



# DIDASKALOI

## RIVISTA SCIENTIFICA DI STUDI PEDAGOGICI

*Direttore editoriale Antonio Ascione*

*Direttore responsabile Nicola Tenerelli*

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**Intercultura,  
sfida educativa per una convivenza  
pacifica**

Interculture,  
educational challenge for peaceful  
coexistence

**giugno 2025, anno 2, numero 1**

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Direttore editoriale Antonio Ascione

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EDITORIALE

## **INTERCULTURA: UNA SFIDA EDUCATIVA PER UNA CONVIVENZA PACIFICA**

In un mondo sempre più interconnesso, la comprensione interculturale è diventata un pilastro fondamentale per promuovere una convivenza pacifica. La globalizzazione, le migrazioni e la comunicazione digitale hanno avvicinato culture diverse, creando opportunità e sfide. L'istruzione svolge un ruolo cruciale nel formare individui in grado di affrontare le differenze culturali con rispetto, empatia e pensiero critico. Tuttavia, il raggiungimento di una vera competenza interculturale richiede il superamento di sfide educative significative, tra cui pregiudizi, etnocentrismo e disuguaglianze sistemiche.

Questo numero di Didaskaloi esplora il concetto di educazione interculturale come percorso verso una convivenza pacifica. Esamina le sfide che gli educatori affrontano nel promuovere il dialogo interculturale e suggerisce strategie per coltivare una società inclusiva e armoniosa.

### *1. Comprendere l'educazione interculturale*

L'educazione interculturale è un approccio che va oltre la mera tolleranza delle differenze culturali. Si propone di promuovere la comprensione reciproca, il

rispetto e il coinvolgimento attivo tra individui provenienti da contesti diversi. Secondo l'UNESCO (2006), l'educazione interculturale è "un concetto dinamico che coinvolge tutti gli studenti, indipendentemente dal loro background culturale, etnico, religioso o linguistico, e mira a promuovere il dialogo e l'interazione".

I principi chiave dell'educazione interculturale includono:

riconoscimento della diversità, riconoscere che le differenze culturali esistono e dovrebbero essere valorizzate piuttosto che represses;

incoraggiare gli studenti a riflettere sui propri pregiudizi e preconcetti culturali;

facilitare scambi e dialogo significativi tra individui di culture diverse;

affrontare le disuguaglianze sistemiche che ostacolano un'equa partecipazione alla società, in termini di giustizia sociale.

### *2. Le sfide dell'educazione interculturale*

Nonostante la sua importanza, l'attuazione dell'educazione interculturale incontra diversi ostacoli.

Molte società operano secondo una prospettiva etnocentrica, in cui la propria cultura è considerata superiore. Questa mentalità alimenta stereotipi, discriminazione e frammentazione sociale. Le scuole spesso riflettono pregiudizi sociali più ampi, rendendo difficile la creazione di un ambiente inclusivo.

Questo accade perché i curricula tradizionali tendono a dare priorità alle narrazioni culturali dominanti, marginalizzando le prospettive delle minoranze. Ad esempio, le lezioni di storia possono concentrarsi sui punti di vista occidentali, trascurando i contributi indigeni, africani o asiatici. Ciò rafforza l'egemonia culturale e aliena gli studenti provenienti da contesti minoritari.

Anche la differenza linguistica è un aspetto chiave dell'identità culturale,

poiché i sistemi educativi spesso impongono una sola lingua dominante, svantaggiando gli studenti provenienti da contesti multilingue. Ciò può portare a discriminazione linguistica e ostacolare un'efficace comunicazione tra le culture.

Si aggiunga che molti educatori non hanno una formazione pedagogica interculturale. Senza un adeguato sviluppo professionale, gli insegnanti potrebbero perpetuare involontariamente pregiudizi culturali o avere difficoltà a gestire efficacemente classi eterogenee. In alcuni contesti, l'educazione interculturale incontra l'opposizione di gruppi politici o religiosi che considerano la diversità culturale una minaccia all'identità nazionale. Questa resistenza può portare a politiche che scoraggiano il multiculturalismo nelle scuole.

### 3. *Strategie per promuovere l'educazione interculturale*

Per superare queste sfide, le istituzioni educative devono adottare strategie proattive, innanzitutto partendo da una progettazione curriculare inclusiva.

Un curriculum veramente interculturale dovrebbe: integrare diverse prospettive storiche e culturali; includere contributi letterari, artistici e scientifici provenienti da diverse culture; incoraggiare discussioni critiche su colonialismo, razzismo e giustizia sociale.

È il compito della pedagogia del futuro – se si desidera un orizzonte pacificato – di orientare le scuole e i programmi scolastici a sostenere l'educazione bilingue o multilingue ove possibile, incorporando metodi di insegnamento culturalmente ricettivi della diversità, magari utilizzando anche narrazioni e tradizioni orali per colmare i divari culturali, grazie alla scoperta degli Altri.

Questa prospettiva deve necessariamente essere suffragata dalla formazione degli insegnanti e dal loro sviluppo professionale. Competenze comunicative interculturali, pratiche didattiche anti-pregiudizio e antirazziste, tecniche di risoluzione dei conflitti per classi eterogenee dovrebbero divenire gli strumenti di bordo del nuovo docente.

Le attività interculturali debbono naturalmente essere incentrate sullo

studente e le scuole devono promuovere lo scambio interculturale; festival culturali e programmi di scambio, progetti collaborativi che coinvolgono studenti di diversa provenienza, dibattiti e discussioni sulla cittadinanza globale; coinvolgimento della comunità e dei genitori.

I nuovi curricula dell'educazione interculturale dovrebbero estendersi oltre l'aula coinvolgendo genitori e i leader della comunità nelle iniziative scolastiche per una proficua collaborazione con associazioni culturali per attingere alle esperienze di apprendimento concrete.

Assume elemento di centralità l'incoraggiamento di un dialogo interreligioso e interetnico con le comunità locali.

#### *4. Il ruolo della tecnologia nell'educazione interculturale*

Gli strumenti digitali offrono nuove possibilità per lo scambio interculturale, anche virtuale; gli studenti possono interagire con coetanei in tutto il mondo tramite videochiamate e progetti collaborativi online.

Piattaforme di e-learning multilinguistici, risorse digitali per un'istruzione accessibile e multilinguistica, convertendo anche i vituperati social media al dialogo – un tempo si parlava di “amici di penna” -: se utilizzati in modo responsabile, i social media possono facilitare discussioni interculturali e campagne di sensibilizzazione.

Alcuni esempi di educazione interculturale di successo si sono realizzati in Canada e in Australia, dove la politica promuove da tempo il multiculturalismo come valore nazionale. Le scuole integrano le prospettive indigene, le narrazioni degli immigrati e l'istruzione bilingue, promuovendo una società più inclusiva.

In Europa il programma europeo Erasmus+ ha sostenuto scambi di studenti e insegnanti in tutta Europa, incoraggiando la comprensione e la collaborazione interculturale.

L'educazione interculturale non è solo un requisito accademico, ma un imperativo morale per la convivenza pacifica. Affrontando l'etnocentrismo, rifondando i curricula, formando gli educatori e sfruttando la tecnologia, le

società possono coltivare una generazione capace di affrontare la diversità culturale con empatia e rispetto.

Le sfide sono significative e di difficile risoluzione, ma i benefici – coesione sociale, riduzione dei conflitti e arricchimento della conoscenza collettiva – sono inestimabili. Mentre la globalizzazione continua a rimodellare le interazioni umane da un punto di vista economico e politico, l'educazione deve evolversi per garantire che la diversità diventi una fonte di forza piuttosto che di divisione. Solo attraverso un'educazione interculturale consapevole, inclusiva e critica può contribuire alla costruzione di un sistema sociale che tenda a una migliore convivenza.

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### EDITORIAL

#### INTERCULTURAL: AN EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

In an increasingly interconnected world, intercultural understanding has become a fundamental pillar for promoting peaceful coexistence. Globalization, migration, and digital communication have brought different cultures closer together, creating both opportunities and challenges. Education plays a crucial role in developing individuals capable of addressing cultural differences with respect, empathy, and critical thinking. However, achieving true intercultural competence requires overcoming significant



educational challenges, including bias, ethnocentrism, and systemic inequalities.

This issue of Didaskaloi explores the concept of intercultural education as a path to peaceful coexistence. It examines the challenges educators face in promoting intercultural dialogue and suggests strategies for cultivating an inclusive and harmonious society.

## *1. Understanding Intercultural Education*

Intercultural education is an approach that goes beyond the mere tolerance of cultural differences. It aims to promote mutual understanding, respect, and active engagement between individuals from diverse backgrounds. According to UNESCO (2006), intercultural education is “a dynamic concept that engages all students, regardless of their cultural, ethnic, religious, or linguistic background, and aims to promote dialogue and interaction.”

Key principles of intercultural education include:

recognition of diversity, recognizing that cultural differences exist and should be valued rather than repressed;

encouraging students to reflect on their own cultural biases and preconceptions;

facilitating meaningful exchanges and dialogue between individuals from different cultures;

tackling systemic inequalities that hinder equal participation in society, in terms of social justice.

## *2. Challenges of Intercultural Education*

Despite its importance, the implementation of intercultural education faces several obstacles.

Many societies operate according to an ethnocentric perspective, in which one's own culture is considered superior. This mindset fuels stereotypes, discrimination, and social fragmentation. Schools often reflect broader social prejudices, making it difficult to create an inclusive environment.

This happens because traditional curricula tend to prioritize dominant cultural narratives, marginalizing minority perspectives. For example, history classes may focus on Western perspectives, neglecting indigenous, African, or Asian contributions. This reinforces cultural hegemony and alienates students from minority backgrounds.

Linguistic differences are also a key aspect of cultural identity, as educational systems often impose a single dominant language, disadvantaging students from multilingual backgrounds. This can lead to linguistic discrimination and hinder effective communication between cultures.

Furthermore, many educators lack intercultural pedagogical training. Without adequate professional development, teachers may unwittingly perpetuate cultural biases or struggle to effectively manage diverse classes. In some contexts, intercultural education faces opposition from political or religious groups who view cultural diversity as a threat to national identity. This resistance can lead to policies that discourage multiculturalism in schools.

### *3. Strategies to Promote Intercultural Education*

To overcome these challenges, educational institutions must adopt proactive strategies, starting first with inclusive curriculum design.

A truly intercultural curriculum should: integrate diverse historical and cultural perspectives; include literary, artistic, and scientific contributions from diverse cultures; and encourage critical discussions on colonialism, racism, and social justice.

It is the task of the pedagogy of the future—if we desire a peaceful future—to guide schools and curricula to support bilingual or multilingual education wherever possible, incorporating teaching methods that are culturally receptive to diversity, perhaps even using narratives and oral traditions to

bridge cultural gaps through the discovery of Others.

This perspective must necessarily be supported by teacher training and professional development. Intercultural communication skills, anti-bias and anti-racist teaching practices, and conflict resolution techniques for heterogeneous classes should become the tools of the new teacher.

Intercultural activities must of course be student-centered, and schools must promote intercultural exchange; cultural festivals and programs exchange, collaborative projects involving students from diverse backgrounds, debates and discussions on global citizenship; community and parent involvement.

New intercultural education curricula should extend beyond the classroom, involving parents and community leaders in school initiatives for fruitful collaboration with cultural associations to draw on concrete learning experiences.

Encouraging interreligious and interethnic dialogue with local communities is central.

#### *4. The Role of Technology in Intercultural Education*

Digital tools offer new possibilities for intercultural exchange, even virtual; students can interact with peers around the world through video calls and collaborative online projects.

Multilingual e-learning platforms, digital resources for accessible and multilingual education, and even converting the much-maligned social media into a forum for dialogue—formerly known as “pen pals”—when used responsibly, social media can facilitate intercultural discussions and awareness campaigns.

Some examples of successful intercultural education have been achieved in Canada and Australia, where policy makers have long promoted multiculturalism as a national value. Schools integrate indigenous perspectives, immigrant narratives, and bilingual education, promoting a more inclusive society.

In Europe, the Erasmus+ program has supported student and teacher exchanges across Europe, encouraging intercultural understanding and collaboration.

Intercultural education is not just an academic requirement, but a moral imperative for peaceful coexistence. By addressing ethnocentrism, reimagining curricula, training educators, and leveraging technology, societies can cultivate a generation capable of addressing cultural diversity with empathy and respect.

The challenges are significant and difficult to resolve, but the benefits—social cohesion, reduced conflict, and enrichment of collective knowledge—are invaluable. As globalization continues to reshape human interactions economically and politically, education must evolve to ensure that diversity becomes a source of strength rather than division. Only through informed, inclusive, and critical intercultural education can we contribute to building a social system that fosters better coexistence.

## **1. DSA (SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS) AND FOREIGN STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The school is called to respond to the dutiful task of transmitting socio-educational and cultural values that reflect those of society. To respond to the multiple cultural needs of a heterogeneous class, it is necessary for the school institution to consider the peculiarities of each student.

With the promulgation of law 170/2010, "New rules on specific learning disabilities in schools", the Italian school wants to implement a teaching practice towards students with DSA (Specific Learning Disorders), focusing on their specificity and their learning needs to guarantee full inclusion in the educational process.

In recent decades, the number of children for whom Italian is configured as L2 has increased considerably, at the same time even all those students who speak Italian correctly demonstrate scholastic difficulties and could present a DSA (Specific Learning Disorders) student.

The data resulting from this work highlights numerous children of non-Italian origin who often find themselves in situations of scholastic failure.

Keyword: DSA (Specific Learning Disorders); inclusion; L2 language.

## 1. *Introduction*

The Ministry of Education and Merit, through data provided by the General Directorate for Studies, Statistics and Information Systems of the Statistical Service, has highlighted that in primary schools there is a constant and continuous growth in the number of pupils of non-Italian origin. Data from the 2011/2012 school year show that there were 755,939 pupils of non-Italian citizenship; specifically, 9 out of 100 pupils in compulsory education were foreigners. Italy is experiencing a significant increase in students with non-Italian citizenship in its schools, reflecting an increasingly multicultural society. With almost one million foreign students, precisely 967,394 units, according to data from the Student Registry, the education system is facing unique challenges and opportunities. This increase of 11.3% compared to 2021 underscores the importance of adopting inclusive and effective policies to ensure full inclusion.

The Primary School hosts the highest share of foreign students, 32.7%, demonstrating the importance of adopting inclusive educational policies from the early years of school in order to guarantee them equal opportunities for educational success. The aim of the school institution is not only to address linguistic and cultural challenges but also to enhance diversity as a resource for the entire educational system. The growing presence of students with different backgrounds represents a unique opportunity to promote intercultural understanding and prepare all students to live in an increasingly interconnected global society.

## 2. *Italian as L2*

By carefully analyzing the situation of migrant or adopted students present in the Italian school system, it is discovered that they can be:

- born in Italian territory to migrant parents who speak their mother tongue at

home and have been exposed to the Italian language early.

- arrived in Italy following an adoption, foster care or migration process before the age of three and also in this case be exposed to Italian early.

- arrived in Italy following an adoption, foster care or migration process in a period after the age of three, therefore late.

«The concept of bilingualism is therefore quite relative, as two bilinguals can never have identical skills, and it is dynamic, as linguistic dominance can vary over time depending on the active use that the bilingual makes of each of the two languages»<sup>1</sup>.

The phenomenon of bilingualism is quite relative, even if it has been studied for a long time, as it presents sometimes contrasting definitions by various authors since the relationship between cognitive and linguistic development is examined<sup>2</sup>, from the point of view of the temporal variable in exposure to different languages <sup>3</sup>, finally, with respect to the linguistic competence achieved in the different languages<sup>4</sup>.

The data indicates that the average age of arrival in Italy of adopted children is 6 years, so it is not right to talk about bilingualism, without considering that it is not possible to define what type of bilingualism it is because the child arriving in Italy is about to learn a second language that is completely new to him. Furthermore, it must be considered that it is not a given, although desirable<sup>5</sup>, that they can always have the opportunity to continue to develop their knowledge of their mother tongue. Sometimes, in the case of adoption, this is lost forever, and we do not know what repercussions they may have on the acquisition of the language of the host country and on the scholastic

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<sup>1</sup> De Rosa, C., (2012). La valutazione della letto-scrittura nei bambini bilingui. *Dislessia*, IX, 297-317

<sup>2</sup> Hamers, J. F., Blanc M. H. A., (1989). *Bilinguality and bilingualism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MIUR (2012). Ufficio Statistica

<sup>3</sup> Contento, S., Melani, S., Rossi, F., (2010). Dimensioni e tipologie di bilinguismo. In Contento, S., (eds.), *Crescere nel bilinguismo. Aspetti cognitivi, linguistici ed emotivi*. Roma: Carocci.

<sup>4</sup> Peal, E., Lambert W., (1962). The relation to bilingualism to intelligence. *Psychological Monographs*, LXXVI, 1-23.

<sup>5</sup> Guetta, S., (2007). Adozione internazionale: Una riflessione per la pedagogia interculturale. In Bandini, G., (ed.), *Adozione e formazione. Guida pedagogica per genitori, insegnanti, educatori*. (pp.257-274). Pisa: ETS.

learning that it conveys. In the case of migrant or adopted children, if there are learning difficulties or is a suspicion that a DSA (Specific Learning Disorders) is the basis of the school difficulties, it is important to analyse the problem both from a didactic or neuropsychiatric point of view but also from the point of view of intercultural pedagogy, activating a dialogue between the different disciplines.

In Italy, intercultural pedagogy has spread since the 1990s, with the birth of the adjective “intercultural” and the subsequent Ministerial Circular no. 205/1990, which defines intercultural education as the ability to coexist constructively, in a multifaceted cultural and social fabric that involves not only the acceptance of diversity but also the recognition of its cultural identity, in the daily search for dialogue, understanding and collaboration in a perspective of mutual enrichment.<sup>6</sup> The implementation of an intercultural educational action requires the use of a teaching approach in which the student is an active and participatory part of the learning process, through a setting rich in cultural and relational stimuli, so that cultural diversity becomes an added value to be explored.<sup>7</sup>

### *3. DSA (Specific Learning Disorders) and children of foreign origin*

Italian law no. 170/2010 initiated an inclusive process to ensure equal educational opportunities for students with DSA (Specific Learning Disorders). Subsequently, in 2011, the Department of Education of the MIUR issued the “guidelines for the right to study for students with specific learning disabilities”.

From a practical point of view, it is important to remember that the definition of a DSA (Specific Learning Disorders) diagnosis occurs in a phase subsequent to the beginning of the school learning process, as it is necessary that the process of teaching reading and writing skills (which occurs at the end of the second year of primary school) and calculation skills (which occurs at the end of the third year of primary school) is completed. Nonetheless, it is appropriate

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<sup>6</sup> Santerini, M. (Ed.). (2010). La qualità della scuola interculturale: nuovi modelli per l'integrazione. Edizioni Erickson.

<sup>7</sup> Bruzzone D. (2016). L'esercizio dei sensi. Fenomenologia ed estetica della relazione educativa. Milano: Franco Angeli.



to specify that it is possible to identify some risk factors (personal and family) and indicators of learning delay that can allow the implementation of targeted and early activities and interventions to start a timely diagnosis.<sup>8</sup>

The above highlights the impossibility, for students who know little Italian, to start a diagnosis. Furthermore, the recommendations for clinical practice recommend excluding situations that could affect the test result, and among these is listed “socio-cultural disadvantage” to be understood also as poor or no knowledge of the Italian language.

The 2007 Consensus Conference regarding DSA (Specific Learning Disorders) suggests caution in the presence of particular ethnic-cultural situations resulting from immigration or adoption, shifting the attention to the risk of producing false positives (students who are diagnosed with a DSA (Specific Learning Disorders) that can be better explained by the ethnic-cultural condition), or even false

negatives (students who, by virtue of their ethnic-cultural condition, are not diagnosed with a DSA, Specific Learning Disorders)<sup>9</sup>. Further indications are provided by the Consensus Conference in 2011. It is established that in order to discriminate situations of specific disorder and situations caused by linguistic and cultural differences, the following factors must be considered:

- mother tongue, other languages known/spoken by the child;
- nation of origin and cultural level of the family, length of residence in Italy of the parents and the child;
- language habitually spoken in the family;
- duration of school attendance;
- writing system initially learned;
- presence of phonological difficulties in the mother tongue;

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<sup>8</sup> Consensus Conference, (2010). Sistema nazionale linee guida. Miur. Disponibile in [www.istruzione.it](http://www.istruzione.it).

<sup>9</sup> Consensus Conference, (2007). Disturbi evolutivi specifici di apprendimento. Miur. Disponibile in [www.istruzione.it](http://www.istruzione.it).

- familiarity with oral or written language difficulties;
- comparison of skills with other members (for example brothers, sisters) of the family;
- period of first systematic exposure to the Italian language;
- differences in the phonetic system of the mother tongue compared to the Italian language<sup>10</sup>.

While the Italian school system is doing its utmost to ensure an adequate level of education for migrant students, it is equally true that data reveal how their academic success is compromised by poor performance and a high dropout rate<sup>11</sup>. In fact, Italy is one of the European countries where the phenomenon of dropping out of school is most frequent. If among students of Italian citizenship 11.3% drop out early, among those of foreign citizenship the percentage rises to 36.5%. The reasons are represented by linguistic and cultural barriers and by economic conditions of the family of origin, on average more disadvantaged, as they hinder the integration of foreign minors in schools, exposing them in particular to the risk of educational poverty. Which includes, among other things, early exit from studies. This condition confirms the need to offer everyone equal learning opportunities.

«A crucial stage is reached when governments or reports [...] explicitly recognise that the reasons explaining the poor results of immigrant pupils lie in the shortcomings of the education system and the weakness of integration policies and not in the shortcomings of immigrants or minorities».<sup>12</sup>

Folgheraiter e Tressoldi (2003)<sup>13</sup> have provided proven methodologies and practices to enable teachers to distinguish which migrant students have academic difficulties and which are penalized only by poor linguistic knowledge, as well as identifying some factors as possible sources of future

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<sup>10</sup> PAARC DSA (2011). Documento d'intesa. Miur. Disponibile in [www.istruzione.it](http://www.istruzione.it).

<sup>11</sup> Santerini, M. (Ed.). (2010). La qualità della scuola interculturale: nuovi modelli per l'integrazione. Edizioni Erickson.

<sup>12</sup> Allemann-Ghionda, C., Perregaux, C., Goumoens C., (1999). Formation des enseignants et pluralité linguistique et culturelle. Entre ouvertures et résistances. Geneve: Direction du Programme national de recherche 33. In Santerini, M., (eds.) (2010). La qualità della scuola interculturale. Trento: Erickson.

<sup>13</sup> Folgheraiter, K., & Tressoldi, P. E. (2003). Apprendimento scolastico degli alunni stranieri: quali fattori lo favoriscono?, in "Psicologia dell'educazione e della formazione", n. 3.

difficulties:

- number of years spent in Italy,
- school attendance,
- development of non-verbal intelligence,
- language most used by the student in relationships with family members and compatriots,
- development of linguistic vocabulary.

Marineddu, Duca and Cornoldi with a scientific study conducted in 2006 <sup>14</sup> on a sample of 81 foreign children of various nationalities attending the second primary and third grade of secondary school compared with a control group of Italian students have highlighted that foreign students differ from Italians only in relation to reading tests of significant linguistic materials and not with regard to mathematical or visuo-spatial aspects. With this research it is excluded that migrant children may more often present cognitive disorders or generalized difficulties or lower self-esteem, confirming that for the purposes of school success the age of first exposure to the L2 language is of fundamental importance, even if motivation, socio-economic status, the linguistic structure of the mother tongue and the level of education in the country of origin can be factors capable of helping the student to overcome any difficulties.

Scortichini, Stella and Morlini in 2012 <sup>15</sup> show how bilingual students can be penalized if assessed through structured tests on samples of Italian native speakers, even if they seem to reduce the risk of false positives. The research, conducted on a sample of 28 bilingual children diagnosed with DSA (Specific Learning Disorders) according to the discrepancy criterion (born in Italy but who speak an L1 at home and the L2 only at school or in recreational and sports contexts) shows that almost all the children in the study present deficits in lexical tests, while the control group composed of monolingual DSA (Specific Learning Disorders), shows different reading profiles.

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<sup>14</sup> Murineddu, M., Duca, V., & Cornoldi, C. (2006). Difficoltà di apprendimento scolastico degli studenti stranieri. *Difficoltà di apprendimento*, 12(1), 49-70.

