

# THE BIRTH OF ‘CITIZENSHIP AND CONSTITUTION’ IN ITALIAN SCHOOLS: A NEW WALL OF COMPETENCES OR TRANSITION TO INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION?

SANDRA CHISTOLINI

**Abstract** – *It seems to be impossible to study education and pedagogy without considering the question of competences and abilities which are the new ID for European and worldwide citizenship. Our discussion starts from an analytical point of view with the aim of examining the conditions of learning in Europe and the future of our systems of higher education. Are we able to communicate the values and traditions of our common historical and cultural heritage or are we facing ungovernable challenges? The era of competences finds fertile ground in a pragmatist mind, while the construction of European citizenship navigates in the waters of the great Mediterranean Sea, cradle of ancient civilisations. Italy could be an interesting example of how Citizenship and Constitution become part of the school curriculum, at all levels, taking the place of Civic Education and Intercultural Education in teaching-training programmes.*

## Introduction: triads spanned by system competences

**I**t seems to have become almost impossible to talk about education and teaching without referring to the abilities which should constitute the new ID, with which a European citizen presents himself to the world. This study analyzes the current situation in order to outline the present and future of a Europe that is increasingly trying to communicate, better and better, values drawn from common historical and cultural roots.

Reading the news, aided by telecommunications and the transparency of online documents, often in the various languages of the countries of the European Union, necessitates an initial selection that corresponds with this article’s proposed research approach.

Reading, selecting and planning are part of the educational policy we are experiencing and from which emerges clearly enough the intention of achieving ambitious objectives. They are, on the one hand, a logical consequence of the development determined by globalisation, while, on the other hand, they are the ‘structures’ conceived to manage a multiplicity of elements which have to be dealt with. To convey what the cultures of Europe have produced in the course of time requires not only the structural and formal command of a language, but, more

importantly, it questions our willingness to be in a world in which civilisations must meet, even if, historically, they have not always followed the same path.

To understand, in a European context, where we are going and which skills we have to develop, as teachers, students, citizens and people belonging to different traditions and cultures, means that our human and professional training should aim at combining our legacy from the past with the present, in order to enrich our common human heritage.

A Europe of knowledge is an urgency, not just a computerised slogan. It is essential to interact with this situation in order to uphold the revitalization, in European universities, and try to propel them towards a better future. Science and technology are committed to accepting the challenge launched by a culture conceived as a connective tissue, uniting peoples and traditions. If interculture involves educating people towards dialogue, citizenship means establishing the rules for living together—valuing each person’s capacities—as individuals and as part of a community and a State, to deal with institutions and achieve justice in an ethically sound society.

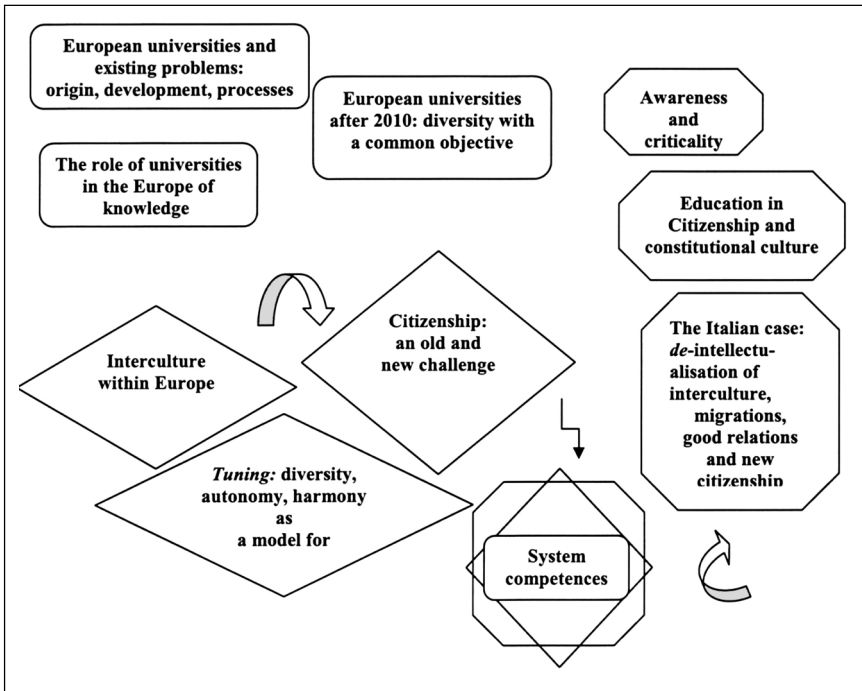
The rings of knowledge, interculture and citizenship intertwine in the Europe we are building, starting from the universities and aiming to include the whole of society (see Figure 1). It is not a question of standardisation, but rather of making the training systems consistent and mutually compatible, thereby avoiding the fragmentation and the limits stemming from multiple approaches. This undertaking is certainly as arduous as it is interesting. Intellectual evaluations and inventions will have to come to terms with the exchange of knowledge made possible through international communications.

## **The European university and existing problems: origins, development, processes**

Among the oldest universities are Al Karaouine, Morocco University, founded in 859; Al-Azhar, Cairo University, Egypt, founded in 988; the University of Bologna, Italy, founded in 1088; Oxford University, England, founded around 1096; and Paris University, founded in 1150. One can observe how the culture of Africa, facing the Mediterranean, was linked to European culture, hereby passing through Italy.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Aristotelian system encountered Arabian culture and the intellectual osmosis between West and East, Christianity and Islam, generated a profitable exchange of scientific and philosophical knowledge. The Syrians, disciples of the Greeks, taught the Arabs to appreciate the classics and preserve ancient science. In the East, the Abassid Caliphs created a

FIGURE 1: The fundamental theme



flourishing tradition with rich university libraries in Baghdad, whereas in the West the Caliphate of Cordova revised and disseminated Greek thought. From India to Egypt to Spain, the Muslim Empire combined elements of Hellenistic and Persian civilisation with Indian culture. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Crusades and the Turkish and Mongol expansions marked the political and military decline of the great caliphates and the transfer of cultural tradition to the Latin peoples. The Arabian philosophy of Avicenna and Averroës compared Aristotle to the Koran and produced its own perceptions of the universe. Christian scholars translated the major philosophical and scientific works from Arabian into Latin and, in Toledo and Sicily, learned Arabs and Jews met at conferences.

