

# ***A classroom with a view Net-based strategies to promote intercultural education***

*Juliana E. Raffaghelli,*

*Interuniversity Center of Educational Research and Advanced Training (CIRDFA),  
University Ca' Foscari of Venice – [j.raffaghelli@unive.it](mailto:j.raffaghelli@unive.it)*

*Cristina Richieri*

*Laboratory of Research on Didactics (RED),  
University Ca' Foscari of Venice – [richieri.c@libero.it](mailto:richieri.c@libero.it)*

## **Abstract**

Can the net become a place suitable for promoting intercultural education? Which elements are crucial to achieve this goal? There is strong agreement on the fact that the Internet represents a metaphor for a place or environment that has social significance in identity building processes (Turkle, 1996), as well as being a cultural environment promoting virtual citizenship and virtual communities (Rheingold, 1993) which, in time, can become formal learning communities capable of generating effective learning (Palloff & Pratt, 1999; Rovai, 2002b). Lately, some attention has been paid to the design of an interculturally sensitive virtual learning place, which can promote further intercultural learning (Rollin & Harrap, 2005; Bélisle, 2007; Rutheford & Kerr, 2008). The participated construction of a virtual working/learning space (VWLS) aimed at supporting a project of international cooperation on intercultural education among Turkey, Slovenia and Italy is described in this article. A case study is presented as a springboard for the discussion of net-based strategies to be included within an intercultural approach to education. The project was set up with the aim of showing how a VWLS can give support to dimensions that are the kernel of intercultural education, from the motivation to share one's own cultural identity (constituted by symbols, icons, music, etc.), to collaboration across frontiers. Furthermore, a possible new concept of intercultural education is presented, as the current idea of it needs to be redefined on the basis of the growing networked learning phenomenon. If VWLS becomes meaningful, it will expose participants to an enlarged cultural context, different to but also comprehensive of their own original context. The process of making sense of what is new could impact on a new dimension of intercultural learning which takes place on the net, a place where there are no frontiers and reality is virtual.

## **Keywords**

Case Study – Intercultural Education – Teacher Training – Virtual Learning Environment – Learning Metaphors

## **1. A Foreshadowed Problem**

Compared to other social contexts, multiculturalism has entered the classroom as a really complex phenomenon, challenging school systems (Gundara, 2000; Banks, 2001). The nature of the cultural “*software of mind*” (Hofstede&Hofstede, 2005), through which kids, parents and teachers read facts and practices, challenges the well founded beliefs of traditional education: academic success, intelligence, learning performance, didactics, teaching (Banks, op.cit). The discussion is not new at all: in most European countries with relatively high immigration (France, Germany, Belgium and The Netherlands) the topic has been faced since the 1950s, and since the mid 1980s the Council of Europe has promoted a number of dedicated educational projects. In these projects education is no longer conceived of as multicultural (referring to different cultures living in the same place without any mutual interaction), rather than as intercultural, with high emphasis on reciprocity and mutual modification (Leclerq, 2003). This is a strategy which aims to draw attention to democracy, pluralism, and

dialogue among different cultures. In Coulby's words, *If education is not intercultural, it is probably not education, but rather the inculcation of nationalist or religious fundamentalism* (Coulby, 2006:246). The point here seems to be about the relationship with otherness for mutual respect, together with what this interaction implies, that is *cultural change*.

We should now define the notion of culture. In anthropology it has two meanings: (1) the different ways in which people living in different parts of the world classify and represent their experiences, and act creatively, and (2) the evolved human capacity to classify and represent experiences through symbols, and to act imaginatively and creatively according to those shared meanings (Geertz, 1973). The first definition leads us to think of culture as something rather static, like a finished, already completed entity, whereas the second, allows us to think of it as something alive, created through symbolic interaction, in a continuous meaning-making process. Indeed, while the former definition comes from anthropologists interested in defining and describing different cultures, the latter, which represents the contemporary perspective based on post-modern thinking, conceives of culture as an evolving entity that we can interpret. Similarly, in the educational field, the positions taken have been a) multiculturalism, which implies a wide-spread, "normal", general culture, and minorities which exist at the same time in the same place; b) interculturalism, which implies several cultures living together and interacting peacefully (Coulby, op.cit). Nevertheless, in the last few years, focus has been put on new meaning-making processes and the cultural change which is taking place in the global, liquid networked society. We still think of education for this complex society as intercultural but, considering the process of cultural change, it might be interesting to consider the issues which are presented in this article: (1) will networked society change the definition of intercultural education? (2) how could we interweave intercultural pedagogy with networked learning perspectives? The Internet is becoming one of the most important *places* where learning occurs, no matter what educational policies are decided or what experts, headmasters, teachers and trainers actually do (Carneiro, 2007). The cultural embeddedness of the Internet needs to be disclosed from an intercultural perspective, bearing in mind that this perspective will need to be deeply revisited on the bases of those cultural spaces already existing on the Web.

