
AVIOR CASE STUDY REPORT

– ITALY

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Introduction

In order to select the teachers and class involved in AVIOR study case, we contacted two of the schools we usually collaborate with, by introducing them the project. We had first a contact with the directors, in order to give an official status to the experimentation, by asking them to select the teacher potentially interested in such a project. After that, we organized a first meeting with the teachers in order to present them AVIOR's background and goals and have a first look at the materials. We had a very positive reception, since we managed to involve 6 classes, i.e. 12 teachers and 10 in activities addressed to whole class groups. In general, the teachers seemed almost 'waiting for' such a project and were eager to start testing the materials.

During the first meeting we explained the teachers how to carry out a study case, but, on a methodological point of view, we left them free to experiment the materials with their pupils and parents, fixing a feedback meeting a month later in order to gather a first impression. In order not to limit their possibility to express freely about the material and influence their perspective, we used focus group to discuss with them and we took notes of their observations, critical points and suggestions.

Case study process

A. I.C. REGIO PARCO: DE AMICIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

A.1. Background

De Amicis primary school has already been involved in the project during AVIOR Study Visit in Turin and is located in the neighbourhood of Porta Palazzo. This area of the city is characterized by a strong multi-ethnicity, with people mainly coming from Africa (34%) and Europe (33%), followed by Asia (17%) and America (8%). In a place that reaches 98.3% of linguistic diversity, the main nationalities are Moroccan, Egyptian, Chinese, Bengali, Nigerian and Romanian.

From a social point of view, Porta Palazzo presents families with economic, housing and linguistic difficulties, who find it hard to actively support their children in their school career. Nevertheless, they all have a strong desire for making them succeed in their life, also with the help of the network of associations that work on the community level.

Classes involved	Teachers Involved	Parents involved	Pupils involved
4 2 classes: 1 st grade (5-7 years old) 1 class: 3 rd grade (8-9 years old) 1 class: 5 th grade (10-11 years old)	8 (2 per class)	5	78 19+19 20 20
Materials	<i>A different chick</i> <i>Bingo</i> <i>Chocolate cake from Hawaii</i>		
Meetings	16 th October 2018: presentation of AVIOR project and materials 6 th November 2018 : first feedback meeting December 2018 and February 2019: later feedback		

A.2. Materials

After seeing the materials, 1st grade teachers selected two materials to be tested:

the story *A different chick*, because, according to them, it best suited the skills of their students. We asked them why they preferred this story over *Chocolate cake from Hawaii* and they answered us that the latter was too long to be proposed in their classes and they were interested also in making the pupils solve the final problem of the story (*helping Kochi in finding friends*). The teachers decided to read the story in Italian, English, Arabic and Chinese (with the help of Nigerian, Moroccan and Chinese mothers) by dramatizing it. They

then ask the pupils to find a solution to the final question that was also translated always with the help of the parents.

the *Bingo*, in Italian-English. We asked again the teachers the reasons for this choice, and they said to us that they wanted to test a material also in the counting area, but the maths book proposed in AVIOR set was too far from their very specific method (Bortolato analogical method, seen during the *study visit*).

On the other hand, the teachers of higher grades decided to test *Chocolate cake from Hawaii* in both classes. They involved two parents (a Chinese and Egyptian mother) and invited them to read the story to the classroom. After the reading, the teachers asked the students to brainstorm about what they have understood of the story in different language and collect their feedback on post-its. Both the linguistic aspect (*what did you understand from the story? Are there any similar/different sounds in you language?*) and the emotional aspect (*how did you feel when listening to a language you don't understand?*) were assessed and collected on a banner.

In both cases, the materials have been tested in regular classes

B. I.C. PERTINI: DUCA DEGLI ABRUZZI PRIMARY SCHOOL

B.1. Background

Duca degli Abruzzi primary school is located in Nizza-Millefonti neighbourhood, one of the less populated areas of the city. It presents a varied social reality, with a mixture of old (people from Southern Italy) and new immigration (people mainly from Eastern Europe and Africa), showing increasing social-economic difficulties. Foreign people represents 13% of the total population, of which 18.6% is underage.

