



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Master's Degree programme – Second Cycle
(*D.M. 270/2004*)
in European, American and Postcolonial
Language and Literature

Final Thesis

—
Ca' Foscari
Dorsoduro 3246
30123 Venezia

English Literature and the
Importance of Motivation:
A Theoretical and Practical Reflection on the
Role of Motivation in Learning EFL Literature

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Graziano Serragiotto
Ch. Prof. Shaul Bassi

Graduand

Laura Perin
Matriculation Number 835054

Academic Year

2014 / 2015

Acknowledgments

To begin with, I would like to thank my supervisors, Graziano Serragiotto and Shaul Bassi, for their helpful remarks, comments and for their availability in the past months.

I also would like to express my gratitude to Maddalena Fantini who helped me develop the final study. Her guiding presence gave me the possibility of experimenting activities and experiencing the teacher profession. I consider her a great example of a committed teacher and a great professional. For this reason, I am really grateful for having had the possibility of working with her.

Out of the Academic context, I would like to thank my whole family, my inspirational grandparents especially, who taught me commitment and perseverance. Furthermore, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to my parents who gave me the opportunity of being here and of reaching this objective. With their discrete but strong presence they have always supported me and believed in me, even in difficult moments. I would also like to express my gratitude to my brother and Genni who have always been by my side and brought happiness in my life.

I owe more than a thank to my friends who have always loved me just for who I am with patience and affection.

And finally, I wish to express my most profound gratefulness to the person I love. Thank you for always being there for me, for being my friend, for loving me... and for being a great excel user!

Contents

Introduction	vi
<i>Chapter 1</i>	
FL Literary Education: a way of widening student knowledge	1
1.1 Culture as the pursuit of freedom	3
1.2. A subject called Literature: a reflecting mirror	6
1.2.1. What is Literature and what is Literature for?	6
1.3 Language Education and Literary Education: two opportunities of learning a language	9
1.3.1 Language Education.....	9
1.3.2. Literary Education	16
1.4. The meeting point: Literary Education in a foreign language.....	21
1.4.1. History of the subject: how FL literary teaching has developed	22
1.4.2. Literary Education's different approaches: advantages and disadvantages.....	29
1.4.3. The modular approach and the construction of the curriculum of literature	31
1.4.4. What to include and what to exclude?	33
<i>Chapter 2</i>	
The protagonists of the teaching action: students and teachers	35
2.1. The fulcrum of Literary Education: the student.	37
2.1.1. The student's brain: a bimodal machine	37
2.1.2. Every student thinks differently. The theory of multiple intelligence	44
2.1.3. Student ways of learning: cognitive styles and learning styles.....	46
2.1.4. The student's inner-self: personality.....	49
2.1.5 Different types of students: child, adolescent and adult.	50
2.1.5.1 The child and cerebral plasticity	51
2.1.5.2 The adolescent learner.....	53
2.1.5.3 The young adult learner.....	56
2.1.5.4 The adult learner.....	57
2.1.5.5 The group of students: the class	58
2.1.6 The student: a reader and creator of hypertexts	62
2.2 The teacher, a multifaceted figure	67
2.2.1. The director of the didactic action: the teacher.....	67
2.2.2 The teacher as a figure in evolution	69
2.2.3 The world changes and so does the teacher: the teacher as a professional.....	71
2.2.4 Teacher of literature: an inspiring intellectual	74
<i>Chapter 3</i>	

