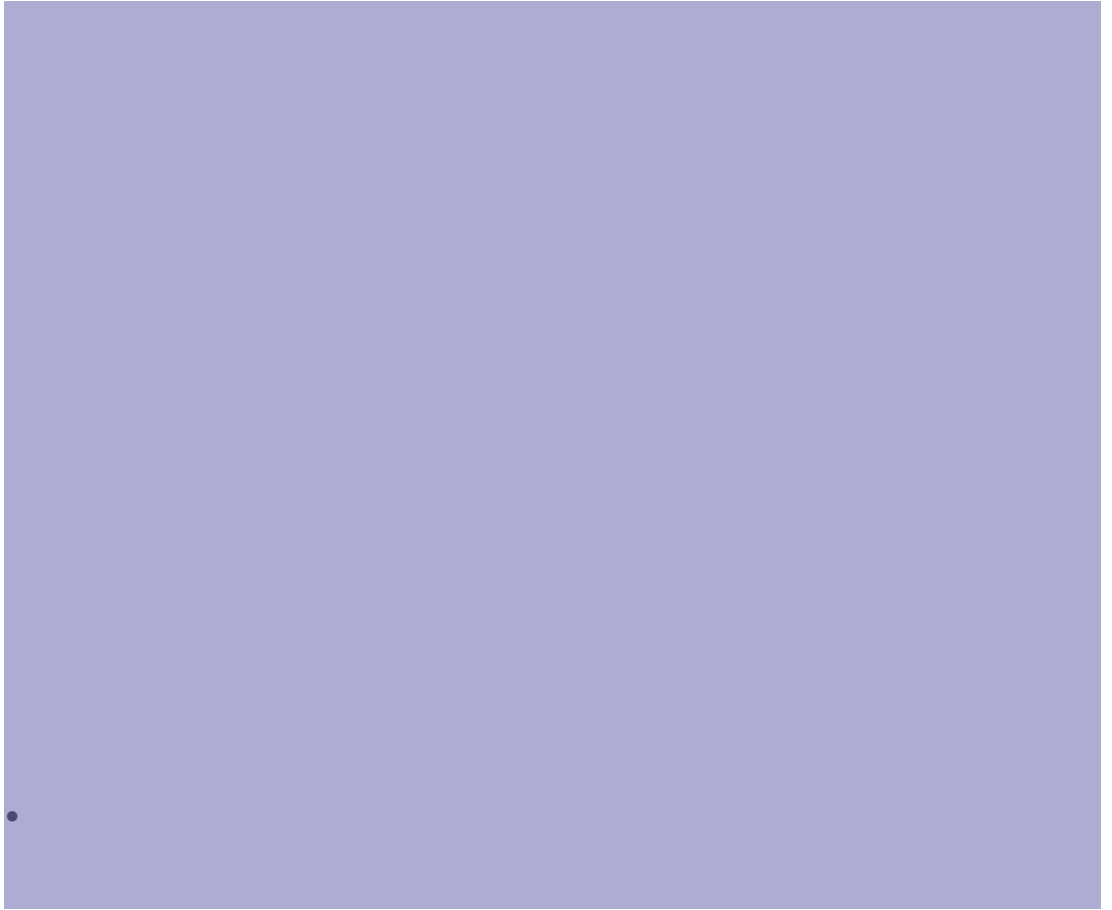
What does teaching Social Harmony mean to me?



What does teaching Heritage mean to me?



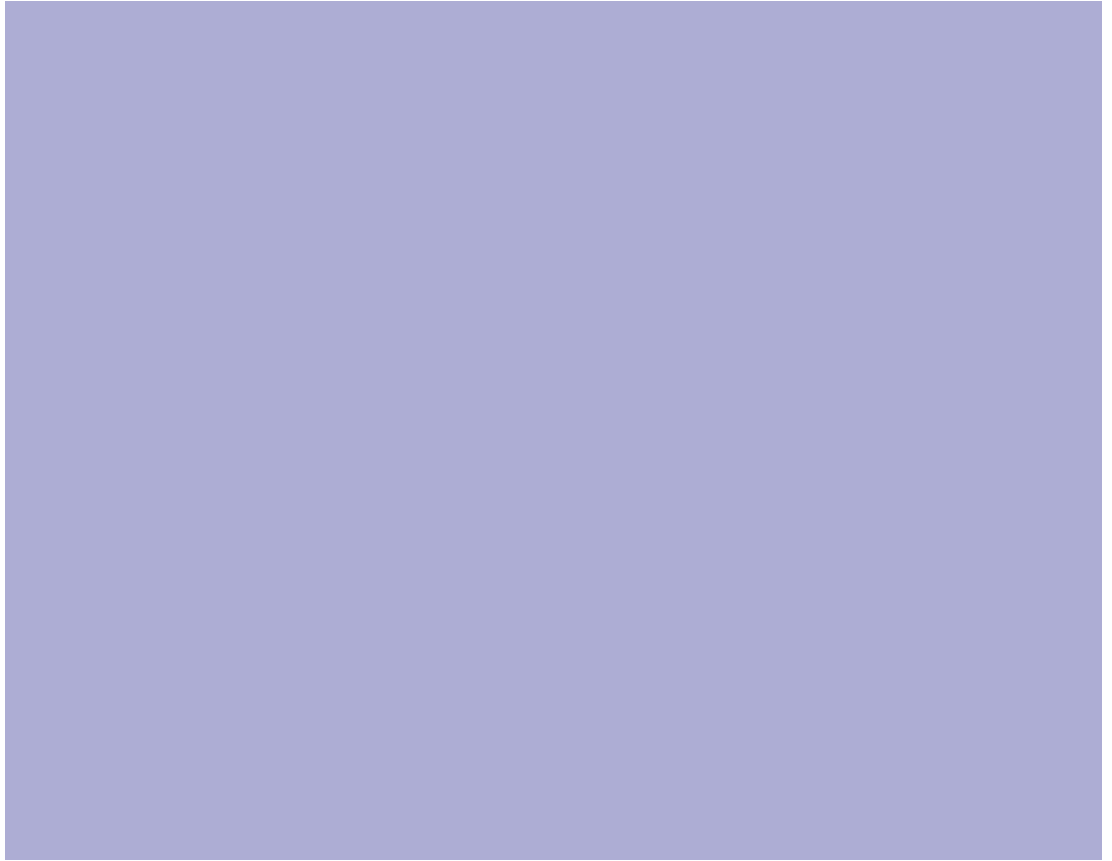
What does teaching Sustainability education mean to me?

A large, empty purple rectangular box intended for a written response to the question above. A small black dot is visible on the left edge of the box.

Can the issue of Heritage be connected to the topic of Active Citizenship Education? In what way?

A large, empty purple rectangular box intended for a written response to the question above.

Can the issue of the Environment and Sustainability be connected to the topic of Active Citizenship Education? In what way?



Can the issue of Social Harmony be connected to the topic of Active Citizenship Education? In what way?





PART TWO

The STEP Project School Territory Environment Pedagogy



Introduction

STEP is a 2015 Erasmus Plus *Strategic Partnership for School Education* Project that lasted 3 years and involved the University of Milano-Bicocca, the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, and the University of Aix-Marseille, the University of Seville, and the SUPSI University of Locarno as partners and members of the working group. The project's participants and active actors included teacher-trainers, educational coordinators, informal education workers, professional educators from the region, nursery and primary school trainee teachers. The project's main resource and its richness came from the multiplicity of participants, from universities, schools and the region, bringing with them different training backgrounds, experiences, roles and outlooks.

STEP was born from the desire and need to reflect on and confront training and the experiences of Active Citizenship Education – at a European level – to construct democratic and Social Harmony, as an opportunity to know, interpret and value the Environment and local Heritage, and to strengthen the School-Territory alliance. Indeed, the partners of the Project share the belief that it is possible to create personal and original identities capable of acting in ways that contribute to the betterment of the world with the knowledge of being part of a system and a collective history.

Purpose

The STEP Project therefore aims to build a transnational network of bodies and institutions responsible for initial and in-post teacher training to create, on a European level, an exchange of knowledge, skills, practices and innovative approaches to Active Citizenship Education. Starting with a comparison between the very definitions of Citizenship, Heritage and Sustainability Education found in the official documents of each country, a transnational curriculum was developed that inspired subsequent teaching trials with a view to building a School-Territory alliance.

Another purpose of the project was to run collective and transnational trials relative to a form of research known as Teacher professional development research, with the aim of giving rise to reflections, methodologies and tools focussed on guiding educational and teaching practices.

Objectives

In light of the above purposes, the STEP Project established the following objectives:

- develop a transnational curriculum for Active Citizenship Education that integrates the topics of the Environment, Sustainability, Social Harmony, and material and immaterial Heritage.
- enhance the quality of initial and in-post training programmes for teachers (nursery and primary school) and for teacher-trai

- test and verify Teacher professional development research strategies.
- encourage the exchange of experiences and research 'in the field' through *collaborative learning* methods and the use of new technologies.
- start teaching trials in nursery and primary schools between School and Territory from a transdisciplinary perspective.
- verify and disseminate findings and trials on two levels – teacher training and schoolchild education – through national and international initiatives.

Project stages: creating the Toolkit

1. Developing a transnational curriculum

(<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B0yMeWvkaoBrRjhHTHZpQ3hPMk0>)

The first stage of the project revolved around the development of a transnational curriculum covering the topics of Social Harmony, Heritage and Sustainability Education. This stage progressed in successive steps aimed at:

- identification of the official sources in each country relative to initial teacher training and Heritage and Sustainability Education (general ministerial documents, national curriculum for nursery and primary education, curriculum for initial teacher training, local curriculum for different types of teaching, workshops and internships), and of the relevant methodology for carrying out a comparative analysis of the institutional contexts of teacher training and national school curricula.
- analysis of such documents using 3 key words: *Citizenship*, *Sustainability* and *Heritage*, with their corresponding subject matter, still considered from an educational perspective.
- in-depth analysis of the above key words based on three levels of analysis, following the guidelines shared by the research team.
- the data collected allowed for the development of a transnational curriculum as common groundwork from which to start teaching trials in the subsequent stage.

2. Teaching trials: methods and tools

(https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_yE7njY2mywhXT1Xcjqrjx8Z9nxu75B5)

The team began teaching trials of the transnational curriculum in a few schools, with the involvement of various institutions in the region, to try out forms of a School-Territory alliance. The group then shared a collective research protocol with researchers and teachers, which detailed core topics, purposes, objectives, methodologies, roles and tasks for each individual, means of recording information and methods for observation and analysis. The research methodology was that of Teacher professional development research (see part three of the Toolkit).

The schools involved were the following:

IT – Università degli Studi Milano-Bicocca

- I.C. “IV Novembre” (Cornaredo – Milan), scuola dell’infanzia “Don Sturzo” and scuola primaria “Dugnani”: project on the topic of developing citizenship identity from knowledge of one’s own region.
- I.C. “Don Milani” (Vimercate – Monza Brianza), scuola dell’infanzia “H. C. Andersen”: project focused on comparing and sharing children’s active social experiences, in and out of school, on the development of trust and of the values of social harmony in a democratic, supportive and open space.
- I.C. “A. Scarpa” (Milan), scuola primaria “A. Scarpa”: project on the topic of welcoming and integration in the community.

IT – Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna

- Scuola dell’infanzia “A. Negri” (Bologna): project on intergenerational exchange and the development of social networks within the area.
- Scuola dell’infanzia “A. Marighetto” (Bologna): project on individual identity and the meaning of citizenship in and out of school.
- I.C. n.2 in San Lazzaro di Savena (Bologna), scuola primaria “Don Milani” and I.C. “Terre del Magnifico” in Cortemaggiore (Piacenza), scuola primaria (San Pietro in Cerro): projects on the street as a place of physical, emotional and relational encounters.

ES – Universidad de Sevilla

- Centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria “F. García Lorca” (Seville): project on planning and transforming the school playground.
- Centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria “P. Garfias” (Seville): project on the area, in particular on a place of great historical and literary interest, linked to the identity of the area, La Cantina dei Gatti (The Cat Bar).
- Centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria “Príncipe de Asturias” (Seville): project on children’s responsibility towards elderly people in their area.

FR – Université d’Aix-Marseille

- École maternelle “Saint Just Centre” (Marseille, Bouches-du-Rhône): introduction to eco-citizenship with interactive pedagogy, project run in partnership with the Parc National des Calanques.
- École élémentaire “A. Camus” (Arles, Bouches-du-Rhône): project on eco-citizenship, art and culture.
- École élémentaire “La Salle” (Bouc-Bel-Air, Bouches-du-Rhône): project on the topic of being citizens in school and in the region.

CH – SUPSI Locarno

- Scuola dell’infanzia (Melano): project on the topic of water.
- Scuola elementare (Melano): project on water and fossils.
- Scuola elementare (Coldrerio): project on soundscapes.

3. Case studies

(https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1229NbgBDhGX-YG7WAnAm0WS2Cpnwt6_uX)

The research team then identified a few schools to be case studies. Data was collected using a portfolio of methods (interviews, video observations, log book, questionnaires, recording children's work) developed with the partners. At the end of the in-classroom trials, criteria and indicators for comparative analysis were identified and the report was written that led to the creation of the Toolkit. In particular, the analysis and comparison of experiences allowed us to highlight certain core factors and themes, including: the outcome of the in-classroom trials; the contents and practices of Active Citizenship Education, integrating Social Harmony, Sustainability and Heritage Education; training teachers in the various countries on the topic; the schoolchildren's learning; and lastly the efficacy of the Teacher professional development research model.



PART THREE

The methodology

Teacher professional development research (TPDR)



Teacher professional development research (TPDR)

TPDR aims to promote the professionalism of teachers (and of education workers within schools and children's services), by emphasising connection and dialogue between teachers and researchers. Both groups are involved in developing and leading the research process that this project seeks to initiate and run. Teachers and researchers take on different roles and tasks in order to develop an inter-institutional collaboration fostering the school's innovation. TPDR is a form of participatory research that aims to transform and innovate teaching practices based on the constraints and resources found within educational and research settings. This distinctive feature is seen in the democratic and dialogical research process, outlining *ad hoc* training strategies able to make this process a meaningful, grounded and useful experience for all participants.

TPDR is a methodology that aims to promote the professional development of teachers and to provide effective feedback to educational and training bodies. The scientific community and the STEP Research Project participants have taken on the following defining commitments:

1. a clear explanation of the research purposes relative to the growth and development of the professionalism of the teachers directly involved and attention paid to the documentation and analysis of the repercussions in the changes made.
2. the creation of an TPDR group comprised of researchers and teachers, in which the various roles of participants are clarified and objectives, subjects, value and methodological choices are negotiated and clarified.
3. centring on the idiosyncrasies of the contexts – institutional and non-institutional – in which the TPDR takes place and which occurs at all stages of the research through the analysis of the constraints and resources available in each context.
4. a continual and systematic comparison between research participants using the recording of findings and processes put in place in school and training settings.
5. attention paid to the impact of the findings within the school, both for educational and teaching innovation, and for teacher training.

Why would a teacher be interested in taking part in Teacher professional development research?

TPDR does not “go into” a setting with the intention of transmitting new, top-down knowledge that could be distant and impersonal for participants, but instead provides the possibility of constructing new concepts based on the lived experiences of teachers. Through open dialogue, exchange, reflection and comparing different points of view (those of teachers and those of researchers) it is possible to go from situated knowledge that is rooted in individual settings to the opportunity to identify new directions of meaning able to guide new educational and teaching practices, and to be implemented differently in other settings.

Why is it important for a researcher to work in the research field alongside teachers?

TPDR can help practitioners (teachers and educators) describe the implicit knowledge that is otherwise in danger of remaining hidden and silent in everyday services and schools. Thanks to the use of specific observation and documentary methods, it is possible to make visible the meanings, reflections, practices and actions which, if described and shared both within the working group and the wider community, can bring new vigour to educational intentionality, to the pedagogic-teaching design of services and schools. Together, teachers, educators and researchers can highlight and promote the professional skills obscured by the continual rhythms of everyday life.

Together, they can develop a more refined lens through which to understand children, schooling and the important objective of its mandate, contributing to the design of new and original educational and teaching practices that meet the needs of today’s children, adolescents and families. This is how theory can be interpreted differently, bringing a fresh perspective, adherence and contemporaneity.

Doing Teacher professional development research therefore means...

Taking on and sharing the responsibility for a process that will inevitably transform your own educational/scholastic setting:

- Making a significant commitment to the research;.Dedicating time, and professional and personal resources to the research.
- Applying your own professional skills to the specific topic and meta-reflexive skills in a broader sense.
- Breaking down, questioning, rethinking and updating your own knowledge.
- Trusting in the potential of the research, even when the process becomes difficult.
- Taking part in a project that also has political aims.

Finding out more about Teacher professional development research

- Centre for Educational Research on Teachers as Professionals: <http://crespi.edu.unibo.it>
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- Barrère A., Frétigné C. (2017), *Recherche et formation*, n°85. En ligne: <https://journals.openedition.org/rechercheformation/2799>
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PART FOUR

The experiences



The experiences

Introduction

The following section presents a series of work sheets that summarise a number of experiences developed as part of the STEP Project by the children and teachers involved. The proposals have been arranged according to school level (pre-school nursery and primary) and Country.

While each characterised by different themes tackled, levels of education and home country, the sheets all share the same idea of Active Citizenship Education: of commitment to and active involvement in the problems affecting the local area and the idea that a school's role is not simply to educate the citizens of tomorrow, but also the citizens of today, starting from a very young age.

Describing a sequence of activities selected from broader programmes, each sheet recounts how the classroom/school group looked in depth at a specific theme, starting from a number of given conditions that characterised every case study and affected the experience itself.

The sequences describe different teaching approaches: some present a predominantly “descriptive” approach, where activities focus mainly on describing, narrating or conveying content; others favour a largely “analytical” approach, placing the emphasis on forging relations, on cause-and-effect processes, on drawing comparisons; lastly, others propose a predominantly “complex” approach, as they strive to link all the elements of the given context and to consider them as an integral system. Although significantly different from one another, the three strategies all represent valid teaching approaches for dealing with the different themes that run through Active Citizenship Education. At the end of each sheet are some practical suggestions for taking new steps towards a more complex approach, without forgetting the age of the children involved and the desired level of involvement. In addition, within each sheet it is possible to identify the different levels of focus on Social Harmony, Heritage, Environment and Sustainability and understand if and how these are interconnected and mutually supported.

At the end of this presentation, there will be the opportunity to access a section dedicated to good questions concerning planning in a broad sense and individual practices. These are questions designed to help teachers to reflect on the case study read or to support them in the planning of original new programmes. The intentionality behind this part is to help teachers to look upon the Toolkit not just as a “box of tricks” which is handy for day-to-day use, but as an opportunity to develop their own critical thinking, their reflective and meta-reflective skills, embracing questions that succeed in setting aside the context to touch upon the key elements of good planning.

The experiences in preschool

ITALY

University of Milano-Bicocca



Scuola dell'infanzia "Don Sturzo" - Istituto Comprensivo "IV Novembre", Cornaredo (Milan)

Project title: *Gemellaggio Creat(t)ivo (Creative Twinning)*

<http://www.creativetwinning.cloud/project/>

Thematic: Social Harmony and Environment and Sustainability

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

Cornaredo is an Italian town with a population of approx. 20,500, located in the metropolitan area of Milan, in Lombardy.

The school is part of the *Istituto Comprensivo IV Novembre* school district <http://www.icsvia4novembre.gov.it/>.

The Sturzo nursery is located in a park on the outskirts of the town, and is composed of five classes, each identified by a different colour. In addition to the classrooms, the nursery has other spaces, including a hall for gym and music activities, labs for painting, English and crafts, a reading library, a dormitory for the younger children's afternoon nap and a dining hall. The school complex is also surrounded by a large garden with extensive play facilities.

The Blue Class is a heterogeneous grouping comprised of 23 children (eleven 3-year-olds and twelve 4-year-olds), the latter group including a child with autistic spectrum disorders who has full-time assistance from a special needs teacher and an educator. This particular child's relationship with his peers is still problematic at times, as he often resorts to physical force to reject them. There are five class teachers in total. The 23 children include 6 of foreign origin, namely 2 Albanian girls, 2 Moroccan-born girls, a Chinese girl and a Venezuelan girl. The children and their parents have a good understanding of the Italian language, with a reasonably good spoken level too. The classroom has several well-defined zones where the children can go of their own accord for activities ranging from unstructured play and reading to crafts and expressive arts. The majority of the children, in both age groups, participate in the activities proposed on a daily basis with enthusiasm and interest. One group, on the other hand, struggles to listen and pay attention, causing a disturbance, which often requires the intervention of the teachers to underline the importance of observing the various rules of behaviour.

1.2 Timeframe

The educational proposal is part of a major school project entitled Creative Twinning. This stage presents just one sequence of three activities, each with a duration of approximately one hour.

- *Activity 1 Meeting with experts from the Humana organisation:* 1 hour.
- *Activity 2 Depicting the experience:* 1 hour.
- *Activity 3 Learning the art of conversation to get on well together:* 30 minutes.

1.3 Teaching objectives

- To highlight the existence of different social and environmental realities, developing interest in the protection of human rights.
- To raise children's awareness of the question of solidarity.
- To communicate the experience in a clear, comprehensible manner.
- To manage to identify cultural differences; to recognise and accept others for who they are, with all their differences.
- To learn to engage in group discussion, promoting social listening skills.

1.4 Group and classroom organisation

- Activity 1: The children are seated in a circle to listen to the expert.
- Activity 2: The children are seated at the various tables in the classroom.
- Activity 3: The children are seated in a circle on mats.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimension developed

Dimensions developed: Social Harmony – specific theme: Theme of solidarity and voluntary work.

2.2 Description of the type of activity

As part of the school's Creative Twinning project, the children receive a visit from volunteers of the Humana humanitarian organisation, who give a presentation on the country of Malawi with which the school is twinned. Afterwards, the children work on the experience by producing a picture, and subsequently reflect together on the question of human rights through a group discussion.

Activity 1. Meeting with experts from the Humana organisation

The expert tells a simple story to introduce the country of Malawi, and the class is shown photos depicting the life of children in the village and various examples of voluntary work. Malawi is pinpointed on the globe.

Activity 2. Depicting the experience

After the meeting with the volunteers, the teacher asks the children to produce a picture depicting the image that struck them most and to comment on it. The teacher writes the children's comments on their drawings.



Activity 3. Learning the art of conversation to get on well together

After the meeting with the volunteers, and after discussing with the children what struck them most about the photos they were shown, a discussion is held with the children on the question of rights and what they are. The conversation, co-conducted by the teacher and a university tutor who is the traineeship coordinator of the Primary Education degree course, has two aims: on the one hand, to problematise the question of rights with the children, supporting the construction of a collective reasoning; on the other hand, to test a way of conducting the discussion that favours listening on the part of the various participants and observance of the rule of turn-taking in conversations.



2.3 The teacher's role

For teachers, Citizenship Education has on the one hand the main objective of teaching children the rules of social harmony at school and, on the other hand, as reflected in the enthusiastic participation in the *Humana* project, a clear reference to themes associated with solidarity and charity, achieved through learning about situations in developing countries which are struck by extreme poverty and conflict. The teacher intervenes regularly, steering the activity in the chosen direction. For the most part, these are corrective interventions or intended to follow the question - child's answer - teacher's feedback pattern. During the project, thanks also to the experience of co-conducting a discussion

with the tutor/traineeship coordinator, the teacher's way of relating to the children undergoes a gradual transformation and she attempts to change her classroom communication practices, toning down the regulatory attitude in favour of listening more to the children's points of view.

2.4 Children's role

In the first stage the children are predominantly listeners. Their involvement is largely limited to producing drawings, sometimes just colouring-in sheets, or work on themes dealt with during the activities. They are mainly informed about the project, sometimes they are assigned roles. In the conversation about what rights are, they are considered bona fide interlocutors, and are invited to consider the problematic matter.

The children, in turn, answer with genuine spontaneity, voicing their ideas and showing their drawings on what rights are and the role they play, referring to their own personal experience and respecting turn-taking during the conversation.

2.5 Examples of material produced

Transcript of the conversation with the children following the meeting with the volunteers (Activity 2):

Teach: What do you have to say about the photos we saw?

Francesco: Those photos were sad.

Teach: Why were they sad, Francesco?

Francesco: Because those children weren't as lucky as we are.

Samuele: That's right! There weren't any desks in the school, or chairs or toys or tables for writing and drawing, and the children had to sit on the floor.

Elisa: The school doesn't even have a roof and walls.

Giulia: The houses have straw roofs with stones next to them, but they're not as nice as ours.

Riccardo: And the children have to look after their little brothers and sisters and carry them around on their backs.

Emanuela: The children have to carry a pail on their head and go and get water from the well to drink

Samuele: The well is far away, it's half an hour away.

Giacomo: I've got a little bottle of water.

Sara: And the children go to work in the fields instead of going to school or playing.

Leonardo: Their toys aren't like ours, they play with bottle tops.

Simone: That's right! We've got lots of lovely, bright toys. Poor them, they only have bottle tops.

Elisabeth: Their clothes aren't nice and they don't even have shoes, they're all barefoot.

Samuele and Safiria: But they're always all together! They're friends, they all smile and they're happy



Children's productions (Activity 2)



Children's drawings with a transcript of their comments by the teacher (Activity 2)

Transcript of part of the conversation (Activity 3):

Tutor/coordinator/: I've come to visit you because I know you're all experts on rights and I'd like you to help me a little...

Samuele: Yes, I remember all the rights

Riccardo: Do not run...

Teach: No, those are rules, rights are...that all children have the right to have something.

Francesco: They have to have food and drink, they have to be looked after by someone

Samuele: They have to have a family, they mustn't be left abandoned

Tutor/coordinator: So what does having a right mean?

Francesco: A right means that nobody has nothing

Riccardo: Also a fridge, food, chairs too

Sara: We have toys

Elisabeth: It means looking after all the children who aren't well

Emanuela: One day the doctor made me better

Simone: Everybody needs rights, to make children grow up and be good...

Samuele: There have to be schools, there have to be toys, flowers, there has to be food, there has to be a kitchen

Tutor/coordinator: so who decided these rights?

Samuele: A wizard!



Drawing by the children after the conversation and transcript of the child's statement (Activity 3)

"Children need lots of things, otherwise they don't do very well...» Samuele

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

- Activity 1: Meeting with the expert, photographs, maps of Africa and Italy.
- Activity 2: Individual work, tools: felt-tip pens and paper.
- Activity 3: Group conversation, audio recorder.

4. Potential/difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

The teacher, with initially a very traditional approach, was in the habit of always following the same order in lesson planning: explanation and mechanical activity (sheets to complete) or creative activity (drawing) to ascertain whether her set objectives had been met. The learning consists mostly of memorisation and analysis which is achieved through multiple languages, mostly creative.

The introduction of a moment of open discussion with the children and the suggestion that it could be used as a starting point, triggered a change of

perspective on the part of the teacher, for the moment a change in the desired direction. Thanks to analysis of the video recording of the activities conducted directly by her and of the conversation co-conducted with the tutor/traineeship coordinator, the teacher focuses on the quality of the group dynamic in class and the relationship between her and the group.

4.2 Difficulties

One difficulty the teacher had was that of limiting her regulatory interventions and leaving sufficient room for the children's ideas. The teacher's words reveal the challenges of teaching her class the basic rules for getting along with one another and socialising as a group, also due to the children not being accustomed to engaging in dialogue or playing the leading role in activities. The teacher ponders the optimum method of conducting conversations with the children, with a view to following a more open and democratic approach. Another major difficulty the teacher has encountered is the lack of support from colleagues not necessarily in the organisation of the activities, but even just in sharing ideas regarding the project: "I found my colleagues' reactions quite upsetting because (...) not once did any of them say: "let's see what you did... did you like it, what process did you follow, let's talk about it".

4.3 Possibilities

The teacher focuses on developing basic linguistic communication and mnemonic skills, plus attentional and perceptive abilities. As regards the development of social skills, the focus is mainly on those related to the ability to listen, recall information and process that information, through verbal or graphic expression. The possibilities lie in working on a daily basis to promote the children's skills in the areas of communication and cooperation, planning conversations on problematic issues and questions of meaning, valorising the children's contributions and guiding them to learn to respect turn-taking and reciprocal listening.

5. School - Territory Alliance

With a view to cultivating a relationship with the local area, the children are introduced to what is a distant reality for them, life in the country of Malawi. Thanks to presentations given by several volunteers, the children learn all about this poverty-stricken developing country, and about life there.

The children's attention is therefore directed not to a local but to a global territorial dimension, which is brought into the classroom by an expert. The project utilises the experience of the Humana organisation, which the children learn about and internalise through a graphic and pictorial task set by the teacher.

The children's attention is therefore directed not to a local but to a global territorial dimension, which is brought into the classroom by an expert, before refocusing on the local dimension, noting similarities and differences with their own life experiences.



Scuola dell'infanzia "H. C. Andersen" – Istituto Comprensivo "Don Milani", Vimercate (Monza Brianza)

Project title: *Caro Sindaco, il cartello dice che non si scrive sugli alberi!* (Dear Mayor, the sign says no writing on trees!)

Thematic: Environment and Sustainability and Social Harmony

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

The Andersen nursery school is part of the *Istituto Comprensivo Don Milani* school district, established in the academic year 2012-2013 (<http://www.icdonmilanivimercate.gov.it/>). The school is located in the Municipality of Vimercate (Monza Brianza) (<http://www.comune.vimercate.mb.it/visitare-vimercate.html#.WykmGKeHK00>). The town of Vimercate is characterised by a significant artistic and cultural heritage, including MUST, the civic museum of Vimercate (<http://www.museomust.it/drupal/>), and Palazzo Trotti, the Town Hall (<http://www.comune.vimercate.mb.it/tour/newindex.php>). The MUST civic museum houses cultural artefacts that narrate the history of the Vimercate area from the most ancient civilisations to inhabit the area up to present-day society. Palazzo Trotti, which has been the Town Hall since 1862, was originally a private residence built in the 18th century, and houses frescoes depicting legendary themes.

