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## **PON Lingua letteratura e cultura nella dimensione europea a.s. 2009-2010 area lingue**

### **Percorso didattico**

#### ***Competenze trasversali – Developing key competences in the English classroom***

***di Antonella Di Pascale***

- **Argomenti:** Inglese, Interazione orale, Produzione orale, Produzione scritta
- **Progetto:** Lingua, letteratura e cultura in una dimensione europea - Area lingue straniere
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- **Tipologia:** Percorso didattico
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- **Livello linguistico:** Livello A2
- **Lingue:** Inglese

**Tematica affrontata:** competenze trasversali

Scopo di questa risorsa è quello di aiutare gli insegnanti a trovare strategie da utilizzare per condurre gli studenti all'acquisizione delle competenze trasversali indicate nella Raccomandazione del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio e a integrarle nei loro curricula. La risorsa prevede il consolidamento di alcune funzioni linguistiche e, allo stesso tempo, lo sviluppo di competenze-chiave quali la capacità di comunicare, avere relazioni positive, cooperare, risolvere problemi, affrontare nuove situazioni e riflettere sul proprio processo di apprendimento.

#### **Obiettivi di apprendimento:**

- riflettere su metodologie e strategie utili per lo sviluppo delle competenze-chiave

(specialmente le competenze 2, 5, 6, 7);

- guidare i docenti all'organizzazione di attività cooperative;
- presentare attività didattiche per la classe.

Competenze in uscita per il docente:

- identificare le competenze trasversali e decidere come svilupparle;
- incrementare il senso di responsabilità personale dello studente e il rispetto delle regole;
- promuovere un atteggiamento positivo degli studenti all'interno del gruppo di lavoro;
- sviluppare atteggiamenti positivi e costruttivi negli studenti nei confronti del loro processo di apprendimento;
- riflettere sul proprio stile di insegnamento;
- organizzare attività didattiche.

Competenze in uscita per lo studente:

- attivare abilità linguistiche per la comunicazione e l'espressione personale;
- sviluppare competenze relazionali;
- usare strategie di apprendimento quali: inferenza, transfer, controllo valutazione, autovalutazione.

**Nota redazionale: il percorso si basa sulle indicazioni 2007 tuttavia le attività e temi proposti sono utili anche alla luce dell'attuale normativa in considerazione dello sfondo comune dato dal QCER e dal livello linguistico proposto dalle attività**

**Revisione linguistica a cura del British Council, coord. dott.ssa K. Harris, J. Ritter**

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## Introduction

“As globalization continues to confront the European Union with new challenges, each citizen will need a wide range of key competences to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world. Education in its dual role, both social and economic, has a key role to play in ensuring that Europe's citizens acquire the key competences needed to enable them to adapt flexibly to such changes”. (from Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council 18 Dec. 2006.)

What is stated and suggested in the Recommendation represents a great challenge for the educational systems of the European countries but above all for teachers and students.

How can teachers organize their work and give the students the strategies to understand and move into complexity whilst being able to create a lifelong learning?

It must be clear that the key competences suggested by the Recommendation refer to the general abilities of the students for as regards the building of personal identity and social responsibility, they refer to cognitive processes, social behaviour, to the ability to reflect, to find and adapt one's learning strategies depending on the situations. These competences are stated as essential for everybody, so they are not specific competences but have to be integrated with other curricular competences as a sort of plot to the learning process.

Teachers should design their curricula by introducing the key competences as part of their specific linguistic competences.

This learning path will consolidate and re-combine some linguistic functions and, at the same time, will develop the key competences for the ability to communicate, have positive relationships, co-operate, solve problems, face new situations and reflect on learning processes in an integrating way.

What is the role of the teacher in this activity? He/she is not the only reference point in the students' learning process but he/she is someone who organizes activities and gives responsibility to students when learning not only linguistic content but also positive ways of relating to others, from a teacher-centred lesson to student-centred activities where decisions are taken by students who collaborate together towards a common goal.

## Aims

The general aim of this learning path is to help teachers find and reflect on strategies to be used in order to lead students towards developing cross-curricular competences as suggested by the Recommendation and to integrate them into their syllabuses.

