



Philosophical Enquiry Advancing Cosmopolitan Engagement

## Newsletter, n.3

### TEST, EVALUATION AND VALIDATION OF THE NEW 'PEACE' CURRICULUM

May 2015



The main result of the PEACE project has been the creation of a new curriculum, designed to improve children's thinking abilities and cosmopolitan attitudes. This curriculum, composed of 6 stories and one handbook, was tested in schools and different educational contexts in Italy, Spain and Austria by teachers and educators who participated in the PEACE training course organized in the three Partner countries.

71 teachers and educators (24 in Italy, 26 in Spain and 21 in Austria) were involved in the testing phase and supported from the technical, administrative and educational point of view by the staff of the Project. In the 2/3 months long testing cycles, pupils of primary and middle school (age: 8-14) took part in a series of P4C sessions using the new materials

(stories as well as exercises and discussion plans).

The cooperation of the trained teachers and educators was fundamental to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and identify the changes to be made in the materials. The teachers/educators were requested to fill in the evaluation questionnaires, to give interviews to the external observers; to be observed by them during their sessions with children; and, finally, to administer specific evaluation tools to children.

The entire process of evaluation was monitored by the PEACE tutors, who were constantly in contact with the teachers and educators and organized several additional meetings focused on their needs and questions. The teachers/educators involved had also the possibility of interacting with each other (and with their colleagues from the other Partner Countries through a group expressly created on Facebook).

Once the feedbacks, comments and inputs from the teachers/educators involved in the testing phase were collected, they were analyzed at the national and international level in order to fine-tune the curriculum according to the results of the testing phase. A second cycle of testing and evaluation of the new curriculum was necessary to validate its fine-tuned version.



## TESTING A NEW P4C CURRICULUM



Whenever we create a new curriculum we have to test and validate it. We can distinguish two situations:

- A) a totally new curriculum
- B) a new curriculum based on already existing and consolidated approach

In the case A) we have to identify:

- 1) The educational goals we want to achieve;
- 2) The objectives, that is the competences and knowledge we want to improve;
- 3) the criteria to observe and assess the improvement of these competences;
- 4) the assessment tools to be administered to a target group (there will be also a control group).

In the case B), if we want to produce a new curriculum within the framework of an existing approach, things are slightly different. Indeed we have to identify 1) the educational goals, 2) the competences to be improved, 3) to fix the criteria to observe and assess this improvement, 4) to construct the assessment tools, but also 5) to assess whether and to what extent the new materials fall within the consolidated approach.

**In the case of the PEACE project,** which has aimed at promoting and cultivating competences in the field of cosmopolitanism through the Lipmanian model of the community of philosophical inquiry (CPI), we had to create new materials that, while being 'Lipmanian' in the goal of cultivating abilities of complex thinking and in mobilizing the CPI approach, have a more specific aim, namely the promotion of cosmopolitan cognitive and affective competences and the raising of the cosmopolitanism awareness.



Accordingly, when we tested the PEACE materials, we had to consider both the aspects related to the specific goal and the coherence with the educational P4C approach.

In order to construct the test and validation tools in the PEACE project, we needed to establish the competences in cosmopolitan thinking we wanted to promote. So we listed the reference competences, defined them very precisely, by specifying the characteristics that may be observable, and fixed detailed criteria to assess them.





## An evaluation from within the practice.

At the same time we needed to assess the convergence of the new materials on Lipmanian approach these materials were. To this end, not only did we devise questionnaires and grids to be filled in by external evaluators (expert in P4C), who read the materials and attended the sessions where the materials were used, but we constructed also grids and questionnaires to be filled in by the teachers and educators who acted as facilitators.

Indeed, as Antonio Cosentino has highlighted, “P4C is a practice which should be primarily evaluated from within the practice,” and, accordingly, when a new curriculum in the P4C tradition has to be evaluated, it is fundamental to have an assessment from the practitioners through specific evaluation tools.



In this perspective, questions like the following were asked: do the stories of the new curriculum present a process of philosophical inquiry? Are they useful to model a process of philosophical inquiry? Are they suitable for the children to whom they are directed? Are the manuals composed of exercises and discussion plans written in a Lipmanian style? Do these materials promote the creation of a community of philosophical inquiry in the classroom? Does the facilitator find an inspiration from these materials for her role as a facilitator? Etc.



The new curriculum was tested in the different Partner countries. As a consequence, it had to be translated into all the Partner country languages and adapted to different contexts. However, these changes, needed to meet the differences of the potential users, did not impact on the general structure as well the contents of the stories and manuals. In other words, despite the differences between the various versions of the curriculum, its European added value consists in being an educational devise effective for different country/cultural contexts and exploitable everywhere.



## THE FINAL PEACE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 3 and 4, 2015, NAPLES (ITALY)

The International Conference *Reflecting oneself in the world: Cosmopolitanism for Inclusion*, will take place in the Department of Humanities of the University of Naples Federico II, via Porta di Massa 1, Naples, on September 3 and 4, 2015.

The Conference aims at presenting the final results of the PEACE project and at fostering the dialogue on what cosmopolitan culture and education can look like in order to promote social inclusion.

The key-speakers will be Prof. David Hansen (Teachers College, Columbia University), one of the most important contemporary philosophers of education and Prof. Gerard Delanty (University of Sussex), one of the most influential European sociologists. The Conference will involve scholars from different parts of the world, among whom leading Italian educationalists, expert in intercultural education, such as Prof. Francesca Gobbo (University of Turin), Prof. Agostino Portera (University of Verona) and Davide Zoletto (University of Udine).



The PEACE Final Conference will interweave three main theoretic issues:

- The notion of *critical cosmopolitanism* and *cosmopolitan culture* put forward by the British sociologist Gerard Delanty;
- The notion of *educational cosmopolitanism* elaborated by the US philosopher of the education David Hansen;
- The notion of *education for complex thinking through philosophical inquiry* developed by Matthew Lipman.

The conference will be structured in three sessions with scheduled talks, two sessions with the papers selected through a call for paper, which will be disseminated through the most important international scientific societies in the field of education, and one poster session.

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The call for paper of the PEACE Final Conference is available on

### CONSORTIUM

- University of Naples Federico II – Department of Humanities (<http://www.unina.it>) Naples (Italy)
- CFpN – Association Center of Philosophy for Children (<http://www.filosofiaparaninos.org>) Madrid (Spain)
- ACPC – Austrian Center of Philosophy with Children (<http://www.kinderphilosophie.at>) Graz (Austria)
- Topaz – Philosophy for Life (<http://www.topaz.org.il/Eng>) Jerusalem (Israel)
- Garua - Cooperativa de Iniciativa Social (<http://www.garuacoop.es>) Madrid (Spain)

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