ANALYSIS Report

ITALY

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Project partnership

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General sources:

- EACEA, Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, **Key Data on Teaching languages at school in Europe,** 2008 edition

- European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, **The Education System in Italy,** Eurybase, The Information Database on Education Systems in Europe, 2007/08

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- European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, **National summary sheets on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms: Italy,** December 2008

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GENERAL NOTE:

According to Italian situation financed Vocational Training system is considered in the Formal area as the activities are well structured and officially recognised by Regions and because a lot of them can have, as result, either an official qualification or a competence declaration, depending on the characteristics of the courses.

The same consideration is done for courses organised and managed by companies through Interprofessional Joint Funds (continuous training, see below), being them structured activities.

1 EDUCATION POLICY AND PROGRAMS IN YOUR COUNTRY

1.1 description of educational system (focusing on language learning; e.g. at what age do children start school and learning their first foreign language, many languages are compulsory, do they need to know foreign languages in order to access university, …),

1.1.1 Formal

1.1.1.1 Education System

The basic principles relating to education, laid down in the Italian Constitution of 1947, include:

- freedom of education;
- the State's duty to provide a network of educational establishments of every type and level, open to all without distinction;
- the right of private individuals and organisations to set up schools at no cost to the State;
- the right to education and basic vocational training for those unable to work and the disabled.

The application of the basic principles of the Constitution has inspired all subsequent legislation, which has insisted in particular on compulsory schooling, teacher training, allowing pupils to develop their full potential, integration of the disabled, vocational training and autonomy for educational establishments. The Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) is responsible for the education sector and for higher education and scientific and technological research.
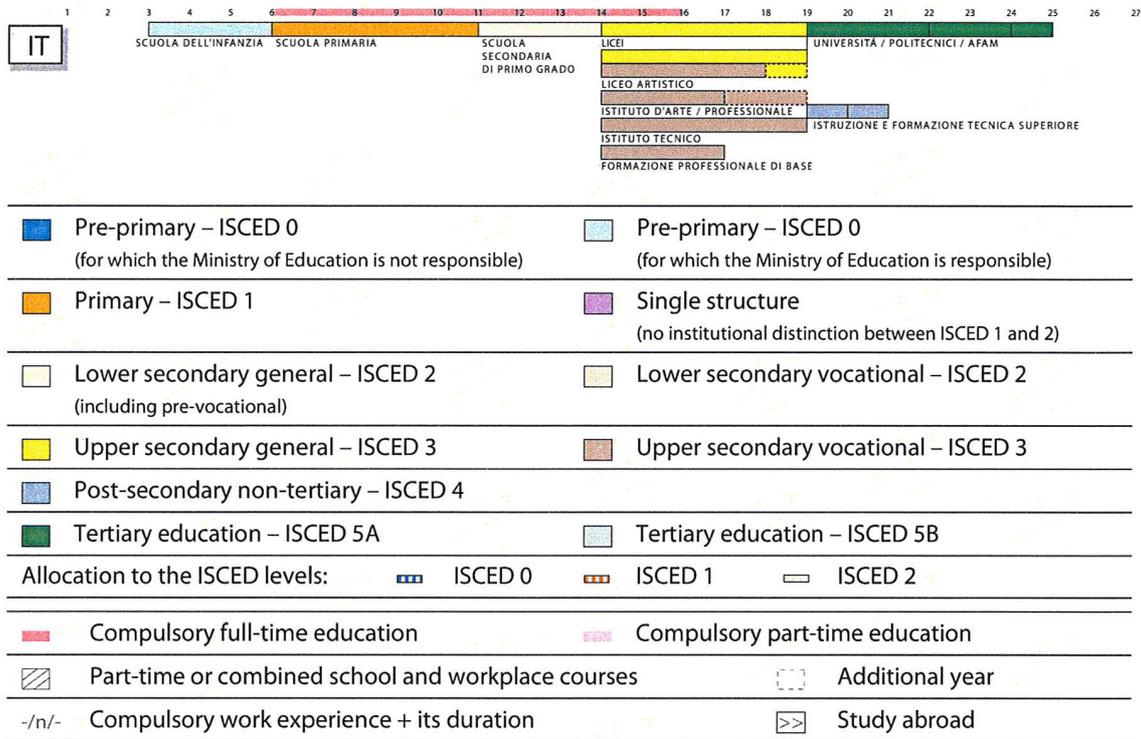
On the regions, provinces and municipalities are conferred all the functions and administrative responsibilities exercised by any State body, apart from those linked to matters expressly reserved to the State. The consequent delegated provisions have granted to schools wide autonomy for teaching methods, organisation, research, experimentation and development.

Autonomy of schools is exercised within a general framework set by MIUR to guarantee the coherence of the education system.

Teaching of a foreign language (normally English) starts in the compulsory primary school (6-10 y.o., with an average of 60 teaching hours per year), while in the compulsory lower secondary school (11-13 y.o., with an average of 60 teaching hours per year) there is also a second foreign language (normally French, rarely Spanish or German except for some small border areas respectively French, German and Slovenian speaking).

In secondary and post secondary non-tertiary education (14-18 y.o.) there is always at least one foreign language with an average of 120 teaching hours per year.

Organisation of the education system in Italy, 2009/10

Pre-primary – ISCED 0 (for which the Ministry of Education is not responsible)		Pre-primary – ISCED 0 (for which the Ministry of Education is responsible)	
Primary – ISCED 1		Single structure (no institutional distinction between ISCED 1 and 2)	
Lower secondary general – ISCED 2 (including pre-vocational)		Lower secondary vocational – ISCED 2	
Upper secondary general – ISCED 3		Upper secondary vocational – ISCED 3	
Post-secondary non-tertiary – ISCED 4			
Tertiary education – ISCED 5A		Tertiary education – ISCED 5B	
Allocation to the ISCED levels:	ISCED 0	ISCED 1	ISCED 2
Compulsory full-time education		Compulsory part-time education	
Part-time or combined school and workplace courses		Additional year	
-/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration		Study abroad	

Source: Eurydice.

The education system includes at present what follows:

- *scuola dell'infanzia* – children's school (non-compulsory) for children between 3 and 6 years of age;

- first cycle of education lasting 8 years, organized in two parts:
    - primary education (lasting 5 years), for children between 6 and 11 years of age;
    - lower secondary school (lasting 3 years) for children between 11 and 14 years of age;

- second cycle of education consisting of two different pathways:
    - upper secondary school, falling under the responsibility of the State, lasting 5 years and addressed to students from 15 to 19 years of age (see and). It is provided by licei, technical institutes and vocational institutes;
    - initial vocational training (three-year courses) for students who have completed the first cycle of education. It is organized by Regions.

