



National Report on Symbol work

Italy

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ITALY

Annex 4 - Generic Framework for Symbol work



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Traditions and understanding of Symbols

Examples of symbols important for Italian and Sicilian culture

Following the provided instruction, this research for symbols for the Italian context includes several categories starting from everyday life and ending with the world of non-formal education.

Gesture and symbolism: in Italy is easy to see in the daily life a number of physical gestures that have specific meanings. Indeed, in everyday conversations Italians use (sometimes unconsciously) gestures to express and communicate emotions and feelings. Some gestures more than others represent ideas and feelings and have a specific meaning shared by a community. According to Poggi and D'Errico (2011) typical codified gestures are “symbolic gestures” that convey the meaning of specific words and sentences, and have a shared verbal translation in a given culture¹.

Gestures range from the simplest to the most complex. Simple gestures are for example one hand on the belly, which means hungry, or the index finger twisted into the cheek which means something that tastes good. Two open hands can ask a real question, “What’s happening?” But also hands placed in prayer become a sort of supplication and rhetorical question: “What do you expect me to do about it?”².

Symbol in non-formal education activities: a symbol inside the non-formal education world is the circle. Often participants in these kinds of activities are asked to sit in a circle to talk and share ideas and opinions. In this context the circle means meeting each other, inclusion, equality between participants and also the multidirectional learning.

The use of the circle can be found in the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach³. RMA is a methodology of research and self-analysis tested by Danilo Dolci starting from the 50s in western Sicily. This approach promotes a sense of responsibility in the communities and individuals and can be defined as a “collective exploration process that considers individuals’ experience and intuition as a reference point” (Dolci, 1996). Typical reciprocal maieutic sessions see a group of people sitting together in a circle with a person who start asking some questions and other people that answer, explore, create and built on other people answers. During

¹ Poggi I. and D'Errico F. (2011) “Social signals: A psychological perspective”. In Salah. A.A. and Gevers T. (Eds.) Computer Analysis of Human Behavior. Springer Verlag’s Advances in Pattern Recognition series, Springer, Heidelberg, pp.185-225.

² See New York times article for more examples: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/01/world/europe/when-italians-chat-hands-and-fingers-do-the-talking.html?_r=0.

³ Dolci A., Dolci F. (edited by), 2011, *Reciprocal Maieutic Approach in adult education, developed within the European Project EDDILI*, (available online: <http://cesie.org/media/2011/10/English1.pdf>).

this process participants learn from each other discover their vital interests and express opinions based on their own experience.

Symbolism and religion: symbols are used in every religion around the world and Italy is a land where religion plays an important role. The cultural heritage of Christianity is evident in the Italian art and literature. In many literary and artistic works there are allegories related to the Christian tradition. A few examples can be seen in the image of pomegranate or in the dove. The first indicates the passion of Jesus Christ, while the second represents peace and salvation.

Symbols and interpretations of dreams in popular culture:

Dreams have been studied and interpreted by the most diverse human disciplines with different reasons, for superstition since ancient times or for therapeutic purposes by the psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud, father of psychoanalysis, in his famous book "The Interpretation of Dreams", claims that "the dream is the royal road to the unconscious." In a more popular context in Italy dreams are associated with the "*Smorfia napoletana*". The "*Smorfia napoletana*" is the dream book, used to draw from various dreams corresponding numbers to play the lottery, also called cabal. In the Smorfia there is a word, an event, a person, an object, which is transformed into one or more numbers, through a coding also precise enough which provides a different number depending on the context. For example, the horses (81), batch (33), football (50), cards (17), or chess (22) and so on.

Sicilian symbols: one of the main important symbol in Sicily is the triskelion which is a traditional symbol of the island. The triskelion, in Italian trinacria, is a motif consisting of a triple spiral exhibiting rotational symmetry. Other Sicilian symbols can be found in the traditional games, in particular in the Sicilian playing cards. It can be found, indeed, many symbols that represent wealth, money, women, luck, and bad luck.