The case study involved the 'Conchiglie' class of the state-run Andersen nursery school.

The class is composed of 29 children (17 boys and 10 girls), divided into two age groups: 14 children in the "senior" group of 5-year-olds, and 13 children in the "junior" group, who are three years of age or almost. There are no children with certified disabilities or special needs who require educational support. There is one girl with insulin-dependent diabetes, who has a daily insulin injection administered by a nurse. This situation is viewed as normal by the rest of the class group, which is familiar with the blood sugar testing procedures that affect their classmate, who manages this activity on her own, making the test into a game and involving her fellow pupils as competent equals.

The class includes four children from other countries, with different linguistic backgrounds and bilingual situations at home. Two of the children have significant linguistic difficulties.

1.2 Timeframe

10 hours in total, 2 hours per module. The programme was carried out over the course of approximately two months, tackling other themes at the same time and picking up the thread between one meeting and another through discussions, photos and re-reading of previous conversations recorded.

1.3 Teaching objectives

- To help the children to develop a notion of their own town that also considers the main elements of its heritage and territory
- To identify a number of local points of reference through young explorer activities
- To reinforce the children's ideas on the usefulness of rules in a local community
- To promote critical thinking for selection of causes and effects on the themes of environmental protection
- To support the formulation of critical questions on the decision-making role of citizens and Mayor
- To promote the conceptualisation of a democratic vote starting from hands-on experience.

1.4 Group and classroom organisation

- Activity 1: large group activity carried out with children seated in a circle, smaller group activity and individual work in the classroom
- Activity 2: Large group activity carried out with children seated in a circle, and outside the school grounds, around the town
- Activity 3: large group activity carried out with children seated in a circle, smaller group activity and individual work in the classroom
- Activities 4 and 5: large group activity carried out at Palazzo Trotti, the Town Hall.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed and specific theme

Sustainability and social harmony - specific theme: sense of rules, respect for the natural and cultural heritage of the town of Vimercate, shared democratic choice of measures for the community.

2.2 Description of the type of activity

The children set out to explore their local area, and during an outing several negative elements catch their attention: dog fouling, litter in green spaces, graffiti on walls. The children thus decide to appeal to the community by producing posters intended to encourage sustainability and respect for the cultural and natural heritage of the town of Vimercate. The children will then present their ideas to the town Mayor.

Activity 1. What do I know about Vimercate?

In class, the children compare what they know about the Vimercate area, recounting and drawing what they all think are interesting things to discover together (the narrow streets of the historical centre, the ancient medieval bridge of Saint Rocco, their grandmother's house,...).

Later, they work in small groups to draw the map of the town.

Before the outing to explore the local area, the teacher involves the children in a conversation about what they have to do to become explorers, what they have to take with them to collect evidence and information (notepad, pencil, felt-tip pen, camera, a bag,...). They decide on each person's role and responsibility in order to make the best use of their energies, plus how they must behave in order to be good observers.

Activity 2. Discovering the Vimercate area!

The children explore the area around their school. Their attention focuses mostly on signs and notices, and house numbers. In particular, the children's attention is drawn to negative elements such as dog fouling, litter in green spaces and graffiti on walls. They take photographs and collect evidence so that they can talk about it later again in class.

Activity 3. What did we see? Let's think about it again!

The children go over the critical elements that emerged during their outing and, prompted by the teacher, they identify the need to draw up a set of rules for respecting the environment, to share with the community through posters. After discussing the characteristics of the posters (shape, colour, message, target audience), the children work in small groups to produce drawings, complete with a brief explanation, to promote behaviour that is environmentally sustainable.

Activity 4. What can we do?

After making their posters, the group of children suggests going to see the Mayor, who they believe is responsible for protecting the Vimercate area. Their idea is to have a meeting with him at the Town Hall, so they can inform him of the violations they noted. They want to help the Mayor to protect sustainability through the posters they have created, gathered together in a book which they hope will raise the whole community's awareness of positive actions for the local area.



Activity 5. Let's talk about it with the Mayor!

The children visit the Town Hall to meet the Mayor. During their talk with the Mayor, the children also enquire about his role in the decision-making process and so they are told about the part played by municipal Councillors with whom the Mayor shares decisions in a democratic way. The children are then involved in a simulated majority vote in order to decide what type of toy should be chosen to bring the greatest benefit to the town park (a slide or a swing).

2.3 The teacher's role

The teacher plans outings for the children to explore the local area, preparing them by talking about the possible roles they can play (an artist, a photographer, a recording technician, an evidence collector,...) and invites them to be very observant, as the outings will be followed up with discussions in class. In class, the teacher uses the conversation with the children to go over the experience with the material collected and to work on critical points, focusing their interventions and assuming a non-judgmental attitude. The teacher invites the children to come up with suggestions for useful rules to support sustainability and protect the natural and man-made heritage. They guide the children's discussion, helping them to identify the institutional figure to whom they can address their proposals. They work with the local council to plan and organise the meeting with the Mayor.

2.4 Children's role

The children are the leading players in an active citizenship experience, drawing up a number of proposals aimed at improving the collective wellbeing in their home town. Observing the local area, they identify several critical issues and, after talking through their different ideas, they draft a book of proposals to benefit the whole community. In a meeting at the Town Hall, they present the Mayor with their book, asking him to take it into consideration when he is drawing up regulations with his Councillors. The children trial a complex level of participation, learning that rules must be useful and that, to be comprehensible, they must be debated collectively. The group has the chance to actively trial a democratic decision-making process, expressing a preference, analysing the number of majority proposals and asking pertinent questions in order to understand the working mechanisms of the voting system.

2.5 Examples of material produced

The map of the town of Vimercate visited by the children (Activity 1).

Examples of some pages of the book of illustrated rules with the children's special dedication to the Mayor. The descriptions of the rules depicted in the posters were transcribed by the teachers using the children's own words. They sum up the meaning of a regulation, the final stage of a project analysing the constituent parts (clear illustration, shape, colour, brief message) (Activity 3).



3. Methodology, tools and materials used

- Activity 1: Guided discussion with a large group on the characteristic elements of the town of Vimercate, brainstorming in order to identify the prominent landmarks and the roles to assign for the outing exploring the town. Material required for producing drawings to be collected in a book. Use of camera and projector.
- Activity 2: Exploring the local area around the school with observational tools.
- Activity 3: Review of the experience in class. Guided discussion on the critical issues observed by the children and sharing of proposals for improvements to be written down in a book for the Mayor. Material required for producing drawings to be collected in a book. Use of camera and projector.
- Activity 4: Simulation through an active trial of the majority voting system.

4. Potential/ difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

The sequence of activities allowed the children to develop their own critical thinking, increasingly complex and participatory, starting from spontaneous exploration. Starting with an outing exploring the local area, during which the children repeatedly focused on the problem of antisocial behaviours, the rules of social harmony and the protection of the local area's historical heritage, the children ended up talking about the need for rules for the community. Another positive aspect is the repeated opportunity for problematisation and dialogue with the children, conveying the idea that no single opinion or decision is better than another, but that it is always possible to embark on a process of negotiation of ideas, enriched by a plurality of viewpoints. Thanks to constant discussion in a large group and the teacher's focused questions, the children were able to construct an idea of useful, shared community rules, eventually also analysing the role of the figure who, together with the Councillors, is responsible for approving and defending the rules at local level:

the Mayor. An important step was when the children had the opportunity to present the Mayor with the proposed rules identified by the group, trialling a participatory role in community life with a view to protecting the natural and cultural heritage perceived as their own. The children asked the Mayor how he managed to decide the rules for the entire town on his own, a question sparked by their genuine curiosity which was supported by the teacher, and answered during their trip to the Town Hall to meet the Mayor. The presence of a semi-circular table immediately conveyed the idea of a collective decision-making process, allowing the children to see past their superficial image of an absolute leader; similarly, the portraits of former mayors introduced the idea of a figure elected to office by local voters and not a lifetime position. Therefore, the main elements that allowed the transition from an informative to a complex perspective were: guided discussion, active experiences on the ground, meeting with key players (the Mayor), design of a project ultimately handed in person to the end recipient rather than simply posted, leaving an impression through a personal encounter.

4.2 Difficulties

In this case the Mayor and local council were happy to co-organise a meeting with the children to talk about the issues they wished to raise, but this could pose organisational difficulties for the development of the project in other settings.

4.3 Possibilities

To expand the network of local institutions to include other cultural and historical protection agencies, like MUST, the civic museum of Vimercate, which the children visited. The programme lends itself to numerous educational possibilities and further objectives, as with the link established with MUST: the collaboration with the museum culminated in the children organising a guided tour for their families and younger 3-year-old classmates, during which they presented what they had discovered and learned in the museum on the history and culture of their local area, demonstrating complex social, linguistic and organisational skills with strong links to the territory.

5. School - Territory Alliance

In this case an alliance was established between the school and the local area, as the teacher carried out participatory planning of the activities and outings with the relevant institutions. The Mayor was in fact actively involved, not limiting himself to granting the children a tour of Palazzo Trotti, but developing a valuable collaboration with them by engaging in a genuine dialogue, and taking on the role of educator by inviting them to simulate a majority vote. The children were able to integrate the information they already had on the Vimercate area and accounts from family members with direct observations, shared with the group, enabling them to start building their own culture of

the local area. After identifying some critical issues in the local area, they deliberately and responsibly formulated a number of structured, motivated proposals for change and actions for possible improvement, thus playing an active role within the community.

Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna



Preschool “A. Negri”, Bologna

Project title: *Radici per crescere: l'incontro tra passato e futuro. La costruzione di relazioni nel territorio di appartenenza*
(*Roots for growing: past meets future. Building relationships in our local area*)

Thematic: Heritage, Environment and Sustainability, Social Harmony

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

The “Ada Negri” nursery is a council-run school in Bologna, located in the San Donato-San Vitale district, in the Pilastro area. The school, like other children’s services provided by Bologna city council, bases its planning on two documents: the Pedagogical Manifesto and Guidelines (<http://iesbologna.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Manifesto-e-linee-guida.pdf>), and the Charter of educational services and council-run nursery schools (<http://iesbologna.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/20160721-CdS-IES-06.pdf>).

In 2016, the school took part in the “Pilastro 2016” project promoted by Bologna city council, which aimed to improve the district by giving it a makeover, providing the residents with a pleasant, well looked after environment suitable for cultivating both individual and community wellbeing. The results of this project raised the school’s awareness of the need to strengthen and enhance the relationships with and between its user-families, plus the intergenerational relations that are part of children’s daily lives.

The “Ada Negri” nursery school has three homogeneous classes for a total of approximately 75 children. The staff consists of 12 adults in total, with 6 teachers, 1 special needs teacher, 3 educators and 2 school auxiliaries.

The sequence of activities presented here refers to an experience organised in the homogeneous class of 4-year-olds, comprised of 25 children. The class has 3 teachers, 1 of whom is a special needs teacher, with additional help from the school auxiliaries.

1.2 Timeframe

The sequence of activities presented here is part of a wider project conducted by the children and teachers of the class, entitled *Roots for growing: past meets future. Building relationships in our local area* and was developed over the course of approximately 6 months.

In particular:

- *Activity 1. Parents' jobs consisted of several meetings*, with each experience lasting around 1 hour.
- *Activity 2 Meeting with grandparents* consisted of several meetings just like the previous activity, with each one again lasting around 1 hour.
- *Activity 3 Interactions with the territory* consisted of several trips in the local area, with experiences lasting around 3 hours.

1.3 Teaching objectives

The global project stems from the convergence of two key factors: on the one hand, the need to build teaching and educational trials in line with the three dimensions identified by the STEP Project; on the other hand, the all-important need to observe and listen to the children's interests and questions in order to specifically tailor planning that is rooted in the identity of the class group.

The project's teaching objectives are:

- Awareness-raising, knowledge and enhancement of the relationships that touch the children's everyday lives.
- Rediscovery of intergenerational relations through knowledge of the trades and traditions of the past and present.
- Educate children in active citizenship by developing awareness of relationships and the context in which they live, and by promoting a sense of identity, belonging and participation in community life.

1.4 Group and classroom organisation

The activities tend to take place in the classroom. The children are seated in a large group around the tables so as to form a large circle. During the interactions with the local area, the teaching activity mostly addresses the large group.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

Within this project, the dimensions of heritage, of living together in harmony and of the environment acted as reciprocal drivers, each dimension finding new ideas and continuous focus in the others as part of a seamless whole. In particular, in this sequence the dimensions of active citizenship were developed through the theme of intergenerational relations.

2.2 Description of the type of activity

Activity 1. Parents' jobs

The teachers organise a series of meetings with parents, each lasting around one hour, during which the parents present their trade or profession to the class. The visitor shows the children the tools and equipment used in their job, with practical demonstrations too.

In particular, the chosen activity is a meeting with a dad who is a builder by trade. The teacher introduces the children to the parent, who carries out a small school building repair during the meeting.

Activity 2. Meeting with grandparents

In addition to the meetings with parents, the teachers organise further visits to the class by several grandparents with the aim of showing the children professions and practices of the past.

In particular, the chosen activity is a meeting with a grandmother who was once a seamstress.

The visitor lays out various tools of the trade on the tables: a sewing machine, thimble, needles, spools of colourful thread, scissors, dressmaker's chalk, various pieces of fabric, a dressmaker's measuring tape. She then goes on to present all the items on the tables, naming them and explaining their function. The grandmother-seamstress proposes a practical demonstration: the creation of a little dress for a doll in the classroom.

Activity 3. Interactions with the territory

The teachers organise an outing in the local area with a trip to the "Museo della civiltà contadina" (Museum of peasant farmer culture) in Bentivoglio (Bologna) (<http://www.museociviltàcontadina.bo.it>). The group uses a public transport bus to reach the museum. The guide welcomes the children and accompanies them on a tour of the museum's various areas and exhibits. The guide shows the children the various objects (for example: wool, straw, maize and barley) that characterise the spaces.

2.3 Teacher's role

In the first activity the teachers prompt the initial conversation with the large group, inviting particular input from the daughter of the visiting dad. They assist the father by showing the children some materials, and pose stimulus questions on the theme with a view to engaging the group's attention, striving to link what the children are observing with their previous knowledge.

In the second activity, the teachers introduce the visitor and take on the role of observers during the experience, trying to engage the group's attention through stimulus questions on the theme ("Who has already seen sewing?", "Do you know what sewing means?").

In the third activity, the teachers prepare a presentation of the museum for the children to stimulate their curiosity. During the trip, the teachers entrust the guide with management of the class group and communication of the content.

2.4 Children's role

During the first activity, the children are told about the overall project and the visits they will receive. They watch the presentations with interest and are eager to take part.

In the second, the children are told about the overall project. Their interventions are spontaneous and unprompted. During the event, they assume the role of observers.

In the last activity, the children are told about the overall project. They listen with interest and ask questions spontaneously. At the end of the visit, they have the chance to interact with some of the materials present in the museum.

2.5 Example of material produced



Figures 1 and 2. Meeting with the builder-dad



Figure 3. A record of the experience



Figure 4. A record of the trip to the Museum of peasant farmer culture

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

The methodologies selected for these experiences are those of meetings with experts, outings in the local area and working in a large group. The teaching tools selected are: a camera and a video camera used to record the activities. The materials used are represented by the tools and equipment brought to class by the visitors or shown by external experts.

4. Potential/difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

The sequence shows how by following the common thread of intergenerational exchange it is possible to accompany the children in projects and experiences at school and beyond, turning the school into a crossroads of skills, face-to-face encounters and stories. In particular, the sequence presents significant potential benefits: collaboration with families which promotes a school that engages with the outside world, and the involvement of the latter in the construction of meaningful educational programmes; intergenerational interaction which favours a flow of know-how between different outlooks and helps preserve strong links between past and present; lastly, interactions with the local area intended as a reciprocal relationship between different subjects who belong to the same area.

4.2 Difficulties

The difficulties encountered by this sequence are the need to coordinate with subjects who have different skills and who sometimes struggle to engage with the needs and interests of children; the need to translate these activities into active, engaging experiences for the children.

4.3 Possibilities

The sequence of activities recorded here includes possible modifications that can be used to enhance the children's level of engagement:

The activity related to *Parents' jobs* can be modified, for example:

- by shared planning of the activity through a previous meet-and-greet with the invited parent, placing greater emphasis on actively engaging the children;
- by proposing a playful conversational context that allows the children to intervene spontaneously;
- by transforming this meeting into an opportunity to talk about themes that affect a particular profession and that to different extents have something to do with the children's everyday lives.

The activity related to *Meeting with grandparents* can be modified, for example:

- by starting the activity from the children's own experiences to find out what they know, what they know how to do and what knowledge they have on the theme of the meeting;
- by involving the children in a practical, hands-on way, giving them the time, space and the right tools to experiment on their own;
- by allowing the children to play an active role in the natural territory available to them.

The activity related to *Interactions with the territory* can be modified, for example:

- by favouring the informal style of spontaneous interaction between participants;

- by promoting the exchange of ideas between those present, starting from common elements;
- by subsequently re-signifying the outing as a trip to visit acquaintances in the district.

In general, this sequence allows us to state that in order to significantly modify the same experience and make it more interactive and engaging, we need to reflect more carefully on several aspects, like the role of the adult and the space, which have emerged as key elements of the process itself. The teacher's interventions, for example, could be modified to stimulate inclusive participation further through questions that link the experience to the children's everyday lives or prior knowledge, focusing their observations and comments to allow a co-construction of knowledge. To enable this, it is useful to rethink the organisation of the classroom, splitting the class into groups of 8/10 children, and setting up symbolic play corners designed to allow each child to try the materials and practices observed in everyday life.

5. School - Territory Alliance

The teachers deliberately select the expert from the local area as a skilled individual who meets the specific objectives identified and they share times, modalities and content with the expert.



Scuola dell'infanzia "A. Marighetto", Bologna

Project title: *Stanze aperte sul mondo: educare alla cittadinanza attiva curando la quotidianità (Rooms open to the world: teaching active citizenship by attentiveness to everyday life)*

Thematic: Social Harmony, Environment and Sustainability, Heritage

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

The "Ancilla Marighetto" nursery is a council-run school in Bologna, located in the San Donato-San Vitale district. The "Ancilla Marighetto" nursery, like other children's services provided by Bologna city council, bases its planning on two documents:

- the Pedagogical Manifesto and Guidelines (<http://iesbologna.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Manifesto-e-linee-guida.pdf>)
- the Charter of educational services and council-run nursery schools (<http://iesbologna.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/20160721-CdS-IES-06.pdf>) .

The school is next-door to another nursery school, with which it embarked on a project of reflection and joint sharing following the terrorist attacks in Paris of November 2015, focusing on the theme of social harmony and mutual understanding. This cooperation led to the elimination of the chain-link fence that divided the two gardens. Now both nurseries enjoy joint use of one large

garden where they can meet and share projects and experiences.

The school is split into two heterogeneous classes comprised of 24 children aged 5, 21 children aged 4 and 5 children aged 3. As regards the teaching staff, in recent years the school has seen a very high turnover which has made it necessary to rethink the overall organisation of the service, providing an ever-growing number of occasions for interaction between the two classes and joint projects. In the wake of this choice, the school signed up to the STEP Project within the broader framework of the Berlin open group or open rooms approach which literally means: *differentiated learning* (Lill, 2015, 2016).

“It’s very, very different compared to the traditional set-up and also a lot of hard work; it’s very challenging because you have to set aside the idea of being always present as the adult figure in order to try, instead, to seize, or allow to emerge and stimulate what comes directly from them. It’s a delicate job of directing, requiring great care and constant attention. As a teacher you remain much more in the wings; the adult has to be an observer much of the time and manage to stay on the sidelines to give the children more space, as much space as possible. It’s an approach that’s well worth it because it really pays off, also in terms of learning”.

(Extract from the teacher’s diary)

The sequence of activities presented here refers to a number of experiences conducted by the nursery school teachers within mixed groups.

1.2 Timeframe

The sequence of activities presented here is part of a wider project conducted by the children and teachers, entitled Rooms open to the world: *teaching active citizenship by attentiveness to everyday life* and was developed over a period of approximately 6 months.

In particular:

- The first activity focused on the theme of individual identity: *Who am I, who are we?* consisted of several meetings, with each experience lasting around 1 hour.
- The second activity, entitled *A tree home...a school home* consists of the reading of an illustrated book and allowed the children to focus in greater detail on the theme of home and living. The activity lasted around one hour in total.
- The third activity, *Being citizens of our own town*, shifts the focus from being citizens within the school to being citizens outside the school, within the town. The activity comprises a number of different moments, here the particular focus is on the party organised in the little local park next to the school.

1.3 Teaching objectives

The global project Rooms open to the world: *teaching active citizenship by attentiveness to everyday life*, stems from the observation of the needs and interests of the children and from viewing them in relation to the local, national

and international context. In beginning to plan this trial, the teachers tried to think of the children-citizens of today and the adult-citizens of tomorrow and of the skills required to be active and responsible citizens from a very tender age. To rise to this major challenge, the teachers set themselves a number of teaching objectives:

- To discover their own identity as individuals and as a group, the beauty of otherness, seeing other people as a chance to grow and learn.
- To re-discover the profound meaning of the words: “respect for childhood”
- To promote independence, free choice, a slower pace, co-designed spaces, re-think oneself as an adult within the educational relationship;
- To promote and share a new culture of childhood by teaching active citizenship inside and outside school.

1.4 Group and classroom organisation

The activities take place both inside and outside school. The children work in a large group as well as in smaller groups. During the interactions with the local area, the teaching activity mostly addresses the large group.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

Within this project, the dimensions of heritage, social harmony and the environment were dealt with, interweaving the different themes. The common thread was the encounter with otherness as an opportunity and an enrichment, experienced personally by the children on a daily basis and through the global rethinking of the service and its mandate.

The convergence of different outlooks enabled the construction of an extremely rich and detailed project development that helped the children to navigate from one experience to another in a competent, original way.

2.2 Description of the type of activity

Activity 1. Who am I, who are we?

The teachers invite the children to reflect as a group on the theme of identity through the stimulus question: who am I? The objective is to then understand how individual identities can meet, get along and contribute to the co-construction of the school group and a peaceful, serene school environment.

The activity is carried out with a small group. Here, the children are interviewed in turn by the teacher who uses stimulus questions with each to retrace several fundamental stages of their individual life story and, starting from their answers, create images for a book illustrating their unique life story.

The reflections prompted by the questions not only helped the children to acquire greater self awareness, but also to describe their own personal characteristics and those of others, not just in terms of physical appearance but also the personality traits of each class member. The next step is to

perceive these unique characteristics of each child also as a resource for the group which must therefore be valorised.

The activity in fact ends with a presentation of all the children's books to the large group so that each child can tell their story and feel they are part of that context, with a role in its making.

Activity 2. A tree home...a school home

The second activity begins with a conversation between the children during the reading of the illustrated book "Albert's Tree" (Desmond, 2016): the story of a bear who comes out of hibernation only to find his beloved tree is sad, and then discovers that living inside the tree is an unexpected guest.

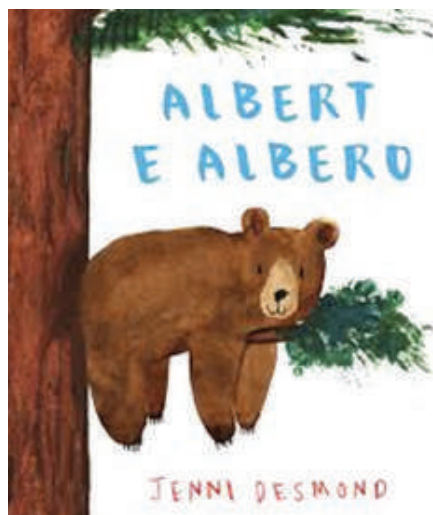


Figure 1. Desmond J. (2016). *Albert e albero* (Albert's Tree). Roma: Lapis.

Reading the conversation

The reading of the book "Albert's Tree" made us reflect on how Albert's tree-home and the wood can be compared to our building-homes and the town, and how sometimes we too are frightened of others and imagine them to be what they are not, simply because we don't know them, while if we take the trouble to get to know them, we can see how we may well benefit from that; sitting in a circle, we talk a little about the town and what it means to be CITIZENS.

(Extract from the teacher's diary)

we can see how this was an opportunity for the group to reflect on home and living and therefore the concept of citizenship. Following up on these new ideas, the children wonder what the school does for them and what they can do for the school. They decide that a good way to look after it is to clear the garden and the vegetable plot.

Activity 3. Being citizens of our own town

The reflections on inhabiting the school and therefore on how to look after it, move on to consider the area beyond the school gates. This time the children work in a large group, pondering what it means to be citizens of their own town and how they can look after it. For the group, the public park next to the school (very popular with the children) offers the ideal opportunity to take action as citizens and organise a party for the local area's residents. Together with the teachers and the families, the children tidy and clear the park of litter, prepare some artwork to decorate it and make all the necessary preparations for the event.

2.3 Teacher's role

In the first activity, the teacher encourages conversation and prompts reflection through stimulus questions, such as: what do I like and what don't I like, what did I use to like and what didn't I use to like, who are/were my friends, what do I/did I use to like to do at school and what don't/didn't I like, what do I/did I use to like to do at home, what do I/did I use to like to do indoors at school and what do I like to do outdoors, what is/was my favourite game and which game do I not like/did not use to like playing. The teacher stimulates reflection by the children by slowing things down and offering them time and space for introspection.

In the second activity, the teacher proposes the reading of an illustrated book without predicting the interpretation that the children will give it. The teacher acknowledges the meanings that some children attribute to the story, valorises their ability to process and transfer meanings from one sphere to another (from Albert's tree to their own home, from inhabiting a wood to inhabiting a school and town), and responds by proposing new avenues starting from the unforeseen intervention.

Lastly, in the third activity, the teachers accompany the children's ideas and work together with them to try to shape their ideas. They do not guide, but follow and welcome whatever emerges in the conversation in the large group.

2.4 Children's role

In the first activity, the children play the central role in the experience and understand the wider significance. They think, recount, see their own characteristics and tastes change with passing time, and they translate their thoughts into pictures. They are informed of the wider project and are consulted during the process.

In the second activity, they are the key players. They listen, process, intervene, comment, and share their thoughts and images.

Lastly, in the third activity, in the light of the project up to that point, the children try to understand how to develop their role as active citizens also outside school. They make their own choices and work together to put them into action.

2.5 Example of material produced



Figure 2. Example of a Life story diary

It's the book of our lives, of what we like and don't like and how we grow.

We need this book to hold on to the nice things and to leave behind the things we don't like any more.

We use those booklets because they are our habits.

Habits are things that you do often.

Then there are rules, which are the things you have to do because otherwise a kid cries because he gets hurt or he gets angry or his mum gets angry.

Habits are things you do because you like to but you can also change your mind.

It's useful to remember stuff I like because afterwards I can say I want to play that game.

It's a book of memories that we can look through when we're grown-ups to remember what we were like when we were little.

Extract from a life story diary



Figure 3. The children tend to the school's vegetable garden



Figure 4. The park decked out for the party

After asking ourselves what are we like, what's our life story, what's our group like and what can we give to our school, we open up to the town, starting from the park in front of the school, by decking it out for a party to celebrate the arrival of spring with all those who use the park. Our commitment to the wider community started the morning before the party when we cleared the garden of rubbish and planted pansies. Our contribution to the "world" was a great success. There was an extremely high level of family participation and passers-by also voiced their approval.

(Extract from the teacher's diary)



Figure 5. The park decked out for the party

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

The methodologies selected for these experiences are conversations in pairs, in a small and large group, and autobiographical drawings. The teaching tools selected are: a camera and a video camera used to record the activities. The materials used belong to the various rooms proposed and in particular to those for language, art and nature.

4. Potential/difficulties

4.1 *Positive aspects of the sequence of activities*

The sequence shows how the theme of encountering others, so relevant and vitally important today, can truly become part of the everyday routine of children's services. This trending topic tested the teachers and presented them with a stark choice: to isolate the school from the real world, or to make it part of it, using means and topics suitable for this age group. The assumption of responsibility by the group as a whole made it possible to roll out a broad, wide-ranging project with the capacity to detect the weaknesses of this time and to work to enable the children to develop the key skills for their lives today and for the future. In practical terms, this meant truly making everything revolve around the children again, slowing the pace of things, deconstructing spaces, abandoning routines and consolidated work methods to re-discover our role as citizens, and to re-educate ourselves every day through small choices in favour of active and global citizenship.

4.2 *Difficulties*

The sequence presented involves a substantial upstream rethinking of the space and of the role of the children within it; the *open group* approach revolutionised the day-to-day routine of the service, deconstructing the previous routines. The teachers' difficulties are linked above all to the need to modify their role in their relationship with the children and in the planning stage, assuming a role which is more that of observer and director.

4.3 *Possibilities*

The sequence of activities recorded here shows how, thanks to the open group approach, the children were able to experience real independence in managing time and space, exercising free choice with greater awareness. The open group, with its unplanned time (Lill, 2016) allowed the children to be more relaxed and at ease within their processes of discovery, play and learning.

The proposals initially stimulated by the teachers are the fruit of careful observation of the children's questions and counter-responses. After opening up the spaces and relationships inside school, the project progressed to open up to the local area around the school and then the rest of the town. A movement indicative of the process followed and activated by the children over the course of months, which became a means of continually accessing different experiences in which each child was able to exercise the right to choose and to take part.

5. School - Territory Alliance

The teachers carry out planning which, after an initial phase, has the capacity to open up to the surrounding area and subsequently to the whole town. They involve the families and local residents to support the children's ideas. It is not an instant openness, but one that is prepared and cultivated over the course of months, an extended period of time that allows the children to experience it with greater awareness and to play a leading role.

