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on Adult Learning and Continuing Education

Life Skills and Entrepreneurship: Educational Pathways

Edited by Vanna Boffo and Mauro Palumbo

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Table of Contents

Editorial

This issue of the *Epale Journal* focuses on the theme of *entrepreneurship*, the quality that spurred the Italian Epale group to embark on this online review, conceived and developed for adult educators and those practitioners who, in various capacities, are involved in the complex world of Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education. With this issue, we have reached the fourth at the close of our second year. We might affirm our entrepreneurship for acting on the conviction that there was room for reflection on themes of adult education, for having considered that scientific research would be valuable to all who work and live with adults, among adults, and for adults. That is to say, useful to us all.

It is worth emphasizing that when we designed the meeting space on the Epale platform three years ago, it was yet unclear to us the importance of disseminating the culture inherent in myriad communities that circle around the themes, good actions, and deeds done in service to others. We have now added a new section, "Practices," and we are improving the internal layout in hopes of giving even more space to your research and activities in the field.

Because Adult Education in Europe today is the place for serving others, those who are diverse, in appearance and in aims, in colour, in terms of profession, of family, of birth, and of sense of place and belonging. Today adults in Europe represent diversity and difference. Because of this, we can coexist peacefully. States with remote and those with common histories, territories with multiple languages which over the centuries have separated and become distinct must, despite their differences, today start communicating once again. We can distinguish our modest and candid journal as a place made for listening: this is how we like to think of it. We welcome words, points of view, thoughts, not haphazardly, but organized and matured within scientific discourse. We owe the cornerstone of the most intense communication and the most interesting recognition precisely to this mode of encounter. United by a desire for understanding, the foundation of thought about and of humankind. From this point, a virtuous circle unites the intention of this "small magazine" to be able to speak to those who deal with people, with citizenship, with learning that spans the course of human life, with *education*.

The points for reflection in the current issue are widespread, but they all rotate around the theme of adult skill sets and the learning necessary to acquire them. Relationships, making connections, communication, work-based learning, entrepreneurship, integration of migrants, career guidance for adults, and employment for all: such are the themes. Alongside and cutting across them, entrepreneurship is coupled to the need for digital competence and technological expertise. From human connectedness we arrive at responding to technology. One gap to be filled in Adult Learning is created by the digital world in which future generations must battle against obstacles of the future.

We are convinced that these reflections can guide us through the complexities and the many challenges being hurled at adults of today, as well as create an awareness to live fully tomorrow.

Vanna Boffo, Mauro Palumbo

Entrepreneurship: an ongoing discussion

Vanna Boffo[1]

Abstract
This text discusses a theme little debated in the field of adult education, namely, the dimension of entrepreneurship as a reflective category for life, not a skill, but an orientation, a capacity that summarizes one aspect of a human being but is also a course for action and a trait of value.

1. Introduction

According to the Treccani dictionary of Italian, "entrepreneurship" is the quality of people who are adventurous, of those who accept to experience the unknown, of those willing to "put themselves on the line". Over the centuries, pedagogy and education have reflected little on this quality, this category which blends with other terms that in our Western and globalized world have spread out with varying fortunes – creativity, innovation, but also the relationship, the connection, and communication. In this sense, we might say that entrepreneurship can be considered a personal trait, but also a skill/capacity. All of us are enterprising, to a greater or lesser extent, however, it is still possible to train and educate ourselves in entrepreneurship, to acquire the ability to be enterprising. Beyond these terms/concepts, we then have values that derive from the categories indicated: trust, authenticity, gratuitousness, and giving. The thought arises that we might make a leap, from entrepreneurship to giving, passing via innovation and the relationship. It is these values that will lead us back to the importance of reflecting on entrepreneurship within adult education. How much entrepreneurship do we encounter when talking about issues related to the world of adults, to the worlds of work or learning?

Not only values but also virtues: enterprising is the person who does not remain inside his/her circle; we might say, is the person who abandons his/her point of view and focuses on others, but also on other places, who heads towards difference, towards diversity. Resourceful is the person who stops "to take measure of him/herself", and in fact, goes *beyond*, with courage, with audacity, with a sense of risk when it comes to the new. It would seem that *entrepreneurship* is an ancient virtue, according to Enzo Bianchi (2010), today once again to the fore, to certify the change of pace that education in adulthood ought to attain. Because unquestionably, education and training, also in adulthood, mean building skills for life, to feel good, to avoid succumbing in the face of a "new" which engulfs those unable to adapt to it (Bollas, 2018). Therefore, we would need pathways to become enterprising, to prepare ourselves for entrepreneurship, to investigate what it really means to reach the ability to build, improve, change, transform and go beyond ourselves (Kolb, 1984).

We might think of entrepreneurship as a sense of dislocation, a change in perspective, and we all know how difficult it is for adults to change their point of view and to transform certainties into *possibilities* without losing their reference points and inner security. Looking *beyond* and thinking *beyond* is a prerogative of the paths of reflectivity and creativity. In fact, divergence, which is a departure from the norm, creates difference and diversity

(Rodari, 1973). Looking to the future and beyond obstacles, is the person who acts with a sense of entrepreneurship and practises to build it, maintain it, renew it, change it, and transform it, so that it becomes a constant trait of an innovative educational behaviour. There is a need to educate ourselves and to teach entrepreneurship; without an intentionally reflective action, we cannot even implement education plans.

Therefore, on the one hand, a thought lies on a word-category, *entrepreneurship*, which although arriving from afar, adopts new meanings and latches onto the skills of the person to live in the world, becomes a life skill not only for survival but to feel satisfied in the world of the life of Simmelian memory (Simmel, 2009).

On the other hand, we urgently need a kind of training to learn new ways of working, to create for ourselves and others, to produce new professional directions and new ideas for a world that is in a state of constant technological flux. We know how much the transformations of which we are the builders or users are supported by the ideas of enterprise, and how much the understanding of these ideas involves aggravating or increasing the differences between people.

In a world like ours that is rapidly evolving and exponentially "diverging" from the canons of the twentieth century in which the adults of today are rooted, it is vital to understand how to tackle transformation and change (Mezirow, 1997). However, transformation and change cannot be interpreted without some keys to understanding. In point of fact, what we are suggesting is that enterprise is one of these keys (Gardner, 2006).

As has been said, the category does not sink its roots in educational reflection, it has close relationships with entrepreneurship which, notoriously, keeps its distance from pedagogical treatises, does not enter the theories of the great fathers of pedagogy of the Twentieth Century and does not appear in the debates on the essence of Adult Education or Lifelong Learning.

Meanwhile, the European Commission has provided some interesting guidelines, many documents, and a Workplan (European Commission, 2016; Bacigalupo, Kampylis & Van den Brande, 2016) to support education on which entrepreneurship can be the bedrock. The policy measures do not ignore these trends; however, the Member States transpose these indications according to their own national equivalents. In this sense, Italy is a territory brimming with local entrepreneurship, but not well-organized for actions of entrepreneurial support. This has implications on entrepreneurship education, which as a result is frequently overlooked. Precisely for this reason, the submission of projects and educational pathways that deal with entrepreneurship is vitally important and testifies to the vitality in Italy of a field of education yet to be harvested.

2. Entrepreneurship education

We could therefore reflect on the entrepreneurship to be taught for the future, both personal/professional and that of the country. This road might lead us to the traditional seat of formal education, namely, the schools. In schools for adults, they teach *entrepreneurship*, even if it is done while stressing other aspects connected with it, such as orientation and life skills, as a process of professionalization. Every time we think of the skills for a profession, we can refer to the entrepreneurship process, and reflect on the whole gamut of vocational training. Instead, according to our definition, the trait of being enterprising invokes a more profound human dimension that is not only directed towards the competence to be developed in a profession, but is also directed to a certain disposition: the value of being able to keep one's hidden talents alive. Thus, here is *entrepreneurship* as an education of the self to search for what we are, for what we can do well: the connection between thinking about the *self* and the action of the *self* is what allows us to be. This does not mean stressing the importance of competence "for profit," as the detractors of policies for the development of employability might still maintain today. It is about going to the roots of people's education, according to the classical matrix that has characterised Western culture from Plato onwards. It is about understanding the

meaning of adult education starting from formal processes and within the informal ones of work, family, and time off from the obligations of living.

As we have already suggested, the chain of concepts such as entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, entrepreneurship, and employability can be explored on multiple levels. People need to be educated to learn entrepreneurship if we want a future of civil responsibility and self-determination. Education is central, using the most varied of programmes, but always hinging on clarity regarding the skills to be acquired. Entrepreneurship is subject to business acumen, which is still not expressed in a form of entrepreneurship, however. The European Commission has added entrepreneurship to its key competencies (European Parliament, 2006/962/EC):

> the spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship: the ability to transform ideas into actions through creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the capacity to plan and manage projects.

