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Living and Leading in the Next Era:
Connecting Teaching, Research,
Citizenship and Equity

Edited by

Loredana Perla
Laura Sara Agrati
Viviana Vinci
Alessia Scarinci



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Loredana Perla, Laura Sara Agrati, Viviana Vinci, Alessia Scarinci

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Educating culture-conscious teachers: the experience of Unisalento's FAMI Course*

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The article presents a research project developed during the realization of the specialization course in “Organization and management of educational institutions in multicultural contexts” in the a.y. 2021/2022 (organized by University of Salento, by the Ministry of Education and the FAMI Fund - Ministry of the Interior), aimed to enrich the professionalism of school teachers of all levels in relation to the multicultural society, with the goal of raising the intercultural quality of educational institutions in their complex. The investigation is about an intercultural transitions perspective that arises from the recognition of the person and from his culture of belonging, where school is a place of transition: the circularity of knowledge intersects with the meeting and the relationship, facilitates the understanding of diversity, and generates inclusive attitudes.

Keywords: teacher education, school pedagogy, intercultural education, diversity as a norm.

1. Introduction

Italy, through some ministerial and European initiatives, has been committed, since 2019, in specific teacher training activities aimed not only at professional development, but also at the realization of an Italian way to Interculture, as a guiding idea for a change in school pedagogy that interprets diversity as a resource, dynamism, plurality. The experience of the FAMI Course is a testimony of the important work of cooperation between school and university for the creation of training courses capable of developing transformative learning in teachers who, according to them, will be able to remodel their visions of meaning in relation to the idea of diversity and global citizenship, both in a professional form (developing the ability to rethink and redesign oneself in the perspective of lifelong learning) and specifically in pedagogical-didactic planning, with significant repercussions on student learning.

2. Theoretical framework

Starting from the hypothesis that investing in teachers training in an intercultural context allows the epistemological recognition and the diffusion of the model of diversity as a norm in the professional culture (Santerini, 2010; 2017) and of the idea of global citizenship (Morin, 2000), the research wanted to highlight how education has a great social responsibility and the training and educational investment of the school, through curricular planning, is essential for the development and recognition of a planetary citizenship starting from the recognition of the person and its culture. (Dewey, 1979, 1982; Abdallah- Pretceille, 1996; Merieu, 2015). In this perspective, the experience of the FAMI Course can be considered as the launch of systemic political-educational actions capable of promoting with awareness the taking charge of “diversity as a norm”, that becomes a reason and objective for the promotion of quality school and quality teachers in the intercultural field. This task makes schools and universities central institutions of the knowledge society for the development of an idea of global citizenship.

3. Methods

New aspects of teachers training were analysed and explored in relation to intercultural skills, with reference to five training areas required by the Scholastic Improvement Plan of INDIRE (National Institute of Documentation, In-

* This article is a joint and synergistic effort of the authors. For the sole purpose of recognizing personal contributions where required, it is clarified that paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 are attributed to Francesca De Vitis, and paragraphs 1 and 2 to Marcello Tempesta.

novation and Educational Research): Organizational and didactic autonomy, Didactics for skills and methodological innovation, social cohesion and prevention of youth problems, integration, citizenship skills and global citizenship, digital skills and new learning environments. A qualitative heuristic-descriptive methodology was used to detect the acquisition and enhancement of teachers' intercultural skills. 103 (one hundred and three) teachers from schools of all levels throughout Italy participated in the research.

4. Results

The knowledge acquired during the Course was useful in a percentage of 78% for the strengthening of the skills of the Integration Area, of citizenship skills and global citizenship and, for 47%, for the skills of the Cohesion Area society and the prevention of youth problems. An interesting fact concerns the contribution that the training activities of the course have made in terms of methodological innovation. In fact, 47% of the teachers declared that the training activities of the Course were beneficial for a rethinking of teaching related to the innovation of both physical and virtual learning spaces. Finally, as regards the area of organizational and didactic autonomy, 57% of the teachers declared that the same training activities have initiated reflection paths on the project dimension of school activities.

5. Conclusions

The FAMI Course showed how the school-university synergy is fundamental for a regeneration of models. Through the recognition of the interdisciplinary strength of cultural plurality and the value of the person, it's possible to promote, in a holistic way, the idea of a new social inclusion and support the educational development of future generations. How can intercultural education contribute to a sustainable future social inclusion? These are the new responsibilities for intercultural pedagogy committed, today more than ever, in an effort to analyse and understand the dynamics of intercultural research involving teachers, who increasingly emerge as fundamental protagonists and not just users of these macro-processes.

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