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Educational Practices

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## Introduzione

Con il presente numero della rivista di *Educational Reflective Practices* si propongono una serie di articoli sui temi della formazione e dello sviluppo del pensiero riflessivo nei contesti di cura, della vita e del lavoro.

Dando spazio ad una pluralità di voci e di esperienze di ricerca, viene posta particolare attenzione ai modelli e alle logiche dell'agire educativo e alle strategie formative utili per coltivare Comunità di Pratiche, così come per sostenere l'apprendimento organizzativo.

Nello specifico l'attuale numero, pur contenendo studi teorici fondati su approcci multidisciplinari e piste di ricerca internazionali, si caratterizza per una significativa presenza di ricerche empiriche che hanno adottato un impianto qualitativo, e che riconoscono la pratica come luogo in grado di produrre epistemologicamente conoscenza e i "soggetti epistemici" come coloro che apprendono da ciò che fanno.

L'assunto di fondo di tali ricerche appare dunque quello di considerare il cambiamento e l'apprendimento individuale, così come lo sviluppo di comunità professionali e la stessa innovazione organizzativa, come l'esito di processi di costruzione congiunta di conoscenza fondati sulla valorizzazione dei saperi prodotti nella pratica e sul reciproco scambio di esperienze tra le persone e le comunità.

In questa direzione i vari articoli proposti (come quello promosso dal "Dipartimento di scienze della formazione, scienze umane e della comunicazione interculturale" dell'Università di Siena dal titolo *Se i medici sapessero, se i pazienti potessero*) si inseriscono pienamente all'interno di una più ampia esperienza di ricerca e networking sul "transformative learning" che la rivista sta ormai promuovendo dal 2011. Mettendo in risalto i temi della cura e della malattia, così come i punti di vista e le prospettive personali ed i vincoli sociali e organizzativi che queste orientano, tutti questi lavori riconoscono le comunità umane e scientifiche come luoghi di socializzazione dei saperi storicamente determinati, ma anche come spazi di costruzione congiunta di conoscenza dove poter sperimentare ed esercitare nuove forme di socialità, di pensiero e di azione comune.

La Direzione scientifica della rivista dunque, muovendosi dagli assunti appena indicati e promuovendo una siffatta ricchezza di voci e di espe-

rienze di ricerca, è lieta di accogliere questo nuovo numero di *Educational Reflective Practices*.

**Loretta Fabbri**  
**Claudio Melacarne**

# Interculture as a cognitive style

by Elsa Maria Bruni

## “Inclusive” thinking and pedagogical thought

As a way of thinking and a cognitive style, interculture is fully part of an individual's abilities, that is, of the multi-articulated endowments individuals require in order to live and establish themselves within the different contexts they confront during their existence. In this sense, the question of interculture is connected with the crucial problem of defining skills and interrelations between knowledge and skill, which are particularly relevant in today's democracies, whose main objectives focus on constructing a social space, as a place of education and citizenship in which the most appropriate forms and the most suitable ways of participation in democratic life can take shape.

In reality, the techniques of the solutions to the problems posed by European multiculturalism have failed, as demonstrated by the recent events in Paris and England. In particular, the failure of the solutions enacted by European countries has brought to the fore the issue of rethinking educational processes starting from an exploration of how to build the knowledge and skills for the new “citizens of the world” (Morin, 2014). It is important to underline that the problem of education is above all a problem of constructing the individual's identity.

From a pedagogical-didactic point of view, the experimental approach has been mainly technical. This perspective has focused on two aspects: on the one hand, involving the statistical organization of data concerning school-children from foreign counties (departmental reports and European Commission); on the other hand, revolving around proposals to revise *curricula*, the classification of successful procedures, as well as ways of welcoming and integrating pupils and building a positive environment in the school (Maalouf, 1989; Demetrio, Favaro 2002; Fiorucci, 2008; Baldacci, 2009).