What we are saying is that what we call *entrepreneurship* is none other than the spirit of initiative. We are also emphasizing that the spirit of initiative cannot and must not be left to the scheme of a professional form but could constitute a privileged *life skill*, particularly today; that it can be built within forms of social aggregation which do not abandon the most fragile, the different, the distant, and the marginal. From the point of view of teaching, it is more than ever necessary to give voice to the ability to take our own lives in hand.

Then, from the plane of personal education which the formal pathways can devote energy and space to, we can forge ahead to plan the programming needed to *take the initiative*. New technologies and digitization represent spaces of a learning that drives new attitudes to life, which means working in favour of a social justice. Entrepreneurship education through technologies is a form of collective and social responsibility. This plan is supported by the policies of the European Union, but perhaps not sufficiently accepted by those of some Member States.

Where can we develop *entrepreneurship* in non-formal situations? At a school level, as we have seen, in higher education in university shadowing services, in contexts of Lifelong Learning that are trying to teach every trainer and every educator the significance of the term. Universities have a specific responsibility. In particular, the actions of Career Services can develop what is the hardest thing to find in courses or training for work, namely, meetings with companies, the testimonies of those who have created work and those who have invented their own. The learning of *entrepreneurship* can be introduced into work-related learning schemes, in the educational pathway of traineeship, in the possibility of carrying out *internships*, in every project or pathway involving stakeholders in the world of work and the professions.

3. Actions for entrepreneurship

The articles of this issue of *Epale Journal* show a vital array of actions, projects, and pathways, and allow us to review and re-transcribe everything we have reflected on previously. Technologies are at the centre of activities for *entrepreneurship*; the terms of their use show and demonstrate how much work remains to be done, and at the same time, how much schools and universities are moving in this direction. Why technologies and why digital? Without skills *for* and *with* the new tools for learning, it will become increasingly complicated to redistribute a social justice that necessarily passes via the acquisition of knowledge. Without knowledge, without appropriate environmental situations, and without sustainable conditions to access knowledge, we cannot have a redistribution of social justice on the one hand, and wellbeing on the other.

Martha Nussbaum has underlined this point (2010, 2011): individual capabilities develop from environmental, cultural, and community conditions, but always *of* and *in* the social group. If we are to achieve a balanced life and sustainable development, we will need to consult the wider community more urgently than isolated individuals. Entrepreneurship is not declinable only in the singular, given that it manifests its strength in the direction of *em-*

ployment, and so it must be transcribed in the plural. We must learn to tell our stories, also autobiographically, *beyond ourselves* and, at the same time, together with others, to understand contexts and to gather food for thought on relationships and communication, including inter- and trans-generational, between the senses and the mind, the starting point toward thinking in an *innovative way*.

In concluding these introductory notes on an issue so crucial to adult education, we wish to emphasize how much work remains to be done, and remind us all of how important the major theme of life skills is in the context of teaching, learning, education, and training.

Notes

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Mutual understanding into action: intergeneration and territory in a work placement schemes for school students

Silvia Luraschi and Laura Formenti[1]

Abstract
This article presents a work-related learning project in which different generations were engaged in research on sensobiographic memories of the territory to discover how places have changed and how to activate entrepreneurship as a precondition to action within a particular context.

1. A systemic redefinition: mutual understanding as premise for entrepreneurship

> *"I learned that you are never too small to make a difference."*
> Greta Thumberg

This article describes an experience in which the protagonists were not adults who studying in accord with classic categories of *Lifelong Learning*; instead, they were learning through an intergenerational relationship between youth and senior citizens. The objective was to stimulate reflection on the nature of *life skills* acquired in a "natural" way, that is, through "normal" interaction between *learners* of different ages in a particular context. Adult education today is measured in epochal changes, even in the relationship between the ages of life: in recent weeks, the media has highlighted the theme of entrepreneurship in relation to *Greta Thumberg, a fifteen-year-old Swedish girl who skipped school one day a week in order to sensitize the world population to climate change (Turro, 2018). This young activist astonished the UN General Assembly by her courage and the maturity of her words at the International Conference on Climate Change (*https://cop24.gov.pl/*). An example, this certainly was, of entrepreneurship across generations.* But it is also something that decision-makers seem unaware of, according to Greta.

Common sense tells us that the entrepreneur is someone who knows how to take initiative, to develop new undertakings, to act by seizing opportunities and consenting to take risks. Being enterprising implies qualities of courage and independent thought, overcoming fear and finding the strength to act. However, this definition undervalues of key dimensions of enterprise, those which are of a systemic, epistemological, relational and evolutionary nature. Entrepreneurship arises from knowledge within a context, from relationships we have with objects, with other people, with ourselves, and it evolves over time in a non-linear way, much like the evolution of our physical world, our relations, our environment both social and symbolic. The same person may appear enterprising and capable of acting within certain contexts, relationships or occasions, but then prove utterly inept in others. Like all the qualities expressed through action, this involves a dimension of power: entrepreneurship and interdependence are tightly connected.

It becomes interesting, therefore, to treat this subject in a systemic and critical light, in order to set up educational contexts that generate entrepreneurship, i.e. that open up possibilities in the relationships between people and not inside them. From a systemic point of view, education and learning concern communication and interknowing, i.e. the possibility for an entire system to learn (symmathesy, see Bateson, 2016, 168 et seq.). The construction of intergenerational paths related to a shared understanding with a particular context generates entrepreneurship as an effect that emerges, not one that is anticipated or planned. This concept was behind the work-related learning project conducted during the 2017-18 school year, in which more than one hundred participants of various ages participated, all in the role of researchers and learners. Fifty male and female students representing two-thirds of a senior secondary school, fifty observers aged 65 to 79, two teachers, and four researchers from the University of Milan-Bicocca.

A system of relationships, therefore, generated entrepreneurship on multiple levels, through a methodology that abandoned classic "instruction" and planning to give prominence to the capacity of each person involved to act. Enactive pedagogy, based on an learning model that is ecological (Bateson, 1972), incorporated (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991) and transformative (Formenti, 2017), frames knowledge as a process that shapes the world – ourselves, others, and the environment – by means of a reciprocal game of constraints and opportunities (Ceruti, 2009). Today, many studies in psychology, neurology and pedagogy (Contini, Fabbri & Manuzzi 2006) underline the circular relationship between perception and action:

> When I direct my eyes towards what I think is a tree, I receive an image of something green. But this image is not "outside". Believing this is already a form of superstition, because the image is a creation of mine, the product of many circumstances, including my own preconceptions. (Bateson & Bateson, 1989: 87)

In this vision, skills become concrete, corporeal, and situational, triumphing over a reductive vision of entrepreneurship that sees it tied only to the world of work: the sense of *agency*, confidence in the ability to make decisions and take risks, as well as reflection, are dimensions that cut across all real-world contexts. Accordingly, the objective is to generate concrete experiences of interconnection and co-construction of knowledge, to contextualize the imperative *lifelong* – a guiding principle for the design of educational systems in Europe (ECC, 2006) – in the name of equity, inclusion, and social cohesion in all sectors of the population and among different age groups (Alberici, 1999).

In this respect, we can see work-related learning as a bridge between the *world of education* and *the world of life* (Vitale, Formenti & Calciano, 2017), drawing inspiration for a broader *lifelong* perspective (Dozza, 2009) that embraces possible future scenarios (Dozza & Ulivieri, 2016) as well and recognizes limits imposed by a dominant adult narration that entraps youth in an idealization of the past (Serres, 2018). *Putting histories into motion* means literally revitalizing the connections between generations, understanding contexts, learning how to learn, and the ability to embark upon new courses of action.

2. Sensotra: an incorporated methodology to generate mutual understanding and agency

Sensotra is a research project funded by the European Community with the goal to investigate transformations in our relationship to the environment from a sensory, multi-generational, and technological viewpoints (http://www.uef.fi/en/web/sensotra/home), i.e. the ways European citizens of different generations have lived and are living the transformations of their territory. A member of the European team, Formenti, suggested two teachers from the "A. Greppi" secondary school of Monticello Brianza (LC) explore the project's research method, i.e. sensobiographic walking developed by Järviluoma (2017), to lay a path to be co-designed with students in the role of researchers.

Sensobiographic walking is an incorporated ethnographic method: researchers ask a witness to choose a si-

gnificant place for his/her life and to then follow along the way for a mobile interview; during the walk, the history of the place is invoked through smells, sounds, tactile sensations and other sensory and biographical memories emerging from interaction with the environment. In the initial phase of the project, a series of experiential and reflective workshops (12h) allowed the students to familiarize themselves with the method: while practising it themselves, they questioned the link with the territory and co-developed the guidelines for the sensobiographic walks.