<sup>15</sup> Scortichini, F., Stella, G., Morlini, I., (2012). La diagnosi di dislessia e disortografia evolutiva nei bambini bilingui (L2). *Evidenze sul ruolo del lessico. Dislessia*, III, 319-339.

These scientific studies demonstrate, therefore, the importance of being able to implement an educational action capable of giving life to a form of personalized learning, as dictated in the PDP, in order to avoid the onset of problematic events that can compromise the learning process, as well as inclusive of the student of foreign origin.

#### 4. Conclusion

The Italian school population must adapt its educational proposals to the high percentage of students whose mother tongue is a foreign language. The maturity of the subject requires understanding the potential and establishing the right “countermeasures” to develop intercultural strategies and methods capable of valorising cultural differences.<sup>16</sup>

The indications of the 2011 Consensus Conference demonstrate how it is necessary to establish a correct diagnosis for the detection of DSA (Specific Learning Disorders), considering the multiple factors in order not to create false positives or missed diagnoses and therefore, avoid incurring emotional problems linked to the sphere of psycho-social development.<sup>17</sup>

The first intervention is up to teachers, understood as the first recognition of problematic situations, which presupposes the need to have elements and skills to distinguish whether learning difficulties are due to poor linguistic mastery or whether the problems are due to a DSA (Specific Learning Disorders) in order to establish a correct teaching intervention.

The school must become the privileged channel for implementing effective operational methodologies, capable of validating the potential of students of foreign origin and avoiding prejudices. and try to identify the guidelines within which to orient the development of the educational path.

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<sup>16</sup> Cardellini, M. (2018). *Giusti M. (2017), Teorie e metodi di pedagogia interculturale, Roma-Bari, Laterza. EDUCAZIONE INTERCULTURALE*, 16(1), 1-3.

<sup>17</sup> Snowling, M., Muter, V., Carroll, J., (2007). Children at family risk of dyslexia: a follow up in early adolescence. *The journal of child psychology and psychiatry*, ILVIII, 609-618.

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## 2. INTERCULTURAL AND SECONDARY SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT:

Secondary school is certainly obliged to transmit culture and social values by observing key aspects such as pluralism and diversity.

Educating considering the intercultural value is for the school institution a delicate and complex educational duty, since it requires that people from different cultural backgrounds coexist in harmony. The task of the school is, therefore, to educate students to mutual respect, dialogue and recognition of the dignity of the person as such, in order to create a fair and supportive society<sup>1</sup>.

*Keyword:* intercultural; secondary school; adolescence.

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<sup>1</sup> Fierli, C. (2025). Prospettive per un'educazione inclusiva anche oltre i confini della scuola per i minori non accompagnati. Percorsi europei per la pace e la democrazia (Doctoral dissertation, Universidad de Granada).

## 1. *Introduction*

Globalization has generated radical and rapid changes in social contexts, creating an equally rapid evolution of institutions from a cultural point of view: from mono to multicultural<sup>2</sup>.

This change has given rise to new ideologies concerning the notion of belonging, understood as a global condition, characterized by a new pluralistic mentality and open to values such as dialogue, comparison and interculturality.

Interculturality represents a pedagogical challenge that revises mental schemes, prejudices and cognitive and value norms, going beyond identities without denying them, towards a logical, epistemic and ethical horizon that is based on values such as encounter and dialogue<sup>3</sup>.

The school, as responsible for the cultural transmission and diffusion of social values, must necessarily review its internal dynamics in order to promote pluralism and respect for diversity. For this reason, secondary school must assume an active role, characterized by aspects such as relationships, exchange and sharing, generating in students the ability to attribute meaning to the different experiences that make up their educational path.

## 2. *Interculturality at school*

The document *Intercultural orientations. Ideas and proposals for the integration of pupils from migrant backgrounds*, drawn up in Italy by the National Observatory for the integration of pupils from migrant backgrounds and intercultural education in March 2022, highlights that citizenship education requires careful and specialized care, as well as an intentional

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<sup>2</sup> Tocci N. (2024). *La grande incertezza. Navigare le contraddizioni del disordine globale*. Milano: Mondadori.

<sup>3</sup> Cambi F. (2012). *Incontro e dialogo. Prospettive della pedagogia interculturale*. Roma: Carocci.



approach, targeted support and the use of effective words and actions<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the importance of adopting open and sensitive cultural approaches towards interculturality is underlined, given the mutual dependence between nations in the global context. In this perspective, the school, as an institution whose task is to welcome cultural diversity, becomes a tool of significant importance, since it has a democratic imprint that operates with students who are in a condition of compulsory school attendance and at an age in which they are extremely receptive, open, free from prejudices and psychic superstructures, aspects that can negatively influence the process of acquiring awareness of oneself, others and the surrounding world<sup>5</sup>.

Designing an intercultural educational action means abandoning the idea of using a purely transmissive teaching approach, in which the teacher, the textbook or the multimedia support relate in a unidirectional way with the student (an aspect that is to be considered obsolete not only in the field of intercultural education), because not only are few cultural and relational stimuli proposed, but also for some implicit consequences with respect to distorted models of knowledge and research that can derive from these<sup>6</sup>. Conversely, an ideal learning environment to welcome students from different cultural backgrounds is represented by situations rich in cognitive, cultural and emotional stimuli, where cultural diversity represents one of the many discoveries that the student is invited to explore<sup>7</sup>. Each student in training is part of a network of relationships that intersect with each other, contributing to a real construction of knowledge capable of giving the student access to a concept of knowledge that is constantly evolving<sup>8</sup>.

Living in a complex and dynamic society presupposes an equally articulated and dynamic cognitive approach, in which the static and the definitive have no place, except in the case of the process of acquiring knowledge. It is in this way

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<sup>4</sup> Osservatorio nazionale per l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri e l'educazione interculturale 2022. Orientamenti interculturali. Idee e proposte per l'integrazione di alunni e alunne provenienti da contesti migratori. <https://www.mim.gov.it/documents/20182/0/Orientamenti+Interculturali.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Benvenuto, G., & Laghi, F. (2025). Nuovi scenari per ambienti di inclusione sociale: Ricerche psico-pedagogiche. Sapienza Università Editrice.

<sup>6</sup> Portera A. (2022). Educazione e pedagogia interculturale. Bologna: Il Mulino.

<sup>7</sup> Bruzzone D. (2016). L'esercizio dei sensi. Fenomenologia ed estetica della relazione educativa. Milano: Franco Angeli.

<sup>8</sup> Mariani A. (2019). Una scuola per formare l'uomo postmoderno. In G. Elia, S. Polenghi, V. Rossini (Eds.). La scuola tra saperi e valori etico-sociali. Politiche culturali e pratiche educative. Lecce: Pensa MultiMedia. 109-113.

that each student/person should commit to contributing to humanizing and improving the material and relational context in which he lives, thus managing to build an authentic democratic environment<sup>9</sup>. Educating for interculturality means implementing an educational project of harmonious coexistence between people from different cultural contexts that is both delicate and complex, capable of creating an authentically fair and supportive society<sup>10</sup>.

The secondary school institution should enhance educational and didactic proposals in multicultural classes, focusing the attention of the students on universal rights both towards each person as such (human rights) and towards cultural diversity (for example linguistic roots)<sup>11</sup>. The term globalization therefore also assumes the function of reducing/eliminating attitudes such as neglecting, ghettoizing or, in even more serious cases, eliding languages, cultures and customs belonging to cultural minorities. The school and its microsystem represented by the classroom has the task of encouraging teaching methodologies and educational practices aimed at promoting the meeting, dialogue and recognition between cultural diversities in order to prevent the emergence of ethnocentric visions. In this perspective, the intercultural value assumes a crucial importance as it manages both to avoid divisions of a religious, linguistic and cultural nature, and to encourage the constructive and democratic recognition of the different identities<sup>12</sup>.

Valorising the different linguistic and cultural heritage of secondary school pupils also allows for the strengthening of multilingualism and religious pluralism, understood as a necessary incentive to promote good teaching practices characterised by cultural diversity understood in terms of identities constructed through social interaction.

«[...] the lesson itself represents a collective exercise whose effectiveness depends on the harmony that can be created between the teacher on the one hand and the intentions and expressions of the class members on the other. [...] Language does not limit itself to transmitting; it creates or constitutes

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<sup>9</sup> Tarozi M. (2015). *Dall'intercultura alla giustizia sociale. Per un progetto pedagogico e politico di cittadinanza globale*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

<sup>10</sup> Fiorucci M. (2020). *Educazione, formazione e pedagogia in prospettiva interculturale*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

<sup>11</sup> Bornatici, S. (2025). *Dialoghi im-possibili. Pedagogia e culture della pace*. In *Progettare futuri possibili Pluralismo dei Paradigmi e Tras-Formazione* (pp. 210-217). Pensa Multimedia.

<sup>12</sup> Ferrari, M., Matucci, G., & Morandi, M. (2019). *La scuola inclusiva dalla Costituzione a oggi. Riflessioni tra pedagogia e diritto*, Milano: FrancoAngeli.

knowledge or reality. [...] The language of education is the language of the creation of culture, not only of the acquisition or consumption of knowledge»<sup>13</sup>.

It is important to place the educational relationship at the centre of the teaching-learning process, in order to identify the right training paths in secondary school, in the form of dimensions inherent to the encounter and recognition of the other as a subjectivity with which to build the meanings and values of care, con-sensus and co-implication.<sup>14</sup>.

There is no doubt that the educational relationship, as dynamic, delicate and complex, must necessarily refer to the responsibility of the teacher, whose task is the cultivation and proliferation of the encounter with the other, in order to allow the latter to carry out his own subjectivation through the unveiling of his own being. For this reason the educational relationship becomes a fruitful experience oscillating between dialogue and encounter, reducing the space of the self to enhance that of the other, and at the same time enriching the interior experience of the two subjects. The relationship therefore becomes dialogue, encounter, comparison. If the encounter and communication between people from heterogeneous cultural contexts represent fundamental prerequisites for overcoming prejudices, stereotypes, racisms<sup>15</sup>, It is also appropriate to consider the delicate and complex characteristics of secondary school students. Think of pre-adolescence and adolescence, aspects that are typical of existential seasons represented by peculiarities and fragilities that require sensitivity and educational care. In a hyper-technological, globalized and reified society like the current one, it is certainly very problematic, from the point of view of communication, to be an adolescent. Think of the rapid changes that have transformed the methods of communication in recent years with the prevalence of Social Networks and the virtual world, privileged tools of communication<sup>16</sup>. Communication, but also the tools used to communicate, take on a fundamental importance at this age, also with respect to the conquest

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<sup>13</sup> Bruner J. 1986. *Actual Minds. Possible Worlds*. Cambridge: MA university press (tr. it. di R. Rini, *La mente a più dimensioni* (2003). Roma-Bari: Laterza).

<sup>14</sup> Borghi, B. (2024). *Raccontare la storia, tra didattica e educazione interculturale: per una scelta e un uso consapevole del manuale di storia*. RICERCHE STORICHE, 54(3), 105-122.

<sup>15</sup> Zoletto D. (2020). *A partire dai punti di forza. Popular culture, eterogeneità, educazione*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

<sup>16</sup> Rivoltella P. C. (2020). *Nuovi alfabeti. Educazione e culture nella società post-mediale*. Brescia: Sholé.

of identity but above all for the delicate dynamics of recognition through which identity is objectified<sup>17</sup>.

These tools can negatively impact the identity process starting from pre-adolescence since the ways of communicating about oneself, personal moods, affectivity, and therefore also the identity itself and the complementary dynamics of recognition, can become impoverished in their original meanings and values<sup>18</sup>.

In pre-adolescence and adolescence, the body changes very rapidly and the growing individual is continuously exposed to these rapid changes, characterized by difficulties in welcoming and accepting these modifications, as well as in the difficult ability to relate to others<sup>19</sup>. A real problem of identity and self-recognition emerges, which is amplified by the relationship with the peer group who, usually, live the same problems, since they experience the same existential and affective precariousness.

The precariousness of the adolescent phase arises from the fact that one feels insecure about the continuous changes that are experienced inside and outside of oneself because one is unable to recognize oneself in stable and lasting characteristics and traits and at the same time in one's own bodily exteriority that rapidly transforms under the impulse of growth.

The difficulties of this crisis lie in the internal uncertainty, in knowing and yet not knowing, in wanting to be oneself and not yet being capable of it. At the same time, the internal uncertainty that declines adolescence perhaps arises from the internal need to satisfy a pleasure principle. The adolescent experiences through daily experience with others in relationships and in the events of life that the principles and absolute norms that animate his interiority must be mitigated to find a concrete correspondence and that, sometimes, it is appropriate to mediate situations with virtuous compromises<sup>20</sup>. In secondary school, it is the teacher who has the delicate task of knowing how to interpret the needs and requirements of his students and

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<sup>17</sup> Dusi P. (2017). *Il riconoscimento. Alle origini dell'aver cura nei contesti educativi*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

<sup>18</sup> Gramigna A. (2019). Usi e abusi. In Id. (Ed.) *Dipendenza da internet. Stili cognitivi e nuove criticità nell'apprendimento*. Roma: Aracne. 33-56.

<sup>19</sup> Barone P. (2019). *Gli anni stretti. L'adolescenza tra presente e futuro*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

<sup>20</sup> Diarena, A. (2025). *L'impatto della cultura di origine sui processi di regolazione emotiva: un'analisi delle differenze durante l'adolescenza*.

of being able to understand them in positive and empathetic terms through educational paths, being able to recognize their vulnerabilities and perceive their potential, thus fulfilling a fundamental educational mission of leading the student towards the awareness of his potential. In these dynamics, the sensitivity of the teacher is entrusted with the possibility of being able to establish concrete relationships with his students governed by the principle of reality and the ability to establish empathetic communication understood as an authentic modality of deep relationship.

### *3. Recognizing the other*

Meeting the other and recognizing him in the sense of custodian and witness of different cultures, means giving life to an event that usually seems to be very problematic and sometimes even a source of bellicose oppositions. Even the present dramatically returns wars, conflicts, exclusions and atrocities that show how economic aspects and the desire for domination prevail over recognition, denying, sometimes, the very right to life<sup>21</sup>.

The market economy is based on parameters such as productivity, which do not consider typically human instances such as communication and intersubjective relationality, deep bonds, affectivity, the spirit of service, the very life of man. Therefore, the economy prevails, extended on a global scale, both in politics and in the planning of growth and development of vast areas of the world. On the other hand, education and instruction take a back seat to the sterile logic of the economy and the market. The real needs are those of people who continually meet, talk, enter into relationships even if they have been educated and trained in different cultures and for this reason have different ways of seeing the world and intending reality. If the present is composed of a global and planetary economic model, the same cannot certainly be said about multicultural education models that promote interaction, relationships and recognize all subjectivities as people regardless of their culture of origin, social class or political and religious beliefs. This closure of the subject, including his own internal insecurities linked to attitudes of absolutization of his own image, highlights a lack of self-knowledge, of personal identity, potential but also limits. If a person is unable

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<sup>21</sup> Ginzberg S. 2024. *Macellerie. Guerre atroci e paci ambigue*. Milano: Feltrinelli.

to know himself, and therefore discover his own identity, he will never be able to recognize the identity of others, and consequently, he will always see the other as a potential threat to his integrity. This aspect, although general, finds greater confirmation if the other belongs to a different culture than that of the place where one lives, in this case the closure will be even stronger, just as the barriers built to exclude the other will be further strengthened. In the encounter a

«[...] relationship of reciprocity that characterizes every intersubjective relationship. Precisely because of its universality, that is to say because every I-other relationship can be said to be reciprocal. [...] The educational determination of the relationship concerns precisely the recognition – and therefore the awareness – of such constitutive reciprocity, thereby intentionally favoring the unveiling of the original trait»<sup>22</sup>.

Self-knowledge is a continuous search, which lasts a lifetime, and it is not certain that the person will be able to fully know himself and be able to obtain full awareness of his personal identity.

The relationship and comparison with the other represent for the person the true reason for life, since to be one must necessarily be for others. It is therefore necessary to give life to a path, even if difficult, of encounter and comparison with the otherness that the personal identity can emerge and be recognized in all its peculiarities and characteristics. Through recognition between people, the subjective identity of each is realized and manifested in all its meanings. Therefore, the person in itself cannot be thought of as an isolated person, but constitutively in relation, able to open up, recognize and be recognized by the other, in order to act and continuously create virtuous dynamics of self-formation with others. It is the relationship, therefore, that seems to be the main pivot on which the intercultural educational process is based, since it can create a sphere of social relationships within which each person is recognized, and uncertainties and insecurities are eliminated, valorising the recognition that characterizes existence in terms of sharing and identity).

Without comparison with the other, the person distances himself from social

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<sup>22</sup> Madrussan, E. (2005). Il relazionismo come paideia. L'orizzonte pedagogico del pensiero di Enzo Paci (pp. 1-204). Erickson.

relationships, from authentic moments of dialogue, comparison and recognition. The adolescent journey is characterized by the process of knowing oneself, by the recognition of personal identity, of the other and of the social context. It is good to keep in mind that in the pre-adolescent and adolescent period there is a strong need to identify with the other, understood as a peer group, which at the same time manifests itself with a form of isolation, to be understood as the need of the adolescent to give up comparison with the other and choose existential models that, usually, are not part of one's being even if reassuring because shared.

So, recognizing the other also implies welcoming and respecting him in his peculiarities and characteristics, giving him the dignity of a person and the same moral status that one manages to attribute to oneself. Recognizing the other is therefore a process that arises from the ethics of respect for others, which represents the basis of civil coexistence, and secondary school is a privileged context for welcoming, recognizing and educating people in intercultural dialogue and in caring for themselves and others.

#### 4. Conclusion

Secondary school can no longer be considered a step to which the student is "obliged" to respond, but rather a certainty, if not representing the foundations on which to calibrate future educational prospects<sup>23</sup>.

The maturity of the topic must be able to understand its potential and test its educational implications in order to be able to develop intercultural strategies and methods to implement the value of cultural difference within educational systems.<sup>24</sup> It is therefore a question of validating its potential without prejudice and trying to identify the guidelines within which to orient the development of the educational path. Obviously, it is necessary to take into account the emergence of any discriminatory dangers, in order to protect and guarantee the development of the culture of acceptance and recognition of

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<sup>23</sup> Bonavolontà, G., & Pagliara, S. M. (2024). Intelligenza artificiale ed elementi per la progettazione educativa riflessioni pedagogiche. Mizar. Costellazione di pensieri, (20), 4-16.

<sup>24</sup> Cardellini, M. (2018). *Giusti M.(2017), Teorie e metodi di pedagogia interculturale, Roma-Bari, Laterza. EDUCAZIONE INTERCULTURALE*, 16(1), 1-3.



oneself and of others.

If the adolescent, thanks to daily experience, experiences the importance of recognizing his own self and the relationship with others, it is therefore necessary that the school institution, as a training body, must recognize the needs of the student and adapt its educational paths so that the student is able to implement a correct process of recognition of himself and, consequently, be able to welcome the other and, therefore, give the right value to both his own and other people's culture<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Tosolini, A., & Giusti, S. (2007). A scuola di intercultura. Cittadinanza, partecipazione, interazione: le risorse della società multiculturale (pp. 1-312). Erickson.



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### 3. MIGRATION AND INTERCULTURALITY

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#### ABSTRACT:

The Mediterranean is the sad destination of daily landings<sup>1</sup>. Law 47/2017, for refugees and unaccompanied minors in Italy, in implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, considers inclusive educational models that can be applied in non-formal education contexts.<sup>2</sup>.

In Italy, in order to manage the large flows of immigration, there are non-profit organizations, but in particular the National Observatory for the integration of

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<sup>1</sup> Ortensi, L. E. (2025). Arrivi, sbarchi e richieste d'asilo. 30 Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Rizzo, A. L., & Traversetti, M. (2020). Il Reciprocal teaching per la comprensione del testo: una strategia didattica inclusiva per garantire il diritto all'istruzione degli allievi con disabilità intellettiva. In 30 anni dopo la Convenzione ONU sui diritti dell'infanzia. Quale pedagogia per i minori? (pp. 617-629). Pensa MultiMedia Editore.

foreign students and for interculture of the General Directorate for the student, inclusion and school orientation and the Observatory for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors, of the Guarantor Authority for Childhood and Adolescence, of the Ministry of Education and Merit.

Unfortunately, the lack of good international cooperation weakens the efforts made to manage migration and, consequently, peace and democracy, aspects necessary to build a culture made of welcome and solidarity.

*Keyword:* intercultural; inclusion; non-formal education.

### 1. *Introduction*

The large internal and external migrations to the European Union that characterise this era are changing society, creating a new identity<sup>3</sup>. Looking at the last five years (2019-2024), due to the difficult human and economic conditions, an ever-increasing number of unaccompanied minors have arrived in Greece, Spain, Italy from the Mediterranean Sea.

An unaccompanied foreign minor is defined as “an unaccompanied foreign minor, present in the territory of the Italian state, not having citizenship of the European Union who is there for any reason or who is otherwise subject to Italian jurisdiction, without assistance from parents or other adults legally responsible for him/her according to the laws in force of the Italian legal system”<sup>4</sup>.

It is for this reason that this work aims to evaluate the reception conditions, the prospects and the life projects in Italy for unaccompanied foreign minors, which go beyond the formal education provided by the school institution.

### 2. *The migratory phenomenon*

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<sup>3</sup> Belardo, E. (2024). Il Concetto di “Paese sicuro” nel diritto dell'Unione europea: la sentenza della CGUE nella causa C-406/22 come ostacolo al paradigma di esternalizzazione? Il caso italiano. *ORDINE INTERNAZIONALE E DIRITTI UMANI*, 1019-1032.

<sup>4</sup> Legge 47/2017, art.2

The migratory phenomenon can no longer be considered marginal, nor can it be believed that it concerns only a few nations, as it now involves the entire world<sup>5</sup>.

These continuous migratory flows, if on the one hand are accepted, on the other it is inevitable to recognize that they give rise to deep feelings in people and often contrasting attitudes such as uncertainty, discomfort and increasingly consistent reactions to the co-presence and interdependence with the “foreigner”, who becomes the stranger with his diversity<sup>6</sup>. This conflict affects and conditions the daily life of the natives, creating a real political and social issue to be addressed<sup>7</sup>.

If migration represents one of the greatest phenomena of our time, it is necessary to ask the right questions in order to address the requests for reception.

«The Mediterranean has been and could be the fertile meeting ground between the worlds that face its waves; the fate of the Mediterranean and the metonymy of the fate of the world, depends on the fate of the world. The key to overcoming the current situation of imbalance and conflict in the Mediterranean is exactly the same that is needed to overcome the threats that loom over the fate of the entire planet»<sup>8</sup>.

If from a political point of view the Mediterranean could represent the starting and finishing point of a global intercultural development, the perceptions and ideas of the local populations are not entirely in agreement with this ideology. The reception, negative or positive, depends on the host society, which should understand the multiple causes of the people who migrate, and think about the different and innumerable values that they bring with them (different

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<sup>5</sup> Gatta, F. L. (2025). La nozione di Paese terzo sicuro tra “governance” internazionale dell’asilo, politiche migratorie europee e tutela dei diritti umani. *Diritti umani e diritto internazionale*, 19(1), 205-240.

<sup>6</sup> Farruggio, S. (2025). Nella mia terra non c’è posto: storie di separazione e di ricongiungimento delle persone tamil. *Mutamento sociale, dinamiche familiari e pratiche professionali. (Strumenti per il servizio sociale)*, 217-235.

<sup>7</sup> Pasini, N., & Zanfrini, L. (2025). Trent’anni dopo: un’agenda di ricerca (ancora) al servizio della collettività. *ISMU INIZIATIVE E STUDI SULLA MULTIETNICITÀ*, 7-12.

<sup>8</sup> Morin, E., Cacopardo, A. M., & Cavadi, A. (2019). Pensare il Mediterraneo, mediterraneizzare il pensiero: da luogo di conflitti a incrocio di sapienze. *Il pozzo di Giacobbe*.

languages, cultures and experiences)<sup>9</sup>. There is no doubt that for migrants to be recognized as an added value and not as an enemy to be fought, there needs to be time for mutual understanding and for building positive relationships on both sides. These are extraordinary changes but at the same time necessary to implement full forms of coexistence, which do not exclude traditional models and habits of thought, but which integrate new ways of thinking and doing of people, thus becoming new available resources of a country.

