



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 is the new curriculum in the field of P4C addressed to improve the 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. The teachers and educators who participated in the PEACE training course organized in the three Partner countries, collaborated to test the new curriculum in the schools or educational contexts in which they usually worked.

71 teachers and educators (24 in Italy, 26 in Spain and 21 in Austria) were supported with technical, administrative and educational support in organizing the testing phase in the contexts where a majority of children coming from migrant

and disadvantaged families live. In the two, three month long, testing cycles, students of primary and middle school age took part in a series of P4C sessions using the new curriculum. Exercises and discussion plans proposed by the curriculum helped facilitators to prepare for the sessions.

Moreover, the Consortium organized the evaluation process which accompanied and supported the testing phase in all the European Partner countries. The cooperation of the trained teachers and educators was fundamental to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum: they 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 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 and educators had also the possibility of interacting with other participants from their Partner Country and from other the Partner Countries through a group expressly created on Facebook.



## GUIDELINES TO TEST A NEW P4C CURRICULUM



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

- A) curriculum totally new
- B) 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; and
- 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 aimed at promoting and cultivating competences in the field of cosmopolitanism through the Lipmanian model of Philosophy of Enquiry, first, we had to create new materials which would work perfectly in promoting competences in cosmopolitan thinking by deploying in an effective way the device of Philosophy of Enquiry; second, we had to create materials which would be absolutely Lipmanian and foster the cultivation of abilities of complex thinking but with specific outcome in raising the cosmopolitanism awareness.



Accordingly, when we tested the PEACE materials we had to consider both the aspects related to the specific goals and competences 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 specifying the characteristics they have and that may be observable, and fixed detailed criteria to assess them. .



## **All this evaluation was done through specific grids used by external observers.**

At the same time we needed to assess how connected to the Lipmanian approach these materials were. To do that, on one hand, we imagined questionnaires and grids to be filled in by external evaluators who read the materials and attended the sessions where the materials were used. On the other hand, we imagined grids and questionnaires to be filled in by the teachers and educators who acted as facilitators.

Indeed, as Antonio Cosentino highlighted in an wonderful essay, “P4C is a practice which should be primary evaluated from within the practice”. In other words, for a new curriculum in the P4C tradition, it is fundamental to assess also the degree in which this curriculum is consistent with the main tenets of Lipman.

To be more specific, we had to ask questions such as: do the stories of the new curriculum present a process of Philosophy of Enquiry? Are they useful to model a process of Philosophy of Enquiry? 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 Enquiry in the classroom? Does the facilitator find an expiration from these materials for his role as a facilitator? Etc.

Along with these questions there was the other side related to the specific goals in terms of promotion of competences in cosmopolitan thinking. And so we had to ask also questions such as: Is this curriculum effective in expanding solidarity, tolerance, openness to the others, openness to the new etc. in the children target group?



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 different real a potential users, did not effect 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

### 3RD AND 4TH SEPTEMBER 2015, NAPLES

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 3rd and 4th September 2015.

The Conference aims at presenting the final results of the PEACE project - *Philosophical Enquiry Advancing Cosmopolitan Engagement* - co-financed by the European Commission and coordinated by Prof. Maura Striano.

The International perspective of the conference is guaranteed not only by the double objective to enlarge the basis of the theoretic discussion and to build bridges and scientific links between Italian and foreign universities and research centers, but also by the fact that it will be held in English, with speakers coming from different countries.

Among the others, Prof. David Hansen, one of the most important philosophers of education from USA, Prof. Gerald Delanty, one of the most influential European sociologists, and other researchers relevant in the contemporary debate in philosophy and education in Italy and Europe will participate in the conference.

The PEACE Final Conference will focus on three main theoretic issues:

- The notion of *critical cosmopolitism* and *cosmopolitan culture* promoted by the British sociologist Delanty;
- The notion of *educational cosmopolitism* elaborated by the US philosopher of the education Hansen;
- The notion of *education to complex thinking through philosophical enquiry* developed by Matthew Lipman and based on the Philosophy for Children approach.

The program of the conference is organized in three sessions with scheduled talks and three 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 sectors close to education in social sciences.



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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)

Philosophical Enquiry Advancing Cosmopolitan Engagement  
Project number: 527659-LLP-1-2012-1-IT-COMENIUS-CMP

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the view only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.