

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING WITH INQUIRY AND DISCOVERY IN MAGNA GRECIA AREA-THE EXPERIENCE OF ORGANIZING AN EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY: PERSONAL NARRATION

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this Cultural Educational Pathway was to emerge the need and the ways of introducing again in school teaching and learning the philosophical thinking, based on the way of life and works of the Ancient Greek Natural Philosophers. By visiting the places where they had founded their Schools, the participants of the Conference can realize important dimensions that they must take into consideration when the design the learning environments for the teaching courses and the methodological technics they choose in each circumstance. In line with the United Nations 2030 Sustainable development Goals, the Erasmus+ program contributes to a greener, equitable and fair society. Ensuring that Europe can continue to grow and improve in a viable way is crucial for our future. This is why Erasmus+ supports education, training and volunteering for a sustainable economy.

The open-air Educational Pathways promote Inquiry Based Learning among peers since they are experiential, team-centralized, and the knowledge is co-constructed by the participants. They are socially constructivist because the educational activities and actions are developed mostly in the society, with local communities. The toponyms functioned as live witnesses of the Greekness of the regions, as through the corruption of words we could trace some remaining elements referred to the meanings and the ancient Greek history.

Throughout the design and construction of the path, there was a strong need to build up a Google Map containing all the selected information of the places on the pins, emerging the history, the philosophy and the beauty of each inch of this map. With this way, our itinerary could be published to all people who may had the wish to trace these kilometers in Calabria and Apulia of South Italy.

INTRODUCTION

Culture, creativity and the arts contribute significantly to personal development, employment and growth across the EU, transferring innovation, and fostering cohesion, fostering intercultural relations, mutual understanding and preservation of European identity, culture and values. Strengthening the cultural and creative industries will provide scope for exploration and release their potential (EP, 2017). Learning mobility, ie transnational mobility with a view to acquiring new skills, is one of the key ways in which a person, especially young people, can enhance his future employability and personal development (COM, 2009). Educators, trainers, young workers and senior management can play an important role in encouraging and promoting mobility and in providing positive examples, recognizing the added value of learning mobility in their activities. Policy implementation in School Leadership is a creative process in which school leaders draw upon their professional knowledge to adapt policy to their schools' needs, and that networks help school leaders share best practice. Policy implementation involves communication, i.e. sharing best practice; ensuring policy is 'fit for purpose', and ensuring that all stakeholders are 'on board' with the policy message (Kikis-Papadakis, 2015).

The main goal of this Cultural Educational Pathway was to emerge the need and the ways of introducing again in school teaching and learning the philosophical thinking, based on the way of life and works of the Ancient Greek Natural Philosophers. By visiting the places where they had founded their Schools, the participants of the Conference can realize important dimensions that they must take into consideration when they design the learning environments for the teaching courses and the methodological technics they choose in each circumstance. They will be able to build up future collaborations and partnerships with

educational and cultural associations and organizations of the two neighboring countries, and, basing them on the past they will build up more concrete future for the young.

Since many studies found a positive relationship between in-service teacher education and student performance, it is indicative the implementation of in-service teacher education and training programs to improve students' performance (COM, 2007). In line with the United Nations 2030 Sustainable development Goals, the Erasmus+ program contributes to a greener, equitable and fair society. Ensuring that Europe can continue to grow and improve in a viable way, it is crucial for the common European future the Erasmus+ Programs to supports education, training and volunteering for a sustainable economy. The challenge for policy makers is to design and support innovative, transparent mechanisms to design attractive career development opportunities and establish replacement procedures that ensure a balance between school continuity and change. Policy actions should focus on ensuring school leaders' career paths become more mobile, allowing principals to move between schools as well as between leadership and teaching (EPNoSL, 2014).

METHODOLOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The narration...

This paper is a personal narration about the experience of organizing the educational/training pathway in Magna Grecia area an experiential teaching and learning intervention with inquiry and discovery in the fields of Science, Philosophy, History, Geography, mainly, in culture and the beauty of Mediterranean Nature. It based on the digital archival material that concentrated for the purpose of the Educational Open Conference of Greeks, Italian and Turkish, mainly the first two, who coexist in Calabria and Apulia from the ancient years. Sections, cohorts, and parallels were sought in a historical reflection in order to answer some questions and to knit the entire narrative around the memories of the two coordinators.