The International Organization for Migration in the World Migration Report 2024 (World Migration Report)<sup>10</sup>, reveals significant changes in global migration patterns. It should be noted that while migration governance policy development tends to take place at the national level, an exclusively national approach does not consider that the impact of migration on development is more felt at the local level. In order to be able to integrate migration into community development plans, it is necessary to create enabling environments at community level to ensure social cohesion and development impact for the benefit of society as a whole.

Migrants can contribute to the development of a country, although this is linked to their ability to access services, integrate into society and stay in touch with their communities of origin. It should be noted that migrants may encounter many barriers that limit their ability to reach their full development potential, and that is why it is important to provide the necessary services and support they need to become an integral part of the new society in which they live.

«When there are strong quantitative and/or qualitative imbalances between supply and demand for labor in a local labor market, these can be filled through internal migration, but only if there are areas where there is an imbalance of the opposite sign and if there are workers available to accept any job and wherever it may be. If these conditions do not occur, then the labor market tends to turn to foreign workers»<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> D'Antuono, N. (2025). La cifra umana: Pedagogia interculturale, «classici», narratività. Marcianum Press.

<sup>10</sup> Organizzazione Internazionale per le Migrazioni [OIM]. (2024). Rapporto mondiale sulle migrazioni 2024  
<https://italy.iom.int/it/news/loim-lancia-il-rapporto-mondiale-sulle-migrazioni-2024>

<sup>11</sup> Golini, A. (2007). Migratori, movimenti. Enciclopedia Italiana

In a world that is becoming increasingly integrated, marked by great economic growth mainly in Western countries and in other economically backward countries, it has produced individual and family well-being only a few decades ago. At the same time, we cannot fail to consider the very strong and growing demographic, economic and social imbalances between the various parts of the world and between the various areas within the same country that have generated an incessant and systematic territorial mobility of the population. This has produced the need to restore balance to a system that has become unbalanced to some extent or in some element. When we talk about territorial mobility of migratory origin, we determine a movement of people from a place of origin to a place of destination, and it is necessary to systematize them following specific criteria:

Distance: regarding the distance covered by the movement, even moving one's home within the same municipality constitutes a migratory phenomenon, also involving the crossing of a border.

Period and duration of the movement: they can occur with daily, weekly or seasonal periodicity during the year. With a short duration (less than 1 year), medium (3 or 5 years) or long (more than 3 or 5 years) that at international level, considers it as permanent.

Cause: of territorial movements, which can be traced back to the search for a better balance between the individual and his personal, family, economic, political and finally cultural space. Nine possible causes have been identified: work, education, modification or breakup of the family union, housing, desire or need to live near the workplace or in more comfortable or more loved places, study, disastrous natural events, wars, non-democratic regimes, military occupations, treaties, lack of religious freedom.

### *2.1 The migratory phenomenon in Italy*

Italy manages the phenomenon of migratory flows from countries that are not part of the European Union through policies that combine reception and

integration with action to combat irregular immigration<sup>12</sup>.

Entry into the territory of the Italian State is permitted at border crossings to those in possession of a passport or equivalent document, and a visa. As stated in Law no. 40/1998, the State periodically programs with a decree of the President of the Council of Ministers, what is known as the flow decree, in which the maximum quotas of foreigners to be admitted into the Italian territory for subordinate and self-employed work are specified.

The State, regions, local authorities, in collaboration with the associations of the sector and with the authorities of the countries of origin, promote the integration of foreign citizens who are regularly in Italy (article 42 of the Consolidated Immigration Act) through programs that provide information on the rights and opportunities for integration or reintegration in the countries of origin, promote linguistic, civic and professional training, and promote entry into the world of work.

A key role is dictated by the Territorial Councils for Immigration, present in each prefecture. Whose task is to monitor the presence of foreigners in the territory and the level of social and work integration, to promote targeted local integration policies, in collaboration with other institutions and private social bodies. It is clear that these bodies represent the point of union between central government and local realities for everything concerning immigration and the problems connected to it.

### *3. Organizations for the protection of unaccompanied foreign minors*

In a century, Italy has gone from being a country of emigration to a country of immigration, and it is for this reason that Europe and Italy are called to reflect on migratory flows that require attention and clarification on the strategies to adopt for the inclusion and integration of migrants.

«[...] If we think back to the epochal migrations of previous eras, not so distant from us, such as those involving millions of Italians towards America between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (between 1880 and

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<sup>12</sup> Ministero dell'Interno (n.d.). Politiche migratorie.  
<https://www.interno.gov.it/it/temi/immigrazione-e-asilo/politiche-migratorie>



1915, four million Italians landed in the United States, editor's note), we notice a frightening setback in terms of rights and the protection of human lives. It is true, racism, especially towards our fellow countrymen, the difficulties of integration, the distrust towards new arrivals were evident. But first of all, those who left from Europe or other places on large ships - not on improbable boats or vessels - were sure to arrive alive despite the enormous distance. And then, of all those who passed the tough screening of Ellis Island upon arrival, only 2% were rejected»<sup>13</sup>.

In recent years, there has been an increase in migratory flows across Europe, triggered by some of the fundamental challenges of the contemporary world: political instability and growing authoritarianism, inequality and extreme poverty, combined with and exacerbated by climate change and mental degradation. In addition, European citizens have the feeling of living in an increasingly dangerous and unpredictable world and therefore need reassuring European responses.

People who decide to migrate are all too often exposed to risks, anguish and violence. Many of them end up in the network of human traffickers and undertake dangerous journeys and we can see it every day on the European coasts.

Migration flows, both external and internal to Europe, have redefined and enriched the societies involved, giving shape to a new and current identity. The organizations that deal with the protection of unaccompanied foreign minors present on Italian territory are numerous, very active and well structured. Among the many, it is worth mentioning the work carried out by the following associations:

- *UNICEF*, about unaccompanied foreign minors, has created an initial list, of a regional type, composed of voluntary guardians who decide to support unaccompanied foreign minors in their journey in Italy, starting from the legal path to access to training services and other opportunities.

- *The Astalli Center* is responsible for accompanying refugees from their first steps in Italy. It offers, every day, a welcoming meal, a place to sleep, takes care of their health and helps them obtain new documents. Accompanying those

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<sup>13</sup> Attanasio, L. (2021). Giornata Mondiale del Rifugiato 2021. I numeri della migrazione. Centro studi e rivista "Confronti, religioni, politica e società".

who are forced to start living again in a new country means being a support for those who have to learn a new language and acquire new skills; bringing out talents and resources that can be used in the world of work, creating a network of human relationships that are essential to being an active part of a community.

- *Save the Children* is an association that operates all over the world and is mainly concerned with safeguarding and protecting boys and girls, trying to guarantee them growth and a better future. In particular, this association wants to guarantee medical care to mothers and children, as well as the right to education and instruction, defend children from abuse and exploitation by trying to safeguard their rights and fight all forms of poverty. As regards unaccompanied foreign minors in Italy, among the projects, there is CLIO (Cantiere Linguistico per l'integrazione e l'orientamento), which offers free Italian courses to minors who arrive in our country.

- *Casa di Marco* is a family home for unaccompanied foreign minors where six operators and five volunteers work. It is a family home for minors. Initially aimed at hosting children from zero to 8 years old, mostly from Italian families in conditions of poverty or psychosocial fragility, since 2010 it has started hosting unaccompanied foreign minors due to the high number of arrivals in Italy. For each of them, the team, composed of educators and psychologists, develops an inclusion project to carry out the exit independently, once they reach the age of majority. It should be noted that all these associations work with children who very often arrive without any schooling, completely unprepared to face life in an unknown country, and therefore require indispensable support and monitoring work to ensure good social integration.

Migration, given its many aspects, must necessarily be considered a key issue in the external relations of the European Union, so it is appropriate to improve cooperation with the countries of origin and transit. In this perspective, it is therefore necessary to change the vision of migration, no longer seen as a phenomenon to be contrasted, but also considering the evolution of markets, work and demographic trends in the European Union, it would be necessary to have a global approach capable of improving aspects and sectors such as cooperation, development, trade, investments, education, transport, etc. This approach changes the strategies by moving from a typology of migration management to a governance of migration.

In this regard, the European Commission has established the Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027<sup>14</sup>, an innovative tool whose aim is to support migrants and people with a migrant background in all stages of integration. The main areas of action are:

- Education and training,
- Work and skills,
- Health and Housing.

The key principles and values contained in this document are contained in the concept of “inclusion for all”, for which policies must also be accessible to migrants, furthermore the main lines of action regarding unaccompanied minors are identified (prevention, reception and identification of durable solutions).

As regards the objectives, it is expected to promote social cohesion and build inclusive societies for all and enhance the fundamental principles and values of the EU Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion through:

- Education and training,
- Employment and skills,
- Health,
- Housing,
- Actions to support effective integration and inclusion in all sectors,
- Strengthening the use of new technologies and digital tools for integration and inclusion,
- Monitoring progress: towards an evidence-based integration and inclusion policy.

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<sup>14</sup> Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Ministero dell'Interno, Ministero dell'Istruzione (2020). Piano d'Azione per l'Integrazione e l'Inclusione 2021-2027. <https://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/it-it/Dettaglio-approfondimento/id/1/Piano-dazione-per-lintegrazione-e-linclusione-2021-2027>

Finally, the Action Plan recognises the importance of reception measures aimed at ensuring adequate assistance to unaccompanied minors who are on the territory of European countries, with the consequent need to strengthen reception measures and access to specific procedural guarantees for minors.

#### 4. Conclusion

This work has highlighted what actions can be taken in the context of migrant integration, with a particular focus on the rights of unaccompanied minors in Europe. In particular, the challenges and opportunities that migrant minors experience in the host context are highlighted, with an in-depth analysis of the non-formal education implemented by associations in the national territory.

With Law 47/2017, significant steps forward have been made in the construction of the protection system for unaccompanied foreign minors, of which the law itself has laid the foundations, despite the significant delay in issuing the implementing decrees and the political attempts to modify the rights acquired by them. This highlights how change must start from politics in order to generate an improvement in the educational community, as today even boys and girls who have become adults need to live and resume their educational experiences that were often started when, as minors, they left their country of origin. Welcomed in Italy, upon arrival the only means available to them was their own will to get involved. The task, therefore, of training institutions, whether formal or non-formal education, is to be able to provide the right set of skills and experiences to put migrants in conditions of autonomy and correct integration into an increasingly multi- and inter-cultural society<sup>15</sup>.

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## 4. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR THE INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS AT SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT:

The school has the dutiful task of being able to communicate to all students social values that include respect for diversity<sup>1</sup>.

Educating under the dignity of multi/inter-culturality represents for the school an educational duty to be spread to all students in order to be able to respond to the needs of an increasingly fair and supportive society<sup>2</sup>.

The teaching proposals characterizing the teaching styles represent the inclusive tool for students with Special Educational Needs as in the case of

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<sup>1</sup> Bossio, F. (2025). Prospettive di pedagogia interculturale ed aspetti etico educativi nella scuola secondaria. *Paideutika*, (41), 63-75.

<sup>2</sup> Fierli, C. (2025). Prospettive per un'educazione inclusiva anche oltre i confini della scuola per i minori non accompagnati. Percorsi europei per la pace e la democrazia (Doctoral dissertation, Universidad de Granada).

children of foreign origin. In this regard, Motor Sciences can represent the tool/discipline for a type of approach calibrated on production.

Rethinking teaching by adopting teaching styles appropriate to each individual class represents the useful strategy to allow a real experience and guarantee inclusion.

*Keyword:* intercultural; school; inclusion.

### 1. *Introduction*

Students of foreign origin bring with them stories of migration that usually make the relationship with school more complex, causing, more often than not, conditions of scholastic as well as cultural hardship<sup>3</sup>.

By school distress we mean an emotional condition experienced by children and/or young people that manifests itself with attitudes of apathy/refusal of educational activities. This condition cannot be traced back to a specific pathology, even if it limits the use of cognitive abilities since it manifests itself through reduced participation in lessons and with voluntary actions by the student that frequently lead to the birth of conflicts. Obviously, this condition also compromises the affective-relational sphere both with the peer group and with the reference adult, which also negatively influences the school life conditions necessary to guarantee an adequate educational and learning path<sup>4</sup>.

The phenomenon of school distress does not derive from a single cause but is multifactorial<sup>5</sup>, even if it is a relationship and the social and personal aspects of the cultural and family context of belonging are among the main ones.

For minors of foreign origin, school inclusion is a time characterized by strong tension since they find themselves interacting with peers who have a different culture and values compared to their country of origin, which leads to perceptions of incompetence and misunderstanding, as well as natural initial

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<sup>3</sup> Cottini, L. (2017). *Didattica speciale e inclusione scolastica*. Roma: Carocci.

<sup>4</sup> Mancini, G., & Gabrielli G. (2012). *TVD. Test di valutazione del disagio e della dispersione scolastica*. Trento: Erickson.

<sup>5</sup> Lynch, K. (2000). *Research and Theory on Equality and Education*. In M. T. Hallinan (Ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of Education* (pp. 85–105). Boston: Springer.



difficulties in dealing with languages built on the sharing of new cultural codes.<sup>6</sup>

The school, an institution with the delicate task of transmitting cultural and social values, must be able to implement the right strategies to promote cultural pluralism and respect for diversity<sup>7</sup>.

### *2. Interculturality at school*

The current school legislation (C.M. 19/02/2014, 4233 and subsequent operational indications of C.M. n. 8, 06/03/2013; prot. 561) students with these difficulties are classified as Special Educational Needs (BES).

In this perspective, the action of teachers aims to enhance those teaching strategies useful for facilitating the relationships between student, task and context, factors that are essential in the student's school life<sup>8</sup>.

What has been said presupposes that the inclusion process is not simply for foreign students the ability to adapt to the culture in which they are welcomed, but a broad-spectrum commitment capable of giving rise to strategies useful for overcoming a block often connected to emotional aspects generated by scholastic discomfort and therefore due to difficulties in understanding the cultural context. The class council is called upon to implement those strategies necessary to promote the student's learning both with regard to the measurement of skills and for the organization of the workload and attendance. For this to happen, it is necessary to promote communication and the relationship between the teacher and the student in order to be able to obtain personal autonomy and promote interpersonal relationships<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Selleri, P. (2005). Di loro non si sa nulla: Storie di immigrazione tra scuola ed extrascuola. *Psicologia Dell'Educazione e Della Formazione*, 7(2), 209–227.

<sup>7</sup> Montessori, M. (2025). *La scoperta del bambino*. Feltrinelli Editore.

<sup>8</sup> Colella, D. (2016). Stili di insegnamento, apprendimento motorio e processo educativo. *Formazione & insegnamento*, 14(1), 25–34. Retrieved September 30, 2022, from <https://ojs.pensamultimedia.it/index.php/siref/article/view/1874>

<sup>9</sup> Cottini, L. (2017). Dopo quarant'anni dalla 517, l'esigenza è sempre la stessa: Avere insegnanti inclusivi. *L'integrazione scolastica e sociale*, 16(4), 370–383. Retrieved September 30, 2022, <https://rivistedigitali.erickson.it/integrazione-scolastica-sociale/it/visualizza/-pdf/1501>

The teaching proposal represents a collective exercise of great effectiveness if implemented in harmony between the teacher and the students. The teacher does not limit himself to transmitting, but creates or constitutes knowledge or reality, implementing what could be defined as the language of the creation of culture, not only of the acquisition or consumption of knowledge<sup>10</sup>.

All this is put into practice through a Personalized Educational Plan, which must be shared with the family, respecting the logic of the educational alliance, whose task is to initially seek the serenity and full inclusion of the student and subsequently the predisposition to cognitive commitment.

In this context, the perceived sense of self-efficacy can be a useful indicator of the degree of inclusion and well-being that the student experiences within the school community.

Perceived self-efficacy means that belief in one's own ability to organize, implement and pursue actions necessary to adequately manage new situations to achieve pre-established results. Obviously, beliefs of efficacy influence the way in which people think and act<sup>11</sup>, since it represents the way in which one interprets reality and places oneself in it. Ultimately, a person with a high sense of self-efficacy has a positive attitude/thought, is motivated towards tasks, chooses relevant goals and, generally, obtains more satisfying results than someone with a low sense of self-efficacy which leads him to perceive situations and his own possibilities in a negative way.

Having a high sense of self-efficacy therefore means being able to be determined in achieving goals when faced with difficult situations that often seem insurmountable, which enhances personal motivation so that people are constantly engaged in persevering in the face of difficulties and failures. Going into the details of this work, in motor activity, the beliefs of perceived self-efficacy are able to positively influence self-regulation and the confidence that a person places in their ability to tackle a specific task or cover a specific role<sup>12</sup>. In fact, it has been observed that children who practice regular physical

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<sup>10</sup> Bruner J. 1986. *Actual Minds. Possible Worlds*. Cambridge: MA university press (tr. it. di R. Rini, *La mente a più dimensioni* (2003). Roma-Bari: Laterza).

<sup>11</sup> Bandura, A. (1982). The assessment and predictive generality of self-percepts of efficacy. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 13(3), 195–199. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0005-7916\(82\)90004-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0005-7916(82)90004-0)

<sup>12</sup> McAuley, E., & Blissmer, B. (2000). Self-efficacy determinants and consequences of physical activity. *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews*, 28(2). 85–88. PMID: 10902091

activity demonstrate greater confidence in their own abilities, are inclined to have higher self-esteem, ease in social relationships and a greater predisposition to tolerate stress<sup>13</sup>.

The role of physical activity is fundamental for improving skills in the context of relationships with others. In this perspective, the role of the teacher of Motor Sciences, in addition to the physical aspects, involves the totality of the student<sup>14</sup>, consequently involving also students who experience the discomfort of finding themselves in new contexts. In this way, the process of inclusion is simplified, encouraging the recognition of the other as a source of different culture. The school must enhance the logic of meeting and relating with the other, even if they have been educated according to different cultures<sup>15</sup>.

Physical activity represents a valid tool according to principles of self-knowledge and personal identity, consequently recognizing the identity of others. It is in this way that the student matures a knowledge of themselves, since through movement they can carry out continuous research that concerns not only their body, but also their mind and their being a person, thus managing to have a full awareness of their own identity. Through physical activity, the relationship and comparison with the other is enhanced, understood not as the single opponent or teammate, but as a reason for meeting and comparing with otherness. Therefore, thanks to physical activity, the subject, even if thought of as an isolated person, can open up, recognize and be recognized by the other, through virtuous dynamics generated precisely by movement. It is physical activity, therefore, that becomes the main pivot on which the intercultural educational process is based, since it can create a sphere of social relationships within which each person is recognized, eliminating uncertainties and insecurities, valorising self-recognition and the diversity of others.

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<sup>13</sup> Gråstén, A., Jaakkola, T., Liukkonen, J., Watt, A., & Yli-Piipari, S. (2012). Prediction of enjoyment in school physical education. *Journal of Sports Science & Medicine*, 11(2), 260–269. PMID: PMC3737880

<sup>14</sup> Sibilio, F., & D'Elia, F. (2015). Professionalità in ambito motorio e sportivo. In Cunti A. (Ed.), *Corpi in formazione. Voci pedagogiche* (pp. 197–201). Milano: FrancoAngeli.

### 3. *Job description*

This research work was implemented in the 2024/2025 school year, for a duration of one year. It involved the first classes of a secondary school in the province of Naples that operates in a territorial context that sees the presence of numerous migrant students of foreign origin. Three first classes of the institute were involved for a total of 92 students, of which 34 of foreign origin. The teachers of the three class councils were informed and trained about the teaching proposals containing the variation of the annual planning in the subject of Motor Sciences, in order to guide the students in an effective and precise way through a constant and active involvement of various teaching/heuristic skills<sup>16</sup>.

The aim of this research was to verify whether a teaching method in the motor field developed through laboratory activities and group projects, thus reversing the planning according to frontal lessons (to be considered outdated and not to be used), can help the inclusion of students with linguistic-cultural BES because they are of foreign origin.

The teaching intervention, defined for laboratories and groups, has characterized the Motor Sciences with teaching styles tending to the production rather than the reproduction of activities by the students<sup>17</sup>. Laboratory and group activities are characterized by a learning/experience situation that is defined, conducted, verified and evaluated largely by the students themselves. This teaching method has changed the context by making the teacher a mediator of the context of the learning setting in which the students have acted in an active and participatory manner<sup>18</sup>.

It was clearly defined to the teachers that the teaching style to be used, defined as "Autonomous learning with teacher supervision", requires that the students decide autonomously the motor tasks to practice and the teacher must share

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<sup>16</sup> Aiello, P., & Sibilio, M. (2010). The teaching research focused on the movement: heuristic approaches and elements of complexity. *Citius Altius Fortius*, 29(4), 52-56. Retrieved September 30, 2022, from <https://www.efsupit.ro/images/stories/imgs/JPES/2010/4/Microsoft%20Word%20-%209%20macheta.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Goldberger, M., Ashworth, S., & Byra, M. (2012). Spectrum of Teaching Styles Retrospective 2012. *Quest*, 64(4), 268-282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2012.706883>

<sup>18</sup> Colella, D. (2016). Stili di insegnamento, apprendimento motorio e processo educativo. *Formazione & insegnamento*, 14(1), 25-34. Retrieved September 30, 2022, from <https://ojs.pensamultimedia.it/index.php/siref/article/view/1874>

the group's decisions by communicating feedback and stimulating the cognitive and social aspects<sup>19</sup>. This is how foreign-origin children are involved beyond the physical-motor level, the cognitive, emotional and social level:

- personally manage the problems and difficulties of a new situation;
- give an operational response to problem situations;
- be protagonists and directly responsible for the educational experience;
- use knowledge and skills in a real context.

The motor intervention lasted a year, and the lessons had the task of implementing an initial path for the achievement of skills in fair play, in the organization of group activities (integrating into the group), in collaboration and in challenges (relationship with others) in order to encourage mutual respect and acceptance of others, values to be implemented in an educational process of inclusion. As for the management of students of foreign origin, as in other cases, it must occur at a transversal level involving the subjects of the school curriculum not only at a formal level, with the preparation of models and circulars, but through changes in the teaching approach. It has been observed that in other subjects to a teaching style has been used in which the active role of the student, guided discovery, self-assessment of learning and problem solving are valued<sup>20</sup>, in order to be able to improve personal dispositions, both on a cognitive and socio-emotional level.

Furthermore, it has been seen how motor sciences by their very nature foster relationships between peers, also with non-verbal languages, attenuate the sense of cognitive challenge that brings with it a risk of failure and foster group protagonism that leads to the success of the training path<sup>21</sup>.

The didactic approach of Motor Sciences rethought according to a laboratory

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<sup>19</sup> Colella, D. (2018). Physical Literacy e stili d'insegnamento. Ri-orientare l'Educazione fisica a scuola. *Formazione & insegnamento*, 16(1S), 33-42. Retrieved September 30, 2022, from <https://ojs.pensamultimedia.it/index.php/siref/article/view/2759>

<sup>20</sup> Colella, D. (2018). Physical Literacy e stili d'insegnamento. Ri-orientare l'Educazione fisica a scuola. *Formazione & insegnamento*, 16(1S), 33-42. Retrieved September 30, 2022, from <https://ojs.pensamultimedia.it/index.php/siref/article/view/2759>

<sup>21</sup> Colella, D. (2019). Competenze motorie e stili d'insegnamento in Educazione fisica. *Formazione, Lavoro, Persona*, 3, 85-93. Retrieved September 30, 2022, from <https://forperlav. - unibg.it/index.php/fpl/article/view/48>

context, characterized by an autonomous choice of areas and tasks, and of a group composed of a reduction of the emphasis on individual performances, manages to generate a positive impact on the sense of perceived self-efficacy, thus making significant motor experiences live for the global growth of the person that lead to the maturation of a sense of security (self-efficacy) and therefore to a positive didactic relationship with the classroom context<sup>22</sup>.

The data resulting from this work show that the teaching proposals implemented with teacher-student interaction methods in which the motor task is not imposed but is personalized according to an active role by the peer group, produces benefits both at a physical-motor level and at a social, emotional and relational level. Furthermore, it was observed that, by implementing this method, students of foreign origin participated in the lessons with a greater sense of pleasantness and sense of fun linked to the satisfaction of having managed to obtain improvements<sup>23</sup>, an aspect that should not be underestimated since it is necessary to involve commitment and active participation of an entire class community in favor of those at a disadvantage<sup>24</sup>.

This work has highlighted how the variation in teaching has led to improvements in the relationships between the student, the task to be performed and the context in which this occurs, particularly in reference to students of foreign origin.

Motor activity shows a potential capable of developing psychological factors, with particular reference to the perception of the self. Obviously, for this to happen, the mediation of the reference adult (the teacher) is necessary.