Education is compulsory for 10 years (from 6 to 16 years of age). From 14 to 16 years of age pupils can fulfill the last two years of compulsory education either in upper secondary schools or in the three-year vocational education and training courses. In addition, all have the *diritto/dovere* (right and duty) to education and training.

Access to both university and non-university higher education is reserved for students who passed the State exam at the end of upper secondary school. Yet, specific conditions for the admission to higher

education are under the responsibility of the Ministry of education, University and Research (MIUR) or of each single university and AFAM institutes (Higher Education in Fine Arts, Music and Ballet).

1.1.1.2 Vocational Training System

In Italy vocational training is the responsibility of various bodies. Vocational training in the strict sense is given in courses administered by the regions, while there are also job-related streams in upper secondary education and in university diploma courses.

The regional training system

European Social Fund provides financial support for about 70% of regional vocational training.

Basic training offers training opportunities as an alternative to school. They are directed at youngsters who have difficulty with over-theoretical and abstract school models and who otherwise would finish or drop out of compulsory school early, entering the labour market without any vocational knowledge, at the risk of cultural and social marginalisation. The courses are structured as long cycles, generally two years and sometimes one or three years, leading to a job qualification.

Integrated training with State schools aims at promoting links between the school system and the regional training system. Within that arrangement, the most common procedure is that of post-qualification specialisation, i.e. two-year courses designed for young people from the Vocational Institutes who have obtained their third-year qualification and who wish to continue their studies by specialising in the same stream. It leads to a twofold final qualification: the vocational certificate and the regional certificate.

The importance of *post-diploma training* is growing. Over the past years this type of medium- to high-level training has become far more popular. The rise in the number of young people completing upper secondary school education and obtaining the diploma tends to defer the need for job-related training at tertiary level and has caused an explosion in the demand for post-diploma courses (within and outside the school, university and non-university). The courses generally take the form of short one-year cycles and in a few rare cases two-year cycles. They are aimed at young people who have taken their diploma of upper secondary education. This type of training is characterised by its high level of experimentation and a marked variety in the methodologies and teaching content.

Apprenticeship and work/training contracts

Apprenticeship is a contract of employment that on the one hand places an obligation upon the employer to provide adequate vocational preparation by having the apprentice work side by side with skilled personnel and, on the other, imposes an obligation on the young person to attend training courses outside the workplace. The regions have responsibility for implementing training programmes for apprentices.

Continuous training

With the absence of a structured system of continuous vocational training in Italy, it is hard to outline a consistent and comprehensive picture of the measures implemented by various bodies.

Schemes promoted by the regions

The regions provided continuous training courses, in other words courses to be attended by workers in employment, on job mobility registers or on a temporarily redundant footing and the unemployed seeking new jobs. In particular, about two thirds of the training has been for workers in employment, courses have involved the unemployed or workers temporarily laid off or on job mobility registers, whereas only a low rate of the courses have been aimed at critical employment, i.e. workers at risk of unemployment as a result of structural changes in the economy and production system.

Training activities in the workplace

In addition to the various institutional-type measures, some training is conducted by employers for their own employees. Such activities may be funded solely out of the employers' own resources or they may be eligible for a contribution from public bodies. For example, the regions -as part of their continuing training activity- fund schemes conducted by training agencies or by employers themselves. Under Law 236/93 and Inter-professional Joint Funds (Law 388/2000), on the other hand, company training actions are funded directly by employers.

1.1.2   Non-formal

There are no legal regulations of non-formal education in Italy; this means that is difficult to "catch" and analyse the most part of these experiences, starting with the consideration that they can happen almost everywhere. At the moment there is not a policy to "rule" non- formal learning in the education system.

On the contrary some regional vocational training system foresee the possibility to get the recognition of the knowledge and/or experiences, done in non-formal contexts, through a formal exam that can bring to a regional qualification or to a formal skills description. The possibility to realize this process is at the moment mostly theoretical.

The non-formal education is implemented by various private organizations and associations, mainly no-profit with a high level of volunteers, where one of the main target audiences is the youth who have got some difficulties with integration into the formal education system or into the society at all.

1.1.3 Informal (trends, characteristics)

As it is of non-formal education, also of informal education there are no legal regulations in Italy, but we can say that foreign language teaching today tends towards the experimentation of approaches that pay close attention to the complexity of factors that control the ability of an adult to learn an L2. It tends not to reduce this complexity or to embrace a single orthodox model, but rather to adopt different strategies, which are careful to place the learner in the centre of the construction of language competence, according to the lesson of the studies that have concentrated on the wealth and articulation of the interlanguages produced by students. Teaching goes back and forth between formal, less formal, and completely informal (through exposure.) learning of an L2. The factors that underlie the dimension of intercultural competence as a constituent part of communicative competence in L2 have thus become part of the foreign language-teaching horizon. The same may be said, at least in the most attentive circles in the professional universe of language teaching, of the consideration of how important, within the process of the construction of competence, the affective factors are, which come from intrinsic motivation and from opportunities for integration into the new cultural and linguistic context perceived by the learner.

1.2 description of responsible policy making organizations and their priorities, current initiatives, national programmes, projects and actions supporting/motivating them (in) learning foreign languages, financial and other support for language learners,

1.2.1 Formal

The Italian public administration has had a highly centralised organisation for a long time. Since the end of the 1950s, responsibilities and services, in effect have gradually been decentralised from the central authorities (Ministries) to the peripheral regional or provincial offices of the state administration.

Decentralisation was stepped up by Presidential Decree no. 10 of 1972 which transferred many of the State's administrative responsibilities to Regions, Provinces and Communes, and it continued with presidential decree 24 July 1977, no. 616. All considered, not even these provisions have affected, if not only marginally, the centralised structure of public administration. On the contrary, Law 15th March 1997, no. 59 and the following delegated decrees granted Regions, Provinces, Communes, Mountain Communities all the roles and administrative tasks currently performed by the state bodies, with the exception of a number of responsibilities relating to specific areas (e.g. foreign affairs, defence, finance, public order,

justice, scientific research, university education, school curriculum and regulations, general organisation of the school system and legal status of school personnel, etc.).

In brief, whereas, in precedence State Administration (central and peripheral) performed all function with the exception of those expressly assigned to the Regions and other Local authorities, with the above mentioned law the latter now perform all administrative functions with the exception of those reserved to the State.