It is interesting to note how, already at this stage, the overcoming of certain fears and resistance was reported subsequently by the children themselves as a learning moment in favour of the relationship and their capacity to act autonomously:

> *Ultimately, I learned that if the researcher is moved by a passion, by genuine interest, the subject of the research perceives a calming climate and consequently opens up easily and becomes inclined to greater openness. In this way, we frequently find ourselves in practice deciding for ourselves how to handle certain parts of the project, not knowing how to carry them out correctly for fear of not achieving the required objectives. One of the most beautiful aspects of the research was the relationship I was able to establish with Luigi, the elderly man I interviewed, because even today when we meet on the street in the village we always stop for a chat.* (Marco, 17 anni)

The project's objective was to create a community of practice through a strongly cooperative scheme. The task of the students, divided into territorial groups, was to locate witnesses, arrange the informed consent, record and transcribe the dialogues, shoot and store meaningful images of the route and analyse all the materials to produce a final summary. They were intentionally left free in order to encourage the assumption of responsibility, creativity and the capacity to make choices and take risks.

From a first analysis of material produced, the project seems to have generated careful listening to the other individual, themselves, and the places passed through. This is informal learning, despite the scholastic framework. The perceptions, emotions and stories fostered new stances and the possibility of developing brief experiences of autonomy. A first project outcome was the acquisition of certain kinds of knowledge and awareness which opened up fresh possibilities:

> *During our walk, Elvira told me what the piazza had been like many years earlier, how it had changed over the course of time, and also expressed some considerations with regard to the people who used to frequent this place and those who come here now. She made reference to what she could see, hear, and touch in the square and in doing so, a nostalgia for the past touched her. She also spoke of her husband and his profession; he had been a paediatrician. Another thing that I found very interesting was her account of the period during the war and the partisans; she recalled that once she was halted by the Germans for some checks and that she "saved" herself thanks to her astuteness. Equally beautiful was the story of her house, an old villa, which, after the war, was used to house the poor. I can therefore sum up by saying that, even if in the beginning I was a little prejudiced, in the end this experience was useful for me because I discovered many things I didn't know about the village where I live, about the period of the war and the old villa near my home.* (Maria Cristina, 16 anni)

These words show the value of intergenerationality in supporting a different perception of our life environment based on listening, curiosity, and historical knowledge. If work-related learning is a training device that favours self-orientation, in this case it promoted an education critical of the territory, which challenged the previous meaning (Mezirow, 2015):

> *Through their stories, I understood that the uninformed transformation of a place can not only harm the space figuratively, but also the sensibility of the people who frequented that space. This made me understand the increasingly overwhelming alienation of modern places that are built, not only without taking account of the surrounding environment, but also the function of the building. That's why this experience allowed me to develop a greater sensitivity towards what surrounds me, to have respect for places, since they are not static things but come to life in people's memories.* (Patrizia, 18 anni)

There is still much to be done to create contexts and occasions for intergenerational knowledge, both inside and outside the school, where learners of all ages can learn together to think like adults (Mezirow, 2015). During the project, all the participants were constantly interrogated to give the experience meaning, generating a self-analysis of what they were doing, living disorientating experiences along with authentic and deep dialogues. However, the students often reported that they would have liked a more structured organization, more precise instructions, and more concrete help in the field: autonomy and curiosity still do not appear skills schools actively encourage.

Notes

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Building entrepreneurship capabilities: the REACT project (Reinforcing Entrepreneurship in Adults through Communication Technologies)

Massimiliano Costa and Paula De Waal[1]

Abstract
The aim of this essay is to show the reader how the REACT Project (Reinforcing Entrepreneurship in Adults through Communication Technologies) can develop adults' entrepreneurial capabilities to improve their quality of life, employability, and integration with society.
The pedagogical assumptions underlying the project include both the "capability approach" and "entrepreneurship".

1. Introduction

From the standpoint of European policies (European Commission, 2006; 2012; 2016), entrepreneurship is a "competence[2] not attributable to a single profession or career (Boffo & Gioli, 2017), but a cognitive, affective and "conative" process aimed to increase a person's worth (Kyrö, Mylläri & Seikkula-Leino, 2008) within an inclusive social perspective3".

Teaching and developing intrapreneurship (Costa & Strano, 2018) allows individual workers to espouse behaviour that will affect not only their employability, but also how they relate to society, thereby increasing inclusion and active participation (European Commission, 2015).

2. The REACT Project

The European REACT project – Reinforcing Entrepreneurship in Adults through Communication Technologies (*www.reactproject.online*) – is funded through Key Action 2 for Adult Education of the Erasmus+ Programme. The partnership has five members from four different EU countries and, in the case of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, is coordinated by the International Centre for Educational and Formative Research (CISRE) of the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage.

The REACT Project's goal is to reinforce the entrepreneurship competences of adults to improve their quality of life, including their employability, and their integration into society (Morselli, Costa & Margiotta, 2014). To this end, it promotes the development of educational methodologies and innovative approaches consistent with the development of the various dimensions of entrepreneurship competence and, at the same time, knowledge of environments, procedures, and techniques thanks to digital communication technologies.

The project's two main levers are: the valorization of intrapreneurship, and the relationship between this concept and the development of capability. In addition, gamification strategies are used to foster more engaging learning for adults (Vezzoli & Tovazzi, 2018).

The experiments carried out in Italy by CISRE researchers resulted in three different workshop sessions, which adopted training techniques and methodologies identified by partners as good practices during the first phase of the project:

• *Workshop 1:* "Entrepreneurship Self Evaluation and Empowerment", with activities geared to self-awareness, digital storytelling techniques, and role-playing.

• *Workshop 2:* "CISRE Game Lab", a business game environment for TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning), entirely developed by the team at Ca' Foscari and geared to the development of information literacy skills for the elucidation of poorly-defined problems, and faster decision-making.

• *Workshop 3:* "Fever Pitch & Business Model Canvas", with activities geared to the creation of innovative business ideas using methods to gradually visualize the generative process.

3. The capability approach and entrepreneurial competence

The capability approach provides a theoretical framework to analyse entrepreneurial competence, looking beyond simple performance towards a reflection on the contextual factors that allow or deny the expression of entrepreneurial competence. When individuals have acquired greater awareness of the factors that are limiting their personal development in terms of forward planning and a personal vision, then they can fully express their personal intrapreneurship in an appropriate manner within their own context. Awareness of these factors allows individuals to make choices in line with their own values, consistent with those contextual factors that encourage or restrict their intraprising action. In this way, the capability approach (Sen, 2000) allows a better association of entrepreneurial competence with individuals' self-determination.

Through this approach to developing capability, a formative vision is established of intrapreneurship as an opportunity to develop as a person, i.e.: to foster the ability to orient oneself and make autonomous choices (Costa, 2018); to achieve self-awareness and fulfil individual potential.

Building entrepreneurship capabilities means "bringing out people's skills and generative capacities for an expansion of their spaces of freedom, for a strengthening of their ability to see their own future and to express their constructive directionality with concrete choices, knowing how to seize from among the different opportunities of a context those they deem of value to themselves." (Strano, 2016), organizing this dimension of agency in terms of autonomy and responsibility (Van Gelderen, 2012).

4. Gamification and intrapreneurship education

The second component that has been considered to promote intrapreneurship education is gamification (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled & Nacke, 2011). Since the target of the project is the adult population, the methodological choice to use gamification is intended to encourage active interest among the participants (Nesti, 2017), i.e., their involvement, in order to modify and significantly impact their habits and behavioural performance (Domínguez, Saenz-de-Navarrete, de-Marcos, Fernández-Sanz & Pagés, 2013).

As a pedagogical approach (Faiella & Ricciardi, 2015), the use of games is in keeping with a socio-constructivist educational paradigm of an experiential nature, involving participants in interaction, problem-solving, choice-making, and narratives (Kiryakova, Angelova & Yordanova, 2014). Games supported by interactive virtual environments allow participants to test their decisions and build their entrepreneurial groundwork in a safe, risk-free environment. These games frequently include problem-solving scenarios (Lin & Shih, 2015) as well as feedback sessions which encourage forms of reflective learning (Barata, Gama & Gonçalves, 2013).

5. Cross-cutting training strategies

After an initial phase to analyse and identify the best European practices in entrepreneurship education, the REACT Project carried out experiments using the methodologies previously shared among its partners. The formative activities of this experimentation develop or contextualize suitable innovative solutions and tools for an adult target that can contribute to the strengthening of their intrapreneurial skills. A cross-cutting cha-

racteristic of the experiments were the dimensions of learning geared more to the development of intrapre-neurship (Blenker, Elmholdt, Hedeboe, Frederiksen, Korsgaard & Wagner, 2014), as had emerged from the analysis of European good practices, in other words: active learning; experiential learning; peer learning; and project-based learning.

- *Active learning*

To learn, individuals must do more than just listen: they must read, write, discuss or engage in solving pro-blems. Active learning refers to the three domains of learning referred to as *knowledge, skills and attitudes.*

- *Experiential Learning*

Consists in the process of learning through experience, more specifically, learning through reflection on doing.