FRANCE



ESPE, Aix-Marseille University

Ecole maternelle "Saint Just", Marseille, Bouches-du-Rhône

Project title: *Les droits des enfants* (Children's rights)

Thematic: Social Harmony

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

Saint Just preschool is located in a popular district in the north of the city of Marseille. However, there is a certain social mix in the neighborhood. The school is classified as a Reinforced Priority Education Network (REP+) because of the importance of the social, economic and linguistic difficulties of the families attending it. Several actions related to citizenship learning are integrated into the school project and collective events are organized around children's rights, secularism, sustainable development or health education. The class studied is a *grande section* class (third and final year of preschool for children aged 5-6) with 27 students (16 boys and 11 girls). The class teacher, Jessica Ludwig-Legardez, has been teaching in preschool for several years and is in this school for two years. She implements several projects relating to citizenship education in her classroom: the implementation of autonomous Montessori workshops, sustainable development education activities in the classroom and outside the classroom in partnership with the Calanques Nature Park, an e-twinning correspondence with an Italian preschool class also participating in the STEP project.

1.2 Timeframe

The sequence was organized around 4 sessions of 30 minutes each for a total duration of 2 hours:

- *Activity 1: Discussion around illustrations of children's rights and drafting of a sentence per illustration* (duration: 30 minutes)
- *Activity 2: Presentation of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, discussion, rewriting of sentences* (duration: 30 minutes)
- *Activity 3: drafting of one illustration per sentence for a collective poster* (duration: 30 minutes)

- *Activity 4: group discussion around the posters made in Jessica's classroom and in the director's classroom* (duration: 30 minutes)
- *Extensions:* exhibition of posters made by the different classes of the school in the reception room of the school for parents.

1.3 Teaching objectives

Throughout the sequence, oral and written language skills are worked on. The sequence is part of the field "Living together" and is more particularly interested in the rules of collective life, the duties and obligations that govern these rules. Each session had a more specific objective:

- Activity 1: Discover and describe illustrations of children's rights.
- Activity 2: Discuss the concept of rights and equality of all children.
- Activity 3: Get organized and get involved in a collective project (make the groups and choose the right that you want to illustrate on the poster).
- Activity 4: Communicate with adults and other children by participating in moments of exchange in a group around children's rights.

1.4 Group and classroom organization

The organization of the class varied over the sessions, depending on the objectives and activities planned:

- Activities 1 and 2: The activity is done with half a class in the group area of the classroom, under the supervision of Jessica. During this time, the other half of the class was doing an activity on their own under the supervision of the ATSEM (Maternelle School Specialized Territorial Agent): graphic design or coloring.
- Activity 3: Half a class worked with Jessica. The students organized themselves in groups of 3 children and carried out the activity in the classroom on their own.
- Activity 4: Two classes were combined, Jessica's class and the school director's class (*moyenne section* class, children aged 4-5). The session took place in the director's classroom, with the children sitting either on the floor or on benches, in a semi-circle facing the blackboard.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

The sequence described here is part of the theme "Living together" and relates to the rights of the child.

2.2 Description of the type of activities

Activity 1. Discovering children's rights

Jessica presented the students a card with illustrations. She asked them to observe and describe the images. Then they imagined what that image was made for and they dictated to Jessica a sentence corresponding to each illustration.

Here are some examples of the sentences that were proposed by students:

"The little girl, she's happy with her parents"

"We see a boy and a girl. She says her first name, she introduces herself."

"She's scared, she's sad. We're scared. You get scared when you're all alone"

"He's at school"

"The girl, she plays tennis, and the boy, he skates"

"A little girl: she comes home and has an apple in her hand. »"

"A house to protect yourself from the rain, the cold"

"She's hungry. We must eat".

"The boy, he hurt himself, he's crying, the doctor healed him"

"Four children with a little cloud, they're talking"

Activity 2. Introduction to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child

Jessica read the students some of the children's rights. Then they searched among the images from the first session, the one to which each of these rights corresponded. She interviewed them to deepen their understanding of the rights cited: "What does that mean?", "Who is this for? Why?", "When are we a child?", "Who should enforce these rights?". Afterwards, she spoke to them about the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. She deepened the notion of "international" by insisting on the fact that this convention concerned all the children of the world. She asked them about countries other than France: "Is life the same in other countries? ", "Are children like me?". Finally, she made them compare the sentences they had written in the previous session with what had been discussed that day and asked them to think about how to improve these sentences so that they would concern all children.

Useful links :

- <https://www.unicef.fr/dossier/convention-internationale-des-droits-de-lenfant>
- https://www.unicef.fr/sites/default/files/userfiles/03_CIDE_SIMPLIFIEE.pdf
- http://cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/droits_homme/41/2/Fiche_thematique_Unicef_-_La_Convention_internationale_des_droits_de_l_enfant_233412.pdf
- <http://eduscol.education.fr/cid66251/journee-internationale-des-droits-de-l-enfant.html>

Activity 3. Creating a collective poster on children's rights

Students divided into groups of 3. Each group agreed to choose one of the rights to create a poster to defend and illustrate it. The roles were distributed within the group according to each child's desire and abilities: one child was a "writer", he copied the chosen sentence; the others were "illustrators" and created the background and drawing for the poster. (See below the photos of the poster).

Activity 4. Collective discussion on children's rights

A group discussion was held between the students in Jessica's class and those

in the director's class who had also produced a poster. This session was an opportunity to question students about the rights they had represented on the posters. The first part of the session was facilitated by the director: she showed them three of the illustrations used in the first session and asked the students to explain what it was about, then she showed the poster made by her class and her students explained to Jessica's class what they had represented (see below). The second part was animated by Jessica from the poster created by the students in her class. Her students read the sentences they had written and explained the drawings they had made to illustrate them.

2.3 Teacher's role

Activity 1: Jessica spoke mainly in the form of questions to students. The purpose of the questions was to bring out the students' representations and to encourage them to think more deeply.

Activity 2: Jessica spoke sometimes in a more formal way, but also in the form of discussion with the children.

Activity 3: The children had a relatively independent activity, Jessica being more withdrawn to allow them to organize themselves. Activity 4: The first part of the discussion was led by the director in a relatively directive way, in the form of questions-answers-validation, she was also very attentive to the control of students' behavior (reminder of the rules: raising hand before speaking, listening to others, waiting, standing correctly). The second part of the discussion, moderated by Jessica, took the form of a discussion based on more open-ended questions.

2.4 Children's roles

- Activity 1: Children were asked about their representations of children's rights.
- Activity 2: Children were informed about children's rights and reworked their initial representations based on this information.
- Activity 3: The children chose one of the rights that was important to them and expressed themselves artistically on the subject.
- Activity 4: Children were asked to explain to other students and adults what they knew about children's rights and what they wanted to present in their posters.

2.5 Example of material produced:





The poster created by the director's class.

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

The teaching methods used are varied: both dialogical (sessions 1 and 4), transmissive (session 2) and based on expression and creativity (session 3).

The material used by Jessica was of three types:

- Illustrations of children's rights (see above)
- Extracts from the International Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Plastic art material: inks and felts, sheet of paper.

4. Potential/difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

- The sequence helped the students to become aware of the existence of international rights for children.
- The fact of starting by making students' representations emerge on the question and then reworking these representations by bringing new knowledge made it possible to make the students' representations evolve.
- The choice of making students illustrate children's rights with a drawing and a sentence enabled them to take greater ownership of the rights presented.
- The group discussion allowed students to express themselves on what they have learned during the different sessions and to discuss the issue with other children and adults.
- The use of open-ended questions during the discussion moments allowed students to deepen their reflection.

- The fact that this sequence is part of a project common to the whole school makes it possible to create an interesting dynamic between the classes of the school and towards the families.
- Families are associated with the work done in class on children's rights by the exposition of the posters in the school's reception room.

4.2 Difficulties

The visual representations used to illustrate children's rights sometimes led to difficulties in understanding for pupils

- During the collective discussion, the use of closed questions by the director led to exchanges based more on the restitution of the elements presented during the previous sessions than on reflexive exchanges.
- During the group discussion, when some students raised issues that might appear embarrassing to the principal and to which she did not know how to respond (for example, one child reported that although children have the right to have a house, some people live on the street), the response was to divert the question and not provide a real answer.
- The sequence did not allow students to engage in concrete actions to promote children's rights.

4.3 Possibilities

Per proporre delle illustrazioni più esplicite si può fare riferimento, ad esempio, al poster realizzato dall'UNICEF per i bambini:

- <https://www.unicef.fr/sites/default/files/userfiles/A7%20Auto%20def.jpg>
- Ensure that students have an opportunity to express themselves, for example by using open-ended questions to allow students to reflect further.
- Do not dodge embarrassing questions and use them as a basis for common reflection. For example, we can think in advance about the questions that may arise and the answers we can bring to them to be less surprised when the questions arise.
- Consider involving local associations (local UNICEF branch, charitable association, etc.).

5. School - Territory alliance

The international dimension was taken into account by the presentation of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and by the affirmation that all children in the world, whatever their differences are, have the same rights. At the local level, the display of posters in the school's reception room allowed parents to be involved in the reflection on this theme, even if it was more as witnesses than as participants. However, no links with local associations were envisaged, which could have enabled students to take more concrete action on the territory in relation to the issue of children's rights.



SPAIN

University of Sevilla

Infant and Primary Education Centre (CEIP) “F. García Lorca”,
Seville

Project title: *El patio de mi cole es para jugar* (*My school’s playground is for playing*)

Thematic: Social Harmony, Environment and Sustainability

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

The educational experience is developed in the “Federico García Lorca” Infant and Primary Education Centre (CEIP), (<https://sites.google.com/site/fglorcasevilla/Inicio>), in Seville, and takes place in the 3-year-olds Infant Education classroom (called “Aula de L@s Elefant@s”), which has 25 students (9 boys and 16 girls). This school is located in a district of Seville called San Jerónimo (<https://goo.gl/maps/ERLcA3RSh742>), an area that was an old town annexed to the city at the beginning of the 20th century. It’s a popular area, with some marginal features.

The project arose because there was a general concern in the school about the use of the playground, an issue that the school community had been discussing for two years. More specifically, the classroom teacher had detected that conflicts between students of different ages were frequent in the playground, one of the main causes being the lack of defined areas for the development of activities by different ages students (in the school there are students from the age of 3 in the Infant stage to the age of 12 in the last year of Primary school), as well as the limited play materials; in addition, the playground space was not very attractive for boys and girls.

Therefore, being aware that spatial organisation has a decisive influence on people’s development, on the relationship that people establish with the environment and on the processes of teaching and learning, we begin to build a project that involves the whole school and, specifically, the 3-year-olds Infant Education classroom.

Basically, the aim is to involve the students in a project to transform the playground into a shared space where they can be happy and live better. To do this, it was necessary to implicate the entire school community, and connect with the school’s Parents’ Association and more specifically with the families of the children in the 3-year-olds classroom. By involving pupils in a task of transforming their immediate environment, and by making a commitment to work together at the level of their age to improve it, “active citizenship” is being practised in everyday school life, an educational aim that makes sense in its own right and which also prepares pupils to become citizens in the future. The project is called *My school’s playground is for playing*. It is developed in

different sessions and school dynamics that are interspersed in a flexible way with other activities related to Infant Education not directly related to the content of the project.

Here is the first part of the project activities, which are developed from the initial problem approach. After the activities here described, the project continued, and the transformations that the children agreed upon were reflected in the playground.

1.2 Timeframe

The global project is developed in different sessions and work dynamics during six school weeks, in March and April 2017. The sequence of activities here described takes place for the first three weeks.

- The beginning: *The Supermartian's surprise letter* (timeframe: 1 hour)
- The construction of the research problem: *We take the first steps* (4 hours, in several sessions)
- The design of the playground: *We make a better map* (2 hours)
- The contrast with reality: *We completed our map in the playground* (4 hours, in several sessions)
- Reflection and conceptualization: *We are architects* (2 hours)
- Systematization to keep moving forward: *What a great project!* (2 hours)
- From the project to the realization: *We carry out the project of our playground* (10 hours, in several sessions).

1.3 Teaching objectives

The objectives of this sequence of activities and, in general, of the global project are the followings:

- Know better the resources of the surrounding environment.
- Contribute to the improvement of the school by designing spaces for collective use.
- Learn to live with the conflicts that arise in the playground and try to resolve them.
- Form groups and develop a sense of belonging to the community, generating different forms of cooperation.
- Develop attitudes of communication and respect.
- Participate as citizens in the life of the community.
- Involve the families in the development of the different activities, making them participate in the process of education of their children together with the school.

1.4 Group and classroom organization

The 3-year-olds classroom has a flexible organization (Figure 1), which allows for a wide variety of activities, both small and large groups, with discussions and practical application activities predominating. These practical activities make it possible to work on everything that is planned in relation to the improvement of the playground.

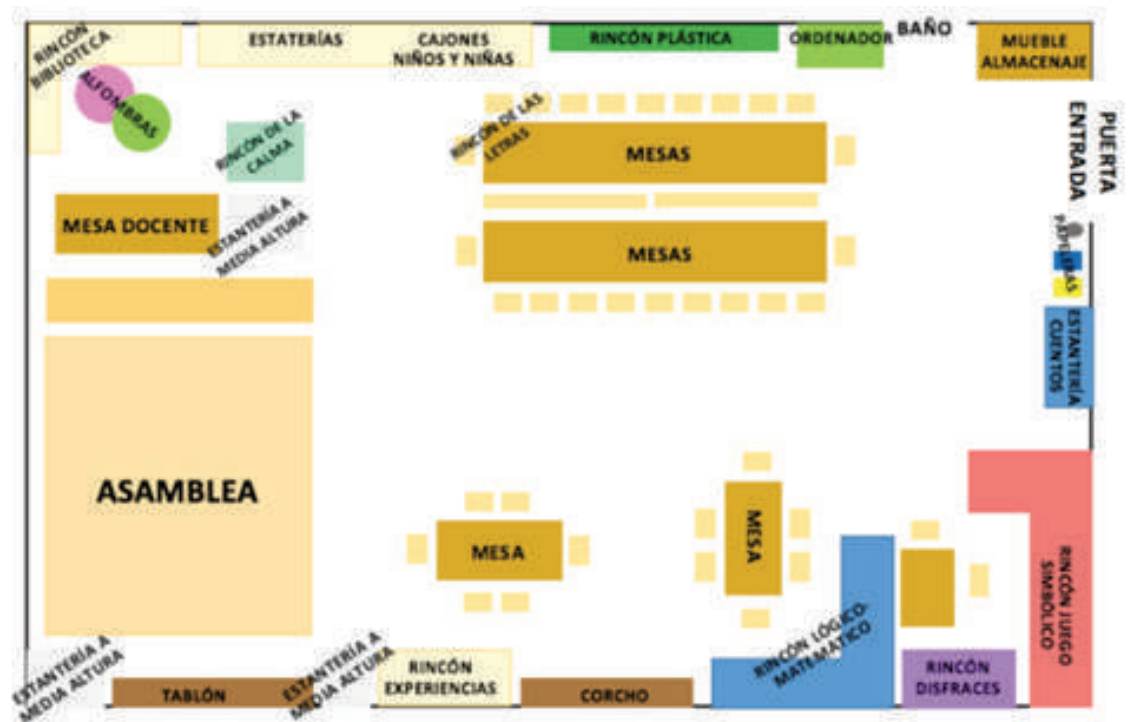


Figure 1. Classroom organization of L@s Elefant@s (3-year-olds classroom).

The classroom follows a variety of routines and activities that are repeated on a regular way; hence the need for a large, open-plan space that allows any type of activity to be carried out, modifying furniture whenever necessary. Many of the usual activities in the 3-year-olds classroom take place in the “activity corners” of the classroom, where the students spend between one and two hours a day. There are different corners in the classroom: experience corners, numbers (logical-mathematical), costumes, computers, libraries, home (symbolic play), plastic arts, sandbox, letters, calm...

Given the singular nature of the project, many of the teaching sessions take place outside the classroom in the playground.



Figure 2. Numbers corner.



Figure 3. Home corner.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

As the problem is the school playground improvement (*My school's playground is for playing*), the focus of the project has been on civil coexistence and, in a secondary way, on environment and sustainability (in the school area).

2.2 Description of the type of activity

The sequence of activities here briefly described is the first part of the global project development *My school's playground is for playing*.

Activity 1. The beginning: "The Supermartian's surprise letter"

To introduce the project and capture the children's interest and motivation, the teacher prepares a surprise: one day, when they arrive to the classroom, they find a letter from a mysterious character, called "The Supermartian of the Infinite Galaxies". In it, the character proposes to investigate how to improve the school playground so that it becomes a fun and well cared of space where everyone can enjoy, share and live together.

Activity 2. The construction of the research problem: "We take the first steps"

The letter received the day before and everyone's commitment to the Supermartian is recalled. Then, on a piece of cardboard, the children make a playground sketch and they include in it, with the help of the teacher, their own comments about what could be done in the playground. The entire class then goes out into the playground to do field research.

To carry out this first exploration of space, a sketch and stickers with symbols are available to help locate the elements that can be seen: trees, fountains, benches, slides... At the return from the playground, the sketch is discussed and it is observed that there are stickers that do not correspond to real elements of the playground; they are identified: slide, wheels... Then, the sketch of the playground is left with empty spaces in which the other unused stickers could be put, in order to make a better playground (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Simple school playground plan.

Activity 3. The design of the playground: “We make a better map”

Together they tackle a process of designing the playground, sticking stickers and drawing other elements that may appear on it. But how could you really do it?; who could you ask for help? (Town Hall, parents, school teachers...). A list is made of who will be asked for help and what kind of help. So, for example: Who makes the maps? (architects). It has been observed that at the entrance of the building there is a school map; the teacher provides a copy of that map and compares it with the sketch of the school yard made by the class, analysing the differences. Thus, it is proposed to make another sketch or map, improving the previous one, taking measurements and references between the different elements.

Activity 4. The contrast with reality: “We completed our map in the playground”

Then, using the school map as an example, they return to the playground to measure it. To this end, a series of instruments and measurement quantities suitable for children have been agreed upon: “Juan’s foot”: for small measurements; “spades”: for medium measurements; “ropes”: for large measurements. A list is drawn up of the elements that they would like to place, making a design of the possible areas: quiet areas: plants, trees, benches...; sand area; mobile play area: wheels, shovels, wheelbarrows, tricycles, etc.; fixed play area: structure play area (rocker arm, slide, wooden house, train, etc.), painted on the ground (“rayuela”, labyrinths, routes, etc.), sports area: basket, goal...; observation area: wind mills, sundial, rain gauge, etc.; movement play area: cooperative games, etc.; other elements: fountains, waste bins, etc....

Activity 5. Reflection and conceptualization: “We are architects”

It can be seen that in the maps the measure used is the meter. Therefore, there is a need to work with the measures used to explain it to the architect that will help to prepare the playground map (Figure 5). This is how a meter is compared and you can see that it measures the same as a spade, that a

spade holds ten feet of John's and that five spades are contained in a string. Therefore: 1 spade = 1 meter; 1 string = 5 spades = 5 meters; 10 feet of John = 1 spade. These conclusions are represented graphically and maintained as standard measurements for use in the "Numbers Corner".



Figure 5. "The Architects" team measuring the playground.

Activity 6. Systematization to keep moving forward: "What a great project!"

We remember everything we've worked on so far, planning what remains to be done to make the big project. Firstly, the map has been improved and the various areas have been designed. Now the work is focused on making a list of everything that has been placed in each area, the possible materials and the amount of them that is needed. This list distinguishes between, on the one hand, the structures and fixed elements, which are located on the plane, and the moving materials and their quantity (example: 20 buckets, 20 blades, 5 tricycles, 25 wheels...).

Activity 7. From the project to the realization: "We carry out the project of our playground"

[The development of the project continues until the application is completed and the playground becomes the desired space].

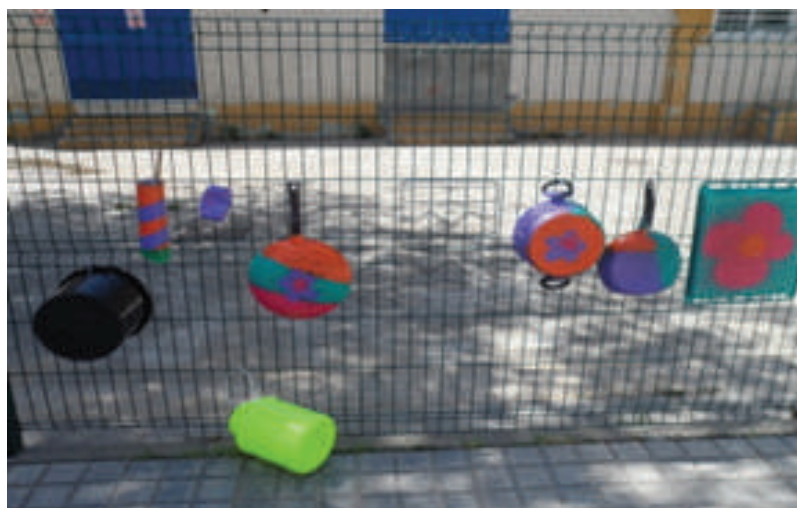


Figure 6. Musical games projected and carried out in the playground.

work, planning the actions to be carried out in the playground, and the small group activities (teams), both in the “corners” and in the playground itself. The materials used are related to the design tasks of the playground transformation, as described above.

4. Potential/Difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

Starting from a problem felt as their own by the students in their daily lives offers guarantees of motivation and commitment to the development of a project of these characteristics. In addition, the practical results of the project subsequently feed back into this process.

This type of project, which develops active citizenship in children, offers opportunities to involve families in the development of activities. It is a way to move forward in building an authentic school community.

4.2 Difficulties

The teacher’s difficulties may come from external factors, such as the difficulty of inserting this type of activity into traditional school dynamics (due to spatial and time constraints) or the scarce collaboration of families. But they can also come from their own professional routines: it is common in Infant Education for the teacher to have a habit of teaching by giving many instructions to the students, and it is a challenge to leave more and more autonomy and responsibility to the young students. Likewise, as has been said, the teacher has to overcome the habit of promoting individual work to promote the cooperative work that corresponds to this type of project.

4.3 Possibilities

It is important to place the emphasis on observing the learning process of the students, to give them more and more responsibility and protagonism in the activities, so that the roles of the teacher and the students are exchanged. Therefore, it is possible to move towards a more complex educational approach by designing activities in which this transfer of protagonism happens.

Likewise, activities can be promoted in which children, in teams, carry out collaborative work activities, considering achievement as a shared success; this would overcome the tendency, deeply rooted in Infant Education, to develop individual tasks, with a competitive approach.

5. School - Territory alliance

The development of this project was supported by the city’s educational institutions, which in previous years have favoured the initiative to transform the school playground. The teacher also shared the preparation of the project with “Argos”, a non-formal education pedagogical organization (<http://www.>

argosproyectos.com/), which also provided didactic suggestions related to education for the environment.

In addition, given the characteristics of the project and also the children's young age, the relationship with the environment is more focused on the school environment, although it also extends indirectly to the neighbourhood through the families' collaboration.



Infant and Primary Education Centre (CEIP) “P. Garfias”, Seville
Project title: *La historia de mi barrio (My neighbourhood's history)*
Thematic: Heritage, Social Harmony, Environment and Sustainability

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

The Infant and Primary Education Centre (CEIP) “Pedro Garfias” is located on “Rayo de Luna” street in the “La Paz-Las Golondrinas” neighbourhood, in the Macarena district of the city of Seville. The neighbourhood has about 3.000 inhabitants (about 1.400 men and 1.600 women), which is 4% of the total population of the municipal district of Macarena. The neighbourhood is located in the north-central area of Seville and in general has good communications with the rest of the city and the surrounding villages. The educational centre is located between several blocks of flats, that form a residential complex, and one of the bridges over the Guadalquivir River, “Puente del Alamillo” (<https://goo.gl/maps/JRj2jR7oA7t>).

In the Macarena district there are some monuments such as the Almohad wall (12th century), the Macarena arch (18th century), the Andalusian Parliament (ancient “Cinco Llagas” Hospital, 16th century) and “Torre de los Perdigones” (19th century), as well as some outstanding buildings, such as the Macarena Hotel or the “Virgen de la Macarena” University Hospital.

In the La Paz-Las Golondrinas neighbourhood there are parks, small shops and a building of great interest for our research, the so-called “Venta de los Gatos” (Inn of the Cats), known for being linked to the 19th century romantic literary figure Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, about whom he wrote a well-known story and which is currently in a state of neglect (<http://elcajondelosmisterios.com/2017/11/22/la-venta-de-los-gatos/>). Also, as a result of the influence that the poet Bécquer had on this place, some street names, a commemorative monument and the association “Con los Bécquer en Sevilla”, are preserved, dedicated to him (and his family; his brother and uncle were famous painters), as well as to his poetry and legends.

This is a traditional and working class neighbourhood, with 61% of the working population (18-64 years). The predominant economic sectors are mainly commerce and industry, with little relevance in agriculture and livestock. However, it should be stressed that the inhabitants are from a lower-middle social class with a great cultural and ethnic diversity. In fact, the neighbourhood

is considered to be a settlement area for foreign-born people as a result of immigration. In relation to this characteristic, one of the main problems of this urban space is the lack of social cohesion, to which the deterioration in the care and conservation of the environment is added.

The CEIP “Pedro Garfias” is a State school (classified as bilingual, like many other schools in Andalusia), with a double line (two classrooms per course). Education is offered in the second cycle of the Infant Education stage (3 to 5-year-olds) and in the whole Primary stage (from 1st to 6th grade, 6 to 11 years). The structure of the school is irregular polygonal and its dimensions are 11.664 m². (<https://sites.google.com/site/ceppedrogarfiassevilla/>). It has two buildings (one on two floors and the other on three) with the Infant School classrooms on the ground floor and the Primary School classrooms on the upper floor (Figure 1).



Figure 1. View of the school “Pedro Garfias”.

The centre has various spaces, such as recreational spaces (two playgrounds -one for each educational stage- and a computer room), teaching spaces (classrooms for the different courses, library, multipurpose and audiovisual room, music room, therapeutic pedagogy room, listening and language room, special education room, compensatory education room, school's auditorium and psychomotor skills classroom), services (toilets for students and teaching staff, morning day-care and two dining rooms), management areas (management offices, head of studies and secretary, orientation offices, four spaces for individual attention, copy shop and staff room) and circulation and communication areas (corridors and staircases).

1.2 Timeframe

The sequence of activities here presented - which is part of a larger project - was carried out from 18 to 26 April 2018, with 7 sessions of one hour.

- Discussion about the situation of “Venta de los Gatos” (60 minutes).
- Letter to the cultural association “Con los Bécquer en Sevilla” (60 minutes).
- Tale and discussion (60 minutes).

- Guided discussion (60 minutes).
- “Caquina Patrol” (dogs poop patrol) (120 minutes).
- Visit of the Association’s President “Con los Bécquer en Sevilla” (60 minutes).

1.3 Teaching objectives

Within the framework of the project called My neighbourhood’s history, the activities here presented are aimed at the following objectives:

- Know and appreciate the values and norms of coexistence, and learn to act in accordance to them.
- Acquire a commitment with oneself and with the environment to learn to be a better citizen.
- Develop critical thinking by reflecting on the resolution of neighbourhood problems.
- Identify oneself with the neighbourhood as a close space and with affective ties.
- Know the nearby environment (house, street, neighbourhood) and its changes throughout history.
- Value the cultural and artistic heritage of neighbourhood and helping to preserve it.
- Work actively as a team.
- Enhance motivation to search and manage information.

1.4 Group and classroom organization

The project is carried out in an Infant Education classroom, with 26 children (4-year-olds), where group work is usually done (Figure 2) and in corners (Figure 3) as usual dynamics, also dedicating several moments of the day to large group work through the assembly (Figure 4).



Figure 2. Area dedicated to group work.



Figure 3. Area dedicated to the corners.



Figure 4. Area dedicated to the assembly.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

The project *My neighbourhood's history* is structured into three interrelated blocks or sets of problems, whose central axis is the neighbourhood where the school is located. Thus, block 1 revolves around the question “Where do I live?”, block 2 is organized around the question “What was it like in the past?”, and block 3 is based on the question “What problems are there now?”. The following map shows the three problems cited, the relationships between them and the associated content (Figure 5).

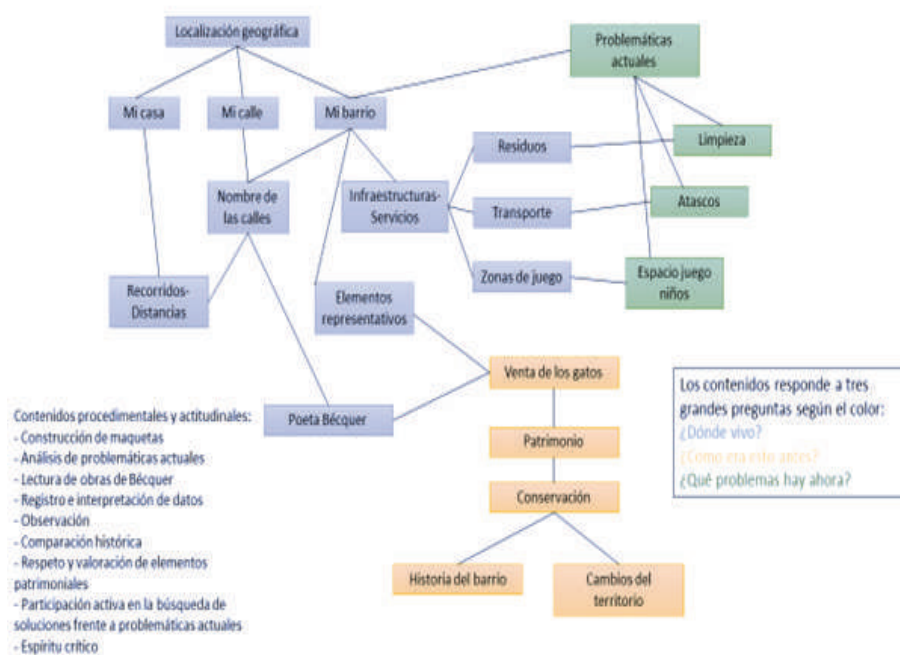


Figure 5. Map of problems-contents of the project My neighbourhood's history.