The *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, the association of students in Bologna and professors in Paris, is one of the most significant hallmarks of higher studies of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The students, more than the professors, are the ones who gained autonomy from the Municipalities, by appealing to the Holy See for justice. The Archdeacon of Bologna quickly took on the right to award

*licentia*. Also at the University of Paris, officially recognised by the King of France, the exercise of jurisdiction was assigned to the Bishop's representative, the 'Chancellor'. Quite often, universities appealed to the Pope to assert their rights, sometimes privileges, with respect to local authorities.

The ups and downs that characterized 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe yielded the great models of English, German and Scottish universities, which were to be exported throughout the world. Models derived from the liberal elites: the English, more concerned with the quality of teaching and teacher-student relations, and the German, more oriented towards knowledge and science (*Wissenschaft*); the university was supposed to serve the professional needs of society and the State, an idea already present in the Universities of Padua and Bologna. But German universities confirmed this function and extended *professional needs* to the economic and industrial world and the technological society.

In 1810, Karl Wilhelm von Humboldt founded the University of Berlin as a place for studying classical culture, pursuing the ideal of the integral, humanistic and harmonious education (*Bildung*) of the inner being; teachers enjoyed teaching freedom and dedicated themselves to study and scholarship.

A different situation developed in universities of North European that were completely swallowed up by the new era. The Scottish universities opened up more to the industrial revolution, by producing engineers and scientists, concentrating on *research* and *teaching*, taking up, to a certain extent, the German meritocratic approach

In 1896, the Aberdare Report on English universities showed a change in the perception of higher education. The report stated that it was important to adapt university courses to the country's circumstances; and making them more practical meant paying adequate attention to the nation's commercial and professional life, so as to favour the careers of university graduates. Oxford and Cambridge were seen as the ivory towers of knowledge and scholarship. Knowledge, attention and interaction among people are the salient features of British universities, to which are added nobility of spirit and the formation of character. Newman further refined this model, by emphasising the value of aesthetic considerations and the education of feelings. If upholding person-to-person relations was relevant in England, in Germany and Scotland, priority was given to objectives such as the development of modern knowledge and need for the correct academic responses to the social demands of the State. A kind of dualism was clearly outlined between individual and social needs for growth. Even today, one asks what a university is and wonders if it is still an institution that educates towards intellectual leadership, if it is a centre in which independent thought and critical judgement are encouraged.

Although many universities broadly pursue these aims, interesting disparities, dependent on the general educational approach, can always be noted. During the decade, 1950-1960, strong economic growth soon turned the universities into mass institutions. The growth in enrolments led to the renewal of the university structure and system that could no longer meet the above-mentioned needs. The increased number of courses, the raised expectations and the demand for greater professionalism constituted a call, as well as a duty, for universities to close the gap between theoretical education and the workplace, and define continuous courses for the training and utilization of human resources. Around 1990, the practical idea spread that those teaching at university must conduct the courses and also do research, without which they would risk remaining at a standstill in relation to theories that had developed and opened new frontiers of knowledge.

## **European Universities after 2010: diversity with a common objective**

European youth policies go beyond education. In March 2005, the heads of State and government adopted the *European Youth Pact*, which outlined a series of common principles concerning the creation of youth work opportunities. The basic skills that educational systems should guarantee were specified and the need for a balance between working life and family was emphasised, thereby taking into account the female population. More specifically, the European Union 'Youth' programme promotes active participation in society and the projects aiming at reinforcing the feeling of European citizenship in young people and developing in them the spirit of initiative, creativity and an entrepreneurial vision. Europe's investment in this project is about 0.9 billion Euros for the period 2007-2013.

At the end of the second millennium, European universities are in the process of realizing the proposals of the Bologna Declaration (1999), as well as attempting to open the national frontiers of academic culture.

It should be borne in mind that the Bologna Declaration represents the goal of the European movement which, in the previous decade through the mobility of Erasmus, had already started fostering a feeling of 'Europeanness' that brought the peoples of the European Community closer together. Even before this, international understanding and contacts, at the university level, were favoured, above all, by the Foreign Ministries, which also permitted free movement even in non-Community countries through agreements between the individual States. For example, Hungary, Poland and Romania entered into the agenda of European Community students and university professors, through the procedures agreed to between the Ministries and the universities.

Between 1970 and 1980, these exchanges (conducted in a third language, often English or French) had already included the study of the local language, participation in university lectures, sharing leisure time, visits to places of particular cultural significance in the host country, and the creation of friendships between European youth, without East or West European divisions.

Agreements set up by the central governments' education systems made the principle of rapprochement of the peoples operative, starting from youth education, in accordance with peace policies, the defence of freedom and democracy and the awareness, among the young, of sharing a common destiny. After the Second World War, with the signing of the Rome Treaties of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957 and the European Atomic Energy Community, Euratom, the signatories, inspired by the same ideal, decided on common action to ensure economic and social progress, by eliminating barriers and divisions.

The cultural effect of the economic agreements of the 1950s did not take hold until the Bologna Declaration (1999), recognizes the diversities of culture, language and higher education systems in the various countries as a fundamental value, a general reference framework that the creation of a common space must necessarily take into account in the attempt to define new education curricula.

Universities carry out a central role in the Europe of knowledge through research and teaching, together with the equally important and significant task of innovation (European Councils of Stockholm 2001, and Barcelona 2002). The democratic principles that guide the strategy are those of proportionality and subsidiarity, while the basic factor of the Lisbon method for extending European research is the comparative evaluation, benchmarking, of research policies (European Commission, 2002).