Symbols in politics: in Italy, as well as everywhere in the world, politics has always used symbols in order to communicate to the public. Two of the main political symbols can be found in the hammer and sickle and in the white shield with a red cross. The first one concerns the Communist party, while the second one concerns the party of the Christian Democrats. The two symbols have represented, especially during the first Italian Republic, an ideological and political division of Italy.

Symbol of antimafia movement: new symbols became important for the Italian society, like the Addiopizzo, which is an antimafia symbol used by the shops to declare they are not paying a bribe to the Mafia.

Brand symbols: Ferrari's symbol: a prancing horse. It also means richness and it is an Italian symbol which is known all around the world. Also we can find FIAT and VESPA as the most known brands of car and motorbikes. Vespa is also a symbol of the pop community.

Our primary target group of young people

As regarding Italy, the critical groups in unemployment process are:

- **NEET** (young people in the age range from 15 to 34 years who are not in education, employment or training) is one of the most problematic topics in Italy. NEET number corresponds to 35.5 % of total unemployment rate in 2013. Additionally, 35.7% of Sicilian young people can be considered as NEETs.
- **Foreign - born citizens.** The occupational situation of foreign - born citizens is also worsening. Between 2008 and 2013, the employment rate of foreign - born citizens (especially among men) shows a negative trend in every year.
- **Women.** The situation of female labour is getting worse also. Especially, the employment rate of women aged between 15 and 49 years has decreased.
- **Immigrants.** Italy has a big numbers of immigration. Official immigration by country is presented below, however illegal immigration is a problematic question for the country; more than 670,000 undocumented residents per year pass the boarder of Italy.

Although the **Early School Leaving (ESL)** is steadily decreasing in Italy (7.4 percentage points from 2005 to 2015), the phenomenon is still quite common: in 2015, 14.7% of youngsters under 25 left before having reached the end of their in high school and without following another training In the European context, Italy is the 5th country with the highest rates of ESL (behind Spain, Malta, Romania & Turkey).

In June 2010, the national education ministers agreed on a framework for coherent, comprehensive and evidence-based policies to tackle early school leaving. Despite the progress made in a few years, it is still a long way off to reduce the number of early school leavers to below 10%, as there is a lot of differences among the Italian regions. Indeed, the South and the Islands still involve 21.4% of early school leavers. Meanwhile, the North and the Centre involve 14.1% early school leavers in average. The highest figures of ESL are in Sicilia (25.8%) and Sardegna (24.7%). Thus, the contraction of the phenomenon is particularly sharp in the southern regions, where the incidence of young people leaving school early dropped by 6.3 percentage points, compared with a decrease of 5.2 percentage points in the regions of the Centre and North. The greatest progress in reducing the phenomenon was achieved by the autonomous province of Bolzano, Puglia and Veneto (decrease of 10 percentage points for the latter).

For most of the cases, girls tend to be less affected by the ESL than the boys. Following Eurostat's data from 2015, the national average of ESL is 14.7% but involves more boys (17.5%) than girls (11.8%). For some regions, one can notice that girls are half less affected by this phenomenon: in 2014 in Veneto, 7% of girls are affected by ESL, while 13,6% of boys are affected. However, it is relevant to remark that in the regions where there are the highest figures of ESL, girls are also really affected – even if it less than boys there: 22,1% in Sicilia and 22,1% in Sardegna.

In general, the decision not to continue one's studies, often an indicator of social hardship concentrated in less developed areas, is common even in most prosperous regions, where high labour demand exerts an undeniable attraction to young people, dissuading them from completing their studies in favour of relatively easy access to employment.

Additionally, ESL is first higher in Vocational schools (istituti professionali) affected with 38% of ESL, then in the Art schools (indirizzi artistici) with 35%, followed by the Technical Institutes (indirizzi tecnici) with 37%, Human Sciences high schools (licei delle scienze umane) with 24%, Scientific High Schools with 21% and High schools specializing in classical studies (liceo classico) with 18%.

The predominance of ESL among males - economic (above all) and cultural - A few ones understand the importance of acquiring an education level at least equal to compulsory school: those who drop out school do it for economic reasons first of all. However, there is also other facts that play an important part like the relationships developed by the school staff and the youngsters and the language they use with them. Young people can leave school early because they want to help out their family, supporting them with the income they got from their work to bring an off-farm income to their family. Even if it is a tiny temporary income, for some families it is critical.