In this respect, there is a great deal of valuable international scientific literature that is an important resource and which indicates that there is a

constant attention to and concern with ensuring stability and social cohesion in different countries. However, the failure of real integration processes is still evident in our countries. On closer observation, emphasis falls on the urgency for new different measures stemming from alternative perspectives and above all from the core of the problems.

Indeed, besides quality and scientific and intellectual good intentions, it is clear that the political translation of a new idea of citizenship is still too limited. The idea of interculture as a lifestyle and resource in forming identities concerning everyone and representing the Socratic prerequisite of εὖ ζῆν, – well-living (Plato) – is yet to be achieved. The methods used in finding solutions has immobilized and limited the opportunities and resources of education from growing within a crossroads of different cultures. The urgent need of a solution to the problems of migration has undermined the cultural approach. What is lacking is the demanding, yet no longer deferrable, great social project envisaging a worldview concerned with everyone's "good life", in socio-political terms and, most of all, in human terms.

Everyone's *well-being* is a prerequisite for everyone's *well-living*, the good life of our societies and the whole planet. It is important to start rethinking the places in which relationships and education must develop, as well as building further opportunities for socialization, knowledge and integration (Cambi, 2006). Human existence only becomes meaningful when everyone is free to move, think, establish relationships, learn, and be part of something. If we consider the recent terroristic attacks beyond their external manifestations, and take into account the identity of the young suicide bombers and consider the French *banlieues* along with the recurring riots taking place in the Parisian slums, what becomes prominent is a common identity: it is all about young Europeans, the children of immigrants who are second or third generation European citizens whose intolerance has its roots in our countries. In other words, what emerges is a young generation which has had no possibility to know or make themselves known, children who have grown up in different cultures and ways of life, with no opportunity to build an identity upon which their existence can be envisioned. Along the same lines, we see young people who have not had a good life, first and foremost because they could not "think freely" or think over the path of their existential development. What they have lacked is the ability to adopt a way of thinking which, - as Carlo Nanni reminds us (2016), "helps us organize perceptions and project our actions" (p. 5), and have given way to the "lack of thought" which Hannah Arendt has compellingly underlined. The majority of this young generation were born in foreign families living in our territories, though they have



experienced the effects of a stereotyped prejudicial view, thus identifying passively with habits and styles they never felt as their own, for they could not choose them freely. These young people have firmly rejected contamination, seeking refuge in a cultural heritage they never felt as their own. In other words, they have followed the path of cultural resistance in contrast with the contexts they live in that naturally entail confrontation and integration. They identify with their families, though many of them have never known their parents' land, nor their habits of life and language. They are adolescents and young adults whose existential path is tragically marked by deep disorientation, that is above all one of identity. On the one hand, they do not belong to their family land, for they often know it indirectly, if at all, through their families. On the other hand, they do not belong to their new land. Generally speaking, they are the mirror of racist, ethnocentric and xenophobic views pervaded by a sense of superiority and dominion, a supposed idea of order, fear and intolerance towards anyone seen as unsettling or threatening towards a monolithic image of society.

On closer inspection, however, this disorientation similarly involves their European native peers, whose destiny in this historical context appears both fragile and marked by the same difficulties in thinking and building the future.

What do young generations have in common today? First of all, the difficulty of choosing their own existential formation freely and independently, that is, young people lack the opportunity to express the essential condition of every human being (Mortari, 2008), namely "taking on responsibility of choosing independently the quality of one's being-there, of one's existence" (p. XII). Indeed, thinking requires dialogue, which takes place wherever there is confrontation and a space for establishing relationships. The possibility of exchanging words, asking questions and expecting answers, as well as thinking together and putting one's thoughts to the test are the existential cognitive horizon no human being should ever renounce in order to live authentically and assign meaning to their existential experience without passively relying on clichés or on other people's views or solutions.

