

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Rethinking Citizenship Education in European Migration Societies Political Strategies - Social Changes - Educational Concepts

Conference Paper

**Contribution to Workshop 5, Session 2:
Intercultural Citizenship Education –
New Perspectives for Learning at Schools**

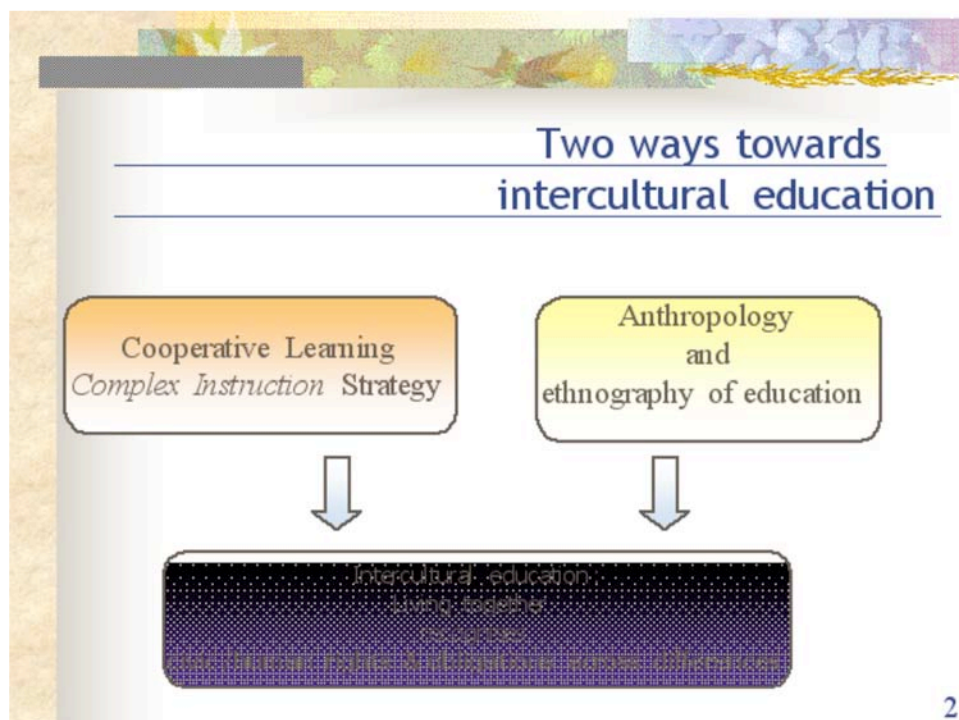
**“Consequences for Teacher Education and Classroom Practice”
Francesca Gobbo, University of Turin**

Lisbon, Portugal, April, 26-28, 2007

www.bpb.de/nece

I plan to address the workshop theme “Intercultural Citizenship Education – New Perspectives for Learning at Schools” by sharing with the Lisbon audience one of the two different approaches that I have preferably enacted in teaching intercultural education to out-of-school educators, professionals working in the public sector (mostly in the national health system), cultural mediators and future teachers. Both approaches provide teachers, educators and young people in school with important educational opportunities that will hopefully implement the intercultural perspective, their right to citizenship *and* realize equity in the classrooms.

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION



2

On this slide, the first approach is the cooperative learning strategy that the late Elizabeth Cohen called “Complex Instruction” and, though developed in the United States, it has been considered as an effective way to achieve intercultural education and citizenship aims (Batelaan and Van Hoof, 1996; Batelaan ed., 1998; Gobbo, 2000).

As I recently wrote, “societies have become aware not only of the historical changes that result from the dislocation/relocation of individuals and families as consequence of worldwide disparities in the quality of life, work opportunities and possibility of survival, but also of the urgent need to answer the new conditions effectively and creatively. Italy is no exception to these processes of mobility and change: they have affected its demography and work sectors, and induced a new sense of social responsibility among a sizable part of its population. The fact that legal immigrants now account for 4.5 percent of the total population indicates that a significant turn in the overall social composition and identity of the country has already taken place, and that the unforeseen event (the passage from a country of emigration to one of immigration) has become an everyday reality. This does not mean that the transition has been, or is, smooth, as the news too often reminds us. However, the discourse of intercultural education has played an important role in pointing out, reducing and preventing prejudicial attitudes towards the newly arrived pupils, and in assigning a publicly positive meaning to diversity that, though always a component of Italian society in terms of linguistic, religious, ethnic and class differences, was until recently mostly relevant within the private realm, and usually ignored or discounted in the public one such as the education system (Gobbo, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007a). On their part, Italian schools and teachers have looked for, and promoted, educational approaches capable of responding to increasingly heterogeneous classrooms through the recognition and valorisation of differences” (Gobbo, 2007b, in press).

I also added that since intercultural education approaches “require *ad hoc* in-service training programs, in the last twenty years many local administrations have founded, and supported, Intercultural Centres whose aim is to provide teachers with the much needed intercultural knowledge and skills through courses on the immigrants’ cultures and religions and an array of didactic projects as well as festive encounters between schools and immigrant families, or between the latter and the local population. Two years ago the Bologna Intercultural Centre invited me to give a course on Elizabeth Cohen’s own version of cooperative learning, known as Complex instruction (Cohen, 1994; Cohen and Lotan, 1997; see also

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Lotan, 2003, 2006a, 2006b). I accepted eagerly since introducing teachers to Complex Instruction gave me the opportunity to aptly complement the celebration of diversity with the recognition that when the same is connected with low social status, it is too often negatively perceived, in turn producing low expectations towards the diverse children's school achievement and significantly limiting peers' interaction with the latter even in group work" (Gobbo, 2007b, in press).

The Bologna course was very successful (Gobbo, Traversi, Augelli, 2005) and at the end of it a limited number of participants decided to continue on their own (at first with my supervision, and now with that of University of Turin's doctoral student Isabella Pescarmona) and develop their own didactic units. However, before I go on narrating the teachers' investment into Complex Instruction and the interesting results, I wish to present the theoretical foundations on which this cooperative learning strategy is based. The latter recognizes that today cooperative learning has become a rather popular way to make pupils of different backgrounds work together on school tasks, and hopefully solve them, by recognizing that task completion through a collective endeavour not only maximizes the group members' efforts but it also offers the opportunity to appreciate the values of participation and of both personal and group responsibility. However, when diversity is connected with low social status, it is often negatively perceived, producing teachers' and peers' limited expectations of low status children's achievement and inhibiting peers' interaction with them even in group work. Complex Instruction is intended for the heterogeneous classrooms of today and it is explicitly aimed to attain equity in education by changing teachers' and peers' expectations towards pupils of low status.



NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

In equitable classrooms

- Curricula are interesting and meaningful
- All students have equal opportunities to participate into cooperative learning
- All students can help each other to learn, understand and solve tasks
- All students can achieve positive school results

24

Therefore Complex Instruction addresses those classroom aspects (classroom tasks, role of students and teachers, patterns of interaction among students and between students and teachers) that are often responsible for students' failure in traditional classroom work.

Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

Complex instruction



A set of strategies **to confront problems of inequality within cooperative learning groups and to change the social system of a classroom**



To change conditions of inequality



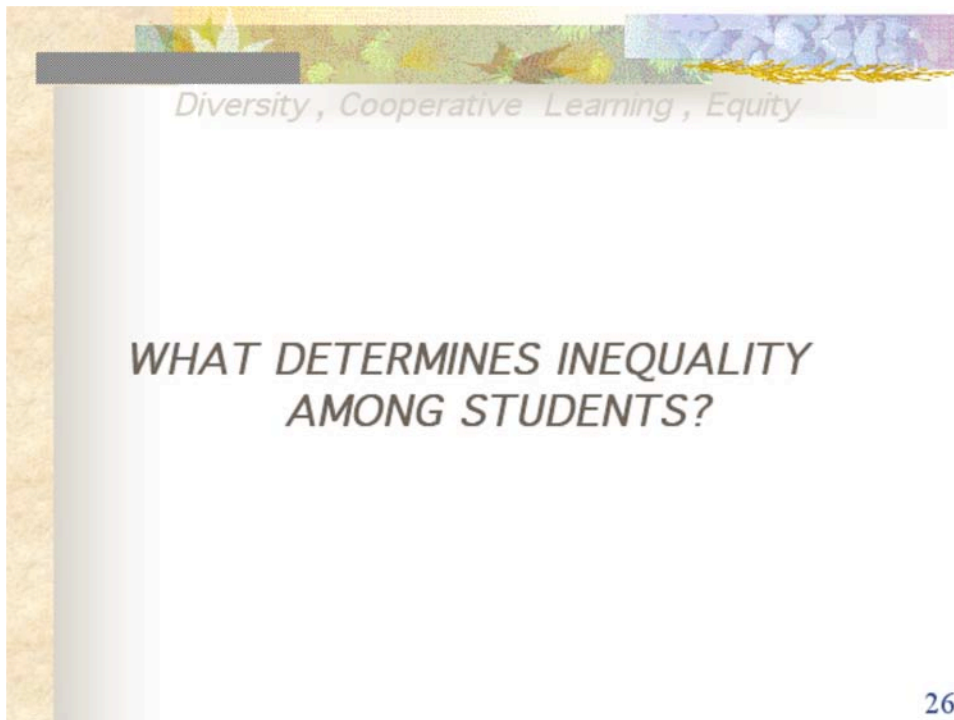
To have students attain good school results

25

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Cohen's sociological analysis of the social system of heterogeneous classrooms acknowledges that the changes taking place inside them (as a consequence of enrolment of more and more pupils and students of immigrant, minority and low-income households) are a potential source of strength and richness for the life of the schools, as long as teachers can capitalise on the multicultural resources represented by those pupils and students.

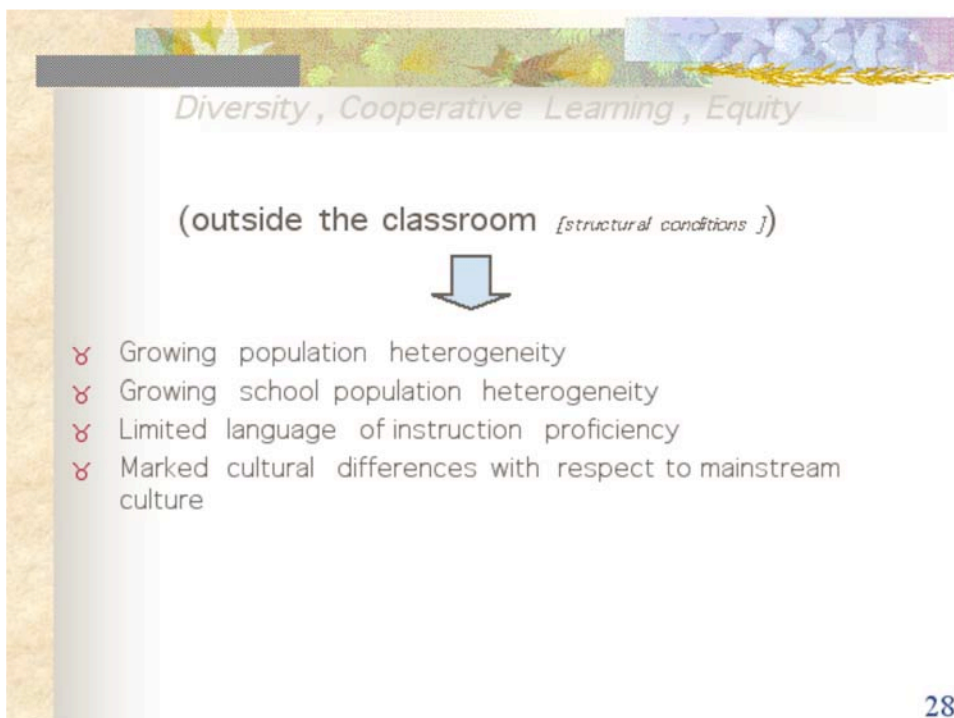
However, Cohen's sociological analysis reminds us that our societies are characterized both by diversity and by social and economic stratification.



Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

**WHAT DETERMINES INEQUALITY
AMONG STUDENTS?**

26



Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

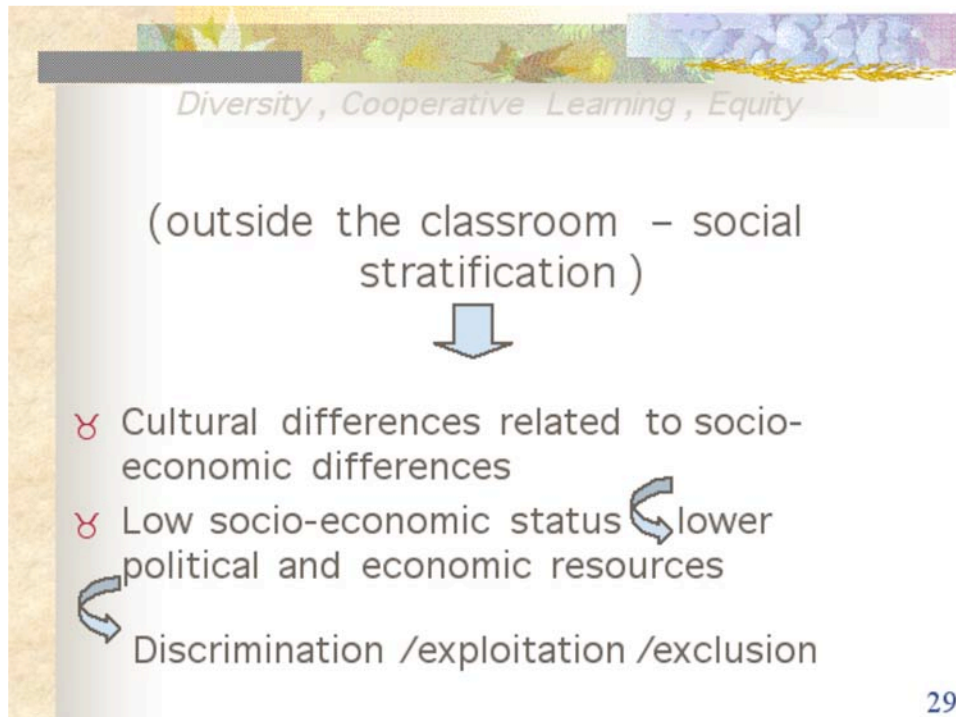
(outside the classroom [structural conditions])