## **The role of universities in the Europe of knowledge**

European documents reflect on the historical and cultural reasons that made European universities exemplary places of education for the entire world. For over eight hundred years, European universities have encouraged scientific research, worked towards the emergence of a tolerant civil society, far from dogmatism and totalitarianism, prepared the young to take up their social roles for the economic and political improvement of peoples and States. This applied to the past. As for the present and the future, the challenges posed by the twenty-first century are perhaps more arduous and include the issues of climatic change, the energy crisis, population decrease and aging, and the speed of technical revolutions.

To explain the great upheavals in terms of economic interdependence and social inequality is not, however, enough to guarantee social cohesion. Identifying a problem does not in itself mean knowing, understanding and communicating it. Understanding presupposes experience and precedes communication. Those who focus on a problem pose a question of rationality and, in some cases, ethics. They call other people to collaborate in order to present the solutions, so that others may participate in their experiences, which can become a common cognitive heritage.

With regard to the hermeneutics of understanding, Habermas, in *Knowledge and Human Interests* (published in Italian in 1970), expressed the important concept of the emergence of life and its fundamental significance in the study of the structure of the human sciences. To be involved in life and have an influence over it is the problem of scholars, scientists and politicians. Inevitably, every judgement will be conditioned by a person's individual characteristics, culture and historical context. Awareness of this conditioning helps one to understand the contents of the evaluation and does not eliminate the need for universal validity. W. Dilthey (1883) and C. S. Peirce (1933) had dealt extensively with the contrast between vital relations and scientific objectivity, in order to remain in the context of Habermas's statements, without, nevertheless, leaving aside the objectivism of hermeneutic knowledge. Objectification is part of a symbolic, inter-subjective connection, both binding and unavoidable, and for understanding to occur it is necessary, in a given situation, for two parties to communicate in a language which, in the end, is shared and becomes indivisible (cf. Habermas, 1973, pp.179-180).

The concept of European Space for Higher Education refers to the knowledge society and the creation of opportunities in science, development, technology and innovation. If we talk about the knowledge society, we cannot avoid discussing the theory of knowledge and, if this is reduced to a theory of science, we would be going back to the old positivism which, according to Habermas, was brilliantly contradicted by Peirce and Dilthey. The return to self-understanding and reflection means taking up again the principle which harmonizes language, action and experience, according to the distinction between the instrumental action, of the natural sciences, and the communicative action, of the human sciences. People are interested in regulating their relationships through language that connects symbols, actions and expressions; so that they can determine concepts of the world and give rise to human interactions, in which the protagonists are the socialised persons who communicate their lives.

The problem for science is not so much proclaiming its neutrality as searching for conditions that make research possible and, thus, a priori conditions of knowledge.

The two-fold objective of economic success and social stability in Europe cannot disregard the relationship between the sciences, only partially dealt with by encouraging interdisciplinary research.

If we consider science, economy and society as three specific units, we realise that they are only the columns and sentinels of world development. These three factors define the level of competition among groups have the power of information. Could all knowledge possibly have the same level of significance? No, this does not happen. Instead, there is supremacy of one kind of knowledge over another; this supremacy, called *par excellence*, is defined by science, put into circulation by economy and solidified into society. Institutions and persons reach this excellence when they are within the same set path, shared at the highest levels of social and political consensus. These paths are often selected based on economic assets. Cultural quality and financial quantity do not always agree.

Despite the high quality of scientific publications, the evaluation of the scarcely competitive state of European universities, compared to those of their major world partners, constantly poses questions of a methodological nature about how to:

- reach sustainable financial levels in, and ensure efficient spending of funds by, the universities;
- guarantee autonomy and professionalism in the academic and managerial worlds;
- concentrate sufficient resources and create the necessary conditions so that universities can attain and develop excellence;
- improve the contribution of universities, with respect to their needs and local and regional strategies;
- establish closer cooperation between universities and businesses for a better dissemination and utilization of new knowledge in the economic market and society as a whole;
- make the European space of higher education, coherent, compatible and competitive, according to the Bologna Declaration, like the creation of a new European space for research.

The Europe of knowledge, based on the economy and society, combines four interdependent factors: production, transmission, dissemination, innovation. These factors influence each other in the sense that production is always in search of vaster markets and markets require new products to feed consumerism.

The new patterns of production, transmission and application propose the enlargement of the international context. The Bologna Declaration generated a process that should not lead to the uniformity or standardisation of the national



educational systems, but should respect their autonomy and diversity. That is why one speaks of convergence, to be fostered through: the creation of a framework of excellence; the availability of efficient structures for management and practices; and the development of interdisciplinary skills.

The framework of excellence concerns each subject and is measured on a European, not national, level. As regards the structures, decisional processes should be rendered effective through the remuneration of services, accreditation and going beyond the pure academic tradition. As for interdisciplinary skills and *faculty-wide objectives*, universities must leave behind the logic of single-discipline research and open up to advanced research, necessitated by the complexity of the problems; individual disciplines can offer their specific contributions without omitting the academic comparison between the sciences.

During the annual meeting in London, in July 2007, to review the progress made in relation to the Bologna Declaration, in the *Stocktaking Report*, there was a call for flexible higher education courses, accompanied by procedures for recognising the learning carried out in non-university contexts. As a result of this, we can see that, for some years now in Italy, efforts are being made to accept the principle of flexibility of training careers. Recognition of skills accrued through non-traditional studies are gradually being recognised.

Since 2005, Italy has started simplifying the transition from the first to the second cycle of university studies; increasing internationalisation; strengthening university-industry contacts; and activating new PhD institutes. The challenges still facing the Italian system: unfocused studies; attainment of a degree within the prescribed times; improving employment levels for those who have 3-year degrees; internationalising the university system (Rauhvargers *et al.*, 2007).

## **Interculture within Europe**

The European Council, meeting in Strasburg in 1981 to discuss *L'Éducation des Enfants des Travailleurs Migrants en Europe: l'Interculturalisme et la Formation des Enseignants*, introduced the general character of intercultural education, which was defined as education for all, democratic education, quality education and teaching children to be open-minded towards others.