- *Peer learning*

This is a binary learning model that is mutually advantageous and involves the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experiences among participants.

- *Project-based learning*

Training methods to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to work by investigating and answering a question, solving a problem, and analysing a complex challenge.

6. Initial analyses of the experimental results

From an analysis of the processes and the results of the experiments carried out in the REACT Project, we can infer a few factors that most influence the process of training in intrapreneurial skills, namely: identification of the initial degree of intrapreneurship manifested by the participants; adoption of an international reference framework in the processes of reflecting on their own skills; development of strategies for active involvement in the training process; generation of meaningful feedback in the participants' personal contexts; the use of tools that show the gradual acquisition of results and allow a dynamic reorganization of these contents.

Below are a few guidelines from the protocols to implement the activities, currently in preparation:

- *Begin the training course with a self-assessment of entrepreneurial attitudes*

Before the workshop activities, an opportunity is given to explore the students' attitudes to entrepreneurship (Pittaway & Edwards, 2012) and to operate on their self-perception of the skills of the learning tool being used, to grasp their original degree of intrapreneurship.

- *Encourage reflection on individual skills using the EntreComp framework*

Make room during the experiments for correlation between students' self-perception and the evidence of competence acquired in their life experiences. This is "recognizing together with individuals, not only what they know (knowledge) and what they can do with what they know (skills), but especially why they do it (aims, motivations) and what they could do (strategies, scenarios) with what they know and can do." (Tessaro, 2011). The same applies to the reflections shared during debriefing or individual feedback sessions to identify the operational intentionality behind the choice to activate the various areas of competence consistent with the EntreComp framework (Bacigalupo, Kampylis, Punie & Van den Brande, 2016; Morselli, 2018 A).

- *Adopt strategies for the active engagement of participants*

In designing learning activities and processes, it is important to launch challenges that can put participants' competence to the test but, at the same time, allow them to increase their capabilities during the course. In the design phase, it is necessary to ensure that their involvement has one standard training objective, for example, that the individuals' motivation passes from extrinsic to intrinsic, to be experienced spontaneously, and is linked to goals that have a meaning and significance within the participants' personal contexts.

• *Promote reflection and transformations of awareness related to the development of intrapreneurship*
At the end of the subsequent phases of the course, activities should be scheduled that can stimulate reflection on their intrapreneurial competence (Mortari, 2003) and on their own concept of entrepreneurship, focusing on the transformations in awareness of conception and behaviour (Mezirow, 2003).

• *Build capability through visual thinking*
Promote the development of learning activities in terms of capability, by generating associations of ideas (Fayolle, 2013) that can lead to new actions or choices of action (Morselli, 2018b) with the support of tools to represent ideas and concepts that can activate visual thinking processes (Bobek & Tversky, 2016). Encourage analysis of the resulting data to identify which decisions or alternative elements might be adopted, considering the existing constraints and resources.

7. Conclusions

To sum up, the experimentation showed that strengthening entrepreneurial competence in the agentive sense (Costa & Strano, 2018) unfolds the real potential inherent to inclusive participation, and to both individual and social sharing/empowerment, turning these into real opportunities to exercise substantial individual freedom. This allows individuals to choose their own life project and pursue it freely and responsibly, to activate cognitive flexibility in a real sense, and to build thinking skills that are creative and innovative. It follows that the development of intrapreneurial competence represents a vector strategy capable of revitalizing workers' knowledge, forward planning, and choices in a constructive personal and professional way (Jones & Iredale, 2010).

The project dimension inherent to intrapreneurship becomes a horizon of educational and generative significance in a working activity that is increasingly dynamic and creative (Costa, 2018). Ultimately, this evidence is reflected by the OECD Learning Framework 2030 when it states that: "education needs to aim to do more than prepare young people for the world of work; it needs to equip students with the skills they need to become active, responsible and engaged citizens" (OECD, 2018: 4). A "sustainable and inclusive" future therefore requires that people are able to make a contribution, to consider perspectives different from their own, to find untapped opportunities, and to identify multiple solutions to big problems.

Notes

[2] "Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, sense of initiative, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports everyone in day-to-day life at home and in society and provides a foundation for entrepreneurs establishing a social or commercial activity. Entrepreneurship education should not be confused with general business or economic studies, as its goal is to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment" (COM, 2008, p. 10).

[2] "[...] it puts emphasis on entrepreneurship as a key competence, which seeks to empower young people and provide them with the transversal skills for active citizenship, employability and possibly, but not necessarily, entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship." (Eurydice, 2016).

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The NOP work-related learning scheme project: identifying and strengthening Life Skills in line with lifelong guidance for studies and work

Cristina Formiconi, Elisa Attili eand Paola Nicolini [1]

Abstract

Throughout Europe, lifelong learning is considered a strategic factor for people to realize themselves in both work and social environments, and also as a vital contribution to implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy. The result is that orientation becomes a continuous complex activity, centred on the person and on his/her personal and professional development. Accordingly, educational institutions, including universities, now place an increased emphasis on the recognition and strengthening of students' life skills through development in formal, non-formal and informal areas, given that these skills are not only fundamental to a person's development but are also increasingly called for in working environments.

This paper describes a good practice from the University of Macerata that valorized a particular set of life skills through a workshop course set up within a National Operational Programme (NOP) work-related learning scheme, which involved ten students from a secondary school specializing in classical studies (Liceo Classico) in the Province of Macerata.

The data collected during the experiment is also presented in order to appraise its effectiveness.

1. Introduction

Lifelong learning, defined as "any activity undertaken by a person in a formal, non-formal and informal way, during the various stages of life, in order to improve their knowledge, capabilities and skills, with a view to personal, civic, social and occupational growth," (Bertagna, Casano & Tiraboschi, 2013: 324), is considered a strategic factor for people to realize themselves in both work and social spheres, and as such is considered a vital contribution to implement the *Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* (European Commission, 2009). Orientation for studies and/or work, taking the entire life cycle as a temporal dimension, becomes synonymous with helping a person gain self-awareness, an awareness that leads to *knowing how to choose* (Soresi & Nota, 2010). All orientation activities are centred on a recognition of the capacity for self-determination in a human being who is supported to the utmost to reveal his/her true self and gain self-realization (Pombeni, 1990). In this way, orientation becomes a continuous complex activity, centred on the person and on his/her personal and professional development and is no longer merely a tool to manage the transitional phases between education and work. Education and orientation professionals are therefore tasked with facilitating the development of self-awareness and individual responsibility, in addition to enabling individuals to take decisions with regard to their own personal and professional choices, by providing information as well as opportunities to explore, discover and clarify patterns of thought and action (Di Nuovo, 2003).

That being so, it is increasingly important to identify life skills, i.e. the set of personal and relational skills which allow individuals to effectively address daily needs, relating confidently with themselves, with others, and with

the community as a whole (Marmocchi, Dall'Aglio & Zannini, 2004). Specifically, the World Health Organization has identified skills in individuals' personal, social, interpersonal, cognitive and affective areas that have been sorted into 3 macro-areas: social and interpersonal skills, cognitive skills, and management of emotions. These skills are often developed in non-formal and informal settings, so that they never enjoy proper recognition, with the result that sometimes the individual is even unaware of how to use them. Unlike hard skills, life skills can essentially be applied both inside and outside the workplace, since they are characterized by extreme *flexibility and transferability* (Rey, 2003).

Within this theoretical frame, the University of Macerata set up a workshop course for an NOP work-related learning scheme project. The purpose was to make students aware of life skills in their possession and their level of competence in employing them, developing them further thanks to specific exercises and reflecting on room for improvement. Below we present the methodological design of the workshop, its various phases, and an analysis of the data collected.

2. Description of the work-related learning scheme workshop

The 96-hour-long workshop from 4 to 20 June 2018 was attended by 10 students from a *Liceo Classico* in the Province of Macerata. Integrated orientation methods were applied in order to guarantee information provision, training and consultancy (Del Core Ferraroli & Fontana, 2005). The orientation was divided into two modules: the first focusing on *information provision and consultancy*, with group and individual activities to build self-awareness, in order to foster realistic responsible choices, useful not only in transitional phases, but aimed at the creation of lifelong orientation for studies and/or work. As a result, the first module's activities concentrated mainly on strengthening personal capacity for selection and organization of information to bring meaning to whatever is happening and what an individual is doing, with an awareness of his/her own expectations and desires. With this came an ability to find the drive to realize a personal educational plan while nurturing the capacity to conceive and set up future actions.

The second module was designed to promote orientation *of a formative type* through activities that put the individual at the centre in his/her entirety and reciprocity of interactions, building self-knowledge and autonomy to foster awareness among the students of the generic skills in their possession. In this phase, meetings were also held with various professionals who showed participants the peculiarities, tasks and responsibilities most often encountered in different areas of their future fields of interest.