### Learning objectives

- Reflect upon methodology and strategies suitable for developing the key competences (especially competences 2, 5, 6, 7)
- Guide teachers towards organising co-operative activities
- Present specific activities for classroom practice.

## Final Competences

### Teachers will be able to

- Identify cross curricular competences and decide how to develop them in their everyday activity
- Increase students' personal responsibility and the respect of the established rules
- Promote students' positive attitude within groups
- Develop a positive and constructive student attitude about learning processes.
- Reflect on their teaching style
- Organise activities

### Students will be able to

- Activate language skills for personal expression and communication
- Develop relational competences
- Use learning strategies such as
  - Inference
  - Transfer
  - Control
  - Evaluation – self evaluation

## Methodology

This learning path is divided into 4 steps

- **STEP 1** - Reflecting on reference materials
- **Task 1** - Teacher's Task
- **STEP 2** - From theory to practice, experimenting with classroom activities
- **Task 2.1** - Organisation and set up
- **Task 2.2** - Experiencing positive interdependence through reading comprehension
- **STEP 3** - Getting self-feedback and reflecting on personal teaching style
- **Task 3** - Teacher's Task
- **STEP 4** - Developing key competences through oral and written activities
- **Task 4.1** - Oral interaction
- **Task 4.2** - Using creativity
- **Task 4.3** - Using ICT
- **Task 4.4** - Testing
- **Self evaluation**

### STEP 1: Reflecting on reference materials

The first step of this learning path is intended to make teachers reflect on reference materials and the way they could be transformed into practice.

For this reason a careful reading of the Recommendation is suggested. Further readings could be provided by co-operative methodology materials such as those written by Roger T. and David W. Johnson, [The Cooperative Learning Center at The University of Minnesota](#).

#### Task 1 - Teacher's Task



In order to reflect on cross-curricular competences to be developed in the classroom, work in pairs or small groups and, by focusing on the Recommendation and other suggested reference materials

- Find out the competences you think have to be developed in your classroom practice.
- Analyse in which way co-operative learning methodology could help you in developing some key competences.

- Compare your ideas with other teachers-in-training.

## STEP 2: From theory to practice, experimenting with classroom activities

Let us consider the Learning to Learn and the Social and Civic Competences. They are essential to any kind of teaching/learning process, but how can they be integrated into everyday practice?

Here, co-operative learning methodology is suggested as a learning procedure to develop social and civic competences, focusing on the essential knowledge and skills aimed at understanding *“the codes of conduct and manner generally accepted in different societies and environments (e.g. at work). It is equally important to be aware of the basic concepts relating to individuals, and non-discrimination, society and culture”* (from Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council 18 Dec. 2006). Co-operative methodology is particularly recommended at the beginning of secondary school, when students meet new friends and start to build or strengthen their learning strategies.

Using co-operative learning does not mean having students work in a group doing their own work, a co-operative group has to be organized and managed by the teacher and should be based, according to Roger T. and David W. Johnson, on five basic elements: positive interdependence, face to face interaction, individual accountability, relevant interpersonal and small-group skills and group processing.

The suggested activity mainly focuses on positive interdependence, but the other elements are also involved.

It starts by making students aware of the importance of the social and relational competences they need in everyday life by experiencing them in their classroom work.



### **Teaching strategies**

First of all the students must be taught about the main elements of the co-operative approach. This could start from the information they can provide from their own experience. For example, the teacher could ask them to explain the meaning of “co-operative” using their own words and ask them to give an example of couples or groups that in fairy tales, novels or cartoons by working together, succeeded in achieving a positive result or a task.

Then the teacher should inform the students about some of the main aspects of the co-operative method for instance individual accountability and the respect of the established rules.

The teacher should make the students understand one of the basic elements of co-operative learning which is the so-called positive interdependence. *“Positive interdependence exists when students perceive that they are linked with group mates in such a way that they cannot succeed unless their group mates do (and vice versa) and/or that they must co-ordinate their efforts with the efforts of their group mates to complete a task”.* (Roger T. and David Johnson)

In other words they should understand that they *“sink or swim together”*.

