«Who speaks more languages lives more lives" Planning and building environments promoting multilingualism in children



Some history...



The project started in the 2012/13 school year. Firstly, it was directed at the teacher of municipal, state and state-recognised preschools through an educational test.

The aim was to promote a multilingual and educational project about multilingualism in the schools of the area, by building in each section involved a multilingual educational environment to enable the development of skills in children.

Since September 2013, the project has acquired a new strength and has become a distinctive sign of a widening educational and experimental path, developed through the scientific consultation of prof. Martin Dodman.

21 municipal preschools involved with 159 teachers

14 state schools between pre and primary schools with 54 teachers 2 state-recognised preschools and 1 primary school with 6 teachers

Problems faced





Some Open Questions



Which education should guarantee a named democratic school, if it is not able to distribute equality in educational opportunities?

How to overcome the traditional idea of English course, and promote the idea that languages are not only something to learn but to also something one can learn with?

Due to the recent migration waves, two needs emerge: that to train multilingual individuals able to overcome these challenges and the other to build multilingual learning environments able of doing so



A methodological approach



The benefits of multilingualism

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Language and learning: multilingualism strengthens even more the malleability of a baby's brain by stimulating the development of his/her overall intelligence

The benefits of multilingualism

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Language and relations: A multilingual individual will be able to access information from various sources, to travel, to meet and talk to interlocutors from different backgrounds

The benefits of multilingualism





Language and integration

"Being multilingual allows people to get in touch with cultural diversity, to know and respect the values and customs of others, to share experiences lived in other communities, to recognise the existence of a common human heriatge and available to everyone

Building multilingual environments







Contents of the curriculum







Main themes and units

My body and myself (how it is, body and expressions, motor and sport activities ...) parts, actions, movements, hygiene, nutrition, identity, growth ... My environments and I (my day, my personal history, historical periods, my school, my territory, my global world ...) time (linearity, cyclicity, duration, succession ...), space (position, orientation, organisation, paths, maps ...), shape, size, quantity, number, causality, changes, evolution ...

The others and I (my family, my friends, my social groups, my multicultural world ...), interactions, rules, sharing, respect, diversity ...



The objectives

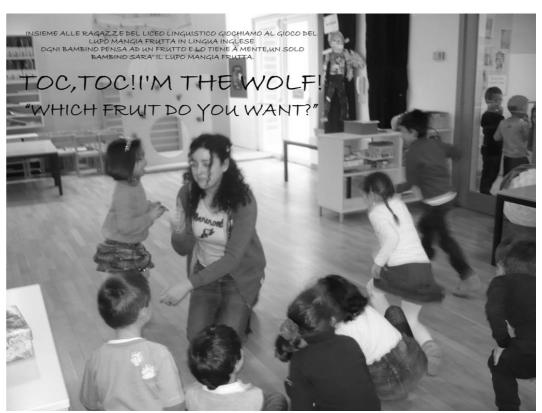
The objective is not to create balanced multi-lingual skills, productive skill in not important, indeed, it takes a longer time, but it rather aims at developing receptive capacity.

The methodology makes the learning of many languages a richness linked to the ability to access more language codes, a way of being, living and conceiving the world. Thus, possessing 2 of them (language codes) means to learn and have more points of views to interpret the reality and the existence.

Working methods



All the curriculum activities such as routine (snacks, meals, bath, getting dressed, sleeping ...), structured activities (reading, songs, motor activities, painting, manipulation activities, trials, research, problem solving ...) and free play can be conducted entirely or partially in one or more languages.



Language scripts

Su, è il momento della merenda

"Come on!" It's time for a snack!"

Gli aiutanti per la merenda sono...

"the helpers for the snack are..."

Mettete I tovaglioli sul tavolo...

"put the napkins on the table..."

Questo pomeriggio per merenda c'e'...:

"this afternoom for a snack there..."

Mela: apple,

Pera: pear,

Banana: banana.

Arancia: orange,

Latte: milk,

E' tanto/ E' poco: Is it too much?/too little?