Plus, the picture of the male “breadwinner” in Italy is still significant (explain the gap between girls and boys in ELS rates): he is the one that has not to study to bring this off-farm income to his family, more than females.

Nevertheless, there are other reasons that could explain the phenomena:

- Socio-economic background of the family
- Irregularities of the school career (cause by a lack of identification, or a specific learning disability such as dyslexia, dysorthography, dyscalculia).
- Youngsters' personal reasons: marginalisation, lack of motivation, low self- esteem
- Difficulties to integrate oneself in a group, or to be victim of bullying
- Lack of a suitable teaching method for everyone: the traditional formal teaching method is not appropriate to all pupils' needs.

Early school leaving is a relevant problem in Palermo city and its surroundings. According to the numbers of the Sicilian Observatory of the former Department of Education one student over 10 fails the examination and 2 students over 100 leave school early. Young people from some neighbourhoods, such as Zen, Brancaccio and the historical centre are more at risk.

Similar methods and possible Synergies

The use of Symbol work in Italy, in the way in which it is present in the project, is not known and the research for similar methods in has brought few results. It seems that the use of symbols for education and career guidance is not common. The use of symbols in psychotherapy it is easier to find and many therapists declare to use such methods. Sometimes symbols are associated with art therapy. This is a collection of experiences and studies on symbols existing in Italy.

Symbol work: either in the field of counselling, guidance, psychology or other fields.

1. This is a thesis about school counselling where the professor analyses it from her experience as a teacher of Arts. In particular, she asserts the importance of symbolism in the study of history of art for the exploration of emotions through the symbols, fairy tales and myths.
Link to the study (in Italian) <http://www.edscuola.it/archivio/psicologia/counseling.pdf>
2. Psychotherapists who use symbols and drawing to help patience in learning about own skills and uniqueness.
Link (in Italian)
<http://www.segnoedisegno.it/public/attivitaFormativa/Il%20disegno%20come%20narrazione%20di%20S%C3%A8%20per%20attivare%20autoconoscenza.pdf>
3. Magazine specialized in psychotherapy and counseling. Inside the magazine, it can found some master and research related to counselling methods such as expressive counselling and counselling through art therapy.
Link to the magazine (in Italian) <http://www.counselingscuolaeuropa.org/rivista/25-26-2009.pdf>
4. This is a thesis for a master theoretical experience in vocational counselling with a focus on counselling education in primary school. The author of the text describes how, even though symbols, she has communicated with the children to understand their emotions.
Link to the thesis (in Italian) <http://www.siafitalia.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Tesi1.pdf>
5. In a paragraph of this book the author explains how large companies use the symbols (and not just symbols) to create a close relationship between the employee and the company.
Some parts of the book are on-line (in Italian) <https://books.google.it/books?id=c-VtQIR-SoC&pg=PA14&lpg=PA14&dq=orientamento+al+lavoro+simboli&source=bl&ots=WWjPwSUEMB&sig=bqlowxpOSf-lpbchaQ8i3IU3O4&hl=it&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjZwfOt6s3QAhWB0xQKHYL0CgoQ6AEI1DAC#v=onepage&q=orientamento%20al%20lavoro%20simboli&f=false>



6. Thesis that studies the symbol on three main aspects.
 - a) The symbol and Homo sapiens.
 - b) The symbol and the discovery of the sacred, and thus the formation of Homo religious.
 - c) The symbol, source of creativity. Man is the creator of culture.
- Link (in Italian) <http://www.meetingrimini.org/detail.asp?c=1&p=6&id=550&key=3&prefix>

Peer Buddy System: the peer buddy system is a procedure in which two people, the "buddies", operate together as a single unit so that they are able to monitor and help each other. Merriam Webster goes on to define the buddy system as "an arrangement in which two individuals are paired (as for mutual safety in a hazardous situation)." The buddy system is basically working together in pairs in a large group or alone. Both the individuals have to do the job. The job could be to ensure that the work is finished safely or the skill/learning is transferred effectively from one individual to the other.