2.1 Dimensions developed

In this sequence of activities, the three dimensions taken into account in the STEP Project are developed: civil coexistence, environment and sustainability and heritage. The beginning of the work project is carried out through heritage, but the other two dimensions are also worked on later.

2.2 Description of the type of activities

After a first phase of the project of a more descriptive nature, where a first approach to the neighbourhood is made, knowing its characteristics and most outstanding spaces, the students begin to investigate its history and the current problems that affect it. The sequence of activities here presented belongs to this moment.

Discussion about the situation of “Venta de los Gatos”

In the assembly, the tutor commented on a news item about “Venta de los Gatos” (https://www.eldiario.es/andalucia/sevilla/Venta-Gatos_0_442355907.html) and the recent decision of its owner: he intends to sell it to turn it into an oriental bazaar or a mosque. Faced with this news, we have shared impressions and possible suggestions or solutions with a large group.

In order to guide the debate, we took turns and asked the following questions: What do we do if “Venta de los Gatos” is demolished and what solutions can we provide? Etc.

Activity 2. Letter to the cultural association “Con los Bécquer in Seville”

As an assembly and in a large group, a letter of support was drawn up to the association “Con los Bécquer en Sevilla”, an entity that has made a request to the Department of Culture of the Government of Andalusia to declare “Venta de los Gatos” a Cultural Interest Heritage.

The teacher has been motivating the debate and collecting all the children’s contributions on how to take care of and conserve this space, as well as other spontaneous comments that have arisen in relation to the subject.

With their help, the children have been writing the different phrases that make up the letter, discovering the parts that this type of writing should have.

Activity 3. Tale and discussion

This activity focuses on the specific problem of dog poops in the streets, and arises after the initial outings to know the neighbourhood. The teacher has invented a motivational tale in which a character finds the situation of seeing the street full of dog poops. After the narration, a dialogue was started around the following questions: What do you think about what’s happening to the character? Has it ever happened to you, and whose responsibility is it? The class-group discussed their impressions and experiences and proposed possible solutions.

Activity 4. Guided discussion

The teacher has restarted the previous debate on this problem in the neighbourhood. To this end, she introduces the following questions: What can you do when you find “poop” in the street? What activities can’t you do if there are a lot of “poops” on the ground? (e.g. lying on the grass); Who would the poops bother? (e.g. a blind person); What happens when there are “poops”? (e.g. smells bad). If dogs owners do not collect the “poops” from their dogs,

who collects them? Whose is responsible for that?

After the break, an individual reflection on some of the above questions is proposed in a written sheet.

Activity 5. “Caquina” Patrol

The teacher has stimulated the assembly, in which the introduction of the campaign of sensitization on the presented problematic has taken place, as a possible solution. To this end, she has shown several examples of posters and has asked for the group’s collaboration in putting forward ideas that could be used in the design of their own posters.

Thus, issues related to the content of the poster have been worked on: elements that appear and slogans. The children, in a large group, have contributed, individually, ideas for the design of the posters that make up the awareness campaign. In total, five different posters are designed.

Activity 6. Visit of the Association’s President “Con los Bécquer en Sevilla”

This activity took place at the time of the assembly; the children handed over the letter written in defence of “Venta de los Gatos” to the president of the association. This gesture highlights the common desire (of the pupils, as small citizens and of the association) to preserve this place as a valuable heritage and representative element of the neighbourhood history and culture.

After the presentation, in a large group, the children, together with the tutor and the president, began a debate in which they commented on the most relevant aspects of Bécquer related to “Venta de los Gatos”: why it is important, why we want to preserve it, what relationship the poet has with the association, etc.

Then, a girl handed her the letter. Loudly, the president has read the contents. Subsequently, she expressed her gratitude and satisfaction at the involvement of children with the poet and “Venta de los Gatos”.

Once this first part had been completed, the children taught the president everything they had worked on in the project: murals, plastic works, photocall, model, puppet... They also explained how they had done it, talked to her about the outings to the neighbourhood, etc.

2.3 Teacher’s role

The teacher strives to give children the maximum degree of freedom, independence and autonomy, allowing them to communicate and help each other and not providing them with all the information, with the intention that they should act, discover and build their own knowledge. We can say, therefore, that their interventions stimulate children’s participation.

2.4 Children’s role

In this project, the students propose and carry out, at their level, citizenship actions in autonomous way. This role can be identified above all in the reflections that children make in the debates.

2.5 Example of material produced

During the development of the project, the students produced several materials. Specifically, in the sequence of activities presented, we highlight the letter addressed to the Association (Figure 6) and the posters for the awareness campaign about the problem (Figure 7).



*"Hola, somos los niños y niñas de 4 años del colegio Pedro Garfias.
Queremos que la Venta de los Gatos no se construya una tienda de chinos o una mezquita (como dice el periódico)
Nos gustaría decirle al dueño lo siguiente: "¿Podrías cambiar de idea para no convertirla en otra cosa que no sea la Venta de los Gatos?"
La Venta de los Gatos es muy antigua y no queremos que se pierda porque es un recuerdo de Bécquer y nos ponemos tristes y lloramos.
Si alguien va a la Venta de los Gatos y no la ve allí se pondría triste, diría: "Anda, me he equivocado de camino y se iría y no la encontraría nunca jamás"*

Figure 6. Boys and girls writing the letter and its contents.



Figure 7. Handing over the letter to the president of the Association.



Figure 8. Assembly about "Caquina Patrol".

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

The project is based on an investigative methodology, in which the students are the protagonists of the learning process, being an active agent in the decision making process. The exchange of opinions and reflections between peers and between the teacher and the students is looked for at all times, so that group and assembly activities predominate, although there is also time for learning and individual reflection.

4. Potential/Difficulties

4.1 *Positive aspects of the sequence of activities*

The sequence of activities allows students to participate actively in their own environment, encouraging the development of reflection and cooperative work skills. At the same time, it gives children the opportunity to get to know movements and associations in their environment that are fighting for and concerned about their conservation. In short, these activities facilitate - at the level of Infant Education - the direct intervention of students as active citizens, involved in the care of their environment and in the conservation of their heritage. In addition, one of the activities carried out, the handing over of the letter to the Association, even had an impact on the local news (https://www.eldiario.es/andalucia/lacajanegra/libros/Venta-Gatos-desaparece-lloraremos-Becquer_0_636587293.html), a manifestation of the relationship between the school and its environment.

4.2 *Difficulties*

One of the difficulties that can be found in these proposals with 4-year-olds children is that the debates are not very in-depth. For this reason it is necessary to use different instruments that help students to present their opinions in a progressively more complex way.

4.3 *Possibilities*

Although a proposal is presented from a complex learning perspective, a greater integration between the three components of citizenship of the project (civic coexistence, environment and sustainability and heritage) could have been achieved, making it more explicit how certain problems in the neighbourhood affect both the environment and heritage conservation, and alluding, as well, to citizen responsibility. However, we are aware of the difficulty this involves, given the age of the students. Because one of the key elements of the project was heritage, sometimes the focus of the work was too much focused in it. We consider that all perspectives should be explicitly taken into account in the proposal design phase.

5. School - Territory alliance

From the beginning of the project, and after the experience in the previous academic year, the teacher carries out a participative planning with the associations and agents of the territory. For the development of this project and for its more direct link with the territory, the teacher's role as a guide and the relationships she may have with various agents in the neighbourhood (family members, shopkeepers, students from other groups, etc.) are fundamental.



Scuola universitaria professionale
della Svizzera italiana

SUPSI

SWITZERLAND

Teaching and Learning Department _ University of Applied Sciences
and Art of Southern Switzerland

Pre Primary (Kindergarten) Melano

Project title: *Il gioco dell'acqua (The game about water)*

Thematic: Education for citizenship, Territory, Responsible
Consumption.

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

Melano (TI) is a municipality in the South of Ticino. Its territory extends over 470 hectares, 70% of which is woodland. As per the end of December, 2017, there are 1446 residents. Melano's energy policy, which has been developed over several years, is outstanding in the cantonal context. It focuses on energy efficiency and makes the most of the local renewable energy sources. The aqueduct, managed by local authorities, serves all of the residential areas; it draws from four natural sources plus an intake well which ensures regular water distribution whatever the weather conditions. The four carsic sources on Mount Generoso, on the other hand, are in some measure dependent from rainfall, and need a supplementary purification process. The intake well, in contrast, draws from lake water; furthermore, the layers of soil act as a natural filter. For all of these reasons, the local community is very aware of the importance of water.

The Melano pre primary school

Melano's kindergarten has two classes, each of which consists of 16 children aged three to five years. There are two common classrooms: one is reserved for reading activities and regular daily tasks, while the other is the designated space for group activities. Depending on the day's schedule, the children are free to manage those classrooms as they see fit.

Two teachers took part in the experiment, which was supported by a DFA team: the educational headperson, the chief inspector and a researcher.

Water is a meaningful subject for the local community; for this reasons it was already touched upon in previous activities. This educational project had the aim of approaching the theme from a different perspective: sound.

Thanks to the activities, the children develop their problem solving skills and their critical thinking as well deepening their understanding of other theme-related subjects.

1.2 Timeframe

4 month.

1.3 Teaching objectives

Learning objective focus

Children design a game by taking active roles within the group-section.

Goals of knowledge and skills

Knowledge

- Invent a game starting from sound stimuli.
- Develop rules that apply to a game that are creative and workable.

Skills

- Recall own experiences.
- Recognize and reproduce the sounds of water.
- To discuss and cooperate in a group: to welcome the ideas of the comrades and to plan for a common goal.

Links to the goals of other disciplines and transversal competences

- Communication: processing / production.
- Create artistic products aimed at a purpose (bingo game).
- Listen carefully to differentiated auditory stimuli related to the water element.

1.4 Group and classroom organization

The educational project's starting point (authentic task) is as follows: two fictional characters send the children a gift, which turns out to be a game. In an accompanying letter, they explain how they found this game in an old farm attic, but that no one seems able to play with it. But if all the children work together in harmony, it will be possible to piece together the rules and understand how the game is meant to be played.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

The main focus is the local landscape - in both its natural and the social aspects - and how it can develop the children's awareness of democratic citizenship, and namely:

- 1) By negotiating the rules of the game
- 2) By respecting their classmates' speaking time
- 3) By arriving at a shared definition of the different uses of water and by experimenting with how the proposed sounds were created.

Discovering and experiencing a new mediating device (the water game) allows the children to understand the complex network of their local reality.

Planning.

Taking on an active and hands-on role both in school and in family life thanks to activities that develop creativity and communication skills.

Observing.

Experiencing reality through an acoustic input by re-elaborating events of family life.

2.2 Description of the type of activity

The children are invited to listen to a specific sound, and then encouraged to discuss what they heard with one another. Formulating hypotheses will ultimately lead them to identify the different uses of water, as well as its perceived value and who benefits from this precious resource.

Various observing activities teach the children how to use their senses to better understand what is going on in a specific situation.

Using sound to understand what water is used for and by whom, as well as how much inherent value it possesses allows for the development of greater awareness and critical thinking.

Activity 1. A special gift



The children receive a special gift: a box containing a letter, a CD (recordings of water sounds) and four corks in a smaller box. They are then asked to try and figure out how the game is played.

Duration: 4 hours

Activity 2. Listening practice

The children are offered the chance to 'practice', that is to say: they share their thoughts with one another and reflect upon the use of water and the sounds related to water. In this way, they can expand their understanding of how water is used and engage in community mapping.

Duration: 8 hours

Activity 3. How the game is played

Playing the game allows the children to meet the initial challenge and engage their newly acquired skills to come up with a shared solution. Discovering and experiencing a new mediator (the water game) leads to a better understanding of local structures and interconnections.

The children can practice their listening skills before carrying out a three-pronged analysis of the subject at hand: the different ways water is used, who

needs or uses water and why, and what value or values we assign to water. The children are then asked to identify the main sounds, to choose which game they want to play and to build the game itself so that other children and relatives can play it during the end-of-year party.

Based on Kolb's approach of experiential learning, we offer the following phases:

Phase 1) Listening as the main focus

The children are asked to listen again to the sounds they heard in the practice phase. Their task is to identify them and classify them according to a priority scale decided by the children themselves; after that the pupils draw a representation of the sound on the board and use a sticker to categorize which water-related function is more relevant to it.

Phase 2) Reflective observation

In order to come to understand experience as a shared collection of individual preferences, the children are asked to decide how they want to organize the game (game of the goose, relay, treasure hunt or acoustic raffle) and what rules should apply.

Phase 3) Abstract Conceptualization

In order to further the children's conceptualization of the complex 'water' subject, every acoustic element is analysed in its spatial context according to a wide variety of criteria. Furthermore, there is an effort to relate the children's reality to global reality and vice versa.

A discussion facilitated by the teacher helps the children to work together in small teams (three to four children) so they can think about the different uses of water and how much water is needed for various activities.

Phase 4) Active experimentation

The children experience the game and reflect upon the rules (identification of strong points and search for possible improvements).

Finally, the children build the game, which will later be used by their classmates and during the end-of-year party.

Duration: 8 hours

2.3 Teacher's role

Activity 1. The first task of the teacher is that of preparing the right materials (appropriate, exciting, effective and axed on different languages, such as logic, illustration and music).

As a second step, the group discovers the new situation and a discussion ensues. The children carry out investigative activities in order to understand what is going on and the problem's wider context; they talk to one another so they can find the right solution.

Activity 2. The teacher organizes field trips so that other sounds, chosen by the children themselves, can be recorded.

Activity 3. For the duration of the project, the teachers are tasked with

promoting the children's active participation by adapting the different phases to their pupils' interests and capabilities.

Whenever there is a discussion, an activity which is a key part of this educational project, the teacher needs to mediate so that every opinion is given space and value. The final decision taken by the group shouldn't simply be a majority vote, but a truly shared position achieved through constructive dialogue.

Furthermore, the teacher should bring up events of extra-scholastic life, thus creating a meaningful and necessary connection between what happens in school and what happens at home.

2.4 Children's role

Activity 1. Pupils are invited to actively listen to the sounds recorded. The children try to recognize and reproduce the different sounds. Thanks to this activity, they will initiate a reflection about water - how it can be used, who works with it, and the value it has for all of us.

Activity 2. Through all of these activities, the children can practice their listening skills and identify silence as a precondition to engage in any acoustic exercise. Furthermore, there is an enhancement of group dynamics: children need to work together, come up with new ideas, be ready to question their own views and come to a shared conclusion on how water is used on a local level.

Activity 3. Every child is respected and listened to in every phase of the project so as to make the most of their learning curve. The original problem is challenging and motivating: the group participates fully to find a solution. The shared definition of the game's rules, which requires everyone's participation, is a true practice of how democracy works. This is implemented chiefly during the construction phase, but also during the game. Furthermore, experimenting with how the different water sounds are created increases the pupils' complex thinking skills.

2.5. Example of material produced



Figure 1. Material (stimulus) delivered to the pupils.



Figure 2. Children research the sounds heard



Figure 3. Pupils prepare the material



Figure 4. Children create the first rules of play

3. Methods, tools and materials used

The methodological approach puts discussion and negotiation centre stage, as those are the most efficient tools to encourage participation. Furthermore, the teachers followed the four phases of Kolb's experiential learning cycle, and namely: concrete learning, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. These elements are profoundly interconnected. The field trip proved to be very valuable in that it provided a tangible 'here and now' experience to test ideas and preconceptions; the constant use of feedback to reflect on both theory and practice was also a meaningful part of the project. Most of the activities focus on how to train and improve creative thinking through listening to and producing sounds. This encouraged the children to move beyond visual stimulation, discovering instead the acoustic dimension (voices, noises, impressions and perceptions). Further listening and recording tools include: a CD of pre-recorded sounds, recording devices, speakers, headphones.

4. Potential/difficulties

It should also be stressed that sound was directly linked to the most primal part of our brains; for this reason, sound often manages to bring to light both memories and emotions related to experience. Choosing sound-based activities, therefore, has great potential, in that it contributes to a more precise mapping of all water-related activities. Unfortunately, those qualities which ensure a productive and thought-provoking educational project are also the main source of obstacles: creating a truly fair debating and negotiating environment so that every opinion can be heard is often challenging for kindergarten teachers, especially if we factor in the need to respect the children's different learning curves. Asking open questions, praising contributions, suggesting new ideas and framing the problem in a different way are all strategies the teaching staff can use to further a better classroom climate.

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

Experiential learning hinges on, and promotes, motivation and curiosity as the starting points for any educational journey. The initial problem provides meaning and context, directs resources and ideas and offers a guideline to structure and manage activities so that children are encouraged to work on their own.

A shift from description to analysis in order to recreate a complex framework through direct experience (a fundamental part of all phases) makes both participation and voicing one's opinions easier, in that every child has his or her own experience and therefore every child is equally important. This allows the entire group to be more confident in taking the initiative and organizing new activities

4.2 Difficulties

Allowing each child to actively participate in the project, which is meant as an exercise in democracy, was the most challenging part of the three phases process. There was a decisive effort not to flatten the individual learning curves so that diversity could be given its fair value. A good method to achieve this goal is to offer the pupils a palette of mediating languages and exploring options (descriptive perspective), as well as different tools and voices (analytic perspective) and media of expression (complex perspective).

Another challenge is represented by the available resources and the possibility to integrate the school activities within the community in order to create an educational project that is truly anchored in its social environment.

Furthermore, a true implementation of such a vision would require the involvement of the entire faculty, and not only the teachers who are directly affected.

4.3 Possibilities

In the framework of skills based learning, the three key phases (namely, shared meaning, practice and design) allow for a shift from simple to complex perspective. In the first phase, the children are confronted with the problem and they're made aware of their own preconceptions and the different uses of water. Here, we have a mostly descriptive perspective which is based upon exploring and awe as the primary motives of discovery.

After that, the children are divided into smaller groups and asked to draw the existing sounds and come up with new sounds. In this way, they train their analytical skills and make active use of their knowledge through creative and artistic activities (drawings, storytelling, recordings, pictures...). And finally, the stage of building the game allows for a combination of both the descriptive and the analytical perspectives through a medium which underscores the complex connections (nodes, junctions and networks) both on site and between the various stakeholders.

5. School – Territory alliance

There was no direct contact with the local environment; instead, the connection was mediated through sound. It would have been interesting to look at other kinds of sources (for instance, by carrying out interviews with those responsible of managing the local water system) and organize a field trip. What was particularly valuable was how the local landscape and all its elements could be recreated by the trigger sound; this could have been completed by a visit of the local mill or aqueduct so that the children could better understand how water is harnessed and used to sustain life. A field trip would also have ensured the children could be confronted with authentic artefacts and real voices: this would have made the learning experience even more meaningful and stimulating.

The experiences in primary school



ITALY

University of Milano-Bicocca

Scuola Primaria “A. Scarpa” - Istituto Comprensivo “A. Scarpa”, Milano

Project title: *Quale accoglienza nella comunità: dall'accoglienza dei bambini di classe prima a quella dei rifugiati*

(*Being welcomed in the community: from first-year school children to refugees*)

Thematic: Social Harmony

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

The *Istituto Comprensivo “A. Scarpa”* school district (<https://www.icscarpa.gov.it/>) is located in Milan, Zone 3 Città Studi-Lambrate. “Antonio Scarpa” primary school was opened in 1958 at 22 Via Clericetti as the “Special Elementary School for Children with Amblyopia” with the goal of enabling pupils with serious eyesight problems to learn also visually through the use, training and re-education of their visual deficits. On 1 September 2008 the school, at this time still legally classed as “special”, became a regular institution in every way. Today its pupils come from a wide range of different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds; some live locally and some are children of parents that work at the universities and/or hospitals in the area. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of non-EU residents that view the school as the best place for integrating in the social fabric of the area.

Class context

Class 5B currently has 19 pupils, 10 boys and 9 girls. There are 4 pupils in the class whose families come from different countries, all of whom born in Italy but bilingual at home. A differently-abled pupil with serious mental and psychomotor deficits is well integrated in the group. Three other pupils (a boy and two girls) have certification for dyslexia and dyscalculia problems diagnosed in the second and third years. The pupils attend school full time (40 hours and 5 days a week) from 8.30 to 4.30 in the afternoon with lunch served during the break between 12.30 and 2.30.

1.2 Timeframe

The project lasted 5 months (January-May) and for practical purposes was structured into numbered activity modules:

- *Activity 1 In the school: what does being welcomed mean?* - 45 minutes

- *Activity 2 What does being welcomed mean away from school* - 60 minutes + 60 minutes + 60 minutes of activities organised every 2 weeks
- *Activity 3 Understanding the phenomenon of migration and the reality of the shelter near the school* - 120 minutes + 120 minutes + 120 minutes plus sporadic moments during the group work in the two following weeks to complete the work begun, organised over a period of 4 weeks.
- *Activity 4 Planning and organising a welcome party*- 60 minutes + 60 minutes + 60 minutes
- *Activity 5 Holding a welcome party* - 180 minutes

Overall duration of classroom activities: 15 hours and 45 minutes

1.3 Teaching objectives

- Learn to exercise the right to speak (Art. 21 Italian Const.)
- Develop the ability to take part in a discussion
- Construct shared meanings to acquire new points of view
- Negotiate and attribute positive meaning to differences
- Develop ethics relating to responsibility
- Develop knowledge on the migrant world
- Learn to put cooperative and collaborative attitudes into practice
- Plan using the knowledge acquired to set significant and realistic goals
- Acquire and interpret the information critically appraising the information received, assessing its reliability and usefulness, distinguishing facts from opinions
- Recognise the values of the inalienable rights of every human being (Art. 2 Italian Const.), of equal social dignity (Art. 3 Italian Const.), of the need to tangibly contribute to the quality of life in society (Art. 4 Italian Const.)
- Know how to use written and spoken language as key media for exploring the world, organising thoughts and reflecting on experience
- Improve the informed subscription to shared values and cooperative and collaborative approaches
- Choose and act to continuously improve your life situation
- Collaborate and participate interacting with others and understanding other points of view
- Identify connections and relations using tools that make it possible to deal with the complexities of living in today's global society
- Play an active role in developing a mixed and informed community.

1.4 Group and classroom organisation

The class has consolidated experience of group conversations, which are promoted as an engine for planning the activity: it will be thanks to the ideas, doubts and questions that emerge from the conversations with the group that the entire project will be constructed, always enabling the children to see the planning process.

- *Activity 1* - Activity aimed at the class group, the pupils work without desks and with the chairs arranged in a circle.

- Activity 2 - Activity aimed at the class group, the pupils work without desks and with the chairs arranged in a circle.
- Activity 3 - The desks are arranged in islands to facilitate small group work.
- Activity 4 - Discussions involving the entire class are alternated with moments of group work where the desks are arranged in islands.
- Activity 5 - The space used is not the classroom but the school assembly hall and garden, set up with chairs and a video projector and tables with food.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimension developed

Social Harmony.

2.2 Description of the type of activity

Beginning with the direct experience acquired by the children when tutoring the first-year children, through a reflection and dialogue activity the class considers the term 'welcoming' and its meaning in the school community, forming a shared definition of what it represents for the class: a place, a situation, a welcoming community.

The class group is then asked to open the doors and look outside to try and define the term 'welcoming' outside the school community: the direct link is with the arrivals of migrants/refugees and their living conditions.

The teacher opens the doors to enter into contact with what is happening outside: in the immediate vicinity of the school there is a shelter run by the Red Cross for a total of 400 guests dependent on the local community. There is a meeting with the managers of the Red Cross in order to learn more about the shelter. The group collaborates with the school's Parents' Association which has raised funds and collected basic essentials for the shelter. The class carries out a series of detailed activities to propose its idea of welcoming and put it into practice together with the local community.

Activity 1. In the school: what does being welcomed mean?

The teacher leads the children in a brainstorming session and subsequent discussion on the meaning of 'feeling welcome', with particular reference to the tutoring activities that the 5th year children experienced with the 1st year children that had just arrived in the school community. On the basis of the brainstorming session and the discussion the children produce a poster entitled "when I feel welcome".

Activity 2. What does being welcomed mean away from school?

Three conversations in class about "what being welcomed away from school" means in which the children identify the question of migrants as a topical social issue. Here, the children's different ideas and stereotypes about the reasons for migration, poverty and welcoming in the city of Milan emerge; the teacher proposes to investigate and examine the issue more closely in the local

community (families, nearby refugee shelter, migrant peers from the shelter that are pupils at the school).

Activity 3. Understanding the phenomenon of migration and the reality of the shelter near the school

On the basis of the previous three discussions, the class is organised into small groups to plan the questions that will be asked in interviews with some of the migrants at the shelter that are in the 4th year at the school. Questions will also be prepared ahead of an interview with the shelter's social worker.

<https://www.crimilano.it/cosa-facciamo/sociale/migranti.html>.

The class prepares a research project on migration and a PowerPoint to summarise their investigation.

Activity 4. Planning and organising a welcome party

After the meeting with the shelter social worker and the interviews with the 4th year children from the shelter, the class decides to organise a welcome party, inviting school friends, their families and guests of the shelter. The class decides on the menu for the party, creates a flyer with the programme to present in the other classes, and writes an official invitation for the guests of the shelter.

Activity 5. Holding a welcome party

As the organisers, the children decide to make a welcome book available to collect the thoughts of the party's guests, they manage the projection of the PowerPoint and they take turns explaining the content on the research into migration. The local authorities are present in the form of the deputy mayor of Milan and a representative of the local council. A video is projected that documented the shared planning process of the entire Citizenship Education course carried out by the children.

2.3 Teacher's role

- Activity 1. The teacher asks the question "how and when do I feel welcome" and invites the children to freely express their thoughts, writing them on a post-it. They then collect and record everything said by the children without commenting on their various takes on the topic.
- Activity 2. During conversations the teacher only interjects in order to encourage participation; they don't express their opinions, only asking for more details or explanations. The teacher transcribes the conversations and gives each pupil a copy, and these are filed in a special folder belonging to the pupils and reread together.
- Activity 3. The teacher organises the various work groups 'on the basis of the task assigned, encouraging self-organisation but helping and acting as a mediator to support group work when requested.
- Activity 4. The teacher oversees organisational aspects, contacts external

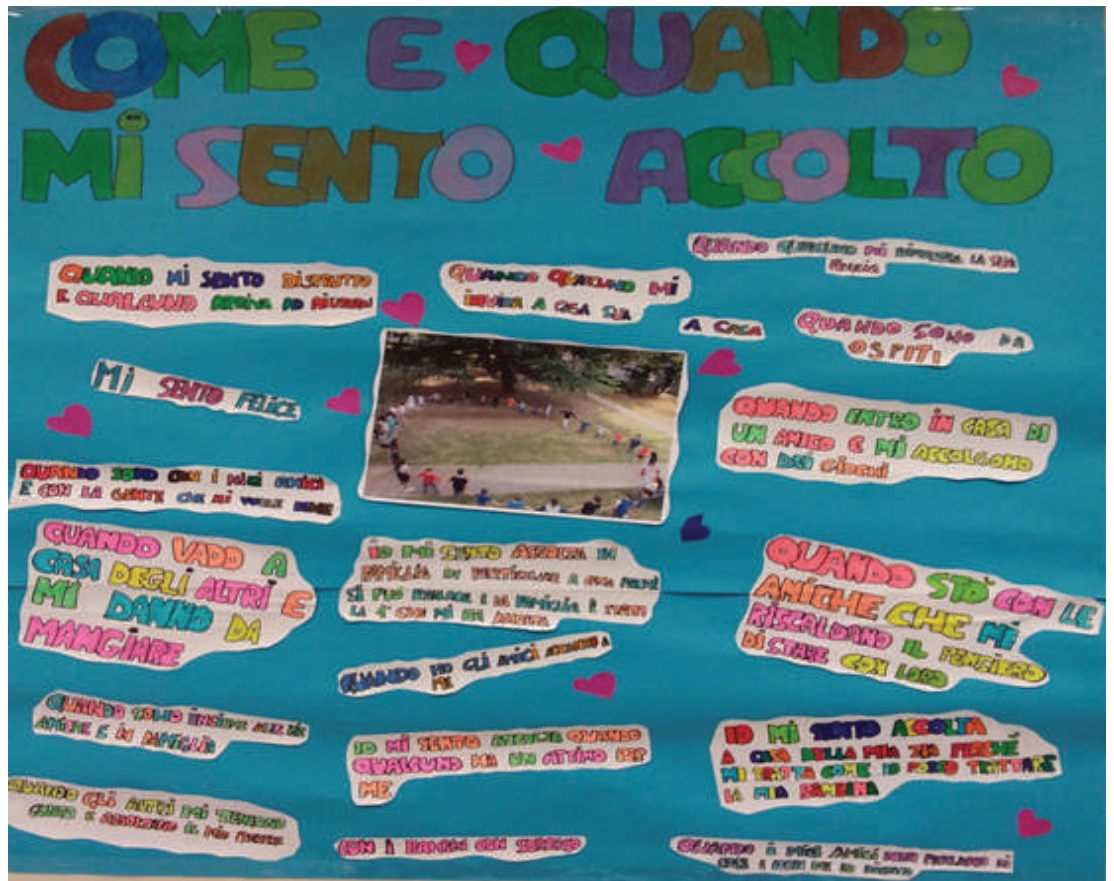
parties, forwards the invitation to the authorities and dialogues with the parents' association involved in the party.

- Activity 5. The teacher oversees the general organisation and coordination of the group of children, welcomes and manages relations with the authorities and local stakeholders at the party.