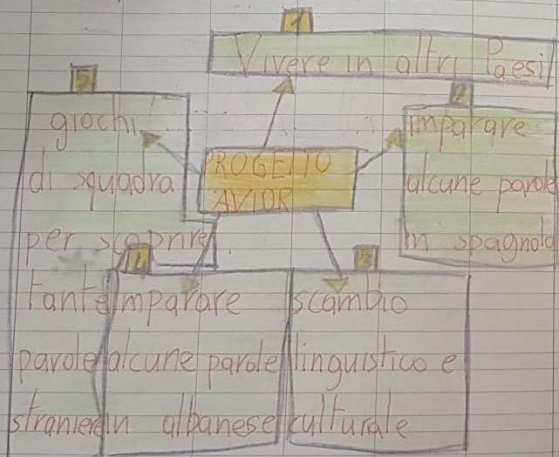
Classes involved	Teachers Involved	Parents involved	Pupils involved
2 2 classes: 2 nd grade (7-8 years old)	4 (2 per class)	5	44 22+22
Materials	<i>Chocolate cake from Hawaii</i> <i>Word lists</i>		
Meetings	4 th October: presentation of AVIOR project and materials 7 th November: first feedback meeting December 2018- April 2019: later feedback		

B.2. Materials

In one of the classes, the teachers decided to test the story *Chocolate Cake from Hawaii*. The activity was proposed inside the “week of the reading out loud” organized each year by the school. The teachers asked 3 mothers of different nationalities (Romanian, Albanese and Arabic) to come to the school and read to the pupils the story in three different days. The story was also read in English by the teacher. Since there wasn’t a Romanian translation available, the Romanian mother offered to translate it in her language. The stories have been sent home to the parents so that they could prepare their reading.

In the other class, the teachers, after seeing the materials, decided to take inspiration from them (Holland’s lesson plans and word lists) and create an activity on their own. By taking inspiration from the word-list, they formulated a list (numbers, greetings, school objects, how to introduce someone...) and asked parents to translate them via a *Google Doc*. The two mothers involved (Peruvian and Albanese) were then invited at school and, after speaking about their migratory experience (why they decided to leave their country and how they felt when they arrived in Italy) in their language and in Italian, they asked the children what they understood of it. After that, the words were read, repeated and then mixed, asking the pupils (divided into groups) to put them in the right order. After that, they created a map to sum up what they have learnt.

Mercoledì 7 novembre 2018
Mappa concettuale: progetto
"Avior"



Sviluppo la mappa

- 1] Questo progetto ci ha dimostrato come si sente a vivere in un paese sconosciuto
- 2] Adesso sappiamo dire in spagnolo, cioè, grazie, buon giorno eccetera.
- 3] Abbiamo capito come si vive in altri luoghi del mondo.
- 4] Sappiamo che in albanese ci sono alcune parole simili all'italiano e altre

Molto diverse (si = no).

- 5] Abbiamo svolto un gioco squadre. Dovremmo cercare le parole in spagnolo e albanese, ricordare il significato e incollare al posto giusto.