According to Law Decree no. 112 of 31 March 1998, in the field of education the State remains still responsible for the tasks and functions which concern the criteria and parameters for the organisation of the school system, its evaluation, the functions relating to the determination and allocation of financial resources debited to the State budget and for the allocation of staff to schools; in addition it remains responsible for functions concerning the AFAM institutions and the foreign schools and cultural institutions in Italy. To the Regions instead is delegated the planning of the integrated formative offer, a combination of education and vocational training, the programming of the school network on the basis of provincial plans, the fixing of the school calendar, contributions to non state schools, and vocational training. Finally, to the Provinces, in relation to upper secondary schools, and to the Communes, in relation to schools of lower levels, are delegated the functions concerning the establishment, aggregation, merging and the closing down of schools, the interruption of teaching for serious and urgent reasons, the setting up, control and vigilance, as well as the dissolution of school collegiate bodies.

Regulations on the autonomy of schools (approved with Presidential Decree no. 275 of 8 March 1999) have transferred to schools important administrative and managing functions of the educational service (see articles 14 and following), as well as high responsibility tasks such as definition of curricula, widening of the educational offer, organisation of school time and groups of pupils, etc., within the frame of general branches valid at national level.

The Ministry of Public Education, University and Research (MIUR) is responsible for the general administration of school education and for the higher education sector in the following areas:

general organisation of the school system; school regulations and programs; legal status of school staff; criteria and parameters for the organisation of the school network; establishment of financial resources charged to the State budget and allocation of staff to schools; evaluation of school system; decision of objectives and training standards on the subject of higher education, etc.; planning of research institutions and interventions in the university system;

guidance and co-ordination, issue of general regulations and financing of both the university and non-university systems (AFAM); monitoring and assessment; European harmonisation and international integration of the university system; requirements for the admission to the university and the AFAM system; exploitation and support to research, etc.

1.2.2   Non-formal

With respect to the responses of privileged individuals, the offer of linguistic education of Italian as a second language, although it is not insignificant, is judged insufficient with respect to the demand. The demand is not, however, estimated in any precise way, either quantitatively or quantitatively; it is judged as implicit and not formalized on the part of the immigrant population. The main problem, according to many subjects, is that of information, which does not reach the potential users of the service very well. They believe it is indispensable for the town governments, the CTPs, (Territorial Permanent Centers for Adult Education), Centers of the Employment Services, in short, the part of public administration or public services that can reach people best, because of their capillary presence, to be more active regarding the theme. Immigration phenomenon is in such rapid evolution, as it was practically inexistent as a phenomenon in the 1980s, and has become a decisive factor in the demographic trend. This explains the increase in the offer of linguistic education for foreigners observed in the first results of the survey on the educational offer. By now a third of the educational structures surveyed regarding the offer propose courses in Italian L2 in their catalogues, even if the number of specialized operators is completely marginal (5% of the total); 45% of the structures that offer language courses, also have courses in Italian L2 in their catalogues, which is in any case in second place, after English, in the panorama of the educational offers assessed as innovative, analyzing the offer, covering approximately 16% of it. In this sector, as the selected subjects point out, first experiences of certification also exist, judged, however, to be with scarce possibility of access for an extremely varied student group. At the same time there is an emphasis in the opinions gathered on the importance that linguistic education of the migrants has with respect to a broader and more aware integration. In this sense the evaluations of the subjects coincide with those of the immigrants themselves, who . probably . feel that they have already taken consistent steps autonomously by acquiring sufficient mastery of Italian. A certain attention is given to the urgency to innovate the processes of learning. It is held to be desirable to use approaches to teaching that integrate linguistic education and input of content concerning the social context and the context of

integration, which are currently considered extremely episodic. The offer should be broadened in this sense, together with the entry quotas, in order to prepare for the rapid integration of the new arrivals.

There is poor documentation dedicated to a better description and exploitation of the places of informal and non-formal learning. Their presence is noted, in reference to the world of *no-profit* organizations, voluntary work and even at times in reference to episodes of self-teaching on the part of the foreign community. Some documents and interviewed subject emphasized, finally, that perhaps one should in the first place value the intercultural opportunities for exchange that occur in the workplace. Businesses should be considered as places of informal learning for language and culture, and places for exchange among workers in a dimension that should be taken advantage of and made explicit. The some consideration can be done for school environment, even if the comparison with working places is really difficult.

An aspect around which significant concurrence is reported regards the necessity to improve the competence in intercultural relating of teachers. Teacher training in the area of intercultural competence should serve to create widespread awareness, avoiding a delegation of the functions of contact to just the cultural mediators. The subjects agree on the fact that the panorama of the teachers of Italian L2 should be enriched with new professional figures, linked also to new technical, and not just linguistic, competence, because teaching Italian to foreigners presupposes already being able to reason in an intercultural way and the methodology for teaching scholastic Italian cannot be applied. The hurdle for the figure of L2 teacher still remains, from the European level to the local level, a question of certification, still absent. We are operating, in short, in an unregulated situation, which prevents the adoption of standards of quality.

1.2.3 Constructing intercultural competence

A plurality of languages implies a plurality of visions, and makes it necessary to strive to widen one.s point of observation in order to have a dialogue with various cultural systems and codes of behaviour.

The experience of exchanges and partnerships within the *Socrates* and *Leonardo* Programmes often leads to the exposure to a new language and another culture, as has been shown in the survey with the selected subjects. The experiences of encounter and the direct contacts with people belonging to other cultures obviously do not guarantee, because of the mere fact of

taking place, the ability to adopt different points of view and willingness to respect differences; on the contrary, the exact opposite phenomenon can occur, of imperviousness, if experiences and encounters are not accompanied by true interventions of teaching interculturality. Attitudes of defense of one's identity can be produced as a result of the inability to understand the culture of the other person beyond the filter of one's own culture.

Intercultural education is a teaching option according to which linguistic and socio-cultural plurality is recognized in the educational process at an organizational level, that of the contents and the methods of teaching (the curriculum). Differences are brought to light, respected, compared and analyzed critically. Everyone is addressed, not only the people belonging to this or that ethnic group. The cultures and the languages of this or that minority can be included, but this does not necessarily take place. Four pillars hold up an education that is intercultural, pluralistic, and respectful of differences:

− giving positive value, subjectively and objectively, to sociocultural and linguistic minorities: not excluding minority languages, supporting the efforts of integration (not assimilation) by teaching the local language, opposing ethnocentric and lingocentric attitudes and contemptuous attitudes towards .other. languages and socio-cultures, giving positive value to multilingualism of every individual and of the group;

− opening up the contents of teaching, implying (in a positive way) a plurality of cultures and of languages: change from a mono-cultural perspective to a multiple perspective (in every subject: history, literature, music, art...);

− teaching social, communicative and intercultural competence (educating regarding meta-communication in daily life, resorting to the analysis of films and TV footage: the images .illustrate. more than words), teaching educators to acquire a greater intercultural competence;

− educating with regard to the plurality of ideas, criticism, and democratic dialogue.

