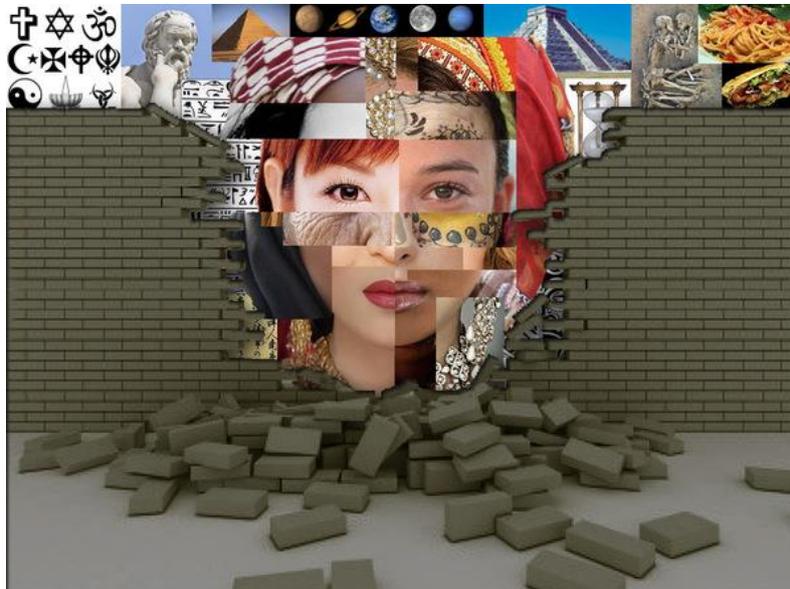




I-VET - Project n. 2011-1-CH1-LEO0500052



Intercultural thoughts

Inventory of representations and meanings emerging from Edmodo posts

First “I-VET” Summer School

Mendrisio, OSC – SCOS Building, 26th – 29th August 2013



Intercultural thoughts

Inventory of representations and meanings emerging from Edmodo posts



The aim of this paper is to provide all participants at the Summer School with a structured feed-back on their assignments, freely build by the Author, using posts, hints, links, pictures, ideas and reflections brought in by them during the preliminary session in Edmodo. I put “titles” in **Bold** and Capital letters, I used elsewhere in normal characters your posts as they are; apart from titles, only statements in *Italics* are personal hints and questions through which I provide a “moderation”, structuring in some way our collective reflection, aiming at opening new perspectives. Posts are reproduced as you can find it in Edmodo: sometimes in English, sometimes in Italian, in a number of cases translated in both the languages by the authors. Language – we know – will be able an additional intercultural challenge of our common work! If you don’t understand them, why don’t you try to “google” translate the ideas of your colleagues: it could be funny, but sometimes also useful! In any case our attempt is also to let you know one each other a bit before starting to work together, through your profiles, reflections and thoughts.

What you’ll see, is a puzzle of intercultural thoughts and representations. But the pieces of the puzzle are structured in such a way that you can find traces of a possible organic discourse. You capture a rationale, you can see a picture emerging on the background.

Take care it’s a collective picture, but at the same time a completely subjective one!

It contains to a hard degree **my** interpretations, ideas, hints! You should take it as one and only one of the possible ways of collectively reflecting on intercultural dynamics, encounters, challenges and opportunities.

It also open the road to one of the key methods we will exploit during the Summer School: collecting reactions, ideas, remarks, trying to elaborate them in a cooperative way: moving from pieces of experience, try to build up a more aware picture of our ever changing world. A picture letting us question our behaviors and beliefs, better understand us and the others, look at a shared horizon and build up common solutions to dilemmas and uncertainties emerging in a globalized and intercultural world.

Interculturalità: il nostro futuro

(Interculturality: our future)

AT THE VERY BEGINNING EACH OF US MET A CULTURE (HERITAGE, IMPRINTING)...

To me, culture is a set of strategies designed to handle life

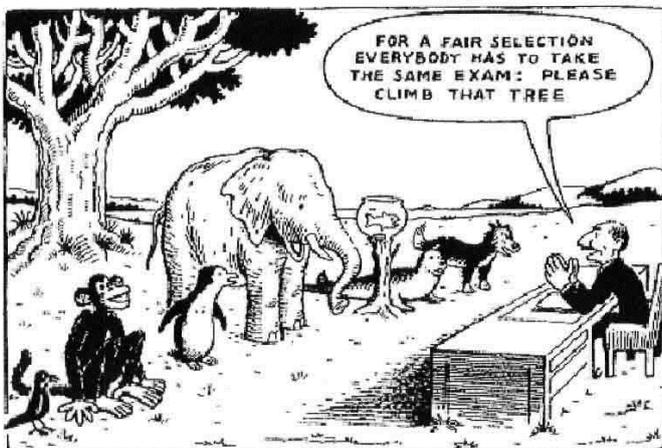
THEN WE REALIZE THAT IMPRINTINGS (AND BELONGINGS) ARE ABSOLUTELY MORE COMPLEX TO BE DEFINED IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