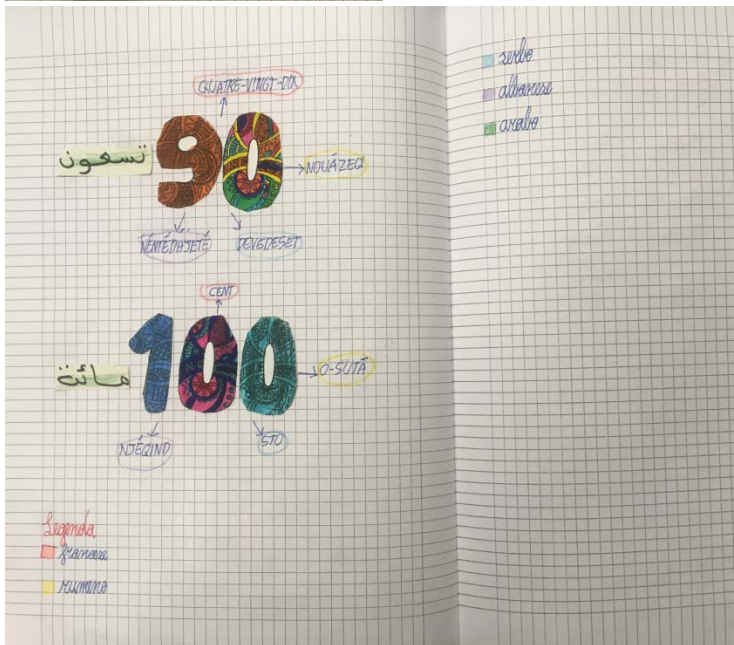
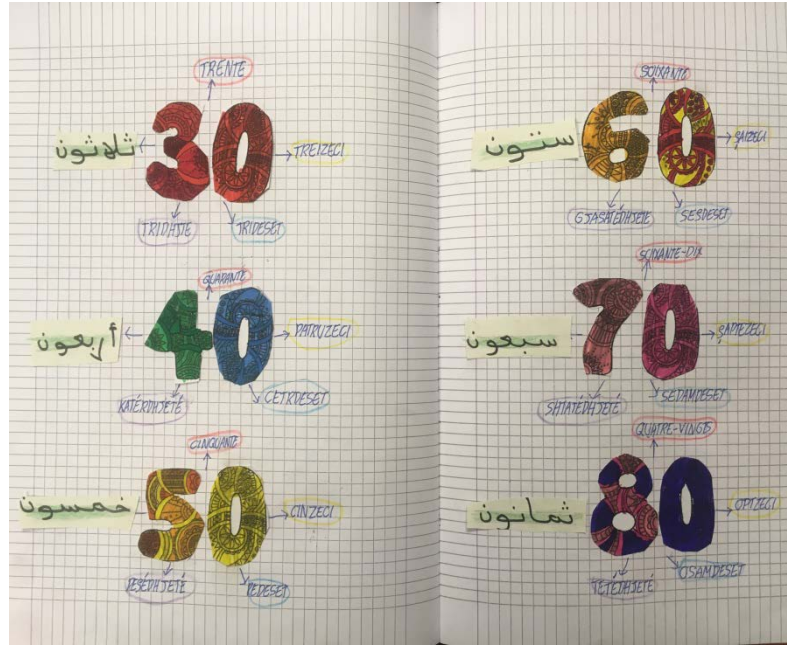
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Conceptual Map AVIOR project:

- 1. Living in other countries.** This project showed us how you feel in living in an unknown country.
- 2. Learning some word in Spanish.** Now we can say hello, thanks, good morning etc. in Spanish.
- 3. Cultural and linguistic exchange.** We've understood you it is to live in other places in the world.
- 4. Learning some words in Albanian.** We know that in Albanian there are words similar to Italian and others very different (e.g. si: po)
- 5. Working in team to discover many foreign words.** We've made a game in teams. We had to look for words in Spanish and Albanian, remember their meaning and glue them in the right place.

Feedback

Thanks to a later feedback, we discovered that the teachers found AVIOR methodology of using multilingualism as a way to involve parents in their children's school life very effectively. As a matter of fact, the 2nd grade maths teacher has recently showed us one of the results of her work on it (5 months after the study case): she asked the parents to write and tell to their children how the numbers from 10 to 100 were said and spelled in their home language. She then collected all the information and decided to create a maths project on it, connected with her curricular activity (they are studying the tens):



From 10 to 100 in our languages

Key

- red: French
- yellow: Rumanian
- blue: Serbian
- Violet: Albanian
- Green: Arabic

Teacher-parent relation

The teachers pointed out the fact that the experimentation was a very useful way to involve parents otherwise difficult to involve, by promoting, at the same time, an active role of parents in the education of their children. In some specific cases (e.g. in Duca degli Abruzzi school), the experimentation created a sort of ‘cascade effect’ among the parents: if at the beginning only a few wanted to participate, others, when hearing their children reporting home what they have done in class, asked to join. As a consequence, the teachers decide to replicate the activity throughout the schoolyear.