The world surrounding the teaching action.....	77
3.1 Building receptive and productive skills	79
3.2 The architects of the teaching action: from the European Union to the class	81
3.2.1. The European Union and its programmes	82
3.2.2 The creators of curricula and teaching materials	85
3.2.3 The organisation of the teaching material.....	87
3.3 The instruments of the teaching action.....	89
3.3.1 The text book: an advantage or a disadvantage?	91
3.3.2. Technology at school: a productive source of interest.....	95
3.3.2.1 The CD player	99
3.3.2.2 The DVD player	100
3.3.2.3 The computer and the use of the internet	101
 <i>Chapter 4</i>	
Motivation: an essential factor in FL Literary Education acquisition.....	105
4.1 What is motivation? Why is it considered so important?.....	106
4.2 Theories and models of motivation	107
4.3.5. Krashen's SLAT on motivation	116
4.3 Motivation and Literary Education.....	117
4.4 Motivation at school: a competence to be built.....	119
4.4.1 Three pre-concepts.....	120
4.4.2 The student's personal relation with leaning tasks: internal and external attributions	121
4.4.3 The motivating character of the learning assignments, the value of the task	125
4.4.4 Teaching strategies towards independence and self-efficacy	130
4.4.5 Social factors influencing student's motivation.....	131
 <i>Chapter 5</i>	
A study on a sample class approaching English Literature.....	136
5.1. Brief introduction to the case: main purposes and research questions.	138
5.1.1. Main purposes	139
5.1.2. Basic research questions	139
5.1.3 General principles to be applied	140
5.1.4. How to stimulate motivation.....	141
5.2 Material used: questionnaires and teaching materials	142
5.3 The class: main characteristics, attitudes and curriculum	143
5.4 Analysis of activities and data collected through questionnaires	146
5.4.1. Definition of the initial context: phase 1.....	146

5.4.1.1. Data analysis	148
5.4.1.2. Preliminary considerations	153
5.4.1.3. Phase 1 conclusive activity: a suitcase filled with books.....	155
5.4.2. Phase 2: the creation of a module responding to student exigencies	155
5.4.2.1. Literary module characteristics and organisation.....	156
5.4.2.2. The teaching plan	157
5.4.3 Phase 3: final data, new context, main findings and reflections	176
5.4.3.1 Final questionnaires and general feedback.....	177
5.4.3 Final situation and conclusions	184
<i>ANNEX A</i>	186
<i>ANNEX B</i>	194
<i>ANNEX C</i>	195
<i>ANNEX D</i>	196
<i>ANNEX E</i>	197
<i>ANNEX F</i>	198
<i>References</i>	200
<i>Sitography</i>	202

Introduction

« Si je me demande aujourd'hui pourquoi j'aime la littérature, la réponse qui me vient spontanément à l'esprit est : parce qu'elle m'aide à vivre. [...] Plus dense, plus éloquente que la vie quotidienne mais non radicalement différente, la littérature élargit notre univers, nous incite à imaginer d'autres manières de le concevoir et de l'organiser. Nous sommes tous faits de ce que nous donnent les autres êtres humains : nos parents d'abord, ceux qui nous entourent ensuite ; la littérature ouvre à l'infini cette possibilité d'interaction avec les autres et nous enrichit donc infiniment. Elle nous procure des sensations irremplaçables qui font que le monde réel devient plus chargé de sens et plus beau » (Todorov, La Littérature en péril, 2007)¹

This brief but eloquent concept by Tzvetan Todorov constitutes the key concept of my thesis and the main message I tried to transmit to the secondary school students I worked with during my internship experience at Liceo Brocchi. According to Todorov, literature could be considered a method to enrich and deepen people's knowledge of the world and of themselves. The more a person reads, the more he may expand the boundaries of his mind.

As a matter of fact, it is possible to regard literature as an instrument for the understanding of other human beings, their behaviours, their ideas and their cultural environments. Each book, page after page, unfolds a previously unknown world to the reader. Consequently, every written work represents a voyage into the author's imaginary world firstly and, secondly, a journey into the time he lived and wrote in. It is, in the end, an experience of self-discovery, of which the final stage represents a chance for the reader to better understand himself or to feel welcomed and understood by the sensitivity of a far-removed person, real as the writer or fictional as a character.

This thesis is a reflection on the presence and role of literature in Italian high schools and the keystone position of motivation among the factors of success in teaching literature. The reason I chose this particular mingling of disciplines as the field of my final thesis is linked to the will of representing what I have been so far (a student), the field I have been studying (English Literature), and what I aspire to become (a teacher). With this as a starting point, I decided to practice what I have learnt, trying to inspire high-school students in a rather short period of time. A further motivation for my choice is well represented by my personal attempt to answer to the main

¹ *If someone asks me why I love literature, the answer that I immediately think of is that literature helps me live. I no longer seek in literature, as I did in adolescence, to avoid wounds that real people could inflict upon me; literature does not replace lived experiences but forms a continuum with them and helps me understand them. Denser than daily life but not radically different from it, literature expands our universe, prompts us to see other ways to conceive and organize it. We are all formed from what other people give us: first our parents and then the other people near us. Literature opens this possibility of interaction to the infinite and thus enriches us infinitely. It brings us irreplaceable sensations through which the real world becomes more furnished with meaning and more beautiful. Far from being a simple distraction, an entertainment reserved for educated people, literature lets each one of us fulfil our human potential.*

problems I detected the first time I met the sample class I later worked with: intellectual laziness and scepticism towards the subjects. With the intent of making the class discover the beauty of the wide world of literature and to understand the reason why it is in the school programme, I started a questionnaire-based study I will present and develop in Chapter V. This part aims at mapping the students' attitude towards English Literature and their motivation to learn more about it, to be curious and active during the lessons.