#### 4. Conclusion

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<sup>22</sup> D'Alonzo, L., Bocci, F., & Pinnelli, S. (2015). *Didattica speciale per l'inclusione*. Brescia: La Scuola.

<sup>23</sup> Giuriato, M., Lovecchio, N., Fugiel, J., Lopez Sanchez, G. F., Pihu, M., & Emeljanovas, A. (2020). Enjoyment and self-reported physical competence according to Body Mass Index: International study in European primary school children. *The Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*, 60(7), 1049–1055. <https://doi.org/10.23736/s0022-4707.20.10550-4>

<sup>24</sup> Lovecchio, N., & Zago, M. (2019). Fitness differences according to BMI categories: A new point of view. *The Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*, 59(2), 298–303. <https://doi.org/10.23736/s0022-707.18.08271-3>

The school represents an educational certainty, and as such, it cannot fail to take into consideration the growing presence of students of foreign origin. The maturity of the subject must be able to make its potential understood, which at the same time requires educational strategies and the implementation of intercultural methods capable of implementing the value of cultural difference within school institutions<sup>25</sup>.

A project like the one proposed in this work highlights the need to calibrate educational interventions on the basis of the classroom context, promoting a type of learning capable of enhancing relational dimensions through the teaching of Motor Sciences.

In this regard, the literature confirms that physical activity proposed according to different organizational methods, manages to produce significant benefits regarding the perception of skills and the development of interpersonal relationships<sup>26</sup>.

Teaching should not be thought of solely as a transmission of knowledge but as an achievement of “knowing how to be” (attitudes, aptitudes, dispositions) that generate positive effects also on the sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem which in turn leads to success in learning and therefore to a positive spiral of inclusion of disadvantaged children<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, a collaborative educational dynamic is put in place, shared by teachers, and oriented towards involving parents, who are also part of the educational process<sup>28</sup>.

In conclusion, the hours of Physical Education should be considered a non-marginal intervention in the development of inclusion, especially when the teacher structures his/her teaching in a conscious way. In this way, a teaching-learning process is promoted in which the school involves all the actors of the

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<sup>25</sup> Cardellini, M. (2018). *Giusti M. (2017), Teorie e metodi di pedagogia interculturale, Roma-Bari, Laterza. EDUCAZIONE INTERCULTURALE*, 16(1), 1-3.

<sup>26</sup> Solmon, M. A. (2015). Optimizing the role of physical education in promoting physical activity: A social-ecological approach. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 86(4), 329–337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701367.2015.1091712>

<sup>27</sup> Ianes, D., Cramerotti, S., & Tait, M. (2007). *La dislessia: Il ruolo della scuola e della famiglia*. Trento: Erickson.

<sup>28</sup> Mura, A., Zurru, A. L., & Tatulli, I. (2020). Inclusion e collaborazione a scuola: Un'occasione per insegnanti e famiglia. *Italian Journal of Special Education for Inclusion*, 8(1), 260–273. <https://doi.org/10.7346/sipes-01-2020-19>



educational path<sup>29</sup>, enhancing the potential of each one without prejudice and trying to identify the guidelines according to which to orient the development of this inclusive procedure.

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<sup>29</sup> Gaspari, P. (2015). *L'insegnante specializzato al bivio. Riflessioni critiche per un nuovo identikit professionale*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.



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## **5. IS EDUCATION THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL TO CHANGE THE WORLD? CHILDHOOD IN ALBANIA DURING THE “DICTATORSHIPS”**

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### **ABSTRACT**

“Education is the most powerful tool we have to change the world”, said Mandela. Indeed, the fight against hunger and war often comes through education, and it is no coincidence that the most ferocious dictatorships have always turned against the world of culture. In the following paper, the characteristics of education during the period of the fascist and then communist dictatorships in Albania will be analyzed, with a special focus on the approach of education towards childhood, and thus on the urgent challenges imposed by rapid change. This research presents some aspects of this transformation process through the analysis of documentary sources that refer to school life, starting with the Italian rule in the period from 1940 to 1945, emphasizing the foundations of the related educational institution and analysing the comparison with the subsequent intervention of the dictatorial regime led by Enver Hoxa. Documentary sources referring to school life at the time show how both regimes educated even the very young to be soldiers, teaching them that war is a legitimate instrument for asserting the strength of one people over others. In Albania, the Communist Constitution of 1946 made it immediately clear that the project aimed to bring all children under state

control.

*Keyword:* education system, regime, fascist, communist.

## 1. *Childhood education during fascist domination: propaganda and militarization*

During the fascist dictatorship in Italy (1922-1943), childhood was strongly influenced by the regime and its ideology. The fascist regime tried to shape young minds through the educational system, promoting patriotic, authoritarian and militaristic values from early childhood.

The Italian government, to consolidate political, economic, military and cultural relations with Albania, adopted as a strategy that of granting Albanian students, recommended by the authorities in Tirana, a certain number of scholarships<sup>1</sup>. Fascist ideology and teaching were easily introduced into their curricula, all these exposed Albanian students to the principles of fascism and prepared them in the perspective of worshipping the Italian fascist regime through the study of school subjects and propaganda.

These policies were part of a broader effort to Italianize Albania and consolidate Italian control in the Land of the Eagles. Control of the Albanian education system was not limited to language and school content but also extended to culture in general. The fascist regime promoted the introduction of subjects such as “fascist culture”, using education to consolidate Italian cultural dominance in Albania.

School quickly became a system through which to indoctrinate children, with a nationalist and authoritarian ideology. Teachers were required to propagate the principles of fascism and the personality cult of the leader, Benito Mussolini, the use of the Italian language was made compulsory in all secondary schools, this was a broader effort to promote Italian culture and language in occupied Albania<sup>2</sup>. Physical education and military training were

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<sup>1</sup> Krrzhjepinski M. (2022). *Il periodo tra le due guerre mondiali, l'inizio delle relazioni diplomatiche cecoslovacco-albanesi* 111. *Cento anni di relazioni albanesi-ceche (slovacche)*, 51. Cfr. Ademi H. (2021). *Organizzazione Statale Sotto Rexhep Mitrovica (5 Novembre 1943 – 16 Giugno 1944)*. Collana di ricerca albanese di scienze storiche, (51), 171-188.

<sup>2</sup> Kuqi B. (2021). *Shkollat katolike gjatë pushtimit Italian. Studime Historike*, (1-2), 165-192.

emphasized in schools, with the aim of creating a generation of physically strong and disciplined young people, ready to serve the fascist state.

The fascist regime tightly controlled the school system, ensuring that all curricula and textbooks conformed to the regime's ideology; teachers who did not adhere to party guidelines risked losing their jobs.

Extracurricular institutions devoted to art, physical education, music, and other forms of entertainment were also controlled, and were required to respect fascist values and promote Italian nationalism<sup>3</sup>.

The overview of education in Albania on the eve of World War II highlights a commitment by the state and progressive forces to expand kindergartens, to provide care and education for preschool children. In the main cities in 1939 there were 23 kindergartens that welcomed 2,434 children, as regards primary schools, especially after 1933, there was a good growth of ten in total between 1925 and 1939. This indicates a commitment to the expansion of primary education and, in general, of the school network in the country<sup>4</sup>.

In the same period, as regards the number of primary schools, it can be said that there was a marked increase in the number: 643, but only a third of school-age children attended them; this suggests that, despite the efforts to increase the number of educational institutions, there was still a low school attendance. The same problem was also reflected in the other levels of education.

These data highlight the challenges that the Albanian education system had to face before the outbreak of the war, but also the efforts aimed at improving access and participation of all in education.

It is also important to focus on some aspects related to teaching. Grammar was taught by proposing the logical analysis of sentences such as "I have worked with pleasure all day" or "Enemies are faced with courage". Finally, the readings dealt with various current topics, such as "The Latin race", for example in the Second Elementary Class Book, there were passages, nursery rhymes and stories in which military life was highlighted and the figure of the

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<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Ostenc M. (1981) *La scuola italiana durante il fascismo*, Laterza Roma.

<sup>4</sup> Duro C. (2012). *Arsimi i Larte ne Shqiperi* (1946-1968).

Duce and the history of fascism.

From the Third Class Book emerge passages that are grammatically increasingly complex, but which have the same propagandistic background.

Between 1940 and 1945, the pupils only had the reading book, while in the following years a textbook and then a notebook were added. Discipline was very strict, there was a breaktime for prayer at the beginning of teaching activities, there was no break for breakfast and in the event of possible errors during the day, the punishments inflicted were very harsh.

The children had a rather simple school kit, a wooden pen holder that contained only a pen, a pencil, an eraser, a pencil sharpener, a box of crayons and blotting paper. The school bag was made of cardboard or wood, or leather for the richer children.

The fascist regime also limited the freedoms of children, promoting obedience, discipline and conformity to the social norms established by the State, the rigor in the management of school grades, on the report card, divided into three trimesters, the judgment on hygiene and personal care was also written<sup>5</sup>.

## *2. Education during the communist dictatorship and indoctrination*

With the rise to power of Enver Hoxha's Party of Labor, the Albanian education system underwent a radical transformation. The communist regime recognized the importance of education not only as a means of reducing illiteracy, but above all as a tool of indoctrination. School became the main vehicle for the diffusion of Marxist-Leninist ideology, and its role was central in the construction of the "new socialist man".

Hoxa stated that it was necessary to "lay the foundations of a new education, which will no longer be the privilege of a minority, but must tend towards a true participation of the entire people in the field of culture and education"<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Bejta H. (1986). *Në luftë për një shkollë e pedagogji socialiste*. Shtypshkronja "Mihal Duri" Tiranë. pp. 54-55.

<sup>6</sup> Hoxha E. (2021). *Kindheitsjahre. Erinnerungen an Gjirokastra 1908-1927: Kommentierte Studienausgabe*. Herausgegeben, eingeleitet, kommentiert und übersetzt von Basil Schader.

During the transition of the communist doctrine, many schools were burned and destroyed, and new ones were opened with difficulty due to the lack of furniture, textbooks and especially teaching staff. An attempt was made to combat illiteracy, especially among young people and women. In October 1944, the “declaration on the rights of citizens” was approved in Berat, which guaranteed education for all, also laying the foundations for the first congress of anti-fascist educators held in August 1944.<sup>7</sup>.

The Korçë Congress of 25-27 November 1944 was a significant event in the history of modern Albania, it was an important meeting for Albanian intellectuals, educators and political leaders who wished to discuss and define the future of education in the country.

The main objective of the Congress was to develop a new vision of the Albanian education system, more modern and in line with the needs of the evolving Albanian society. The Congress was attended by one hundred and thirty-eight representatives from all provinces of Albania, including educators, academics, writers, activists and politicians. These representatives discussed a wide range of topics related to education, including school curricula, teaching methods, literacy, access to education and other related issues.

One of the main initiatives that emerged from the Korçë Congress was the promotion of a “new Albanian school” that was more inclusive, modern and oriented towards the social and cultural progress of the country. This new Albanian school was to reflect the values and interests of contemporary Albanian society and prepare students for a better future.

This Congress is considered an important moment in the history of Albanian education as it marked the beginning of a new chapter in the country’s education system, which would influence educational policies and practices for years to come<sup>8</sup>.

After the communist government took office, reforms were initiated against the previously existing educational system, which was considered bourgeois.

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Böhlau Wien.

<sup>7</sup> Hoxha E. (2021). *Kindheitsjahre. Erinnerungen an Gjirokastra 1908-1927: Kommentierte Studienausgabe*. Herausgegeben, eingeleitet, kommentiert und übersetzt von Basil Schader. Böhlau Wien.

<sup>8</sup> Duro C. (2012). *Arsimi i Larte ne Shqiperi (1946-1968)*.

The aim was to create a new socialist school, with communist aspirations and in line with the ideology of the new regime.

From 1944 to 1948, the Albanian educational system adopted the Yugoslavian educational system, instead of the Russian one, despite the two proposals being quite similar at that time.

These changes reflect the commitment of the Albanian communist government to radically transform the educational system to adapt it to the communist ideology and political agenda of the regime.

Unfortunately, limited financial resources limited the effectiveness of these reforms, highlighting the difficulties in implementing a radical change in the educational system of Albania<sup>9</sup>.

The census of September 30, 1945, showed that only a small percentage of the population could read and write, with most part of the inhabitants being illiterate. In addition to opening new schools and providing teaching staff, it was necessary to focus on raising the general level of education of the population. This would be essential to address the widespread illiteracy (81.22%)<sup>10</sup> and to promote the socio-cultural and economic development of the country<sup>11</sup>.

Improving the overall level of education required significant and coordinated efforts by education authorities and the government. This included policies to increase access to education, provide adequate resources for schools, and train enough qualified teachers<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Gogaj I. (2010). Plagët e shkollës shqiptare në diktaturën komuniste (Arsimi 8-vjeçar dhe i mesëm). *Studime Historike*, (03-04), 183-201

<sup>10</sup> A.A.V.V. (1947) *Arkivi Qendror i Republikës së Shqipërisë me tre fondet e tij Fondi i Ministrisë së Arsimit Nr. 511*, fascicolo 6 pag 2

<sup>11</sup> After the 1946 reform, Western foreign languages were eliminated from the school curriculum and the so-called revolutionary triangle of learning, productive work, physical education and military education was introduced, all entirely based on the ideological axes of Marxism-Leninism. The Party-State's goal was to transform the school into the main instrument of communist indoctrination. The cultural upliftment of generations was not fundamental. The teacher's personality had also deteriorated. Cfr. Beqja H. (1976). Në themelet e arsimit popullor. *Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor*. p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Duro Ç. (2012). *Arsimi i Lartë në Shqipëri (1946-1968)*.



## 2.1. *Restrictions on children's personal freedom*

During the dictatorship of Enver Hoxha, education and school were instrumentalized to promote the communist ideology and the personality cult of the leader. Children were indoctrinated from a young age with communist propaganda, through textbooks, school lessons and educational activities with the aim of wanting to shape the minds of young Albanians to conform to the values and ideals of the regime.

Children were educated from a young age on the heroism of the communist struggle and the need to be ready to defend the country from external and internal threats. For these reasons, education emphasized the importance of loyalty to the regime and defense of the homeland, resulting in a highly militarized education, with extracurricular activities aimed at military training and preparation for the defense of the country.

Art, music, literature and entertainment were controlled and driven by the regime, all forms of communication were manipulated to show a prosperous, powerful and rich facade of the country and to put the Western world in a bad light.

The literary process during this period was strictly controlled by the regime; in fact, authors had to conform to the ideological guidelines established by the government, otherwise they risked censorship or removal from the literary scene<sup>13</sup>.

The harsh ideological repression and censorship that characterized the Albanian communist regime, in the school year 1946-47 decided to remove some prominent intellectuals such as "Gjergj Fishta, Faik Konica and Ernest Koliqi, considered "inconvenient" for the regime because of their political positions or their critical works<sup>14</sup>.

Children's books had to adhere to the party's ideological principles and promote the regime's positive image; this also applied to children's literature. Authors who did not respect these guidelines risked censorship or removal

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<sup>13</sup> Pappleka F. (2010). *Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi*. Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, p.319

<sup>14</sup> Prifti B. (2021). *Censura në shqipëri gjatë diktaturës, përjashtimi i autorëve të mëdhenj nga historia e letërsisë*. *Dritëhije*, (3), pp. 66-77.

from libraries and schools.

In schools it was the time of emphasizing the communist ideology from childhood, the idea of the Fatherland. The tools allowed to disseminate all this were magazines, authorized books such as “Gezimi” and “Fatosi”<sup>15</sup>. Considered important and suitable readings for spreading patriotic ideology among children. For over five decades, both magazines were pillars of the cultural and educational process, promoting values such as the heroism of the communist struggle and readiness to defend the country.

The magazine “Fatosi” played a prominent role, conducted by well-known journalists and children’s writers such as Mehmedali Hoxha and Fejzi Bojku, and led by a series of distinguished editors until 1999. This publication, in addition to supporting the regime’s propaganda, offered young readers the opportunity to publish their own works, promoting active participation that strengthened adherence to the dominant ideology<sup>16</sup>.

This ideological manipulation reflects the government’s desire to shape the perception of young people, limiting the development of critical and independent thinking.

### *3. The social and emotional impact of the dictatorial education system*

The first blow to the authority of the master was struck at the very beginning, when the socialist term “comrade-master” was invented, instead of the bourgeois term “god master”. Paradoxically with precise political intentions, somewhere openly and more hidden, the youth organization came out into the open in the pedagogical council and there came a time when the director feared the youth secretary. Ladders, grades of reform after direct reform after directive from above, the authority of the teacher was always decreasing and

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<sup>15</sup> Basha K. (2019). *Shtypi shqiptar në Maqedoni (1945-1991)*: Sevdail Demiri, Shtypi shqiptar në Maqedoni (1945-1991), aspekti kulturor dhe arsimor, Shkup, 2015, f. 245. Kosova, (44), pp. 317-320.

<sup>16</sup> Although *Fatosi* sometimes appeared more open than other magazines such as *Gezimi*, all forms of expression, including art, music and literature, were subject to strict controls. Censorship was omnipresent, and authors who did not conform to party directives risked removal, as demonstrated by the elimination of writers considered inconvenient by the regime.

he himself was lowering his head more and more<sup>17</sup>.

The year 1946 is characterized by the proclamation of the Albanian People's Republic and by the creation of a single and compulsory school system for all, the school was separated from the churches, any religious propaganda was prohibited. During the dictatorial regime, the repressive policy maintained towards teachers kept them in a state of subordination, fearing that their intellect could be influenced by bourgeois revisionist ideologies, thus putting socialism and the destiny of the nation at risk. This climate of suspicion and control limited the freedom of teachers and undermined their educational and formative role<sup>18</sup>.

School was politicized, and in this circumstance, children were subjected to rigid control and to the limitation of their individual freedoms. The subjects were political, the theme of social education took the place of the Marxist-Leninist one, civic education was studied. Extracurricular activities were strictly controlled by the regime and young people had few opportunities to freely express their opinions or interests outside the boundaries imposed by the Communist Party.

### *Conclusions*

The article examines the impact of education in Albania during the fascist and communist dictatorships, highlighting how both regimes used education as a tool of indoctrination and social control. During the fascist domination (1922-1943), Italy imposed an educational system aimed at promoting patriotism, authoritarianism and militarization, trying to Italianize Albania through propaganda in schools. Albanian students were forced to study "fascist culture" and the Italian language, to consolidate Italian influence and prepare young people to serve the fascist state. Schools thus became places of cultural control, where any deviation from the official ideology was punished.

With the communist regime of Enver Hoxha, the educational system

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<sup>17</sup> Hoxha E. (1957). *Raport në Plenumin e KQ të PPSH, 13 shkurt 1957. Në Dokumente kryesore të PPSH (vëll. III)*. Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese, 1972.

<sup>18</sup> Puto A. (2006). *Fryma romantike dhe nacionaliste në debatin për "identitetin shqiptar"*. Perpjekja, (23), pp. 13-33.

underwent a radical transformation, with the aim of spreading Marxism-Leninism and shaping a new generation of “socialist men”. Communist indoctrination affected every aspect of education, with the removal of Western influences and the militarization of schools. Even the arts and children’s literature were subject to strict censorship, aimed at promoting the regime’s ideology.

Both dictatorial periods used schools not only for education, but to train citizens loyal to their respective regimes, limiting the personal freedom and critical thinking of young people. In conclusion, education under the fascist and communist regimes in Albania became a powerful tool for ideological manipulation, deeply marking society and influencing the future of the country. It can be concluded that the climate of fear and control during the dictatorship had a negative impact on the social and emotional development of Albanian children<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Gogaj, I. (2010). *Plagët e shkollës shqiptare në diktaturën komuniste (Arsimi 8-vjeçar dhe i mesëm)*. Studime Historike, (03-04), pp. 183-201.

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## 6. THE IRANIAN SCHOOL: SYNCRETISM OF RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL POWER

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### ABSTRACT

Iran's education system, overseen by state ministries, imposes centralised and religiously oriented curricula, with compulsory Islamic studies and gender segregation. Despite high literacy rates (97% among young people), systemic problems such as gender inequality, unemployment (30% for female graduates) and insufficient funding persist. Civic education promotes nationalism and anti-Western values, while textbooks incite anti-Semitism. Severe restrictions on academic freedom include censorship, blocking websites (e.g. JSTOR) and repression of dissent. The death of Mahsa Amini in 2022 triggered protests that were met with violent repression, arrests and Internet shutdowns. Teachers and students risk dismissal, torture or expulsion for activism, particularly over hijab laws. Independent student groups are replaced by state-affiliated bodies and many academics emigrate due to persecution. The system favours indoctrination over critical thinking, exacerbating inequalities and stifling intellectual freedom.

*Keywords:* religious education, Iranian school, students.

## *Methodological premise.*

In order to draft this contribution, given the relevance of the topic, only documents available online were consulted. The considerations were essentially focused on texts and reports that follow a Western logical-methodological evaluation criterion – which does not necessarily imply an ideological interpretation. It was often impossible to access Iranian sites, evidently blocked; furthermore, it was complicated to consult documents present on sites, presumably continuously hacked, because they were not always usable/downloadable, inhibited by antivirus and full of pop-ups that prevented reading.

### *1. Administrative system and male-female distance*

The education system in Iran is structured into different levels, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (for higher education)<sup>1</sup>.

Every Iranian course of study is centralized, and the curricula are set at the national level.

Early childhood education is optional; after the age of six, children attend the compulsory *Dabestan* primary school for a total of 5 years (from 2023, previously it was 6 years), until they reach the age of 11: Persian, mathematics, science, Islamic religion, physical education are studied; upon completion, students receive a certificate of completion<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Uni-Italia, *Il sistema formativo in Iran*;

[https://uni-italia.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Il\\_sistema\\_formativo\\_in\\_Iran.pdf](https://uni-italia.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Il_sistema_formativo_in_Iran.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Cfr: Madandar Arani, A., Amani Tehrani, M., Sorkhabi, S. (2023), *A Systematic Review of the Critiques and Problems of Fundamental Reform Document of Education in the Islamic Republic*



Lower secondary education, *Motavaseteh* - First Cycle, lasts 3 years; among the subjects studied, introduction to Persian literature, foreign languages (English or Arabic), social and religious sciences.

After the age of 14, for another three years, young Iranians attend *Motavaseteh* - Second Cycle divided into two branches: theoretical (humanities, social sciences, mathematical-scientific) and technical-professional (industrial, agricultural, artisanal). At the end, students take the national *Konkur* exam for university access.

As regards university education, the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology is supported by the Ministry of Health which manages the medical university; both public and private Azad universities and all specialization schools are controlled by the State: the study path includes a Degree (Kardani or Bachelor, 4 years), Master (2 years), Doctorate (4-5 years). It is compulsory to attend studies for 9 years (primary + first secondary cycle, age 6-15).

The Iranian school system from an administrative point of view does not seem to differ too much from Western systems but it is characterized by its religious emphasis: Islamic education is compulsory, as is gender segregation - with rare exceptions in schools in rural areas, due to the low number of enrollments.<sup>3</sup>

The literacy rate is 88%, 91% for men, 85% for women; in rural areas illiteracy reaches 15% compared to 5% in cities <sup>4</sup>. Among the 15-24 age group, literacy reaches 97%, a sign of the government's commitment to ensure that young people attend school. The dropout rate in primary school is 2%; in secondary school it reaches 15% (higher among girls in rural areas)<sup>5</sup>.

In primary school, both sexes attend school with the same percentages: in

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of Iran, Iranian Journal of Comparative Education, Volume 6, Issue 2, pp. 2426-2445; cfr.: Ministero dell'Istruzione Iraniano (2023). *Educational System Structure in Iran*, on line: <https://en.mfa.ir/>; cfr.: World Bank (2022), *Iran Education Sector Review*; cfr.: UNESCO (2021), *Education in Iran: A National System in Transition*; cfr.: Statistical Center of Iran (2023), *Annual Report on Education Indicators*; [www.edu.ir](http://www.edu.ir) ; cfr.: UNESCO Iran: [unesco.org/tehran](http://unesco.org/tehran)

<sup>3</sup> Gholami, R. (2022), *The Politics of Schooling in Iran: Gender, Religion, and Class*. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>4</sup> Editorial (2023), *Ecco i dati sull'Educazione Globale 2023 secondo l'UNESCO*, Unesco.

<sup>5</sup> Cfr.: Statistical Center of Iran (2023), *Annual Education Report*; [www.amar.org.ir](http://www.amar.org.ir); cfr.: World Bank (2023), *Iran Education Dashboard*; [www.worldbank.org/iran](http://www.worldbank.org/iran)

university, 60% are women in fields of study such as medicine and human sciences; in engineering degree courses this percentage tends to be equal.