Sempre più persone nel mondo vivono in paesi che non sono il proprio. Lo scrittore Pico Iyer, che anche lui ha tre o quattro "origini", riflette sul significato di casa, della gioia di viaggiare e della serenità dello stare fermi... Pico Iyer's travel writing chronicles fascinating (and often jarring) examples of cultural mashups. Now he shows how travel can rescue us from our technological distractions. – video posted by Paola Serra – English, with Italian subtitles

(http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/it/pico_ayer_where_is_home.html?source=email#.UhMp3MVbeLL.email)

... THAT CULTURES ARE DIVERSE AND ALL LEGITIME

Whereas multiculturalism contents itself with the acknowledgment of cultural diversity per se, interculturalism aims at a more active approach: Promoting dialogue and interaction between cultures and thus a deeper understanding/appreciation of differing perceptions to deal with life



... THAT AS TEACHERS OR TRAINERS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE ALWAYS IN ACCOUNT DIVERSITIES IN ORDER TO DESIGN PATHWAYS REACHING REAL EQUITY

BUT, SHOULD WE GO A STEP FURTHER?

What we will try to do all together in Mendrisio, is putting these shifting from mutual understanding towards interaction in practice, experiencing the encounters with the others... What we are trying to manage is the hidden - and sometimes neglected - face of interculturality: that means let's try to find together traces and signals of intercultural dynamics under the surface of our daily lives, not looking only for major intercultural clashes.

ENCOUNTERS → INTERACTION → CHALLENGES → OPPORTUNITIES?

Given that the people I follow are often migrants, interculturality represents a daily challenge for me... for me as a teacher and as a person interculturalism is a challenge...

Before being a desirable and stimulating opportunity, encounters with the others, revealing diversity and unexpected frameworks, making our mental schemes fragile and inadequate to read and understand the reality, is a challenge. Accepting challenges is a key for opening the door to intercultural exchange: Working in a multicultural environment is enriching, but it is also a daily challenge.

We have to cope with several forces hampering the recognition of potential opportunities deriving from the encounter with the others:

INVISIBLE WALLS, MENTAL FRAMES, THINGS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED - Interculturalità significa abbattere le barriere mentali che ancora ci separano dagli altri

Intercultural approach means for me to pull down the wall that divides my ability to understand what is outside myself to the rest of the world.

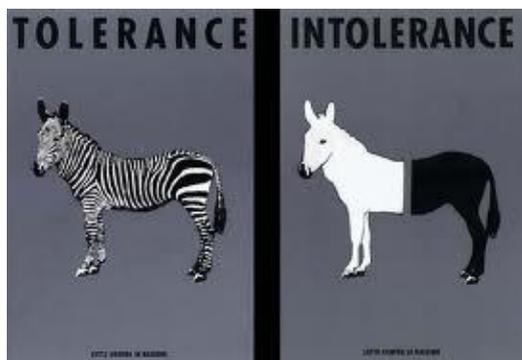
COMPETITION, ACCESS TO SCARCE RESOURCES - But interaction between cultures seems more and more problematic in our region because of the limited employment opportunities

CARRYING THE WEIGHT OF COMMUNICATION - Interculturality has much to do with communication. And that is the challenge, creating a constructive intercultural exchange

The term inter-culture is supposed to be the study of forms, tools, opportunities to develop a dialogue between different cultures. It is meant to be the constructive and creative confrontation, which offers the possibility to compare ideas, values and different cultures by observing meeting places, which endorse diversity and differences within the dialectical complexity of necessary interactions to achieve mutual acknowledgement, where the preset “inter” indicates the intercultural reciprocity, the proximity of the diverse on a fertile soil of discussion...

DIFFICULTY TO WEAR THE “CLOTHES” (PERSPECTIVES) OF THE OTHERS - Interculturality: (Re)thinking the human experience from other perspectives!

To really appreciate intercultural dynamics it takes a lot of time, and an opened-mind attitude and a lot of knowledge, so that's quite a big deal in our contemporary society..



DIVERSITY OF CODES AND MEANS –

What does we mean with Tolerance, for instance? How meanings and codes can affect our way to deal with diversity and mutual understanding?

