

FOREIGN STUDENTS, INTEGRATION PROCESS, EDUCATION POLICIES IN ITALY

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Index

1. Foreign students in Italy. Features and secondary data
2. Integration process. Some research results
3. Education policies. Challenges for the italian schools



1.

FOREIGN STUDENTS IN ITALY. Differences and inequalities

Students with non Italian citizenship: a picture



- ⊙ Rapid and exponential increase of foreign students in the last decade (reduction of Italian pupils)
 - 786,630 foreign students
 - 8,8% of the total
- ⊙ Actual phase of stabilization and normalization of migratory flows in the educational system
- ⊙ Similar distribution of the presence of Italian and foreign students in the first and second cycle of education

A differentiated group



- 47,2% foreign students born in Italy
 - In pre-primary schools(3-5 years), 79,9% native born
 - In primary schools (6-10 years), 59,4% native born
 - In lower secondary schools (11-13 years), 68,2% foreign born
 - In upper secondary schools (14-18 years), 87,8% foreign born
- 196 different nationalities
 - Rumania, Albania, Morocco, China, Moldavia (52% of tot)

MIUR, Ismu Foundation, s.y. 2012/13

Learning process: an irregular path



- **High delay** = attending classes not corresponding to age

40% of foreign students

10% of Italian students

- **Lower scolarization tax** (14-18 years), in particular in secondary schools

63% of foreign students

94% of Italian students

- **Concentration in vocational/technical education** (sparse presence in general education)

77,1% of foreign students

52,6% of Italian students

- **Concentration in VET courses**

16,5% of foreign students

6,7% of the total

Educational achievements: critic points and inequalities

- **High retention**, in particular in secondary schools

21,6% of foreign students

10,8% of Italian students

- **Lower learning levels** in Italian and Mathematics
- **Better performances** of second generation students
- **Relevant gap** between first generation and Italian students **in reading** (Source: PISA OECD; INVALSI)

- **High percentage of Early School Leavers (Istat, 2012)**

44% of foreign students

16,5% of Italian students

- Foreign students are 20% of the total of ESL

Concentration in schools



% of foreign students	2002/03	2012/13
Not present	43,0	20,7
Less than 30%	56,9	74,6
More than 30%	0,0	4,7
Total	100	100

- ❑ Increasing concentration of foreign students in specific schools, classes, etc.
 - ❑ In Northern and Central Italy
 - ❑ Lombardia: 191.526 foreign students, 10% of schools with more than 30%
 - ❑ In compulsory education

- ❑ 415 schools with a foreign majority

- ❑ Can it be an educational and social risk?



2.

INTEGRATION PROCESS.

Between theory and reality

Definition of educational integration. Is diversity a problem or a resource?

1. ASSIMILATION

- ⦿ *Diversity as a problem to manage and overcome*

2. TOLERANCE BUT SEPARATION

- ⦿ *Diversity is accepted,
without contacts between groups*



3. INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE AND DIALOGUE

- ⦿ *Diversity as resource for education and
professionalization; integration as a project to build*

Multidimensional approach

Individual variables	Relational/contextual variables	Institutional variables
Migratory experience	Peer relationships	Ethnic school composition (% foreign students)
Familiar experience	Relationships with teachers	Educational achievements (path regularity and learning levels)
Schooling experience	Relationships with other adults in the educational context	“School effect” (specific interventions for foreign students and intercultural education for all students)
Belonging	School-family relationships	

Compulsory education. Research results

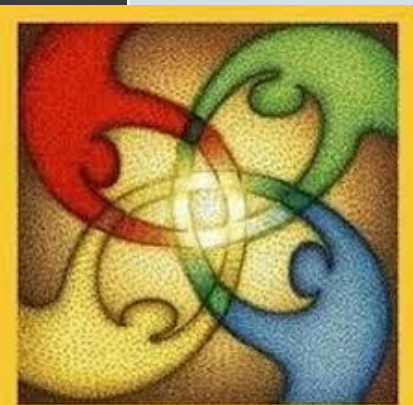


LEARNING PROCESS

- Key factors: age of arrival and lasting of the stay in Italy
- Poor support in homework from the family
- Few resources, but good will and agency
- Strong investment in education, at a personal and familiar level, in order to reach a better social position