↓

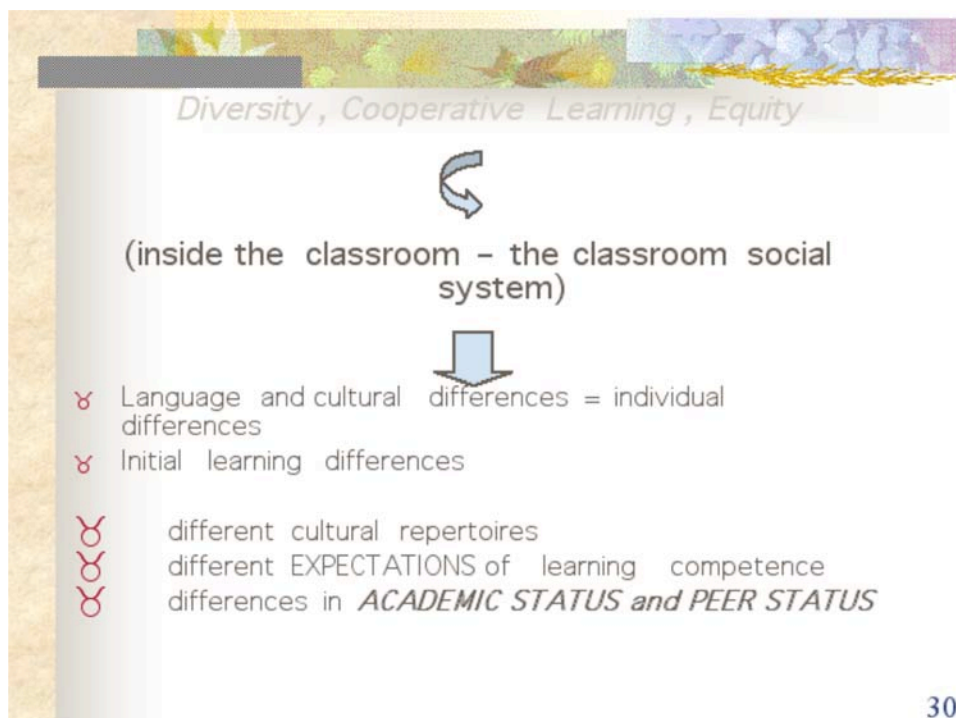
- ✗ Growing population heterogeneity
- ✗ Growing school population heterogeneity
- ✗ Limited language of instruction proficiency
- ✗ Marked cultural differences with respect to mainstream culture

28

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION




While outside the schools, the pupils' and students' cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious differences often translate into inequality of opportunities and low social status, *inside* the classrooms, the same differences can be at the roots of students' low academic performance and low standing among their peers.



NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Remindful of the theory and findings presented in *Pygmalion in the Classroom* by Rosenthal and Jackbson, Cohen posited that



Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity


Differences in academic status are consequences of different expectations of learning competence by teachers and peers because of
the non diversified character of school learning activities

- ✂ tasks are the same for every students
- ✂ students cannot decide how to do the task
- ✂ teacher's evaluation criteria are usually the same for every student's work
- ✂ students cannot evaluate their own work

↪ Academic hierarchy among students and a difference in academic status among peers

31

In fact, equitable classrooms cannot be achieved



Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

(inside the classroom)
When some students

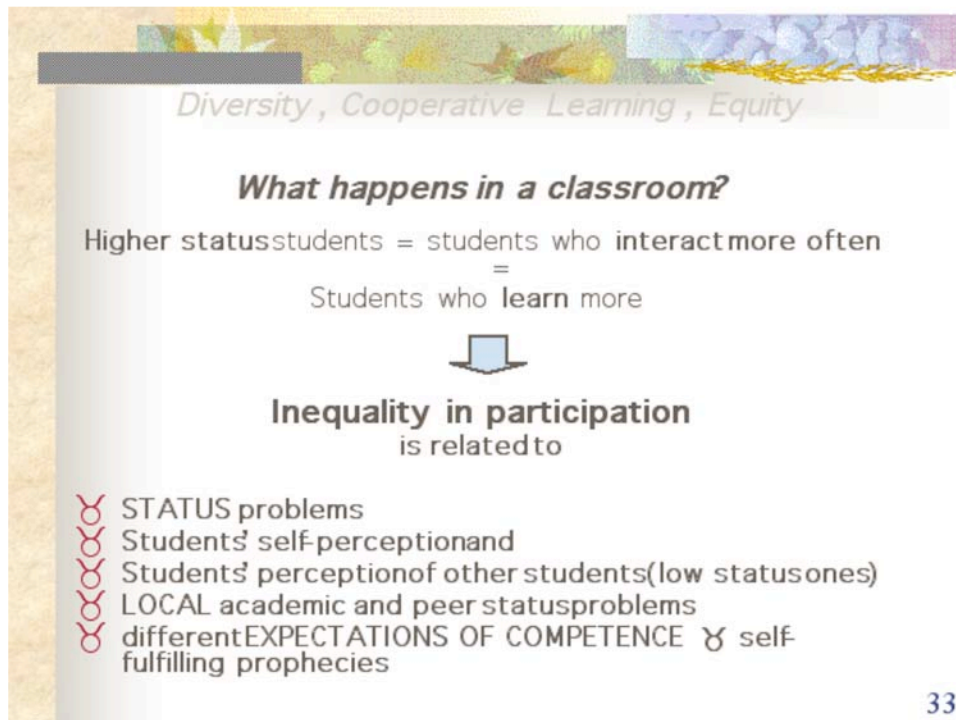
↓

- ✂ Are expected to be unable to learn both basic and higher order concepts
- ✂ Do not have equal access to interesting learning materials
- ✂ Are not expected to be ready for tasks requiring a higher order cognitive capacity
- ✂ Cannot participate to group work in an active and significant way, and
- ✂ Their ideas are not taken into consideration by their peers