The reference to children of migrant workers as a field of action for intercultural education was quite customary at that time and is still a constant in pedagogical studies directed at asserting the principle of equal educational opportunities, to be achieved in multiple forms. There are discussions about the teaching strategies to assess how the principle was pursued, achieved and, possibly, disregarded.

From 1944 to date, four wide-ranging themes have been at the heart of the international scientific debate, which aimed at heightening teachers' awareness of:

- the values of peace, democracy and justice, equal opportunities (around 1960);
- students with specific needs (around 1970);
- multicultural education (around 1990);
- education towards citizenship, starting from about 2000 (Chistolini, 2007).

From a theoretical point of view, the studies of comparative and intercultural teaching mark the rise of a neo-criticism concerned with examining educational systems that define themselves as democratic, although presenting a low level of cultural pluralism. These systems are so monocultural and mono-confessional as to have crossed over into totalitarianism and State ideology, in the most glaring cases in the history of education over the last fifty years.

Subjects such as cultural anthropology, ethnology, and human geography are not sufficient to develop an understanding of other peoples and make knowledge an instrument for overcoming racial prejudices and cultural stereotypes. The comparativist Holmes spoke of eliminating error in the context of comparing educational policies. The critical view of intercultural leads to the denunciation of the social injustice produced by the educational systems imprisoned in the selection of excellence, the guiding principle of new educational policies. This is one of the contradictions arising from the comparison of the model produced by the Bologna Declaration and the intercultural dimension of Europe in the preceding decade. From quality education we have sunk to competitive education, from cosmopolitan Europe, we have passed to Europe as the beacon of the world, so we should not be surprised at seeing the ancient ghosts of intolerance and exclusion reappear, just as the globalisation of information and knowledge is being proclaimed.

## **Citizenship, an old and new challenge**

From cross-cultural studies, the analysis of migratory movements and phenomena and the identification of the interdependence of culture, society and personality emerges the material which provides the acid test for teaching's basic premises.

Breaking with traditional interpretative models is the most interesting challenge facing contemporary education. The children of migrant workers are no longer to be treated intercultural, but rather recognised as citizens of the State; an immigrant and his family do not live in the suburbs and are no longer products

of the metropolitan ghetto, they attain social consensus and cultural inclusion; a person does not just belong to the restricted group that favours, or hinders, his/her growth, but is instead part of a world community, without borders; the village is not moving towards the world, it is the world which is becoming a global village; the flow that led from economic poverty to wealth and social success has been overturned; wealth buys shops and services, thereby distorting the identity of continuously changing European cities; recognising oneself is more difficult than knowing oneself, in a context in which the rules are no longer to be presumed, but rather to be totally established.

In 1964, N. M. Gordon published an important book about assimilation in America, revealing the problems of citizenship of new immigrants, who were asked to adhere fully to the United States cultural model, often ignoring the nostalgia for a far-away land and family members, they might never see again. Foreigners had already become citizens of overseas countries, in which the period of intercultural had passed rapidly (Taft, 1976). This reference to the United States is interesting as a historical and political antecedent that marks the passage from the season of intercultural to that of citizenship. From 'guests' to citizens, one might say.

Today, Europe finds itself discussing a citizenship dealing with civic values, democracy, freedom and human rights. Teaching and educating about citizenship do not refer to uniform concepts in the various EU countries. Diversity is an important opportunity to create a pedagogic debate among teachers and educators to produce practical results. The concept of citizenship has become central and crucial following the expansion of the European Union. The European Council of 2004 laid down as the priority objective of the social agenda the development of responsible citizenship, within the regulatory framework of the democratic society for which European youth should be educated.

One should also remember that globalisation makes it necessary to talk to and educate the world citizen. An interconnected, interdependent world interprets citizenship as the 'harmonious coexistence of different communities in local, regional, national and international contexts' (Dooly, Foster & Misiejuk, 2006): this concept expresses the commonly accepted idea of living together in peace and harmony.

The impact of globalisation and the opening of borders does not weaken the feeling of nationality, deemed a distinctive feature of citizenship. The notion of nationality is prevalent in many countries and permits cultural, historical and geographic identification, as well as belonging to chosen groups. The nation state shapes the organisation of contemporary social life and describes the thinking and proposing of education in each country. In this regard, we are confronted by the freedom of the economic market on the one hand and, at the same time, less and less freedom in education, particularly in those States in which the national curriculum has a very strong bearing on educational programmes.

Recent research in British schools highlighted the reluctance to listen to children and students and allow them to express themselves on issues of daily life, how schools are run and the assessment of human relations. Teachers and educators do not appear to support active participation, considered the essence of citizenship education. This state of affairs encourages attempts to remove the obstacles that prevent young scholars from becoming active citizens (Holmes, 2006).

There is a clear contradiction. On one hand, the individual States are trying to face many internal problems in schools. Both students and teachers complain about the lack of attention to human relations. On the other hand, these same States must seriously take into consideration the standards set forth by European declarations. Attachment to one's own country and positive response to Europe: this is the contradiction to be overcome. Devotion to one's own educational system has to come to terms with what was called for in Bologna and Lisbon.

The new university system is diversifying and interpreting the transition from an elite organization to one catering for the masses as the coexistence of cultural missions and the strengths deriving from the plurality of study outlines and programmes. The Europe that attracts talent is building citizenship, thereby granting its citizens the skills to take up opportunities in a society in which it is necessary to educate students to be aware of shared values and their belonging to a common social and cultural space.

## **Tuning: diversity, autonomy and agreement as a citizenship model**

Europe supplies two tools, among others, to identify intercultural and citizenship correctly. The first is the *Thesaurus for Education Systems in Europe* (TESE), the latest version being that of 2006, and the second is the so-called *Tuning* methodology.

The glossary contains European terms, while *Tuning* contains the skills that lead to agreement in Europe and which should foster the process of building citizenship.

The glossary states that, instead of *multicultural education*, the term *intercultural education* is used and *citizenship education* becomes *civics* with the variations noted below.