Why to prepare this Route in Magna Grecia?-The purpose and the targets

As Rosella wrote in an email to Maria, *"I am suggesting that the fascinating thing that I have been experimenting during my work for you to build this route is the beautiful interweaving that this land (Calabria) offers between an incredibly rich, powerful both culturally and economically past (Magna Grecia) ... a current economic decadence ... but the presence, today , of incredibly lively, refined, rich, intellectual groups so engaged in their link with the past of the Magna Grecia ... such as the Association of the lovers of ancient Greek language on the slopes of Aspromonte! They are so engaged in sustain this Greek identity (so far in the history) till now, instead improving this ancient identity!!! I am fascinated by this persons that I don't know, but I wish to meet...and I wish that you meet, too!"*

We are wondering what was that which attracted us to prepare this route? The developing relationships with people with Greek origin? In places of our ancestors colonies? In places where our ancestors found food, place to live, people to develop civilization? Rosella had the answers through her suggestions, proposals and ideas *"If you want to have a partner in the Lamezia Terme area, do not worry ... in that area I will be able to look for interlocutors, calmly, during the winter ... because I have points of reference (we are close to Serrastretta!) Instead, in Crotona (Magna Grecia and Pitagoras, and Maths issues...) and mainly in the area where Greek is spoken, I believe we must all together (mainly you and all Greeks your colleagues) to be present and have meetings! I believe that you should create a relationship among all you Greek speakers ... and I believe that in an Erasmus hypothesis, the theme of linguistic minorities is a very strong idea, theme, strongly sponsored by the UE!"*

As for the targets of the educational/training pathway, the first was to meet the remains of the ancient Greek civilization in Magna Grecia, as we mostly referred above. The

second target was the inquiry of the beauty of the Mediterranean Nature in South Italy, in mountains, plateaus and seashores, since we are looking for the beauty coming from harmony in any time of our lives. *'The principles of mathematical objects are the principles of all things'* and *'the elements of numbers are the elements of all things and the whole of heaven is a harmony and a number'* (Pythagoras). *"And Lamezia Terme, which is beautiful, between sea and mountain and full of great shopping centers! In the road of the Tirreno motorway between Reggio and Scilla, the colleagues at Bovesia have advised me of beautiful scenic sites, from which your Greek colleagues will enjoy the panorama of the Stretto and Sicily, Etna Volcano... From Tropea we can see Stromboli Volcano and the other Aeolian islands..."* (Rosella)

Both exhausted, late in the night, tired, we were renewing our appointment for tomorrow morning, early in the morning again in front our PCs *"Good night, my dear, I'll let you sleep now ... because it's late for you and tomorrow you have to work...My dear...we are both crazy...working like crazy woman in the night of Sunday !!!!! But this is the life taught we love!!!!"* (Rosella). And Maria answered, before go to bed, *"Just now I was thinking the same!!! What we have to leave behind us, while we are finishing our educational life and life generally? As a heritage for the next generations of teachers? To introduce again philosophy in the way of thinking of their students, of the world citizens. To learn by thinking, not learn by gaining and memorizing the ready knowledge, but to construct their own one by the use of 'If' and 'why', looking for answers to the queries of existence and the quality of life, with the conscience of coexistence with the other creatures of the planet, to have a sustainable vision for the future of our communities, of our countries. This gives us force to continue"*.

When the first program of the local collaborators arrived to Maria, the glad was great *"Impressive that all your effort became reality!!!! You and I have collaborators now in Calabria!!! We can continue our focusing on Philosophy!!! We 'll do our best in building future cultural and educational collaborations with partners who see the life philosophically!!!!!"* (Maria wrote to Rosella).