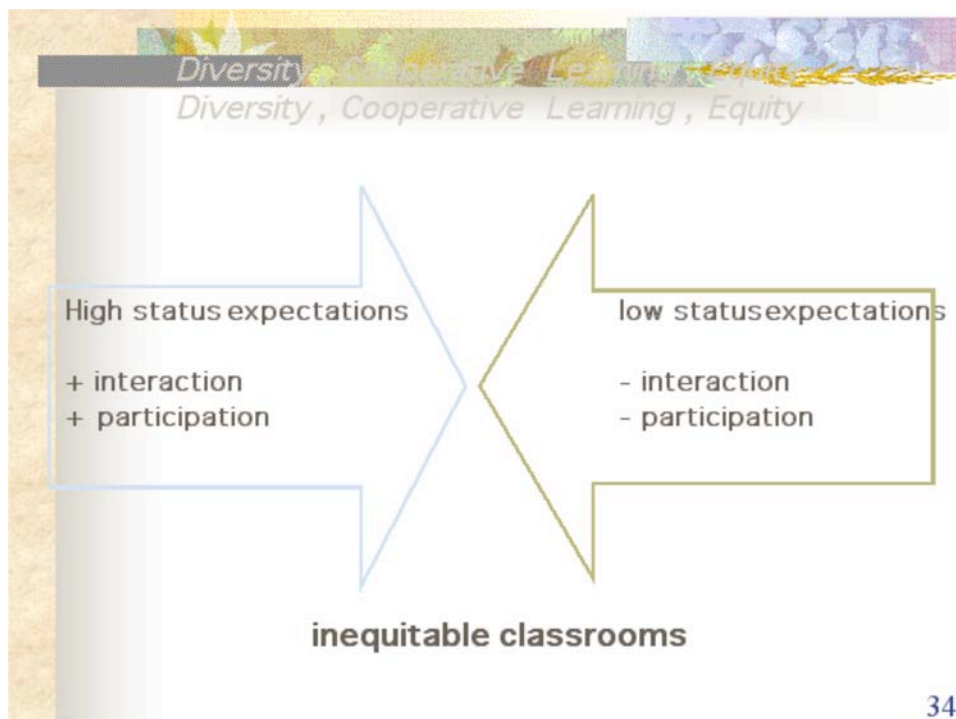
27

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Therefore,

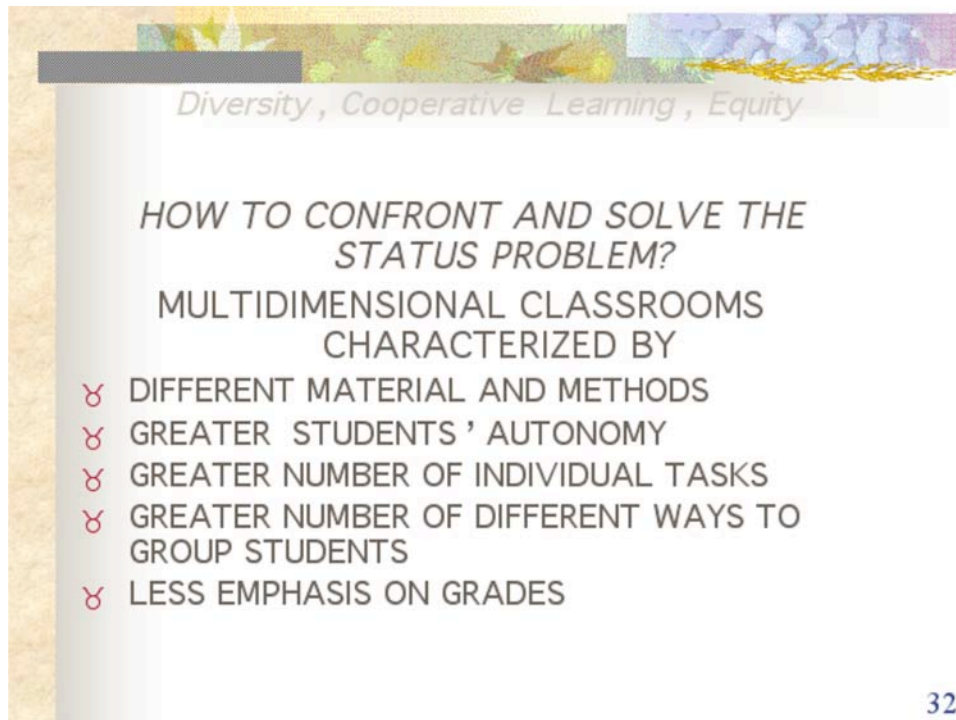


As the next slide shows vividly, the kind of interpersonal interaction that takes place produces inequitable classrooms:



NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

This awareness generates the following question and a course of educational innovative action:



Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

HOW TO CONFRONT AND SOLVE THE STATUS PROBLEM?

MULTIDIMENSIONAL CLASSROOMS CHARACTERIZED BY

- ✂ DIFFERENT MATERIAL AND METHODS
- ✂ GREATER STUDENTS' AUTONOMY
- ✂ GREATER NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL TASKS
- ✂ GREATER NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WAYS TO GROUP STUDENTS
- ✂ LESS EMPHASIS ON GRADES

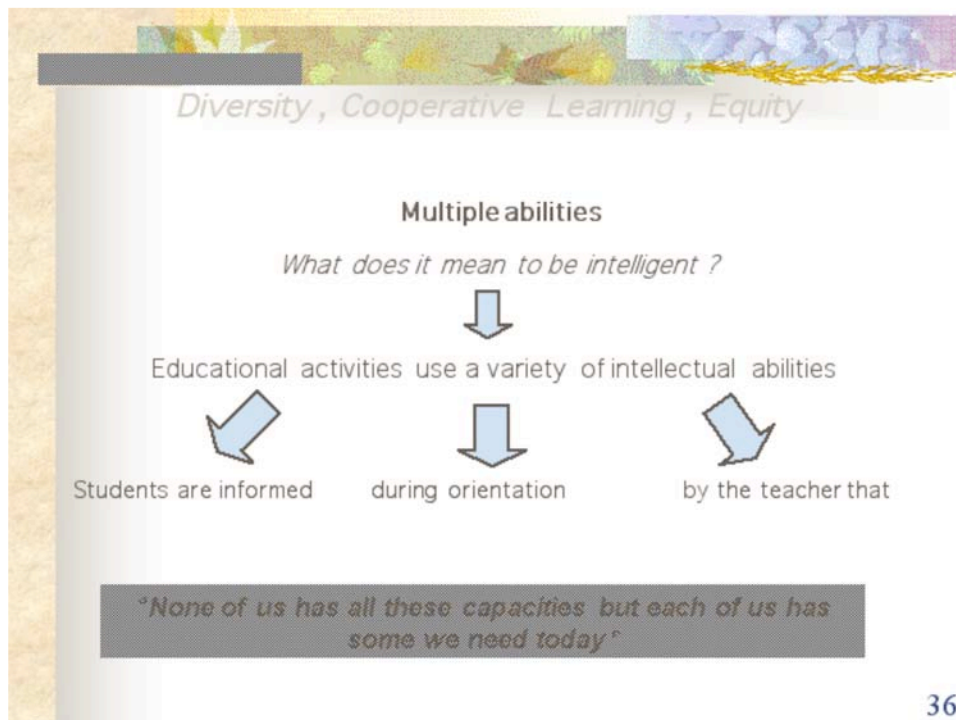
32

Complex Instruction aims

- (1) to activate abilities/intelligences for learning tasks,
- (2) to attribute competence to low status students.