## Prerequisites

This activity is for students in the first year of Middle School, they should be able to understand and give personal information, express feelings, express possession, talk about their house/bedroom and talk about what they are wearing. They should know simple structures like the verbs to be, to have, the present simple of ordinary verbs, articles, short answers, place prepositions, noun-adjective position and the imperative.

## Task 2.1 - Organisation and set up



### Step Tasks

- The teacher: forms small groups and assigns one of the roles mentioned below to 3 students.
- The students: are asked to take individual responsibility for the role they have been assigned.

After having explained to the students the meaning of co-operative work, the teacher should establish the **checkers** (the social roles within the group). The **“sound checkers”** must control the noise level within the group, the **“turns checkers”** must make sure that the students take turns in speaking and the **“desk checkers”** must check that the students move around the class and form groups in a proper way. The general idea is to promote individual responsibility and a positive attitude towards group work. If the students learn to use social skills in class they will have positive interpersonal relationships and could share knowledge, experiences, emotions, caring and psychological help. This would represent a further step in the students’ personality development and in the building of their learning strategies.



A reflective activity at this stage could be done by asking students to explain the importance of social skills in order to make them aware of the positive effects of this attitude in class work. Reflecting on one's learning process is an important passage to developing or strengthening the fifth key competence of the recommendation: **learning to learn**:

*"the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organize one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training"* (from Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council 18 Dec. 2006).

## **Task 2.2 - Experiencing positive interdependence through reading comprehension**

### **Step Tasks**

- The teacher: prepares the texts and gives them first to each student of the group, then gives another text to the whole group. The teacher encourages reflections on the co-operative learning process. The teacher evaluates the results.
- The students: complete the first text individually then collaborate with their information to complete the whole text. They reflect on the positive and negative aspects of the group work and on what can be improved.

The activity suggested for this step is the reconstruction of a text. The teacher gives each student a text with some missing parts to be filled by answering a series of multiple choice questions. (See attachments 1.1, 1.2, 1.3).

Each member of the group has a different text. In this first phase the students must work individually. In the following phase, by collaborating, they must complete another text that summarizes the contents of the previous passages.

The group work task is to complete the final text in the shortest possible time.

To encourage the reflection on the co-operative learning process, at the end of the lesson the teacher could ask the students to think about the activity they have just finished and write at least two positive aspects of the group work and at least one that needs to be improved (see attachment 5).

A final check of the activity could be done at the end when the teacher gives each student a correct version of the final text: see attachment American football: Freddy Adu.

### STEP 3: Getting self-feedback and reflecting on personal teaching style

If you have tried activity 2.2 in your class, it is time to get feedback from yourself and reflect on what happened. Whatever your lesson was like, there will have been something good and/or something that could be improved. To become aware of this, "hot and cold feedback" (J. Scrivener "Learning teaching" Macmillan) is a way of considering it. Self-reflection should occur after every step of this path.

#### **Task 3 - Teacher's Task**

Hot feedback: as soon as you finish teaching, write a description, using a few sentences, of what happened and your reactions and feelings.

Cold feedback: the following day, add a few more sentences, both on positive aspects and on those that need work.

### STEP 4: Developing key competences through oral and written activities

#### **Task 4.1 - Oral interaction**

##### **Step Tasks**

- The teacher: prepares the questions asking the student to collaborate, the teacher explains the activity "numbered heads together" and organizes the groups.
- The students: answer the questions, first individually, then by asking their friends the necessary information and filling in a chart. Then they introduce themselves and talk about the other components of the group. They evaluate the activity.

The following step is mainly concerned with communication in foreign languages, but also involves the fifth and the sixth competence of the Recommendation. The communicative goal in this step focuses on: introducing oneself and one or more friends. The activity that teachers can present is called [Numbered heads together](#). This is intended to improve the interaction among students and develop a class identity.

Each group of two/three students receives a list of questions referring to personal information, belongings, interests etc. Each student must answer the questions individually, then ask his/her friends and fill in a chart with all the information he/she has (see attachment 2).

In the following phase each student introduces him/herself and talks about the other components of the group describing the main aspects of their personalities. This task is intended to revise and consolidate the communicative function “describing people”, interacting to obtain information, to experiment and improve the positive interdependence and collaboration in the group giving the students the chance to relate to each other to obtain the most from the group work.