Unemployment among graduates is higher among women (30% vs 18% men).

The objectivity of the numbers seems not to be so dramatic about young Iranians, but it does not fully describe it:

«Our findings provide several policy implications. Specifically, rebuilding and strengthening Iraq's education system should be a priority, particularly through investments in school infrastructure, targeted support programs for conflict-affected cohorts, and initiatives aimed at increasing girls' school enrollment and retention. Given the persistent poverty rates and high out-of-school rates, policies that integrate education recovery with broader social protection measures are critical to break the cycle of conflict-induced disadvantage»<sup>6</sup>.

Women, despite the high rate of university education, participate in the workforce only by 16%; in rural areas, educational services are lacking, teachers are less qualified; economic sanctions have reduced funding for public education (minus 20% since 2018, according to World Bank data)<sup>7</sup>.

## 2. *Civic and religious education*

In Iran, civic and religious education is a fundamental component of the school curriculum, closely aligned with the principles of the Islamic Republic: in primary school, religious education is compulsory for 2-3 hours per week; in secondary school, for 3-4 hours.

Religious education is compulsory in all public and private schools and focuses on some points of a fixed study program: essentially mnemonic learning of the *Quran* (great care is given to the recitation of the verses), Shiite history and doctrine (history of the Imams, Ahl al-Bayt), Islamic ethics.

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<sup>6</sup> Le Nguyen Dieu Anh, Binh Thi Thanh Dang, Trung Xuan Hoang (2025), *The long-term impacts of Iran-Iraq war on education and employment outcomes*, International Journal of Educational Development, Volume 117.

<sup>7</sup> Statistical Center of Iran, <https://amar.org.ir/en>

Considerable attention is given to the teachings of Islamic law (*Fiqh – Sharia*), the legal system that derives from the Quran and the *Sunnah* (the teachings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad).

*Fiqh* includes the study of human actions, classified as: obligatory, prohibited, recommended, disapproved or neutral; *Sharia* is the divine law revealed in Islam, while *Fiqh* is the human interpretation and application of this law. In other words, *Sharia* is the theoretical concept, while *Fiqh* is the concrete practice of how Islamic law is understood, explained and applied by jurists.

In Iranian schools, space is also given to the so-called *Adab*, the set of good manners, etiquette and moral behavior that Muslims are encouraged to practice; it is a concept that covers a wide range of aspects of life, both public and private, and can be translated as courtesy, refinement, respect and decorum.

Civic education Tarbiat-e Madani is taught as part of social sciences or in specific courses. The main themes of the study program are: the Iranian Constitution (great attention to the *Velayat-e Faqih*, Government of the Jurist; Duties towards the Islamic State; Economic and cultural resistance against Western cultural influences (remember that Iran is under embargo); education for the Fatherland (to educate to participate in commemorations and rallies in the square that are arranged by the government).

The traditional Shiite religious education school “hawzah ‘Ilmiyyah” run by religious scholars and born during the “period of occultation”, the *Ghayba* of the XII Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi, from 874 AD, is a completely different matter. This is a fundamental concept in Shiism: it refers to the period in which the last Imam, according to this school of thought, would not have died, but would have “hidden” and made himself invisible to the faithful, waiting to reappear at the end of time to establish an era of justice: «This function has guaranteed the independence of the Hawzah in the sight of the rulers, giving it a very effective role of counter-power»<sup>8</sup>.

There are many references to the nationalist, militaristic and anti-Western

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<sup>8</sup> Editorial (undated), *HAWZAH ‘ILMIYYAH: la Scuola Tradizionale Sciita*, in Islamshia.org, site of Associazione Islamica Imam Mahadi;  
[https://islamshia.org/hawzah-ilmiyyah/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1751790787.6064240932464599609375](https://islamshia.org/hawzah-ilmiyyah/?doing_wp_cron=1751790787.6064240932464599609375)

culture that emerges from specifically religious but also secular study programs; a rigorous examination of Iranian textbooks, with the specific interest in documenting antisemitism, shows incitement to violence and the promotion of hate; the most recent comprehensive study of Iranian textbooks was published over four years ago, in the form of a rigorous, landmark monograph by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education<sup>9</sup>.

### 3. *Limits of freedom of expression*

The Iranian government imposes significant restrictions on teachers and students, often justified under the guise of maintaining national security, islamic values, and political stability.

The death in custody of 22-year-old Jhina (Mahsa) Amini at the hands of Iran's "morality police", following apparent torture, in September 2022, after being arrested for wearing an "inappropriate hijab", was a dramatic illustration of an entire state apparatus designed to discriminate against women (especially those in education) and violate the rights of all with impunity.

Jhina's death, coupled with the regime's predictable denial of responsibility, catalyzed protests in over 140 cities across Iran, to which authorities again responded with repressive force and an internet shutdown.

Hina Amini, now known to the world by her Persian name, Mahsa Amini, like many Kurds used a Persian name in an attempt to avoid systemic discrimination against Kurds and the Kurdish language in Iran; but Jhina was the name by which she identified herself, the name by which her family addressed her, and the name now on her gravestone in Saqqez, Kurdistan.

The Iranian regime strictly controls educational content, censoring to the point of exclusion subjects deemed "un-Islamic" or politically sensitive. Critical theory, gender studies, and Western humanities are often excluded or heavily

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<sup>9</sup> Cfr.: Weinberg, D.E. (02.09.2021), *Incitement: Antisemitism and Violence in Iran's Current State Textbooks*, Anti-Defamation League, New York; [www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org);  
cfr.: Pardo, E.J. (2016), *Iranian Education: The Continuous Revolution*, IMPACT-se; [https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/Iranian-Education\\_The-Continuous-Revolution-2016.pdf](https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/Iranian-Education_The-Continuous-Revolution-2016.pdf)

edited.

One of the Islamic Republic of Iran's new tactics of digital repression has been preventing people in Iran from accessing foreign platforms. We worked with Meta throughout 2022 on solutions that would enable access to Instagram and WhatsApp: the country's most popular platforms<sup>10</sup>.

Professors and academics who criticize government policies face dismissal, forced retirement, or imprisonment. Many have been barred from teaching due to alleged "anti-regime" activities.

Iranian authorities have increased their crackdown on peaceful dissent and expression through intimidation, arrests, prosecutions, and trials of students, artists, academics and their family members of those who were killed during the 2022 protests. They have also responded to the widespread defiance of the compulsory hijab by ramping up their efforts to impose the dress code on women, using a range of tactics, including legal summonses, new legislative initiatives, and increasing pressure on private business to impose hijab rules<sup>11</sup>.

Amnesty International in 2024 denounced the systematic repression by the Iranian authorities against students who participate in peaceful protests. It highlights that students are subjected to violent repression by Iranian security forces guilty of excesses, arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment against young people protesting for human rights and freedom. Many students have been detained without formal charges, often in secret centers, subjected to psychological and physical pressure, summary trials, denial of access to lawyers; convictions are based on "confessions" extracted under torture. It is impossible for students to engage in politics, because activists are expelled from universities or banned from studying, while the authorities increase surveillance on campuses. Amnesty has long called on the global community to condemn Iran and protect the rights of students, calling for the immediate release of those detained for political reasons.

The government has systematically dismantled independent student groups,

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<sup>10</sup> Editorial (2 April 2024), *Digital freedom and protest in the UN's Fact-Finding Mission report*, Article 19.

<sup>11</sup> Editorial (15 September 2023), *Iran's Crackdown on Dissenting Academics*, Human Rights Watch.

replacing them with state-affiliated bodies (e.g., *Basij Student Organization*)<sup>12</sup>: students participating in protests (e.g., the 2022-2023 *Woman, Life, Freedom* movement) have been arrested, tortured, or expelled<sup>13</sup>. Female students and teachers risk suspension or expulsion for defying compulsory hijab laws<sup>14</sup>. Many academic websites (e.g., JSTOR, Google Scholar) are blocked, hindering research<sup>15</sup>; students and teachers face monitoring for expressing dissent on social media; teachers that protest poor salaries and working conditions, leading to arrests (e.g., the 2022 nationwide teachers' strike)<sup>16</sup>.

Many academics and students emigrate due to political repression and limited career prospects<sup>17</sup>.

Especially at universities, student protests highlight how professors use their power to impose themselves on students, violating ethical boundaries, stripping them of their intellectual property rights for research, and other dishonorable practices<sup>18</sup>.

The subordination of students to teachers is a deeply felt problem; it is well known that the Iranian education system faces significant challenges related to independence and intellectual freedom, which can exacerbate generational conflict. The ongoing conflict in the country will inevitably have a negative impact on the education and safety of students who reject cultural

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<sup>12</sup> Amnesty International (2014), *Silenced, expelled, imprisoned: repression of students and academics in Iran*, Etico - UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning; cfr.: Amnesty International (2023), *Iran: Silenced, expelled, imprisoned*, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/mde130152014en.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Mehrnami, S. (3 December 2024), *Overcrowding, Teacher Shortages, and 'Learning Poverty': Education Crisis in Iran*, Iranwire; <https://iranwire.com/en/features/136723-overcrowding-teacher-shortages-and-learning-poverty-education-crisis-in-iran/>

<sup>14</sup> Ghobadi, P. (4 November 2024), *Iran urged to release woman detained after undressing at university*, BBC Persian.

<sup>15</sup> Payande, I. (1 June 2024), *Internet in Iran: Censorship, Sanctions, and the Challenges Facing Users*, SSRN; [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=4879453](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4879453)

<sup>16</sup> Editorial (2023), *Iran's Teachers Demand Fair Pay*, Radio Farda; <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-teachers-protests-pay/31679689.html>

<sup>17</sup> Cfr.: Taghati, A. (5 June 2025), *The Crisis of Education and School Dropouts in Iran*, NCRI National Council of Resistance of Iran; <https://www.ncr-iran.org/en/>  
cfr.: Editorial (6 March 2023), *Monday briefing: Why are hundreds of Iranian schoolgirls getting sick*, The Guardian.

<sup>18</sup> Salita, J.T. (2010), *Authorship practices in Asian cultures*, Write Stuff, 19 (1), pp. 36-38.

impositions<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> H. Weisi, H., Ahmadi, R. (2025), *Student voice: Power relations and culture-sensitivity in authorship legitimacy of research publications in Iran*, International Journal of Educational Development 114 – 103261



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## 7. SERVICE-BASED LEARNING FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT:

How can we shape new, democratic, multicultural minds that are open to society by pioneering an innovative approach to dialogical education through relationships grounded in equality, reciprocity, and responsibility? What training is needed for teachers?

What pedagogical approaches should be used to foster a new cosmopolitan awareness?

Faced with this educational emergency, it is essential to develop educational strategies and responses that foster an increasingly intercultural understanding.

This is not an easy goal to achieve, as it involves educators from diverse educational backgrounds, including teachers, who are the first to be called upon to question their own paradigms with the aim of mitigating the

ethnocentrism present in our education system.

*Keyword:* intercultural; inclusion; school; digital; service learning.

## 1. Introduction

Being able to instill in students a new pedagogical sensitivity capable of valorizing civic engagement together with the ethics of responsibility <sup>1</sup> as recalled in the thought of Don Milani, means being able to overcome selfishness and narcissism in favor of a desire to build a solid social system based on equality, solidarity and inclusion<sup>2</sup>.

Developing an awareness of the common good, fostering in everyone a shared sense of responsibility for a collective and shared ethic, fostering a heightened sense of moral responsibility, whose distinctive feature is its transversal and pervasive nature, and promoting an ethic of responsibility throughout school, means activating a critical spirit in each student, providing them with functional tools for reading and interpreting reality. It is important, therefore, to create a type of school that works to educate itself and educate to participate with others in the life of the city by gaining experience through the interaction of that common citizenship which is first and foremost human<sup>3</sup>.

The use of the Service Learning pedagogical approach proves to be useful in achieving the objectives described above, since through the production of a significant experience, it is able to combine both the aims of specific learning objectives and the development of civic responsibility in the student<sup>4</sup>.

The Service Learning approach is characterised by the pedagogical intention of placing the integral development of the person at the centre of its structure,

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<sup>1</sup> Jonas, H. (1993). Il principio responsabilità. Un'etica per la civiltà tecnologica. tr. it., Einaudi, Torino.

<sup>2</sup> Desideri, M., & Betti, C. (2017). L'inattuale attualità di Lettera a una professoressa. *Rassegna di pedagogia: Pädagogische Umschau: trimestrale di cultura pedagogica*: LXXV, 1/2, 2017, 109-121.

<sup>3</sup> Cestaro, M. (2025). Genitori "di seconda generazione": "linee guida" per la formazione di una mediazione genitoriale interculturale nella città. *Formazione & insegnamento*, 16(2 Suppl.), 1-xx.

<sup>4</sup> Ehrlich, T. (1996). «Forward», in B. Jacoby et al., *Service Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, p.XI.

valorising the empowerment of the individual who actively contributes to the construction of himself and of the community in which he lives<sup>5</sup>.

Service-Learning understands the human being as an intentional consciousness in relation to himself and his world. Helping each person infuse intentionality into their actions and relationships appears, for Service-Learning, to be the sine qua non of that specific and constitutive planning of education, which takes on the task of improving, of accessing that utopia, which should motivate and attract the work of human beings and, specifically, of the pedagogical world<sup>6</sup>.

Using a Service learning approach allows the school to break out of its often closed world and repository of knowledge, in favor of the students' ability to put at the service of the community what is learned during the normal course of teaching activities, in order to contribute to the improvement of the context in which the school is inserted, thus obtaining an added value to the teaching-learning process<sup>7</sup>.

This approach leads to rethinking content and methods according to the logic of improving reality, combining the learning phase with constructive community service. In this way, students have the opportunity to play an active role, as protagonists in all phases of the project, from the conception to the implementation of solidarity activities (related to a need present in the community) to the evaluation<sup>8</sup>.

With Service Learning, schools become active participants in the life of the community to which they belong, assuming a social responsibility aimed at improving it.

Obviously, the focus remains on learning, which becomes more aware, self-reflective, and metacognitive, in a dynamic of community service,

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<sup>5</sup> Selmo, L. (2018). *Service-Learning e l'eredità pedagogica di Paulo Freire*, in S. Colazzo (ed.), *Service-Learning: Teoria, pratica e valori per una formazione inclusiva*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

<sup>6</sup> Milan, G. (2019). Il valore del Service Learning come metodologia pedagogica in una prospettiva di comunità, in Id., *Didattica della solidarietà*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

<sup>7</sup> Fiorin, I. (2017). *La sfida dell'insegnamento. Fondamenti di didattica generale*, Mondadori Università, Milano.

<sup>8</sup> Maulini, C., Cuccaro, A., Gentilozzi, C., & Miatto, E. (2025). Il Service Learning nella cornice dell'Embodied Cognition. *Journal of Inclusive Methodology and Technology in Learning and Teaching*, 5(2).

participation, and reciprocity,

as well as in an interdisciplinary dimension, as dictated by the 2030 Agenda, which entrusts schools with the delicate task of providing quality, equitable, and inclusive education, training, and training programs. Only through individual participation in global citizenship is it possible to “end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and ensure that all human beings can realize their potential with dignity and equality in a healthy environment”<sup>9</sup>.

### *2. Intercultural teaching through service learning*

Service Learning bases its principles on the implementation of educational activities in real-life contexts, whose starting point is the response, in terms of the implementation of a service, to a true and felt need of the community<sup>10</sup>, in order to create the conditions favorable to the construction of identity in its dual guise of I and we.

<i>Service Learning Objectives</i>	
<i>1</i>	Involve students and community members in defining the project and its outcomes <sup>11</sup>
<i>2</i>	To offer an effective and valuable service to be carried out for and with the community <sup>12</sup>
<i>3</i>	Develop learning and advanced cognitive and metacognitive skills, as well as the student's civic sense,

<sup>9</sup> Agenda 2030. <https://unric.org/it/agenda-2030/>.

<sup>10</sup> Tapia, M.N. (2006). *Educazione e solidarietà. La pedagogia dell'apprendimento-servizio*. Città Nuova Editrice, Roma.

<sup>11</sup> Lear, D.W., Sanchez, A. (2013). Sustained Engagement with a Single Community Partner. in *Hispania*, vol. 96, n. 2, pp. 238-251.

<sup>12</sup> Bringle, R.G., Phillips, M. Hudson, M. (2004). *The Measure of Service Learning: Research Scales to Assess Student Experiences* [online]. American Psychological Association.

	through multiple opportunities for reflection <sup>13</sup>
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*Table 1: The objectives of Service Learning*

In the process of identity formation and the system of social relations, the local area represents a place of relationships between people, characterized by culture, tradition, and history. These aspects become, in the relationship, a moment of exchange between institutional representatives and citizens.

The pedagogical approach of Service Learning certainly engages with the cultural identity of the local area, aiming to enhance the plurality of a globalized society.

In Italy, the idea of a school rooted in the local area consists of:

- actively collaborating in the removal of obstacles;
- working towards a solid inclusive culture, established since Law No. 517/77;
- focusing, through the “National Guidelines for the Curriculum of Preschool and the First Cycle of Education” of 2012, on the formation and practice of active citizenship;
- introducing, through Law 92/2019, the transversal teaching of civic education in the first and second cycle of education;
- Extending the School-Work Alternation (now PCTO) program to all secondary schools, as well as the educational orientation program for the final year of middle school and the final three years of high school (Ministerial Decree no. 328 of December 22, 2022) to facilitate self-awareness and the knowledge of the educational, occupational, social, cultural, and economic context of reference, is an educational utopia that, with the Service Learning approach, can become reality.

This requires establishing this approach to teaching within its organization and at the theoretical and regulatory level.

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<sup>13</sup> Eyler, J., Giles, D.E. (1999). *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

In Italy, the Ministry of Education, in agreement with INDIRE, has introduced measures to support its implementation through an experimental program implemented in 2016 in some regions, culminating in the Service Learning Olympics.

### *3. Service Learning as an intercultural approach*

Living in a multicultural society means coexisting in the same territory and the same space of experience, which inevitably generates small transformations, which require the development of a cosmopolitan competence essential for social communication and the sustenance of democracy.

For Dewey, democracy is not simply a formal structure, but a self-determining and self-legislative “community of communities” where education proves to be the primary means for its ongoing development.

«A democracy is more than a form of government. It is first and foremost a form of social life, of continuously communicated experience. The spatial expansion of the number of individuals sharing an interest to such an extent that each must relate his action to that of others and consider the actions of others to give a reason and direction to his own is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory that prevented men from grasping the full meaning of their activity. These more numerous and more varied points of contact denote a greater diversity of stimuli to which an individual must respond and consequently stimulate the variation of his action»<sup>14</sup>.

Cohabiting the world produces intellectual and cultural benefits, which deserve to be pursued with awareness and intentionality. Intercultural interaction is not only a strategy for fostering peaceful coexistence, crucial as it is, but also a way for each individual to broaden, deepen, and enrich their repertoire of meanings, expanding their ability to make sense of the world and of others.

From this perspective, intercultural education should not be considered merely as a defense mechanism against cultural conflicts, but as a fundamental

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<sup>14</sup> Dewey, J. (2000). *Democrazia ed educazione*. Editori Riuniti, Roma.

commitment to bridging the gap between a cosmopolitan world and a mentality that, if not shaped by an open perspective, risks remaining limited. Therefore, the role of education as a catalyst for building a solid and inclusive democracy is of fundamental importance.

The task of educating for democracy and global citizenship falls to schools, as they are the privileged place where the skills necessary for active and informed participation in democratic life are built.

For Dewey, school represents a continuous social process that allows individuals to develop their critical skills and actively participate in society.

Nussbaum argues that an education oriented toward global citizenship must promote intercultural understanding and respect for differences, essential elements for an inclusive and pluralistic democracy.<sup>15</sup>

For Cambi, identity must not be cancelled but questioned as an open perspective to promote a critical and dynamic vision of cultures.<sup>16</sup>

Di Giacinto believes that understanding the other's point of view means knowing how to decentralize oneself with respect to one's own frame of reference, adapting one's thought models to changing contexts.<sup>17</sup>

For Pinto Minerva, the creation of conditions for an authentic dialogue between cultures requires a migrant and dynamic thought, capable of overcoming dogmatic and stereotyped positions.<sup>18</sup>

This plural and dialogical thinking supports principles of solidarity, mutual respect, discussion, and cooperation, essential to an inclusive and multiculturally open democratic society.

The perspective of deconstructing social representations, prejudices, and false beliefs that condition social relationships, combined with the promotion of the ability to decenter one's perspective, represents an effective response for

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<sup>15</sup> Nussbaum, M. C. (2016). *Not for profit: why democracy needs the humanities*-Updated edition.

<sup>16</sup> Cambi, F. (2001). *La cura di sé come processo formativo*. Carocci, Roma.

<sup>17</sup> Di Giacinto, A. (2002). *Comprendere l'altro*. FrancoAngeli, Milano.

<sup>18</sup> Pinto Minerva, F. (2002). *Educazione interculturale: modelli e percorsi*. Armando Editore, Roma.



schools to the challenges of intercultural education. Schools must intervene in the dialectic of identity/otherness to prevent aggressive ethnocentrism and foster the balanced development of individuals ready to face a rapidly evolving world of cultural hybridization.

Schools therefore assume a central role in facilitating dialogue, encounters, and the transmission of critical and multicultural knowledge, promoting a pedagogy of listening and the exchange of symbols, identities, and collective memories, fostering the development of a cosmopolitan mindset, and focusing on building a cognitive and affective space for discussion and encounter.

One of the most significant challenges in education is finding a balance between the universal and the individual, aiming for an education that values humanity and develops its potential. Forming a balanced identity is urgent, as rapid social transformations often precede individuals' ability to adapt, risking defining identity more through differentiation than community integration. In this context, Milan emphasizes that "Education cannot be a casual, improvised, extemporaneous activity; otherwise, it would be reduced to an action entirely dependent on the uncontrollable flow of events, on a determinism that leaves no room for authentic planning, for improvement<sup>19</sup>.

This pedagogical approach fosters an open school, in constant dialogue with the social context, encouraging students not only to acquire theoretical knowledge but also to develop values, skills, and attitudes that strengthen civic engagement and personal empowerment.

Service Learning places relationships and encounters with others at its core, promoting meaningful interaction between students and the community. It is also distinguished by its strong pedagogical intention to promote complete personal development, which goes beyond simple instruction to embrace a holistic vision of education. In Service Learning, the human being is viewed as an intentional consciousness, constantly in relationship with themselves and the world around them, oriented toward infusing intentionality into their actions and relationships. This is a fundamental element for an educational project that goes beyond the improvement of reality but supports a pedagogical utopia capable of inspiring and guiding people's actions and thoughts. This vision is relevant to contemporary pedagogy, as it helps shape

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<sup>19</sup> Milan, G. (2006). Alla scoperta di Paulo Freire nella pedagogia attuale. CLEUP, Padova.

a perspective that goes beyond the simple transmission of knowledge, but aims to educate aware, active, and responsible individuals committed to building a more just and supportive society.

The Service Learning pedagogical approach allows schools to transcend their traditional role as custodians of knowledge, encouraging students to share what they learn in class for the benefit of the community, fostering an attitude of responsibility and care for themselves, others, and the environment.

School is notoriously a key institution, a place where global citizenship is educated and developed, building the foundations for individual and systemic resilience. However, the pursuit of equitable, quality, and inclusive education is insufficient to spark change in the country unless the social and cultural approach is shifted from the centrality of “I” to “We”.

An educational approach that can foster individual and social transformation by accompanying the shift toward a new humanism is the pedagogical proposal of Intercultural Service Learning.

The Intercultural Service Learning (ISL) approach seeks to provide a meaningful response to the challenges of contemporary education by promoting global citizenship and intercultural awareness. Furthermore, it seeks to specifically integrate intercultural interaction and dialogue, addressing the need to develop cosmopolitan skills that facilitate social communication and contribute to the support of democracy. In the context of Intercultural Service Learning, education is not only a means of fostering peaceful coexistence but also becomes a tool for enriching the repertoire of personal meanings, expanding the ability to interpret the world and relate to others authentically.

The participation in Intercultural Service Learning projects requires students to engage in activities that respond to the real needs of the community, strengthening their sense of responsibility and a deep understanding of cultural dynamics. Through these experiences, students not only develop curricular and civic skills, but also learn to consider cultural diversity as a resource for their personal and community journey. This pedagogical approach encourages critical reflection on service experiences, fostering empathy and a decentralized perspective. Reflection and ongoing interaction with different cultural contexts allow students to overcome stereotyped

positions and develop a more inclusive and respectful vision of diversity.