Complex Instruction's intercultural dimension has been recognized since it works with students' different cultural, linguistic and cognitive abilities as resources for the learning achieved when every student participates equally in group work.

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION



36

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION




SEVEN TYPES OF INTELLIGENCE
(after Howard Gardner)

- LINGUISTIC**
(ability to express ideas verbally and in writing, to understand speeches and texts)
- LOGICAL-MATHEMATIC**
(ability to understand geometrical figures and relations among numbers)
- MUSICAL**
(sensitivity to music and rhythm)
- VISUAL-SPATIAL**
(ability to orient oneself in space, to have a sense of space)
- KINETIC**
(ability to be aware and in control of one's own body)
- INTERPERSONAL-SOCIAL**
(ability to pay attention, to understand and to care for others)
- INTRAPERSONAL**
(awareness of one's own abilities)

37

However,



**Learning units constructed on multiple abilities are
a necessary yet not sufficient condition to
create equity in cooperative learning groups**

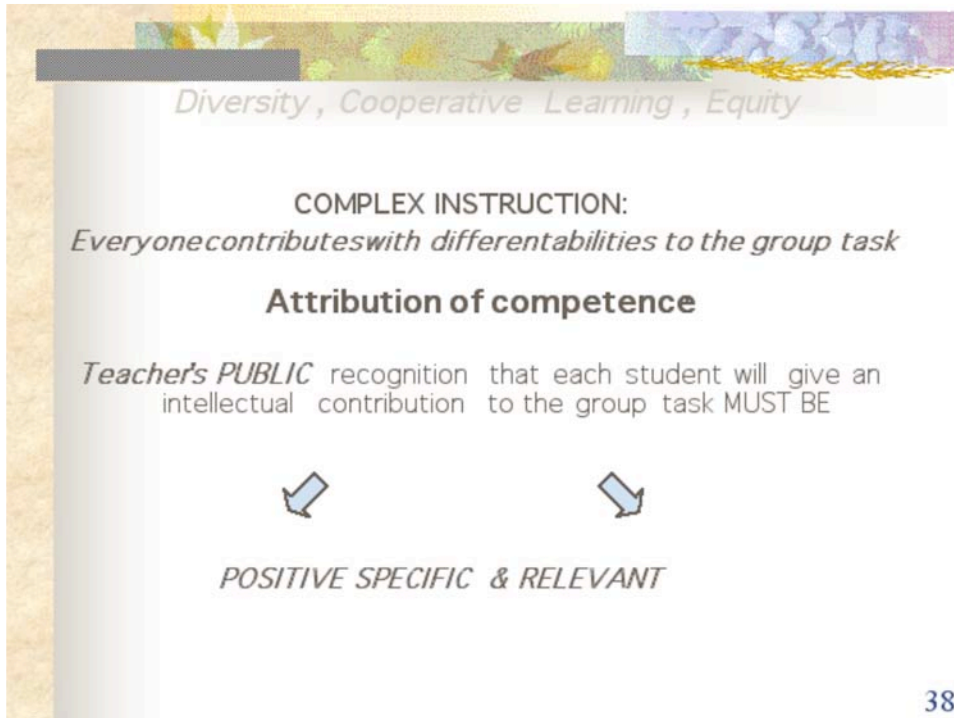
↓

***Without a specification by the teacher to
change expectations of competence,
status problems will remain even when
students work on tasks based on
multiple abilities***

40


NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Which brings us to point (2, p.8 of this presentation), namely that teachers, once they have become aware of the status problems among their students, are ready to treat it specifically when it surfaces during group work so that every student can fully participate in it and interact with her/his peers. Conversation, discussion and valuable multiple ability contributions toward accomplishing the cooperative learning tasks increase both the learning *and* the status of individual pupils and students, as well as that of the class as a whole.



The teacher's responsibility for making students interact among themselves is best expressed in the delegation of authority to groups.

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION




Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

**DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY BY THE TEACHER
(various strategies)**

- ✘ A good task description and indications for work make the group less dependent on the teacher
- ✘ Detailed instruction let students formulate anew the task activity
- ✘ Every group member has a specific role
- ✘ Roles rotate in order to allow everyone to play them all
- ✘ Roles make students less dependent on the teacher
- ✘ Students also do what is usually the teacher's responsibility

44

In a condition of learning autonomy, students make an effort to accomplish a task by discussing different options and hypotheses and by working together toward the completion of the tasks. Though teachers delegate authority to the groups, they must be keen observers of the interaction within groups so as to intervene quickly and effectively if status problems arise to block interaction and work. Teachers' specific and detailed feedback is also necessary in order to make groups accountable for what they did (or did not do) and for the way they worked.



Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

TEACHER'S ROLE:

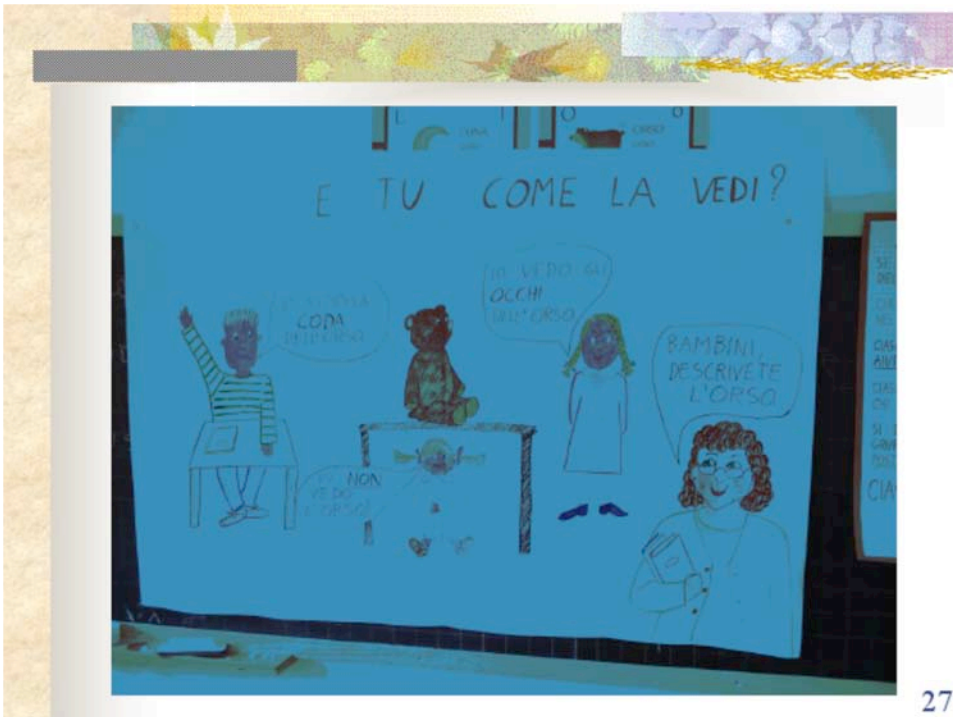
- ✘ To promote interaction within groups
- ✘ To remind groups that they are responsible for their own learning
- ✘ To remind groups that they are not expected to ask their teacher for help, unless they find they cannot reach an agreement on how to solve the problem even after debating different solutions among themselves
- ✘ To remind groups and group members that they can learn from their mistakes
- ✘ To emphasize that the group is responsible for the group results
- ✘ Every group member is responsible for her/his own individual account

43

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The course I taught at the Bologna Intercultural Center was characterized by its constant linking between theory and educational practice: teachers attending the course listened to the theory presentation but also they experimented Complex Instruction by working both with the units developed at Stanford University by Elizabeth Cohen and Rachel Lotan and with those created by the Comenius project led by Pieter Batelaan and tried in nine different European countries between 1997 and 1998. In the end, the various group activities, the observation, feedback and further discussion on interactive dynamics within group work, always accompanied by my care for a balance between theory and practice, made participants not only familiar with this strategy in cooperative learning but also made some of them eager to plan some original didactic units in Complex Instruction and to try them in their own heterogeneous classrooms. Each unit so far developed (but more are under construction) is centred around a different “big idea” (see next slide), namely

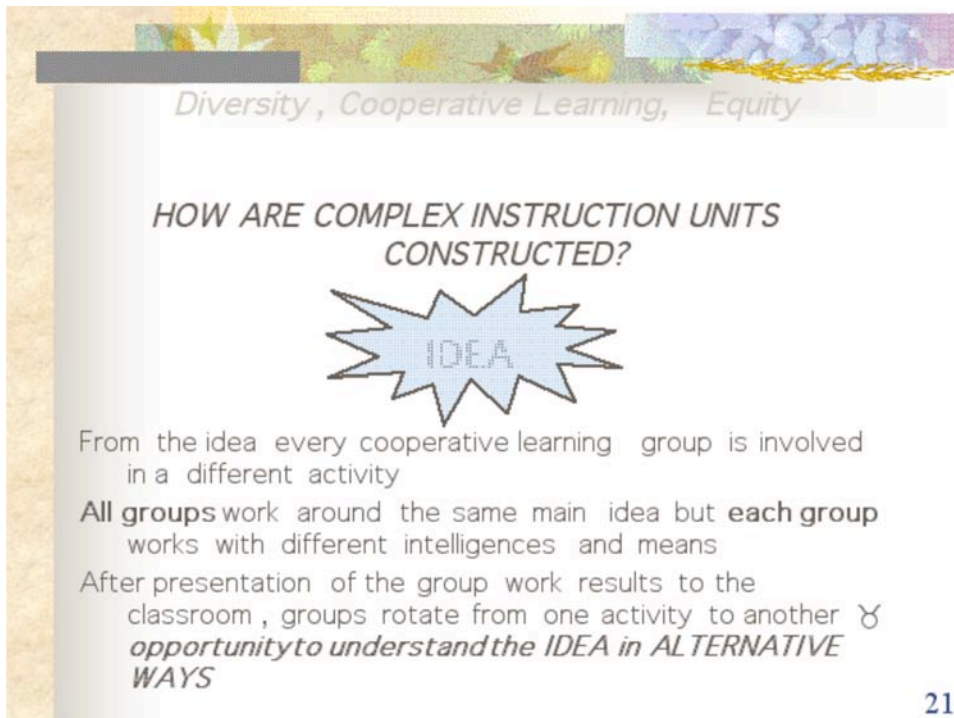
- (1) awareness that in societies there are different points of view – this idea leads to an appreciation of different perceptions and to place one’s own beliefs into perspective, therefore assigning a positive connotation to diversity and hopefully contributing to conflict management;
- (2) awareness that misunderstanding can result from the intention to communicate – this idea leads, among other goals, to examine the relationship between meanings and non verbal communication in different cultures.



27

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Teachers in Bologna followed these steps:



Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

HOW ARE COMPLEX INSTRUCTION UNITS CONSTRUCTED?

IDEA

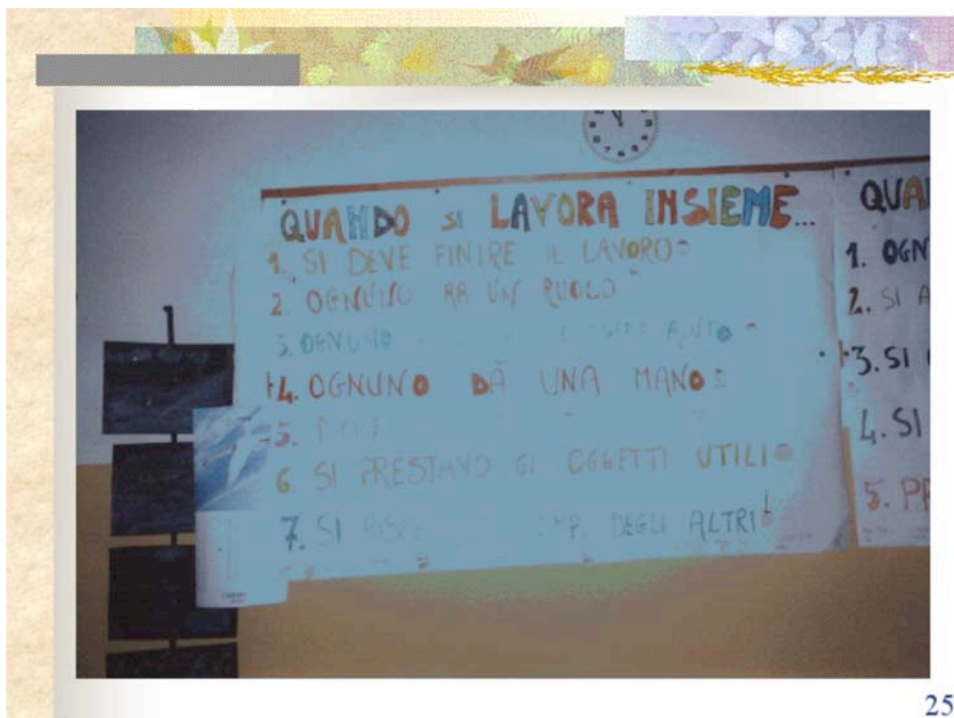
From the idea every cooperative learning group is involved in a different activity

All groups work around the same main idea but each group works with different intelligences and means

After presentation of the group work results to the classroom, groups rotate from one activity to another \propto opportunity to understand the IDEA in ALTERNATIVE WAYS

21

Of course, each unit developed by the Bologna teachers is based on multiple abilities so that each child can contribute to task completion according to his/her own ability.