## **Education, identity and "second generations"**

Second generation immigrants, which are constantly increasing in our countries, grow up among different cultures and live the condition of pluralistic belonging, therefore they often experience the difficulty of contradictions. Growing among different cultures is ideally a resource,

though in fact it compels young people to engage in an endless elaboration of their identity. They experience shifts of attitude dynamically, as well as changes of identity strategies so as to cope with the necessities stemming from the contexts of their lives (Erikson 1995). Underlying this position is not only the idea of identity as process, but also the results of research of the last decade. These studies foreground a change – in Italy at least – in the condition of adolescents. Research has aimed at analysing identity development in young Italian people of foreign origin and the ways they grapple with different cultural situations. What has emerged is that the new Italians, the children of immigrants, who were born and have grown up in our country and in Europe, show that plurality which actually belongs to anyone. In this respect, Luisa Leonini (2005) asserts that the hybrid, the mixed-race, not only characterises identity building strategies of young people of foreign origin, but is also a shared experience, involving, at least in part, young people in general, since the awareness of belonging to a community or culture is not referable to a single element or dimension” (p.5). These young people, like everyone else, feel and undergo a struggle for self-formation that requires continual change. The children of immigration experience transformations which are influenced by age, sex, environment, human relationships and the external world. They live the changes of adolescence and find themselves compelled to revise the very notion of the family (Lancini, Madeddu, 2014; Sospiro 2010). Like all young people, they experience the contradictions of their time, as well as geographical and historical contexts where multiple conflicting cultural references coexist and intertwine. They live the cultural deviations produced by uncontrolled consumerism and widespread commodification (above all in cultural terms), determining the identity building processes.

There are several common elements in young people, both Italian and second generation. A noteworthy aspect is the school dropout rate, which is still far today from the standards of *Strategia Europa 2020* (ISTAT, 2013; OCSE, 2014; MIUR, 2015).

The analysis of school dropouts requires the consideration of some important aspects connected with the socio-economic conditions of the family. From a pedagogical angle, it becomes a significant level underscoring the criticalities of a certain educational model and a pedagogical paradigm that have characterized Western education for centuries.

Underlying our history and the structure of our thought is the notion of the unitary ordering principle of man, his education as well as reality. In other words, Western history has been a history of laying the foundations of identity, justifying and supporting it, a history where Otherness could

have no place and has actually none, since it engenders fear and distrust and therefore has to be expunged (Suchodolski, 1965; Vernant, 1996; Waquet, 2000; Bruni, 2012).

The question of identity has been a constant concern, hence it is reasonable to assert that the establishment of the Western episteme mirrors an indefatigable effort to sustain a socio-political as well as educational-religious project with the aim of preserving tradition, along with the socio-cultural structure. Social stratification itself mirrors the rational will to control; from an educational viewpoint, the organized distinction of careers has meant perpetuating the given order; moreover, intellectual Europe has used Latin at school, not only, as is well known, for linguistic reasons, but also as a sign of power and control of power that “made distinctions by dividing” and “divided by making distinctions” (Waquet, 2004; Bruni, 2005).

Although this view seems now outdated, especially after so much intense experimentation in education, some shadows are still looming on the horizon and are a cause of concern in today’s socio-educational and cultural reality. For instance, the – also long-standing – presence of people of foreign origin is again at the centre of cultural-educational debates, after the terrible cases of violence that have shaken Europe in the last few months. Terroristic violence has been condemned as an abomination of humanity, while prompting in the majority a prejudicial vision extended to millions of Muslims living in our countries. This cultural regression, which takes the shape of a re-emergence of intolerant systems of thought, as well as practices of asymmetrical relationships, is an object of pedagogical concern because the latter is committed to articulate and develop ways of thinking, strategies and styles of education which aim to deconstruct clear-cut egocentric identities. Furthermore, it calls attention to a comprehensive rethinking of the weakness of recent achievements in terms of solidarity, cooperation, openness and cultural conviviality. It is imperative to do more and better and work out a feasible educational project able to reach the real core of the questions emerging from multiculturalism and addressing everyone in our planet as well as every single person as an individual. Everyone has to come to terms daily and throughout their whole lives with two crucial themes equally involving intercultural discourse.