This paper is in fact dedicated to the importance of motivation in the process of literary acquisition. Therefore, every activity proposed to the class was chosen accordingly to students' interests and attitudes. During this three-month internship experience, I had the possibility to work with a class approaching English Literature for the first time. This way I had the chance to record the class's initial idea of the subject and to later work on this idea by continuously trying to motivate them.

The Krashenian role of motivation in the process of learning literature will be the *fil rouge* of this thesis that aims to demonstrate its importance in its theoretical and practical hues.

In the first chapter I am going to analyse the importance of culture and knowledge, underlining the role literature plays in the widening of men's mental boundaries. Then I am going to examine what Literature is and what role it has, the differences between Literary Education and Language Education and the intersection of these two forms of education: English Literature as subject studied in a second language. With this purpose, my study tries to inquire on the motivation of the presence of English Literature in Italian secondary school curricula, dealing with the problems that may appear and the approaches applied in teaching it, paying attention to the specific module-based structure of its programme.

After having analysed the main theoretical aspects of Literary Education, the aim of the second chapter is to describe the protagonists of the learning process. Different and fundamental aspects are here discussed: the concept of "class" (intended as a plurality of personalities and feelings), and the figure of the teacher (considered as an intellectual working as a linguistic facilitator). I am then going to observe the role and the main characteristics of the student's tool, the text book, and finally the teaching strategies used to activate curiosity in the students, so as to generate acquisition in the subject.

The third chapter is dedicated to the description of those instrument helping and facilitating the teaching action, the teaching material. A brief description of their advantage and disadvantages is to be provided focusing particularly on the role of the technological devices utilized in the teaching process.

In a forth moment, attention will be given to the particular energy that allows the brain to create new synapses and to deposit recent and new information in the student's mind. The primary role motivation plays in the learning process is going to be examined, taking into account the theories addressing it and the techniques that are necessary to stimulate it.

The practical study on a "sample" class is described in the fifth chapter. With the idea of highlighting how students responded to the proposed activities, the study follows a schematic order so as to be of more practical use to the reader. The working sheets and the material used will flow into a final appendix so as not to fractionate the reading process.

Finally, my personal considerations on the study will be expressed in the last part of this presentation.

To my dear grandfather Angelo Costantino Perin

Chapter 1

FL Literary Education: a way of widening student knowledge

Literature could be considered the extreme effort culture makes so as not to disappear, to reaffirm its life and its existence. Literature and culture could be seen as two entities mutually related and involved in the enrichment of one another. With this concept in mind, the ground of my thesis is going to be discussed and analysed in this first chapter. An excursus on the importance of culture and literature in the past and in the present is going to be presented. We are then going to proceed by putting particular emphasis on the role and nature of literature in school (Literary Education), considering its juxtaposition with Language Education. In order to come to the conclusion, in the last section, we are going to analyse the converging point between Literary and Language Education: Literary Education in FL. That is to say, the moment in which proper Language Education linguistic competences seep into the sphere of Literary Education so as to allow the student to decode a text written in a foreign language.

1.1 Culture as the pursuit of freedom

What makes us free creatures? A possible answer to this important and rather complex question could be found in the possibility of making choices; a possibility not possessed by everyone. Unfortunately, man's history is studded with episodes of deprivation of liberty: from women's conditions in the Middle East, to citizens forced to leave their possessions and family behind in order to venture into an illegal and perilous journey towards Europe just to regain a chance of a better life. Our personal liberty is the most precious thing we possess, and for this reason we ought to do everything we can so as not to lose even an infinitesimal fragment of it.