The last part of the course included a specific work-related learning experience at the archaeological excavations near Urbisaglia, overseen by experts in the field. At the beginning and end of the experience there was an occasion to examine some of the life skills possessed in order to identify any development. The data collection focused on four skills: *Observation; Active Listening; Effective Communication; and Problem-Solving*. Each skill area was outlined and operationalized by referring to several sector studies (Soresi, 2007; Trinchero, 2013), dividing them into three levels of possible *expertise*, defined as *Basic, Intermediate and Advanced* according to specific reference markers for each area (Nicolini, Moroni & Lapucci, 2009). The two tests chosen to assess each of these were administered to identify students' levels at the beginning and end of the course. These two tests were intrinsically similar, but not totally identical, in order to forestall a "training activity effect" that might hinder effective recognition of acquisition or development (Le Boterf, 1994).

3. Analysis of the data collectedi

Below are the data taken at the beginning and end of the workshop described above, relating to the 4 reference skills (Table 1).

	OBSERVATION		PROBLEM SOLVING		LISTENING		EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION	
Students	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit
1	intermediate	advanced	basic	advanced	intermediate	intermediate	advanced	advanced
2	basic	intermediate	basic	intermediate	basic	intermediate	intermediate	intermediate
3	intermediate	advanced	basic	intermediate	intermediate	basic	intermediate	intermediate
4	basic	advanced	basic	advanced	intermediate	intermediate	intermediate	intermediate
5	intermediate	intermediate	basic	advanced	intermediate	intermediate	advanced	advanced
6	basic	intermediate	basic	advanced	intermediate	basic	basic	intermediate
7	basic	intermediate	basic	intermediate	intermediate	intermediate	basic	intermediate
8	intermediate	intermediate	basic	advanced	intermediate	intermediate	intermediate	intermediate
9	intermediate	advanced	basic	advanced	intermediate	intermediate	intermediate	intermediate
10	basic	intermediate	basic	advanced	basic	intermediate	intermediate	advanced

Table 1 - Students' skills on entry and exit

As can be seen in Table 1, positive development was found in the general skills: all the students showed an increase in at least one if not more areas of skill, passing from a basic or intermediate level to intermediate or advanced.

By the end of the course, the area that had developed most was *Problem-Solving*. In fact, all the students showed growth in this area: 3 of them had gone from an initial basic level to intermediate, and 7 had gone from an initial basic level to advanced. This result is understandable considering the type of training the students underwent, solving problems that were specifically related to the excavations, a completely new activity which necessitated attention.

Observation was the second skill in which positive developments were seen. Specifically, for 8 students out of 10 there was evolution in this area: 4 students went from an initial basic level to intermediate; 1 student from a basic level to advanced; 3 students from an initial intermediate level to advanced. For the remaining 2 students, the skill of *Observation* remained stable at an intermediate level. This result can be explained in the light of the activities related to the excavation, wherein this skill is highly and constantly requested and exercised.

In the area of *Effective Communication*, 3 students showed a positive development: 2 students went from an initial basic level to intermediate, 1 student from an initial intermediate level to advanced. For the remaining 7 students, the level of the specific skill remained stable or at an intermediate or advanced level. Taking into account that the skill level on entry was already quite high, it can be assumed that this type of skill was not used much during the activities envisaged by the NOP.

For the last area, that of *Listening*, there was positive development for 2 students, who went from an initial basic level to intermediate; 6 students remained stable at an intermediate level; instead, 2 of them fell from an intermediate level to basic. In the latter case, it is possible that a motivational factor influenced the results obtained with a lowering of attention to the task near the conclusion of the experiment, which also coincided

with the end of the school year. However, if an individual can perform at an intermediate level, it is quite certain that he/she can also use the same skills at a basic level. It is also likely that listening skills were not particularly necessary for participation in this case.

4. Conclusions

In European and Italian policies to achieve the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives, the constant references to lifelong learning and life skills advocate finding new strategies for a dialogue between formal, non-formal and informal learning, whose interaction can generate knowledge that is transferable from one context to another, thereby extending the range of opportunities, occasions, and locations for learning (Brescia, 2012). In this way, orientation becomes a continuous complex activity, centred on the individual and his/her own personal and professional development. (Ajello Meghnagi, & Mastracci, 2000).

For many years, the University of Macerata has been engaged in building life skills in formal situations through a range of workshops designed to acquire relational, methodological and personal competence, including the ability to communicate effectively, to handle interpersonal conflicts, and to work in a team (Nicolini, 1992; Nicolini & Pojaghi, 2006).

The workshop set up by the University of Macerata described here, applied integrated orientation methods to guarantee information provision, training and consultancy, favouring the centrality of the students and providing useful tools to undertake autonomous, informed choices. Indeed, the orientation and consultancy offered were specifically geared to developing skills already possessed by the participants. A key goal was to provide useful tools that could formally attest life skills, something which, for the moment, cannot yet be applied in any formal institutionalized way.

Notes

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Lifelong learning services to support the academic integration of students with international protection

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Abstract

This paper describes an experiment involving the academic integration of refugees (currently sixteen) at the University of Bari, begun some years earlier within the framework of research and education promoted by the Lifelong Learning Centre (CAP) for the valorization of the cultural and human capital of migrants, visa applicants, and beneficiaries of international protection. The service incorporates the recent MIUR provisions (2017-2018) regarding "access of foreign students who are visa applicants to higher education courses."

1. Lifelong learning and local academic integration practices

The intention of this paper is to highlight the way in which interdisciplinary research can promote lifelong learning within academic services and tools that are called to meet increasingly weighty social needs such as the emerging demand for the academic integration of refugees and migrants. On this point, the contribution summarizes an experiment to produce transparency in study courses for displaced persons and students, geared to cultural and academic integration (Dryden-Peterson, S. 2011) which at present (in 2019), sees 16 refugees enrolled on the University of Bari's courses. For some years, the academic social research at several Italian universities, also thanks to coordination by the Conference of Italian University Rectors, has been open to public inclusion policies, galvanizing support and mentoring for the insertion and cultural integration of refugee students. Independently, universities have the duty to use formulae that guarantee students' right to study and the authenticity and veracity of their documentation, especially in those cases where it is not possible to obtain an original copy.

The research developed by the Lifelong Learning Centre (hereafter CAP) at the University of Bari, coordinated by a group of researchers involved in the sociology of education, pedagogy, and industrial and organizational psychology, reconstructed the background of young refugees who were thus able to obtain recognition of qualifications issued in their home country and previous educational courses (also tertiary ones). The outcome was admission to the courses of the University of Bari, with a view to lifelong learning. The experience gained by the CAP also answers the recent indications (2017-2018) of the Directorate General for the Student, Development and Internationalization of Higher Education of the MIUR on procedures for foreign students to access higher education and vocational education and training courses in 2017-2018 which entailed "all necessary efforts to prepare procedures and internal mechanisms to assess the qualifications of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, even in cases where there are no documents to prove these qualifications or some parts of them are missing." In the final report of the Focus Group on the issue of integration, dated April 2017, the UNHCR remarked that such national regulations, potentially of great impact, are too often fragmentary and sporadic.

In fact, the cultural and economic integration of beneficiaries of international protection constitutes a strategic challenge for the European Union as a whole as well as national societies. It should however be considered

that the difficult access to employment for this category of migrants is influenced by factors of specific weakness such as psychological vulnerability (due to traumas experienced before and during their journey, difficult integration in the new setting, poor living conditions, and uncertain future prospects). This is in addition to the impossibility of choosing their destination country by appraising opportunities, and the total lack, or poor quality, of supportive social networks in the receiving context. These serious shortcomings may then be accompanied by problematic processes of professional disqualification which are much more telling for them than for other unemployed or underemployed.

Working to ensure this recognition promotes a much better match between labour demand and supply, favours professional mobility, and encourages migrants to invest in their own professional capital (Zanfrini, 2015). An effective integration process comprises many aspects, from economic independence to the creation of a relational fabric, from the acquisition of language and cultural skills to full participation in the political dimensions of citizenship, which can only be reached at different moments in time and to a different extent (Cesareo & Blangiardo, 2009). Presupposing a multidimensional approach in the operational solutions, it is essential to work on the possibility of reducing social inequalities based on culture for the result to be lasting and have an effect on several generations. For these reasons, integration and inclusion interventions and policies based on a valorization of people's cultural and professional heritage (refugees and otherwise) are increasingly significant when it comes to context and local character (Ambrosini, 2017; Timm, Student, 2016) within a pattern of migratory flows that is by now structural.