The problem of identity and the question of integration are crucial issues for intercultural pedagogy, that is a reflection on education as a primary tool to pave the way for the coexistence of different cultures. This reflection starts from assigning meaning to the complex aspects regarding human reality and its becoming plural in current contexts, where globalization – namely a long historical process and a shift *in fieri* – is obviously

accelerating from several viewpoints and for a number of intertwining causes (Held, McGrew, 2007). The problem of identity and the question of integration do not concern foreigners and minorities in general; everyone is inevitably involved in transformations, whereby the questions of identity and social integration coalesce and show the two sides of the same coin that is human existence. Hence, from a structuring paradigm of human formation, identity becomes very complex, considering that – in Paul Ricoeur’s terms – man is constantly striving towards projecting and re-projecting himself, against a background of deep transformations and loss of existential meaning. For instance, it is possible to mention the end of the great events of the twentieth century, the fall of the idea of the nation, the threat to the idea of citizenship, and the veer towards an over-liberalist direction of the Western society. Nowadays man thinks and moves through his existential path in a scenario that appears radically shaken by new turbulent events unsettling traditional meanings and the socio-cultural order of our democracies. As a result, the subject’s theme and status have been radically reversed if compared to the Western cultural tradition, for if the urgency to assign a meaning to everything as inherent to human nature stands firm, at the same time the process of humanization has become more radically problematic as self-realisation, namely as commitment to one’s personal identity. Thus the focus on the process of culturalisation, that is a complex unitary process of personalisation, which invades the individual as an inner expansion that is at once psychological and spiritual, as well as social, namely the process of interaction with other people. Mounier (1960) has defined this human path in terms of “fight” and “ceaseless struggle” against life’s sleep and life’s inebriation that is spiritual sleep” (p. 247), besides outlining the centrality of an educational goal, aimed at giving expression and substance to everyone’s creative vocation of being and being-there. Mounier has brought forward the idea of contest for the formation of the self, aware of the fact that achieving a personality does not represent a natural phenomenon in an individual’s life, and that as a consequence this process must be directed through pedagogical practice and effort in order to enable every human being to go beyond individuality by means of a disposition involving the entire universe. From an intercultural viewpoint, it is imperative to delineate a perspective which encompasses the urgency to think and articulate what Aihwa Ong (1999) has defined an “anthropology of the present”. This entails the articulation of clear ideas about the notions of identity, culture, citizenship, pluralism, human education and community as authentic “living organism”, without the craze for novitism – as Giovanni Sartori (1993; 2000) has repeatedly pointed out – to impinge upon their definition.

From this angle, interculture refers to a universal human universe,

namely it refers to whoever inhabits the planet, with no cultural distinctions of race, ethnicity, gender, and sex, tackling the question of man's essence and how he grows into existence as an extension of his being, as a being-there which implies rooting and the unavoidability of the "Other" (Heidegger, 2011). Along this line, intercultural education becomes a field of research primarily focused on the articulation of the conditions every individual requires for his human formation, which in turn necessarily implies the possibility to experience one's ontological vocation beyond the self as part of a communion with other people.

Therefore, the intercultural project can only be multidirectional, addressing every citizen living in today's societies, both native and foreigner, immigrant and migrant.