In this way, Intercultural Service Learning becomes a means of forming a balanced identity, capable of integrating one's being into a broader and more complex context, while promoting a critical and dynamic vision of cultures. It offers a space for social experimentation, where cultural barriers can be overcome and where meaningful learning is deeply connected to service experiences and collaboration.

The collaborative approach of Intercultural Service Learning allows students to become co-constructors of their own knowledge, creating a learning environment that is not only geared towards the transmission of knowledge, but also towards interaction and exchange between different cultures.

Intercultural Service Learning is therefore intended as a tool for integrating theory and practice, where learning occurs in a context of reciprocity and dialogue. This pedagogical approach overcomes cultural barriers and promotes a global vision, in which students become active participants in the process of building a more equitable and inclusive society. In this sense, intercultural education is not only a mechanism for fostering peaceful coexistence, but also becomes a driver for social change, developing in students a critical awareness and social responsibility that goes beyond the simple acquisition of knowledge. In this way, not only are we developing informed and active citizens, but we also contribute to the construction of a global community, where respect for differences and solidarity are fundamental to democratic, peaceful, and inclusive coexistence.

#### *4. Educating for global citizenship*

The relationship that can be created between the digital world, intercultural education, and Service Learning is strongly supported by Italian education policies, which recognize the crucial role of digital technologies in fostering educational innovation and inclusion. In this regard, the National Digital School Plan (PNSD), introduced by Law 107/2015<sup>20</sup>, represents the regulatory framework for the digital transformation of Italian schools, highlighting the importance of integrating digital technologies into learning paths to develop

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2015/07/15/15G00122/s>

transversal skills and make schools a place of continuous innovation. This enables schools to respond to global challenges and leverage technology as a key tool for promoting new forms of learning, including experiential and intercultural learning promoted by Service Learning. Among the main objectives of the PNSD is the promotion of informed digital citizenship, which aims to prepare students to use technology critically and responsibly, creating spaces for active participation and fostering meaningful intercultural experiences, in line with the principles of Service Learning.

In this sense, Italian Ministerial Decree No. 110/2016 <sup>21</sup> on digital skills and educational innovation reinforces this vision, emphasizing that digital education is an essential component of the school curriculum and encouraging the development of projects that leverage technologies to enhance active learning and student engagement in practical and collaborative activities, including citizenship programs.

This regulatory framework supports the idea that digital education can act as a catalyst for expanding intercultural education, promoting more inclusive and globally oriented teaching. The integration of digital technologies offers students the opportunity to connect with external communities, participate in collaborative projects, and enjoy learning experiences that foster the development of social responsibility, inclusion, and the ability to interact in an increasingly interconnected world<sup>22</sup>.

The use of digital within Service Learning experiences facilitates the creation of spaces for global dialogue, as it allows students to participate in intercultural projects that transcend geographical borders, making interaction with different communities possible and amplifying the scope of intercultural experiences, as well as offering a global, accessible and inclusive education<sup>23</sup>.

Furthermore, digital media allows for documenting, reflecting on, and sharing the Service Learning experience, creating a network for the real-time exchange of practices and ideas. The documentation phase occurs through videos, blogs, and digital portfolios, which not only helps enhance students' experiences but also expands the educational impact of the activities themselves, providing

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<sup>21</sup> MIUR, (2016). Decreto Ministeriale n. 110/2016 sulle competenze digitali. Roma, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Indire, (2022). Dentro e fuori la scuola: esperienze di innovazione educativa. Firenze, pp. 45, 78.

<sup>23</sup> Fiorin, I. (2017). La sfida dell'insegnamento. Mondadori università-Mondadori education.

insights and best practices for other school and community contexts<sup>24</sup>.

Digital technology, therefore, demonstrates its importance both as a tool for accessing and expanding knowledge through new resources, and as a device that enhances students' interpersonal and intercultural skills. It allows them to experience active citizenship on a global level, facilitating the creation of collaborative networks between schools in different countries, promoting joint projects, and fostering the development of intercultural empathy through the direct exchange of experiences and ideas. In this way, digital technology enables us to overcome physical and cultural barriers, offering students learning opportunities that prepare them to interact in an increasingly globalized and interconnected society<sup>25</sup>.

As a result, Service Learning is enriched with new potential and challenges that, if properly addressed, can foster in students a greater awareness of their role as global citizens and intercultural competence capable of promoting a more inclusive society. The ability to critically reflect on one's experiences and to connect with others, valuing diversity, is an integral part of the educational process that Service Learning promotes, and the use of digital media only amplifies its scope and effectiveness, making the learning process more dynamic and accessible<sup>26</sup>.

The school's goal is to provide students with key skills to address the challenges of today's world, which undoubtedly include critical thinking, effective communication, collaboration, and creativity, along with digital and intercultural skills that enable them to navigate and actively participate in an increasingly globalized and technologically advanced society. This emphasizes the opportunity to build bridges between different cultures and contexts, fostering understanding, mutual respect, and the co-construction of shared meaning, preparing them to become aware and responsible global citizens.

Digital media, through e-learning platforms, webinars, forums, and online communication tools, serves as an amplifier of opportunities for action, creating learning environments that transcend the physical confines of the

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<sup>24</sup> Mortari, S. (2017). *Ricerca e formazione. Prospettive di pedagogia interculturale*. Carocci, Roma, p. 35.

<sup>25</sup> Tapia, M. N. (2006). *Educazione e solidarietà. La pedagogia dell'apprendimento-servizio* (Vol. 13). Città Nuova.

<sup>26</sup> Sergiovanni, T. J. (1999). *Building community in schools*. John Wiley & Sons.

school, encouraging students' active and informed involvement in social transformation projects, and providing them with the tools to take concrete action on issues of global relevance. The combination of service learning, digital media, and interculturality thus represents a powerful pedagogical tool for developing global citizens capable of interacting effectively in a complex and multifaceted society, prepared to contribute to improving society through the informed and critical use of technology. In this process, the role of the teacher is transformed, becoming a facilitator of intercultural dialogue and a promoter of critical reflection, capable of stimulating active and conscious participation in students in the construction of a common future<sup>27</sup>.

### 5. Conclusion

This research project aims, within the pedagogical field, to investigate innovative educational strategies that involve the use of service learning to address the challenges of contemporary global society, which are essential to fostering the development of informed, competent, and responsible citizens.

Using a dynamic and innovative pedagogical approach capable of promoting the development of intercultural, social, and civic skills in schools means integrating practical community service experiences into the teaching-learning process, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world, multicultural contexts.

Service learning represents a valid alternative capable of producing collaborative and interactive activities in which students are exposed to diverse cultural perspectives, thus fostering empathy, mutual understanding, and respect for diversity. The development of these skills is crucial to addressing the dynamics of globalization and multiculturalism, and the educational role of schools must also be conceived as a generative space for planning, innovation, and meaning-making. School, therefore, is not just a place for the transmission of knowledge but is increasingly becoming a context in which students can develop key skills to address the challenges of the contemporary world. Student involvement in concrete and participatory activities becomes an effective pedagogical tool for integrating theory and

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<sup>27</sup> Lotti, L. (2020). *Progettare il Service Learning nella scuola italiana*. Franco Angeli, Milano, p. 33.

practice, fostering authentic and meaningful learning<sup>28</sup>.

The importance of an experiential approach, dictated by Service Learning, highlights the ability to offer direct contact with multicultural realities and engagement in projects that benefit the community through the digital world. This provides students with an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of their actions and their role as global citizens.

In this way, learning becomes an active and dynamic process, in which the student is at the center and participates in the construction of their own knowledge through concrete experiences and critical reflection. This allows for the formation of individuals who are aware of global interdependencies, open to intercultural dialogue, and capable of contributing to the construction of more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable societies<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> De Santis, T. (2025). *Contesti multiculturali: strategie didattiche inclusive e interculturali applicate in classi plurilingue. Una ricerca empirica nella scuola secondaria di II grado*. *IUL Research*, 6(11), 175-192.

<sup>29</sup> Maddalena, S. (2025). *IbridAzioni pedagogiche tra interculturalità, narrazione di sé e resilienza*. *Formazione & insegnamento*, 21(1), 1-xx.



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## 8. EDUCATING ABOUT INTERCULTURALITY

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### ABSTRACT:

The current global context is characterized by marked cultural diversity, meaning that people's actions are interdependent and everyone can express, propose, or impose their own contribution. Each individual, person, or institution contributes to the redefinition of the system with cultural, social, and anthropological expressions, with personal needs in which the surrounding world and humanity are part of an organic whole and in continuous relationship.

In such circumstances, the "sense of living and coexisting"<sup>1</sup> undoubtedly has a strong impact, with aspects present in everyday life that fuel a sense of fragility<sup>2</sup>, uncertainty<sup>3</sup>, impoverishment of thought and morality<sup>4</sup> and civic

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<sup>1</sup> Ubbiali, M. (2023), *Promuovere l'impegno civico-sociale educando all'amicizia. Una ricerca educativa nella scuola*, in M. Milana, P. Perillo, M. Muscarà, F. Agrusti (eds.), *Il lavoro educativo per affrontare le fragilità individuali, istituzionali e sociali*, pp. 61-97, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

<sup>2</sup> Iori, V., Rampazi M. (2008). *Nuove fragilità e lavoro di cura*, Unicopli, Milano 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Cambi, F. (2000), *La "paideia" nell'epoca attuale dell'incertezza*, Studi sulla Formazione/Open Journal of Education, 26(2), pp. 185-189, 2023. See: E. Morin (2022), *Riforma del pensiero e riforma dell'insegnamento*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano.

<sup>4</sup> Mortari, L. (2019). *Ricerca e pratica dell'etica delle virtù*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano.

disengagement<sup>5</sup>.

From this emerges a reflection on the idea of community in the context of complexity, interpreted in its etymological meaning of “cum munus,” that is, as a gift to others, as a place of exchange that evokes our otherness and our potential, which can be expressed not only by learning to be alone with ourselves, but also together with others<sup>6</sup>.

*Keyword:* interculturality; inclusion; participation; education

## 1. Introduction

«An education that nurtures respect for all, building a sense of belonging to a common humanity that helps students become responsible, active global citizens. It encourages students of all ages to take active roles in addressing and solving local and global challenges, to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, and safe world that fosters cultural diversity and tolerance, gender equality and human rights, peace, and nonviolence»<sup>7</sup>.

In today's society, characterized by a fusion of the local and the global, where contemporaneity is fluid, we find cultural hybridizations, new dimensions of identity, new nomadisms, new ideas of collectivity and citizenship that arise from multiple affiliations where there is a desire to continuously and consistently seek the well-being, inclusion, and belonging of each individual. This highlights the need to learn to understand others, focusing on the importance of recognizing and giving voice to others, in order to enable full participation in school education and in non-formal and informal contexts, places where collective and non-collective spaces of identity are constructed. It is therefore necessary to ensure the presence of fertile ground to foster the development of values of participation and action, necessary to foster feelings of common ground towards social forms of living, in which everyone recognizes themselves as an integral and interacting part.

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<sup>5</sup> Putnam, R.D. (2001). Civic Disengagement in Contemporary America, *Government and Opposition*, 36(2), pp. 135-156.

<sup>6</sup> Regni, R. (2003). *Viaggio verso l'altro: Comunicazione, relazione, educazione*. Armando, Roma.

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO, 194., <https://www.ohchr.org/en/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

From this perspective, school becomes a pivotal educational element, capable of creating a generative space for education, transformation, pedagogical planning, and the recomposition of the heterogeneous and fragmented social fabric. The school institution thus becomes an entity capable of constructing, experimenting, and negotiating an educational project whose goal is an ethic of diversity<sup>8</sup>.

If schools are to educate about diversity, then a type of intercultural education must necessarily be considered as the best approach to promote dialogue as it is capable of fostering an open mindset<sup>9</sup>, able to operate within “mental boundaries” and eliminate prejudices that cloud the way of seeing others<sup>10</sup> and support the development of a way of thinking capable of building a plural identity<sup>11</sup>.

## *2. The need to educate in interculturality*

While it is true that every human being, in every age and place, has an essential need for education, it is equally true that, in the era of globalization and global interdependence, all education must be interpreted through a vision in which the intercultural aspect dominates, whereby the concepts of identity and culture are not longer considered static, but dynamic and constantly evolving.

The other and life in a complex and multicultural society must no longer be seen as risks of hardship or illness, but as opportunities for both individual and collective enrichment and growth.

Various pedagogical models have been implemented in Europe, including transcultural, multicultural, and intercultural<sup>12</sup> to try to address the failure of past political solutions. In European politics, prominent figures such as Angela

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<sup>8</sup> Granata, A. (2018). *La ricerca dell'altro. Prospettive di pedagogia interculturale*, Carocci, Roma.

<sup>9</sup> Pescarmona, I. (2021), *Intercultura e infanzia nei servizi educativi 0-6: prospettive in dialogo*, Aracne, Roma.

<sup>10</sup> Agostinetto, L. (2022), *L'intercultura in testa. Sguardo e rigore per l'agire educativo quotidiano*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

<sup>11</sup> Fiorucci, M. (2020), *Educazione, formazione e pedagogia in prospettiva interculturale*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

<sup>12</sup> Portera, A. (2013), *Educazione interculturale: Competenze per una società inclusiva*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Merkel, David Cameron, and Nicolas Sarkozy have declared the failure of multiculturalism, accusing it of weakening national identities and fostering the separation of cultures.<sup>13</sup>

Although multiculturalism promotes knowledge and respect for diversity, from a cultural point of view, it is possible to find some limits: a static vision of culture, the suspension of moral or political judgments and a lack of critical evaluation<sup>14</sup>.

Considering intercultural education as a suitable approach to respond to the challenges of the modern era therefore appears to be an essential tool for dealing with the rapid changes and contemporary crises<sup>15</sup>. Encountering an ethnically and culturally diverse individual thus becomes a challenge and an opportunity to reflect on values, rules, and behaviors.

If the concepts of multiculturalism and pluriculturalism evoke a description of the peaceful coexistence of people from different cultures, the prefix “inter” implies a deeper relationship, interaction, and exchange between individuals of different origins. In this sense, the intercultural approach promotes contact, dialogue, and discussion, as they are understood as the ability to manage differences of opinion, disagreements, and conflicts<sup>16</sup>.

The intercultural approach therefore recognizes the opportunities and limitations of both, and thanks to the ability to integrate them into a new synthesis, it is able to enhance encounters, dialogue, discussion, and interaction. This is why the need for intercultural skills capable of effectively managing the complexity and diversity of the contemporary world is

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<sup>13</sup> Merkel, A. (2010), *Discorso alla conferenza della CDU*, 17 ottobre 2010.

Cameron, D. (2011), *Discorso alla Conferenza sulla Sicurezza di Monaco*, 5 febbraio 2011.

Sarkozy, N. (2011), *Intervista alla TV francese*, 10 febbraio 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Perotti, A. (1994), *Educazione interculturale in Europa: Esperienze, politiche, prospettive*, Armando, Roma.

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<sup>15</sup> OECD, (2018). *The Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030*, OECD Publishing, Parigi.

<sup>16</sup> Portera, A. (2013), *Educazione interculturale: Competenze per una società inclusiva*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

emphasized<sup>17</sup>.

## *2.1 Intercultural education in Italy*

Article 2 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, reaffirms that “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind.” This enshrines the universality of human rights, guaranteeing their respect regardless of nationality, race, religion, or other personal characteristics. This document represents a cornerstone in affirming the right to equality for all human beings, including migrants and minorities, highlighting the obligation of nations to respect the dignity and fundamental rights of every person, regardless of their legal status or cultural origins.

Furthermore, Article 2 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Italy with Law No. 176 of 27 May 1991, requires states to respect and guarantee the rights of children without discrimination. Thanks to this, migrant children and their families have the right to equal access to essential services, including education and healthcare, thus ensuring the protection and promotion of the rights of the most vulnerable, even in situations of international mobility.

In Italy, Article 3 of the Constitution affirms the principle of equality, stating that “all citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions.”

This highlights the fundamental value attributed to cultural and linguistic diversity as elements to be safeguarded and promoted, with a view to inclusion and social cohesion.

Over the years, numerous laws have been enacted in the school system to promote inclusion. The most recent are:

- Law no. 53 of 2003, which introduced the concept of personalized curricula, encouraging the creation of educational and teaching programs tailored to the

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<sup>17</sup> UNESCO, (2016), *Global Education Monitoring Report*, UNESCO, Parigi.

needs of

each student, both Italian and foreign, laying the foundation for a more flexible educational approach (also made possible by the school autonomy established by Presidential Decree 275/1999).

- Ministerial Circular No. 24 of 2006, which published the Guidelines for the Reception and Integration of Foreign Students, providing a comprehensive operational framework for schools. The objective of the Guidelines was to indicate the administrative and teaching actions necessary to support the inclusion of minors without Italian citizenship in the education system, promoting appropriate reception programs and fostering integration into the school system. This legislation has been an important support tool for schools, offering concrete guidance on how to manage cultural diversity and how to enhance the presence of foreign students.

- Ministerial Circular No. 2 of 2010, which introduced a regulation establishing a maximum limit of 30% of foreign students per class. This measure aimed to prevent an excessive concentration of foreign students in certain classes, thus ensuring greater diversity, promoting more balanced integration, and a more harmonious coexistence between students of different origins, enhancing the intercultural dimension of the educational process, and contributing to a favorable learning environment for all students.

- Ministerial Circular No. 4233 of February 19, 2014, which issued new Guidelines for the reception and integration of foreign students, providing detailed instructions and practical suggestions to facilitate integration and improve the intercultural teaching approach, opening the discussion with a programmatic question:

“Multicultural school or international school?”

This question appears to acknowledge the limitations of a multicultural approach and argue that intercultural education forms the foundation for the specificity of educational programs for foreign students, within the context of activities that must shape educational action for all. One of the document's key concepts is the importance of adopting an intercultural approach that does not refer exclusively to students of immigrant origin, but to society as a whole, in order to create an educational environment in which each individual feels

recognized and valued. Obviously, this approach must involve all components of the educational community (students, teachers, families, and school staff) regardless of their origin, promoting an educational model in which diversity is considered a resource for mutual enrichment.

This document highlights the very concept of culture, proposing a dynamic and critical vision of exaggerated multiculturalism, which views cultures as closed and immutable entities, which risks fueling ethnic segregation and fostering a stereotypical and reductive view of diversity. Conversely, this document promotes an open intercultural concept, in which culture is viewed as a continuously evolving construct, shaped by relationships and mutual dialogue. Therefore, the exchange and integration of new elements are seen as moments of enrichment for each participant.

In this regard, schools become places of cultural mediation where teachers foster listening, dialogue, and deep understanding, and the intercultural classroom becomes a space for identity building for all students.

In 2022, the National Observatory for the Integration of Foreign Students and for Intercultural Education published the document “Intercultural Guidelines. Ideas and Proposals for the Integration of Students from Migrant Backgrounds,” which aims to introduce innovative terminology—think of the use of expressions such as “students” and “people from migrant backgrounds”—to emphasize a more inclusive approach. Furthermore, this document establishes the idea of people of other cultural identities as “natural cultural mediators.”

Finally, considering this innovative vision, a reformulation of the concept of citizenship is proposed, no longer limited to legal status but expanding to the capacity to be active citizens, capable of exercising rights and fulfilling duties. School is identified as the primary place where citizenship is learned and lived.

### *3. School and intercultural education*

School must be understood as an intrinsically intercultural space where histories and identities intertwine. It is, therefore, a place where different cultures meet, bringing together people with diverse experiences and perspectives, thus creating unique opportunities for dialogue and mutual



enrichment. This highlights how the school system becomes a privileged environment for fostering an educational environment that values differences, promotes coexistence, and inspires students to become informed citizens open to dialogue with others.

The task of intercultural education in schools is to foster a conscious and respectful attitude toward cultural diversity, as well as promote dialogue and mutual understanding between students of different backgrounds, facilitate the use of personalized learning paths tailored to the educational needs of each student, enhance everyone's experiences and cultural skills, and create an inclusive environment where differences are viewed as educational resources that enrich the entire school community and prepare students for life in an increasingly globalized and interconnected society.

School is not limited to teaching concepts such as peace, coexistence, and solidarity, nor can it be thought of as a simple strategy to avoid academic failure. It must be understood as a place where profound and structural change in society occurs, placing the individuals involved in the educational relationship at the center of reflection,

recognizing their individual uniqueness and cultural diversity.

The term interculturality emphasizes the concept of relationality, based on a dynamic of exchange and interaction between different cultures. This implies a continuous process of dialogue and mutual exchange, aimed at fostering a profound and respectful understanding of cultural differences, as well as promoting harmonious and inclusive coexistence<sup>18</sup>.

For Pinto Minerva, intercultural education implies an educational project in which the encounter between different cultures is not limited to passive coexistence or a casual mixing, but to the creation of new cultural syntheses that respect their respective roots and generate original models<sup>19</sup>. This idea aims to respond to the challenges posed by a world characterized by growing interdependencies and transform the mental models with which we perceive others and the new global landscape. For this to happen, it is necessary to build a collaborative network capable of countering prejudice, stereotypes, and

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<sup>18</sup> Nanni, C. (1992), *Pedagogia interculturale: su che basi e in che senso?*, in AA. VV., *Pedagogia interculturale. Problemi e concetti*, La Scuola, Brescia.

<sup>19</sup> Pinto Minerva, F. (2002), *L'intercultura*, Laterza, Roma.

hostility, in order to promote an inclusive and open vision.

In the school context, interculturality should not be thought of as a separate discipline, but rather as a principle that pervades the entire educational system. In this regard, in his article “Intercultural Dimensions of Education,” Skubic<sup>20</sup> identifies four fundamental components of the principle of interculturality in pedagogy (see Table 1).

1	<i>Equality between different cultures</i>	Intercultural pedagogy promotes equality between different cultures and ethnicities.
2	<i>Non-negative attitude towards diversity</i>	The intercultural approach implies an open and respectful dimension towards others.
3	<i>Educational success for minority groups</i>	The goal is to ensure a system that allows real educational success for all, including minorities.
4	<i>Development of community values</i>	Schools must promote the values of coexistence and community.

Table 1: four fundamental components of Skubic’s principle of interculturality

The author argues that interculturality must influence the entire school system and not be limited to certain sectors, emphasizing the importance of the central role of the student/human being in school/society, countering the risks posed by global commercialization and consumerism.

Intercultural education, understood in this way, therefore promotes the deconstruction and reconstruction of educational processes, whereby the

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<sup>20</sup> Ermenc Skubic, K., (2016), *Dimensioni interculturali dell'educazione*, ResearchGate.

classroom becomes a laboratory for action research, a metacognitive space in which learning becomes meaningful, capable of contributing to mutual well-being, also thanks to the use of new pedagogical approaches<sup>21</sup>.

Intercultural education, therefore, should not be considered an additional content, but rather a pedagogical aspect that permeates and permeates the entire educational process. From this perspective, the challenge of intercultural teaching lies in finding a balance between relationality and the shared construction of knowledge between teachers and students, enhancing the dynamism that arises from encounters and the ordinary enriched by diverse perspectives. Therefore, the intercultural approach is based on a subjective relationship, in which cultural affiliations are inalienable dimensions of the subjects involved. Furthermore, relationality should be understood as an authentic and natural dimension, in which exchange and dynamic, mutual growth occur. Finally, it is important to clarify that this process becomes central not only for intercultural classrooms, but also for monocultural situations, since the educational dynamic always requires active collaboration between all parties involved and, if integrated as a principle, becomes a criterion for evaluating the quality of the educational system.

#### 4. Conclusion

This research is part of the field of pedagogical studies that explore innovative educational strategies to address the challenges of contemporary global society, aiming to foster the development of aware, competent, and responsible citizens.

Using a dynamic and innovative pedagogical approach capable of promoting the development of intercultural, social, and civic skills in schools means integrating practical community service experiences into the teaching-learning process, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world, multicultural contexts.

Through collaborative and interactive activities, students are exposed to diverse cultural perspectives, thus fostering empathy, mutual understanding,

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<sup>21</sup> Bertozzi, R. (2025), *Sinti youth and challenges to changing educational practices*, EDUCAZIONE INTERCULTURALE, 23(1), 17-29.

and respect for diversity. As highlighted by international literature<sup>22</sup>, the development of these skills is crucial to address the dynamics of globalization and multiculturalism.