This last purpose of education . let us not forget . is proclaimed in every educational system in every democratic country. However, the dimension of socio-cultural diversity is usually neglected.

Instead, particular attention is necessary in the interactions with the pupils and in the teaching of every subject. Constructing intercultural competence means also favouring an openness of the educational curriculum to a plurality of languages:

- discovering and accepting alteration through the study of languages;
- deconstructing and going beyond lingocentrism;

- understanding the value of the plurality of cultures and of the pluralism of ideas;
- giving oneself instruments for intercultural and international communication;
- becoming more competitive in the labour market.

Various elements thus cause us to believe that language teaching oriented towards the promotion of multilingualism is important.

Education in which the teaching of the principal language is free from lingocentric approaches, in which the teaching (in courses of language and culture) of a first (and a second, third...) foreign language and/or of a minority national language and/or of languages of migration is planned at an early stage. In this context of openness to exchange, the teaching of the local language to members of a linguistic minority can improve, by giving a positive value to the contributions that come from immersion.

Opening up education to multilingualism and to the intercultural dimension implies not to repress, but rather to authorize, show the appreciation of and encourage the appreciation of other languages, give a positive value to the linguistic competence of the pupils, accustom them to linguistic comparison and to indicating the cultural differences and similarities that are shown in the languages (to practicing, in short, linguistic relativism, asserting that there do not exist languages . or cultures . that are superior or inferior).

Modern languages are a privileged, but not unique, area for development of a multilingual perspective and intercultural competence. Other disciplines must intervene as well and contribute to the inter-linguistic and multicultural dialogue. Individual schools, which today make many more autonomous decisions than before, can become environments of multilingual learning and offer experiences of integrated multilingual education. This prospect requires teachers who know how to act as intercultural operators, capable of educational teaching interaction in the network of relations that are formed through exchanges and partnerships among schools. In order to reach these objectives, continuing teacher training is necessary which gives instruments for establishing connections among languages, for defining comparability among different linguistic systems and for creating diversified linguistic curricula. Teachers who are trained ad hoc are necessary, as well as adequate instruments, resource centres with multilingual dictionaries and multimedia encyclopaedias, specific software, and teaching materials that facilitate the knowledge of more than one language. It is a necessary radical change towards an education with a European point of view that favours not only the uniformity of certification, but gives instruments for elaborating curricula for

linguistic education in which multiple forms of knowledge and competence cutting across various fields combine, and the weight of so many unconnected disciplines is avoided.

Any choice of multilingual education implies, nevertheless, a certain amount of alternating among the languages and requires modalities of modular programming in which two or more languages alternate. Multilingualism is a socio-psychological process, insomuch as it offers the opportunity to stimulate learning of a co-operative type and generates curiosity for linguistic discovery and motivation to increase one.s linguistic repertoire. It is above all a political choice, insomuch as it is a democratic value, a step towards real communication, at least at the European level. To communicate is a conscious social act, it is negotiation of meanings, and it constructs bridges of relationships and interchange.

The English language by itself is not enough today. It is not enough at the scholastic level, nor is it sufficient for specialization, research and future mobility. In our country a myopic linguistic policy has developed that has led to an erroneous perception of languages often in competition with each other, with a hierarchical succession of first, second, and third language.

This reinforces the social representation of the importance and the utility of this language or that one and foments every type of cliché and linguistic prejudice. It also contributes to reinforcing stereotypes of presumed greater or lesser difficulty in the learning of one language or another. A monolingual policy inevitably causes closed attitudes and misconceptions regarding the languages that are taught less. In order to answer the need for social cohesion and thus promote the democratic behavior of an active citizenship, it is necessary to give differentiated opportunities in various languages, in all phases of life, to develop learning to learn, and activate a multilingual education that becomes a part of common knowledge and that educates people to value the linguistic and cultural heritage of Europe.

1.3   good practices regarding foreign language learning; incentives/ promotions for language learning etc., what languages are being learned, by whom and why, who organizes and sponsors language learning

1.3.1   Formal

In the education system in the last years some schools, according to a Ministry decision, introduced the teaching of some subject (e.g. history, mathematic, geography, physics…) in a foreign language (mainly English, and mainly scientific subjects), giving the students the possibility to deep the knowledge of the language.

This experience had good results and good satisfaction by the students, but was limited to a few experiences because of the shortage of economic resources, the need to produce didactic material directly by the teachers, the low level of foreign language knowledge by the technical teachers.

It's important to underline that there aren't specific economic resources for these kind of experiences, such as there is a cut of funding for foreign language teaching in the primary school.

1.3.2   Non-formal

There are some experiences in some local "social centre" (private no-profit association, sometimes spontaneous, dealing in people in lacking of opportunities or with difficulties: immigrates, homeless, school leavers…; other times spontaneous youth groups aggregations). Some experience is specific for young immigrants (either 2nd generation or, mainly, sons/daughters come in Italy following their parents in rejoining processes.

In this case the foreign language is Italian, intended as L2. The main aim is to help these young people in "integrating" into the society (or at least to avoid their loneliness) and, of course, Italian is the main tool to reach this aim. In these cases the use of daily language and of methods and didactical materials stimulates fantasy and creativity and help

- to feel the students comfortable,
- to make expression in a foreign language easier,
- to involve the students,
- to shorten the distance between teacher and students,
- to throw down the barriers to learn..

As useful example we can quote the following experience, done in various environment: the practice is called (unofficially) "Language of the city". It's an activity useful to learn a foreign language and to know "how the city works", that is to know and to understand useful services of the city. In this way students can learn basic daily Italian while learning basic information about the city; the approach is "learning by doing". There's a short introduction done by a "tutor" that can also "follow", at least for the first time, the group/s around the city to "discover", e.g., the transport system, the social and health services, the monuments and so on. In this case "students" learn more a skill than the structure of the language that could be acquired following a regular course.