2. From local to global: European initiatives for cultural integration of displaced persons

Given that social integration processes are linked to quite specific territorial conditions (institutional, welfare, civil society, employment, cultural) and different migration patterns (ethnic composition, type of immigration, numbers, and social impact), tend to be subjected to "local interference", albeit within coordinates provided by national policies. Classic models to manage migratory flows soon lose their standard implications in the sense that, little by little, while tending towards a consistent unitary standard, they need to take account of the relational context which the integration process is a part of and grows within: people's identity owes a great deal to local interactions, daily exchanges, the concrete conditions of life, and links with civil society rather than to individual integration policies which correspond more to a regulatory framework than an actual inclusion practice. Local practices must therefore be transformed into national and European drivers (Scardigno, 2018) if it is going to be possible to exploit their innovative potential. Not to mention that a bottom-up experience can remedy a lack of adequate national policies precisely through expertise gained locally. A demonstration of the importance of local practice comes from *inHere*, a European Union project created to facilitate the integration and access of refugees to higher education institutes in Europe, strengthening sharing of knowledge, mutual support, and academic partnerships. The inHere project does not lay down operational schemes but appraises good practices among initiatives implemented locally in higher education to respond to a variety of emergency situations among refugee students and identify integration models which, having been successful, could potentially be extended but in reality are not yet consolidated in the territories of experimentation.

The Catalogue of Good Practices has been designed to serve as a source of information, inspiration, and an exchange of experiences and collaboration for academic communities, by identifying a series of best practices and skills for the integration of refugees. The cases included in the Catalogue have been selected based on criteria that considered the impact of the initiatives, whether real or potential, regarding the integration of refugees in the education system and in social life. The 300+ initiatives appraised in 32 nations included the

work of the University of Bari's CAP, whose lifelong learning practices were verified and testified for three out of the eleven parameters taken into consideration. In particular, European recognition of the qualifications of third-country nationals based on the Lisbon Convention, collaboration with other universities, local authorities, associations and NGOs, etc., the financial support granted to refugee students through scholarships, exemption from the payment of fees, a contribution to living expenses and other outlays associated with studying, free university residences, etc. In fact, the CAP works to provide effective procedures in conjunction with CIMEA – the Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence.

As regards the sharing of practices, mention must be made of the CAP's participation in *Skills 2 Work: Valuing Skills of Beneficiaries of International Protection* (January 2016 – December 2017), a project coordinated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to promote and disseminate good practices in validating the skills of asylum seekers and displaced persons. The CAP has been included on the Skills 2 Work digital platform, which is a tool for beneficiaries of international protection, asylum seekers, and representatives of the world of work to acquire information and discover useful services for social inclusion, to indicate the bodies available, to access information on the legislation for recognizing qualifications, and list the administrative integration schemes to access such services. Through the creation of sustainable employment opportunities, Skills 2 Work has helped the socioeconomic integration of foreign workers through a better management of the system to validate the skills of applicants for international protection and refugees based on good practices identified in 9 partner countries. Among the first projects followed by CAP since 2015, which has featured effective interrelations with local, national and European integration policies, is *Work for You*, a project financed by the European Fund for Integration and launched in collaboration with local institutions and third-sector organizations. This service, aimed at creating transparency and recognizing skills acquired by migrants and beneficiaries of international protection in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts, has provided an initial welcome and acceptance phase designed to reconstruct users' backgrounds and to analyse their needs and potential. With a view to optimizing human capital, individual users have been directed towards targeted services, helped to enrol on a degree course or assisted with the procedure to have their qualifications recognized. All accompanied by an assessment of their general skills with the issuing of a "soft skills folder", a resource of use in their search for employment in keeping with their abilities. As recognized by the ISMU [Foundation for Initiatives and Studies on Multi-Ethnicity] in a paper on "New methodologies to assess the academic qualifications of beneficiaries of international protection in Italy" of March 2018 (Sarli, 2018), an interesting aspect of this service of the University of Trento is its "capacity to create synergies between recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning. This opens the way, at least potentially, to the innovative possibilities of personalizing university courses, based on recognition of skills already possessed and identification of those to be acquired. This is a horizon that is still largely to be explored but appears extremely promising in terms of the democratization of opportunities and the optimization of human capital from a lifelong learning perspective."

Among the lifelong learning services to support the academic and occupational integration of beneficiaries of international protection, is the recent operating protocol adopted in June 2018 by the Apulia Region, the Universities of Bari, Foggia, Salento, and the Polytechnic University of Bari. This agreement concerns the creation and implementation of a regional system to validate and certify skills for the Apulia Region (SRVCC), which transposes the experiment begun by the CAP (Scardigno, Pastore, Manuti, 2019) to certify skills/qualifications acquired in non-formal and informal learning contexts as an individual's legacy acquired during his/her life. A legacy to be valorized, clarified and recognized, particularly for those political refugees or beneficiaries of international protection who use the CAP.

3. Conclusions

When choosing instruction and education, the recognition of cultural differences as constitutive and emerging properties of social situations can engender discontinuity between generations (Besozzi, 2005; 2009; Santagati 2011). A fact that can reduce the still significant effect of predestination exercised by the cultural capital ascribed to the foibles of life. Foreigners still represent a provocation (Besozzi, 2011), and their presence continues to be viewed as a challenge for the social cohesion and evolution of host societies (Ambrosini, Molina, 2004). Social inclusion policies must pay attention to the dual transition of membership (ethnic and unrecognized cultural capital) in order to avoid the risk of reproducing the perverse but predictable effects of a relapse into inequality (McBrien, Dooley & Birman, 2017). This applies even in the face of necessary choices of welcome, useful albeit not sufficient for the growth of the whole of Mediterranean Europe, but not only. For the CAP's interdisciplinary team, working on the development and growth of the cultural capital of the refugee resource represents a genuine turning point in inclusion policies. An attention to the risk of the unexpected effect of increasing inequality (Peterson, *et al.*, 2017) that can be triggered in processes which, while activating paths of reception, are unable to take the quantum leap of really recognizing human capital along with the economic and cultural advantages of valorization and integration.

By helping to define integration processes, the cultural capital recognized through lifelong learning services becomes an important litmus test of social integration processes. However, since it produces and reproduces specific balances of power, there is also a pressing need to act to counter any downhill inclinations and to encourage progressive trends. Knowing, for example, that the European Commission envisages by 2025 an increase of 23% in highly qualified positions, while the science and technology sectors have already been seeing situations of labour shortage for many years, shows how urgent it is to work to remedy these structural deficits of the host society, also by drawing on refugees' unrecognized cultural and professional legacy through lifelong learning (Palumbo, 2013).

Notes

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Digital technologies, language learning using a smartphone. The BYOD project

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Abstract
The requirement to respond to the special educational needs of a group of students attending an evening school course inspired a BYOD – Bring Your Own Device – experiment to ensure achievement of the goals set by the teacher and envisaged by the syllabus of the subject being taught, namely, English. The approach proved effective, both because it promoted the simultaneous implementation of language and digital skills, and because it allowed inclusive personalized teaching that provided these adult learners with a useful opportunity to improve their level of foreign language communication [LS]. The strong points turned out to be the support of the technologies and the flexibility of the learning environment. However, the project also found a few weak points in the overly ready acceptance and possession by the learners, who were scarcely or not at all accustomed to the study method used.

1. Introduction

The challenge posed by technologies in education and the need to find solutions to a series of educational issues at an evening course during the slot for a foreign language, inspired a BYOD project[2] – the name coming from an acronym created by the Intel company[3] around 10 years ago – which saw students who were Italian native speakers or from other linguistic backgrounds achieve positive and encouraging results with respect to the objectives set and the general educational pathway of the adults enrolled on the course. As Dato stated in 2010,[4] "an adult is a subject with particular cognitive characteristics and therefore requires a conceptual and methodological apparatus which takes account of the special features that distinguish him/her," something confirmed later by Knowles (1984), who underlined the unbreakable productive bond that occurs between adult experience and learning. The latter constituting a need to individualize and personalize educational pathways based on an individual's biography and previous experience. Accordingly, the project described here precisely matches this response to special educational needs, favouring the learning of adults taking a course.

2. The BYOD experience during an evening school course

In a 2015 study, the European Commission, in collaboration with EACEA and Eurydice, showed that on average in the European Union of 28 countries (EU-28) more than 8% of adults (25-64 years) with a diploma (or another similar qualification) had obtained it in adulthood (over 25 years) (European Commission, 2015). In Italy, this percentage is 3.2%.

In Italy's school system, evening schools offer just one of the educational opportunities for adults to obtain an upper secondary school diploma. Indeed, all Italian citizens and also immigrants of working age can enrol on evening courses even if they have never attained a high school diploma but are in possession of a lower secondary school qualification. Under the educational reform (Circular no. 36 of 10 April 2014; Presidential Decree

no. 263/2012), evening courses match the syllabuses of each grade of school system and are divided into lear-ning units that award educational credits. The format includes various levels that allow personalization of the course according to individual needs and the starting point of every student (https://www.orizzontescuola. it/approvato-nuovo-regolamento-delle-scuole-serali-importanti-anche-competenze-acquisite-sul-lavoro/) with a timetable reduced by 30% compared to the corresponding daytime courses (Art. 4, paragraph 1, letter b, Circular no. 36).