In Italy the "education by peer" method is already well know and used in different fields. Here there is three examples where this method is developed: in the Non Formal Education promoted by organisations in the field of youth (1), used by psychologists as a resource in the prevention within the school (2) and studied at the university in the Sociology departments as in this analysis of Peer-tutoring, peer-education and cooperative learning (3).

- (1) "Peer education is one of the most significant models of work with and for adolescents. It recognizes them as primary actors in the promotion of their welfare and implementation of preventive actions risk behaviour."
http://www.isistodi.it/joomla/images/stories/ALLEGATI/progetti/peer_education_animazione_sociale.pdf
- (2) "The Peer Education is an innovative methodology to be used as a new resource in the prevention within the school. It 'an educational strategy to trigger a spontaneous process of transfer of knowledge, emotions and experiences from some members of a group to other members of equal status.'" <http://www.trova-psicologo.it/elenco-psicologi/La-Peer-Education-l-educazione-tra.html>
- (3) Peer-tutoring, peer-education and cooperative learning: In recent years in Italy it is often mentioned, and also started to be practice in classrooms, peer education and tutoring. Peer tutoring and peer-education identify an educational model collaborative aims to enable a spontaneous process of transition knowledge, emotions and experiences of some members of a group to other members of equal status and for new acquisitions. The model sets in motion a



process of communication characterized from deep experience and the search for a strong authenticity and harmony between the parties involved. The benefits are greater in the presence of a positive relationship and of a power balance among participants [why participation should be voluntary for both sides]. <http://web.unitn.it/files/download/8701/quad57.pdf>



Description of our Stakeholders

From the beginning of SymfoS implementation, each project partner has been involved in an in-depth stakeholder analysis. They identified and assessed organisations and people in term of their interest over the project and importance for its success, dissemination and sustainability.

The research focused on SymfoS relevant groups of stakeholders:

- Policy makers in the education field, especially those in charge of recognition tools for skills and qualifications. The intention is to engage with them in order to influence education policy. They will be informed about project objectives and activities and involved in national stakeholders' events.
- Decision makers in the VET sector, such as schools, NGOs working with youth and VET providers. They will be engaged in order to promote the adoption of the SymfoS method. They will be informed about project objectives and activities and involved in national train the trainer workshops and stakeholders' events.
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Typologies of stakeholders identified are:

- School/VET provider: VET providers, Lifelong learning centres, training centres decision makers, school managers, etc;
- Public authority: i.e. local, regional or national public administrations in the education field;
- NGO: i.e. organisations working with young people with fewer opportunities;
- Job centre/Employment agency: public offices for employment, private agencies for employment;
- Professional association of counsellors, career guidance officers, teachers, trainers, VET staff associations;
- Youth organisation/Students union: i.e. organisations, unions or networks of students.

CESIE identified 33 stakeholders at local (mainly Palermo city and Palermo Province), regional (Sicily) and national level. Several NGOs that regularly work with young disadvantaged people and migrants and several VET providers in Palermo area, that are part of a local network of relevant subjects often collaborating together, have been included in list of relevant stakeholders.

Validation of the SymfoS Learning Outcomes

Level 1: Validation of the train-the-trainer course

ECVET

In ECVET system a Qualification consists of a number of Units. Units contain a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence that can be assessed and validated with a number of ECVET points. So, a learner can obtain a qualification by accumulating required units in different contexts and countries, always respecting national legislation regarding the accumulation of units.

According to the ECVET Recommendation, the description of a Unit should comprise of the following:

- The title of the Unit (general image of what the professional needs to know and do in a work environment);
- The title of the respective qualification (or qualifications) to the unit;
- The EQF level of the qualification associated with the Unit. The Italian NQF refers to the EQF levels);
- The ECVET points allocated to the unit;
- The Learning Outcomes (LOs) contained in the unit;
- The assessment procedures and criteria;
- The validity in time of the unit.

Converting LOs to ECVET credits and EQF Levels

A common approach is that 60 points should be allocated to the LOs that a professional is expected to have within a year of formal full VET. Duration, content and type of the training determine the amount of credits that should be allocated to each Unit. In SymfoS case, practical training should be considered very important and this should be reflected in credits allocation.