1.3.3   Informal

There's no documentation regarding informal experiences, but it can be easily said that among young people the use of social networks, downloading music and/or original version of movies (i.e. not

dubbed as it is usual in Italy), helps in learning foreign languages; it must be told that the foreign language is almost only English.

A different situation is related to immigrants (1st and/or 2nd generation, easier for the 2nd) that must learn (at least understand at a basic level) Italian as L2. Their informal learning is normally spread by people (friends, relatives, parents) coming from the same country, and sometimes can also be supported and/or facilitated attending to language courses. Also in this case "students" learn more a skill than the structure of the language that could be acquired following a regular course.

It must be underlined that more than 80% of the people who know one or more languages indicate school as the educational area in which they learnt both the first (85,7%) and the second (81,01%) foreign language[1]. This demonstrate the difficulty to find and to analyse the informal learning area as, how it's easy to understand, even if people learn a foreign language in an informal way, probably they are not able to "recognize" and to "describe" this kind of learning.

2. MAIN DIDACTIC AND METHODOLOGICAL MODEL(S) AND MEANS IN USE FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

2.1 how and what documents/materials are being used, techniques like in classic/ eLearning/ mLearning/ or blended learning etc., how many teachers per student, how active and important is student participation in creating curricula,

2.1.1 Formal

Teachers are free to choose textbooks and teaching methods. Studies shows that teachers who adopt a teacher-centred style give more opportunities to learners to engage in sequences of error treatment, which in turn are more likely to lead them to self-repair. In particular, studies reveals that these teachers draw on a wider range of corrective responses, including elicitation, clarification requests, metalinguistic clues and repetition of error. Findings suggest that teachers should become more aware of the function and value of different types of error feedback.

In the education system the most used technique is the classical one, that is the way of teaching depending on the teacher's experience, creativity, motivation and initiative; the so called face to face lesson.

In the vocational training system, due either to the specific characteristics of the target group in some cases, or to the specific students needs in others, more involving methods are often used through specific materials, active methods, original didactic instruments. eLearning and blended are rarely used, due both to the lacking of specific materials and to the lacking of teachers' experience and competence. The innovation is content/method based more than technical instruments.

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[1] Source: MLPS 2006

2.1.2 Non-formal

Non-formal education can have (and mainly has) a planned training structure where open and hidden methods are used in a flexible environment. The principles of non-formal education are:

- learning by doing
- learn to be closer to the other people;
- learning to learn.

Non formal education can use:

- songs as testimonial of authentic language,
- movies, tv series for idioms, colloquial sentences,
- books for lexicon,
- audio books,
- pod casts of international magazines and/or networks,
- comics to fill,
- dialogues to be performed,
- wide role playing use,
- mime show,
- advertisements,
- the city as learning environment (e.g. places, buildings, services, transports, literature)…

Also in this case the language learnt is mostly English, except for foreign young people that learn Italian as L2.

The focus is more on the **skills** than on the language **structure**, using a communicative language; in an non-formal environment often there is a different way of teaching to support a wide range learning, through the use of the following drivers:

- structure removal ,
- use of play, i.e. to learn as children do,
- language acquisition, not language study,
- teacher as a counsellor, to win the learner's barriers,
- real language continuous exposure with different tools,
- strong and continuous interaction teacher/learner, focused on learner's needs,
- empathic relation,
- to lean on personal interests,
- experience based tools,
- being part of a team,
- links & connections among different matters and environments,
- link with the environment (sociality)…

2.2 **are young male learners addressed differently to their female counterparts?, are there special models for dysfunctional/ aggressive learners/learners with migrant background etc, how does age, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. come into play when planning foreign language courses?**

2.2.1 Formal

Male and female are addresses the same way, and there is no differences. In Italy people with special needs is integrated in "normal" classes, with the help of a supporting teacher which not necessarily is a foreign language teacher. Supporting teacher also often must takes care of three-four students with different disabilities and needs. For immigrated students the actual govern purposed separate class to learn Italian, before their inclusion in "normal" classes.

2.3 **where does the language learning mostly take place (environment); at schools or private homes, in small or large groups, at private or public institutions, who takes part and who organizes language learning, do courses take place during the day or at night, etc.**

2.3.1 Formal

Language learning normally takes place in classrooms, rarely outside.

2.3.2 Non-formal

Language learning can take place almost everywhere, according to the needs and to the subject: e.g. if the subject is the use of Local Health Unit services, probably there will be some theoretical lesson in class (before and after) , and then there will be an "immersion" (such as visits, interviews) on the place, with case analysis, simulations etc.

2.3.3 informal

Normally language learning takes places everywhere except that in standard teaching/learning places.

2.4 **which levels are there, what are the objectives/ tools used etc., are most language courses for beginners or advanced learners, to what level do learners advance on average, what languages are learned at what level,**

2.4.1 Formal

Of course levels and objectives depends on the class (1st, 2nd, and so on) and on the school. In Upper Secondary General there is more attention to literature; in these kind of school is in progress the

teaching of different subjects in foreign language. In Upper Secondary Vocational more attention is paid to technical language, according to the specific subject of the school (e.g. mechanics or graphics and so on).

In both the case in the last years more attention is being given to daily life language.

In the vocational system normally the content of curriculum is strictly related to the professional profile and/or to the specific subjects of the course; the level change according to the different kind of training: basic, post-diploma, post-graduate.

2.4.2   Non-formal

Levels and objectives depend strictly on the students needs and characteristics.

3.   LANGUAGES TAUGHT

3.1   which language is the first/second/ third foreign language children learn at school, % (estimation) of each language to total languages; is there a reason why these languages and not others, how many languages do they need in order to access their tertiary education, is preference given to languages of neighbouring or European countries, who decides which languages are being taught, do learners have a choice or is it determined by the school?

3.1.1   Formal

Approximately 95% of students studies English at school and in vocational system, as it is mandatory in compulsory education since 2006/07. Normally the second language is French (once the most taught), studied approximately by 35% of the student.

English is commonly sees as a "lingua franca" spoken in the most part of the countries all around the world, and it's intended as the main and most effective way to communicate. Moreover Anglo-American culture such as music, movies, technology and so on is of course in English, and this is a good reason to study this language. Of course to study doesn't mean to speak.

In two border regions jointly with the official state language a minority/regional language with official local language status is also taught: Italian plus French in Valle d'Aosta-Vallée d'Aoste and Italian plus German in Alto Adige/-Süditrol. In Alto Adige/-Süditrol German speaking people (about 70% of the total local population) consider Italian as a foreign language. In these regions English is also taught.