2.4 Children's role

- Activity 1. The children take part in the brainstorming session, freely expressing themselves without taking turns to speak; they talk among themselves without the interference of the teacher and independently gather together their ideas on the poster.
- Activity 2. The children participate independently in the discussions, with an amount of input that always significantly outweighs the prompts of the teacher; each pupil says their name before speaking and the group guarantees the necessary silence so the recording can be made successfully; pupils do not need to raise their hand when they want to speak but must wait for the right moment to respectfully join the discussion without interrupting or being overbearing; if somebody is interrupted the so-called "rules of chivalry" are applied whereby they are allowed to finish what they were saying.
- Activity 3. The children ask questions in turn and discuss the tasks assigned to the various groups; open discussions in the group.
- Activity 4. The children get ready to play a leading role in the party; they take organisational decisions, they divide the tasks and take it upon themselves to inform the other classes and to promote the party at home, inviting guests and workers from the shelter.
- Activity 5. The children are actively involved in the management and organisation of the party, taking responsibility for welcoming the migrants from the shelter to the school community as well as the families attending the event.

2.5 Examples of material produced



Poster on welcoming made by the children (Activity 1)

Power Point made and presented by the children (attached) on welcoming (Activity 3). (<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1OGSuDOUZ0nnzbndXD9RYjOq85T8-K0e>)



Drawing produced after the meeting with volunteers from the shelter (Activity 3).



Invitation to the welcome party made by the children (Activity 3).



Welcome book made available by the children for guests of the welcome party (Activity 5)

Video that documents the shared planning process of the entire Citizenship Education course carried out by the children (Activity 5):

[\[https://www.facebook.com/ProgettoErasmusPlusSTEP/videos/1879471785604008/?t=11\]](https://www.facebook.com/ProgettoErasmusPlusSTEP/videos/1879471785604008/?t=11)

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

- Activity 1. Brainstorming, discussion; posters, post-its, felt tip pens
- Activity 2. Discussion and interpretation and analysis of the transcription of the previous discussions, audio recorder.



- Activity 3. Discussion, preparation and carrying out of interviews with experts and peers, information research activities and reorganisation of the material in a PowerPoint, group work. The children consult newspapers, dictionaries and the internet using the computer and IWB.
- Activity 4. Discussion, group work, activities to promote the party, flyer, graphics programme.
- Activity 5. Presentation of PowerPoint, video, welcome book, sharing a meal.





4. Potential/difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

The idea that emerged from the conversations with the pupils of the class is that welcoming is a scenario in which both parties, those who welcome and those who are welcomed, are involved in a learning process that transforms the entire community. Working on the theme of welcoming and its meaning inside and outside the classroom and the school enabled the children to consider and discuss current issues and problems in a critical and interdisciplinary way. Structuring the work in this way, with frequent discussions and debates between peers and adults, made it possible to more successfully coordinate the issues in a vast conceptual framework, in an accessible and immediate way, something which would have been much more difficult taking a more “traditional” approach to the topic.

All of the local stakeholders involved (families, parents’ association, shelter staff, migrants, authorities) identify the relationship between migrants and the welcoming community as a topical social issue; the work of the pupils therefore seems to be a response to a more general need of the community and this gives it an importance that engages and motivates the group. This importance is recognised by the teacher as a factor that captures the attention and drives the group’s participation in the activities, fostering the learning process.

4.2 Difficulties

Harmonising a project in the field with the times and resources of the school requires the attention and support of the school’s administrators.

The relations with the community involve the teacher in activities subject to a certain amount of uncertainty which they have to manage by reorganising the activity in terms of the needs and constraints of those involved.

The work on socially relevant issues also brings to light the reflections of the teacher who together with the class explores complex and delicate subjects. This requires motivation and interest and supervisory abilities.

4.3 Possibilities

The group conversation method used by the teacher encourages the children to participate, get involved and take centre stage, and is suitable for various situations: assessing the activities carried out, exchanging and sharing ideas, reflecting on experiences, the conception and planning of activities.

The work on topical social issues improves the attention and participation of the children and gives them the opportunity to have their own space for discussing social issues, to develop their own opinions and to learn through dialogue with their peers and meetings with important external figures.

The non-judgmental guidance of the teacher, always focused on fostering the participation of all, consolidates their positive, dialogue-based relationship with individuals and the group as a whole.

The stakeholders in the community are attentive and interested in being involved with the school in a non-standard way, recognising its role as a social stakeholder.

5. School - Territory Alliance

In this case the relationship between the School and the Community takes the form of a joint project between the various parties involved: children, teachers, families, workers and children from the shelter, and the authorities (deputy mayor and representative of the local council).

To facilitate the participation of the various parties (Red Cross shelter for refugees and asylum seekers), discussions were held on how best to convey the reality of the shelter and the stories of its guests to the class, at the same time seeking to meet the need for greater integration of the shelter with the local community. The parents' association helped organise the party and involve the families of the children; the families of the pupils in the class showed their willingness to get involved and discuss delicate and complex issues with their children, the local authorities supported the general community initiative, recognising the social value of the class's project.

In this way the teacher and their class played leading roles in the dialogue and relationship with both the school and local communities: the children's interviews with expert figures and the final product on the issue of migration made it possible to document and show the public the various stages of the project, and to reflect on the knowledge acquired; the involvement of the local council and the deputy mayor of Milan in the initiative made it possible to engage the authorities and give the issue of welcoming a public dimension;

the organisation of a pizza to which migrants from the shelter were invited, once it was established that their biggest desire was to eat a pizza, led to the participation, interaction and meeting with other people who showed they had desires as well as needs.



Scuola Primaria “Dugnani” - Istituto Comprensivo “IV Novembre”, Cornaredo (Milan)

Project title: *Fare storia, crescere Cittadini! (Making history, developing Citizens!)*

Thematic: Social Harmony, Heritage

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

The *Istituto Comprensivo IV Novembre* school district (<http://www.icsvia4novembre.gov.it/>), is located in the centre of Cornaredo, a town on the outskirts of Milan. It is made up of 2 nursery schools, a primary school and a lower secondary school. Some of these schools are located in a large green park that extends from the edges to the centre of the town. The park is well structured and has facilities for various activities, which are organised at both school and social level for the entire community. Originally a farming town in the main, the population of Cornaredo lived in the farmhouses and courts which, even if redeveloped, still maintain their traditional and characteristic features today. Likewise, the Ghiacciaia (Ice House), the Museo della civiltà contadina (Museum of peasant farmer culture) and the Antico Forno (Old Oven) are still places visited by the various schools. The town has undergone major changes since the 1950s with the people abandoning farming and devoting themselves to artisan activities and the tertiary sector. Furthermore, in recent years there has been a rise in the population due to the arrival of numerous families of foreign origin. In fact, there are numerous children of non-Italian origin in the years and classes of the different schools.

Class 3^A of Dugnani primary school (*Istituto Comprensivo Statale IV Novembre*) currently has 25 pupils, 13 boys and 12 girls. Two pupils are from families that originally come from outside Italy (Albania and Ukraine). Both were born in Italy and regularly attended Cornaredo nursery school and are well integrated in the class. In recent years the Ukrainian pupil's difficulty in the linguistic and expressive field had been noted and he receives support in learning Italian (he is aided with his homework). Two of the pupils are certified as disabled and one is assisted by the special needs teacher for 9 hours a week.

During the project a student intern studying Primary Education was present in the class. The intern was in the class every Monday and Thursday from October 2016 to May 2017 and supported the teacher in all activities. This experience formed the basis for her final dissertation research project.

1.2 Timeframe

The series of activities was held between December 2016 and May 2017. More specifically, the duration of the various activities described was as follows:

- *Activity 1. Trip to Cascina Favaglie farm:* 2 hours
- *Activity 2. What did we see?:* 1 hour of discussion + 1 hour setting up the museum in class
- *Activity 3. Let's get ready for another trip in the local area!:* 2 hours
- *Activity 4. Let's go to the Courts!:* 2 hours
- *Activity 5. Let's organise a "Courts of Cornaredo" exhibition:* 1 hour + 2 hours organising the exhibition

1.3 Teaching objectives

- Learn the history of the local area
- Promote its historic and cultural heritage
- Recognise the link between the past and the present also through a dialogue between generations (children, grandparents and special figures in the local area)
- Develop the ability to research information
- Promote the development of social and argumentative skills
- Learn to plan and work in groups
- Connect different pieces of information from the local context and learn how to communicate them to others.

1.4 Group and classroom organisation

Activity 1. The trip was made in the local area, involving the entire class

Activity 2. The discussion takes place in the classroom, the desks are arranged in pairs. A corner is created in the classroom to set up the little museum.

Activity 3. Arrangement of the desks in little groups.

Activity 4. The trip was made in the local area, the children were divided into groups, respecting the roles assigned to them in class.

Activity 5. The discussion takes place in the classroom, the desks are arranged in pairs.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

Social Harmony and Learning about Heritage - specific theme: discovering local history, the value of cultural heritage

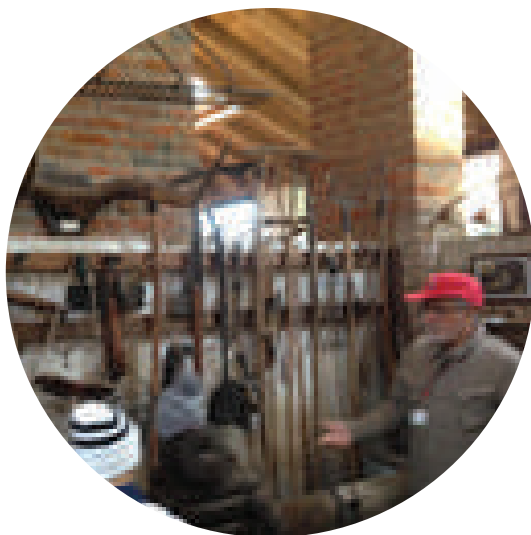
2.2 Description of the type of activity

The children go on an outing in the local area with the aim of learning about the cultural heritage of Cornaredo. Thinking back to what they saw, they decide to set up a little museum in the class. The children later prepare themselves for another outing in the local area which they organise themselves. To share

what they discovered and learned during their outing with others (parents, children...) the children decide to organise an exhibition at school.

Activity 1. Trip to Cascina Favaglie farm

The guided tour of the Museum of peasant farmer culture and the Ghiacciaia (Ice House) was carried out by volunteers from Italia Nostra. The volunteers provided information and descriptions of the objects and environments, formulating questions aimed at ascertaining what the children had learned. (<http://www.ghiacciaiafavaglie.it/>).



Activity 2. What did we see?

Dialogue guided by the teacher showing the photos of the items seen at the museum on the IWB in order to go over the themes of the visit, establish what was learned and then produce texts in small groups with descriptions of the objects, their function and in some cases their worth as items of sentimental value or local heritage. A connection with the theme of solidarity emerged as the volunteers of the Cascina described how some sewing machines that were no longer in use were collected, repaired and sent to African women in order to set up a business, a topic that had already been covered in class during the meeting with Humana volunteers and the twinning with Malawi (<http://www.creativetwinning.cloud/project/>)

Following the discussion some children decided, on their own initiative, to bring to school some items belonging to their grandparents (diaries, photos, instruments), who were interviewed. It was then decided that a little museum would be set up in class.

Activity 3. Let's get ready for another trip in the local area!

The second outing had already been planned at the start of the year and was chosen by the intern in order to focus on the theme of group work. The children had to organise the group work dividing up the roles (journalist, photographer, artist and special correspondent - already decided by the intern) and deciding

what questions to ask the interviewees. This was followed by a discussion on why it was worth visiting the Courts, in which the children clearly underlined the importance of learning about one's local area and how people lived in the past.

Activity 4. Let's go to the Courts!

The outing involved the exploration of the courts and a meeting with experts - two women that have lived in the courts since they were children - who described their experience. The trip took two different forms: together with the teachers the children were accompanied by a guide (a retired teacher and "expert" in local history) who provided them with information. At the same time, under the supervision of the intern the children sought to carry out their own research on the local area more or less independently.

[\[http://www.comune.cornaredo.mi.it/Articoli/Home-Page/Notizie-in-evidenza/74-3029%5ELA-CURTA-UN-PATRIMONIO-DA-RISCOPRIRE.asp?ID_SN=3029\]](http://www.comune.cornaredo.mi.it/Articoli/Home-Page/Notizie-in-evidenza/74-3029%5ELA-CURTA-UN-PATRIMONIO-DA-RISCOPRIRE.asp?ID_SN=3029)



Activity 5. Let's organise a "Courts of Cornaredo" exhibition

Large group discussion on "what to do" with all the information collected on the trip to the courts, during which the idea of organising an exhibition at the school, open to the public, was proposed. Constraints (for example the permission of the head) and necessities (communicating the initiative externally) emerge which the children discuss also among themselves, taking different views, with the guidance of the teacher.

The children decide to make a comments book available for visitors to the exhibition.



2.3 Teacher's role

From the observations of the intern and the analysis of the conversations in class, the contributions of the teacher are balanced between taught lessons (to present the content/provide instructions/solutions/guidelines) and lessons that encourage inclusive participation and the continuation of the activity. The teacher organises lessons in an interdisciplinary way and often bases them on conversation; however, on some occasions it is difficult to gather the ideas of the children and with this in mind the established plan should be reviewed.

2.4 Children's role

It was already standard practice that the children were informed and consulted during the development of the various activities; a number of activities are shared with them, however, observing the chronological evolution of the project, a gradual increase in the number of lead actions by the teacher is evident, as is a greater openness to change. This corresponds with an increase in analytical and complex learning on the part of the children, greater participation in dialogue, greater reflection on the meaning of the content they have learned and the ability to collaborate and interact with their classmates.

2.5 Examples of material produced:

Activity 3. Transcription of a discussion with the intern

Intern: "Why are we going to visit the courts in your opinion?"

C: "To remember Cornaredo when it was old, in the past, and the courts also show us that this court has been here for a long, long time because where the name of the court is written you can see that it is ruined"

C: "We are going to the courts because we can also see the kinds of machines there were years ago to plough the fields and make corn on the cob"

C: "To see how men lived their lives a long time ago in Cornaredo".

- List of identified roles:
- JOURNALIST: has the task of interviewing the women that live in the courts of Cornaredo during the trip.
- SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT: has the task of noting down interesting facts and details observed when exploring the courts in their notebook. Also helps the journalist note down the details of the talks they regard as particularly significant or which struck them the most.
- ARTIST: focuses on an aspect of the court that particularly struck them or that interests them and makes a sketch, using a drawing pad and a charcoal pencil. Later, in class, they will reproduce the drawing on canvas.
- PHOTOGRAPHER: takes photos during the trip to the courts, focusing on what they deem to be the most interesting elements.

Activity 4. The children work in little groups to organise the exhibition. In particular, one group decides which photos to use on the descriptive poster of the courts of Cornaredo

L.P.: "We could use the photo of the harvest"

L.R: "Yeah but that's got nothing to do with it...it has to represent the whole court. I would use this photo"

Intern: "Explain why you think this photo could be used"

L.P: "Because the wall also shows how the court was once upon a time"

L.R: "Yes but this photo is nicer...it also has the floor, the name of the road, the name of the court..."

L.R: "This is nice"

L.P: "Yes but you can't understand it"

L.R: "Wait, I like this one"

L.P: "Nooo"

L.R: "This is nice too. Mmmm, no. It's refurbished"

L.P: "This one?"

L.R: "No, it's out of focus"

L.P: "This!"

L.R: "Yes, this one"

A.P: "Yes!"

Transcription of a small group discussion with the researchers

Researcher: "Why do you think the teachers got you to do this?"

C: "They did it because if not... we wouldn't have understood the way things were. How can we understand our past if... we don't know this really important thing, that you study in Citizenship, we can't study the other subjects if we haven't studied the courts how could we know that once upon a time there were courts with these kinds of castles..."

R: "Who might know these things?"

C: "Someone who looks for evidence, who comes up with theories..."

R: "Someone who looks for evidence, who comes up with theories, exactly..."

C: "It's like if you only see the end of a film you'll never know what happened. You have to see the introduction to understand the whole film, you have to have seen all of it, you can't just see a bit at the end."

Activity 5. From the exhibition visitors' book:

"Thanks for this lovely step back into the past... that takes us into the future"

A mother

"Always be interested in both the past and the future" Italia Nostra NPO

"Great work! Very important for highlighting the importance of being citizens"

A grandfather

The exhibition:



3. Methodology, tools and materials used

Activity 1. Educational trip in the local area, explanations by the Italia Nostra volunteers that manage the museum. Cameras and notebooks.

Activity 2. Discussion and setting up of exhibition. Card, photos, objects, IWB, computer.

Activity 3. Group work and discussion in large group. Notebooks, posters, felt tip pens.

Activity 4. Outing in the local area, explanation from expert. Cameras and notebooks, drawing pads and pencils, jotting down questions to ask the experts.

Activity 5. Discussion, audio recorder, posters, photos, computer.

4. Potential/difficulties

4.1 *Positive aspects of the sequence of activities*

The alternation of trips in the local area and preparation and reflection in the classroom enabled the children to develop an increasing awareness of their role as protagonists and to sustain an open dialogue with their classmates and teachers, also reflecting at notable depth on the meaning of group work, for example. The presence of the intern both in the class and during the trips made it possible to plan and make choices, in terms of times/spaces/materials, also together with the children so the various activities could be carried out as effectively as possible. It also made it possible to collect lots of crucial documentary evidence, particularly the words of the children, for launching a process of reflection on their ways of learning and on the effectiveness of the teaching activities.

Example of dialogue taken from the self-assessment interviews carried out by the intern at the end of the year:

Alice: "I think the ingredients for working in a group are collaborating, listening, thinking with your own head and not always letting the others choose, but never take a vote"

Intern: "Why should you never take a vote?"

Alice: "Because somebody thinks but they don't have to think that... I don't know, for me this is the majority, it isn't deciding together, maybe thinking a lot like, someone thinks... I don't know if somebody wanted to vote, if somebody wanted to vote in my group I said no straight away"

Int.: "So you would advise against voting even during group work"

Alice: "Yes, well if everyone votes the same way OK, because sometimes even if you vote the majority doesn't win, maybe the majority dig their heels in and wanted to side with her, somebody says "not for me, it's like this" and then all the others say "Why didn't we listen to her?"...because if you want to take a vote, I don't know, you sit and you think... you know, you also think about what the minority said, you reflect! It's not just that you say no, no for me it's like this!"

The teacher worked habitually in an interdisciplinary way. This helped when reconsidering the different outings in the local area with the children, making various types of analysis possible.

Although the children were exposed to a descriptive and informative approach during the first trip as regards the local area and its heritage, later a moment to reconsider the outing in class was planned. The aim of this moment was to recall some of the objects seen but also to connect the things they saw and heard with a more day-to-day and meaningful experience for the children (e.g. "my grandma also had this sewing machine but she doesn't use it anymore because she bought a new one"). A further level is reached when the children themselves plan how to organise the trip in the local area and choose how to use the material they collected (texts, photos, drawings) to set up the exhibition.

4.2 Difficulties

For the teacher it isn't always easy to marry the array of ideas proposed by the children with their possible realisation. As a result, at times the teacher guided the planning of the various activities, consulting the children but not allowing them to make choices and decisions. Another difficulty was promoting the collaborative and cooperative skills of the group through the creation of educational situations to find shared solutions for problems and to realise common projects.

4.3 Possibilities

The biggest development possibilities connected with this sequence of activities lie in giving the children a more active and influential role, therefore making them the real protagonists not only of the teacher's plans, which in this sense can change and be subject to deviations, but above all stakeholders as regards local institutions.

5. School - Territory Alliance

During the first outing the teacher is supported by representatives of a local body (Italia Nostra volunteers) to offer an experience led by an external expert; however, she prepares the trip and processes the information subsequently collected in class. As such, rather than a "one spot" project it is an approach that involves the informed use of local cultural heritage, which is inserted in the didactic project.

In the case of the trip to the Courts, the teacher deliberately chooses the local expert as somebody with the skills that meet the specific objectives they have identified. The expert also met the children in the class to prepare them before the trip.

The decision to allocate the different roles that the children would carry out during the trip in advance significantly impacted on their interest and also prevented them from spontaneously exploring the context and having an open dialogue with the experts. The photographers and artists were freer in their actions.

Even if there wasn't a genuine collaboration, the Cascina Favaglie Italia Nostra volunteers were then invited to the exhibition and a dialogue with the school was certainly launched.



Scuola Primaria “San Pietro in Cerro” – Istituto Comprensivo “Terre del Magnifico”, Cortemaggiore (PC)

Project title: *La strada, punto d’incontro di diversità, ti porta a scuola* (The road, meeting place of diversities, takes you to school)

Themes: Heritage, Environment and Sustainability, Social Harmony

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

The municipality of San Pietro in Cerro is a little farming village of 912 inhabitants (ISTAT 31/12/2014) equidistant from the four schools that comprise the school district (Castelvetro, Cortemaggiore, San Pietro in Cerro, Besenzone, Villanova) 3.5 km away. In 2014, 75 of the local residents were non-Italian, 8.2% of the total population.

The Municipality’s cultural heritage is made up of the Castle, a private residence that forms part of the cultural circuit of Castles of the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza.

San Pietro in Cerro primary school of the Istituto Comprensivo “Terre del Magnifico” school district of Cortemaggiore (Piacenza) (<http://www.iccortemaggiore.gov.it/>), is made up of two combined classes and operates on an open school basis, as part of a local, regional and international network, in close synergy with the education authority.

In the 2017/2018 academic year the school had 24 pupils in 5 classes: 1st: 7; 2nd: 1; 3rd: 7; 4th: 4; 5th: 5.

Two research teachers and an intern from the Primary Education degree course at Cattolica University of Milan took part in the trial.

The learning unit, illustrated below, entitled “On the road...STEP along the way”, forms part of “The road, meeting place of diversities, takes you to school” project.

All of the classes were involved, from the first to the fifth year of primary school, for a total of 24 pupils.

The activities also involved the classes of the primary schools of Besenzone (Piacenza).



San Pietro in Cerro primary school (PC)

1.2 Timeframe

The sequence of activities lasted a total of 4 months, structured in the following way:

- *Activity 1. The roads of the world* (4 hours)
- *Activity 2. The roads of my city* (8 hours)
- *Activity 3. The roads of democracy and possibility* (20 hours)

1.3. Teaching objectives

The teaching objectives regarded exploring the environmental, morphological, anthropic and historic, artistic and cultural expressions of the road to identify different ways of bringing together and uniting the community and the school, which for years has worked as part of a network with other institutions. In particular, the theme of the road, tackled in an interdisciplinary way, became the meeting point and bridge of this union, where in daily practice the past, with its heritage and legacy, met the future, the aspirations and the desires of the children. The understanding of the local area made it possible to examine the following aspects:

- the school environment, the park environment: features of the manmade and natural environment
- the road to school where I live
- roads: stories of the lives and habits of different peoples
- the history of the road in my town: the physical and manmade features of the roads travelled every day by the members of our families
- the road in the various countries of origin of the pupils at the school
- the “roads” not to travel down; and the roads I love to take
- observing the different everyday habits of schools that alter and influence the places in every community
- the road of bullies, of solitude, of beggars, of refugees, of workers, of the apathetic in my city; identification, analysis, observation of characteristics
- the road of solidarity in our communities: identification, analysis, observation of characteristics; Me, us, together we make the road liveable
- the open school as a dynamic place for the community to meet and socialise.

The road is therefore presented to children as something that brings people together because, as a young citizen reminded everyone, “along the way you’ll see that you are no longer alone...” to quote Italian singer Claudio Baglioni. Discovering that the road is the stratification over time of different mentalities, habits and customs enabled them to understand that being an informed citizen means recognising and responsibly participating in and encouraging the meeting of different generations and cultures which may come together along the way and construct a new idea of identity and citizenship.

The activities concluded on 30 May 2017 with a play involving both the San Pietro in Cerro and Besenzone (Piacenza) schools at the “Giuseppe Verdi” theatre in Busseto (Parma).

1.4. Group and classroom organisation

The activities involved the use of different spaces: 5 classrooms, one equipped with media materials (computer, IWB), the school corridor as a place of assembly and activity sharing; external spaces like the park, the school garden and the road. The learning unit concluded with a play at the theatre attended by the municipal authorities, the schools of the *Istituto Comprensivo*, the school headteachers, some university lecturers and the general public.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

The dimensions developed regarded: Social Harmony, Sustainability, Heritage. The underlying motif that united and strengthened the connections between the various dimensions was the “ball of yarn” from which the project took its cue. The various threads of knowledge and relations of which it comprises were involved in every phase of the activities, becoming a travel companion of the children. Each time, every ball unwound, intertwining and integrating with lots of stories, in relation to the intergenerational meetings along the “road” of knowledge and experience; a factor that fostered connections, the meaning of identity and “coexisting happily together”.



The “ball of yarn”

2.2 Description of the type of activity

Activity 1. The roads of the world

The teacher introduces the topic of the meaning of “road”, showing the class a globe.



On the roads observing the globe and the environment

Activity 2. The roads of my city

The reflections continue with a second activity that regarded the simulation in class of a network of roads, i.e. a crossroads at which traffic police, drivers, motorcyclists and pedestrians are all present. Everyone travels the roads that lead to the crossroads for different reasons: some because they are going to work, some to admire the city as tourists, some because they are doctors and have a particular profession... etc.



Along the roads of San Pietro in Cerro and Cortemaggiore

Activity 3. The roads of democracy and possibility

The third activity involved viewing the film “On the way to school” by Pascal Plisson, which got them to reflect on the obstacles and problems that four children in four different corners of the globe have to contend with every day to get to school, risking their own lives. The activity continued with a Skype call with the class of children at the school in Kinshasa (Congo).



Skype connection with the children of the Kinshasa school - Congo

2.3 The teacher's role

During the first activity, through a brainstorming session, the class is asked to reflect on the different systems and means of transport that connect the roads of the world.

Educational materials are distributed and consulted: atlases and maps.

The interactions between the teacher and students are also driven by stimulus questions that seek to encourage inclusive and democratic participation.

During the second activity, the teacher asks the children to act out one of the roads from their towns, arranging themselves in the class and assuming different roles.

The activity is driven by the teacher with questions: *what other meanings can we give to the road?; where do you like to have fun? What are the roads in your town like? Empty, busy, deserted...*

Finally, the teacher shows the film "On the way to school". At the end of the film, the teacher leads a brainstorming session encouraging debate on the roads travelled by the children depicted. The reflections this generates are summarised on a poster.



The teacher acts a facilitator during the conversation between the children, enabling everyone to express themselves.

After the screening of the film and the children's reflections, a Skype call is made with the children of the school in Kinshasa, the capital of Congo.

2.4 Children's role

After looking at the globe, and an educational outing, the class observes that the land is criss-crossed by lots of roads.

During the brainstorming session a child observes that as well as physical roads other types of roads can also exist: "But there are many more roads, also figurative ones". Following this observation some children assert that there are also "long and winding roads" and those travelled "because you want to achieve a goal".

The children have free access to the educational materials provided by the teacher.

In the second activity, according to the set up in the classroom the children spontaneously cover a role and, encouraged by the teacher's questions, individually or in little groups come to the conclusion that crossroads represent the turning points of life: "making the right choice is difficult", the children remark, but "you have to make compromises" because you don't make choices on your own and these must always be made "listening to your heart".

The activity enabled them to underline the difficulties encountered when playing in the city. During a brainstorming session they are invited to reflect on traffic-related problems that prevent them from having spaces to play in safely. The reflection concentrates on the possibility of the road and the back yard once again becoming places for meeting and having fun.

Finally, during the last activity the children, after watching the film and in response to the stimulus questions of the teacher, come to the joint conclusion that although the boys and girls in the film travel long distances across hostile and dispiriting lands (savannah or boundless plains), risking coming across dangerous animals (alligators, lions), they are really determined to get to school, conscious of how education is their one and only possible saviour. The stories of Jackson from Kenya, Carlito from Patagonia, Zahira who lives in a Berber community in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, and Samuel from a village in the Bay of Bengal, stimulate the reflections of the children who observe how "some areas of the world don't have our luxuries", but that school for all children means "independence". They recognise that all "children have to deal with obstacles, we too".



From watching the film to the reality of the roads they travel to get to school: the children connect with the children of the school in Kinshasa and have a conversation.

Children of Kinshasa school (Congo)

The learning unit described above continued with other sequences of activities that concluded with the dramatisation of all of the educational projects at “G. Verdi” theatre in Busseto. On this occasion the play stood out for a highly symbolic gesture: the unwinding of the “ball of yarn” that is passed among all the children as a sign of solidarity. The “ball of yarn” was given new meanings including the importance of uniting and strengthening contacts with other school institutions in the world (like the school in Kinshasa) in order to be active citizens, to “be positive in the world”, because “paths cross” and represent the “thread of legality”, they are a means of “staying together”.

After a general representation of the previously discussed issues, the “ball of yarn” was taken by a child and given to the public present in the theatre by the teacher.



The roads therefore tell the stories of daily life and the difficulties of living: “If we look at our roads they are often empty, people don’t say hello to each other, and this is why we are trying to pass the ball of yarn between schools, so they meet, get to know each other, respect rules and avoid bullies”, says Irene.

2.5 Examples of material produced



Children who take care of the vegetable garden



The children present the results of their research at the municipal council of Besenzone (PC)



Activities of children on occasion of the Day of Legality



Group graphic-pictorial activity on the geography of Italy

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

Methodology: taught lessons, discussion, brainstorming, role playing, outings in the local area, group work, meetings with experts, writing the script, dramatisation.

Tools and materials used; IWB, camera, computer, paper, compass, posters, fabric.

4. Potential/difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

From a teaching perspective the positive aspects regarded the ongoing interdisciplinary nature of the various activities through the participation of specialist teachers and the connection between the school world and the citizenship with original and innovative approaches. The final dramatisation of the activities was supported by some careful work carried out with the municipal band actively involved in many other moments of the project. The important network created with the local and national authorities, the school authorities and the associations is also quite significant.

