



REciprocal maieutic Approach pathways enhancing Critical Thinking



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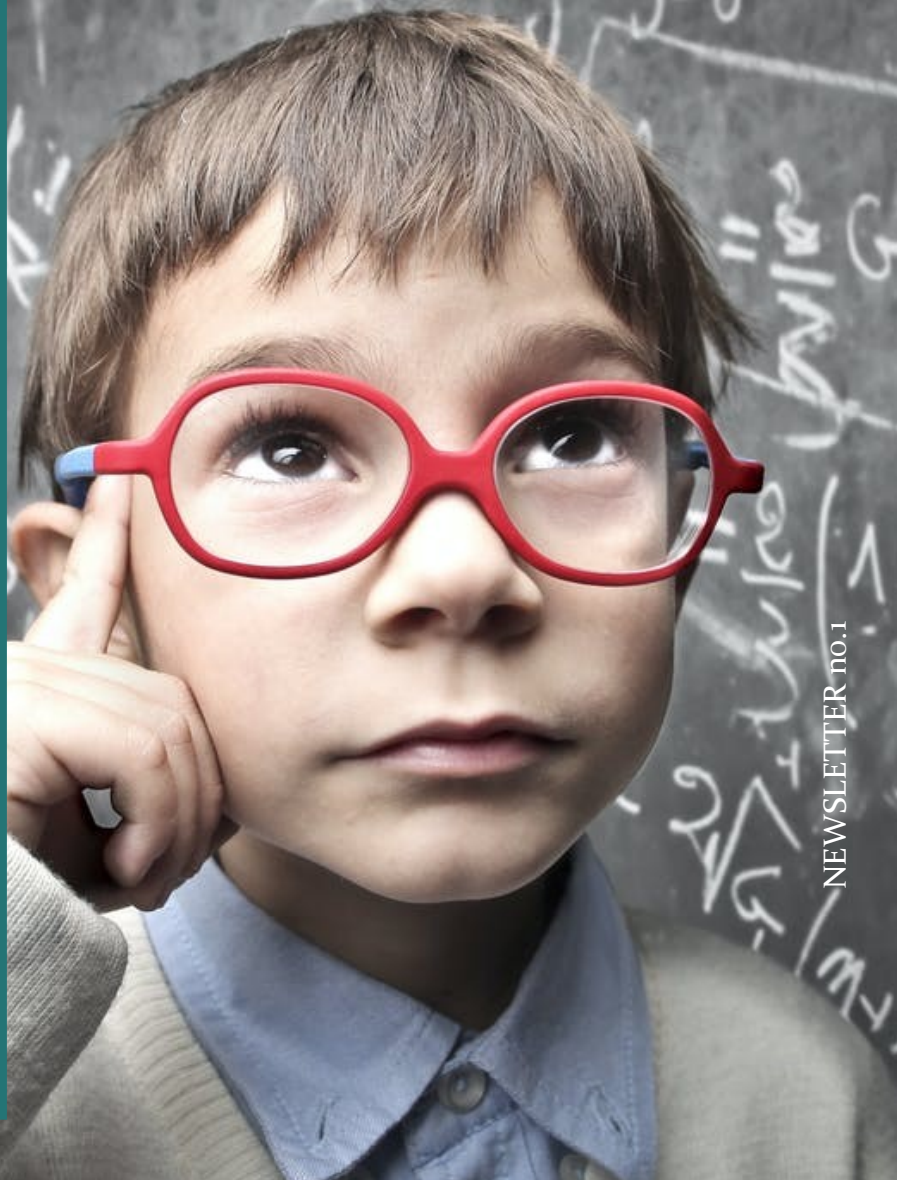
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Project
Objectives &
Challenges

Reciprocal Maieutic Approach
Montessori's experience
Enhancement of Critical thinking skills acquisition



Critical thinking is a particular a mental habit and to support the creation of the related skills requires students to think about their thinking and about improving the process, it requires students to use higher-order thinking skills – not memorize data or accept what they read or are told without critically thinking about it.



About the project REACT

REACT project intends to develop and implement an innovative methodology for the enhancement of **critical thinking** (CT) skills acquisition, aimed at fostering inclusive education and the common values of tolerance and acceptance of diversity as an enriching value. The new methodology will involve all the key actors of the educating communities: **teachers, students** and **their parents**.