Every conscious choice we make, in every moment of our life, is the product of a reasoning process according to which we judge whether or not to do something new, to know someone new, or to undergo new experiences. But how do we decide? Basically by confronting the new option with the existing patrimony of information we started off with, information we built from the moment our brain created its first synapse, or in other words, our personal knowledge of the world surrounding us.

Knowledge and the process of its continuous expansion make us free. Free from mental boundaries, prejudices, ignorance and cynicism. Among the whole variety of species populating Earth, only the human being is characterised by the possession of culture. While animals live in the legacy of evolution, resulting from millennia of adaptation and change, the human being adds cultural evolution to this miraculous physical one. As "cultural evolution" is considered as the cultural succession and development of phases of human culture - from the *Lascaux paintings* to Picasso's *Guernica*, from *Beowulf* to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* -, we all have always lived immersed in culture, from its highest triumphs to its lowest and darkest falls.

Now we need to better define what culture is and how can we define it accurately in all its different hues.

First of all, the word "culture" acquires an anthropological meaning when associated with the concept of "heritage (individual or collective) of knowledge", that is to say the ensemble of customs and procedures shared by a group of people and passed down through the centuries. A plurality of cultures forming what can be defined as "great human culture" existed and still exists in the world. A further connotation the word "culture" may acquire is to be found in the concept of "cultural heritage of a population", identified in a certain period of time, as in the statements "the culture of Ancient Rome" or "Culture of Enlightenment". In these cases, the term loses its strictly anthropological connotation referring to the cultural inheritance of a population living in a defined historical period. To conclude, there is a third meaning often implied to describe a group

of people belonging to a country, and object of secondary school studies. Culture is here considered as the *summa* of what has been produced, collected and widespread in the given country. It is the reflection of what men have learned and developed in centuries.

As a matter of fact, an owned culture corresponds to the amount of civility a population or a single individual can rely on. The ampler it is the better, because it provides the person with the possibility of aspiring to a better life position. To be well-cultured and to constantly increase our knowledge means, in fact, to have a great number of instrumental knowledge and a well-structured baggage of notions to solve problems and to fully express our personality. As a consequence, an educated person is freer, more aware, and ready to face the challenges of life.

Where is the primary source of knowledge located? Knowledge, culture - as pointed out in the first paragraph - is related to the human brain's faculties. Human beings have always had the genetic potentiality of codifying their language in writing and, consequently, of reading. The feature that distinguishes man from other creatures is what one of the most important Italian geneticists, Edoardo Boncinelli, defines as "Human Environment" (Boncinelli, 2015, p. 15). This is intended as the place where people grow up and live, and where continuous interactions among people deeply modify our brain. Every man becomes such only after a total immersion in the environment composed by other individuals who, even possessing different characteristics and traditions, share some cognitive features and an unmistakably human behaviour. In this process, the entire world surrounding the individual is *imprinted* in his body and brain, becoming his own heritage of knowledge.

Why is the human being so complicated? We are wired animals with an overdeveloped brain, always looking for new answers to questions on the world we inhabit. Aristotle defined man as a "political animal", underlining his propensity towards sociality and interactivity, a social animal that has to be social in order to be described as *man*. Consequently, man is a social animal, or better, a cultural animal. The single human being can be seen as the product of a millenary biologic evolution but is considered *man* only when he takes part to the collective reality becoming a cultural being.

As mentioned before, culture can be regarded as the system of notions and precepts of a whole population. In the moment in which different cultures are gathered together under the name of "history of a human collective" it becomes clear how the triumphs and developments that Man has obtained are quite magnificent. The adventure called "human knowledge" started almost two million and four-hundred thousand years ago, when our ancestors started shaping fragments of stones so as to go hunting. Man is, as Boncinelli claims, "a symbolic animal" (Boncinelli, 2015, p. 35), the only living creature capable of seeing beyond things and thinking about them even in

their absence. This capacity of interpreting the world, the consideration of how objects can potentially become instruments, has led the human being to develop technology and art. The contemplation over what he obtained in centuries of discoveries and developments flowed into different disciplines: History, Philosophy, Law, Mythology and Religion. This immense encyclopaedia of knowledge, elaborated in millennia by the collective of human beings, is available to every generation through learning. Knowledge, *de facto*, can be transmitted, acquired and assimilated thanks to its systematic order and its reiteration by means of another human conquest: language. Unfortunately, unlike bones that leave fossil traces, language does not leave us any trace of its existence or the information it contained, unless it is written. Consequently, sharing a common code, a language, gives us the chance to access the precious contents and notions belonging to different traditions composing “human culture”. In this important and essential process of transmission school plays a fundamental part as a vehicle of knowledge.