The document on the National Plan for Digital Education issued by the MIUR as an annex to Law 107/15, inclu-des BYOD within 35 Actions that promote the use of digital technology in school. The idea of students using devices, mainly smartphones, during an evening course proved almost immediately to be a major opportunity to develop inclusive effective teaching.

A quick needs analysis revealed certain obstacles to a successful learning pathway emerged immediately. The group, which was attending a third-year course on Mechanics and Mechatronics at a large upper secondary school in Turin, consisted of 30 students, with a medium-low attendance level, i.e. a little over 50% of students were present at every lesson, but the remaining 50% frequented irregularly due to work timetables and shi-fts, for family reasons, or because of living far from the school premises. All the members of the group were male, of varied geographical origin (Albania, Egypt, Philippines, Italy, Moldova, Morocco, Nigeria, Romania, Pakistan, and Peru), and aged between 18 (30%) and 52 years old. In this scenario, after checking their current language skills which were of all imaginable levels, there was a pressing need for an inclusive approach that would allow them not only to overcome their difficulties, but also to improve their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in accordance with the course syllabus. A few key topics were selected relating to the mi-cro-language, in line with English for Special Purposes – ESP, and consistent with the course syllabus, especial-ly for the first semester, the period of the school year when the BYOD experiment began: Materials and their Properties, Renewables, and as regards grammar, Conditional Clauses and Relative Pronouns.

So, after the zero step, i.e., the needs analysis, and after identifying the key subjects of the syllabus already mentioned, the first step was to create a timeline that matched the group's needs, which, as already mentio-ned, was of a "mixed abilities" type . The sharing in the classroom of digital materials and resources of the OER type – Open Educational Resources – helped the students to familiarize themselves with digital documents and contributions, an operation that needed medium- to long-term timeframes in view of the absolute novel-ty for many students of using digital resources as study materials.

After overcoming their initial "suspicion" towards an innovative procedure, the group worked in the classro-om in small groups/pairs using their own smartphones (mostly) and some laptops to:

• carry out research on the web using online dictionaries identified by the teacher (for example *http://www. wordreference.com/it/* (11/2018) and *http://www.reverso.net/text_translation.aspx?lang=IT* ((11/2018), for comprehension activities and/or the translation of texts into the micro-language: "English for Mechanics"

• carry out reading and listening comprehension, vocabulary exercises, and summarize them

• carry out activities to boost reflection on the language and grammar to do with the themes of the syllabus (e.g. *https://www.ego4u.com/* e *https://www.engvid.com/*) (11/2018)

• watch video clips on the subjects in the syllabus (e.g. *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kUE0BZtTRc*, (11/2018) from National Geographic, *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0W1ZZYIV8o* (11/2018) from TED Talks

Exams were taken at the end of each module, corresponding to around three-four weeks of classroom work, with an online test on grammar skills, using Google modules and with oral activities in pairs or individual (agre-ed and scheduled with the learners) based on examples of around 5-8 minutes in English on the subjects being dealt with. Presentations were made using PowerPoint, shared on a Multimedia Interactive Whiteboard.

3. Conclusions

This BYOD experiment, born as a teaching solution posed by the needs of a heterogeneous class in the linguistic sphere and requiring an inclusive approach, provided a chance to carry out lessons appropriate to the time for study and work that the evening course students had available. The fact of being able to use their own devices, also to do exercises and activities outside the formal environment, reusing online materials shared in the classroom, aided attention, made the lessons more dynamic and stimulating, contributed to the group work, encouraged cooperation, and above all, using original linguistic resources, allowed the students to improve their performance in the use and knowledge of the English language. Attendance also improved and the participation became more proactive in a learning environment that was no longer "lecture-style" and centred on contents and stimuli provided by the teacher, but on exchange, collaboration, research, and respect for individual timeframes and needs. The adult learners of the 21st century, "who need a continuous renewal and redefinition of their own cognitive identity and not only skills useful to translate the various kinds of knowledge, but above all to discover the pleasure of exercising a thought open to change," to quote Dato once again (2010), found the use of their own devices in the classroom a point of strength to make learning more flexible and to match their own study process.

It is also true that making smartphones and other mobile devices virtual places of learning requires a shifting of values and priorities, passing from a communicative and social use of these tools to that of tools for intellectual work and the promotion and advancement of individual knowledge. Initially, a sort of mistrust and sometimes disbelief was created, doubts arose, and for some, the process to change their mindset was slow and non-linear.

Nonetheless, the final results, based on the performances requested in the evaluation stage, proved encouraging and stimulating, both for the teacher and for the adult learners who were the protagonists of this teaching and educational experiment.

Notes

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[2] Action no. 6 of the PNSD (Italian National Plan for Digital Education): "The digital school, in collaboration with families and local authorities should be open to so-called BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), i.e. to policies in which the use of personal electronic devices during educational activities is both acceptable and efficiently integrated." *http://www.forum-pa.it/scuola-istruzione-e-ricerca/come-attuare-il-modello-bring-your-own-device-a-scuola* (11/2018)

[3] *https://www.techeconomy.it/2015/01/30/byod-in-italia-allestero-i-dati-intel/* [11/2018]

[4] "Heterogeneous" or "mixed ability" are terms used to describe classes where there are students with different levels of profit. In reality, homogeneous classes simply do not exist. All classes consist of pupils who are very different from one another in some way. Which means that they have different strengths and weaknesses in the learning pathway. (Ur, P. (1991) *A Course in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[5] Open Educational Resources are materials for teaching, learning and research found in every means, both digital and non-digital, that have no access costs, do not require permits, are adaptable, and may be distributed without limits or restrictions. *https://en.unesco.org/themes/building-knowledge-societies/oer* [11/2018]

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- *https://www.techeconomy.it/2015/01/30/byod-in-italia-allestero-i-dati-intel/* [11/2018]

Enterprise in adult learners when staking their lives

Mariadaniela Sfarra[1]

Abstract
An aptitude for enterprise can be found in whoever is willing to become involved, to be daring. According to the outcome of the last national EPALE seminar in 2018 dedicated to entrepreneurship in adult education, any person who has creative ideas and starts putting them into practice can be considered enterprising.
The social redemption pursued by adult students who attend first- and second-level courses to achieve a sound basic training is a good example of how to apply enterprise in one's own life.

1. Foreword

In the 2006 European Parliament and Council Recommendation, a *spirit of initiative* and *entrepreneurship* together constitute one of the eight key competencies for lifelong learning. As we can read in the Eurydice Report, from 2016, the concept of entrepreneurship "since then, [...] has been developed further by the Thematic Group [...] of the European Commission" (p. 29). The achievement of this is closely linked to creativity and, to this end, it becomes essential to promote a targeted mindset and relevant expertise among students. According to the report, fostering entrepreneurship means stimulating responsibility and action with or without "a commercial objective" (p. 30), touching all existential and social aspects. In 2014, the European Commission emphasized the need to set up "a flexible and adaptable study plan" in schools to favour "interdisciplinary learning based on projects" and to make room for "group processes and interactions" (p. 9). Embarking on a new pathway means leveraging education for life skills, personal and relational skills thereby allowing everyone to interact with the rest of the world with confidence in themselves and others. In 1993, the World Health Organization defined the characteristics of 10 Life Skills. Some of these were the focal point of two educational pathways, illustrated below, created for upper secondary adult students at the Aterno-Manthonè school in Pescara with the aim of helping them project themselves into a more conscious "Personal Life Project" (MPI, 1993):

- "Self-knowledge", or acquisition of self-awareness;
- "Development of a critical sense", an autonomous interpretation of reality;
- "Creativity", an ability to find original solutions to various problems;
- "Effective communication" to express personal ideas in a clear way;
- "Interpersonal relationships" and group work.

2. Example of a project. Reading: a "road" to freedom

A recently implemented project, which inspired the development and strengthening of enterprise, made use of the activity of reading aloud, a shared form, therefore. The continuing decline in the number of people who read regularly, glaringly apparent from the last report published by ISTAT, the Italian National Institute of Statistics, (ISTAT, 2017) has shown the urgent need for schools to reverse this trend.

The work included some evening classes and other lessons held in prisons, following the guiding thread of *freedom*, as proposed by the competition "Libriamoci 2018" under the auspices of the MIUR, the Italian Ministry of Education and MIBAC, the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities. Initially, two separate workshops were set up, one for each site, and then a couple of events combined the two contributions into one inspiring meeting, first on the prison premises and then at the school; in the latter case, with the participation of prisoners that were granted semi-freedom.