Interculturality is tolerance... or “La tolleranza dovrebbe in verità essere solo un sentimento transitorio: essa deve portare al rispetto. Tollerare significa offendere”. (Johann Wolfgang Goethe posted by Maspoli)

WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO: ACCEPT NEW CODES AND MEANS... Perhaps I should spend more time by learning the daily use of a social network, this is my first intercultural challenge now.

... **COMPARING, BEFORE JUDGING...** It will be very interesting to meet the particular intercultural challenges in Ticino and compare them to our own experiences (...) So seeing how they are dealt with in Ticino, how we experience their being dealt with and getting into an exchange on this might bring new, constructive ideas.

La nostra società ormai è multiculturale. Questo rappresenta una enorme ricchezza per tutti

DOES IT REALLY FITS TO REALITY OR IT IS ONLY A NICE STATEMENT? IN ANY CASE, OPEN THE DOOR TO INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IS ALWAYS SOMETHING PERSONAL. IT'S UP TO US, AS INDIVIDUALS...

... finding the personal way of dealing with interculturality, (*digging under the surface*)

I appreciate every day the benefits of interculturality: cultural enrichment, different educational backgrounds, creativity, diversity of knowledge and competences

... it means a not boring word. Differences that can make **me** a better person...

... **AND IT IMPLIES FIRST OF ALL A HARD WORK ON OURSELVES, AND ACCEPTANCE OF DIVERSITY AS A (POTENTIAL) RICHNESS (BUT TAKE CARE: EXPOSED VALUES ARE OFTEN CONTRADICTED BY PRACTICED ONES!)**

...per poter davvero ascoltare, e quindi conoscere, l'altro, bisogna prima essere in grado di volgere uno sguardo verso noi stessi, poiché solo così sarà possibile creare un luogo dove poter accogliere, ascoltare e conoscere chi è ancora sconosciuto

Intercultural dynamics often allow us to understand our real values and to make clear a lot of our behaviors and other things that are unconsciously done most of the time

BUILD UP INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY NEEDS PROXIMITY, LEADING TO EMPATHY –

Interculturalità va oltre alla semplice presenza di persone di nazionalità diverse. **E' lo stare insieme condividendo pensieri, idee, desideri, sofferenze e gioie...**

Rita Pierson, a teacher for 40 years, once heard a colleague say, "They don't pay me to like the kids." Her response: "Kids don't learn from people they don't like." A rousing call to educators to believe in their students and actually connect with them on a real, human, personal level (video posted by Tommasetti - English, with Italian subtitles http://www.ted.com/playlists/125/tv_special_ted_talks_educatio.html)

... **RESPECT** - E' il rispetto dell'altro.

... and an **OPEN MIND**: apertura è cultura, apertura e cultura

SHOULD WE IGNORE STEREOTYPES, OR BETTER BE AWARE OF THE LENSES WE ALWAYS USE TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THE REALITY?

For me is take time to stop and observe without being distracted from prejudices, listening, understanding and sharing different point of view, lifes experiences. To have a compare of values. Diving in a world full of colours and add new shades.

A GOOD WAY SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO JOKE WITH STEREOTYPES, DISMANTLING THE RISK OF MAKING THEM PREJUDICES.. Interculturality is trying to understand how italian is talking so fast, how hungarian eating tooo much like me :)), how finnish people like hugging, how belgium people product beers, how german people drink beer tooo much :)))...

interculturality is love, peace and understanding

Does it really true? Could we consider interculturality as something idealistic, a common and politically correct goal... or should be consider it as a negotiation process, the hard work to agree on a "shared goal", the daily effort to build up new patterns of a common citizenship (in a participative and deliberative perspective)?

Interculturalità è un discorso aperto tra particolarismo e universalismo. Tra le mie idee, bisogni, sogni e le idee, i sogni, i bisogni dell'altro. È un rimettere in discussione sé stessi e la propria rappresentazione del mondo alla ricerca di un'inclusività sociale non utopica ma fattuale. Qui ed ora. È mettere al centro l'individuo con le rappresentazioni del mondo che lo accompagnano, è sospensione dal giudizio, ricerca di un terreno comune in cui coltivare le idee che servono al mondo di domani, alle nuove generazioni, per vivere in pace nel rispetto delle diversità ma anche dei diritti dell'uomo e della donna.

Should we ignore or deny diversity, to be interculturally competent? Interculturality is having different pieces in the same puzzle... Can survive in any situation and under any circumstances, ignoring differences... ***Do we have to ignore the differences, or better cope in a constructive way with them, in order to find out acceptable solutions (probably mutually changing our cultural patterns and ideas...)?***

Shlould we better be able to negotiate sense and meanings during intercultural encounters, activating all our sense, motivations, emotions, attitudes?