3.1.2 Non-formal

Of course in non-formal environment the reasons described above are even more important. A nearly similar reason must be considered in the case of Italian as L2, important to support integration in a different society.

4. ASPECTS CONCERNING THE TARGET GROUP, I.E., YOUNG PEOPLE LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES:

4.1 Motivation for language learning (conditions for reaching young people and motivating them to participate in language learning), what is the social status of learning foreign languages, are there language exchange programs where students get to visit the country whose language they are learning, are their pen pal programs, do learners have a choice between learning a language or a different subject, do young language learners have common interests and preferences?

4.1.1 Formal

In some case in education there is the possibility to have exchanges of different kinds:

- Study visit, in which the whole class travel jointly for a week or so and visit places and museums and so on and, in some cases also meeting local schools; it is mainly a "cultural" experience.
- Exchange visit, where a single student lives for a couple of weeks (rarely more) in a family abroad, not necessarily in the country of the studied language; in these case normally the students also attends to the lessons in the local school. These visits are real "exchange visit" because student also each other. Both study visit and exchange visit are mainly financed by LLP Mobility or Erasmus, mainly used by schools and vocational training centers.
- Erasmus Program visits: widely used by university students, with a very high level of satisfaction both in term of experience and of language learning.

As told above the main foreign language taught in VET is English and students cannot choose the language by themselves; they can choose only the second language, limited to the schools in which there is this kind of experience.

In this context the social status can be important because a more rich or educated family can help the student in learning a foreign language (and not only the language) either directly (using their language knowledge) or indirectly, paying private courses.

4.1.2 Non-formal

English is commonly sees as a "lingua franca" spoken in the most part of the countries all around the world, and it's intended as the main and most effective way to communicate. Moreover Anglo-American culture such as music, movies, technology and so on is of course in English, and this is a good reason to study this language. Of course to study doesn't mean to speak.

In non-formal environment the reasons described above are even more important. A nearly similar reason must be considered in the case of Italian as L2, important to support integration in a different society.

4.2 Their level of education, years of schooling, types of school, prestige and quality of school, what plans do learners have for their future education, are they aiming for higher education, what is their GPA, ?

4.2.1 Formal

According to MIUR data 98% of young people attend to the compulsory school, 48% has a 5 years diploma and only 7% has a degree.

Despite the mandatory study of English, only 29% of Italians says they know English at a normal conversation level.

Italian education system faced (and is still facing) deep changes in the past few years, and at the moment is really difficult to foresee and understand the consequences of these changes. Generally speaking we can say that Upper Secondary General schools (ISCED 3) gives a wider cultural preparation (including foreign languages) than Upper Secondary Vocational schools (also ISCED 3), more dedicated to technical subject. Only University has a credit system comparable with other European countries, while lower and upper schools use votes from 1 (very very rare, comparable to F in ECTS) to 10 (also very rare, comparable to A in ECTS). Vocational education managed by MIUR is normally intended (but not exactly true) as a choice for lower educated or for the ones that prefer a quick, even if lower, technical qualification. We can say that the average GPA for the ones who get the diploma or the qualification is between 6 (E in ECTS) and 7 (D/C in ECTS), more rarely 8 (C/B in ECTS).

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

ECTS scale	Definition	Italian system comparison
A	Excellent: outstanding performance with minor errors	9/10
B	Very good; above the average standard but with some errors	7/8
C	Good; generally sound work with a number of notable errors	7
D	Fair; fair but with significant shortcomings	6/7
E	Sufficient; performance meets the minimum criteria	6
FX	Some more work required before the credit can be awarded	5
F	Considerable further work is required	3-5

4.3 Gender distribution, what percentage of men and women take part in language classes, especially voluntary courses, is there a gendered image attached to language learning?

4.3.1 Formal

Gender distribution depends on general gender situation; there's not a class per class statistics; generally female students are about 48% and male 52%. in Upper Secondary Vocational schools and in Vocational education managed by MIUR (mainly electronic and mechanics) there is a very high male presence.

4.3.2 Non-formal - Informal

There aren't data available

4.4 Proportion of young people in relation to older learners practicing/ learning foreign languages, what age groups take part in most extra curricula language learning, are there languages that are more popular with younger or older learners, are there languages with equal distribution?

4.4.1 Formal

There are some specific courses for lower educated people for getting a diploma, only in technical areas. At the moment there is a discussion about the maintenance of this experience because of lacking of economic resources by MIUR.

4.4.2 Non-formal

There is an interesting experience, the so called "Third Age University Primo Levi", mainly dedicated to elderly people. It's a private no-profit organization sponsored by Bologna Municipality, Bologna Province, Emilia-Romagna Region and Bologna University. At its beginning it was specific for elderly people, but at the moment it opened its activities to a wider range of people, youth included. Each person can join to the association with a small enrolment contribution plus a specific contribution for each course. There is a specific foreign language area (Area L) with course of different levels in English, French, German and Spanish, from beginners to upper intermediate level for each language. Teachers come from Alliance Française, British-Italian Association, Goethe Institut and mother tongue for Spanish. These courses are attended by a large number of people, due also to the enough low cost (150,00 € to 250,00 €, depending on the level). Generally teaching methods are really interactive, involving students in daily life situations, also using multimedia materials (generally CDs, VHS and so on).

4.5   Other issues (e.g. their status of employment, are they forced to learn foreign languages within this system or do they learn voluntarily, how are they graded on their progress, are there consequences for failing or passing a course, etc.)

4.5.1   Formal

In formal context it is mandatory to study foreign languages; teaching methods not always support learning, depending mainly on competence and creativity of the teacher. In Upper Secondary schools often the taught language it's not the daily life one, but the "classical" one, with great attention to literature more than on "normally" spoken language. The progress are graded using the standard Italian system (see above). If they not succeed they must get through a resit exam in September.

4.5.2   Non-formal

In this context normally some employed people attend to foreign languages courses in company that asks them to do. Mainly this is the case of companies that have closer relationships with foreign countries, and these people need to know at least English to work abroad in machinery assembling, maintenance and training activities. Most of them also improve their knowledge directly practicing the foreign language abroad, while working.

4.5.3   Informal

Of course in this case there's no exam and progress are not graded.