Everyone's history is a history of relationships and exchange which are not a choice, rather they are intrinsic characteristics of human beings and societies. These relationships and interactions function indeed as an engine, problematizing and articulating the complex social system which defines the new subjects. The monodirectional pedagogical intentionality, which has been central to Western educational thought since its very beginnings and has aimed to reproduce the same model of man for the same model of society has now been replaced by a new educational stance. Underlying this model is a real and responsible critical dynamism relying upon men and women constantly searching for the most authentic ways towards mutual affirmation and integration. It would be preposterous to think of cultural and educational processes in terms of dogmatic systems of interpretation, since examples through history and globalized geography move along such scales of intensity, speed, and differences that they create a clear gap with regard to the ideas, values, forms of knowledge and horizons of crystallised and unitary meaning of the old tradition. The modern state educated and integrated man through a strict rational scheme aimed at consolidating the idea of the nation besides functioning as a way of defending a common heritage of rituals, histories and memories shared by every member of the community. This socio-cultural complex "was not merely an all-encompassing social or cultural entity. Rather, it constituted a 'community made of history and culture', placed on a territory and often sharing a tradition of rights and duties" (Held, McGrew, 2007).

## Education and intercultural skills

Researchers from different cultural and scientific backgrounds believe in the importance in today's societies of formative, cognitive, existential, and professional modes based on flexibility and anti-dogmatism.

In particular, the issue of the skills and abilities required by "the citizen of the world" particularly questions pedagogical knowledge, which is concerned with providing theoretical bases and strategies for a meaningful education, in step with the demands of a critical, reflective and transformative learning.

The gap between this emerging educational model and simple linear education paths is widening.

Current pedagogical research has overcome the Cartesian view of the subject in formation, traditionally relying on the power of rationality and denying the role played by unconscious, irrational and implicit components in the formation of intellect and identity. Hence, research in the field of education has brought to light the importance of what, albeit invisible, gives meaning to human life at different though interconnected levels. The individual's inner and implicit components have been revealed, it has been therefore necessary to reformulate educational dynamics so as to think and work out a project synthesizing the cognitive level as well as the implicit dimensions of every human being's process of formation. The processes through which man knows, thinks, and considers the Other, establishes relationships and grows into an intellectual and socio-cultural being have been revised. These are crucial processes, for they enable the subject's constant transformation so as to deal with global change.

It is evident that the question of skills and abilities man requires today is directly connected with the complexity of educational responsibility, seeing that from a teaching-learning perspective it calls for a deeper insight into the definition of the abilities and modes aimed at developing man's complex skills. Furthermore, from the viewpoint of pedagogical research, it assumes a rethinking of the forms of *educere*, well beyond any educational technicism *stricto sensu* pivoted on rationalistic approaches and traditional technical abilities (Striano, 2001; Fabbri, 2007). Being intercultural means being open and willing to see things from different points of view, while decentering from the self, besides leaving off routine behavioural and existential practices. Being intercultural is nothing to do with abiding by a list of rules, nor is it something dependent upon particular knowledge or related to intellectualistic and rationalistic activity (Dewey, 1938; Arendt, 1987; Morin, 2000). Interculture is not a specific knowledge. It is not even just knowledge! It is something more. It is a structure that reconfigures,

gives new shapes, combines, and creates *ex novo* explicit and implicit knowledge; further, it brings about acts of experience and critical thought. In other words, interculture is a skill and an ability that grows in situational form, both at a personal level and at a socio-cultural level, as well as at the level of the contexts in which it takes place.

During the last decades research has been paying attention to actions functional to the development of reflective and meta-reflective skills.

For instance, there has been a shift from identifying and defining through the observation of behaviours adopted for a given task to the field of development of skilful attitudes and complex goals which rather than merely coinciding with a particular performance, correspond to the ability to innovate, improve, facilitate, interact, be creative and flexible, sensitive and open to communication (Rossi, 2009).

Research has shifted its focus from identifying skills applied to professional performances to the development of the necessary skills for a fully-realized life and a well-functioning society. Therefore, “skill” refers to the ability aimed at finding complex answers in the contexts an individual encounters during his lifetime (Rychen Salganik, 2003). What emerges is that the chief aspect in the notion of skill is its not being exclusively linked to technical utilitarian components aimed at some object.

Furthermore, in this light, the range of meanings associated with skill has become much broader, so much so that its domain has expanded to involve above all the mental processes from which cognitive building and organization originate.