Che cos'è per me l'interculturalità? Premetto che per tanti anni ho avuto una visione cartesiana della realtà, basata su una logica che potesse essere valida per tutti. Con il viaggiare e il conoscere nuove realtà nel mondo, ho capito che non è possibile avere una visione che possa essere applicata universalmente. Lo sforzo che invece bisogna fare è mettersi nei panni dell'altro: sia esso il nostro vicino di casa, un proprio amico oppure qualcuno che viene da lontano. Un esercizio per nulla evidente che si scontra, tutti i giorni in cui mi sveglio, con gli schemi mentali di cui sono composto. Più che un obiettivo, considero quindi l'interculturalità come un atteggiamento da coltivare ogni giorno e con chiunque.

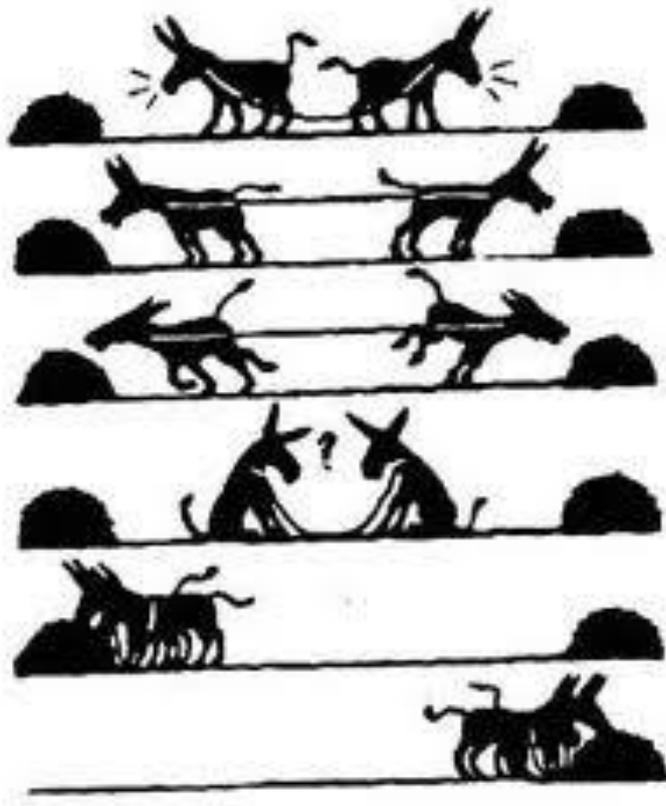
Interculturalism for me is: encounter, opportunity, communication, curiosity, awareness, sharing, mouvement, understanding

FINALLY, LET ME PUT FORWARD A PROVOCATIVE REGARD – we are dealing with a hard transformation, from ethno-centric points of view towards ethno-relative ones!

Could we say that we made the first fundamental step towards intercultural competence (behavior in action..) only when we are shifting from denial of diversity (CARTESIAN attitude) to acceptance, accommodation, hybridization...with a good open mind, and a fair ironic attitude?

I think that when we rely on the idea of intercultural exchange and respect for each other, we moderate the tendency to judge other cultures only through our own eyes. It is through the eyes of others that we realize our own vision of the world, and in my opinion this vision must be dynamic, not static.

A didactic based on proximity, respect and nurturing of opinions, exchange, cooperative exercises can play a fundamental role at this purpose.



According to new research by Stanford psychologists, people's attitudes toward another racial or ethnic group improve when they participate in the other group's cultural activities, such as (...) making a music video together. (...) The study, by Brannon and Greg Walton, looked at what role social connections, such as a shared interest, have in reducing bias and whether engaging in the cultural behaviors of another ethnic or racial group could play a role in reducing prejudice. "If you get to know someone from another group and you find you have something in common with them (...) you more easily like them or feel connected to them. (link posted by Burak Karabey - <http://scienceblog.com/65811/participation-in-a-cultural-activity-may-reduce-prejudice/>)

We will work in Mendrisio on 2 settings – workplace and training – in which per sé people are asked to pursue common goals, engaging together. Individual expectations and collective dimensions are therefore potentially linked, interlaced and interacting in such contexts: people should run in the same direction even to satisfy their individual needs. Of course it never happens automatically, sometimes it could be replaced by tensions, disease and unrest. Researching on field, you do have the opportunity of find possible methods, experiences and life stories showing to which extent a "pedagogy" based on interaction and the definition of communalities and common goals could enhance our capability of coping with diversities, risks and fears characterizing our societies.