The children showed a lot of interest in solving current problems, those they felt were closely associated with their daily activities: the places where they play, the roads of knowledge, of the network and of independence.

4.2 Difficulties

The difficulty in stepping back from the teacher's lesson.

4.3 Possibilities

Submission of concrete and effective proposals to the municipal administrations to make some particularly busy and unsafe places more accessible and give back the public, and children in particular, spaces for socialising.

The learning unit involves participation on the Children's Committees or Student Parliaments where a representative of the school proposes the adoption of a road.

Identifying other meeting opportunities with new school institutions to continue to reflect on the meaning of "road" and continue with the network of yarns from the "ball".

The learning unit involves strengthening the consolidated network of schools by sharing the goals of the project with new schools. The university can represent a bridge to other schools and the participation in research projects. San Pietro in Cerro school shared some of the objectives with the primary school of Ponticella (Bologna), participant in the STEP trial.

5. School - Territory Alliance

The teacher deliberately chooses the local expert or experts as people with the skills that meet the specific objectives they have identified; they also launch a shared planning process with local associations and operators.

The specific characteristics of Cortemaggiore school district are aimed at involving combined and open classes between the sites and the different school levels in a constant dialogue with families and local training institutions that not only includes the more strictly local and regional arena but also the international panorama. Participants include the UN, the FAO and UNESCO, active parties in the trial.



Scuola Primaria “Don Milani” - Istituto Comprensivo n° 2, San Lazzaro di Savena (Bologna)

Project title: *Vivere la strada come luogo di incontro di una comunità passando per la scuola (The road as a meeting place in a community that goes through the school)*

Thematic: Heritage, Environment and Sustainability, Social Harmony

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

“Don Milani” primary school is part of the *Istituto Comprensivo n.2* school district of San Lazzaro di Savena (Bologna) (<http://www.2circolosanlazzaro.org/>).

Posizione della Scuola Primaria “Don Lorenzo Milani” e della località Ponticella rispetto al Comune di San Lazzaro di Savena ed alla città di Bologna



The area and the main neighbourhoods of the Municipality of San Lazzaro di Savena (Bologna)



Position of “Don Lorenzo Milani” primary school and the neighbourhood of Ponticella in relation to the Municipality of San Lazzaro di Savena and the city of Bologna

San Lazzaro di Savena is a municipality of 32,349 inhabitants in the metropolitan city (formerly the province) of Bologna in the region of Emilia-Romagna (<http://www.comune.sanlazzaro.bo.it/>).

The town is on the Via Emilia, on the right side of the Savena stream, 6 km south-east from the centre of Bologna. It is connected with the urban area of the administrative capital, separated from it only by Savena stream, on whose left bank sits the district of the same name of the city of Bologna. San Lazzaro di Savena is the fourth biggest municipality in terms of resident population in the province of Bologna. On 1 January 2016 there were 2539 foreign residents in San Lazzaro di Savena (7.9% of the total population), the majority of whom from Romania, Moldavia, Ukraine, Albania, Morocco, the Philippines, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The *Istituto Comprensivo n. 2* was opened in 2014 with the goal of managing four nursery schools, three primary schools and a lower secondary school, partly located in the administrative capital and partly in the districts. “Don Milani” is located in a suburban area characterised by large green areas and is attended by children that live in the neighbourhood of Ponticella or in the Municipality of San Lazzaro di Savena. The school is attended by 136 pupils divided into 2 sections for a total of 7 classes. 19 teachers work at the school including 2 special needs teachers.

The trial involved class 4A which comprises 25 pupils, including seven non-Italian children and one differently-abled child, and two class teachers. The University of Bologna team contributed with the support of a student intern from the Primary Education degree course - who later graduated with a dissertation on the experience with the STEP Project - and the participation of researchers. The programme developed by the teachers was planned in connection and collaboration with that developed by San Pietro in Cerro school (Piacenza).

1.2 Timeframe

The sequence of activities examined lasted five months in total and was structured in the following way:

- first activity *When the Savena ran clear* (4 hours)
- second activity *Interviews with people from different generations* (12 hours);
- third activity *Project to redesign the Park* (16 hours).

1.3 Teaching objectives

The overall project was entitled *The road as a meeting place in a community that goes through the school* and focused on the road as a physical space common to all citizens of the Municipality of San Lazzaro (Bologna).

(https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1229NbgBDhGXYG7WAnAm0WS2Cpnwt6_ux)

More specifically, it related to a road that crosses one of the parks that surround the Municipality and connects the city centre with the neighbourhood in which the school is located. However, this road also had a number of critical issues connected with its lack of safety and road signs: this generated the problem

of its redevelopment, as communicated to the entire community by the pupils. As such, the Project involved awareness, research and study activities to make it possible to fully exploit this communal space from both a historic and environmental perspective and also as an active citizenship exercise, pursuing the following objectives:

- Develop the dimensions of Social Harmony, the knowledge and promotion of Heritage, the Environment and Sustainability in a cross-disciplinary way;
- Promote the understanding and protection of the natural environment and the local area as a resource for forming a personal and social identity;
- Encourage intergenerational and intercultural dialogue through the redesign of the Park as a place for meeting, exchange and socialising;
- Promote Active Citizenship Education that engages the school, family and local area through the sharing of experiences and spaces;
- Strengthen the sense of belonging and the development of active participation in community life, not just at local level but also at national and European level.

1.4 Group and classroom organisation

The first activity took place in class, mainly in a large group. The second activity took place outside of the classroom both in other areas of the school (for the interviews with peers) and externally (for the interviews with grandparents and parents/aunts and uncles). The third activity took place largely externally - in the Park - and in big groups, and was followed by discussions in class.



The class with the teachers and the intern

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

The dimensions examined in this sequence of activities were those identified

by the STEP Project, i.e. Social Harmony, Heritage and Environment and Sustainability. These dimensions were approached and tackled in an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary way with strong synergies with local institutions and agencies. Finally, it seems appropriate to highlight how this trial was organised through a didactic project in which Active Citizenship Education did not have a marginal or separate role but accompanied the teaching and the general training goals, significantly contributing to the inclusive and intercultural dimensions promoted and developed by the numerous projects offered and launched by the School and Territory.

2.2 Description of the type of activity

Activity 1. When the Savena ran clear

To contextualise the programme of the STEP Project the teachers propose an activity to the class centred on the knowledge, promotion and sharing of the historic and cultural heritage of the school's local community, the Municipality of San Lazzaro and more specifically the neighbourhood of Ponticella. In particular, to analyse and understand the history of Ponticella and what life was like in the area in the early 1900s, they make use of a book – M. D'Amato, *Quando limpido scorreva il Savena (When the Savena ran clear)*, San Lazzaro di Savena, La Terrazza, 1951 – which explains the institutional, individual and collective vicissitudes of the community between the early 1900s and the 1950s.

Activity 2. Interviews with people from different generations

The teacher divides the class into three groups and gives each one the task of interviewing people belonging to different generations (grandparents, parents/aunts and uncles, peers) to establish their different preferences and needs. The aim of the interviews is to collect information on the pastimes of the adults and the games they played during their childhoods and, through their peers, those of the present. The various interviews also have the common goal of collecting requests and suggestions on the redesign of the Park as an opportunity and place for socialising and sharing experiences.

Activity 3. Project to redesign Ponticella Park

The teachers collect the information generated by the last two activities comparing the past and the present and identify, with the pupils, the external school space of Ponticella Park as an anonymous place with no historic identity, no safety measures for recreational activities like walking and playing, and no common areas that encourage intergenerational and intercultural socialising for the citizenship. Following the collection of requests put forward and approved by the class, the teachers invite the children to turn them into practical and extremely precise proposals. To this end, they accompany the pupils to the Park to observe and evaluate how and where to carry out the approved projects (e.g. benches, tables, areas for chess and draughts, rubbish

bins, plastic bag and glove dispenser for dog walkers, games area, ramp for skateboards and bicycles). On returning to the class, the teacher asks the pupils to create a map of the Park with their proposals to put to the Municipal Committee of San Lazzaro di Savena.



2.3 Teacher's role

During the first activity the teachers propose brainstorming activities aimed at revealing the knowledge of the pupils relative to the space, stories and anecdotes connected with the area external to the school. The teachers encourage the exchange of opinions and discussion in a climate of collaboration and reciprocal listening. The text is read and studied in a large group. The teachers explain any parts that are unclear and collect the questions of the pupils to stimulate subsequent analysis, particularly on the history of the local school and its protagonists. Finally, they invite the children to connect the issues that emerged with the places that are most important to them in order to facilitate the creation of choices and proposals linked with the Park redesign project.

During the second activity the teachers act as participants and researchers together with the pupils. Together they identify people that are potentially available to be interviewed and define the prompts for the interview. The teachers aim to act as facilitators so the children can understand and feel fully at ease with the interview process, and formulate additional questions they believe are most in keeping and consistent with the goals of the activity.

Finally, in the third and final activity the teacher acts as a participant and researcher together with the pupils in every planning phase. As an institutional figure, they operate as a mediator between the school, the institutions and the other agencies in the local area to promote the participation and active citizenship not only of the pupils but of the entire community around the theme of redesigning Ponticella Park, also developing widespread awareness of the environment as both material and immaterial heritage and as a context for promoting sustainability, thus bringing together the three dimensions promoted by the STEP Project. The teacher collects the working and final documentation of the STEP Project as documentary evidence of the Project and the identity and story of the class.

2.4 Children's role

The pupils actively participate in the proposed activity and show that they understand the changes in habits, traditions, buildings and monuments over time. They also recognise which places in the natural environment they feel most attached to, explaining and describing how these must be discovered, protected and promoted.

In the subsequent activity the children are informed about the Project, they formulate pertinent questions and actively participate in all phases of the activities relating to the interviews. They listen to the suggestions of the teachers closely and with interest, formulate and debate the interview questions in a large group creating a common schedule. From the interviews they take away useful elements for the subsequent activity.

During the final activity the pupils play a leading and active role: they formulate questions, express theories, identify resources and problems when realising the various Park redesign proposals and explore together the possibility of getting to know and interacting with the institutions and multiple agencies in the area: municipal services, Local Health Authorities, community centres, libraries and other schools belonging to the same district.

2.5 Example of material produced

During the trial various materials were produced including different types of drawings and maps, photos, videos, different types of texts, interviews and posters.

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

Methodology: brainstorming, discussion and reflection, group work, outings in the local area, observation and investigation, problem solving.

Tools and materials used; IWB, camera, measuring instruments, posters, audio recorder.

4. Potential/difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

First of all, the strong motivation of the class teacher involved in the Project is worthy of mention; she promoted the programme from the initial phase through to the involvement of the pupils, families, the local community of San Lazzaro di Savena and the municipal political institutions.

The Project was developed through a bottom-up process of identifying the research topic and implementing it in practice always as a work in progress. This made it possible to structure an educational programme actually implemented in the school and social community in which it would be carried out, contributing to expressing the theoretical values and ideals of Active Citizenship Education in everyday lives and contexts. The children were therefore given the chance

to learn and to be responsible and informed citizens - towards the community, heritage and the environment - in an original and not clichéd way.

Another significant and extremely effective element is the development of an Active Citizenship Education Project constructed in an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary way, not only because it involved the combination of different disciplinary content but also because this content was used to form an integrated 'meta' dimension of Social Harmony, Heritage and Sustainability Education.

4.2 Difficulties

One area of difficulty could be the development and maintenance of a constant collaboration and alliance with the local area. In fact, it is well documented that the task of Active Citizenship Education is not the exclusive responsibility of the school. However - probably because of the different timeframes that distinguish the administrative from the school sphere - the biggest problems could be in the area of interaction and dialogue with the municipal administration and the school's headteacher.

4.3 Possibilities

Finally, it seems appropriate to underline how this trial was organised through a didactic project in which Active Citizenship Education did not have a marginal or separate role but accompanied the teaching and the general training goals, significantly contributing to the inclusive and intercultural dimensions promoted and developed by the numerous projects offered and launched by the School and Local Area.

5. School - Territory Alliance

The teacher assumes the role of coordinator and mediator between the school and the other institutions. They promote the creation of a dialogue between the pupils, recognised as citizens, society and the local administrators.



FRANCE

ESPE - Aix-Marseille University

École élémentaire “A. Camus”, Arles

Project title: *Un colloque citoyen à l'école (A citizen conference at school)*

Thematic: Social Harmony, Heritage, Sustainability

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

Albert Camus Elementary School is located in the Trébon district of Arles. The school has 247 students. The school is engaged in a work of relation with the parents of pupils of the district. Generally speaking, pedagogical perspectives develop a committed work on the question of citizenship through territorialized social situations. Carine's class is part of this global school project which is compulsory for all schools in France.

1.2 Timeframe

The sequence was organized in 5 sessions for a total of 10 hours:

- Activity 1. First, a reinvestment of experiences in and on the world, class work carried out during school outings (1 hour)
- Activity 2. An awareness of the multiplicity of objects of study that contribute to the theme of citizenship (1 hour)
- Activity 3. An appropriation phase through group study work on selected themes (1 hour)
- Activity 4. Organization and preparation of the conference (1 hour)
- Activity 5. The outcome with the conference (from 9 am to 11:30 am and from 2 pm to 4:30 pm) (5 hours).

1.3 Teaching objectives

- Activity 1: The aim is to discover the many facets of the world to give meaning to school work. The content uses writing activities in terms of content and form. The students' writings are based on outings, experiences of interviews anchored in the social life of a territory. The tools combine on the one hand the learning of techniques (interview rules - rules of politeness, turn of speech), and on the other hand the contents of interviews based on testimonies and lived experiences. This memorized work constitutes a singular history of the class.
- Activity 2: The objective is to show that multiple possible objects define citizenship. This step is intended to trigger reflection from direct questions to students: “What is citizenship for you?”, “Did you say citizenship?”. It consists on listing a set of possible work objects, which define citizenship.

The objects that stand out are: selective sorting; renewable energies and the calculation of each student's energy footprint; knowing their territory; sustainable development, art and culture of the territory. During this phase and for each theme, a group chooses an object of study.

- Activity 3: This appropriation phase corresponds to a study work by teams of students. Each team works collectively on one of the selected study objects, with the aim of producing a power point that will support the collective presentation at Session 5. The guiding thread for the students' research work is a question: "What can I do to get involved in the environment as a citizen?".
- Activity 4: The organization and preparation of the conference itself. It is a question of organizing the morning that gives meaning to the whole activity: to think about the contents of the interventions, their form and the conditions of feasibility. The conditions for implementation pass through information addressed to the institution for security and hierarchy issues.
- Activity 5: It is the conference form (in the presence of the two invited researchers Michel Floro and Alain Legardez) which, by taking a conventional aspect, allows an exchange between the teacher and the pupils. The teacher creates a framework linked to the rules and codes and to the mode of presentation of the knowledge presented by associating the verbal and the non-verbal, the posture of presentation, the tools, etc. Exchange with the other students.

1.4 Group and Class Organization

The organization of the class varied over the sessions, depending on the objectives and activities planned:

- Activity 1 and 2: The activity is interactive with the class group. Ideas are exchanged and spread in the classroom. They're memorized.
- Activities 3 and 4: Group work on the questions posed in sessions 1 and 2.
- Activity 5. The session of the conference aims at a form of out-of-school work to get closer to a social format. Presentations are given in groups of 5 to 6 students. The turns of speech are fixed thanks to the stick of speech. Each team of students presents their intervention using a projected Power Point. The students face the rest of the class, the two researchers sit at the back, the teacher occupies the classroom space and monitors the speaking time.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Developed dimensions

The sequence described aims to work on active citizenship through territorialized social situations. It has three characteristics: it is rooted in the territory; it addresses the three themes of citizenship (living together, heritage, sustainable development); it calls for the transversality of knowledge.

2.2 Description of the type of activities

Activity 1. Pre-writing sessions

Pre-writing sessions are conducted in class through meetings and a writing committee with a delegate from each cycle 3 class. Writings have addressed the following questions: “Did you say citizenship?”; a set of themes deals with education for sustainable development, with “The tale of the carnival island”; a look at the school of the past and living together with the elders.

The pupils are already engaged in writing a small book, one chapter of which deals with a question of education for sustainable development and living together. Its writing is based on students’ experiences and interviews.

These interviews combine the learning of techniques (interview rules - rules of politeness, turn of speech), and content based on testimonies and experiences with the testimony of elders.

Activity 2. Work situations

Work situations are both non-formal and formal. There are the albums, such as “The tale of the carnival island”, the production of the poster for the neighborhood festival on the theme of solidarity, the invitation of former teachers, through a look at the school of the past and living together with the elders. They can also be formal.

Proposed texts address a language study competence relating to the Official National Education Bulletin of 2015 and a competence relating to one of the three fields of STEP (living together - Moral and Civic Education, Education for Sustainable Development - Sciences, Culture Heritage, Territory - Art History and Geography). The texts are proofread with the pupils who choose the vocabulary they wish to retain concerning the theme of the text. This vocabulary is classified in tables. A glossary of all the texts was then produced. This lexicon is remobilized in written productions.

Activity 3. Students construct their interventions

Students construct their intervention around the presentation to the class, teacher and potential guests, using a Power Point. The activity mobilizes all the information bases, digital tools, previous students’ work, albums already read, past films, etc. The objective refers to skills to build a personally concise, yet common and explicit discourse.

Activity 4. Feasibility of the conference project

The feasibility of the conference project depends on the inspector who can authorize or prohibit the arrival of guests. A letter was addressed to him and to the two researchers respecting the forms of politeness, but also the institutional forms which require to fix the date and the place. A program was sent to the guests - and each moment of the day was sequenced in time with a program.

Activity 5. Presentations

Each team of students presents their intervention using a projected Power Point. The speaking situations have two characteristics: they address issues that concern the daily life of the students and therefore engage them; then they are part of the Moral and Civic Education curriculum. The student who speaks is the speaker, this denomination gives him an indication of the meaning and responsibility in terms of knowing who engages him with his team.

2.3 Teacher's role

The teacher recalls the time, refocuses the debates and takes stock of the knowledge to be transmitted. It keeps the speaking time calm and balanced. He also asks questions that are sometimes “lively” and do not always have answers. Finally, he ensures that the expression often refers to specific technical terms.

The teacher-student interactions are based on the transmission by the students of the fruit of their work. It therefore encourages their expression and raises questions about the major themes addressed.

2.4 Children's role

It consists of being part of a long learning process to transmit; studying to bring knowledge to others. Students reflected on an issue and looked for information. They carried out preliminary study work to prepare presentations on a citizens' guiding theme: to know one's territory, one's resources to better commit oneself to the environment in the long term. This objective is achieved by involving students in the organization of a final session.

2.5 Examples of material produced

Activity 3. An example of slides presented by the natural energy group

Les éoliennes

- Il vaut mieux choisir les énergies renouvelables car elles ne polluent pas.
- Les avantages de l'éolienne : elle ne pollue pas
- Elle peut fournir l'électricité pour 4000 foyers.
- Voici l'éolienne que nous avons vu aux marais du Vigueirat.



Notre maquette d'éolienne

- Nous avons testé notre maquette d'éolienne dans la cour. Elle tourne et la lumière s'allume. Elle fabrique donc de l'électricité.



Activity 4. The invitation letter

We are the students of Mrs. Bert's CM2A class at Albert Camus School in Arles. We would like to invite you to a conference day: "I am committed to the environment" that we are organizing at our school on Tuesday 16 May 2017.

We ask you to accept, Mr Inspector, Distinguished Researchers, the expression of our profound respect.

The students in the CM2A class

The program of the conference

9am - Welcome
9.30 am - Conference: Preserving the richness of the Camargue territory
9.45 am - Conference: Being eco-responsible
10-10.30 am - Break
10.30-10.45 am - Conference: Respecting biodiversity: the example of local organic agriculture
10.45-11 am - Conference: Let's choose renewable energies
11.00-11.30 - Interview with researchers
Afternoon
14-15 pm - Debate on renewable energies
15-15.30pm - Break
15.30- 16.30 pm - Activities on Moral and Civic Education



3. Methodologies, tools and materials used

The material used: a Power Point with the presentation from the first slide of the student team as a whole. Each student / author exists as such, his name is registered.

For preliminary research, it is all modern communication media. Finally, the film of the presentations and speeches allows the students to see and get to know each other in situations. The teaching methods used vary according to the sessions.

4. Potential/difficulties

4.1 *Positive aspects of the sequence of activities*

The activities presented in this sheet have the advantage of being anchored in the territory, of crossing two themes of heritage / territory and sustainable development, of soliciting the transversality of knowledge, of mobilizing students based on a collective class experience, of clearly announcing a purpose that gives them meaning. The organization allows to develop a team work for a collective preparation, while leaving a freedom of choice in the objects of studies related to the topic

The speaking situations have two essential characteristics: they address questions that concern the daily life of the pupils and, from there, engage them; then they are part of the Moral and Civic Education curriculum.

Reflection leads to action. The students' answers to session 2 highlighted themes that refer to daily classroom actions; for example, for ESD, they focused on selective sorting and the installation of several bins: a garbage bin; a bin for plastics, cardboard and paper in the classroom; a sorting box for batteries. The knowledge worked has a territorial anchorage. They refer to a form of transversality based on the study of language and the citizen themes of living together, ESD, culture, heritage and territory.

The possible energy choices based on knowledge refer to everyday life. The work compares these various sources: wind turbines, photovoltaic solar panels that heat water and produce electricity. The children take the example of the photovoltaic solar panels and the wind turbine in the Vigueirat marshes where they went on school outings. The teacher helps to pose the problem which is in itself a knowledge. Not all students know what the carbon footprint is. The problem is posed, refers to another field of knowledge, that on energy.

4.2 *Difficulties*

The difficulties encountered are linked to the reluctance of colleagues or the inspector to organize the conference in Karine's class.

4.3 *Possibilities*

They derive from the relevance of the situation which requires learning about form and content.

Questions of form

The teacher's job is to teach students to listen to themselves at all times.

She must also look at the watch, because the concentration time is relatively short. Time management for these activities is essential.

Content issues.

In relation to the presentation, the specificities of the situation that require concision induce a temptation: for students to say too much.

Another essential task for the teacher is to regulate students' commitment and energy so that they can step back from the knowledge they have acquired

and are exposing.

Finally, the student listeners also have a work of questioning which cannot be carried out with interest without having prior knowledge on the exposed topic.

5. School - Territory alliance

The territorial dimension was taken into account through a series of preparatory studies and visits to certain sites. A body of knowledge is developed with reference to the local level and daily life.





École élémentaire “La Salle”, Bouc Bel Air, Bouches du Rhône
Project Title: *Le Conseil des délégués (The Delegates Council)*
Thematic: Social Harmony and Sustainability

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

La Salle School is directed by Jacques Bensakkoun, a member of the STEP team. It is a Public Elementary School of the Academy of Aix Marseille which has ten classes and 243 pupils.

School work is linked to extra-curricular activity times through several projects such as ESD (Education for Sustainable Development), English, or the “gnomon” project, which is the development of a school sundial associated with Spanish partners. Within the framework of ESD, the school has been involved in waste sorting in association with the Marseille community of municipalities for the past ten years (visit of the waste center at Arbois, Bronzo sorting center in Marseille, interventions in the school by trainers from the Centre Permanent pour l'Education à l'Environnement – CPIE once a year and per class).

Within the elementary school of Bouc Bel Air, a council of delegates is organized. It brings together two elected students per class who participate in delegate councils to address issues concerning the functioning of the school. These councils are held about 6 times a year. The rules of classroom and school life, canteen demands, and activities in the school playground are discussed. The gender distribution is balanced, there are as many girls as boys. There are 20 students for 6 classes.

1.2 Timeframe

The council of delegates is organized around several sessions (duration: 3 hours):

- Activity 1 before the councils (1 hour): Elections are organized in each class at the beginning of the year. The elected delegates will participate in the meetings organized in each class where the students of the class share with them the problems they face within the school or the proposals they wish to make.
- Activity 2 (1 hour): In each class of the school, a list of requests is sent by the students to their delegate who represents them.
- Activity 3 (1 hour): During the council itself, Jacques takes up the requests one by one and brings answers, the delegates being able to bring complements or suggestions.

1.3 Educational objectives

- Activity 1: Some questions about developing good living at school are asked, in order to allow the expression of students' needs and desires. In this situation, the organization is based on a school space dedicated to

delegates' meetings that functions as a commission. The aim is to involve students in the planning and redevelopment of school space. The goal is "that the children take possession of the school" as Jacques states (Focus Group of 16/01/2018). In this sense the school becomes a daily space where children have an opportunity for action.

- Activity 2: The aim is to organize a debate in each class on the transformations and improvements in the daily life of the school. Each class produces a list of requests for which the delegate is the bearer.
- Activity 3: The objective for delegates is threefold. First, it is a question of exposing the demands coming from their comrades; second, to become aware of the feasibility of these demands; third, to account for the use of what has been accepted or achieved. In this, action is linked to education for sustainable development.

1.4 Group and Class Organization

- Activities 1 and 2: Elections and meetings are held with the class group in the presence of the class teacher.
- Activity 3: Meetings are held with all 16 delegates. The director chairs; he has a list of requests on hand. There is sometimes a person in charge of the town hall according to the types of requests. The students sit in squares to present the demands.



2. Specific them-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

In the Primary School of Bouc Bel Air a Delegate Council has been organized. It has two students who were elected in each class and they participate to the Delegate Councils to face school's problems. These Councils are held six times per year. Classroom and school rules, school canteen needs and recess games are discussed. There are the same number of girls and boys. There are 20 students from 6 classrooms.

2.2 Description of the types of activities

Activity 1. The election.

These are elections in which student volunteers who show that they are aware of the task ahead of them: carrying the demands of their classmates and representing them.

Activity 2. Student consultation.

The students are consulted in their class, they can give their opinion, propose suggestions and explain their complaints. They are represented by the delegates, authorized to carry the word of their comrades. For Jacques, the way of considering the request is more important than what is said: "If the request is admissible even if there is a disagreement (related to feasibility) it must be done" (Focus Group of 16/01/2018). The delegates summarize the requests by class. They record these requests in a document which is then communicated to the director of the school as facilitator and chair of the council of delegates.

Activity 3. Teacher-student interactions.

Discussions between teacher and students are based on formal rules: you have to lift your finger to speak. Each delegate makes his or her remarks and suggestions, evokes the disagreements about the class, the canteen, the playground, the teacher... If the preparatory work on requests is of great importance, the work that check up on the acquisitions is just as important because it highlights their management and their real usefulness. Students explain the reason for the proposals, record refusals, discuss redevelopments, and report on the maintenance and use of what has been done.

2.3 Teacher's role

The teacher's commitment aims at reciprocity. The delegates' meeting is based on the principle of reality as constraint and as law. If the final decision is made by the teacher, it is justified by an objective reality represented by the presence of the deputy mayor during discussions, cost, safety etc... "All requests were accepted, except mirrors in the WC for a matter of standards and cost. But there was the layout of the playground with hopscotch, areas reserved for certain games... skipping ropes, a reading corner in the courtyard." (Focus Group of 16/01/2018).

Activity 1: Director Jacques B. organizes the elections in the classes

Activity 2: The director notes the requests of the classes and anticipates the delegates' meeting. For example, he invites a municipal official if the request concerns school facilities.

Activity 3: the director chairs the meeting and reviews with the students what is possible, authorized, prohibited and dangerous.

2.4 Children's role

Activity 1: Delegates make a commitment by running for election.

Activity 2: They record and discuss their classmates' proposals in each class.
 Activity 3: They make the connection. They broadcast the proposals, the decisions made, concerning the spaces for example the "corner to draw", the "friendship bench", the corners to play with the foam ball etc. But they must also take into account the opinions of the parents of students noted during the school council, and report on the use, management and maintenance of equipment already acquired. A first step towards a form of representative democracy.

2.5 Examples of material produced:

The productions are of material nature with facilities within the school:

- Installation of a basketball sign,
- of football cages, ...

... or of a non-material nature which affects the functioning of the school as..:

- the use of game cards (Pokémon or Star Wars cards) during playtime,
- the realization of hopscotch,
- the reservation of the yard lawn for quiet games.

Example of themes addressed within the framework of the councils of delegates, in partnership with the territory

Themes	Partnerships
Paper and packaging recycling,	Membership of the municipal staff of Bouc Bel Air
Food waste in the canteen	
Two vermicomposters	

The alliance between school and territory promotes engaging situations. Some form of power is transferred to students as "school citizens" through delegate councils.

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

- Election materials (session 1)
- List of requests (session 2)
- List of requests and assessment of past actions (session 3)

On the pedagogical level, the sessions are based on discussions between teacher and students.

4. Potential/Difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

The contents and fields of knowledge mobilized around heritage and territory

dimension are addressed in terms of local knowledge, which enables children to become aware of their environment and to acquire knowledge.

4.2 Difficulties

The feasibility of the actions often depends on the parents who finance certain projects; on the involvement of the local authorities and the town hall in particular, as owners of the schools through their material and financial support. As a result, the financing of actions remains fragile.

The passage from speech to action presents another difficulty, because it assumes that the town hall plays the game and agrees to make the possible and requested adjustments.

4.3 Possibilities

Moving from words to action could be improved by giving students more autonomy and responsibility in the decisions taken.

5. Alleanza tra Scuola e Territorio

The territorial dimension has been taken into account. It is at the same time an object of work, because the school territory is rethought adapted, arranged according to students' requests; it is also a means of regulating action, because it is the municipal institution for example which gives the criteria of feasibility. This work also allows parents to be involved in the implementation of projects.