The approach starts from the application of a set of laboratories based on the **Reciprocal Maieutic Approach** (RMA) for discovering and discussing the process that leads to the creation of intolerance and spreading of stereotypes. The RMA will be enriched with some peculiar aspects of the **Montessori's experience**: the application of the observation principle and the re-tought of the learning space.

Project Partnership

What to expect from the Project



CENTRO STUDI VILLA MONTESCA

F O N D A Z I O N E

1.

FONDAZIONE HALLGARTEN FRANCHETTI CENTRO STUDI VILLA MONTESCA (ITALY)

Fondazione Hallgarten Franchetti Centro Studi Villa Montescas has been founded in 2001, one hundred years after the first publication in Città di Castello of the Method of Scientific Pedagogy edited by Maria Montessori and its experimentation in the rural schools of the Upper Tiber Valley. A number of educational institutions, together with the local authority of Città di Castello, formed an educational and professional training institution to continue, in the spirit of the Franchetti institutions, the research and experimentation of new teaching methods. Today, the Centro Studi is an innovative workshop for pilot projects for primary and secondary school students, young and adult people with special, personal, social and educational needs. The objectives of Villa Montescas are the promotion of new and inclusive pedagogical and didactic approaches, the creation of a democratic and safe space of education, the building of a European and international relationship and network as well as the enhancement of cooperation on education and culture and the valorization of diversity in those areas.

Main coordinator and partners in dozens of EU projects, Villa Montescas as leader of REACT project expects to build, together with solid and reliable partners, an innovative methodology for the enhancement of critical thinking skills acquisition, aimed at fostering inclusive education and the common values of tolerance and acceptance of diversity as an enriching value for students, teachers and the whole Educating Community. The methodology lays on the combination of the experience and the features of Maria Montessori's Method of Scientific Pedagogy with specific characteristics of Danilo Dolci's Reciprocal Maieutic Approach, thus incorporating Danilo's attention to social change and empowerment of actors of the community with peculiar aspects of Montessori's method traditionally applied to infant education. REACT fits with the strategic objectives of Villa Montescas in terms of innovation in pedagogy and active involvement of the whole Educating Community in the educative process.

2.



CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

Center for Educational Initiatives is dedicated to the mission of making quality education accessible from anywhere, enhancing the authority of the Teacher and turning the School into a cornerstone in building trust between teachers, students and parents. In CEI we believe that through trainings how to use the new ICT tools and e-platforms, based on the constructivist pedagogical model, in learning process management, we contribute to the qualitative change and modernization of the educational environment. The high technologies we use allow us to dream that in the next few years the Teacher will respect the students and the society with his skills to use modern educational approaches, to use without difficulty and anxiety the new technologies in the classroom and to know the latest achievements of the pedagogical science.

Born before the Web Age, the teacher in the early 21st century dramatically experienced his fall into the web. Information technology has forced him to rethink the pedagogical model in which he is prepared and knowledgeable; to accept that the privilege of asking questions is no longer just his; to prepare that it should rather build skills rather than present information. It is reached quickly and easily by "technologically literate" students and they need knowledge of how to analyse, evaluate and use it. And the person they rely on is their teacher. The new generation is increasingly in need of motivation and less and less of the elementary filling of the information deficit. From the informant, the teacher should be ready to become an Illuminator and moderator. He must fight for the heart of the disciple for the head. It is not that tabula rasa of the pre-information era that he, like an empty warehouse, as a docker, fills up. The warehouse is full and needs to be arranged.

The REACT project will arm the teachers with a new educational method and approach to discuss with students a new currents hotspot as these ones of an intercultural coexistence and a more inclusive and respectful society.

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CENTRO PER LO SVILUPPO CREATIVO DANILO DOLCI

Centre for Creative Development Danilo Dolci is based on the experience of social and educational work carried out by Danilo Dolci and his collaborators, which started in Eastern Sicily back in 1952.

At present, CSC Danilo Dolci is a non-profit association involving young people and adults, which mainly acts through projects in the educational field carried out in cooperation with schools, universities, institutions, associations and social groups both at local and international level.

The Centre stemmed from the need of offering the local communities a reality committed to practically solve the local problems, developing a creative space in which fostering awareness and bottom-up planning were the center of the action, paving the way for a real change. Since the beginning, the main focus of the Center were non-violent education practices as well as the development of a methodology – the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach – able to ease creative development at school and in the local territory.