How to Prepare an Open Educational Conference-The Way to Work Jointly

The Conference was a Peer Learning Activity which is developing in the framework of the Educational-Training Project 'Mesogeios-Isalos Grammi-Mediterranean Sea-Waterline' (doc with protocol number 726/13-9-2015 of the School Advisors' Office in Chania, Crete, Greece) and more focused in the Project 'Teaching Science Notions with Ancient Greek Natural Philosophers' (doc with protocol number 1134/02-11-2015 of the School Advisors' Office in Chania, Crete, Greece) which were addressed to executives and teachers of School Education who are interesting in collaborating and sharing knowledge and experience in the field of Sustainable School Leadership. This time, additionally to previous aims and activities they studied the introducing philosophy in teaching and learning. The Conference was an Educational Pathway which intends to unwrap the "waterline"(Isalos Grammi) from Crete to the Mediterranean Sea, to the Europe, to the world, bearing in mind the words of Socrates "I am not an Athenian or a Greek citizen, but a citizen of the world", to expand the boundaries of the mind, the horizons of thought and the criticisms in most untrodden paths of investigation and discovery, promoting the values of Education for Sustainable Development. The journey is the goal and we are aiming to it (Breiting S. et al, 2005). [*Regarding the title of the Project, the term 'waterline' – ίσαλος γραμμή- is shipbuilding and technical term which is taken seriously into account in ship loading. Although it is called line, actually is defined as the level of the horizontal section of the surface of the sea with the ship to the point where it balances and floats when the ship is fully and properly loaded (Wikipedia)*].

When in July 2016 we started with Anna and Rosella to prepare an educational path for Magna Grecia, we did not think it would have so much work that would sometimes discourage us from continuing to design and choose to give it up. We started to discuss the idea of preparing an educational pathway in the places of Magna Grecia from the previous

Educational Conference in December 2016 at Chania, when staying in company in Vamos Parthenagogeio. But, the everyday communication and exchange of ideas through WhatsApp and emails started in July 2017. It was asked from some friends, of Greek Literature and Geologist teachers, to search what the Greek young people, the students, learn about the regions of Magna Grecia that we were planning to visit.

In the beginning, Maria as School Advisor for Science Teachers, wrote the framework of this Learning Pathway of inquiry and discovery in the traces and routs of Ancient Greek Natural Philosophers, pre-Socratic, from the point of view of training Science teachers in a disciplinary training Program abroad. The registration of any new information and add-on or change to the program was immediately on this principal document. When this document had sufficient information and was quite informative in describing the whole project, it was made public as the first announcement (Document with protocol number 298/14-9-2017, coming from the Office of School Advisors for Science Teachers of Chania Secondary Education). The desire to participate by Science teachers from Crete was very limited and eventually only one participated. However, this training proposal found immediate and particular response from School Advisors of Attica and Western Greece, eight of them finally participated.

Throughout the design and construction of the path, there was a strong need to build up a Google Map containing all the selected information of the places on the pins, emerging the history, the philosophy and the beauty of each inch of this map. With this way, our itinerary could be published to all people who may had the wish to trace these kilometers in Calabria and Apulia of South Italy. The Geologist Teacher Thodoris prepared it and put some of the collected information on the pins of the itinerary's map. A website contains the whole information that gathered and shared by the 14 participants of the Open Conference in Magna Grecia in October of 2017 (<https://magnagreciaopeneduconf.wordpress.com/>).

Obstacles to Overcome-Problems to be Solved

Where to visit, whom to meet, what was there in the past? Questions that we had to answer all around the pathway in this open and field Conference. *"I believe, my dear that it is much more interesting for you to meet this vibrant cultural reality rather than tire of infinitely visiting poor, dispersed archaeological areas ... not well preserved! Some will see it ... but only a few"* (Rosella). The greater difficulty was on realizing that the distances on the maps are not the same in the time demanding. With the people from the bus renting, the associations and Albano we were trying to clarify each day's itinerary, about the roads we were seeing on google map but Albano insisted that they are not so good and need more time with the mini bus than the car. We had to fight against the time and the earlier coming of dark in the autumn afternoons, during the last days before the change of summer time to the winter time *"Also consider that to reach Catanzaro in the late afternoon (much traffic!) From Crotona it will take about 2 hours...in the dark!"* (Rosella).