#### **Task 4.2 - Using creativity**



##### **Step Tasks**

- *The teacher*: organizes the groups and gives directions about the activity.
- *The students*: use their information and competences to project and realize the task which is to describe and draw a friend’s house/bedroom on the basis of their information and creativity.

The task suggested for this step is a creative activity: describing and designing a friend’s house/bedroom on the basis of the information collected in the previous phase. The students can ask more questions if necessary and use their imagination. At the end, they could be asked to give reasons for their choices (see attachment 3).

This task could be done with students working in pairs. The teacher, in this case could assign only two roles such as the sound checkers and the turns checkers.

To end this step, the teacher could suggest a gallery tour activity, consisting of an exhibition of the students’ drawings, a description by the author of the drawing and a general comment from those whose house/bedroom has been painted.

This activity is intended to strengthen the development of social abilities and a better knowledge among students. The students, in fact, are asked to identify themselves with another student and get his/her characteristics. This activity also

involves the development among young learners of the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship key competences especially as concerns the

*individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives” and “This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance”.*

(from Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council  
18 Dec. 2006)

### **Task 4.3 - Using ICT**



#### **Activity 1**

#### **Gallery tour activity using a Power Point presentation.**

#### **Procedure**

- 1) Ask the students to bring in a digital photo of their bedroom.



- 2) Ask the students (in pairs) to make a power point slide with the drawing and the real bedroom of the student.
- 3) Ask the students to guess whose bedroom it is and to spot the differences between the photo and the drawing.

The same activity could be suitable for an interactive whiteboard

- **Procedure**


Show the slide on the whiteboard and ask the students to spot the differences by describing and marking them on the screen. This activity exploits the power of images to support linguistic activities and the development of a communicative competence. Students are emotively engaged because what is shown and talked about belongs to their own experience. Moreover, they can play a physical part in the lesson.



### Activity 2

A very motivating vocabulary work activity for the students could be done on line using games and quizzes on websites designed for teachers and ESL students'. As an example see: [Things in my house](#). This activity is based on vocabulary of things in the house, but there are a lot of different possibilities for vocabulary revision. A choice of vocabulary work activities (crosswords, multiple choice etc.) can be found on the following websites: [Learnenglish.britishcouncil](#) and [Links of Interest to Students & Teachers of English as a Second Language](#).

### Task 4.4 - Testing & Self Evaluation

 The whole activity could end with written work. The students have to introduce themselves and a friend, describe his/her house/bedroom and also their friend's. The written production should contain the basic information such as: name, age, physical appearance, personality, city, address, family, pets (if any), hobbies, house/bedroom, furniture and objects in the house/bedroom. Evaluation is based on these criteria: completeness of information, variety of vocabulary, accuracy (see attachment 6).

A follow-up activity concerning error analysis and reflection could be made after the teacher has corrected the texts and told the students the types of mistakes, by asking them to think about their mistakes and correct them. They could do it individually or work in pairs. Here is an example of a chart to be completed by the students while reflecting on their mistakes.

<b>Type of mistake (Teacher)</b>	<b>Explanatory notes (Student)</b>	<b>Corrected sentences (Student)</b>	<b>Final check (Teacher)</b>
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He favourite hobby is basketball <b>ww*</b>	Wrong word, a possessive adjective is necessary	His favourite hobby	✓
She have got one brother <b>#*</b>	The third person of the verb to have is HAS	She has got	✓

**Code:** ww means wrong word

#means number or agreement understanding mistakes.

Understanding mistakes: a code

(from Assirelli- Curtis- Berardi- Santandrea: "Speak Easy" Celtic Publishing 2007)

**Sp** = Spelling (errore di ortografia)

**ww** = wrong word (parola sbagliata)

**Λ** = word missing (manca qualcosa)

**#** = agreement (errore di concordanza)

**Ø** = omit something (togli qualcosa)

**wo** = word order (ordine delle parole sbagliato)

(This code has been used in the textbook "Speak Easy" vol.1 Celtic publishing 2007).

The mistakes could be underlined by the teacher or marked using a code as in the chart in order to be more precise.