5   FINANCING/ POSSIBLE FUNDS (after the project's LLP funding)

5.1   Formal

EU level

- Dissemination projects for mainstreaming

National/local level

- National/local public authority financing
- To vocational training centres (using ESF)
- MIUR (Ministry of Education, University and Research) financing (schools autonomy system)

5.2   Non-formal

EU level

- Dissemination projects for mainstreaming

National/local level

- National/local public authority financing
- To vocational training centres (using ESF)
- To no-profit associations (sport, immigrants, others… using funds for social activities
- Self-financing (association members, families…)

5.3   Informal

EU level

- Dissemination projects for mainstreaming

National/local level

- National/local public authority financing
- To no-profit associations (sport, immigrants, others… using funds for social activities
- Self-financing (association members, families…)

The general actual problem is the reduction of financing both by ESF and by MIUR and local authorities.

CATALOGUE OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND TREND INDICATIONS

For raising motivation of young people to learn foreign languages and to improve implementation of language learning in attractive forms.

- **TRENDS**
  - Formal (education system) = traditional methods (!)
  - Formal (vocational training system) = active methods
  - Non formal/informal = active methods

- **PEDAGOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS**
  - Use of active methods based on experience and learners' interests
  - focus on the skills more than on the language structure
  - More attention to environment and culture of origin

- **STRUCTURAL RECOMMENDATIONS**
  - Changing of teacher role = from teacher to counsellor

- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RAISING AWARENESS/ REACHING THE TARGET GROUP(S)**
  - Experience and interest based methods and tools

- **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION INTO EXISTING MEASURES**
  - Experiences exchange
  - Teachers training
  - More methodological flexibility

- **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**
  - different effective methods/learning environment coherent with different cultures/target groups and languages diversity
  - raising awareness on cultural and linguistic diversity is the main responsibility of schools
  - how can we motivate teachers to step out of their classroom, and start cooperating with the outside world

We intend "equal opportunities" in a general sense, not only considering the gender; we also include people in lacking of opportunities, immigrants, disabled people, people with lower education and so on. These differences and the associated inequalities cross all the society and affect all social levels and groups, as well as the youngest population. The existence of these differences that affect the approach and methodology of "Non-Formal" and "Informal" language learning must be considered and can be accepted and analysed, as it should be a factor to be considered in the project development.

LIST/ CONTACTS OF RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL AND EDUCATION POLICY ORGANIZATIONS IN EACH PARTNER'S COUNTRY

Organization	Main Tasks/	Objectives (of the organization)	Contact data
Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) – Provincial School Office of Bologna	Provincial Service Agency of MIUR	Information, teachers standings, dissemination of initiatives	http://provvbo.scuole.bo.it/
Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) – Regional School Office of Emilia-Romagna	Regional Service Agency of MIUR	Coordination of Provincial Service Agencies of MIUR	http://www.istruzioneer.it/
Emilia-Romagna Region – Vocational Training and School Department	Implementation of the EU programmes structural and financial tools in vocational training using ESF	Information about all the training opportunities in Emilia-Romagna, planning and coordination of EFS training initiatives at a regional level	http://www.form-azione.it/form-azione.htm
Bologna Municipality – Youth Policies Department	Informagiovani enable youth to learn about job and educational opportunities, as well as cultural events and several Youth -oriented activities.	General information and guide for young people	http://www.comune.bologna.it/power/informagiovani/wiki/index.php/Chi_siamo
Bologna Municipality – Social Services Department	Supporting activities to people in lacking of opportunities	Financing people, bureaucratic support in administrative acts, facilitation in various fields, language course for immigrants	http://informa.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/salute/servizi/12:2709/
Primo Levi University	Private no-profit Cultural association, delivering a large panel of different courses in non-formal context	Every person in the area can find the education possibilities according to their wishes and needs.	http://www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/primolevi/index.htm
University of Ferrara – Language Centre	Organizes and coordinates all the services for Italian as L2 for University of Ferrara	Course for foreign students of University of Ferrara	http://www.unife.it/centro/linguistico

CONCLUSIONS OF CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS

We contacted several people and organisations in 4 interviews and a focus group involving 4 other people; all of them are teachers, both of foreign languages (English, French and Spanish) and Italian as L2.

Some of them are employed teachers, being the others free lancers and professionals. They had normally various kind of students: adults (mainly business/technical English), young people (+18 y.o.), teen agers in both in formal and non-formal contexts.

All of them use mainly active methods, trying to involve at the highest possible level the students, according to their needs and their learning habit.

Their method is interactive, using daily life tools, intending the language not as academic but for concrete reasons (work, study, visit, mobility).

According to them there should the strongest coherence with the students' experiences and attitude.

This is easier in non-formal contexts, where people decide to learn a foreign language according to their needs; more difficult in formal contexts, especially schools where curricula are decided at a national level by the Ministry.

Also in these situation they declare that it is possible to use non-conventional tools and instruments, depending on teachers' attitude, creativity and motivation.

Almost all of them use instruments as songs as testimonial of authentic language; movies, tv series for idioms, colloquial sentences; books for lexicon; audio books; pod casts of international magazines and/or networks; comics to fill; dialogues to be performed; wide role playing use; mime show; advertisements,;

the city as learning environment (e.g. places, buildings, services, transports, literature)…

If in vocational training we often use the expression "learning by doing", in languages learning they use a similar expression: "learning by communicating and playing, in a word: having fun".

Some of them says that the **focus is on the skills** more than on the language structure and the goal is "develop a **hobby in English**" to be followed up alone and in group, because there's no offer for group- activities in the long run.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE NO.: 1

TITLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Out from the school

Availability (Language(s), link, IBN,…)

English

General description (include level and age group, information on specific target group if any,..)

Upper secondary school, Italian students, Ferrara

- the students prepared researches whose result was presented (in English) in a public event and the proceeds was used to support the local park storks colony.
- students groups chose matters according to their interests, such as music (Beatles, Nirvana & U2 music & lyrics) and differences between 70s and actual values among teenagers, also using music and lyrics.
- a DVD was also produced.
- the event, held in the local town hall was very successful.

Objective(s)

- To rise up the motivation of the students, helping them in learning and showing them that it's possible to study and learn English also funning.
- To help them in funding their own learning method, not depending on curricula or text books

Link/ Contact (organisation, Internet address, email if possible)

Gianni De Giuli, giannidegiuli@ialemiliaromagna.it

Remarks (pedagogical recommendations, IPR, other)

- traditional teaching-learning rules were overturned, going beyond school borders.
- students' motivation was a very important success element

RATE : 1=very/high   2=quite (high)   3=rather not/low   4= not at all

Adaptability: Is it possible to adapt or transfer the example of "best practices" to our project? = 2

Effectiveness: What was the effect of the implementation of the best practice? = 2

Attractiveness: What is attractive in the best practice example? (E.g.: methods, innovation, motivation of learners etc.) = 1

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE NO.: 2

TITLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The city as a learning environment

Availability (Language(s), link, IBN,…)

Italian

General description (include level and age group, information on specific target group if any,..)