On the other side, the parents who participated were very happy to be involved in the school-life of their children and find it easier to collaborate with the teachers on a very

practical way: this may represent a good starting-point for building a stable teacher-parent relationship and communication in the future. However, as both teachers and parents pointed out, it was easier for parents who mastered the Italian language to be involved in the experimentation, because they could follow what was being said in class and/or could give a direct contribution. For instance, in the specific case of reading activities, they could follow what was being said in both languages and interact with the class in a real bilingual way (i.e. in Italian and in their home language). Like this, they could feel to have an actual role in the education of their children.

Obstacles

The main obstacle in carrying out the case study was in making the materials really available for the teachers and ready to be used. As a matter of fact, when we presented them, they were still in the 'original' form and thus differed a lot from one another. As a consequence, during the first meeting with the teachers, we carefully explained them that, if the materials could appear very different from one another, they were part of a whole and had the same aim. Then, once we got the 'design' version of the materials, the teachers asked us to prepare them some combination (Italian-another language) ready to be used in class, which was really time-consuming for our staff and slowed a little down the timing of the experimentation.

This problem is also linked to the fact that, as in any experimentation, the most of the work is left to the enthusiasm of the teachers and their willingness to test a new methodology. In many contexts, this task usually falls on a limited number of teachers, who may feel overwhelmed by the work required. In order to overcome that, we enacted two different strategies:

we involved the school director *before* talking to the teachers as an essential step in entering the schools and developing a fruitful exchange with them;

we left the teachers free to adapt the materials and take inspiration from them, without giving too many instructions. We just clarified them the goal of the experimentation (i.e. how multilingual materials could encourage parents' involvement) and asked them to periodically report to us.

Finally, on an operational point of view, the teachers pointed out some obstacles/observations in the use of the materials, which can be summarized as follows:

some of the reading materials (e.g. *Chocolate Cake from Hawaii*) are too long to be read/proposed in the lower classes and seem to be created for older students than AVIOR target group;

when proposing materials linked to a non-visual/reading teaching method, it is often difficult to have the necessary tools for the students to apply it (e.g. using the apps would imply to have enough tablets to work at least in small groups, which is not always possible, the same could be said for the *Listen and do exercises*, requiring the *Vocaroo* support)

the apps are to be used only with beginners, to encourage their linguistic skills;

some of the materials could also be made available to the pupils in order to use them as games, during the break, in an autonomous way.

Conclusions

The Study Case produced an unexpected result in the schools involved. As a matter of fact, the teachers seemed to be waiting for such an experience, since they were already in search for instruments to encourage the learning of their students, especially in multilingual and difficult classes. Thus, we just needed to give them inputs without insisting too much to produce results. If the schools usually see our organization as a supporting agent in their everyday work and they constantly ask us for help in managing difficult situations, in this case the teachers worked almost autonomously, by just reporting to us whatever they felt interesting in the experimentation.

However, despite such an enthusiastic reception, we noticed that some of the teachers find it hard to use the materials as a way of promoting multilingualism in their classrooms. For many of them, the issue of teaching Italian is crucial and the materials proposed are seen as useful instruments to teach that language via the foreign students' mother tongue. There is not enough culture of multilingualism as a resource: it is a cultural process that needs time to be understood, elaborated and applied in the Italian school system.

In this, the experience of AVIOR Study Case contributed to raising awareness in the field of multilingualism among the teachers, by producing a greater involvement in the project as a whole, while motivating them in taking a more active role in it. As a matter of fact, two teachers from Duca degli Abruzzi and two teachers from De Amicis also decided to participate to AVIOR Study Visits in Tallinn and Amsterdam, because they wanted to know more about the project and have a look to other interesting multilingual practices around Europe.