Self-correction, reflection on mistakes and the feedback given by the teacher is a further step of self awareness and moves towards the "*individual's ability to handle obstacles and change*" as stated in the fifth key competence.

A general evaluation of group work could be done by the students at the end of the activity and compared with the previous evaluations to see if there has been improvement and what still has to be done.

### **Self evaluation**

This final section is for helping you in the self-assessment of your progress after performing the tasks of this learning path.

Read the following indicators and assess your progress using the scale from 1 to 5:

1 = very poor

2 = poor

3 = satisfactory

4 = good  
5 = very good

	1	2	3	4	5
I can identify cross-curricular competences and develop them in my everyday activity					
I can design activities to promote and develop students' social competences					
I can implement strategies to make students reflect on their learning processes and evaluate them					
I can reflect on my teaching style					
I can make changes in my teaching activity and style when necessary					
I can implement creative activities in the language classroom					
I am willing to put new ideas into action in my teaching practice					

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[Council of Europe](#) – Common European Framework of Reference Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment

[Beginner vocabulary](#)

[Numbered heads together](#)

[Links of Interest to Students & Teachers of English as a Second Language](#)

[Wordsearch](#)



## Sintesi in italiano

Lo sviluppo delle competenze chiave (secondo la Raccomandazione Europea) nella classe di lingua inglese.

Una delle maggiori sfide per i governi ed i sistemi educativi europei in particolare, è rappresentata dalla necessità, attestata dalla Raccomandazione Europea (18 dicembre 2006), di fornire ai cittadini europei l'acquisizione di competenze chiave per favorire il processo di apprendimento lungo tutto l'arco della vita, che permettano loro di adattarsi in modo flessibile ai continui cambiamenti che il mondo odierno e la globalizzazione richiedono.

I docenti sono quindi chiamati ad integrare nei loro curricula tali competenze in modo collegiale come una sorta di trama su cui costruire il processo educativo. Lo scopo di questo percorso è quello di aiutare gli insegnanti a trovare strategie da utilizzare per condurre gli studenti all'acquisizione delle competenze trasversali indicate nella Raccomandazione e ad integrarle nei loro curricula.

Questo percorso prevede il consolidamento di alcune funzioni linguistiche e, allo stesso tempo, lo sviluppo di competenze chiave quali la capacità di comunicare, avere relazioni positive, cooperare, risolvere problemi, affrontare nuove situazioni e riflettere sul proprio processo di apprendimento.

### **Obiettivi di apprendimento:**

- Riflettere su metodologie e strategie utili per lo sviluppo delle competenze chiave (specialmente le competenze 2, 5, 6, 7)
- Guidare i docenti all'organizzazione di attività cooperative
- Presentare attività didattiche per la classe

### **Competenze in uscita per il docente:**

- Identificare le competenze trasversali e decidere come svilupparle
- Incrementare il senso di responsabilità personale dello studente e il rispetto delle regole
- Promuovere un atteggiamento positivo degli studenti all'interno del gruppo di lavoro
- Sviluppare atteggiamenti positivi e costruttivi negli studenti nei confronti del loro processo di apprendimento
- Riflettere sul proprio stile di insegnamento
- Organizzare attività didattiche

### **Competenze in uscita per lo studente:**

- Attivare abilità linguistiche per la comunicazione e l'espressione personale
- Sviluppare competenze relazionali
- Usare strategie di apprendimento quali: inferenza, transfer, controllo valutazione, autovalutazione.

## **Metodologia**

Il percorso è costituito da quattro step suddivisi a loro volta in sotto paragrafi, il primo prevede una riflessione sui documenti di riferimento e su come i principi in essi affermati possano essere integrati nella pratica didattica. Il secondo step procede con il passaggio dalla teoria alla pratica, ovvero come sviluppare le competenze sociali e civiche attraverso l'applicazione dei principi fondamentali dell'apprendimento cooperativo e l'organizzazione di attività didattiche ispirate a tali principi. Lo step 3 propone al docente un momento di riflessione ed autoanalisi della propria attività didattica. Il quarto step presenta attività per lo sviluppo della seconda, della quinta e della sesta competenza chiave della Raccomandazione con verifica finale delle attività.