SPAIN

University of Seville

Infant and Primary Education Centre (CEIP) “Príncipe de Asturias”, Seville

Project title: *Vivimos con nuestros mayores (We live with our elders)*

Thematic: Social Harmony, Heritage

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

The Infant and Primary Education Centre (CEIP) “Príncipe de Asturias” is located in the Torreblanca neighbourhood of Seville (<https://goo.gl/maps/cTPVfD9uTW22>) (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Aerial and lateral view of the CEIP “Príncipe de Asturias”.

This neighbourhood is located in the eastern area of Seville, bordered to the south by the municipality of Alcalá de Guadaíra and the Cerro-Amate district of Seville; to the east by the municipality of Carmona; to the north by the municipality of La Rinconada and the northern district of Seville; and to the west by the district of San Pablo-Santa Justa in Seville. Torreblanca is a neighbourhood with significant socio-economic transformation and social intervention needs, as it is located on the city’s outskirts and surrounded by a multitude of industrial areas that isolate it from the city itself.

Because of its socio-cultural characteristics, the CEIP “Príncipe de Asturias” (<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/averroes/centros-tic/41009548/helvia/sitio/#>) is included in a compensatory zone project. Families tend to support the initiatives and guidance of the teachers, although we find an important part of them that maintain a low level of expectations or an insufficient involvement with the education of their children. These cases, moreover, usually involve students who need more educational attention.

In this context, a didactic proposal has been designed with reference to the intergenerational relationships between Primary Education students and their grandparents (elderly people), who care for their grandsons. The project aims to carry out a study of the personal and social problems of the elderly people in the neighbourhood in several aspects: statistics, specific characteristics and needs, services for care at present and throughout history. To this end, various sources are consulted and the results are communicated, with the aim of carrying out actions aimed at improving the problem posed.

1.2 Timeframe

The didactic proposal that has been carried out is called *We live with our elders* and has had a total duration of 10 weeks, during which a total of 20 working sessions have been put into practice, including outings and didactic itineraries outside the school.

Here is a sequence of six activities that constitute one of the proposal's work blocks. They have been developed over 3 sessions of one and a half hours on April 18, 19 and 20, 2018.

- *Introduction to funeral rites (45 minutes).*
- *Identification of several funeral rites (45 minutes).*
- *Geographical location of funeral rites and cultures (30 minutes).*
- *Experiences of death in different cultures (60 minutes).*
- *Beliefs, myths and legends about death (60 minutes).*
- *Discussion and conclusions (30 minutes).*

1.3 Teaching objectives

The project *We live with our elders* is structured in 5 blocks of contents and problems, which are worked on in three levels of progressive deepening: a "descriptive" level, an "analytical" level and a level considered as "complex". The activities here presented are part of content block 5. The objectives to be pursued are the followings:

- Know the funerary rites in several cultures, to have a more global and deep knowledge of the different cultures that coexist in the neighbourhood.
- Know how to use a geographical map to locate countries in it.
- Develop students' reading and writing skills through different texts.
- Value and respect the opinions of peers using disagreement as a principle that is part of the coexistence and diversity of groups.

1.4 Group and classroom organization

The class, with 25 students, 10 girls and 15 boys (11-12 years), from 6th grade of Primary Education, worked mainly in groups of 5 students. For some activities, they have been grouped in different ways, such as in "circle" for general sharing and discussion (Figures 2 and 3).



Figure 2. Teacher explaining.



Figure 3. Discussion and general sharing activity.

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

The project addresses, through its 5 blocks, various issues related to the intergenerational relationships of students and the elderly people. These work blocks are:

1. *What elderly people do you know?*
2. *How do they live? Who do they live with? Who takes care of them? Why do nursing homes exist?*
3. *How do you feel with them? How do you think they feel with you?*
4. *What do you do with them?*
5. *How did you live death and how would you like to live it?*

Block 5 - here presented - relates to the death of elderly people and education for death. This issue has been addressed in different cultures and times, as well as the different funeral rites that each of these cultures have. One of the problems worked out in this block 5 is: "How is death represented in different cultures? This is integrated with the rest of the didactic sequence, due to, in order to favour the intergenerational relations that take place in the neighbourhood, we focus on issues that affect not only the quality of life of the elderly, but also what happens once these people die. All these problems are not usually worked on in the classroom, even though they are very important in relation to education to live in society.

2.1 Dimensions developed

In the sequence of activities presented, one of the three dimensions contemplated in the STEP Project, civil coexistence, and, to a lesser extent, the other two dimensions, environment and sustainability and heritage are developed".

2.2 Description of the type of activities

The didactic sequence presented consists of 6 different activities, which are described below.

Activity 1. Introduction to funeral rites

This initial activity consists fundamentally of the teacher's explanation of various funeral rites that have been carried out throughout history in very diverse cultures, such as the Buddhist Rite, the Christian Rite or the Hindu Rite. During the explanation, images of the different rites are shown and doubts that the students have about them are resolved. Some of the questions raised by the students are noted on the blackboard, to be noted down and dealt with again later.

Activity 2. Identification of several funeral rites

This second activity is carried out just after the previous one and is included in the "workbook" (listed as 5.1), material that has been generated for the development of this didactic proposal. It shows new photographs of different funeral rites related to those previously explained. Students must indicate which image represents each of the funeral rites. Six images corresponding to six different rites are presented, namely: the Celestial Burial; the Jazz Funeral; the Hanging Coffins; the Carnival of the Cows; the Cremation of the Bull; and the Fantasy Coffins. The aim of this activity is to check whether the students have significantly understood the previous explanation by relating the new situations (through the images) with those described above. Conceptual and procedural contents are worked on, as they must observe, identify and classify the different images in order to assign them to the different cultures (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Extract from Activity 5.1 of the "workbook".

Activity 3. Geographical location of funerary rites and cultures

In the second work session, students should situate geographically the rites they worked on in the previous session on a world map. In this activity, the geographical location of the funeral rites should be placed on the world map by discussing, in small groups, all the information they have about the different countries in which the rites have been placed. In this way, it is intended to review what was previously worked on and to show the previous knowledge they have of different countries, thus adding contents from the areas of geography and history to the contents of education for citizenship, as well as issues of heritage (symbolic-identity elements) (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Extract from Activity 5.2 of the “workbook”.

Activity 4. Experiences of death in different cultures

In this activity, the students read several excerpts of text explaining what different funeral rites consist of. Afterwards, they should discuss in a small group what they think and what their personal opinion of each rite is, in comparison with life experiences they have had about the death of a relative or a person in their immediate environment. This activity aims to develop empathy and appreciation of the traditions of other cultures, thus developing more attitudinal content, encouraging the acceptance of people and their customs, regardless of their origins.

Activity 5. Beliefs, myths and legends about death

In this activity, students are asked to read various statements about death and to assess the veracity of its content, sharing their thoughts on each statement (Figure 6). They are also encouraged to add some more myths to the list. The aim of this activity is that the students show their thoughts on some of the legends and myths that revolve around death. It is also intended, in a certain way, to demystify a subject that is part of our life experience but that in general lines is loaded with taboos and mysticism, not addressing it in a direct and

habitual way, as other issues present in our development as living beings. This activity is accompanied by a small glossary of terms related to death, the meaning of which is not always clear to students.

INVESTIGANDO CÓMO VIVIMOS CON NUESTROS MAYORES

¿CÓMO VIVIMOS LA MUERTE?

5.4 Lee las afirmaciones sobre la muerte y valora la veracidad de su contenido. Puedes añadir algún mito más a la lista. Puntúa qué piensas de cada afirmación.

CAZANDO MITOS SOBRE LA MUERTE

	1. IMPOSIBLE	2. TENGO DUDAS	3. PODRÍA PASAR	4. TOTALMENTE CIERTO	1	2	3	4
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
G								
H								
I								
J								
K								
L								
M								
N								
Ñ								

GLOSARIO:

MUERTE: Cesación o término de la vida.

DUERO: Demostraciones que se hacen para manifestar el sentimiento que se tiene por la muerte de alguien.

SUFIMIENTO: Padecimiento, dolor, pena con que se sufre algo.

DOLOR: Sentimiento de pena y congoja por causa física o emocional.

RESUCITACIÓN: Acción de volver a la vida, con manobras y medios adecuados, a los seres vivos en estado de muerte aparente.

DUERO: Proceso de elaboración y aceptación de la pérdida.

Figure 6. Extract from Activity 5.4 of the “workbook”.

Activity 6. Discussion and conclusions

In this activity, students are asked to express their personal conclusions to the group and to calculate the average of the scores obtained in their answers, so that they can finally compare them with the rest of their classmates. The aim of this activity is to generate a debate on the subject under discussion. In this way, questions of otherness and assertiveness are addressed. In addition, the previous activity is continued with regard to the demystification of the taboos related to death and mathematical contents are worked out (Figure 7).

5.5 Expresa las conclusiones de tu clase hallando la media de las respuestas. Compara tus ideas iniciales con las del grupo y busca información en caso de duda.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	Ñ

Figure 7. Extract from Activity 5.5 of the “workbook”.

2.3 Teacher's role

In this sequence of project activities, in particular, the role of the teacher has focused on presenting and directing the activities carried out, adopting a role closer to the traditional role, although promoting debate and student participation. This approach was required by the characteristics of these activities. In any case, during the course of the project, the teacher adopted different roles depending on the activities carried out.

2.4 Children's role

The level of participation of the students has changed throughout the learning process, having been informed about the project in progress, consulted about it during the course of the intervention and taking into account the proposals made by them about the functioning of the project. This allowed them to carry out citizenship actions autonomously, depending on the activities carried out, both in small and large groups.

2.5 Examples of material produced

Work material has been developed for the students, specifically a workbook and a booklet for field outing to a nursing home (Figure 8).



Figura 8. Estratto dell'attività 5.9 del "quadernino degli studenti".

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

In these activities, a methodology of a transmitting nature is shown, with participation of the students in debates and group interactions. Based on the teacher's explanation or the reading of texts, the students carry out different types of activities. The student's workbook (as a substitute for the textbook), photographs and maps of the world have been used as tools.

4. Potential/Difficulties

4.1 *Positive aspects of the sequence of activities*

Among the positive aspects of the sequence of activities presented we must emphasize the approach that the students make to other cultures and other funeral rites that are practiced on the planet, different from those of their own culture, which enriches them as individuals and citizens, promoting values such as tolerance and respect, and also empathy.

4.2 *Difficulties*

The most common difficulties that teachers may find in the transition from one perspective to another may be organisational or experiential. Thus, difficulties may be founded related to the school space and furniture organisation, which may favour or hinder collaborative learning. Another difficulty can be the experience of the teacher in dealing with issues of different levels of depth, as in many cases there is a lack of training on the subject. The classroom routines also play a role, which often do not allow for a complex approach to the issues. It is also difficult to coordinate with other territorial institutions, especially since the times and spaces they use are very different from those of the school.

4.3 *Possibilities*

These activities are developed, above all, with a descriptive approach, as they present, narrate and detail different situations. From here on, other activities can be developed that focus more on analysis (analytical level) and on a systematic understanding of reality (complex level). Thus, for example, first of all, a brainstorming session in class on the funeral rites they know and their origin could be held. In this way we would investigate the initial conceptions of the students. We could then ask them to do some research on this issue in the library, so that they can become familiar with the subject from theoretical texts. They could also be asked to work on the problem at home with the family's help to bring into the classroom what they have learned. This would also involve the family in the teaching-learning process. In class, there will be a sharing of the rites that the students have worked on, and a debate will be held on what they consist of, where they come from and what appraisal they make of them. The debate will also deal with the death of a loved one and the experience of their funeral.

5. School – Territory alliance

The design of the project has involved the New Health Foundation (<http://www.newhealthfoundation.org/>), a non-profit institution dedicated to the observation and optimization of health, social care and family support systems. This Foundation, which was already working with the school, joined the project, carrying out a series of activities related to people's feelings at the time of death.

Also, with the project underway, the students expressed their interest in having a member of the medical community from the neighbourhood come and talk to them about the most common illnesses of the elderly. Both expectations were met with discussion activities by the doctor and a visit to the nursing home.



SWITZERLAND

Teaching and Learning Department _ University of Applied Sciences
and Art of Southern Switzerland

Primary School Melano

Project title: *Dall'acqua ai fossili (From water...to fossils)*

Thematic: Heritage, Environment, Territory

Scuola universitaria professionale
della Svizzera italiana

SUPSI

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

Melano is a municipality near the city of Lugano, on the slopes of Mount Generoso. Because of its position on the shores of Lake Lugano, in the past it was a busy harbour. Nowadays, Melano has 1446 residents (as per December 31st, 2017) and covers a surface of 470 hectares (70% of which are woodland). The municipality's longstanding energy-efficient policies have earned it the label 'Città dell'energia®', awarded by the Swiss Energy Program - a government body which recognizes the efforts of those municipalities which implement pioneering energy policies in order to lower energy consumption and CO2 emissions (<http://www.melano.ch/index.php?node=424&lng=1&rif=237bcae82b>).

Furthermore, Melano is very close to Mount San Giorgio, part of the UNESCO World Heritage and the best fossil record of marine life from the Triassic Period (245–230 million years ago). Because the lagoon was near land, the remains also include land-based fossils of reptiles, insects and plants, resulting in an extremely rich source of fossils.

The children from the neighbouring municipality of Maroggia also attend Melano's primary school. There are mixed-age groups for ages 6 and 7, and non mixed-age groups for older children (8 to 10 years of age). Most groups are managed by two part-time teachers. Two teachers of the oldest children (Year 5) took part in the experiment, which was managed and designed by a DFA team: the educational headperson, the chief inspector and a researcher. We're now going to discuss the learning unit "From water to fossils".

Following the recommendation of the cantonal department for Education, the aim of the project was to complement a series of lessons the children had been taught in Year 3. The original lessons were conceived as an explanation

of the earthquake that had struck central Italy at the time, and the idea was to use that subject as a starting point to teach the children about the Big Bang, how the Earth was born, the different kinds of geological strata, and finally the importance of water and how it sustains life in its every form.

This interdisciplinary approach was further enriched by listening to the children's questions and including subjects that piqued their interest, as well as by a special focus on the nearby municipality of Melide. The main reason for this is that the school is located in a unique geological area, which includes the recently renovated fossil museum of Meride and the former breccia quarry in Arzo.

1.2 Timeframe

3 month.

1.3 Teaching objectives

Development of an interdisciplinary project (science, history, geology and paleontology) with the goal of promoting a better knowledge of the region we live in and particularly the Mount San Giorgio fossils (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Areas of competences and processes involved

- to investigate;
- to orientate in space and time (via time line);
- to analyze;
- to design;
- linguistic skills related to writing;
- collaborative competence in group works with peers (recognition of the partner respecting ideas and proposals different from their own).

Knowledge goals and skills

KNOWLEDGE

- To know the process that characterizes the fossil.
- To understand the composition of the rocks of Monte San Giorgio, observe and understand why there are fossils related to water.
- To classify the main fossils, understand the training processes and georeferenced them on the map.
- To know the main geographical aspects of the area.
- To perform simple calculations related to geological eras
- To use scientific terminology and an appropriate vocabulary.

SKILLS

- To collect significant materials with respect to the phenomenon being investigated.
- To understand, summarize and produce relevant and clear scientific texts.
- To listen, share and respect the ideas of the peers for a good collaboration.
- To recognize the source of new knowledge in the words of others;

- To train your mind and imagination to change your point of view, thus favoring greater flexibility, enriching creative, thoughtful and critical thinking.
- To respect rules, needs, diversity and feelings of others in structured situations.

1.4 Group and classroom organization

The school activity starts with presenting the children with a ‘mystery’ situation which makes them want to learn more about a specific subject. The teacher shows the class a sealed box, claiming she only just found it buried in one of the school’s lockers. She then asks the children what should be done with it. Inside the box are several vegetal and animal fossils.

Various hypotheses are put forward; the children are then encouraged to start on an educational journey whose aim is to deepen their knowledge of the fossils they’re handling.

In this way, the teacher has an opportunity to follow up on previous history and geography lessons by exploring the distant past of the region the children live in.

Furthermore, the children are asked to carry out specific tasks; among them are activities designed to promote their problem solving and critical thinking skills.

This is a subject that allows for several school activities in various fields, chief among them reading skills, how to write and summarize texts, timelines, geography, geology and history. Moreover, the children can improve their social skills, such as teamwork and mutual respect.

The end of the the project is marked by the creation of a booklet containing all the data gathered by the children. This text includes various ways to convey information (such as drawings, timelines and subject-specific lexical).

2. Specific theme-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

The learning unit’s main focus is to further knowledge of the local heritage, and particularly of the geological landscape and the fossils in the area surrounding the school (namely, how and why those fossils were formed).

2.2 Description of the type of activities

Activity 1. Mapping the students’ knowledge / beliefs / misconceptions and models before undertaking a detailed study

Every pupil is given a piece of paper and asked to answer the following questions: ‘What is a fossil? How do you think fossils came to be? What are they made out of?’

The teachers choose not to give an immediate answer, collecting instead the pupils’ theories and ideas.

Duration: 1 hour

Activity 2. General reflections and hypotheses on the localization of the

phenomenon in time and space

Next, there is a second series of open questions, such as: 'Do we have any fossils in our region? Where? Why? What happened? When?'

The teacher encourages brainstorming discussions, and the pupils contribute with their own personal hypotheses and knowledge.

Next, the subject of the Tethys Ocean is introduced - a body of water which once covered the entire region. This provides the opportunity to connect this new subject with matters explored over the course of previous science lessons, such as sedimentation and how the pressure of the African continent formed the Alps.

Duration: 3 hours

Activity 3. Experimentation on the formation of fossils

Where can we find fossils? Hypotheses are offered, and theories fleshed out. This is the moment to mention sand stratification and how rocks slowly decomposed in the Pangea period. There is a map detailing how the Tethys sea covered the entire Mendrisiotto region; the teacher explains what equatorial temperatures are.

By using an aquarium, the class recreates the stratification process as it happens naturally over centuries. The sedimentation is simulated with sand, dirt, pebbles, rocks and aquatic organisms. A plastic ammonite is buried in sediment strata. This allows for a clear visualization of how pressure, warmth and time will lead to the creation of a fossil imprint.

At the end of the experiment, a real ammonite (previously hidden by the palaeontologist) is fished out of the water. The children can now interact with a real fossil after they observed every phase of its creation through the aquarium simulation.

Duration: 6 hours

Activity 4. Experimentation of the corrugation that occurred thanks to the thrusts from the tectonic plates

"Why did we find fossils in Mount San Giorgio? How could they get there?"

Brief discussion and collection of hypothesis. Then, the students stare at the dynamic model that explain the fossilization and stratification process.

Duration: 6 hours

This educational project hinges on a descriptive perspective; during the various learning units, the children's initial ideas are tested and their veracity and accuracy are discussed with classmates or with the rest of the class. It is important to encourage pupils to say what they think and to give value to their opinions.

2.3 Teacher's role

Activity 1. The teachers are careful to ask open questions so as to hear the pupils' ideas and initial knowledge of fossils. All the answers are collected but not immediately discussed.

Activity 2. Through a brainstorming activity, the class discusses these ideas as a whole, and most particularly the presence of fossils near the school grounds and where they come from. Every pupil is encouraged to give his or her opinion, and individual contributions are rewarded by being turned into a source of new questions and discussions.

Activity 3. The activities are mostly led by the teachers or by an external expert (in this case, the palaeontologist), who further a specific aspect of the subject at hand by carrying out practical experiments on geological strata and fossils. The pupils have the opportunity to work both with primary (fossils, rocks etc) and secondary (atlases, textbooks etc) sources.

Activity 4. The teachers, alone or with the support of the paleontologist, carry out a series of activities to demonstrate and explain how fossils are formed and how the stratification process works.

The teachers also take on the role of facilitating the discussion among pupils so that everyone has a chance at voicing their opinions on how the fossils came to be on the Mount St Giorgio.

2.4 Children's role

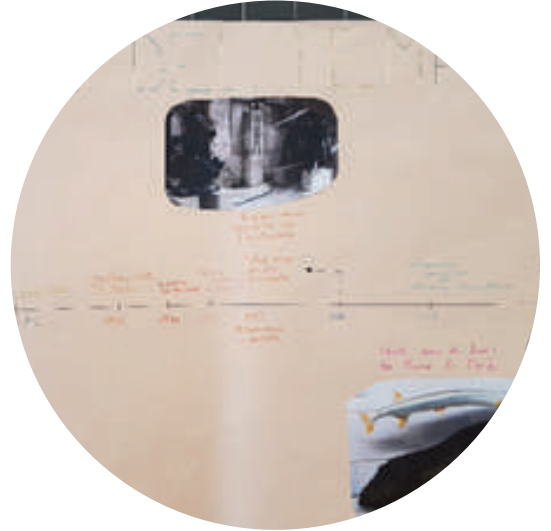
Activity 1. The children work independently; they provide an individual answer of what they think fossils are and how they came to be.

Activity 2. During the brainstorming sessions, every pupil is encouraged to actively take part to the lesson by volunteering his or her ideas.

Activity 3. The pupils are asked to observe the various phenomena, formulate relevant hypotheses and write them down as short texts. These activities are complemented with practice-oriented presentations carried out either by the teachers or by the palaeontologist; the pupils, however, take on a central role because the entire experience is about their personal development and how they can shape and use their own knowledge and identities. For this very reasons, the pupils are encouraged to look at previously known facts from new perspectives and focus instead on logical arguments. It is thanks to those arguments that they're then able to engage in critical thinking and recognize other points of view as legitimate and worthy of respect.

Activity 4. The teachers, or the palaeontologist, present some themes or make demonstrations during which the students are asked to observe, to formulate hypotheses, to write scientific texts. The role of the child is central because the activities aim at the personal and conscious development of the personal identity and of one's own knowledge. To do this it is called to distance itself from facts and information, as well as from its actions and to resort to logical arguments through the formulation of hypotheses and reflection on the same in the exercise of personal reflection practice but also in recognizing legitimacy to the different points of view.

2.5 Example of material produced



Secondo me i fossili sono animali intrappolati
nella roccia, poi la roccia prende la sua forma
e diventa un fossile

non giurerei che ho davvero approfondito
l'argomento, scoprendo che si formano
i fossili tutti da non milioni
di anni, ma da non mesi
di fossili, allora mi sono dato da fare
di Monte San Giorgio, un posto
stupendo che tutti hanno visto
in un'ora di tempo.
Come mai il mare non copre il
monte e non ci sono
di fossili, allora mi sono dato da fare
di Monte San Giorgio, un posto
stupendo che tutti hanno visto
in un'ora di tempo.
Come mai il mare non copre il
monte e non ci sono
di fossili, allora mi sono dato da fare
di Monte San Giorgio, un posto
stupendo che tutti hanno visto
in un'ora di tempo.

As the various phases of the project are implemented, the pupils' initial hypotheses are then furthered and developed.

3. Methodology, tools and materials used

As a first step, the project focuses on the pupils' individual opinions and on their discussions as a group. A brainstorming activity allows to pool the class' knowledge and expose preconceptions about fossils. In a second moment, the pupils undertake a series of activities that lead them to gain more knowledge on the subject through group discussions and directly observable experiments and phenomena.

The paleontologist had a central role: she explained the fossilization and stratification process with the help of authentic materials and dynamic models (chief among them: dedicated notebooks and an aquarium containing water, sand, dirt, rocks and aquatic organisms). The idea was to recreate a visually striking and accurate model of how different materials form sedimented strata over the centuries and how rocks collide under the pressure of tectonic plates. The pupils also watched videos about reptiles' fossils.

During their field trip, the pupils had the opportunity to experience first hand how different geographical and physical phenomena interact with one another. After a classroom-based lesson on Alpine orogeny, they carried out scientific experiments on site (namely, the analysis of limestone, asphalt rock and clay).

4. Potential/Difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

The entire educational process was framed by a skills based learning program hinging on three key points: identifying the problem (problem framing); training (skills practice); presenting a conclusion (in the form of a CD summarizing the different discoveries).

Because she managed to pique the pupils' interest through the use of relevant examples and authentic material, the inclusion of an external expert (the palaeontologist) proved to be an essential part of the first two key points (problem framing and skills practice).

4.2 Difficulties

Field trips and experiments involving authentic and sometimes fragile materials can present important challenges, especially when there are many children in the class. An interesting strategy is to separate the class into two groups of twelve children each. Unfortunately, however, this requires resources that are not necessarily available to all teachers.

4.3 Possibilities

In applying this model to the project at hand, the choice was made to make the shift from a purely descriptive to a more analytical approach, for instance by encouraging the pupils to touch, explore and study actual fossils and other materials. Because of this, the pupils carried out individual researches and

classification models of the fossils they interacted with.

Furthermore, the pupils were able to observe different kinds of rocks during a field trip to the fossil museum and the former breccia quarries of the Mara Valley. By experiencing the orogenic phenomena and their impact on the landscape close-up, the children learned how to read that landscape in a systemic way, as well as how to spot the connection between the various parts of the geological structure. Physical geography (namely, orogenesis and fossil formation) is considered in its long-term effects against the backdrop of the shorter times of human geography (namely, the exploitation of natural resources and the rediscovery of our shared heritage). The analysis of the familiar region of Mount San Giorgio under this specific light led to a new understanding of this UNESCO site and its unique heritage.

5. School – Territory alliance

The teachers made contact with an external expert (the paleontologist, who also works as a guide on Mount San Giorgio), who then recommended a tangible, geographically-relevant experience. The details were worked out as a team, but the activities were mostly led by the expert herself.

The field trip, realized thanks to an ongoing collaboration with both the museum and the quarry, was also a very valuable experience.

Finally, we would like to underscore how the school staff managed to forge a precious and formative connection with non-school entities. This allowed not only for a more meaningful experience, but also for an excellent use of local resources.



Scuola universitaria professionale
della Svizzera italiana

SUPSI

Primary School Coldrerio

Project title: *Coldrerio suona (Coldrerio sounds)*

Thematic: Heritage

1. Description of the case study context

1.1 Context

The municipality of Coldrerio (TI) is in Mendrisiotto, the southernmost region of Ticino. Its area is comprised of 246 hectares (woodland: 47 ha; fields: 32 ha; grasslands and pastures: 92 ha; streets and roads: 18 ha; residential zones: 56 ha). There are 2960 residents. The school, which is located in the very centre of the town, next to City Hall, has an important role to play, not only from an educational point of view but also for the population as a whole. The teachers regularly organize activities with the aim of making the most of the local sights, and these will generally include the entire community.

Coldrerio's primary school works very closely with the rest of the educational community. Two teachers, the DFA's educational headperson and a DFA

researcher took part in this activity.

The Year 3 children (aged 8 to 9) took part in one of the projects, 'Coldrerio's voices', whose aim was to rediscover the past of the village and the traditional way of life with the help of an acoustic journey. The starting point was a story; the pupils were encouraged to read it, understand its context and interpret the environment around them.

Nowadays, our region is suffering from major noise and air pollution issues. These phenomena are mostly caused by the heavy traffic, which can be very nearly unbearable at rush hour.

In the past, however, things were very different. Coldrerio used to be very quiet - a residential unit formed by two smaller villages (Villa and Castello) surrounded by open country. People would work in the fields from dawn to dusk; life followed the rhythm of the sun and the passing of the seasons. Religious and civic life was set by the church bells. The only other sounds one could hear were the sounds of nature and those of traditional country life: neighing horses and creaking carts. The children, who were still free to roam the streets, would shriek with delight during their games, and the patrons of the town's two inns (Osteria del Turo and Osteria della Pia) would chat loudly with one another. In the mornings, one could see a row of full grappa glasses on the windowsills of the Osteria della Pia - the innkeeper would leave them out so the men could have a drink before toiling all morning in the fields.

1.2 Timeframe

6 month.

1.3 Teaching objectives

The following page shows the table with the summary of skills that the course intends to develop:

Investigate	To understand and vocalize one's needs and feelings / to examine both one's own experiences, and other people's / to observe reality in a truly systematic way / to explore different phenomena from a historical and geographical point of view / to read the landscape so as to understand the organization of society and the differences and similarities between past and present.
Orient yourself in space and time	To find one's bearings with the help of maps and other instruments of spatial reconnaissance. / to use a coherent spatial language to parse various visual and acoustical sources; how to sketch maps and plan trips. / to recognize the natural temporal cycles and connect them to the social time and the rhythms of society. / to understand time is a universal data and its role in shaping society. / to use temporal markers (years, centuries, millennia) as tools to read the past. / to draw a timeline of historical events.
Analyze	To analyse the natural origins and transformations undertaken by those fundamental resources which are key to human survival and development (water, food, energy, raw materials etc). / to tell apart natural and artificial sounds. / to understand that human beings need to adapt to a natural environment that may not bend to their will.
Modeling	To identify living organisms' fundamental needs in their natural environment. / to visualize the social and geographical organization of a neighbourhood or a city of the past or the present.
Communicate	to represent the observation of natural and artificial environment. / to identify and use multimedia tools to put together and effective presentation. / to summarize, ask questions, commend and give one's opinion on someone else's work.
Design	To formulate and defend an opinion about a personal experience. / to assume an active role in the classroom; to develop one's communication skills and creativity during group projects. / to plan and put into effect prosocial behaviours; how to be respectful - of oneself, of others, and of the environment.

1.4 Group and classroom organization

The goal is to encourage the pupils to be curious about their local history, environment and traditions. By observing and exploring natural phenomena, the pupils can infer roles (of people) and functions (of objects, tools and buildings). Activities can be carried out with the whole class (for instance, storytelling) or with groups of students; furthermore, they can take place both in the classroom and outside (in this case, in the town of Coldrerio). The teachers use tools (such as Zoom recorders or the software Audacity) to analyse, classify, record and shape the materials in a creative way.

2. Specific them-oriented activities

2.1 Dimensions developed

The main goal of this educational project is that of studying and giving new value to the traditional heritage, with a particular focus to local history. Thanks to the characteristic sounds the town used to resonate with (in all their social and economic difference), the teachers create a bridge between the past and current reality, the one the children experience every day.