The most difficult thing in our communication were the misunderstandings about the itinerary. Things that I had changed in the Program Rosella had again to incorporate in her new arrangements and start, in sometimes, new communication and arrangements. This became worse one week before the Conference when no bus had been found. *"This, your plan for Friday, absolutely not realistic, because you will not be able to do what you have planned, unless you come to Bova late in the evening. The distances are great, the very bad roads we know them ... the minibus has to go at a much lower speed than a car. So, unfortunately, I must immediately cancel the meetings that, with great effort, the Greek Association has organized for you! What a pity..."* (Rosella).

In the preparations of the pathway contributed also John and Eva, after Rosella and I finished the more stabilized route, in 7 of October 2017. They started to check the possibilities and search for the ways in order to be in the right places in the right times with the pre-arranged meeting. The fixing of the times of appointments was a great problem as we had not

the sense of distances and traffic on the roads, we had to be on time in the meeting places and in the archeological parks and museums.

When the faced preparation difficulties increased, Rosella and Maria involved in the dilemma 'to prepare a trip or an educational pathway? *"I think it's better to dismiss the acclaim of the experts in Crotona and travel free of appointments"* as Rosella set the substitute query. It was a Conference and not an Excursion! The important in this Conference were the meetings with the locals and not the visiting of places. RAI TV Yesterday evening, in the National television, the persons of the Greek Association where the protagonist of a very important TV program (<http://www.rai.it/dl/RaiTV/programmi/media/ContentItem-dca6eba3-ad59-4b7c-8910-89932858a1e4-tg1.html>).

Searching the Beauty and Harmony of Life-into the remnants of Hellenism

Culture, creativity and the arts contribute significantly to personal development, employment and growth across the EU, transferring innovation, and fostering cohesion, fostering intercultural relations, mutual understanding and preservation of European identity. Strengthening the cultural and creative industries will provide opportunities for exploration and liberalize their potential (EP, 2017). The open-air Educational Pathways promote Inquiry Based Learning among peers since they are experiential, team-centralized, and the knowledge is co-constructed by the participants. They are socially constructivist because the educational activities and actions are developed mostly in the society, with local communities. From the historical references, we realized many connections to the Greek Mythology, to the Trojan War, the Eleusinian Mysteries and Odysseus travels. Through these remaining 'Greek' words we could follow the roots of history, of the knowledge, the wisdom, the social changes, mainly the social payments of the contemporary West World, the memories from the school knowledge, and cultural elements in the Greek tradition, common to our youth. By putting yourself into this pathway, you link the developed scientific knowledge and gathered experience with reference-orientation points in the trip of life. You connect, mix, re-share, like the cards of the deck, mythology, history, tradition, science, religion, family and local culture, ultimately your personality.

In Philosophical practices, critical thinking is faced as developing skill to test the robustness of any ideas, arguments or opinions and insists that the originator of the idea or ideas rethink their position when necessary according to the demands of reason. The method of 'ifing' is a kind of hypothetical thinking which asks us to imagine a situation that might not be the case in order to think about what it would mean for us. Hypothetical thinking also highlights that philosophy is as much about imaginative thinking as it is about logical thinking (Worley, 2011).

The most exciting part of the planning of this itinerary was the visit of the Archeological Park of Pythagoras, reading about his life and School, in order to visit the places where he developed his theories and way of life, as most prepared as possible we could meet the main target of this educational intervention. The general view was to deepen in the way of approaching the notions related to the origin and construction of the world by the ancient Greek Pre-Socratic Philosophers who lived in the East Mediterranean and how to introduce in schools their way of teaching and learning. We had the need to become, at least for one hour, teachers in their positions, with empathy to expand the limits and margins of our thoughts. 'Life is like a festival; just as some come to the festival to compete, some to ply their trade, but the best people come as spectators, so in life the slavish men go hunting for fame or gain, the philosophers for the truth' (Pythagoras).

EPILOGUE

When communication and participation are at the heart of policy response, creative social action appears to flourish (Kikis-Papadakis, 2015). Policies that promote participative

and democratic decision-making help schools and teachers become more effective in identifying and meeting the needs of all in the school community, into designing innovative didactic interventions to meet and achieve the aims of Curricula more comfortably.

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