### 1.1. The net as a place to meet equal-but-diverse people

The *Screenagers* generation (Rushkoff, 2006) is exposed to an amazing quantity of stimuli coming from the net, hence it participates in several *virtual environments* and *communities*, sharing new cultural values and behavioural patterns. If in some cases these patterns have been declared as foreign, extraneous to the participants, the main cyberculture studies emphasize that a new culture of cybernauts is emerging (Rheingold, 1993) producing multi-identities in relation to which real life is only one of the possible sceneries where the self is forged (Turkle, 1996). According to Maistrello's beautiful metaphor, these young people are citizens in new territories on the net (Maistrello, 2007). Indeed, in cyberculture studies, this problem has been considered in terms of virtual communities, online identities, online interactions, digital discourses, access to and denial of the Internet, and the design of virtual interface. According to cyber-anthropologists' definitions, cyberspace becomes a social space in which people still meet face-to-face, even though new definitions for both 'meet' and 'face' are needed. In David Silver words (2000), *while cyberspace may lack for the most part the physical geography found in, say, a neighbourhood, city, or country, it offers users very real opportunities for collective communities and individual identities*. It is worth remembering, at this point, the classical concept of *agorá*. The Greek word *agorá* comes from the verb *ageirein* meaning "to gather" and initially it designated the assembly of the whole people, as opposed to the council of chiefs (*boulé*). Then, it came to designate the location of that assembly and what happened there, hence its later meaning of "market-place". In Greek society the *agorá* became an important place that represented mainly democracy. Moreover, it was the place which offered the possibility of communicating, learning, and exchanging not only goods but also ideas. In fact, in Aristotle's ideal city, the *agorá* represents the life of the city, being separated into two domains: the vulgar, for business and commerce, and the free *agorá* for more serious political, intellectual and religious activities (*Politics, 1331a31*). Thus, it seems clear that the *agorá* is what people build through intense participation, rather than, a simple localized, architectonic place.

We could conclude that meeting people from several cultural backgrounds and experiences on the net should be possible through a new contextualization of interaction in a symbolic place, different from one's own place of belonging. Only recently, together with the discussion about a new model of educational relationships, has the idea that intercultural encounters can also take place on the net been highlighted (Dunn & Marinetti, 2002; McLoughlin, 2007; Liu, 2007; Rutheford & Kerr, 2008; Bélisle, 2008), hence the attempt to develop culturally sensitive e-learning environments. Nevertheless, the definition "culturally sensitive" seems to be controversial, encompassing the whole discussion about "cultural interaction/change" mentioned above. If people are given the opportunity of creating meaning through engagement and participation in group activities, then a cultural

manifestation takes place, introducing the prospect of cultural change. Based on this assumption, we could affirm that the possibility of establishing interactions which might lead to the creation of a virtual space on the net – like an *agorá* – could promote intercultural learning. Moreover, this kind of new space could be culturally inclusive through the process of cultural change, emphasizing the dimension of the Web as a *third space, a dimension, it could be argued, that gives people the opportunity to practise dialogue and discover the relativity of one's own cultural position.*

## **2. A case study**

The experience discussed in this article was part of an international cooperation project called PERMIT. The research was based on a participant/constructivist approach, where the research team took part in the process of developing e-learning strategies and designing an online platform that allowed 24 teachers from Italy, Turkey and Slovenia to interact in order to carry out project activities during a school year. The underlying assumption was that peer support and joint collaboration through the net would reshape teaching practices towards the development of intercultural sensibility. According to the definition of Bennet (1993), intercultural sensibility is supposed to evolve from more ethnocentric positions to ethnorelative ones. Therefore, teachers' professional and existential identity is supposed to have an impact on the acquisition of intercultural sensibility in students' learning processes.