Pedagogical research has contributed to bring into focus new fields of exploration regarding man’s educational process. The quality of the ways of being and thinking has become central and transversal to human existence and not only connected to a particular activity or profession. “Hard skills” – otherwise called vocational or practical skills – acquired through formal education or training are thus associated with “soft skills”, namely transversal skills. They are not to be regarded as areas of knowledge, or as contents; rather, as open-mindedness, as an ability to think and reflect without automatism, to act independently and convey acquired knowledge in view of behaviour suited to multicultural and multifarious contexts and finally, as the readiness to look for new and never identical styles and attitudes<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Scientific research applies different definitions: the ILO (International Labour Office) uses expressions such as “key and core skills”; in the UK “key skill” prevails, whereas the recurring definition in the UE is “basic skill”. Several other definitions are possible, such as enterprise skill, key competence, life skill, non-technical skills, personal competence,

“Soft skills” are an invaluable resource from a cognitive and cultural perspective, as well as from a social and professional point of view. They can be seen as the necessary endowments for men living through change. Moreover, it is arguably change itself, widespread in every field all over the planet, that requires ways of management and control suited to times and practices in constant transformation; in a word, the so-called flexible skills. If applied to multicultural contexts, this line of reasoning leads to the following deduction: the inherent plurality of our societies calls for mental as well as relational experiences in line with the complexity of an articulated human and social scenario. As a consequence, it is evident that the traditional ways of investigating the categories of history, human nature, culture and society are no longer suitable for the present contexts, with their uncertainties and partial assumptions necessarily released from any universalistic claim (Leccardi, 1999). Plurality and problematization become the categories through which the multifarious social and educational phenomenology is read. Around these categories educational knowledge along with the processes of knowledge building have to be remodelled.

On closer investigation, the effort to rethink contemporary man’s status and education, carries the risk of restating a new ideal individual, that “solitary I”, imprisoned in subjectivism and estranged from a world passively felt as inevitable oppression or danger, for it imposes change, efficiency, and relationships with a “you”. Rather than an opportunity for an engaging “going beyond” and for individual development, this “you” is seen as provocation (the Other as oppression).

The formative challenge consists in recovering the unity of human subjects, thinking and re-thinking about pluralism, while granting every human being the freedom to choose and decide and, above all, the freedom to think, granting every man the possibility of free thought, “with no masters or servants” (Gennari, 2007, p. 32). Hannah Arendt (1987) has contended that the main problem of today’s society and of contemporary man lies in “lack of thought”, seeing that it is precisely this condition that undermines the quality of life while preventing man from expressing himself and deciding independently regarding his realization both in human and in existential terms. In this sense, the entreaty to “stay awake” generally links thought with every individual’s responsibility to take their own original existential shape (Arendt, 2007).

personal skills, process skills, soft skills, transversal competences. This multiplicity testifies to the ambiguity of the notion.



More specifically, through the appeal to be more aware of the reality in which one lives and more conscientiously careful about one's formation as a human being, the activity of thinking and thought itself ensure an authentic human accomplishment, as well as a defence for man against the temptation to conform with standardized, pre-shaped and passively acquired codes, norms, languages and behaviour.

As soon as man sees himself as thought, he is granted the freedom to be himself, to express his cognitive life, to be actively part of the world, while at the same time cultivating an ethical stance free from the subtle constraints of prejudice and any passively taken ideological stance (Arendt, 2004).

The crucial role of thinking as a resource for man and society undoubtedly appears as the *leit-motiv* of pedagogical thought, a key theme of pedagogy, whose meaning is further enriched today in intercultural terms. The indisputable centrality of every individual's cognitive life must not overlook questions of human relationships. Relationships remain the source of education therefore pedagogical thought should take into account the plurality of forms every individual connects with in the course of his existence (Ricoeur, 1990).

If it is true that nobody can only rely on what comes from oneself, but always needs something coming from other sources, then authentic thinking, at once free and critical, is the requisite for self-realization and at the same time the condition for building solidarity and social cohesion. The first step towards an intercultural education is recognizing our pluralistic belonging together with our ceaseless process of redefinition.