Se avete finito di fare merenda andiamo sul tappeto:

"if you have finished your snack go on the carpet"







Acting

Actions like moving (yourself/one thing), choosing, combining, grouping, merging ... items according to different criteria.

Language

Using different types of language:

- body: movements / facial expressions, gestures, moving some parts of the body or the whole body ...
- spoken: sounds, songs ...
- visual: scribbles, graphic representations, drawings ...
- human: (proto) words, phrases ...

Operative card



Skills involved:

Type of activity:

Description of the activity:

When:

Language phrases:

Indicators of competence:

Some reflections



Adults such as teachers (almost never multilingual) have the possibility to give themselves a challenge, dare, test and learn with children.

Thanks to the meeting with prof. Dodman who has accompanied this path to overcome fears of languages, it also gave value to other widespread skills among our teachers such as relationship ability, educational and didactic capacity, playing along etc.

Structure of the educational project



Two-year project with a:

- Basic course
- Advanced course

Methodology: Training/intervention and supervision in the classroom

Structure of intervention:

- Training in methodology
- Processing scripts to experiment
- Comparison with colleagues and experts in the work done
- Comparison with an expert in the direct observation in your own class during the day-to-day development of the activity
- Courses to support the knowledge of English (for teachers)





School year 2013/14	Teachers	Schools	Sections/classe s	Pupils
Preschools	78	22	59	1573
Primary schools	18	9	14	448
Total	102	31	77	1925

School year 2014/15	Teachers	Schools	Sections/classe s	Pupils
Preschools	85	25	60	1500
Primary schools	17	6	17	425
Total	96	31	73	2021





Events:

- 2 public initiatives addressed to parents and teachers
- 2 seminars: multilingual citizens in multilingual environments

Publications:

- "Who speaks two languages lives two lives"
- "Designing and building environments promoting multilingualism in children"
- "Pass me the Red"



Questionnaires for teachers

(67 questionnaires collected)

- 1)What languages are spoken at school?
- 2) Who speaks one or more languages and with whom?
- 3) In which environments and types of activity one or more languages different from Italian are used?
- 4) For the implementation of your project on multilingualism, please indicate with keywords?:
- a) facilitating factors?
- b) hindering factors?
- c) needs to continue
- 5) During the activities, which indicators emerge to evaluate the project?
 - a) Action and language indicators (briefly describe some examples)
 - b) Attitude of the children towards the project:

Indifferent?

Positive/collaborative?

Negative/Opposition?

Other (specify)

Questionnaires for parents

(325 questionnaires collected)

- 1) Which languages are spoken within the family?
- 2) Who speaks one or more languages and with whom (in the family)?
- 3) Do you think it is important to have a preschool where more languages are spoken?

YES NO

- If YES, why? (maximum 2 motivations)
- If NO, why? (maximum 2 motivations)
- 4) In relation to the school's activities on multilingualism, have you had a feedback from your child?

YES NO

- If YES, what?

He/she uses words from a language other than the Italian learnt at the preschool He/she shows curiosity about different languages and cultures He/she asks for books, games, etc. in a language other than the Italian Other (specify)



From trials to daily education practice



- Annual educational project
- School pedagogical project
- Pedagogical project of the nursery schools and preschools of the municipality of Ravenna

An innovative project from an educational point of view



- It is a socio-educational path because it proposes a "normal" approach to complexity which is nowadays made up of different languages spoken by children/and especially their families - coming to our schools with different stories and contexts of origin.

Multilingualism is not necessarily the learning of English

- or another language but to have a dialogue conceptually with another language code.
- It is a democratic path because it brings the project of multilingualism to all children to overcome the differentiation between those who were in the English lesson and who did not want or could not join it.

References



Theoretical references are to be attributed to Prof.Martin Dodman responsible for the experimented method

Bibliography:

"Linguaggio e plurilinguismo:apprendimento, curricolo e competenze"a cura di Martin Dodman, Erickson.

"Chi parla due lingue vive due vite"

" Progettare e costruire ambienti che promuovono il plrilinguismo nei bambini"

"Passami il red"

Publications by the Pedagogical Coordination of the Municipality of Ravenna