Reading was seen as a tool to search for meaning, for greater self-knowledge, and *freedom* was the guiding thread that united the selection of various texts which interpret the concept from different points of view. The result was an interesting pathway which led to reading being identified with cultural independence, as suggested by the name of the project. Reading texts about freedom seemed like a form of escapism, a way in common for the evening-school students and the prisoner-students to break down their personal "walls".

In order to facilitate the comprehension by all the students involved, whether autochthonous and not, the teaching was carried out in Italian, English and French.

The reading course began from an interpretation in English by evening-school students of some extracts from Beckett's *Waiting For Godot*, to suggest that paralysis which occasionally blocks life choices: we prefer to stand still and wait for something that is unlikely to arrive on its own unless we go looking for it. Which is how the two protagonists awaiting the arrival of Godot live their life; and Godot never will arrive. "These two clowns who expect who knows who to arrive, to resolve who knows what, (...) that's all of us," said the critic D'Amico (2014), who outlined the characteristics of Beckett's plays, known as "the theatre of the absurd" and for this reason, demonstrates the truth of life, which is often, outwardly, inconclusive.

The second part of the course focused on the search for inner freedom with a reading of the short story "The train has whistled", from Pirandello's *Novelle per un anno*. The main character, Belluca, crushed by a huge amount of responsibility both at work and in his family, searches for inner freedom with the aid of his imagination which leads him to discover new worlds. By isolating himself from reality and climbing aboard a train, even if only dreamed, Belluca ends up conquering himself.

From the search for greater knowledge of one's own self, we moved on to an interpretive reading in French of the poem *Liberté* by Éluard, a hymn to freedom. A work written in 1942 during the German occupation of Paris while the poet was a member of the Resistance. In it, freedom is described as the supreme good for man, the way to defend one's own ideas, decide on one's own actions. Freedom represents the ultimate goal that each person is called upon to pursue with tenacity, protecting it and its intrinsic value.

The course work concluded with the reading by the prisoner-students of some of the *Letters from Prison* written by Gramsci to family members during his incarceration for his anti-Fascist ideas. The students were led to reflect on the theme of freedom lost and on the value of family affection that can save us from loneliness and estrangement.

After the readings, there were various touching testimonies from students who wished to communicate to the audience the experiences they had had with respect to the various readings. It was possible to feel the emotion of all the students whose sense of enterprise or initiative had been stimulated by engaging in a different activity. Also remarkable was the commonality of feeling shared by the detained students to the reading of

Gramsci's letter as a tool "not to drown in one's own pain" and to survive emotionally, as argued by the critic Santucci (2005). This was an example of how the activity propelled those present towards self-awareness, to a critical interpretation of the contents and the effectiveness of their expression, both during the reading and in the formulation of their comments, bringing added value to the work of the group and the pursuit of a common goal.

The open class activity helped to build positive personal relationships between subjects who were very different from one another in terms of culture, social condition, and ethnicity, and to triumph over a dangerous, stifling, closed mind.

3. Participation in the *Scriviamoci* Prize: "Us and Others"

It was decided to choose from the OECD Skills Strategy (2017), the gathering of input regarding "skills challenges for Italy" (p. 6), to increase the low-level skills of adults and promote lifelong learning. The operation was to encourage adult students to participate in the Prize "Scriviamoci 2018" organized by the *Centro per il Libro e la Lettura*. In this pathway we worked on communication, first oral and then written, following the indications given by Cinganotto (2018: 59): "Within this target of learners (...), it is often necessary to work (...) on language skills."

The theme of the competition was "Us and Others" referring to migration. The competition invited stories or short essays that expressed personal opinions, considering the extent of this phenomenon in recent times. Specifically, the point was to express a reasoned position on willingness to welcome the migrants arriving, or a desire to close the borders: a reflection which immediately aroused interest.

A writing workshop was set up to guide the participants to tackle several steps as a team activity: from the collection of the material to a critical investigation of the issue, there was an indispensable exchange of ideas, and then the written production. Heeding their creative spirit, all the participants formulated their own scheme, exercising effectiveness of communication as a stimulus to clarity. Their contributions were highly meaningful and have been published on the site: www.anovecento.net/scriviamoci.

To illustrate the liveliness of the reflections, it seems useful to cite a few passages, at least of a couple of participants.

"The other is inside us, in the sense that each of us has his or her own originality and diversity, and we are others," wrote Stendardo (2018), developing a rigorous reading of the coexistence of people belonging to different cultures. He continued by arguing that, precisely because we are all different, we are equal in diversity and "we all share the same sky".

Another student, Tavarani (2018), referred to a few sentences written by Giovanni De Mauro for the magazine *Internazionale* (2017) equating our exaggerated fears to an elephant: "Today our elephant is called immigration. [...] The chief of police himself, Gabrielli, said: 'The numbers speak clearly, there has been no increase in the presence of immigrants.' Yet despite this, [...] immigration has become the main concern for many Italians." What emerges is an objective fact which, compared with the perceptions of a good part of the population, reduces the widespread concern for an invasion which, at the end of the day, simply does not exist. Tavarani added a useful legal reference: "seeing that also our constitution is, by definition, anti-racist, the objective of all of us should be the continuation and implementation of social equality."

The common thread uniting the contributions from those participating in the competition was a broad-mindedness towards reception and integration, since migrations were seen as related to globalization, and fundamental elements for Italy's development.

4. Conclusions

The pathways presented sought to interpret the indications of the text *Entrepreneurship Education. A Guide for Educators*, drawn up by the European Commission in 2014 on the importance of using "active methods of engaging students to express their creativity and innovation" (p. 9). Seemingly then, only experimentation can promote such practices, by bringing into play different operational procedures in order to adapt them better to the educational requirements. The success of the implemented activities is proved by the students themselves, who continue to ask to take part in other similar activities, from a desire to put themselves to the test and to measure themselves against others through creativity for active citizenship.

Notes

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Book Reviews

Educazione in età adulta

Federighi, P. (a cura di) (2018)
Firenze: Firenze University Press

Gaia Gioli [1]

Past, present and future. We could say that these are the key categories which allow us to read the volume edited by Paolo Federighi being presented here. The past, present and future of education in adulthood and, in particular, the chronological arc of the twentieth century in Italy through the research, policies, places and professions that have marked educational knowledge *on* adults, *with* adults and *for* adults.

The idea of collecting the essays arose in the aftermath of the International Conference *Research on Adult Education in Italian Universities* which the volume's title is based on, in order not to waste a wealth of research and reflection, the innovative thrusts of a scientific community that learns and which worked strenuously for over a year on the theme of adult education. The conference, born inside the SIPED (Italian Society of Pedagogy) Group on "Theories, processes and projects of adult education and lifelong learning", was organized on 21-23 November 2017 at the University of Florence to investigate the origins and development of adult education in Italy at universities. Retracing and reconstructing the origins, which were already apparent in the 1960s, when the first chairs were established in Florence and Rome (1969), followed by Padua and Cagliari (1972), and Cosenza (1976) (p. 5), meant identifying the lines of development – from the theory of education in adulthood, to popular and adult education, from the theory of organized social control, to that of the transformative educational action – and research methodologies in their relationship with other disciplines, in order to perceive the main fields of research and forecast the future scenarios of research *in* and *on* adult education. Consequently, this volume, which does not wish to be a mere re-proposal of the conference proceedings, instead represents a path of reflection to identify fields of research which affect the macro levels (policies), meso levels (places), micro levels (public) and meta levels (professions) of the adult education of the future. It is indeed the voices of the researchers that, through study cases and projects, present the reader with what it means to *research*, i.e. "reflect on the meaning and significance of the act and the action in adult education" (p. XI) on and with adults in a world in constant transformation. If the first part of the volume identifies, through its essays, the historical and theoretical lines to rethink adult education, learning and higher education, the second part of the volume is a rich series of texts, ideas and experiences that tell of a scientific community that is committed, that works and proceeds for the common good and tries to find innovative solutions to the countless emergencies of 21st-century society: the policies and systems: from the affirmation of the right to the search for effectiveness; the places of life and production; the ordinary educational system; the institutions and cultural consumption; the special audiences, professions.

All the research guidelines addressed wish to be the pillars on which to build research on the future of adult education. It is precisely on this theme that the volume closes, posing itself the problem of building capacity for a future of adult education that is not *tomorrow*, but is already *today* and that requires *practitioners* and researchers to have the ability to simultaneously manage a plurality of variables and perspectives that are naturally mutable.

The future will require the competence to know how to learn to learn, to be able to create new adaptive ideas, know how to communicate them, know how to build a community, and know how to open up to dialogue (pp. 392-39). Precisely these skills, in addition to metareflexivity on oneself and on one's own historical and life experience, will be the strength of the adults of tomorrow and the role of adult education operators, able to train them to acquire these skills, will be absolutely key. Educational actions in adult and higher education and places of education therefore become orientation and training for work and the life project (pp. 394-395) and cannot exclude considering all the paradigms that will require a strong bond between skills, work and training.

Notes

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