Correlation of NQFs and EQF

It is important at this point to establish a Memorandum of Understanding between Competent Institutions as a mutual trust document used to examine, judge and identify how ECVET points can be converted in equivalent credits in different countries.

- How to produce a Europass Certificate Supplement that will accompany the training certificate, specifying the learning outcomes acquired in the course?

Europass Certificate Supplement

In Italy the Europass Certificate Supplement is not widespread. This Certificate is usually associated to a Upper secondary education diploma (Licei, Vocational schools) and to VET courses at regional level. Moreover, the participating trainers will get a Europass Mobility document (to be organised by Hafelekar together with all partners).

Europass Mobility document

CESIE will collaborate with Hafelekar and all partners to prepare the Europass Mobility document.

National Qualifications Framework In Italy

Italy as many other European countries has started the procedures for the creation of a NQF with the aim of introducing an approach centred on the comparability of learning outcomes rather than on learning paths (duration, curriculum structure, etc.).

This process started with the national Law 92/2012 “Riforma del Mercato del Lavoro” which aims at the re-launch of lifelong learning, valorisation of formal, non-formal and informal learning, national regulation for validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification of competences and finally aims at the creation of the NQF “Repertorio nazionale dei titoli di istruzione e formazione delle qualificazioni professionali”.

This last consists in “...the unitary framework for the certification of skills, through the gradual standardization of the essential elements, even descriptive, of education and training qualifications, including those of education and vocational training, and professional qualifications through their link, also through a shared system for recognition of credits from a European perspective”⁴.

Regions also decide to create their common framework for the national recognition of their qualifications and Sicily, for example, it adopted its qualifications directory (based on the model developed in Lombardy region)⁵.

The Italian legislative decree n.13/2013 provided standards for validation and certification services but a procedure to follow in order to ask for validation of trainings is still under definition.

Next steps for the national technical committee will be to provide a draft of national guidelines for the validation and certification of competences.

⁴ Repertorio nazionale dei titoli di istruzione e formazione delle qualificazioni professionali
http://nrpitalia.isfol.it/sito_standard/sito_demo/repertorio_nazionale_qualificazioni.php.

⁵ Repertorio delle Qualificazioni della Regione Siciliana
<https://repertoriodellequalificazioni.siciliafse1420.it/repertorio>.

Level 2: Validation for the Young People taking part in the SymfoS training

Europass Mobility document and Youthpass

Participants to the training activities will receive an Europass Mobility document describing the learning outcomes acquired. A Youthpass Certificate for recognition of their non-formal learning outcomes will be also prepared (<https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/about/>).



Recommended Literature

- Hellö S. (2005), *La gestualità forma alternativa di comunicazione*. Master's thesis Romanska Institutionen Lunds Universitet
(<http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=1331449&fileId=1331450>)
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- Galimberti U. (2003). *La terra senza il male. Jung: dall'inconscio al simbolo*. Feltrinelli, Milano.
- Eco U. (1997), *Semiotica e filosofia del linguaggio*, Einaudi.

Annex 1: Field Research & Interview Partner

DATE	INTERVIEW PARTNER / INSTITUTION	TOPIC / ACTIVITY & OUTCOMES
22/11/2016	Irene Pizzo - Project Manager at CESIE – working on projects that include ECVET	Information on how to obtain a validation of the train-the-trainer course and learning outcome
25/11/2016	Jelena Mazaj - Project Manager at CESIE – working on project for improvement of employability	Data for description of the Primary target group of young people relevant for CESIE
21/11/2016	Annaclaire Turco – Project Manager CSC and psychologist	Information on use of Symbol work and peer buddy system in Italy
12/12/2016	Isfol – National Center Europass Italy	European Certificate Supplement
19/12/2016	Pasquale Musso – Researcher at University of Palermo - Psychological, Pedagogical and Educational Sciences Department	Information on use of Symbol work and peer buddy system in Italy
21/12/2016	Diana Macri –Isfol	ECVET and national qualification framework

2014
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