INTERETHNIC RELATIONSHIPS

- Relevance of age of arrival
- Isolation, poor social relations, conflicts (newcomers and first generation)
- Integration mainly in school
- Lack of interest in relational aspects
- Influence of the school climate on wellbeing and educational achievement



Secondary schools. Research results



LEARNING PROCESS

- Difficulty in the access for newcomers
- Discontinuous paths, risk of school failure and leaving
- Guidance problems in the school choice (general or vocational)
- Concentration in vocational education influenced by personal, familiar, contextual factors
- Stubbornness when facing failures
- Low profile foreign students (poor performances and low expectations), but also foreign students with high performances, willing to succeed and with the idea to attend university

INTERETHNIC RELATIONSHIPS

- More openness among foreign students (minority), less among Italian ones (majority)
- Gender more relevant than citizenship
- Preference for extra school friendships, without citizenship distinction
- Positive foreign students-teachers relationship
- Latent racism
- “Normal” intolerance
- Hostility linked to uncertainty for future and work perspective



A research on schools with a high percentage of foreign students in Lombardy



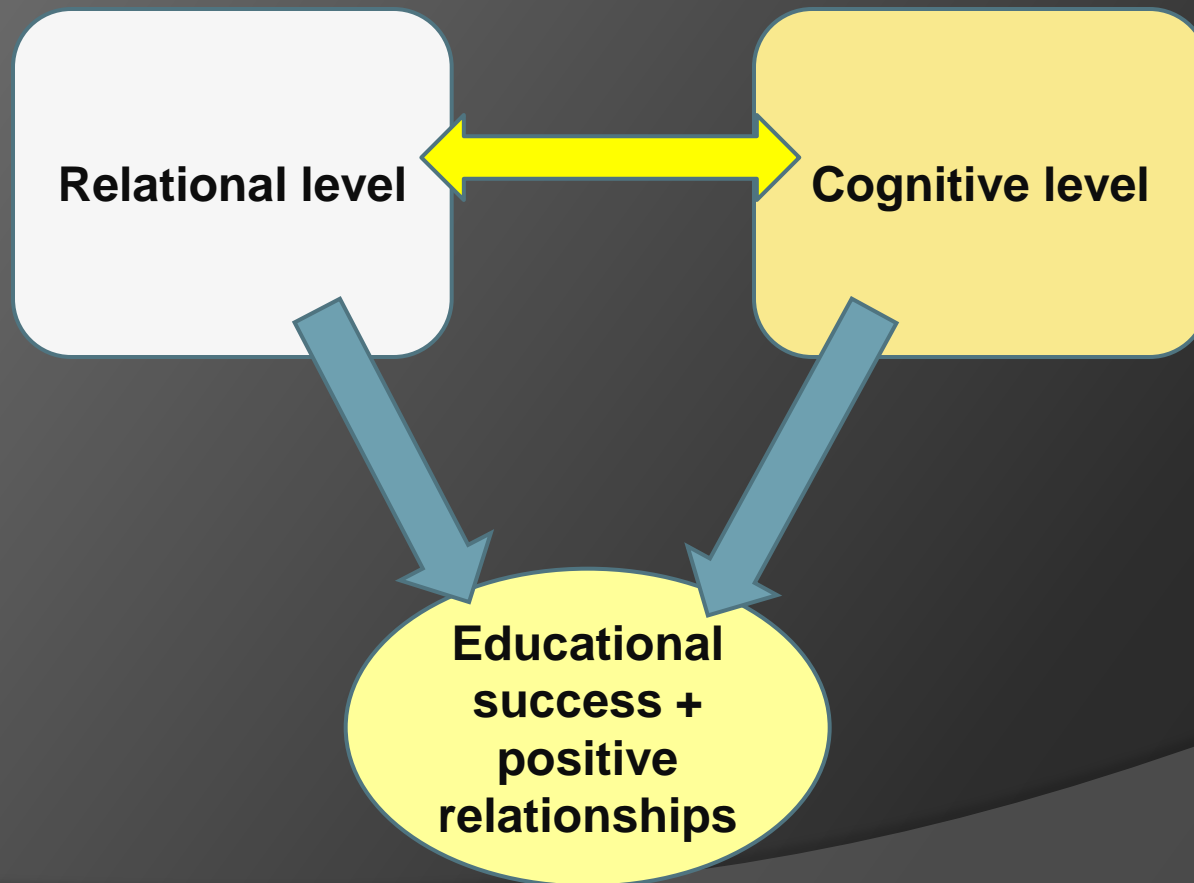
- M. Colombo, M. Santagati, *In plural schools. Integration measures for foreign pupils*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2014.
- Quali-quantitative research (2010-12) in secondary schools (ORIM / ISMU)
 - 35 individual interviews / 3 focus groups
 - 1.040 questionnaires in lower secondary schools with more than 30% of foreign students per class