RMA is a pedagogical methodology of research self-analysis, participation and co-creation which represents a great resource to discuss contents, to learn new competencies and to reflect on specific issues. It can be defined as a “process of collective exploration that takes, as a departure point, the experience and the intuition of individuals” (Dolci, 1996) and it can be used specially to develop creativity, communication skills, relationship skills, cooperation skills and active participation skills.

As expert and continuing the legacy of Danilo Dolci and it’s Reciprocal Maieutic Approach, CSC will build, together with partners, an innovative methodology for the enhancement of critical thinking skills acquisition, aimed at fostering inclusive education and the common values of tolerance and acceptance of diversity. The methodology lays on the combination of the experience and the features of Maria Montessori’s Method of Scientific Pedagogy with specific characteristics of Danilo Dolci’s Reciprocal Maieutic Approach.

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FUNDACIÓN UNIVERSIDAD SAN JORGE

Founded in 2005, San Jorge University (Zaragoza, Spain) is a non-profit foundation that currently has about 3.000 students. Despite its youth, it has not stopped growing by increasing its academic offer, ranging from the Social Sciences (Journalism, Advertising and Public Relations, Translation and Intercultural Communication) to the Health Sciences (Nursing, Pharmacy, Psychology) or Technology (Architecture and Computer Engineering), among other undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

Its objectives include the training of well-prepared professionals for the 21st century labour market, accustomed to problem solving and teamwork, with good management of technological tools; all this without neglecting education in terms of human values. The team is young and dedicated to innovative teaching and personalized attention to students. In the field of interculturality, USJ welcomes a large number of foreign students each year, representing overall a very significant percentage of its students.

The research group on "Migrations, Interculturality and Human Development" is the one involved in the project. The group is absorbed in the study of issues such as integration, multiculturalism and interculturality and is obtaining remarkable results in terms of publications, financing, and participation in national and European projects.

Regarding the REACT project, it's worth mentioning that about 15% of the population in Spain is of foreign origin, especially present in the educational stage. Within two decades, Spain has become from being a country that emits emigrants to one that receives immigrants, just like other southern European countries. This reversal in the flows of people, who come with their respective cultural and religious baggage, represents a social challenge that must be urgently addressed, starting from education. Therefore, the REACT project is of special interest, as it will provide tools to the education professionals, who must respond to situations for which they have not received necessary training, as well as to exchange points of view on the matter, allowing the promotion of new approaches that facilitate intercultural coexistence and a more inclusive and respectful society.



REGIONAL DIRECTORATE OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Corfu-based Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education (RDE) of the Ionian Islands is one of the 13 RDEs throughout Greece with the authority to locally develop and implement the education policies launched by the Ministry of Education. It focuses both on administrative and educational activities that help the region improve the training and education provided on the 7 main islands and other islets of the Ionian Sea, carrying out several educational and cultural activities, seminars, workshops and lectures. In co-operation with the Ionian University, it has implemented an EU-funded programme concerning the opportunity given to students to revive historical events through virtual reality, and has co-ordinated 3 schools from different countries in an Erasmus KA2 programme concerning Ioannis Kapodistrias, the Governor of the First Modern Greek State, 1827-1831.

Both the tremendous changes in teaching tools and methods in the new digital era, and the developments in the geopolitical map in Southern Europe due to immigration and increased population movement in the wider area of the Mediterranean involving 3 continents, have changed the face of educational reality beyond recognition. Since the early 1990s, Greek schools have had to cope with multi-cultural students in an abrupt way, unprepared and often baffled with so many different languages, cultures and social behavior among schoolchildren of such diverse backgrounds.

Through its participation in the REACT Programme, the RDE of the Ionian Islands aims to co-operate with its partners and work with them on an innovative pedagogical methodology based on the principles of inclusion, active participation, social acceptance and collective spirit, in order to abolish stereotypes and avoid marginalization of minority groups. The RDE will be happy to see how the ancient Maieutic Method, first conceived and applied by Socrates 2.500 years ago (with dialogue and discussion being used to extract the truth from his interlocutors, just like a midwife ["maia"] takes the baby out of a woman's body), can be developed and updated in modern schools and societies, to extract willingness from students, mutual tolerance and acceptance, in order to enhance critical thinking and promote the values of peaceful co-existence, harmonious collaboration and creative interaction, through the constructivist approach that is mainly based on the students' previous life experience and their collective exploration of the world around them.