The crucial concept underlying this participatory approach is that we have not been engaged in a mere research process, but rather in supporting a process of generating new practices to change/improve the life of the involved social groups. Within this process, we have also made efforts to improve our professional practice, as part of a *living theory* (Whitehead & Mc Niff, 2006).

### **2.1. PERMIT Online Learning Space: What can we do to get teachers involved in an intercultural vision of their own practice?**

The PERMIT project aimed at promoting the Civil Society Dialogue between the European Union and Turkey with a specific focus on ensuring better knowledge and understanding of Turkey within the European Union. From the beginning, this goal was transformed by the Scientific Committee into a more significant and representative one, aimed at promoting a process of mutual learning from practice and reflection upon partners' cultural identities, in order to induce the development of intercultural sensibility. Hence, a working hypothesis was designed as follows: *Intercultural awareness among researchers, teachers and students involved in the project (samples 10, 100, 800) is supposed to be low. The innovation in teaching methodologies and materials is expected to enhance researchers, teachers and students' awareness of cultural diversity and its understanding, as a dimension of intercultural sensibility.* An important issue was raised in carrying out the project, namely the need to work out a successful teacher training programme which would have an impact on the intercultural dimension, based on the latest conceptions on continuing teacher training. The idea had been expressed since the very first discussions about training methodology, as *interweaving formal learning (seminars and e-learning) with teachers' expertise, that is to say their practical knowledge (non-formal learning), considered as a process of reflection on practice recognized at an academic level.* Discussions and mutual understanding between teachers from several cultures were then fundamental to generate individual teaching projects to be implemented in class later on. It was assumed that only through collaboration, in both plenary sessions and in broad subject groups of teachers from different countries and from different kinds of school, new approaches and lesson schemes could be forged out of their combined best practices. Hence, intercultural strategies within pedagogical practices would emerge from existing strengths and extensions of the vision of what was possible. The need to give continuity to the process launched through the workshops was immediately evident. How could participants from several different countries and realities give continuity to their collaboration? The teachers and their materials needed to *go virtual.*

### **2.2. Creating the Virtual Working/Learning Space: Which kind of place on the net do we need in order to give continuity to the teachers' debates across frontiers?**

According to the initial discussion above, and considering the further training hypothesis implied in the project, the VWLS (also called *The Space*) had been given an important attention from the very first seminar. *The Space* was set up to keep the aims and objectives of the project at the forefront, and to store the information the

teachers might need in addition to their teaching materials. *The Space* was also conceived to give supportive empathy to the teachers who were looking for colleagues' help with their creative process.

Within *The Space*, the teachers were not seen simply as downloaders of information. Instead, they were perceived of as *uploaders*, considering Web 2.0 philosophy, since artifacts, tools and spaces were progressively going to be shaped by the teachers' interventions and published in *The Space*. Coherently with this, teacher's professionalism was envisaged as a process of critical deconstruction of one's own practices/knowledge, within which the teacher becomes a researcher who obtains a deep understanding of the discipline through teaching (Margiotta, 2007). So, he/she becomes the author of his/her own teaching resources and strategies. This active and reflective approach was supported by both the possibility of publishing contributions on the net very easily, and the subsequent collaboration with colleagues and students made possible by Web tools. This process of collaboration and critical deconstruction across frontiers with peers from several different cultures would induce the development of intercultural sensibility through a) one's own and other people's cultural awareness; b) decentralization of the conception of one's own subject and practices, towards a more ethnorelative position (implying the acceptance of the self as part of a broader picture, beyond local practice). *The Space* was designed to reflect this idea of professional development and to adhere to the above mentioned training strategies. Scheme 2 explains the structure and the areas in *The Space*.

Extremely simple software was used, according to the principles of Open Source Software and Web 2.0: the VWLS was built by integrating Drupal (release 6.0) and Moodle (release 1.9). While the news and the project site ran on Drupal, discussions and learning activities were placed on Moodle. A blog on WordPress was eventually used to contain the final version of work, while videos and photos were embedded into an e-learning platform Moodle by using You Tube, Flickr and Picasa Web Albums.