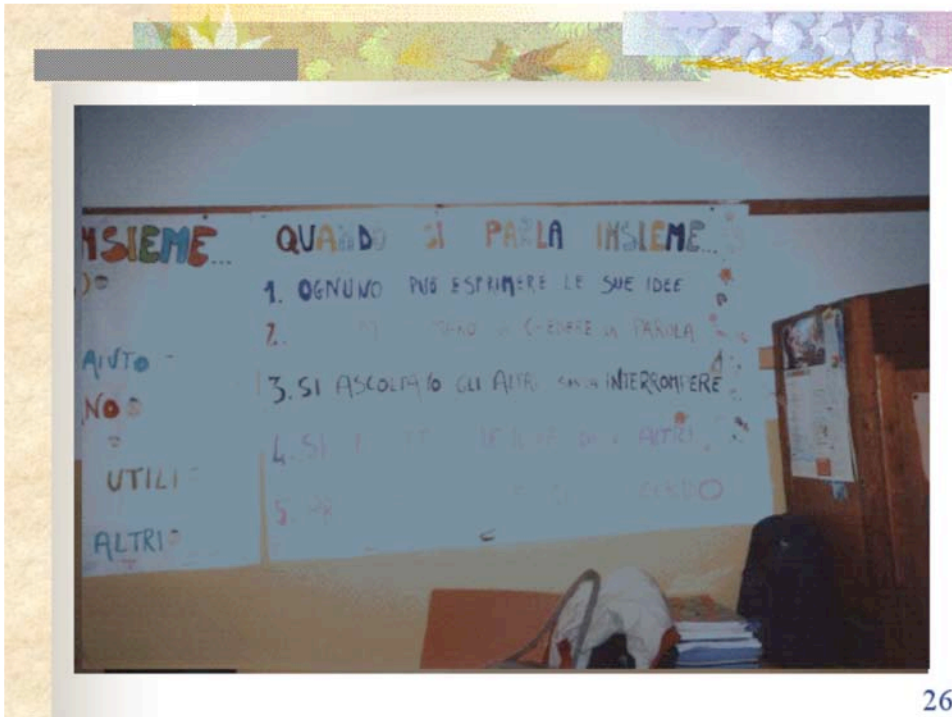


QUANDO SI LAVORA INSIEME...

1. SI DEVE FINIRE IL LAVORO
2. OGNUNO HA UN RUOLO
3. OGNUNO HA UNA PARTE DA COMPLETARE
4. OGNUNO DA UNA MANO
5. SI PRESTANO GLI OGGETTI UTILI
6. SI PRESTANO GLI OGGETTI UTILI
7. SI PRESTANO GLI OGGETTI UTILI

25

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION



Cohen had indicated how research conducted in classrooms where Complex Instruction units had been tested showed that

Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

THE MORE STUDENTS SPEAK, INTERACT AND WORK TOGETHER IN GROUPS, THE MORE THEY LEARN

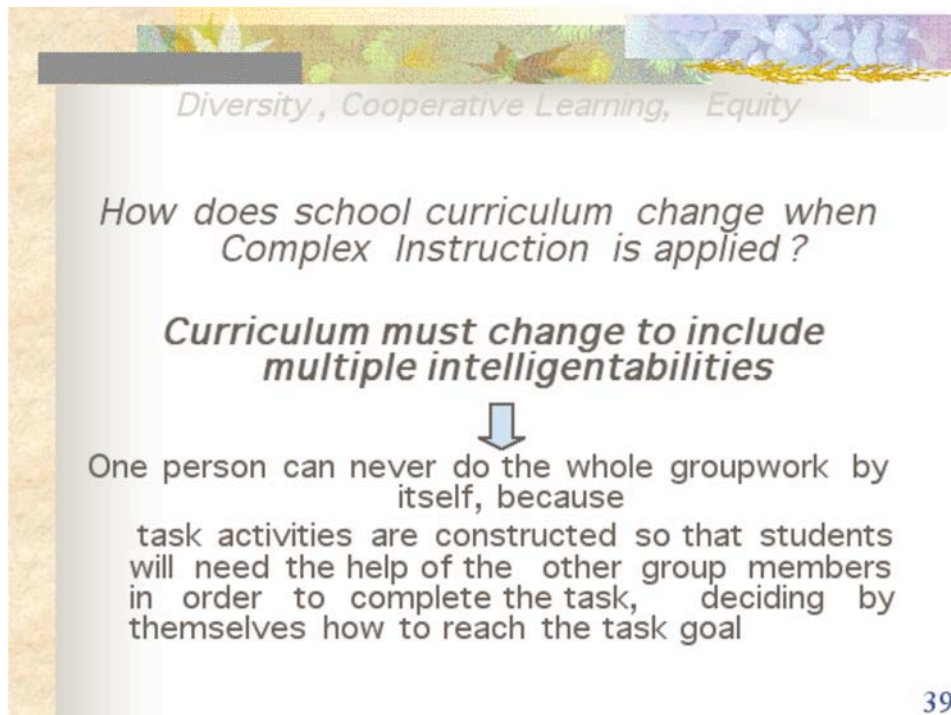
✂ **POSITIVE RELATION BETWEEN INTERACTION AND LEARNING BOTH AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND CLASSROOM LEVEL**

✂ **STUDENTS REFER TO EACH OTHERS AS RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUAL LEARNING**

42

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Those results, that can be found in the empirical research conducted by Cohen and associates, made the Stanford sociologist of education suggest that Complex Instruction could fruitfully become part of the classroom educational activities.