A central aspect that emerged from this work is the transformative role of schools as a generative space for planning, innovation, and meaning-making. School, therefore, is not just a place for the transmission of knowledge, but is increasingly becoming a context in which students can develop key skills to address the challenges of the contemporary world. Student involvement in concrete and participatory activities becomes an effective pedagogical tool for integrating theory and practice, fostering authentic and meaningful learning<sup>23</sup>.

The importance of an experiential approach that offers direct contact with multicultural realities and engagement in projects that benefit the community provides students with an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of their actions and their role as global citizens.

This is also confirmed by contemporary pedagogy, which considers the combination of theory and practice a fundamental element for meaningful and transformative learning. Thus, learning becomes an active and dynamic process, in which the student is at the center and participates in the construction of their own knowledge through concrete experiences and critical reflection. This allows for the formation of individuals who are aware of global interdependencies, open to intercultural dialogue, and capable of contributing to the construction of more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable societies<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> De Santis, T. (2025). Contesti multiculturali: strategie didattiche inclusive e interculturali applicate in classi plurilingue. Una ricerca empirica nella scuola secondaria di II grado. *IUL Research*, 6(11), 175-192.

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# DIDASKALOI

RIVISTA SCIENTIFICA DI STUDI PEDAGOGICI

UNESCO, (2016), *Global Education Monitoring Report*. UNESCO, Parigi.

## 9. LEARNING EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DOCTOR-PATIENT INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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### ABSTRACT:

Intercultural communication between doctors and patients represents a significant challenge for the healthcare industry. This article aims to conduct an integrative review that explores and summarizes the current literature examining cultural factors that influence the communication experience of patients and doctors in healthcare settings and to provide an evidence-based solution.

The approach of Whittemore and Knafl (2005) was used to conduct this review. Research studies were retrieved from Medline/PubMed, Embassy, CINAHL, PsycInfo, ProQuest, Scopus, Web of Science, and Cochrane Review. This review included 1,752 English-language articles published between 2010 and 2024.

The results revealed a difference in physicians' communication behavior when interacting with patients from different cultural backgrounds compared to those from the same cultural background. Specifically, when communicating with patients from different cultural backgrounds, physicians were authoritarian, focused on biomedicine, and did not involve patients in the decision-making process. Patient behaviors during visits, their experiences, and their perceptions of the quality of care during intercultural visits were varied and inconclusive. Patients were often found to exaggerate their respect for physicians, feel uncomfortable with their physicians' direct communication



style, be less proactive, demonstrate poor health literacy, and feel shy.

These behaviors have been attributed to language differences, differences in illness perception, perceptions of healthcare communication, prejudices, preconceptions, physicians' training experience, and time spent on visits. Furthermore, ineffective communication during intercultural visits has been observed to impact patient satisfaction, medical adherence, continuity of care, physician professional satisfaction, and the ability to make an accurate diagnosis. Therefore, effective communication plays a significant role in patient and physician satisfaction.

**Keywords:** communication; intercultural communication; physician; patient.

## 1. Introduction

This literature review examines previous research examining intercultural communication between patients and physicians. Specifically, it focuses on patients' and physicians' experiences with effective doctor-patient communication, which translates into numerous positive outcomes for both. Effective doctor-patient communication has been directly linked to patient satisfaction<sup>1</sup>.

In this regard, satisfied patients are less likely to file complaints against the institution or the doctor, which makes this parameter an indicator of high-quality healthcare<sup>2</sup>. Effective communication promotes a good doctor-patient relationship, facilitates a proper exchange of information, encourages patient adherence to treatment, and consequently improves health outcomes<sup>3</sup>. Good communication during the consultation facilitates an accurate diagnosis by sharing relevant information about their health problems and adhering to the

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<sup>1</sup> Brinkman, W.B., Geraghty, S.R., Lanphear, B.P., Khoury, J.C., del Rey, J.A.G., DeWitt, T.G., et al. (2007) *Effect of multisource feedback on resident communication skills and professionalism: a randomized controlled trial*. Arch. Pediatr. Adolesc. Med. 161 (1) 44-49.

<sup>2</sup> O'keefe, M. (2001). Should parents assess the interpersonal skills of doctors who treat their children? A literature review. J. Paediatr. Child Health 37 (6), 531-538.

<sup>3</sup> Stewart, M.A. (1995). *Effective physician-patient communication and health outcomes: a review*, CMAJ (Can. Med. Assoc. J.). Canadian medical association journal 152 (9) 1423.

treatment prescribed by the doctor<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, effective communication between doctor and patient may be linked to optimal therapeutic and physiological outcomes, such as reduced blood pressure and blood glucose levels<sup>5</sup>. Unfortunately, one of the most challenging aspects of healthcare communication is a doctor's ability to communicate with patients from diverse cultural backgrounds<sup>6</sup>.

Intercultural communication studies how people from different cultures communicate and how their communication styles compare with those of others from different cultural backgrounds. Such studies typically compare the communication styles of two different nations according to specific criteria such as frankness and openness. In other words, when we talk about intercultural communication in this study, we refer to what happens when two people (a doctor and a patient) from different cultural backgrounds meet or come into direct contact. In this regard, Matusitz and Spear<sup>7</sup> compared the communication styles of patients from the United States and three Asian countries (Pakistan, Thailand, and Japan), finding that American patients tended to communicate more clearly, explicitly, and directly with their doctors than their Asian counterparts. Another recent study on intercultural communication found that Turkish patients tended to be more indirect and inexplicit than Dutch patients when communicating with their doctors; for example, when doctors asked questions, Turkish patients tended to tell anecdotes to illustrate their answers rather than responding directly<sup>8</sup>.

## 2. *Intercultural medical consultations*

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<sup>4</sup> Kindler, C., Szirt, L., Sommer, D., H'ausler, R., Langewitz, W. (2005). A quantitative analysis of anaesthetist-patient communication during the pre-operative visit. *Anaesthesia* 60 (1) 53–59. [14]

<sup>5</sup> Michie, S., Miles, J., Weinman, J. (2003). Patient-centredness in chronic illness: what is it and does it matter? *Patient Educ. Counsel.* 51 (3) 197–206.

<sup>6</sup> Von Fragstein, M., Silverman, J., Cushing, A., Quilligan, S., Salisbury, H., Wiskin, C., et al., (2008). UK consensus statement on the content of communication curricula in undergraduate medical education, *Med. Educ.* 42 (11) 1100–1107.

<sup>7</sup> Matusitz, J., Spear, J. (2015). Doctor-patient communication styles: a comparison between the United States and three Asian countries, *J. Hum. Behav. Soc. Environ.* 25 (8) 871–884.

<sup>8</sup> Schinkel, S., Schouten, B.C., Kerpelick, F., Van Den Putte, B., Van Weert, J.C. (2018). Perceptions of Barriers to Patient Participation: Are They Due to Language, Culture, or Discrimination? *Health Communication*.

Intercultural medical consultations represent a potential source of poor communication, resulting in increased misunderstandings and a potentially negative impact on the quality of care<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, several studies suggest that cross-cultural medical consultations are associated with greater misunderstanding, dissatisfaction, and lower patient compliance than intercultural medical consultations<sup>10</sup>.

Three literature reviews were identified that specifically address intercultural communication in medical visits:

<i>AUTHOR</i>	<i>TYPE OF REVIEW</i>	<i>OBJECTIVE</i>	<i>RESULT</i>
Schouten & Meeuwesen <sup>11</sup>	review of observational studies	identify the impact of cultural differences on both doctor and patient behaviors	found that most of the studies reviewed did not link communication behavior to culture or cultural variations in doctor-patient communication to outcomes.
Rocque & Leanza <sup>12</sup>	systematic review	synthesized qualitative studies exploring patients' experiences of communicating with a GP	The authors reported negative experiences, positive experiences, and communication outcomes.

<sup>9</sup> Ferguson, W.J. (2002). Candib LM. Culture, language, and the doctor-patient relationship. *Fam Med*, 34, 353-361.

<sup>10</sup> LaVeist, T.A., Nuru-Jeter, A. (2002). Is doctor-patient race concordance associated with greater satisfaction with care? *Journal of health and social behavior*. 296-306.

<sup>11</sup> Schouten, B.C., Meeuwesen, L. (2006). Cultural differences in medical communication: a review of the literature, *Patient Educ. Counsel.* 64 (1) 21-34.

<sup>12</sup> Rocque, R., Leanza, Y. (2015). A systematic review of patients' experiences in communicating with primary care physicians: intercultural encounters and a balance between vulnerability and integrity, *PLoS One* 10 (10), e0139577.

Paternotte & van Dulmen <sup>13</sup>	realist review of the factors that influence intercultural communication	Attention placed between ethnically dominant doctors and ethnically minority patients	Intercultural communication is influenced by language, cultural and social differences, and clinicians' assumptions.
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Table 1: *Revisions related to intercultural communication*

Schouten and Meeuwesen identified five key predictors of culture-related communication problems:

1. Cultural differences in explanatory models of health and illness,
2. Differences in cultural values,
3. Cultural differences in patient preferences for doctor-patient relationships,
4. Racist/perceptual biases,
5. Language barriers.

In Rocque & Leanza's work, negative experiences included being treated with disrespect, pressure due to time constraints, and a sense of helplessness due to the dominance of biomedical culture in medical encounters. Positive experiences were related to physicians' relational and technical skills and approaches to care. For ethnic minorities, language barriers, discrimination, differing values, and acculturation were negative influences. Ethnic majorities also reported that differing values and discrimination-based communication impacted outcomes. The findings of this review are limited by the fact that more than half of the studies reviewed did not explore cultural aspects related to this experience.

The findings of Paternotte and van Dulmen's work identified that goals, core competencies, and specific skills were important in determining the outcomes

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<sup>13</sup> Paternotte, E., van Dulmen, S., van der Lee, N., Scherpbier, A.J.J.A., Scheele, F. (2015). Factors influencing intercultural doctor-patient communication: a realist review, *Patient Educ. Counsel.* 98 (4) 420-445.

of doctor-patient interactions.

The review of empirical studies identified key thematic areas similar to those reported in previous literature reviews. These were physician-reported communication behaviors and experiences, patient-reported behaviors and experiences, outcomes reported from intercultural visits, and physician behavior mitigation skills.

Intercultural medical visits represent a potential source of poor-quality communication, resulting in increased misunderstandings and a potentially negative impact on the quality of care.

This review examines research on cultural factors that influence patients' and doctors' communication experiences during medical visits. The review shifts from an exploratory approach that reveals the factors that influence intercultural communication to an explanatory approach examining how these factors influence the process<sup>14</sup>.

Intercultural communication occurs between two interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds<sup>15</sup>. This can be challenging even with participants from the same cultural group, although when it comes to intercultural communication, it is perceived as more challenging. Doctor-patient encounters are a critical and fundamental component of the healthcare process, as the purpose of medical communication is to facilitate the exchange of information and shared decision-making. However, in an intercultural context, intrinsic differences between doctors and patients can hinder the exchange of crucial information. The multidimensional components of culture, such as values, perspectives, and beliefs about illness, are exacerbated by communication difficulties in the medical encounter<sup>16</sup>.

Salim & al. have identified new advances essential to solving communication problems between patients and doctors <sup>17</sup>. These include paraverbal

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<sup>14</sup> Spencer, J., Silverman, J. (2001). Education for communication: much already known, so much more to understand, *Med. Educ.* 35 (3) 188–190.

<sup>15</sup> Watson, B.M. (2008). Intercultural Communication in Health-Care. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*.

<sup>16</sup> Teal, C.R., Street, R.L. (2009). Critical elements of culturally competent communication in the medical encounter: a review and model, *Soc. Sci. Med.* 68 (3) 533–543.

<sup>17</sup> Mohd Salim, N.A., Roslan, N.S., Hod, R., Zakaria, S.F., Adam, S.K. (2023). Exploring critical components of physician-patient communication: a qualitative study of lay and professional perspectives, *Healthcare (Basel)* 11 (2).

communication, such as rhythm and tone of voice; using a calm tone and maintaining an appropriate pace can help both parties understand each other better. Furthermore, eye contact, appropriate facial expressions, attentive listening, and disease prognosis play a significant role in effective communication.

Integrative reviews summarize and report reliable, valid, and accurate findings. Reviews help healthcare professionals stay up-to-date on recent advances in the field. These reviews also help policymakers assess risks and benefit from systematically reported findings to support clinicians and patients and intervene if necessary. Reviews are also important because primary information on a topic is sometimes poorly reported, thus reducing its usefulness. Furthermore, reviews help identify the topic's strengths and weaknesses. Through reviews, researchers can gather and combine information and data to answer specific research questions. In the field of doctor-patient communication, a recent and updated integrative review is still lacking, and it is essential to identify the main factors responsible for doctor-patient communication. Therefore, this study can contribute to the body of knowledge by providing an integrated review of generic doctor-patient communication methods.

### *2.1 Description of the Research Work*

This method is recognized as the broadest type of research review and facilitates the simultaneous inclusion of qualitative and quantitative research. Whittemore & Knafl<sup>18</sup> They structured the integrative review into five consecutive phases:

1. Problem formulation,
2. Data collection,
3. Data evaluation,
4. Analysis and interpretation,

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<sup>18</sup> Whittemore, R., Knafl, K. (2005). The integrative review: updated methodology, J. Adv. Nurs. 52 (5) 546–553.

## 5. Presentation of results.

It is important to define the guiding research question at the outset because it informs the studies to be selected, defines the participants, and sets the context for the research problem.

The databases consulted as primary sources for data collection included Medline/PubMed, Embase, CINAHL, PsycInfo, ProQuest, Scopus, Web of Science, Cochrane Review, and Google Scholar, all recognized as appropriate for health-related topics. A combination of keywords defining the question and the search objectives was used to generate free-text search terms and Medical Subject Heading (MeSH) search terms.

The following combination of keywords and synonyms was used:

RESEARCH RELATED KEYWORDS		
Patient	Outpatient	-
Doctor	Doctor	Medical staff
Communication	Intercultural Communication	-
Hospital	Outpatient Clinic	Outpatient Service
Relationship	Transcultural Relationship	-

Table 2: *Keywords related to the search*

Broad and synonymous search terms were used to ensure the retrieval of all studies meeting the inclusion criteria. A manual search was also performed to retrieve any missing studies. Databases were also searched, and the search results were then compared. Studies were then selected after removing duplicates using Endnote software. Eligibility assessment was conducted in two stages:

- screening of the title and abstract,
- screening of the full text of eligible studies.

Keywords were examined by database as needed; the specified databases and selected keywords yielded 1,731 studies. The search process followed the rules and protocols recommended for conducting a reliable integrative review, in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines (PRISMA)<sup>19</sup>.

I dati sono stati estratti dai 34 studi selezionati e assegnati a uno dei dieci campi:

<i>Number</i>	<i>FIELDS</i>
1	author/year
2	objectives of the study and its perspective
3	concept and theoretical model used
4	research design
5	studied population
6	context
7	sample size
8	facilitators/obstacles to communication attributable to cultural factors
9	social or other factors
10	study results

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<sup>19</sup> Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D.G., Group, P. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: the PRISMA statement. *Ann. Intern. Med.* 151 (4) 264–269.



Table 3: *Research fields*

The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was used to assess the quality of the selected studies as it has proven to be a valid and reliable evaluation tool<sup>20</sup>. Questo strumento consiste in due domande generiche (screening) che si applicano ai metodi qualitativi, quantitativi e misti. Specifically, this review used the 2018 version, updated from 4 to 5 criteria plus the two screening questions. The evaluation process was conducted, prior to which a systematic protocol was established, as suggested by Pluye et al.<sup>21</sup>, to ensure optimal functionality of the MMAT. The average MMAT score for the selected studies was 80%. However, some quantitative studies scored low on methodological criteria, attributable to a small sample size. Nine of the selected qualitative studies failed to identify the qualitative approach adopted in their studies.

In an integrative review, several primary studies contributed various elements to the overall evidence synthesis<sup>22</sup>. Given the limited number of relevant studies, all studies that met the selection criteria were included, acknowledging their limitations. Data analysis in research reviews involves sorting, coding, categorizing, and synthesizing data from primary sources into a unified and integrated conclusion that addresses the research problem. Data was extracted from the articles for inductive content analysis. This involved a rigorous and systematic process in which researchers drew inferences from the data by translating context-specific information into general categories. NVivo software was used as a tool to manage, sort, and reduce the large amount of data. The actual activities of the analysis phases, such as coding, categorizing, and thematizing, were performed manually.

## 2.2 Results

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<sup>20</sup> Pace, R., Pluye, P., Bartlett, G., Macaulay, A.C., Salsberg, J., Jagosh, J., et al., (2012). Testing the reliability and efficiency of the pilot Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) for systematic mixed studies review. *Int. J. Nurs. Stud.* 49 (1) 47–53.

<sup>21</sup> Pluye, P., Robert, E., Cargo, M., Bartlett, G., O’cathain, A., Griffiths, F., ... & Rousseau, M. C. (2011). Proposal: A mixed methods appraisal tool for systematic mixed studies reviews. Montréal: McGill University, 2(1), 1-8.

<sup>22</sup> Pawson, R., Greenhalgh, T., Harvey, G., & Walshe, K. (2005). Realist review-a new method of systematic review designed for complex policy interventions. *Journal of health services research & policy*, 10(1\_suppl), 21-34.

This review included 34 studies:

- 19 studies used a qualitative method,
- 13 studies used a quantitative method,
- 2 studies used a mixed methods approach.

Analyzing the source where the studies were conducted:

<i>NAZIONE</i>	<i>NUMERO STUDI</i>
Israele	1
Iran	1
Saudi Arabia	4
Gulf countries	1
Kenya	1
Netherlands	6
Swiss	2
England	1
Italy	3
Greece	1
Sweden	2
USA	7
Canada	1

Australia	3
TOT.	34

Table 4: *Analyzed works divided by country of origin*

A literature search revealed that communication between doctors and patients has been widely studied, although it focuses primarily on the intracultural context. Studies examining the impact of racial and ethnic concordance between patients and doctors are inconclusive. These studies, conducted primarily with minority groups in the United States, indicate that racial concordance has a lesser impact on health outcomes than a doctor's communication style and ability to build trust<sup>23</sup>.

Furthermore, several studies describe physicians' perceptions, behaviors, and experiences regarding communication with patients from diverse cultural backgrounds. Evidence suggests that physicians who encounter patients from diverse cultural backgrounds exhibit limitations in their communication behavior<sup>24</sup>. Specifically, Gao and Burke observed videotaped visits and reported that white American physicians had a biomedical focus and predominantly one-sided conversations with Chinese, Hispanic, and African American patients. The physicians spoke most of the time, with few questions raised by themselves or their patients. Similar findings were reported by Shirazi & al.<sup>25</sup>, which examined Swedish physicians' communication experiences with Middle Eastern patients and their perceptions of communication during a videotaped medical examination. Physicians reported insufficient attention and listening, and very little effort to include patients in the decision-making process.

Physician-centered communication behaviors were attributed to cultural differences, insufficient training, and years of experience. Other contributing

<sup>23</sup> Sweeney, C. F., Zinner, D., Rust, G., & Fryer, G. E. (2016). Race/ethnicity and health care communication: does patient-provider concordance matter?. *Medical care*, 54(11), 1005-1009.

<sup>24</sup> Gao, G., Burke, N., Somkin, C. P., & Pasick, R. (2009). Considering culture in physician—patient communication during colorectal cancer screening. *Qualitative health research*, 19(6), 778-789.

<sup>25</sup> Shirazi, M., Ponzer, S., Zarghi, N., Keshmiri, F., Motlagh, M. K., Zavareh, D. K., & Khankeh, H. R. (2020). Inter-cultural and cross-cultural communication through physicians' lens: perceptions and experiences. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 11, 158.

factors identified included encountering shy or reserved patients, patients' low levels of education and health literacy, and healthcare system-related barriers such as lack of time.

In most of the studies reviewed, physicians perceived communication with patients who spoke a different language as difficult, challenging, problematic, an obstacle to building relationships and rapport with patients, and a source of frequent misunderstandings<sup>26</sup>.

Other studies have found similar findings regarding physicians' unfavorable perceptions of communicating with immigrant patients due to cultural differences, particularly gender issues. For example, Würth & al.<sup>27</sup> conducted 19 interviews with Swedish physicians to examine their perceptions of encounters with Albanian and Turkish patients. Most physicians expressed frustration with their inability to perform the medical examination effectively and communicate openly and directly when meeting immigrant patients because they were reserved and sometimes accompanied by their husbands, who often communicated with the physicians.

Conversely, in some cases, physicians perceived little or no difference in communication when meeting patients from different cultural backgrounds. Cultural counseling services aimed to provide direct support to physicians encountering

intercultural communication barriers. They focused on developing skills for communicating with patients through professional development, continuing education programs, and a culturally sensitive curriculum during residency training. The use of reflective practices enabled a culturally sensitive approach to patient care. Paternotte<sup>28</sup> Physicians were asked to observe and reflect on their communication during recorded visits with native and non-native patients. Physicians perceived little difference in communication with native and non-native patients. Another study in Saudi Arabia showed that 51.9% of

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<sup>26</sup> Amiri, R., Heydari, A., Dehghan-Nayeri, N., Vedadhir, A. A., & Kareshki, H. (2015). Challenges of transcultural caring among health workers in Mashhad-Iran: a qualitative study. *Global journal of health science*, 8(7), 203.

<sup>27</sup> Würth, K., Langewitz, W., Reiter-Theil, S., & Schuster, S. (2018). Their view: difficulties and challenges of patients and physicians in cross-cultural encounters and a medical ethics perspective. *BMC medical ethics*, 19(1), 70.

<sup>28</sup> Paternotte, E. (2016). Intercultural communication between doctors and patients; a multi-perspective exploration.

Saudi and non-Saudi physicians reported having a good rapport and effective communication with Saudi patients<sup>29</sup>. However, this result is subject to bias because it is based on self-reports in which physicians assessed their own communication skills.

Overall, compared to encounters with patients from the same cultural background, studies have demonstrated a significant difference in physicians' perceptions and communication behaviors when encountering patients from different cultural backgrounds.

#### *4. Conclusions*

This review aims to explore and summarize the current literature examining cultural factors that influence patients' and physicians' communication experiences in healthcare settings and to provide an evidence-based solution. The review findings revealed that intercultural communication difficulties among physicians, reported outcomes from intercultural visits, and mitigation skills and behaviors are interconnected issues that impact both physician and patient satisfaction and the quality of healthcare services.

Physicians' cultural competence and general communication skills are essential in intercultural visits to effectively address these challenges, although healthcare policymakers should pay greater attention to the importance of medical visits in intercultural contexts to facilitate interaction between patients and physicians. The sociocultural situation is completely different in every country, and health policymakers should develop guidelines and recommendations that promote patient-centered and culturally appropriate care in all healthcare settings. Furthermore, policies should also consider integrating an evidence-based approach to intercultural communication into all healthcare settings. Each country's Ministry of Health should prioritize developing healthcare professionals' ability to communicate with patients through professional training, continuing education programs, and the introduction of a culturally responsive curriculum during specialist training. Therefore, further research is needed on doctor-patient intercultural

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<sup>29</sup> Al Ali, A. A., & Elzubair, A. G. (2016). Establishing rapport: physicians' practice and attendees' satisfaction at a primary health care center, Dammam, Saudi Arabia, 2013. *Journal of Family and Community Medicine*, 23(1), 12-17.

communication and ways to improve intercultural competence.

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## 10. INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUES: EVOLVING IDENTITIES BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS AND DIGITAL MEDIATION

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### ABSTRACT:

This paper explores, from a transdisciplinary perspective, the function of school as a political and meaning-generating space in a complex, globalized, and digitally mediated society. Through an analysis of intercultural identity construction processes and an examination of the implications of emerging technologies for the determination of being, it offers a critical reflection on the formative role of educational and digital mediation in the co-construction of plural subjectivities and the development of new social configurations.

*Keywords:* Interculturality, training, identity construction, technologies.

## 1. Introduction

This article offers a timely and transdisciplinary exploration of the intersections between education, cultural identity, and digital technologies in an increasingly globalized world. The work delves into the transformative role of schools as political spaces and generators of meaning, critically examining how digital mediation influences identity construction and intercultural dialogue.

One of the strengths of this article lies in its ambitious scope, which interweaves theoretical frameworks from pedagogy, sociology, and digital studies to address pressing questions about the role of teachers, the challenges of cultural diversity, and the potential of emerging technologies to foster inclusive societies. The authors draw on a wide range of thinkers, from Bauman's "liquid modernity" to Baudrillard's hyperreality to McLuhan's global village, situating their analysis within broader sociocultural and philosophical debates. This theoretical foundation provides a solid foundation for their argument that intercultural education must evolve to meet the demands of a digitally mediated world.