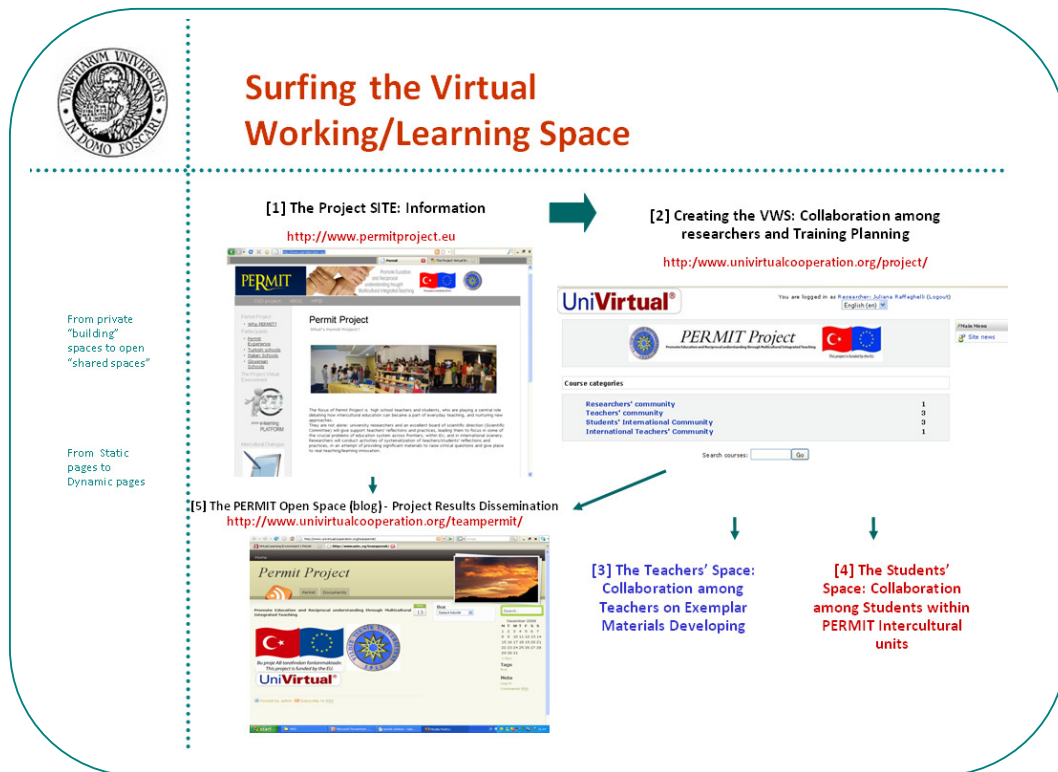


Figure 1 - *The Space's* original idea

### 2.3. Implementing the VWLS

Figure 2 shows the development of the project through all its phases. A set of online modules was proposed to the teachers as part of their training, but the main activity was to upload their own materials and to collaborate in order to implement pilot experiences in class. Thus, implementation was progressive and organic to a bottom-up logic as the spaces were shaped in accordance to the groups' needs. The analysis of the training phases, FTF and the online learning activities (from the first to the third residential seminar) allows us to understand how *The*

*Space* became something more than an e-learning platform. In fact it evolved into a space for experimentation and the sharing of reflection on the *meanings* which were emerging from practice prior to discussion in residential meetings.