Hyphothesis and questions

- Is a good school climate linked to an higher integration?
- **Does an high percentage of foreign students in class lead to learning and relational difficulties?**
- What are the factors that affect the quality of interethnic relationships?
- What does learning and growing in a multicultural school mean?
- **Is cultural diversity a resource or a problem for the development of a good school climate?**
- Is the relational integration happening?

MAIN HYPHOTHESIS

The relational and cognitive levels are fundamental for the educational integration process. They are strictly related to educational success, satisfaction, wellbeing and positive relationships



Integration Index



● Synthetic measure

RELATIONAL ASPECTS

- Classmates relationship Index
- Student-teacher relationship Index
- Conflict between peers Index (fight, abuse, racism seen or experienced)

COGNITIVE ASPECTS

- Educational success Index
- Linguistic competence Index

Factors related to the Integration Index



- ⦿ Gender (females)
- ⦿ Citizenship (italian students, foreign students)
- ⦿ High status and cultural capital
- ⦿ High satisfaction of parents through school experience
- ⦿ Studying motivated by personal interest and passion for knowledge
- ⦿ Existence of measures for reception or integration of foreign students
- ⦿ Ethnic composition doesn't seem to affect the integration level in school

Integration factors. A synthesis

	Educational success	Interethnic relationships	Integration = Educational success + Good interethnic relationships
Individual factors	Italian students Females Studying as obligation Project capacity	Females Foreign students	Females Italian students Studying for passion
Familiar factors	Status Cultural capital	-	Only child Status / cult. cap. Family investment
Relational and institutional factors	Educational wellbeing Good relationships with teachers	Educational wellbeing Peer relationships Positive idea of migration	Wellbeing School measure for integration



3.

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN ITALY. CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Italian model for the educational integration



- ⦿ Inclusive and universal system
 - Right to education for each child, even for illegal immigrants
 - “Common school”, foreign students attend ordinary classes
- ⦿ Intercultural model (‘90)
 - Equal dignity to each diversity, promotion of dialogue, openness to differences, sharing of common values
- ⦿ Difficulties in law application
 - Divergence between juridical frame, school practices, availability of human and financial resources
 - CM 2/2010: Definition of formal criteria for a balanced distribution of foreign students (limit of 30%), without specifying concrete instruments and resources

Challenges (individual level)



- ⦿ Take care of peer relationships among males, more exposed to conflict
- ⦿ Recognize and de-construct identities that live together in school
- ⦿ Support students in long-term projects, helping in transitions
- ⦿ Motivation to study, developing interest for knowledge

Challenges (familiar level)



- ⦿ Promote ethnic, social, economic heterogeneity in schools and classes
- ⦿ Prevent and contrast implicit and explicit form of selection in the class creation
 - Teacher turnover
 - Equal distribution of educational activities
- ⦿ Support the learning process in particular in classes with relational problems

Challenges (contextual level)



- ⦿ Identify and recognize racism, before starting educational activities (intervention on languages, attitudes, behaviours)
- ⦿ Transform class organization, fostering mixed groups and cooperative learning
- ⦿ Promote activities in order to develop the sense of belonging to school/class
- ⦿ Give skills to foreign students, training to leadership
- ⦿ Support teachers to reflect on their knowledge, communication and relational style with students and parents, etc.
- ⦿ Foster networks to increase integration

Conclusions



- ⦿ Educational success is always related to a positive school climate
- ⦿ An high percentage of foreign students doesn't undermine high integration levels
- ⦿ All the students with a low status have to reach minimum standards of learning, without considering nationality
- ⦿ Integration is a process that develops in schools and between schools, through a interinstitutional cooperation



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