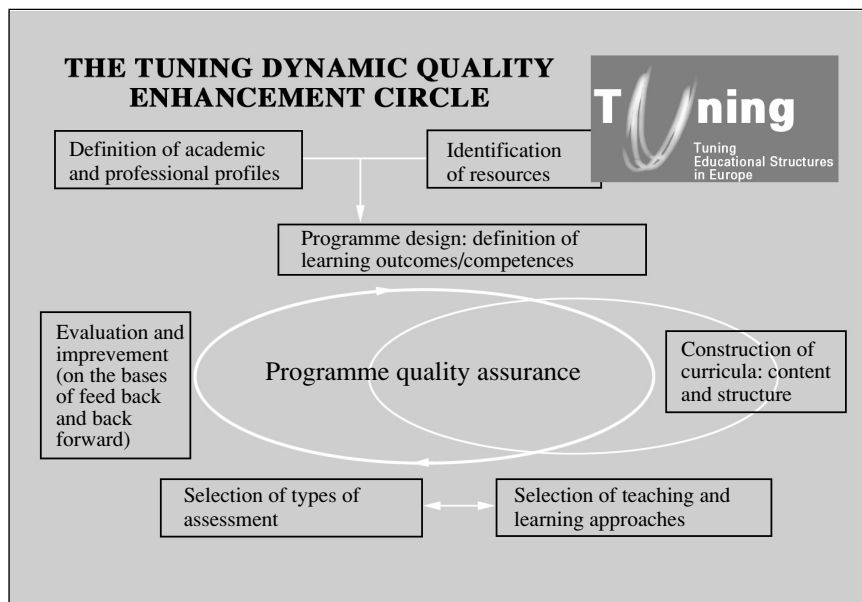
- Citizen: population; marital status.
- Citizen participation: *civil society*, democracy
- *Citizenship education* USE civics
- *Citizenship learning* USE civics
- *Citizenship training* USE civics
- *Civic education* USE civics
- Civic values: democracy; freedom; human rights

Civics: *citizenship education; citizenship learning; citizenship training; civic education; education for citizenship; social sciences; community studies; education for peace; law studies.*

The term ‘civic values’ is useful: it refers to the specific skills indicated by the *Tuning process* (see Figure 2) designed to harmonize educational structures and programmes based on diversity and autonomy and coordinated by the Universities of Deusto, Bilbao, Spain, ([www.relint.deusto.es/TuningProject/index.htm](http://www.relint.deusto.es/TuningProject/index.htm)) and the University of Groningen, Holland ([www.let.rug.nl/TuningProject/index.htm](http://www.let.rug.nl/TuningProject/index.htm)).

The term *Tuning* was chosen to convey the idea that universities must not blend together or merge or offer prescribed, final curricula, but should be able to communicate, converge and move towards a common understanding. Respect for educational diversity, independence of subject-matter, and local and national authority are assured.

FIGURE 2: The ‘tuning’ dynamic quality enhancement circle



Source: González J. and R.Wagenaar (Joint project co-ordinators) *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. A pilot project by and for higher education institutions supported by the European Commission in the framework of the Socrates programme, Bilbao and Groningen, December 2003.*

‘Tuning’ was set up to include the curricula and make them comparable. This approach provides for five lines of discussion and study in the academic disciplines:

- general skills;
- specific skills;
- the role of credits and the system of accumulating them;
- approaches to learning, teaching and assessment;
- increasing the quality of the educational process.

In the list of the 30 general academic skills (for all the subjects) which students should acquire, the ones indicated under nos. 20 (ability to work in an interdisciplinary team), 21 (ability to communicate with non-experts in the field), 22 (appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism), 23 (ability to work in an international context), 24 (understanding of the cultures and customs of other countries) are the closest to interculture, multiculturalism and citizenship (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/Tuning.html>).

However, as regards the specific skills in Teaching, European Studies, and History, the following are indicated:

#### *Education*

- 03. Ability to reflect on one’s own value system
- 15. Ability to adjust the curriculum to a specific educational context

#### *European Studies*

- 07. Ability to work in a multicultural team
- 19. Awareness of the debate about European citizenship and European identity

#### *History*

- 39. Awareness of, and respect for, points of view derived from other nations or cultural backgrounds

Pedagogy, translated as *Education*, does not use the words interculture, multiculturalism or citizenship, but refers to the individual’s system of values and a context-adjusted curriculum.

Surveys show that multiculturalism and citizenship are deemed a privileged field of European Studies, while History deals with national identity.

## **The Italian case: the de-intellectualisation of intercultural, migrations, civil coexistence and new citizenship**

In 1992, the drive towards intercultural studies, in their final form, reached the Chairs of General Pedagogy in Italy (Chistolini, 1992). The Ministry of Education actively entered the academic debate with a declaration on intercultural education in schools, signed by Corradini, which then became a ministerial circular (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1992).

By reconstructing the intercultural situation in training teachers in Italy, we note how intercultural education as a subject for teacher training, although not unfamiliar in Europe, was unexpected at the Faculty of Education, responsible for training all teachers, regardless of school type or level.

The greatest impact of intercultural education in European universities was on educationalists with international interests, while schools, bound to the centralised nature of education and sheltered from the as yet calm wind of autonomy, were less concerned with the change. Apart from some rare exceptions, the theoretical and practical experience of intercultural education could not be said to be a universal, permanent feature of all Italian teacher training.

The initial approach to intercultural education in Italian universities was not identical with the ministerial and scholastic one. In the universities, one started from the theory of comparative teaching, bearing in mind the numerous international studies which, starting from the 1800s, had concerned themselves with comparing educational systems in order to improve teacher training, from a developmental perspective, which was neither ethnocentric, nor exclusively European. The issue of international comparisons acted as an impetus for changing educational systems, aiming at a better understanding among peoples, nations and cultures. For the comparison to occur and achieve understanding, even in different languages, it was necessary to meet and discuss teaching concepts and experiences related to the development of education.