Young immigrates (2nd and 1st generation)

Young immigrates (2nd and 1st generation)
- Traditional lessons to introduce method and city map *(structure, characteristic, also in the figurative sense..)*,
- Guided group city tours, then groups without guide,
- Building, places, shops, people, transports, services…
- Examination, description, interviews,
- Remarks and consideration together,

Objective(s)

- To have a friendly approach with the city map and services
- To learn useful and daily language element
- To know the environment,
- To know the languages (i.e. the different Italian languages)
- To help them in integration (!)

Link/ Contact (organisation, Internet address, email if possible)

Corinna Egitto, at natasciaschieri.mo@ialemiliaromagna.it

Remarks (pedagogical recommendations, IPR, other)

Active participants involvement Usefulness of language used (daily language) NOTE: Similar to Good Practice 3 (see below), but with a completely different target group

RATE : 1=very/high   2=quite (high)   3=rather not/low   4= not at all

Adaptability: Is it possible to adapt or transfer the example of "best practices" to our project? = 1

Effectiveness: What was the effect of the implementation of the best practice? = 2

Attractiveness: What is attractive in the best practice example? (E.g.: methods, innovation, motivation of learners etc.) = 1

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE NO.: 3

TITLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The language learning city

Availability (Language(s), link, IBN,…)

Italian

General description (include level and age group, information on specific target group if any,..)

Foreign students attending to Ferrara University courses

- Traditional lessons to introduce method and city map *(structure, characteristic, also in the figurative sense..)*,
- Guided group city tours, then groups without guide,
- Building, places, shops, people, transports, services…
- Examination, description, interviews,
- Remarks and consideration together,

Objective(s)

- To have a friendly approach with the city map and services
- To learn useful and daily language element
- To know the environment,
- To know the languages (i.e. the different Italian languages)

Link/ Contact (organisation, Internet address, email if possible)

Monica Pavani, at natasciaschieri.mo@ialemiliaromagna.it

Remarks (pedagogical recommendations, IPR, other)

Active participants involvement

Usefulness of language used (daily language)

NOTE: Similar to Good Practice 2 (see above), but with a completely different target group

RATE : 1=very/high   2=quite (high)   3=rather not/low   4= not at all

Adaptability: Is it possible to adapt or transfer the example of "best practices" to our project? = 1

Effectiveness: What was the effect of the implementation of the best practice? = 2

Attractiveness: What is attractive in the best practice example? (E.g.: methods, innovation, motivation of learners etc.) = 1

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE NO.: 4

TITLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Downloading English

Availability (Language(s), link, IBN,…)

English

General description (include level and age group, information on specific target group if any,..)

Students of Initial Vocational Training courses
The teachers used the most common social networks (such as Facebook and MySpace) to teach English and to make young students more comfortable with a foreign language; she also helped the students in downloading music from internet. These activities were done in group also trying to establish a peer to peer cooperation among the students.
The students also translated and analysed lyrics of songs, comparing their translation with an "official" one.

Objective(s)

To make the students more familiar with basic English, also motivating them in learning by themselves

Link/ Contact (organisation, Internet address, email if possible)

ENaIp Bologna, antonella.magnabosco@enaip.bologna.it

Remarks (pedagogical recommendations, IPR, other)

Active participants involvement
Usefulness of language used (daily language)

RATE : 1=very/high   2=quite (high)   3=rather not/low   4= not at all

Adaptability: Is it possible to adapt or transfer the example of "best practices" to our project? = 2

Effectiveness: What was the effect of the implementation of the best practice? = 2

Attractiveness: What is attractive in the best practice example? (E.g.: methods, innovation, motivation of learners etc.) = 2

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE NO.: 5 AND 6

TITLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Learning by doing

Availability (Language(s), link, IBN,…)

English

General description (include level and age group, information on specific target group if any,..)

Employed workers, maintenance men, fitters and assemblers in various companies building Packaging Machines and Numerical Controlled Tool Machines.

It was difficult because all of the students were adults, and part of them were uncomfortable with foreign languages.

The teachers adopted a role playing method, simulating real situations, based on the technical skills owned by the students more than on the language structure, de-structuring the formal teaching/learning.

The teacher and some student acted as customer of the service while other students acted as techniques, helping them in creating a quiet environment using their professional skills facilitating their learning and the language acquisition more than language studying; in some way the teachers acted as counsellors more than as teachers, overcoming the students difficulties and rising up their self confidence.

Objective(s)

To learn technical language for work environment and daily life language for "surviving"

Link/ Contact (organisation, Internet address, email if possible)

Fondazione Aldini-Valeriani, Bologna, www.fav.it

Remarks (pedagogical recommendations, IPR, other)

Active method "in situation" and "learning by doing", overcoming mental barriers

RATE : 1=very/high   2=quite (high)   3=rather not/low   4= not at all

Adaptability: Is it possible to adapt or transfer the example of "best practices" to our project? = 2

Effectiveness: What was the effect of the implementation of the best practice? = 3

Attractiveness: What is attractive in the best practice example? (E.g.: methods, innovation, motivation of learners etc.) = 2

Annex 2

Bibliography

A) Literature (you used)

(Name of Author(s): Title of document, publication place and year)

B) Links (you used)

Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) – Provincial School Office of Bologna	http://provvbo.scuole.bo.it/
Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) – Regional School Office of Emilia-Romagna	http://www.istruzioneer.it/
Emilia-Romagna Region – Vocational Training and School Department	http://www.form-azione.it/form-azione.htm
Bologna Municipality – Youth Policies Department	http://www.comune.bologna.it/power/informagiovani/wiki/index.php/Chi_siamo
Bologna Municipality – Social Services Department	http://informa.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/salute/servizi/12:2709/
Primo Levi University	http://www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/primolevi/index.htm
University of Ferrara – Language Centre	http://www.unife.it/centro/linguistico
Web site of Italian Continuous Training experiences	http://www.eformazionecontinua.it/
Public Body for information, evaluation, research, studies and analysis on labor market, training and employment	http://www.isfol.it/
Ministry of Education, University and Research	http://www.miur.it/DefaultDesktop.aspx
Territorial Permanent Centre for Adult Education	http://kidslink.bo.cnr.it/ctpbesta/

C) Further/ recommended literature

D) Further/ recommended links

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