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RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

COUNTRY FOCUS: ITALY

Euphoria



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Euphoria has been applied the survey online within its own network composed by approximately 400 schools all over Italy.

The main outcomes are the following:

1)What challenges/difficulties amongst the students have you encountered when you've started teaching a new class/group with a foreign background?

Teachers dealing with multicultural classes and foreign students stated that the most significant obstacle is the language. Students that don't speak the local language experience, obviously, difficulties in interacting with teachers and classmates. They also



have a huge problem in progressing in their learning. Sometimes this problem regards also the classmates who are shy in approaching them.

2) Do these challenges alter over time when the student's progress? If so, in what ways?

Many stated that the relationship improves after finding common ways of communication. In particular if the student learns Italian, or if the teacher finds interactive ways of engaging the learner.

3) Are the challenges/difficulties different depending on sex, ethnicity, culture, religion, and/or educational background? If so, in what ways

According to Italian teachers, cultural differences matter in the degree of integration within the classrooms. In particular, Europeans students integrate more easily than non-Europeans, e.g. students coming from China. Teachers identified two other challenges to face within their multicultural classes: talking of religion and culture. They generally agree on the fact that discussions on history, woman conditions and Italian traditions are the most challenging. At the same time, they believe that multicultural classes can help avoiding the generation of small "ghetto" of different cultures, and state that integration depends also on the personality of each student and the family context they live.

4) Have you found a working strategy/method for finding a common ground when teaching students who face different kinds of challenges/have different difficulties in the same class/learning situation? If so, what strategy?

Different working strategies and methods emerged from the survey:

- Diversify teaching strategy concentrating on each student individual;*
- Developing cooperative learning and non-formal activities focusing on the different cultures;*
- Simplifying contents for foreign students;*
- Introducing the role of tutor/students and take advantage of intercultural operators within the classrooms, especially with Chinese students.*

Some teachers underlined that dealing with multicultural classes needs lots of empathy and open-minded approach in order to get in touch with the different cultures.

5) After how long can you detect signs of acceptance, adaptation and/or assimilation (if any) amongst the students?

The range is quite big (from "soon" to 1 year), but on average 2-3 months.

6) Does the degree of adaptation differ depending on sex, ethnicity, culture, religion, and/or educational background? If so, could you give some examples?



Italian teachers reply that the degree of adaptation mainly depends on the personality of each student and the family context they live. In order to confirm this statement about personality, a teacher told about two Pakistani brothers who attended the same school but in different classes. She told that one of them was more integrated than the other one, underlining that much depends also on the personality of students.

7) Have you noticed any differences in degrees of integration between teaching a single cultural class/group and a multicultural class/group? If so, what differences?

Generally they reply “no”, but some teachers admitted that having a single cultural class is easier to manage than a multicultural class, even if multiculturalism can be a great advantage for everyone.

8) Have you detected any topics that are difficult to teach/talk about in a multicultural class/group? If so, what topics?

As said before, teachers find talking of religion and culture in multicultural classes difficult. They generally agree on the fact that discussions on history, woman conditions and Italian traditions are the most challenging.

9) Are there situations where students end up in heated debates and can't seem to be able to regain focus? If so, does the degree of intensity differ between single cultural classes and multicultural classes? Could you give an example?

Many don't believe they have noticed this, stating that heated debates happen in every kind of classes.

10) If you end up in such a “trap”, have you found a strategy/“trick” to get out of the “trap” and get the class back on track? If so, what strategy/“trick”?

Usually teachers call for immediate silence when something related with bad behavior in class happens. At the same time if something that needs to be discussed happens, teachers try to manage a debate and asking for the different points of view.

11) Are there any areas in teaching a multicultural class you feel you struggle more with than other areas? If so, what areas?

Many stated religion, history, languages and all that subjects that prefer verbal reasoning.

12) Would you like to be able to get support, tips and/or concrete exercises online designed for specific teaching situations? If so, in what format would you prefer it (for instance chat, searchable databank, videos etcetera)?

Unanimously they reply “Yes” and would prefer databank or videos.



13) Does the teachers/educators background (ethnic, cultural etcetera) affect the dynamics, perception, influence and reception regarding challenges and integration in the class/learning situation? If so, could you give an example?

The most common reply was Yes. Most of the teachers affirmed that racism is a common phenomenon not only between students but also teachers that often are not very open to work in multicultural classes. Many teachers suggested to foresee a brief training module explaining the history of migrations and the main causes of the phenomenon, in order to make teachers aware of the complexity of the topic and of the violation of human rights happening in some Countries from which refugees escape.