The ministerial approach to intercultural education was striving to augment the planning skills and autonomy of the schools which, on the one hand, looked to the central regulatory-institutional framework and, on the other hand, considered the problem of intercultural teaching, especially with regard to foreign children, who were increasing year by year. The migratory phenomenon tended to reinforce the intercultural approach. The twin themes of cross-cultural studies about migration and intercultural education were favoured by ministerial and scholastic culture.

The two approaches, the academic pedagogic-comparatist and the socio-cultural one of the central and peripheral school policies, influenced each other over subsequent years and produced a comparatist-type teaching literature, in which the socio-cultural factor was considered a dependent variable within the

context of historic-systemic analysis. The impact of any one single perspective of study could not be significant considering the wealth of relevant material available.

It was one thing to formulate the theoretical discourse on education, starting with the critical analysis of historical-social processes, such as colonisation, assimilation and integration, and promote interculture as a reaction to isolation, discrimination and unequal opportunity; but it was another thing to start from a comparative theory, as a working hypothesis, and demonstrate the formal, substantial contradictions of educational systems that declare themselves democratic, while falling short of their own objectives by reproducing the selection and neglect which afflicted the deprived categories of the population.

As one can well understand, the two approaches were destined to destroy each other, or feed off each other, not so much because of an obvious ascendancy of one over the other, but rather for reasons of vital space, opportunity to exist and educational realism. By reasons of vital space, we mean the persistence in linking interculture almost exclusively to migration; since 1998, the Ministry has been producing annual reports, referring to ‘pupils of non-Italian citizenship’ and offering a statistical fact which turns to teaching interpretation for an ample, detailed assessment of the subject. By reasons of opportunity to exist, we mean the need to keep alive the interest in international comparative studies that help us understand what we have left behind and where we are going. If interculture was a source of comparison for Van Daele (1993), for Vico (1992) it was a theoretical challenge to the fundamentals of general and social teaching, just to give some indicative, but not exhaustive, examples.

Finally, by reasons of educational realism, we mean the commitment to consider the value of the two approaches which are a sign of the intellectual fertility of teaching over the last twenty years and, as such, without cancelling each other out, they have the responsibility to stay alive to enrich the debate and favour the opportune linking of pedagogical theory and practice (Chistolini, 2004). Particularly the third group of reasons, those of educational realism, give rise to the eclipse of interculture, to the advantage of the emerging civil coexistence (Corradini, 2003). Cultural comparisons, accepting immigrant children, the culture of dialogue and tolerance, the resource of ethnic diversity and the discovery of the multiplicity of religions lead back to issues of individual and collective freedom, the correct view of rights and duties, relations with institutions balanced between legitimacy and legality, laboriously intent on having to concur with what the citizen deems is right and what regulations sanction, knowing full well that, in many situations, there is an unbridgeable gap between the individual’s sense of personal justice and the application of the law.



As it evolves, intercultural education merges with educating towards civil coexistence and citizenship. In any case, it is necessary to avoid insisting upon identifying intercultural with citizenship by means of, sometimes sterile, intellectual twists and turns. The de-intellectualisation of intercultural education requires that the state of schools should be assessed, in practical terms, and, when the stage of development allows it, the transition can be made from intercultural education to citizenship education, from dialogue to agreement, from acceptance to participation and from rights to duties.

## **Citizenship education and constitutional culture**

In the current state of university training of teachers in Italy, intercultural, multicultural and citizenship are not always included as independent subjects; they may fall within the teaching of General Pedagogy. They are indispensable transversalities, necessary recommendations that society imposes and the individual takes on..

In the new phase, which we have gradually reached through school reform (Law no. 53 of 28 March 2003) and the *Personalised plans*, which provide for pre-school activities and primary school curricula (Legislative Decree no. 59 of 19 February 2004), intercultural and multicultural are cited in educating towards civil coexistence that includes citizenship, road and environmental education, as well as health, nutrition and affectivity.

In the fundamental idea of educating everyone, both those who are legally recognised as citizens and those who are not, to accept coexistence, we find the desire to overcome the limits of definitions and affirm the common principles of living together. Teachers' educational responsibility is to foster political awareness, fertile terrain to encourage understanding between different people and lead everyone towards an education which will be a means of freeing the individual.

History, geography, mathematics and art supply the intellectual and technical tools for putting into effect civil coexistence, as well as for demonstrating how the social and natural sciences help a person to live better in the community. To go beyond national borders and bring the moral core of civil coexistence to the fore requires understanding fully all that the term coexistence means and defining educational objectives ever-more clearly.

In 2007, pedagogical concerns turned once again to the issue of citizenship as described in Directive no.58 of 8 February 1996. The debate in Italy is particularly lively at the moment and tends to interpret citizenship as the political status of citizens, who know how to balance their rights and duties in their relations with

institutions, whether in terms of a social culture learnt at school and in the community they belong to, or a knowledge of the constitution, as well as active participation in local, national, European and worldwide levels. The phrase *citizenship education and constitutional culture* is the subject of national discussions among sectorial experts (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2007, pp.133-135).

This is a lengthy text that examines citizenship from a broader point of view; it considers the person as having fundamental rights, including the right of citizenship: belonging to a State, a political and social community, in which one learns and shares common values. The decision to belong to the community of a State involves widespread social and political participation, which does not end with voting, but also includes an appreciation of each person's unique value and his/her right to be free from the snares of any kind of discrimination, which would hinder equality and democracy. Let us talk about citizenship as:

- a right and duty of a teacher's professional development;
- the opening of borders and the choice of an intercontinental approach in training working teachers;
- an epistemological transition from interculture to worldwide citizenship;
- a human-spiritual dimension of the educational system;
- civil coexistence;
- a comparison of teaching methods;
- autonomy in Italian schools.

But we are interested in creating the conditions of citizenship as:

- *belonging* to the community of men and women, living together in society;
- *formulating* spiritual values;
- *producing* economic well-being for everyone;
- *participation* in the common good;
- *sharing* rights and duties, based on ethical and institutional considerations;
- *accepting* others;
- *legitimizing* a person's right to be seen as a human being in society.