The authors skillfully outline the challenges posed by globalization—such as identity crises, axiological confusion, and the fragmentation of social ties—but their solutions obviously remain abstract or ambitious. For example, the call for teachers to adopt "global competence" and "professional reflexivity" is compelling but lacks concrete examples of how these skills can be operationalized in different school contexts. Similarly, the discussion of digital technologies, particularly wearables and metaverses, raises challenging questions about their role in transcultural dialogue, but stops short of critically examining their limitations or potential risks, such as the digital divide or the commodification of identity.

The article's structure, divided into three thematic sections, effectively organizes its multifaceted argument. The first section emphasizes the need for teachers to embrace intercultural pedagogy, while the second explores identity formation in globalized contexts, highlighting the shift from

multiculturalism to interculturalism. The third section, perhaps the most innovative, examines how computational simulation and digital networks can generate new social ontologies. Here, the authors' enthusiasm for metaverses and transculturality is palpable, although their optimism could benefit from a more nuanced approach to critiques of digital alienation or the homogenizing effects of global technoculture.

While referencing indigenous movements like Standing Rock as examples of digital resistance, the analysis focuses primarily on European educational frameworks and technologies. A more inclusive approach, integrating the voices of the Global South or marginalized communities, could be a future study to strengthen its argument for a truly pluralistic interculturalism.

Despite these criticisms, the article offers a valuable contribution to ongoing debates on education and digital mediation. Its interdisciplinary approach and forward-looking vision invite readers to reconsider how schools and technologies might collaboratively address the complexities of identity in the 21st century. Combining theoretical rigor and a call to action, the authors challenge educators, policymakers, and technologists to reimagine the possibilities of intercultural dialogue in an era of rapid transformation.

In short, the article serves both as a critique of current educational paradigms and as an encouraging provocation for what they might become.

## *2. School as a political space: rethinking the role of the teacher from an intercultural perspective*

What is the role of schools in contemporary society, marked by globalization and sociocultural complexity? How does cultural diversity influence educational practices and teacher professionalism, and how does the intercultural approach fit into new educational realities?

Until the second half of the 20th century, individuals' daily existence was structured within narrow social boundaries, governed by proximal relational networks tied exclusively to family, work, and neighborhood communities. The advent of globalization, a systemic phenomenon generated by the interconnection of digital technologies, transnational mobility, and the logic of post-Fordist capitalism, has radically transformed the structural paradigms of

human coexistence, making the global reality multifaceted.<sup>1</sup>

McLuhan's prediction of the emergence of a "global village" is coming true in an era where the compression of space and time, generated by economic, political, technological, and cultural interconnection, fosters the accelerated circulation of human and economic capital, information, and values. Globalization undoubtedly offers numerous opportunities, from the consolidation of democratic structures to the advancement of healthcare, as well as the intercultural enrichment resulting from international mobility. Thanks to the circulation of knowledge and access to diverse lifestyles, citizens are developing and implementing new practices to address unprecedented challenges. These challenges, however, conceal systemic threats, from labor market fragmentation to professional and existential precarity, while a pervasive neoliberalism fuels mass logics.<sup>2</sup>

These dynamics generate profound identity crises, hinder the construction of long-term projects, and produce widespread discontinuity in life stories. The loss of stable reference points translates into a tension between narcissistic individualism and social isolation, accentuated by "fluid" emotional relationships and weak bonds.<sup>3</sup>

Present insecurity, past marginalization, and future uncertainty place individuals in a state of widespread value disorientation, in which immediate hedonism and the concept of freedom as absolute arbitrariness prevail over the collective and cooperative dimension of social life. Furthermore, the growing and constant redefinition of borders and the expansion of labor markets and international politics are making migration flows increasingly significant and their management more complex. In this scenario, it becomes essential to complement traditional political, economic, and social disciplinary skills with the transversal cognitive, emotional, and relational knowledge necessary to operate in multicultural and multilingual contexts.<sup>4</sup>

In the educational field, axiological confusion, combined with the growing

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<sup>1</sup> Portera A., *Manuale di pedagogia interculturale*, Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, Bari 2018, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ivi, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Bauman Z., *Amore liquido. Sulla fragilità dei legami affettivi*, Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, Bari 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Portera A., *Manuale di pedagogia interculturale*, cit., p. 7.

heterogeneity of school classes, requires teachers to have solid training and reflective awareness, as well as communication skills geared towards mediation and inclusion, in which the other becomes a co-protagonist of the relationship.<sup>5</sup>

The cultural and linguistic diversity of our Italian schools, due to the increasingly significant presence of students with migrant backgrounds, requires a critical evaluation of the interventions implemented to promote inclusion: the intercultural perspective emerges as a concrete pedagogical necessity, requiring conscious reflection on the teacher-student relationship and the ways in which teaching is carried out and learning is internalized.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the importance of the topic, the impact cultural diversity has had on changing daily teaching practices still appears underestimated in schools. Let us therefore question the extent to which teachers have actually implemented the intercultural approach, not as a formal or rhetorical response, but as an awareness of the structural nature of diversity in the classroom and the urgency of transforming it into an educational resource.

Following the pandemic emergency, in light of the critical issues encountered, the need to relaunch the debate on interculturality, understood as a transformative perspective on educational practices, emerges even more forcefully. The role of teachers is crucial in developing teaching strategies capable of promoting sustainable integration paths: it is essential to start from their educational needs and the need to develop specific skills in managing diversity, within a dialogic-relational perspective. The intercultural approach, then, becomes an integral part of the teaching profession and the overall educational project, enabling us to address the challenges of contemporary society by renegotiating old meanings and co-constructing intentional directions of meaning.<sup>7</sup>

The tension toward the other, which harks back to Husserlian thought, expresses in intersubjectivity the fulfillment of a phenomenological philosophy not founded on a solitary and egological basis, but rooted in a

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<sup>5</sup> Frabboni F., *Il laboratorio*, Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, Bari 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Besozzi E., *Gli insegnanti nella scuola multiculturale contemporanea* in *La formazione interculturale dei docenti: professionalità, risorse e sfide globali*, Fondazione Ismu, Milano 2021, p.13.

<sup>7</sup> Ivi, pp. 13-14.

transcendental community of subjects. It is within this horizon that intentionality finds its most profound expression, offering the opportunity to create authentic spaces of encounter within which it is possible to strengthen the strength of one's own cultural identity, channeling value orientations toward broader and more varied perspectives. At the educational level, this vision becomes the foundation of intercultural exchange, a necessary prerequisite for building a society of coexistence, governed by a «way of thinking and living, and therefore of being together, open to exchange and mutual enrichment».<sup>8</sup> Promoting an inclusive environment, where cultural diversity is recognized as a value, requires not only personalized learning paths and respect for different teaching schedules, but also the ability to highlight students' difficulties by enhancing their strengths and cultivating them along the way.<sup>9</sup>

As the European Commission highlights in its reports, *Preparing Teachers for Diversity* (2017) and Eurydice, *Integrating Students from Migrant Backgrounds into Schools in Europe: National Policies and Measures* (2019), teacher training and the training of all school and education systems play a strategic role in creating equitable environments. Specifically, the latter document provides a comparative overview of national policies and the role of teachers in relation to cultural diversity and the promotion of socio-emotional well-being policies and highlights the importance of acquiring specific skills useful for addressing cultural divides and preventing marginalization.<sup>10</sup> What are the priority areas of intervention in teacher training?

First and foremost, intercultural communication stands out, essential for fostering teaching processes based on dialogue, active listening, and the appreciation of a plurality of perspectives. Then, digital technologies offer new learning opportunities, but at the same time require skills in the conscious use of tools, digital identity management, and the coexistence of real and virtual environments. Digitally mediated communication, in fact, questions the educational relationship, prompting ongoing reflection on the balance between presence, interaction, and technological mediation. Intercultural communication and technology are complemented by the practice of professional reflexivity, now considered a fundamental aspect of teacher

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<sup>8</sup> Besozzi E., *Gli insegnanti nella scuola multiculturale contemporanea*, cit., p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> Ivi, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> Ivi, p. 28.

identity: reflecting on one's own educational experience, reworking it narratively, and contextualizing it within the challenges posed by social complexity allows teachers to become informed actors, capable of critically planning and adapting their actions. In this sense, teaching is no longer the mere application of procedures, but a continuous exercise in discernment, choice, and self-development; the reflective teacher becomes someone capable of articulated, observing, and redesigning their actions, nourishing them through renewed experience, considering the critical issues and opportunities offered by their environment.

The school environment also becomes a learning space for teachers, who build their skills through daily interaction with colleagues, students, and families, using collegial and cooperative teaching models, creating paths of co-responsibility, and directly influencing educational quality.<sup>11</sup>

Following this reflection, it seems clear and necessary to undertake a comprehensive reconsideration of the role of teachers, who are called upon to promote a pedagogy that welcomes and cultivates the new generations. This entails establishing an intergenerational educational pact that transcends the daily routine of school and focuses on building supportive and participatory citizenship. This requires "global competence," defined by the OECD as:

« [...] ability to understand the complexity of local and international interactions, to appreciate cultural diversity and to act responsibly for the common good and sustainable development». <sup>12</sup>

Alongside disciplinary rigor and pedagogical and teaching skills, solid ethical and civic training is essential, enabling teachers to translate the constitutional principles of equity and social justice that inspire inclusion practices into daily practice. These principles are synergistic and complementary, contributing to the definition of a high professional profile in terms of technical quality and civic engagement. It is therefore essential that teacher training programs place the mission of the school as a political space, a promoter of change and democracy, at the center.

Alongside what Philippe Meirieu <sup>13</sup>, a French pedagogue, considers to be the

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<sup>11</sup> Ivi, pp. 29-30.

<sup>12</sup> Ivi, p.31.

<sup>13</sup> Meirieu P., Bottero E. (eds.), *Quale educazione per salvare la democrazia? Dalla libertà di pensare alla costruzione di un mondo comune*, Armando Editore Srl, Roma 2023.



essential requirements for a teacher (love of knowledge and love of students), there is also room for love of democracy, a pulsating feeling, a lively desire to create equal learning opportunities, with a view to valorising cultural, social, linguistic and evolutionary differences.<sup>14</sup>

This is how the educational relationship reaches its fullest expressive potential, creating moments of dialogue, promoting solidarity and respect, and legality, and encouraging active participation in collective life. All stakeholders involved in the school project assume the role of active subjects, recognized and protected in their uniqueness. As co-protagonists of a caring relationship, they are configured as bearers of horizons of meaning, experiences, situated knowledge, and specific formative needs, which contribute to shaping the intersubjective framework of the educational process. This relationship is structured by an intentional disposition rooted in an ethic of responsible acceptance of the Other, within which each individual contributes, in a dialogical and reflective manner, to the co-construction of a generative and inclusive educational space.

### *3. Recognizing intercultural identities within globalized contexts*

This reflection highlights how, to adequately respond to the transformations of contemporary education, teaching professionalism must be based on a comprehensive set of skills: disciplinary, pedagogical-didactic, communication, digital, and, above all, relational and ethical. However, redefining teachers' professional profiles cannot ignore a broader analysis of the social and value-based context in which educational action takes place.

In a world marked by identity disintegration and cultural plurality, it is urgent to address, alongside reflections on the skills required of teachers, the issue of the educational relationship in its symbolic sense, questioning the quality of the relationships that are forged and their ability to respond to the need for recognition, belonging, and dialogue felt by the new generations. In this context, it is essential to rethink cultural diversity not as an obstacle, but as an

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<sup>14</sup> Ferrero V., Granata A., *Per amore della Democrazia. Equità e formazione socio-politica dei futuri insegnanti*, in *Professionalità studi*, 3-4, 2022; [https://www.edizionistudium.it/sites/default/files/ps\\_2022\\_3-4.pdf](https://www.edizionistudium.it/sites/default/files/ps_2022_3-4.pdf) (consultato in data: 17/01/2025).



educational resource in building paths that foster the creation of a society founded on a set of shared values.

But how can we respond to the need to build an intercultural society despite linguistic distances? What tools are available today to support individuals in their journey of identity formation, from an inclusive perspective of mutual recognition? Today, people live in a globalized and multicultural context, within which they can choose from multiple forms of thought and behavior, confronting a variety of norms, ideas, values, and educational styles<sup>15</sup>, that lead to a sense of confusion that can be addressed by fostering the construction of a relational project based on dialogue and mutual recognition.

The absence of axiological references produces a blurring of boundaries which, consequently, leads to a dispersion of the individual's identity which has repercussions on relationships between individuals, corroborating the sense of bewilderment and producing a cultural gap that translates into a feeling of fear between individuals belonging to different cultural heritages.

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he work of integration and inclusion must begin with a process of re-signification that focuses on developing awareness of the concept of diversity as an opportunity for encounter and self-reconstruction, through the discovery of new perspectives. To this end, the commitment is to promote intercultural encounters through the development of an action plan that takes into account various factors, including linguistic divergence, historical heritage, and the relevant cultural context.

Specifically, the task of education identified by Samanamud Ávila is therefore to decolonize knowledge and reduce the objectification of one's own culture, in favor of dialogue and shared reconstruction through an intercultural

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<sup>15</sup> Portera A., *Globalizzazione e pedagogia interculturale*, Erikson, Milano 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Bauman Z., *Modernità liquida*, tr. S. Minucci. Editori Laterza, Bari 1999.

perspective.<sup>17</sup> The answer to this demand for recognition is to be found in the reversal of the concept of multiculturalism into interculturalism, that is, from an idea of shared tolerance and coexistence to one of “plural identity”.<sup>18</sup>

For this to be possible, it is necessary to first address the issue of relationships, which today requires the ability to transcend boundaries<sup>19</sup>, overcome the isolation between the individuals involved, and develop a level of communication that allows us to highlight the linguistic and identity recognition needs of each individual involved in the process of co-constructing shared behavioral grammars.<sup>20</sup>

But where can this be achieved? Which institutions should contribute to making this project a reality?

We need a school that functions as a “community” open to all, one that can become the heart of a socially innovative and inclusive network: an institution capable of constantly updating knowledge and skills, but above all, of preparing students for active and informed citizenship.<sup>21</sup>

While it is clear that it alone is not sufficient, education today serves as a social hub, and it is precisely within its system that identity construction can be pursued, developing a participatory and engaged citizenry, responsible for its own context. This lays the foundation for intercultural dialogue, which can only be achieved through rediscovering the value and potential of each individual. For this to happen, it is essential that an encounter between the individual's educational potential and the resources available today occurs.

Considering the intercultural learning process as a situated and intentional journey, it is essential that its design be grounded in reality and take into account the specificities and resources of the context in which it takes place. In this case, to complete an inclusive intercultural process, we can use technology, whose rapid evolution today significantly influences the

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<sup>17</sup> Samanamud Ávila J., *Interculturalidad, educación y descolonización*, “Integra Educativa”, vol. III, n. 1 2010; ISSN 1997-4043.

<sup>18</sup> Pinto Minerva F. 2002. *L'interculturalità*. Editori Laterza.

<sup>19</sup> Polenghi S., Cereda F., Zini P., *La responsabilità della pedagogia nelle trasformazioni dei rapporti sociali*, Pensa Multimedia, Lecce 2021.

<sup>20</sup> Spaliviero C., *Educazione letteraria e didattica della letteratura*, Edizioni Ca' Foscari. Venezia. 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Romano, R. G., “*Quaderni di intercultura*”: un progetto di dialogo aperto e solidale, in *Quaderni d'Intercultura*, XV, 2023

construction of a person's identity. Specifically, the high-performance tools that permeate society today become new appendages belonging to the unity of the human essence, recognized as part of the whole, which therefore contributes to the attribution of meaning and the process of reconstructing a person's identity.

In this regard, we can consider the use of wearable technologies, that is, the application of those wearable technologies that have become part of everyday life and which, if used consciously, reveal a range of potential applications. The support possibilities arising from the use of these devices are manifold: from monitoring an individual's physiological functions through the recording of biometric parameters to planning and managing personal commitments.

Specifically, the component we will focus on in this article concerns the possibility of using simultaneous translation in communication processes between people who are culturally and linguistically distant. If we analyze wearable devices such as hearables and smartwatches, we can see that they integrate functions, supporting listening to lectures and educational podcasts, performing instant translations, recording new vocabulary, and activating notifications and reminders through a wide variety of interactive applications.

In the Language Technologies section of the Digital Europe Programme, we can see how the European Commission also supports research and deployment of innovative language technologies that adapt to individual needs, while respecting their dignity and privacy. Indeed, we can analyze how these offer significant support capabilities for work, especially in the field of communication, thanks to new existing platforms capable of performing simultaneous translation in multiple languages, even reproducing the voice of the broadcaster, as well as the ability to transcribe and/or insert subtitles from multimedia files.

Artificial intelligence, in this way, enables a tangible improvement in individual well-being, facilitating communication and promoting a sense of inclusion. Even more importantly, by merging these tools with wearable technologies, their application potential increases significantly, encouraging their use at any time and in any context, while always having them at hand.

Considering the above, it is important to clarify, however, that these tools should not be seen as a substitute for an individual's educational path, but can

certainly represent a crucial resource in the linguistic mediation process.

The attitude to adopt renewed interculturality is one of curiosity and discovery, of the vibrant need for a concrete encounter with what appears different, yet with which we possess fundamental common ground: the need for recognition of personal and historical-cultural dignity.

Considering the theme addressed in this article, the challenge becomes to create the possibility of joint action, recognizing the intentionality of educational action in the process of building identity through holistic intercultural promotion. All of this can be supported by the use of constantly available wearable devices that reduce communication gaps, fostering a process of mediation and, therefore, integration that leads to the creation of an intercultural society that, within a collective project proposal, does not forget to preserve the dignity of the individual and the traditions they bring with them.

Working for peaceful sociality requires building a network that doesn't shy away from issues, but embraces and addresses them, maintaining a collective vision open to ongoing experimentation and informed by the many nuances that emerge from the convergence of diverse cultures.

#### *4. Parallel entities in dialogue: reflections on computational simulation and the possibilities of transcultural transformations of social ontology*

Reflections on the implications of globalization, which today require teachers to develop skills that make cultural difference a resource, including through the adoption of next-generation technologies, invite us to rethink the role of digital networks in the construction of social ontology. Do these tools simply simulate reality, or do they rewrite it? Are digital technologies simple communication tools, or do they generate new habitable worlds capable of fostering encounters with the Other? And if so, is it possible that they nourish a truly hybrid cultural fabric, in the spirit of "transculturality"?

When we talk about technology, the concept of simulation immediately comes to mind, recognizing the ability to synthesize, approximate, and rewrite the natural world; in this purely technical process, understood as *techne*, humans inevitably end up absorbed by it, blurring the definitive boundaries between

natural and artificial. But what is a simulation? Returning to Baudrillard's analogy, we can define this revolutionary practice, both epistemic and epistemological, both as a mindset that reshapes the scientific paradigm with which to investigate the natural, and as a *modus operandi*, redefining human action, both scientifically and socially. Born from computer graphics and then evolving into the metaverse, computational simulation, in its most concrete form, is a veritable land-formation that generates new universes, new territories to be inhabited in ways unprecedented compared to the past. But the implications of these new territories lie not only in the possibility of a novel experience: in fact, transcending the simple digital networks traditionally associated with ICT, the primary example of this simulation, a new ontology emerges that rewrites all social dynamics.

Evidence of this is, for example, the evolution of communication practices: traditionally, in the digital age, we speak of a many-to-many model, which decentralizes social and power networks, enabling the democratization of any process. Today, by contrast, thanks to the paradigm of *metaversality*, communication seems to be characterized by an immersiveness that validates the diversity of subjects, renewing the encounter with the Other.

This renewal allows us to speak of a new interculturality. The pluralities that can express themselves in digital environments are not a mere digital presence: their encounter is articulated in ongoing processes that produce new value chains, based on processes of recognition, negotiation, and cultural contamination, blurring the boundaries of cultural and individual identity.

This is a new hybrid culture, certainly aligned with interculturality and generated by processes of dynamic and symbolic co-construction of a new ontology of the social that moves between representations and simulations. In these terms, computational simulation does not limit itself to perfectly reproducing and approximating the natural, but rewrites it, adopting the computer logic of hacking, to generate the dimension of hyperreality<sup>22</sup>, that cultural space in which the reference to the original, from which computational simulations are generated, fades to the point of being replaced by a series of alphanumeric codes – which refer to a computerized and no longer natural dimension.

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<sup>22</sup> Baudrillard, J., *Simulacri e impostura* (Ed. orig. 1981), Milano: PGreco Edizioni 2021

This rewriting demonstrates the full potential of next-generation technologies, which, by blurring the boundaries of reality, reshape the encounter between cultures, now characterized by a play of simulacra and continuous renegotiations, broadening the horizon of understanding the Other.

The news of our times, in fact, is full of cases that seem to demonstrate this new interculturality, especially in relation to sociopolitical issues. If we consider cases of cultural struggle, such as the events at Standing Rock or the Canadian Idle No More movement, we can see how, with the help of digital technologies, it is possible to create new multicultural, sustainable, and supportive networks, but also to rediscover one's own cultural identity—especially for those who have been historically excluded from dominant narratives<sup>23</sup>. From a phenomenological perspective, therefore, it is the events themselves that suggest to us the possibility that new generation technologies, such as computational simulation itself, are the custodians of a new power that configures new spaces of sociality and generates new forms of social power<sup>24</sup>.

In other words, computational simulation and the immersive dimension of metaverses offer new intercultural perspectives that, in a novel way, appear to enable new encounters with the Other. It therefore seems reasonable to think that ICTs, and metaverses in particular, are not just universes parallel to the natural world: we could indeed speak of entities parallel to the physical world, with which they constantly communicate, as if they were open-source systems constantly exchanging energy, inputs, and outputs.

«Le prestazioni superiori delle soluzioni di rete distribuite sono il segno distintivo di una nuova generazione di tecnologia digitale [...]. Guidate dalle preoccupazioni in materia di privacy e sicurezza dei dati queste nuove soluzioni non centralizzano i dati o il controllo; usano invece dati messi in comune a livello locale e analisi locali per coordinare gli attori locali. Questa tecnologia può fornire alla comunicazione una capacità d'azione e permettere alle piccole organizzazioni di riprendere il controllo delle proprie risorse per

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<sup>23</sup> Simpson, L. B., *As we have always done: Indigenous freedom through radical resistance*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis MN 2017

<sup>24</sup> Castells, M., *The rise of the network society* (2nd ed., Vol. 1). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons 2010.

sfruttare la saggezza collettiva esistente all'interno e tra i loro residenti». <sup>25</sup>

This ongoing dialogue, characterized by constant symbolic renegotiation between cultures, combined with the immersive experimentation made possible by metaverses, suggests the possibility of moving beyond interculturality. From this perspective, we can indeed speak of the development of a transcultural approach, which goes beyond simple coexistence to develop a network of heterogeneous elements that intertwine and transform each other. <sup>26</sup> If we consider the nature of digital environments, the subject of this investigation, this possibility seems strengthened by the development of these processes of co-production of meanings generated within them. All this enables a hybrid cultural fabric, simultaneously static and dynamic, in which the transcultural paradigm develops. Computational simulation therefore appears to be a valuable resource for understanding the Other, facilitating the development of a true melting pot.

### 5. *Conclusion*

Next-generation technologies bring about social changes that no longer conform to traditional paradigms, as they offer new possibilities for democratic social construction, in which cultural identities are constantly redefined. Within these processes, the possibility of a transcultural approach thus emerges, making the encounter with the Other a creative process in which to rethink humanity, one's own culture, and one's own identity, experimenting with new forms of coexistence—also, and above all, in the spirit of the now traditional “global village”. Considering the above, it becomes necessary to rediscover the value of an education that, considering itself rooted in a globalized and interconnected context, recognizes its tools and uses them to rediscover the value of building an intercultural and even transcultural community.

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<sup>25</sup> Accoto, C., *Il mondo in sintesi: Cinque brevi lezioni di filosofia dell'informazione*, Milano: Egea 2022.

<sup>26</sup> Welsch, W., *Transculturality – The puzzling form of cultures today*, in M. Featherstone & S.Lash (Eds.), *Spaces of culture: City, nation, world* (pp. 194–213), London: SAGE Publications 1999.



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# DIDASKALOI

RIVISTA SCIENTIFICA DI STUDI PEDAGOGICI