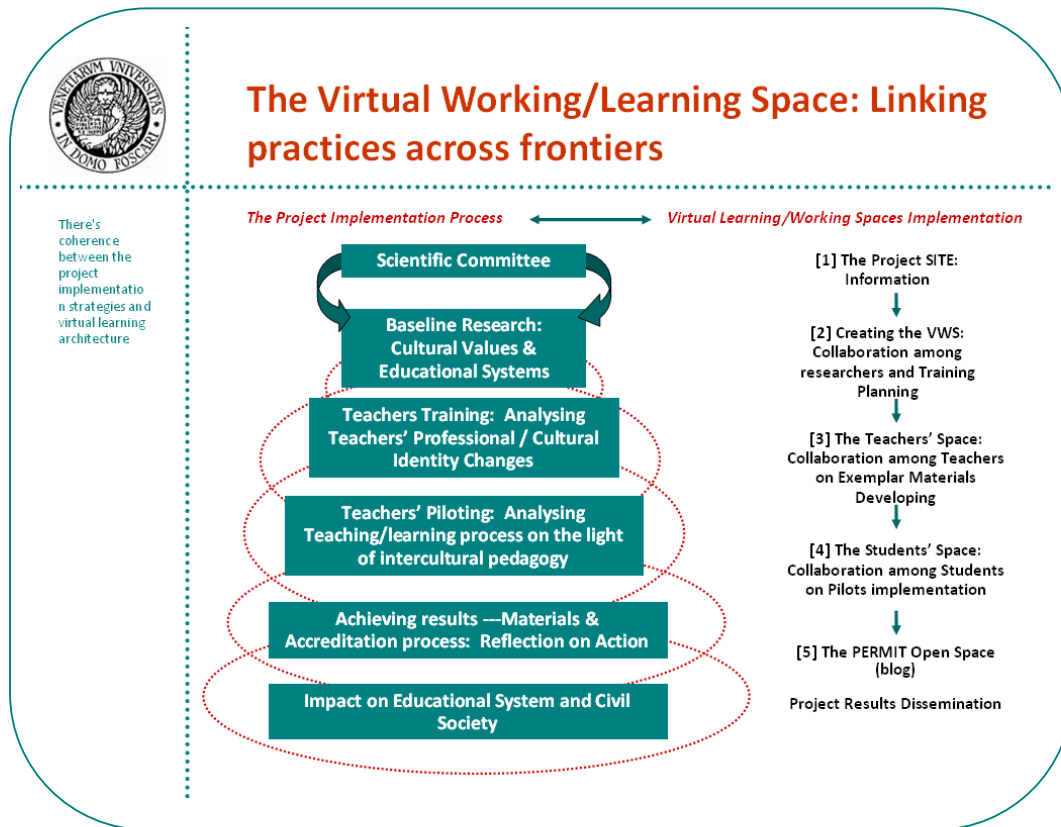


Figure 2  
The coherence between project development and the construction of *The Space*

### 3. Results and Perspectives of the VWLS

#### 3.1. Outcomes I. The VWLS as the Matrix of shared knowledge

The teachers piloted ideas, developed through a networked learning process, in their own classes. The following data comes from 19 questionnaires delivered through an online form at the end of each working session (“After Training Questionnaires”); the respondents were the teachers from the three countries involved in the project. As main result, **91, 67%** of the respondents thought that the VWLS was a useful tool for developing an intercultural professional identity, mainly because:

[...] “It gave us the opportunity to see other colleagues’ didactic approaches, compare teaching perspectives, spark ideas, give help to other teachers, shareing materials.” [...] **(Slovenian teacher)**

[...] “The platform was generally considered useful for giving teachers the idea of a working group “across frontiers”, eliminating national barriers and borders; as it means a lot to students too, especially when they see that in so many schools their peers do the same pilots, and come up with similar or very original questions!” [...] **(Italian teacher)**

[...] “Because for cancelling the contours and the borders of the bodies and the brains, it is more necessary and usefull to come together than the other technologic methods in opinion me [...].” **(Turkish teacher)**

Participating in an international community of teachers and students had an impact on personal practice, because it was an opportunity to work with people from different educational contexts, bound together by certain ideas and beliefs. The PERMIT international teachers' community was hence possible because of *The Space*, whose virtual representation could be considered a semiotic representation of a meeting place (where iconicity and symbolism of shared words become "things" of common use). The platform could be considered, then, as an instrument supporting some of the crucial processes of the PERMIT approach: the sharing of experiences and working models, the opening of a window on communication between students and teachers from the many contexts involved in the project. Nevertheless, the potential of this kind of tool is to be developed. Some teachers reported:

*[...] "The Space was somehow the "storage space" [...] and its proper value and the purpose is about to come; The Space was important and it can become more important if it becomes a means of communication amongst students and teachers; [I] think it should be implemented for the relation between students [...]."* **(Turkish teacher)**

*[...] "Technical barriers as equipments and teachers' skills are a problem to face if this kind of instrument is to be used [...]."* **(Italian teacher)**