This citizenship does not turn to invisible classifications to alienate the new poor and it does not hide personal views about teachers' training, behind implausible scientificities, under the pretext of generalising them. It deals with the construction of a solid democracy as a common, shared reference point.

In his book *On Democracy* (2002), R. A. Dahl considers the following as the minimum requirements of a democracy:

1. elected administrators;
2. free, fair, frequent voting;
3. freedom of expression;
4. access to alternative sources of information;
5. associative autonomy;
6. extended citizenship.

For Dahl, a higher basic level of civic education at school would enable adult citizens to make political choices. However, we must also talk about public discussions and controversies, salient elements of a free society. If institutions are ineffective in forming competent citizens, it is necessary to start from the beginning, according to Dahl, with intrinsic equality: we must consider the good of each human being as intrinsically equal to that of anyone else (Dahl, 2002).

The pedagogical viewpoint is perhaps less instrumental than the political one and, therefore, broader, riskier and irreplaceable in educating the person to be part of an open society.

## **Awareness and criticality**

Some overall considerations emerge from the topics dealt with so far. Europe has put forward a rather ambitious regulatory framework, which is putting the various countries to the test, in their efforts to reach targets of excellence, competition and appeal. As could be expected, in a pressing, progressive reform like the one fostered by the Bologna Declaration, not everyone is proceeding at the same pace and with the same degree of interest. What is certain is that the process has started and cannot be stopped, while a lot can be done to steer it in the most appropriate direction.

In the assessments of the progress being made, prior to 2010, there are also some elements, known to everyone, which are not always transparent. Students and teachers are evaluated on what they show they have learned and not on what they have actually experienced during their training.

The system of credits also permits this, namely, only to evaluate skills corresponding with some prerequisites and not with others. The correctness of the answer will thus depend more upon the capacity to move technically through the maze of knowledge than on reasoning. Doubt would, by definition, appear to be banished and certainty, so highly criticised by the scientific thinking of the 1900s, re-emerges with the risk of slipping towards new intellectual, if not actually political, dogmatisms

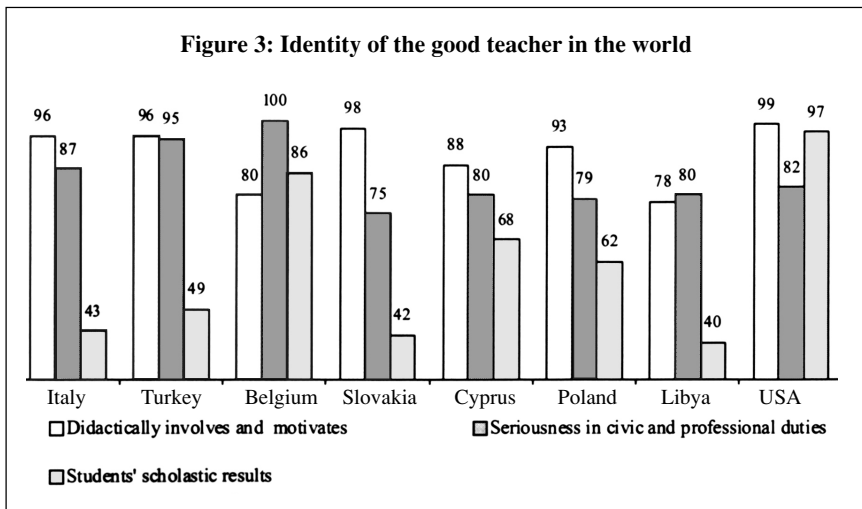
The comparative research on teachers in Italy and other European and non-European countries points to at least two trends that describe the teacher of the new millennium (Chistolini & Verkest, 2006).

For the first trend, a teacher's worth depends upon what he/she teaches; the building up of knowledge and activation of educational processes are derived from the human concepts and the sense of presence of the individual in the universal project of rationalisation and humanisation of the person. All this harks back to the systems of thought, such as Idealism, Neoidealism, Personalism, Existentialism, Spiritualism and Criticism, that described the feelings of a period and foreshadowed the future in which the individual, at the centre of knowledge, was the maker of the object in which he/she was mirrored.

The second trend is that of the teacher whose value depends totally, or almost, upon the pupils' success; this model, mainly American, based primarily on the philosophy of Pragmatism and learning by doing, values the student's answer more highly if it is part of a clearly defined project.

In some schools, the first model triumphs over the second and Idealism prevails over Pragmatism; in other schools, the opposite occurs.

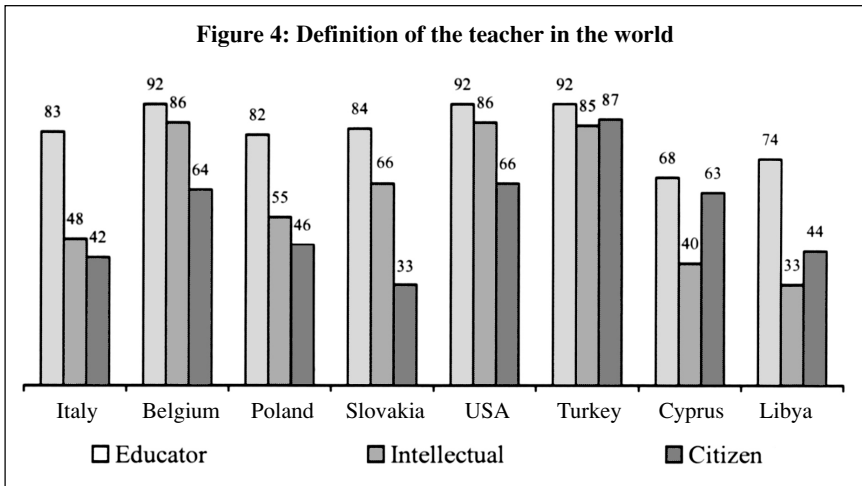
Figure 3, concerning the *Identity of the good teacher in the world*, compares eight groups of teachers belonging to various cultural areas.