AGRAF gUG

AGRAF gUG (haftungsbeschränkt) is a spin-off of Saarland University. The non-profit organisation started work in 2011 with a project in the context of the EU-Commission's Grundtvig program. Before, we participated in projects mainly at Saarland University, from the Grundtvig, Comenius, Sokrates, Erasmus, and Interreg programs of the EU commission, and in projects funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Science, the Joint Federal and Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion, the German-French Youth Council, SR broadcasting station, and the German Research Foundation.

The focus of our work always lies in media, which are examined with regard to their specific use. A fundamentally important field of application, both good and problematic, is the education sector. Thus, it is inevitable that questions regarding a meaningful and adequate use of media in the context of learning processes, but also regarding personality development, are at the centre of our work, our projects and publications. Above all, it is important to understand how questioning and research-based learning, as well as ethical and personality-building effects can be realised in our media-dominated world. It is clear that traditional teaching methods are reaching their limits, if they were ever as successful as believed at the times.

Conversely, it is not always clear how questioning, researching, ethical and personality-building learning can and should be implemented through media. Thus, even constructivist learning methods can reach their limits in view of the filter bubbles that social media create. In any case, these are important and relevant questions that the project addresses and that A GRAF wants to accompany with its expertise.



RMA

Group communication strategy that enables all the elements in the group to give their ideas and opinions, contributing through this to the development of a final common idea

Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA) today represents a powerful tool to promote active citizenship and dialogic learning and it is meant to be a dialectic method of inquiry and "popular self-analysis" for empowerment of communities and individuals and it can be defined as a "process of collective exploration that takes, as a departure point, the experience and the intuition of individuals".

Montessori

Approach to learning and conception of learning environment spaces

RMA encounters and includes in the practice the ideas of Maria Montessori, related to the exploration as a best way to support the children development, physical and cognitive. For Maria Montessori, as the floor is the "first book of the child" and he/she uses his/her tactile approach to learn about the surrounding world, the mind is a path of daily exploration of the reality.

CT

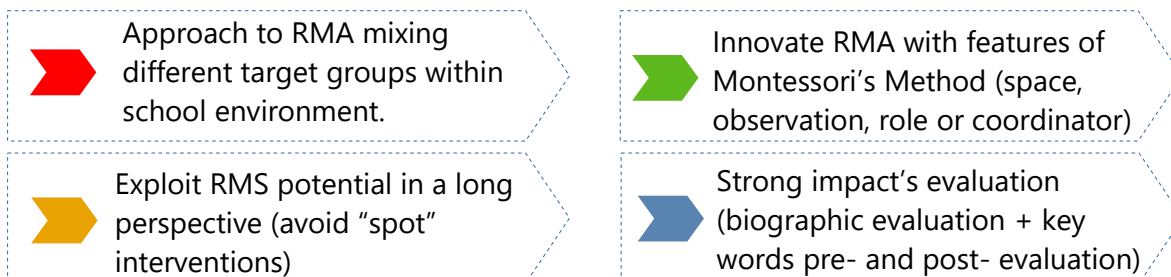
Dismissal of stereotypes as results of the cognitive process for students, teachers and parents

Critical thinking is a particular a mental habit and to support the creation of the related skills requires students to think about their thinking and about improving the process, it requires students to use higher-order thinking skills – not memorize data or accept what they read or are told without critically thinking about it.

Therefore, critical thinking is a product of education, training, and practice. Innovative pedagogies should be used, even because the assessment of students in such analytical skills and critical thinking, in the adoption of certain common values and attitudes (such a sense of tolerance) and the active participation and engagement of students in school and community life is a complex task.



Innovation Levels



◆ Student level

The acquisition of critical thinking skills in such a kind of heterogeneous and observation-focused learning environment will be quicker, more solid and complete

◆ Teachers level

The participation to the RM laboratories will innovate the way teachers participate to the schools activities and the way they can contribute to the creation of a more inclusive learning environment that enhance the acquisition of critical thinking skills and interpersonal competencies for all the participants.

◆ Parents level

REACT project will innovate the traditional idea of parent involvement in the school life, overcoming the concept of school planning co-creation and passive participation of parents to initiatives that are not developed using a protective methodology – and thus proven to be not effective

◆ Community level

To put a trigger element constituted by the application of a dialogic learning tool aimed at tighten and strengthen the relationship among members, share common goals, exploring mutual inner needs and expectations in order to exploit the full potential of community environment.

◆ Policy Level

- Introduction of a pathways at any educational level
- Definition of a set of indicators and recommendations
- Multistakeholder collaboration
- Building of a real public awareness, promoting large-scale system change thanks to the strategic role of the community

Thank you!