Every individual, especially if devoid of cultural tools, can express repulsion towards the other, seeing them as a threat, as a cause for the loss of group identity and, from a psychological viewpoint, as a destabilizing element, unsettling one's interpretive criteria (Magatti, Petrosino, Recalcati, 2013). The Other unsettles the given order! (Pirani, 2000; Buber, 2004).

Once again, the lack of critical anti-dogmatic thought makes emancipation from prejudicial views very problematic. In the course of history, these views have taken root particularly in Western culture, thus complicating the process of the acquisition of an intercultural way of thinking.

Consequently, what is missing is the necessary condition for a reflective thought pivoted on the difference of points of view and constructive exchange of worldviews.

Interculture as a cognitive style refers to a more dynamic image of a way of thinking that enables the subject to experience different possibilities

of interpreting human and social reality, thus promoting the elaboration of hidden meanings behind appearances.

It is a way of knowing that produces skill in every actor involved, no matter to what extent they are involved and the role they play, because it takes into account the subjects' motivational components besides rediscovering the crucial role of the affective dimension inherent to cognitive processes and personal education (Broudy, 1987; Bruni, 2016).

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## ***Abstracts***

### **Interculture as a Cognitive Style**

*by Elsa Maria Bruni*

This article explores the question of interculture as a way of thinking and a cognitive style. Beginning with a critical approach towards the techniques of solutions to the problems of multiculturalism, the Author highlights how the Western educational model, hinging on exclusively rational paradigms, has denied differences, considered education as a linear ordered process, assigned reason an exclusive function within cognitive processes and marginalized the implicit and unconscious dimension in the individual's formation. The article presents a renewed pedagogy in terms of categories of analysis oriented towards a holistic exploration of the new educational subjects. At the core of this new pedagogy is the commitment to promote patterns of experimentation and development of flexible, reflexive, critical and anti-dogmatic thinking.

### **The Student as a Researcher. Fostering and Evaluating Students' Meaning Perspectives in a Collaborative Action-Research**

*by Loretta Fabbri*

Different perspectives have been developed starting from J. Mezirow's work and several experiences and reflections were born after his work in 1991. Other researchers (Taylor, 2010) tried to translate some of the ideas of Transformative Learning in educational practices (Hoggan, Simpson, Stuckey, 2009) and they used his works as a background for planning researches in several contexts. The experience described in this paper is developed from the experiences conducted in the Department of Education at the University of Siena where the Transformative Learning Theory has been used by a group of professors as a back-ground to understand the ways in which a teaching process can change the meaning perspectives of a group of students in an higher education program.

## **Sound Dramatization in the Development of Social and Critical Competencies**

*by Maria Rosaria Stollo*

Starting from a reflection on the critical and social competencies, defined as key-skills in the current socio-cultural context, the paper analyzes the use of music and theater in training the trainers and presents a case of sound dramatization tested at the Laboratory of Educational Epistemology and Practices of the University of Naples Federico II.

## **The Experience of Beauty in Adulthood**

*by Micaela Donatella Castiglioni*

Is it possible to think of the experience of beauty, or aesthetic experience, as an experience within and through which we may process, construct, revisit and problematize meanings? The objective outcome of beauty would thus take on subjective value with which to confer meaning on, and make sense of, our lives. On these and other conceptual grounds, this paper asks whether educating to beauty in museum settings (with reference to one project in particular) can offer a valid form of adult education when delivered via a cultural, self-learning and self-educational dispositive based on a narrative-autobiographical approach, in which a museum mediator who has been duly trained in self-narrative and self-reflective practices plays a key part in facilitating the learning experience. More specifically, it is proposed that educating adults to beauty may lead them to experience growth, for example by increasing their capacity for wonder or helping them to critically decentre, etc., in the encounter between their own perspective and that of others, including the museum mediator.