As may be seen, the didactic concern is common to all the countries, except for Belgium and Libya, where the teachers interviewed stated that a good teacher is above all serious about his/her civic and professional duties. Bearing in mind that we are talking about a strongly Catholic sample (Belgium) and a strongly

socialist one (Libya), we must conclude that religion and politics exercise a decisive influence over the evaluation of teachers, while in the other countries the essential criterion is teaching ability. As regards the third item, the students' scholastic results, the distribution of the U.S. sample offers objective confirmation of the pragmatist vision of education, described here as the second trend.

Figure 4, concerning the *Definition of the teacher in the world*, indicates the general consensus on considering the teacher an educator. Only in three countries, Turkey, Cyprus and Libya, is the teacher considered more a citizen than an intellectual. It would appear that, once again, the relationship of religion, society and politics results in the teacher's civil function being highly valued. Under conditions of low religious, social and political pluralism, the teacher-citizen carries out the educational task assigned by the centralised State.



The Europe that speaks the language of competences is perhaps better understood by countries that consider students' success praiseworthy, while the Europe that speaks the language of citizenship is presumably better understood by teachers in countries with a centralised educational system. In other words, the era of competences finds fertile ground in a pragmatist mentality, while the construction of European citizenship circulates in the great Mediterranean Sea, the cradle of ancient civilisations.

Although we are aware of treating partial data that might be disproved by other worldwide surveys, we believe the arguments outlined here represent minimum hypotheses that can become material for discussion and in-depth research in the twin fields of study and teaching.

---

**Sandra Chistolini** is full professor of General and Social Pedagogy at the University 'Roma Tre'. She is a member of the National Committee appointed by the Italian Ministry of Education to renew the school curriculum on civic education. She is the author and co-author of several books and articles published in scientific national and international journals. Email: [chistoli@uniroma3.it](mailto:chistoli@uniroma3.it)

## References

- Chistolini, S. (2007) *Pedagogia della Cittadinanza. Lo Sviluppo dell'Intercultura nella Formazione Universitaria degli Insegnanti*. Lecce: Pensa MultiMedia.
- Chistolini, S., Verkest, H. (2006) The social deprivation of teachers in Italy, Belgium, Cyprus, Libya. In A. Ross (ed.) *Citizenship Education: Europe and the World*. Proceedings of the Eighth Conference of the Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network. Riga: London: CiCe Institute for Policy Studies in Education. London Metropolitan Univ.
- Commissione Europea (2006) *Ricerca Comunitaria. 7PQ le Risposte di Domani Cominciano Oggi*. Settimo programma quadro, Comunità europee. Available online at: [www.ec.europa.eu/research](http://www.ec.europa.eu/research)
- Comunicato della Conferenza dei Ministri europei dell'Istruzione Superiore (2003) *Realizzare lo Spazio Europeo dell'Istruzione Superiore*. Berlino: 19 settembre.
- Corradini, L., Fornasa, W. & Poli, S. (ed.) (2003) *Educazione alla Convivenza Civile. Educare Istruire Formare nella Scuola Italiana*. Roma: Armando.
- Council of Europe (2004) *European Year of Citizenship through Education 2005. Learning and living Democracy*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Dahl, R. A. (2002) *Sulla democrazia*. Bari: Laterza.
- Dilthey, W. (1883) *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften. Versuch einer Grundlegung für das Studium der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte*. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot.
- Dooly, M. R., Foster, R. & Misiejuk, D. (2006) *Developing A World View of Citizenship Education in Higher Education Programmes*. London, UK: CiCe Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe.
- Europa (2002) *Innovation Policy Studies. Status Report of Latest Results, and Forthcoming Tasks*. 25.02.2002.
- Europa (2005) *Ricerca e formazione. Verso uno spazio europeo della ricerca*. Available online at: <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/it/lvb/i23010.htm>.
- Gordon, M. M. (1964) *Assimilation in American life: the Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Habermas, J. (1973) *Conoscenza e Interesse*. Bari: Laterza.
- Haug, G. (2001) *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. Project launching event. The Tuning project in the context of main trends in higher education in Europe*. European University Association (EUA) Brussels, 4 May.

- Holmes, J. (2006) Participation and whole school improvement, *Reflecting Education*, Vol. 2 (2), pp. 38-47: <http://www.reflectingeducation.net/index.php/reflecting/issue/view/3/sho>.
- King, E. (1993) Prospettive e metodi della educazione comparata. In M. Laeng (ed.) *Atlante della pedagogia. I luoghi*. Napoli: Tecnodid.
- Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. Consiglio Nazionale della Pubblica Istruzione (1992) 'Pronuncia di propria iniziativa sull'educazione interculturale nella scuola', in S. Chistolini (ed) *Educazione interculturale. La formazione degli insegnanti in Italia, Gran Bretagna, Germania*. Roma: Euroma-La Goliardica.
- Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione (2007) *Scuola e Legalità*. Primo rapporto sui lavori del Comitato Nazionale 'Scuola e Legalità'. Roma: 23 maggio.
- Peirce, C. S. (1933) *Collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Edited by Charles Hartshorne, C. & Weiss, P. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Rauhvargers, A. et al. (eds)(2007) Bologna Process Stocktaking Report from a working group appointed by the Bologna Follow-up Group to the Ministerial Conference in London. May 2007. Department for Education and Skills. London: Socrates.
- Taft, R. (1966) *From Stranger to Citizen. A Survey of Studies of Immigrant Assimilation in Western Australia*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- TESE (2006) *Thesaurus for Education Systems in Europe*. English version. European Commission: Eurydice. Available online at: <http://www.eurydice.org>
- Van Daele, H. (1993) *L'Éducation Comparée*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Vico, G. (1992) *Pedagogia Interculturale. Problemi e Concetti*. XXX Convegno di Scholé. Brescia: La Scuola.
- Ziman, J. (1990) Research as a career. In S. Cozzens et al. (eds) *The Research System in Transition*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.