### 3.2. Outcomes II. The sense-making process: building metaphors for intercultural dialogue

Metaphors are forms of language that express shared sense-making processes, since they stimulate a "double process of semantic mapping", through the operation of linking one category to another, and thus condensing meaning (Mercer, 2000; Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Metaphoric thinking is also deeply rooted by images (Lakoff & Johnson, op.cit.). This cognitive assumption could make the use of metaphors frequent in intercultural conversation. At a certain point of the PERMIT project, metaphors started to circulate among the teachers and the students, as part of the process of negotiation of meanings, and in the effort to come to an understanding with otherness, but also as a way to generate a common context for intervention. A first metaphor, "The PERMIT Coffee House" (see figure 3), which identified the online forum, was conceived in order to meet the international group's need to create a "meeting point" where to have free, informal interactions. This metaphor was launched through an image which illustrated the students' area and the diversity which it could contain. The teachers discussed the pros & cons of this proposal at the International Teachers Community (Plenary Discussions Forum, from Interaction 11 to Interaction 18: 6 participants). The main problem faced by the teachers was the perception of the risks involved in a) allowing *The Space* too loose a connection with planned learning activities; b) keeping a check on students' behavior even in this place – which is both in and out of school. The teachers decided to allow free contact among the students. This decision had a positive impact, since the Coffee House allowed the students to get to know some aspects of their foreign peers' everyday life, and supported their reflection on lifestyles and identities in different cultures. As it emerged from feed-back activities, the impact was strong on some Italian students:

*"[...] We would never imagine that a Turkish girl could be a Physician's daughter, and that she could have travelled the world more than we did [...]."* **(Vocational Training School, Mestre, 14 May 2009)**

*"[...] Reading about the life of these kids, I realized that their likes, their thoughts, their fears, are very similar to those of mine [...]."* **(Vocational Training School, Mestre, 14 May 2009)**

*"[...] The insertion of the piece in the puzzle is a good example of the relationship that has emerged between the Italian students and the foreign students, Turkish and Slovenian, of PERMIT project. In fact, this project is a puzzle that has been completed, and that established an important and constructive link among three very different cultures, that at the same time are together in wishing to know each other and wanting to understand each other. To me, Permit Project has been an important springboard to a deeper knowledge of cultures different from mine[...]"* **(Art School, Padova, 28 May 2009)**

The Humanities group produced another significant metaphor, that of the "Skyline" (the shape of a city seen against the skyline at sunset). The "Skyline" was used by the teachers and the students to represent themselves to the others. Linked to this idea, the Skyline was the first metaphorical image easily shared despite of the difficulties in communication trying to use English as "lingua franca" (the Humanities group, being formed by people with very different disciplinary and experiential backgrounds, suffered intensely from this difficulty in negotiating sense within a common project). At first, the teachers agreed to exchange photos of their own city which had been taken by themselves. Then, they started to ask their students to take pictures, reflect on the



“shapes and shadows”, as visible and invisible parts of their own city, and hence reflect on the “shapes and shadows” of other PERMIT cities. This phase was followed by the introduction of the theme “The cities” in the Lesson Plan of very different subjects, such as Design (as a *mood board* for fashion design), Literature (as a starting point to produce literary texts and to introduce Italo Calvino's work *Invisible Cities*), Art (as a starting point to study the works of art in the cities involved in the programme), History (as a means of stimulating the study of the historical context of certain buildings which are a link between cities in different countries).

Discussion	Started by	Replies	Last post
introducing myself!	Ecem from KocSchool-Turkey	50	Ecem from KocSchool-Turkey Sat, 6 Jun 2009, 08:36 AM
Sena..	anadolu lisesi 1	2	anadolu lisesi 1 Wed, 3 Jun 2009, 07:58 PM
città invisibili in Padova, Lubiana e Istanbul.	Klaudia club(LAModigliani) Hist2	0	Klaudia club(LAModigliani) Hist2 Wed, 3 Jun 2009, 05:43 PM
Giada invisible city	Klaudia club(LAModigliani) Hist2	0	Klaudia club(LAModigliani) Hist2 Wed, 3 Jun 2009, 03:48 PM
Padova- via Anelli	Klaudia club(LAModigliani) Hist2	0	Klaudia club(LAModigliani) Hist2 Wed, 3 Jun 2009, 02:40 PM
The real hide city	Klaudia club(LAModigliani) Hist2	0	Klaudia club(LAModigliani) Hist2 Tue, 2 Jun 2009, 02:54 PM

**Figure 3: A metaphor for an informal place of meeting**  
*This is the introducing page to the PERMIT Coffee House created by a teacher.*

The cognitive mapping process produced by this metaphor was also extended to other categories to represent intercultural dialogue, for example the metaphor of the iceberg, which suggests the idea of what is visible of one's own intercultural identity, and what is invisible, hidden under water.