The actors in this journey-process, that is to say, museum mediators and their interlocutors, who include both Italian and international visitors, enjoy the opportunity to experience both self-care and care for others, where care is defined as a taking on of responsibility.

Finally, the author examines the equivalence between educating to beauty-educating to narrative-educating to cultural, critical, active and responsible citizenship: the last-mentioned dimension represents an increasingly urgent priority within the education and training practices targeted at adults in the contemporary era, in which territorial barriers are giving rise to a deep and complex state of crisis that may also contribute to a loss of meaning at both the individual and collective levels.

The approach discussed here is situated within a broader educational-pedagogical framework and agenda that is “interioristic” and “introspective” as well as closely related to the perspective of “narrative pedagogy”.

### **Expected HR Competencies: what do Companies want from HR Managers?**

*by Nataliya Pylat*

In order to analyze educational needs for HR managers this paper examines current expectations concerning the HR effectiveness and the difference between global and regional trends: which notions about the HR effectiveness are common among the experts. The result of the group discussion indicates the most expected areas of HR competencies perceived by HR professionals in Ukraine: strategic contribution and business knowledge, effective communication, personal efficacy, people-oriented behavior, mastering HR processes, strategic workforce planning, organizational culture, learning and personal development. At the same time there is no expectation among HR professionals about innovation, change, technology and social media.

### **Innovation and Practical Creativity. The Case of a Craft Organization**

*by Francesca Bracci*

The article proposes a reflection on processes of organizational change and dissemination of innovation that led a company in northern Italy, mainly of a craft nature, to become, in a decade, an international excellence of the Made-in-Italy luxury.

A case study is presented that focuses on the dynamics present within an organizational context and aims at understanding the experiential learning paths that the involved professionals have developed to deal successfully with a crisis situation and to answer instances of innovation which went through the company.

### **Reflective Literacy Profiles. The Mexican Case Study according to the Goals of Education 2030**

*by Enrico Bocciolesi*

Starting from the Freireian proposal of reading, writing and conscientization (Freire, 1984) so much of society, how thoughtful act of educating (Hoz, 1991), it was revealed today the need to promote, from reflective

practice, continuity and closeness of learning for life (Fabbri, 2008; Rossi, 2008).

Many authors refer us to the sense of learning to learn (Heiman, 1985; Alonso, Gallego & Honey, 1994; Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1996; Thrun & Pratt, 2012), with particular attention paid to educational sciences and renewed their definitions of literacy. With current and ongoing updates of old and new educational reforms have proved difficult, and demands. Starting from changes in the educational area, typical of recent reforms iberoamerican, through reading the latest indications of UNESCO, the UN and NATO, has decided to activate a route that can integrate learning pragmatism of the social context.

These reasons have brought the Universidad de Guadalajara, Mexico, to start a training programme, unique in its kind, aimed at the promotion of new forms of literacy. In an academic setting, where universities, reflexivity and reading skills meet, interesting learning objectives have been achieved, that are proposed in this paper. Methods and narratives aimed at learning have encouraged the spread of critical thinking, working in synergy with the socio-and based on models of reflexivity inherent in learning styles offered by Alonso and Gallego in short form CHAEA (Cuestionario Honey-Alonso Estilos de Aprendizaje).

**“Se i medici sapessero, se i pazienti potessero”. Comunità di Pratiche di gestione della malattia oncologica.**

*di Loretta Fabbri, Claudio Melacarne, Carlo Orefice, Mario Giampaolo*

"Se i medici sapessero se i pazienti potessero" is an Action-Research project sponsored by the Department of Education, Humanities and Intercultural Communication at the University of Siena, started in March 2016.

Built on the experience and the literature that identifies the group as a resource and place of peer learning, the goal of the project is to determine whether, and under which conditions, it is possible to establish a Community of Practice (CoP) that allows a social approach to the oncologic disease, emphasizing the exchange of knowledge between participants who are interested in experimenting this new approach to and management of the treatment.



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