2.2 Description of the type of activity

Activity 1. Listening to a privileged witness: Michele's great-grandfather

The story the teachers tell the children, and which constitutes the project's starting point, is centered around a fictional child, Michele.

Michele visits his great-grandfather, a citizen of Coldrerio who is now living 50 km away, in a retirement home in Bellinzona.

The old man tells Michele about his childhood, and how after the end of the afternoon lessons he liked to play in the streets with his friends. They had formed a band and built a hut in a secret location. There, with great care, they'd buried a treasure in a tin box. Michele is fascinated by this tale; he'd love to visit those places and find the buried treasure. He asks question after question, but the old man is confused by the changes undergone by Coldrerio over the decades and doesn't know how to answer. It's been years since he's visited the town; all he remembers are the sounds he could hear from the hut. Duration: 4 hours

Activity 2. From sounds to images of the past

Every child is given the following text: "Dear Year 3 pupils of Coldrerio's primary school, we work for the local television company and we would like to film a documentary about our Canton's past. We collected several old pictures and recordings, but since we do not know your town, we can't place them. Can you help us? We would like you to find those locations and snap a current shot of what they look like today, as well as record the sounds you can hear there. Please let us know if you succeed!" This is how the pupils start working and

collecting materials for a documentary about 1970s' Coldrerio.

Duration: 8 hours

Activity 3. Looking for Coldrerio's sounds

Once every vintage photograph has been successfully matched to a sound, the children need to find where the picture was taken, go to that place and 1) snap a picture of the exact same location and 2) record any sound they hear there.

Duration: 8 hours

2.3 Teacher's role

Activity 1. The teacher tells the story of Michele and then reads a list of those sounds to the pupils:

"I heard the voices and laughter of the washerwomen, the rustle of clothes, the constant, pleasing sound of running water, the noise of branches and leaves moving in the breeze, the sudden snap of a branch cracking, the cowbells and, in the distance, the metallic clanking of the trains." All those sounds have previously been recorded by the teacher, who now plays them to the class.

Activity 2. The activity is divided in several distinct parts. First, the children are asked to observe three pictures, note down any comment or change which has taken place over the years, and listen carefully to the sounds representing a specific time period.

Activity 3. The teachers act both as mediators and as supervisors: they intervene directly at first, by introducing the story to the children; after that, they organize and manage the discovery and exploration processes.

2.4 Children's role

Activity 1. After that, the pupils are divided into groups. Every group is given a list of sounds (and recordings) with the instruction of matching them to the various areas of Coldrerio:

- Roccòlo: children shouting, footballs being kicked around, leaves whispering in the wind, the chattering of birds, someone clapping their hands, birds flying and chirping.
- Paù: bundles of rush, croaking of frogs, chains, children playing, pigs grunting in the background.
- Piazza Mola: carts moving, clip-clop of horses, flowers in the wind, men and women's joyful chatter, the noise of a threshing machine, someone working with a hammer and saws, glasses and bottles clinking together, the cries of swallows and house martins.
- Corte del Mirabel: cats meowing, clip-clop of horses, dogs barking, chicken clucking, a cockerel crowing, a donkey braying, leaves moving in the wind, ropes sliding up and down, someone coughing and wheezing and spitting, people talking in low voices.

After listening to the recordings, the pupils use books, old pictures and maps of the town as well as interviewing the older residents of Coldrerio to try and figure

out where the sounds originally came from. By looking at old morphological and city maps and how they change over the decades, the pupils develop a sense for historical analysis and familiarize themselves with their environment.

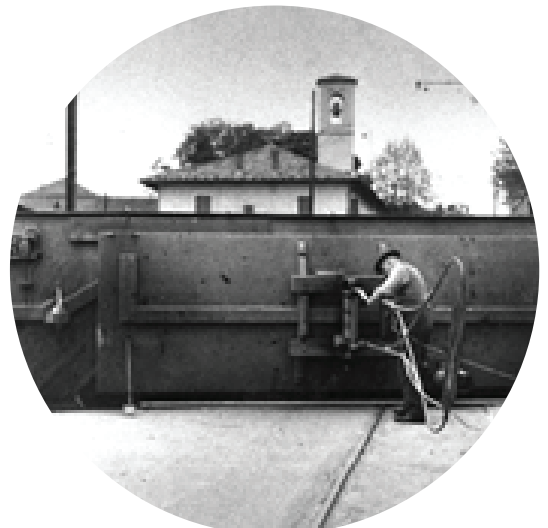
Activity 2. In the second part of the activity the pictures are matched with sounds. The pupils are encouraged to talk to one another and discuss what they think are the right matches.

Activity 3. This educational activity allows the children to develop both their observation skills and more traditional research skills (analysis of books and photographs). Furthermore, it promotes social skills by encouraging the children to go on a treasure hunt for the 'lost' locations, because that hunt can't be successful without detailed interviews with the local population.

By working together and discussing their ideas with the class, the children learn how to share their thoughts and opinions with others.

2.5 Example of material produced

(Some of the pictures which were used during the activities and the recordings the children took.)



3. Methodology, tools and materials used

The story about Michele's great-grandfather was the starting point, and it was used as basis to implement a series hands-on, interactive educational methods. Pupils needed to brainstorm and debate in small groups or with the entire class; furthermore, they worked together to solve problems and elaborate a single operative strategy to recreate the present and past acoustic environment. A list of materials includes, but is not limited to: the story itself, the recordings of Coldrerio's sounds, books and other sources on Coldrerio's traditions, such as maps, vintage pictures representing what life in the village used to be like and recorders so the children can capture the sounds of present day reality.

4. Potential/Difficulties

4.1 Positive aspects of the sequence of activities

The chief advantage of this educational project is that it helps the children to be curious and ready to discover new things. Thanks to the great-grandfather's tale, the pupils start noticing and actively thinking about the acoustic aspect of the town they live in. This leads to a deeper knowledge of local traditions, sounds and places of the past and the capacity to connect them to their modern day equivalents. They children can therefore think about and discuss why and how some places next to them have changed, and how the acoustic heritage is just as meaningful as the historical and geographical heritage of their town.

4.2 Difficulties

The coordination and co-building efforts remain the biggest hurdle both in what concerns integrating a complex perspective and for the inclusion a second class in the activities. The difficulty would be in finding a teacher open to such coordination, but also in identifying new starting points which could a) be of interest to the children and b) provoke a line of thought on current reality both as its own unique phenomenon and in how it relates to the past.

4.3 Possibilities

By using an analytical perspective, the educational project conceives of the local heritage as of something valuable that deserves to be protected; furthermore, it promotes a better understanding of that heritage by exploring the landscape through a different point of view (sounds), it teaches children about research, cataloguing and categorization, and it ultimately contributes to preserving local traditions and sights (for instance through the director's video).

Adapting this activity to the frame of a complex perspective would require the children to make connections on another level, and namely to master the slogan 'act local, think global'. This would entail a redefining of what 'heritage' is and how much effort is needed for a true contribution towards its protection and preservation.

5. School – Territory alliance

Over the course of the project, the teachers encouraged the children to interview the town's elderly residents so that they could help them to match sounds and places. This can be considered an inclusion of 'expert witnesses' into the project, as elderly residents have a longstanding experience of the different local traditions. However, more could be done in this area; for instance, one could identify lines of work where 'old professions' are still represented (such as local craftsmen workshops) and organize a field trip that would engage both the pupils and the local community.

PROMPTS FOR PLANNING

How can I collect the documentation to plan, to tell and to question the experience?

How could the children be involved in the different activities to become actors and protagonists of the choice they made?

Which resource (material, human, institutional) can I use in class or in the territory to realize this didactic proposal?

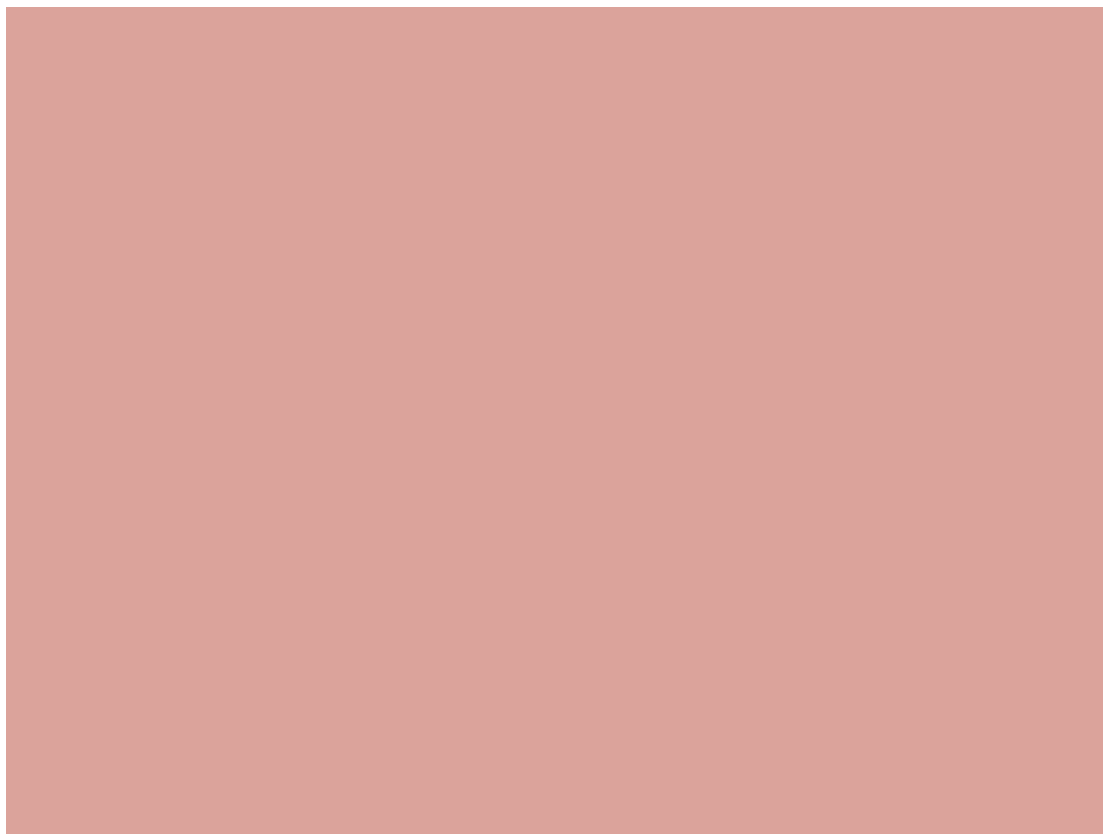
PROMPTS FOR REFLECTING ON MY ACTIVITIES

In which other ways and directions it could be develop this theme?

In which way can I propose this experience within my context?



Which documentation's tools can I use to follow the process?





PART FIVE

Documents and Teacher's tools



Tools

One of the clear strengths of the STEP Project was offering teachers some tools for the observation and recording of the processes designed and developed ad hoc according to the requirements of the project and in response to the needs that emerged during the project.

The need to plan these supportive strategies was dictated by the need to reflect on Active Citizenship Education starting with the teaching practices used on a daily basis by the teachers, with the intention of identifying and bringing deeper meanings to the surface.

To bring attention to these daily practices, certain methods were suggested for recording information/meta-reflection that are functional and simple to use during or immediately after the experience, with the goal of allowing them to focus their attention on certain specific elements.

Below, 3 particular tools are detailed: the *teacher's diary of the educational programme*, the *observation method using suggested prompts to observe activities and specific tasks*, and the *School-Territory alliance sheet*.

Teacher's diary of the educational programme

It is advisable to write the "in progress" diary before, during and after the trial programme.

PROGRAMME TITLE

CLASS:

TEACHER:

OBSERVATIONS AND MOTIVATIONS THAT INSPIRED THE PROGRAMME: KEY ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS OF THE SUBJECT AREAS, CONTINUITY WITH PREVIOUS OR SUCCESSIVE EXPERIENCES, CONTEXT...

.....
.....
.....
.....

GENERAL PURPOSE (relative to STEP and to the identification of the three themes: SOCIAL HARMONY, HERITAGE, ENVIRONMENT-SUSTAINABILITY)

.....
.....
.....

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR EACH ACTIVITY, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITY, SKILL

.....
.....
.....
.....

LIST OF THE TITLES OF THE ACTIVITIES THAT COMPRISE THE PROGRAMME

Activity 1
Activity 2
Activity 3
Activity 4
Activity 5
Activity 6

ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF TIME NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT ACTIVITY IN CLASS

Activity 1
Activity 2
Activity 3
Activity 4
Activity 5
Activity 6

ACTIVITY SHEET NO.....

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION (setting details: spaces, times, materials and forming groups; activities to be done; phenomena/behaviours to observe/what to reflect on)

.....
.....
.....
.....

WHICH OF THE CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES, CAPACITIES DOES THIS ACTIVITY STIMULATE AND ENCOURAGE?

.....

PREPARATION ACTIVITY

.....
.....
.....
.....

RUNNING THE ACTIVITY (instructions, teaching methods – questions and discussions – proposed activities)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

MEANS OF RECORDING THE PROCESSES AND CHILDREN'S RESULTS

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT GRADE

Were the purpose and specific objectives of the programme met from the point of view of the children? (What did they do? What did they say? What kind of approach? What questions did they ask?)

Was the structure of the activity adequate for fulfilling the purpose and specific objectives?

Was the setting appropriate? (spaces, timing)

Was the running of the activity adequate?

What did the children think?

Observation sheet with suggested prompts for the observation of activities and specific tasks

STEP	
Observation sheet	
SETTING INFORMATION	
DATE	
TIME	
PLACE	
OBSERVER	
Observation question:	
DESCRIPTION: in this column, you have to describe what you observed as accurately and in as much detail as possible, trying to pay particular attention to the dialogue and behaviours of the key players.	CONSIDERATIONS: in this column we would like you to note down the reflections, thoughts, doubts and questions that the observation described above gave rise to
In light of what you have written above, what would you do next? What ideas and suggestions would you like to propose now?	

SUGGESTED PROMPTS FOR THE OBSERVATION OF THE ACTIVITIES AND SPECIFIC TASKS

“Background knowledge” stage - discussions, drawings...

- Which were the proposed activities and as part of which teaching contract?
- What were the instructions?
- What were the types of comments and questions posed by the children before starting?
- Was it necessary to reformulate the problem, clarify the terms?
- What were the expectations regarding the proposed situation

During the activities:

- What spontaneous questions did they ask?
- What prompts? What responses? Before, during or after the activity?
- Did they have any difficulties with understanding the instructions?
- Did they have any difficulties during the experience? Which kind? How did

they resolve them?

- Did they carry out actions not suitable for resolving the problem?
- Did they observe each other?
- Were they engaged and attentive?

After the activities:

Describe and indicate, using examples taken from the materials collected (paper and pencil observations, transcriptions of discussions, photos, videos), the changes that took place relative to knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can be observed in other settings and activities chosen by the children themselves, that emerged from authentic tasks or discussions, and from the written meta-reflexive self-assessment of the learning processes engaged.

The suggestion to deconstruct the event, describing it in detail, explaining your own thoughts and feelings in that short period of time, together with the possibility of considering the immediate future, helps you the observer become aware of the educational intentionality underlying your own practices, the movements made, the words chosen, the teaching methods used, the educational setting, the child-teacher relationship, etc.

The practice of putting your thoughts down on paper, giving them shape and putting them into words, allows you the observer to refine not only your gaze, but also to question yourself, to become more aware of your own role and your own professional skills, growing as a reflexive professional.

School-Territory alliance sheet

Finally, a last section dedicated to informal education was created.

To keep track of the relationship with the region, it could be useful to fill out - when possible - the sheet below to, once again, monitor not only the activities that take place, but also the educational intentionality that lies behind this encounter.

STEP	
Alliance with Territory sheet	
CONTACT	
WHO ENCOURAGED IT?	
WHY?	
HOW?	

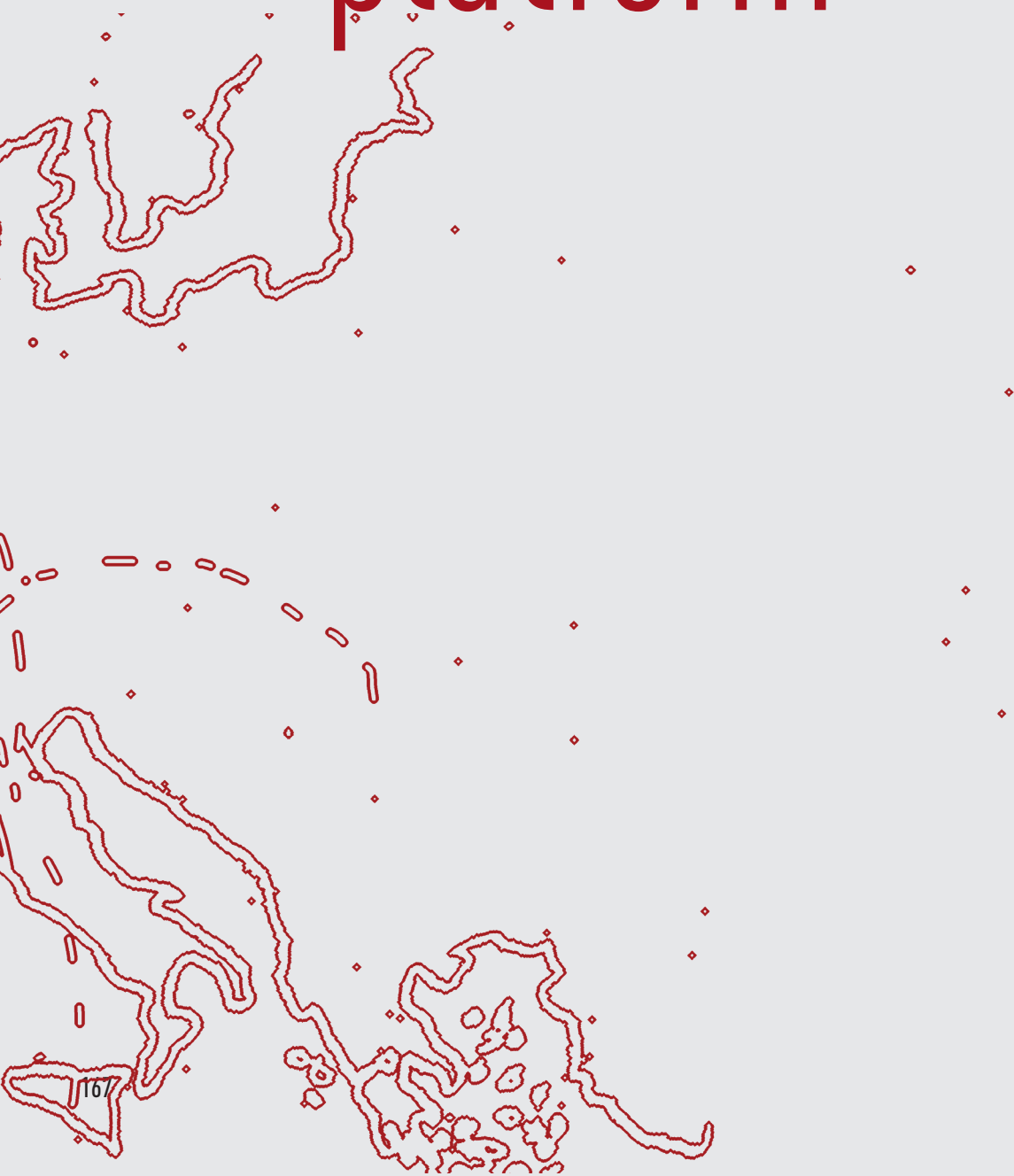


eTwinning



PART SIX

The eTwinning platform



The e-Twinning platform

To end this Toolkit and to complement the presentation of experiences and methods that can encourage and facilitate the construction of ever more aware, effective and complex Active Citizenship Education programmes, the STEP Project partnership suggests one last element of research planning, and a sharing space: the *e-Twinning* platform. (www.etwinning.net).

The STEP Project made good use of the *e-Twinning* portal to create a network of teachers involved in the case studies and to verify the feasibility of virtual twinning between parallel children's classes. Only one virtual twinning was set up.

The use of e-Twinning in the STEP Project

From the beginning of the in-classroom trials in the various national settings, the *e-Twinning* platform was a space for dialogue and the exchange of materials and accounts of experiences between the teachers involved in the project programmes. The aim of building a transnational network of bodies and institutions - as well as of creating stronger ties between schools and local and national territories - and of broadening access to and participation in the educational experiences set in motion was pursued by constructing a space of collaboration within the context of recent possibilities of social inclusion and networking. Through the use of the *e-Twinning* platform, the possibility of forming a European community of practice to use, develop and co-construct the capacity to do research suited to classroom activities was identified.

In the *e-Twinning* portal, an *e-Twin* can ask to create a group and, if accepted by the National Unit, can invite other *e-Twinners* and run the space based on the group's needs. This function allowed teachers participating in the trials to meet, exchange materials and discuss the educational proposals developed during the trial itself.

The aim was to go beyond the group of teachers, and to welcome the children into the virtual environment in real projects of twinned classes. This would have allowed the children to meet in the *Twinspace* to develop relationships and activities, taking advantage of the tools offered by the portal.

The use of the "Group" in the *e-Twinning* platform facilitated the sharing of planning, processes and results of teaching innovations, as well as allowing for the constant monitoring of planning and teaching assessment methods.

SHEET 1

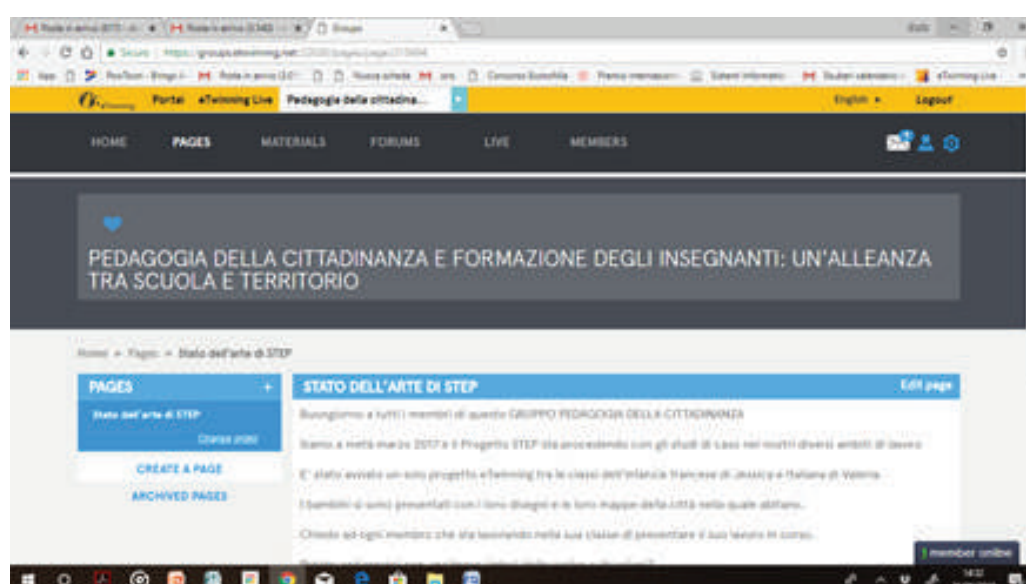
E-Twinning Group “Citizenship Pedagogy and Teacher Education: an alliance between School and Territory”

The *e-Twinning Group “Pedagogia della cittadinanza e formazione degli insegnanti: un'alleanza tra Scuola e Territorio (Citizenship Pedagogy and Teacher Education: an alliance between School and Territory)”* was opened in June 2016 to create a collaborative space for teachers involved in the STEP Project, who were designing teaching activities for active citizenship to trial with the children in the following school year.

The objective was to encourage dialogue between participants about experiences of active citizenship to put into practice with children in each regional setting and to explore the possibility of classes collaborating at a distance with the use of virtual twinning.

In the Group in question:

- various forums were launched for teachers to discuss their experiences in school in order to build relationships for potential virtual twinning.
- archives were created to make the materials from training encounters (e.g. conference presentations, class posters), the sheets produced by teachers, records of the activities carried out with the children available to all.



A screenshot of the Group open in the portal www.etwinning.net

What is the e-Twinning platform?

The *e-Twinning* platform - launched in 2005 as part of a European Commission initiative and currently one of the most significant aspects of the Erasmus+ Programme 2014-2020 - is the largest European community of teachers (approx. 550,000 registered teachers). A large part of these teachers are involved in electronically twinning parallel classes in different countries.

The *e-Twinning* portal is also the official IT platform for collaboration between schools in the framework of the Erasmus+ projects in the education sector. The network of various National Units in the 36 countries signed up to the project is in constant connection with the central European Unit, which is responsible for updating the web platform and its tools, and provides support services, supervision of the registered members and projects, as well as the dissemination and promotion of users' high-quality experiences through seminars, publications and prizes.

Teachers, headteachers and school staff from any type or level of school, public or private, can sign up to the *e-Twinning* platform. Whoever participates in the community can expect an online platform equipped with tools designed to facilitate collaboration and the exchange of ideas, in a multilingual and multicultural space that allows for the direct involvement of teachers and pupils in the project's activities, linked with other international colleagues and peers. The National Units recognise the twinning projects, and make a protected virtual workspace called *Twinspace* available. This is run by the administrator (the teacher who set up the Group) based on the teaching requirements needed to realise the project.

In addition, the *e-Twinning* portal offers free training courses with international experts (learning events, webinars, expert talks) and makes these experiences available over time, giving teachers and classes the possibility for flexible collaboration based on teaching needs and the curriculum objectives.

Why working on the *e-Twinning* platform?

The portal enables:

- The promotion of exchange, collaboration and comparison (at a distance) following a community logic based on practice and peer learning;
- The development of teaching innovation involving multiple disciplines in inter-curricula activities, providing the possibility of improving various skills including relationships, problem solving, the use of foreign languages in 'real-life' settings, technological skills, creativity and working in teams towards a shared goal;
- The construction of multicultural settings and the encouragement of the internationalisation of school activities, starting with simple communication projects to create real pedagogical partnerships fostering real movement between schools;
- The encouragement of training and in-post professional development of teachers through sharing objectives, techniques and ideas at a European level;
- The promotion of motivation and recognition, obtaining visibility of your own work, certifications and prizes to share with colleagues and pupils;
- The facilitation, security and support of its use .

Indeed, the platform has been designed to allow for the flexible and autonomous shaping of collaboration, based on the teaching requirements and curricula objectives, without the need for IT knowledge or particular technical tools. Starting *e-Twinning* is simple and an activity that is at the complete discretion of partner teachers. There are in fact no time restraints or bureaucratic procedures needed to start working with it. Great attention has been paid to the system's security to ensure data is kept private.

Lastly, thanks to the *e-Twinning* network, each member can benefit from continued support throughout the project. (LINK: <http://etwinning.indire.it/>)

SHEET 2:

Virtual twinning “Giochiamo insieme? Jouons ensemble?” (Shall we play together?)

A twinning project was created and realised by an Italian and a French teacher, from two nursery schools that are members of STEP (the *scuola dell'infanzia Andersen* in Vimercate and the *École Maternelle St Just Centre* in Marseille).

The project was launched following the start of a relationship between the children in these two schools, thanks to a ‘real’ letter including drawings the children in the Marseille nursery school had drawn of themselves and sent by post to the children in Vimercate. They did not have to wait long for a reply from the Italian children; sending the envelope by post became an occasion to go outside of the school gates and observe the area.

(<http://etwinning.indire.it/>).



Letter and drawings of the French children that started the *e-Twinning* project “Giochiamo insieme? Jouons ensemble?” (Shall we play together?)

The collaboration between the two teachers sought to organise virtual “encounters” between the children in their respective schools in a dedicated space – the *twinspace* – so they could get to know each other, exchange photos,

drawings, handmade crafts related to their own environments, regions, histories and cultures, broadening the children's horizons from the very local to the European citizenship level.

Even the parents were invited to access the *Twinspace* with their children's credentials, to see the children's virtual activities and to become actively involved.

The *Twinspace* of the *e-Twinning* project "Giochiamo insieme? Jouons ensemble?" (Shall we play together?) was opened in the portal in January 2017. The children of two classes were able to introduce themselves, share backgrounds, and perspectives through the exchange of experiences.

The virtual twinning allowed the French and Italian children to discover cultural similarities and differences through accounts of the reciprocal regional settings in which they were immersed.

The use of the *e-Twinning* platform brought added value, allowing for communication through the exchange of images, videos, and words, and for the narration and discovery of the children's own lives by learning about the other, about a distant and different place. An adventure of sorts, which allowed the region to be read: the children's representations, ideas and affective memories helped them overcome their first impressions and move towards a deeper and observed understanding through the discovery and concrete observation of spaces and places. This account was shared using the spaces and multimedia tools made available by the *e-Twinning* platform.

With distance collaboration in *Twinspace* - the virtual space dedicated to the project - the children were able to have an experience of active European citizenship, narrating their experiences of everyday life with virtual communication tools.





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PART SEVEN

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- *Fundación CIVES (documentos, propuestas, proyectos de educación para la ciudadanía):* <http://www.fundacioncives.org>
- *Fundación ESPLAI: Ciudadanía comprometida:* <http://fundacionesplai.org>
- *Fundación Alternativas (libros y documentos diversos sobre ciudadanía, democracia, sostenibilidad y otros temas sociales):* <http://www.fundacionalternativas.org/>

On Sustainability Education:

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- <http://www.education-developpement-durable.fr/>
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- *Red Española para el Desarrollo Sostenible:* <http://reds-sdsn.es/>
- *Centro Nacional de Educación Ambiental (CENEAM):* <http://www.mapama.gob.es/es/ceneam/quienes-somos/>
- *OEPE (Observatorio de Educación Patrimonial en España):* <http://www.oepe.es/>
- *Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias: Plan Nacional de Educación y Patrimonio:* <http://www.mecd.gob.es/planes-nacionales/planes-nacionales/educacion-y-patrimonio.html>
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