This impregnation of common images through the students' production, and the teachers' reflection on their students' works was a clear representation of the cognitive and emotional effort made in order to build a common narrative of practices across frontiers and disciplines. Thanks to free negotiation and consensus, rather than to the constraints of curricula or external coordination, an intercultural context for common practices was created.

#### 4. Conclusions

From the results it emerged that the teachers (but also the students) perceived the importance of *The Space* by considering it as an important element in the building of the sense of community across frontiers. In fact, the chance of knowing other *glocal* realities, and communicating with them through the use of a virtual space was considered not only relevant, but crucial from the perspective of intercultural dialogue. All the teachers emphasized the motivation and curiosity showed by their students about the different realities taking part in the PERMIT experience, seeing *The Space* as a window to look “outside the walls of the classroom/curriculum” (Teachers internal meeting, Venice, 15-5-2009). The teachers stressed the need to enhance this motivation for

educational innovation in class and at school, by introducing common activities across frontiers, and the students themselves asked to keep on taking part in *The Space* to communicate with peers from other countries. This interest shows how narrow the space offered by the classroom (physically delimited) and the curriculum (symbolic delimitation) is becoming: in fact, what the students and the teachers were claiming was a new *territory*, the only frontiers of which are the limits of *imagination*. This is the case in which the Web can play a role, not as a technological device, but as a semiotic space able to create the coordinates of an *enlarged cultural context*.

Networked learning – as part of a wider training vision – seems to offer the possibility of featuring symbols and iconicity in a significant way. As a result, the recognition and the re-signification of cultural symbols and metaphors belonging to other cultures create *new contexts which allow new narratives*, as has been emphasized by Sharples, Taylor & Valvoula (2007:231):

“[...] *learning not only occurs in a context, it also creates context through continual interaction. The context can be temporarily solidified, by deploying or modifying objects to create supportive work space, or forming an ad hoc social network out of people with shared interests, or arriving at a shared understanding of a problem [...].*”

This could match our attempt to raise some awareness of the potential of networked learning for introducing an intercultural dimension in teaching/learning processes. The evidence about the construction, use and impact of VWLS collected within the PERMIT experience, shows a process of creation of a semiotic space, a place where re-interpretation of one's own experience occurs, followed by new common narrative. This process seems to motivate people to participate in international online communities aimed at achieving an intercultural vision, as they seem to perceive themselves as out of a specific cultural context: a new symbolic representation that goes beyond *my place* – with my own cultural rules – or *yours*. By means of *electronic conversation* this place becomes a third, new place. Furthermore, the fact that the process is crystallized in electronic texts and icons, we are allowed to believe that diversity is discovered, explored and kept in memory before reaching *thirdness*. We could conclude that networking learning is a kind of learning that takes place in *enlarged cultural contexts*, thus causing the reformulation of the concept of *intercultural learning*. This implies the creation of a context by several cultural identities, rather than by fixed entities that exchange meaning. This new context generates a sense of belonging to a wider project, a territory where virtual/planetary citizenship can be implemented. Of course, this is rather utopian, because cyberspace can house symbolic violence as well as real places do, but participation based on a bottom-up logic should tackle the problem.

Will these encounters in online spaces have an impact on spaces in the *real world*? This question, the kernel of new education (comprehensive of networked learning as well as intercultural education) certainly requires further research. The metaphors emerged and shared by the teachers and the students about their common teaching and learning activities were supported by *The Space*. It promoted the continuity of a sense-making process, thus leading the participants to go through an experience that allowed them to build new discourses about other cultures. *The Space* in the PERMIT project, suggesting the idea of a *place* where to meet (an *agorá*), generated the perception of a room where people introduced their diversity to the others, shared activities and goals, and recognized otherness. Perhaps this gave the participants the idea of a classroom without walls, an enlarged cultural context where intercultural dialogue could take place: *a classroom with a view*.