Diversity, Cooperative Learning, Equity

*How does school curriculum change when
Complex Instruction is applied?*

***Curriculum must change to include
multiple intelligibilities***

↓

One person can never do the whole groupwork by
itself, because
task activities are constructed so that students
will need the help of the other group members
in order to complete the task, deciding by
themselves how to reach the task goal

39

The pupils of the five schools where the units were tested did not always have an easy time learning to learn together (nor did the teachers find it easy to learn to stand back and let the pupils grapple with the task and relational problems). However, in trying to reach the goal cooperatively, they certainly learned to listen to each other, to debate a suggestion or an idea with group members, as well as to give and to accept constructive criticism from them, to help each other finalize the project in the best manner, and to realize that there are many different (and often unexpected) intelligent ways to achieve a satisfactory result. In the end, what matters from an intercultural educational point of view are both the product (even when the goal is not achieved successfully) *and* the process, both the difficulties met along the latter *and* the capacity to overcome them as indicated by the task completion.

By way of conclusion, I would like to underline that the approach I present here, precisely because it is aimed at realizing equity among pupils by giving each of them different opportunities, cannot but recognise teachers as indispensable partners in the educational innovative endeavour: in fact, I believe that when didactic change and improvement are pursued, teachers cannot be imagined as merely dispensers of good practices or new educational activities. Usually, most teachers, as professionals, are eager to learn new ways that appear more effective or innovative, or that will make their own teaching more effective and innovative. But it must be always acknowledged that their new learning takes place in interaction with their prior theoretical knowledge about children, classrooms and educational objectives, their prior experience with various kinds of "good practices", their everyday ability – better, their concern - to create appropriate conditions for pupils' learning, all of which are supported by a deep belief in education. From this perspectives, in every basic education or in-service course teachers are both learners and interlocutors (or partners), and innovative educational strategies should be first tested through teachers' critical reflections, questions and doubts about the new proposal. Thus, if the cooperative learning strategy called Complex Instruction is in its second year of classroom experimentation, and if teachers continue to meet regularly, on their own free time, in order to construct

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

new didactic units, it must be because Complex Instruction not only works for the children but also for teachers who, along the in-service course specific contents, have learned many things about what I define as culture(s) of the school (namely, values, beliefs, behaviours, rules, expectations, schedules and manners of interactions, language and jargons, etc., that are either taken for granted or penalized when they do not fit the cultural patterns) and about themselves. And while pupils learned to work together in a new way, the Bologna teachers in turn learned what they liked about this kind of group work and what was in their own past educational experience that almost certainly made them decide to invest their own free time in constructing didactic units.

If I may quote once more my more recent work, there I pointed out that there is a need to accompany educational innovation with a comparative perspective in order to problematise it and to avoid transforming it “into an instructional package or recipe, to be delivered ‘just in time’”. In other words, it [the comparative perspective] was meant to raise, and possibly answer, the question if, and to what extent, the migration of educational ideas and strategies from one social, cultural and political context to another one should not first of all take into serious consideration how such ideas and strategies are understood and creatively interpreted when they reach a new environment. In times of globalisation, there will be many similarities between any two, or more, different social and educational contexts and this will in turn provide the rationale for borrowing and/or disseminating new concepts, approaches and goals in the field of education, in the belief that because there are common problems, there can also be common solutions. Such diffused, modernist belief seems to ignore that changing times and conditions require instead that we make new ideas and programs encounter and interact with the social, historical and intellectual fabrics that they are supposed to innovate. I like to think that in this way acknowledgement of, and respect for diversity that intercultural education promotes and sustains is given an important additional meaning since, in the case of educational innovation, the disseminators are from the beginning in a relation not only with institutional contexts and teaching traditions but first of all with persons whose complex professional identity and personal history represent a challenging opportunity to have them as partners in an intercultural dialogue” (Gobbo, 2007b, in press).

In fact, when I interviewed the Bologna teachers shortly after the classroom experimentation, their long, thoughtful answers about “the reasons for their personal and professional choices and investments (including that of attending this course) make clear that they see themselves as agents rather than mere consumers of the latest innovative educational proposal, and as active, thoughtful mediators between their own cultural, educational, political beliefs and ideas, that are historically contextualised, and the changing public and private realities generating new beliefs, habits and expectations” (Gobbo, 2007b, in press).

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Bibliographical References

1. Batelaan, P. ed (1998), *Towards an equitable classroom. Cooperative Learning in Intercultural Education in Europe*, Hilversum: International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE).
2. Batelaan, P., Van Hoof C. (1996), Cooperative learning in intercultural education, in *European Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 7 (3).
3. Cohen, E. G. (1994), *Designing Groupwork. Strategies for the Heterogeneous Classroom*, New York: Teachers College Press.
4. Cohen E. G. (2003), Equità, scuola e *Istruzione Complessa*: i principi di base, in Gobbo, F. (a cura di), *Multiculturalismo e intercultura*, Padova: IMPRIMITUR Editrice.
5. Cohen, E. G., Lotan R. eds (1997), *Working for Equity in Heterogeneous Classrooms. Sociological Theory in Practice*, New York: Teachers College Press.
6. Gobbo, F. (2000), *Pedagogia interculturale. Il progetto educativo nelle società complesse*, Roma: Carocci.
7. Gobbo, F. (2003), C'è una giostra nel futuro? Esperienza scolastica e processo di inculturazione in una minoranza occupazionale nomade, in Gobbo, F. (a cura di), *Etnografia dell'educazione in Europa. Soggetti, contesti, questioni metodologiche*, Milano: Edizioni Unicopli.
8. Gobbo, F. (2006), Along the Margins, Across the Borders: Teaching and Learning among Vento attrazionisti viaggianti, in Antelitz, Coombes P., Danaher P. eds., *Marginalised pedagogues? International Studies of the Work and Identities of Contemporary Educators Teaching 'Minority' Learners*, special issue of *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22 (7).
9. Gobbo, F. (2007a), Between the road and the town: the education of travelling attractionists. An ethnographic research, in Pink W. T., Noblit G. W. eds., *International Handbook of Urban Education*, Dordrecht: Springer (in press).
10. Gobbo, F. (2007b), Teaching Teachers Cooperative Learning: an Intercultural Challenge, in G. Bhatti, C. Gaine, F. Gobbo, Y. Leeman eds., *Social Justice and Intercultural Education: an Open Ended Dialogue*, Trentham Books, Stoke on Trent (in press).
11. Gobbo, F., Traversi, M., Augelli, A. (2005), Cooperative Learning nelle classi multiculturali, in *Educazione interculturale*, 3 (1).
12. Lotan, R. A. (2003), Group-worthy tasks, in *Educational Leadership*, 6 (6).
13. Lotan, R. A. (2006a), Managing groupwork. In Evertson, C. and C. Weinstein (eds.) *Handbook of Classroom Management: Research, Practice, and Contemporary Issues*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
14. Lotan, R. A. (2006b), Teaching teachers to build equitable classrooms, in *Theory into Practice*, 45 (1).