## References

- Banks, J. A. (2001). *Cultural diversity and education : Foundations, curriculum, and teaching* (4th ed.).
- Bélisle (2008) eLearning and Intercultural dimensions of learning theories and teaching models, elearning papers, [www.elearningpapers.eu](http://www.elearningpapers.eu) N° 7, February 2008
- Bennet, M.J. (1993) "Towards a Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity" in R. Michael Paige, ed. *Education for the Intercultural Experience*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Coulby, D. (2006) *Intercultural Education: Theory and Practice, International Education*, 17 (3), August 2006, 245-257
- Dunn, P., Marinetti, A., (2002). *Cultural adaptation: Necessity for eLearning*. <http://www.linezine.com/7.2/articles/pdamca.htm>
- Geertz, C. (1973 [2000]) *The Interpretation of Cultures*, NY: Basic Books.



- Gundara, J. (2000), *Interculturalism, Education and Inclusion* London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Lakoff, G., Jonhson, M. (1980) *Metaphors we live by*, Chicago: University Chicago Press.
- Leclerq, J. (2003), *Facets Of Interculturality in Education*. Strasbourg: The Council of Europe Publishing
- Liu, Y. (2007), *Designing quality online education to promote cross-cultural understanding*. In A. Edmundson (Ed.) *Globalized e-learning cultural challenges* (pp 35-39). London: Information Science Publishing
- Maistrello, S. 2007, “*La parte abitata della Rete*”, Milano: Tecnologie Nuove.
- McLoughlin, C. 2007. Adapting e-learning across cultural boundaries: A Framework for quality learning, pedagogy and interaction. In A. Edmundson (Ed.) *Globalized e-learning cultural challenges* (pp. 223-238). London: information Sciences Publishing
- Mercer, Neil (2000). *Words and Minds: How We Use Language to Think Together*. Routledge.
- Palloff, R., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publishers
- Resnick, L.B., Levin, J., Teasley, S. –eds- (1991) *Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition*, Washington: American Psychological Association press, University of Pittsburg.
- Rheingold, Howard (1993), *The Virtual Community, Homesteading on the electronic frontier*, Cambridge: The MIT Press
- Rushkoff, D. (2006) *Screenagers: Lessons from the chaos from Digital Kids*, New Jersey: Hampton Press.
- Rutherford, A. & Kerr, B. (2008): *An inclusive approach to online learning environments: Models and Resources*. Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education –TOJDE April 2008 Volume 9, Nr. 2. [http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/tojde30/pdf/article\\_2.pdf](http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/tojde30/pdf/article_2.pdf). retrieved from the site 21 May 2009.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press.
- Whitehead, J, McNiff, J (2006), *Action Research: Living Theory*, London: Sage.
- Rollin, I. Harrap, A. (2005) *Can E-Learning Foster Intercultural Competence?* Brookes eJournal of Learning and Teaching, Volume 1, Issue 3, October 2005. [http://bejlt.brookes.ac.uk/vol1/volume1issue3/practice/rollin\\_harrap.html](http://bejlt.brookes.ac.uk/vol1/volume1issue3/practice/rollin_harrap.html), access on 11 November 2009.
- Rovai, A. P. (2002b). Building sense of community at a distance. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 3(1), 1-16. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ646664) Rovai,
- Rushkof, D., 2006, “*Screen-agers: Lessons in Chaos from Digital Kids*”, Hampton Press Communication, New York
- Silver, D. (2000), “Looking Backwards, Looking Forward: Cyberculture Studies 1990-2000, retrieved from <http://rccs.usfca.edu/intro.asp>, 15 May 2008; originally published on *Web.studies: Rewiring Media Studies for the Digital Age*, edited by David Gauntlett (Oxford University Press, 2000): 19-30.
- Turkle, Sh. (1996) “*Life on the Screen*” (Italian Ed., 1997, “*La vita sullo schermo. Nuove Identità e relazioni sociali nell’epoca di Internet*”, Milano: Apogeo)