Considered as the institutional extension of home education, and different from culture to culture, the main purpose of the school system is to allow its future citizens to take possession, at least in part, of the treasure of knowledge and practices constituting their own civilization and culture. But this educational project is not limited only to schooling time, representing instead the starting point of a life-long learning process known as “permanent education”.

Given its purposes, it is the school system’s duty to decide not only what is to be taught but also the strategies to use in order to obtain the maximum result. Every time and every country have pondered on this matter, and designed programmes responding to adequate didactic methodologies. The result is a scholastic system offering a range of competences, guiding students in the development of abilities and the creation of non-instrumental knowledge. Each school subject, be it scientific or of humanities, could enrich students’ personal baggage. Hence, humanities should contribute to the development of knowledge as much as scientific studies, regardless of the student’s talents or personal inclinations, but always keeping in mind that the class is an ensemble of individualities receiving and reacting differently to the teacher’s *stimuli*. School is the structure in charge of preparing the ground on which the seeds of creativity and curiosity could germinate. This can be done not only by encouraging and rewarding originality, but also by transmitting the idea that building a personal knowledge is not a way of obtaining what we want in life, but rather advices and assets that help to make it more possible to obtain. For this reason, it is important to maintain ourselves informed by reading, studying, experiencing the beauty of our country, travelling and find pleasure in acquiring new pieces of knowledge. The type of notion that we internalize is not important: each new piece of knowledge helps us to see more clearly what before was confused, to satisfy our curiosity and to enrich our personality. A curious

person should perceive the same amount of pleasure in reading a poem, contemplating a painting, listening to good music or hearing scientific news. What matters is to prove pleasure as a key factor in the production of the energy responsible for brain functionality but also the starting point of motivation in the learning process.

1.2. A subject called Literature: a reflecting mirror

Our time is, without any doubt, the outcome of the diffusion and progressive development of technology and at the same time victim of a loss of sensitivity. We are becoming more and more capable of everything, except of being human. This is because it is easier to improve technologically, whereas it results far more difficult to improve from the inside. Civilization could not be internalized, so it could not be transmitted biologically but only culturally through the collective. With this rather apocalyptic background, literature steps in and humbly offers itself as an antidote against this “dehumanization” process of man.

Literature contains a power in itself that is scarcely valued in school because of didactic needs and programmatic deadlines. With this as a starting point, we find it interesting to investigate on the nature of literature, its role in secondary school, the difference between Linguistic Education and Literary Education and their meeting point: studying literature in a foreign language, in this case, English.

1.2.1. *What is Literature and what is Literature for?*

The road to define Literature has often been travelled. However, its final definition is not easy to reach. A possible answer could be found by checking its etymology in the dictionary. The word “literature” finds its origins in the Latin word *lit(t)eratura*, which may acquire three different connotations. First of all, it is described as “Acquaintance with books; polite or human learning: literary culture”. It is then also described as “literary work or production; the realm of letters”, and finally as “literary production as a whole; the body of writing produced in a particular country or period” but also as “that kind of written composition valued on the account of its qualities of form or emotional effects” (Shorter Oxford Dictionary, 2002).

In his book, *Literary Theory*, Terry Eagleton tries to define literature through its relationship with language: “Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech” (Eagleton, 1996, p. 1-7). Literature is here seen as the finest product of the man’s ability to create language.

The way Literature is perceived and studied today dates back to a period between the 17th and 18th centuries when, with the hegemony of the bourgeoisie, it became instrument of what Palmisciano defines “democratic education of feelings”. The narration of stories was considered a pedagogic instrument to transmit values (Palmisciano, 2001, p. 59). Conversely, nowadays it is often perceived as a self-referential discipline lacking of any positive or useful reason to be studied.

But what is literature? Literature can be considered as a key we can use to open the treasure chest of human understanding. Each text - whether personal narrative, historical work, testimony, reflection, letter or memoir - allows its reader to discover a new dimension of the reality that surrounds him. Quoting Todorov: “literature helps me live [...] literature does not replace lived experiences but forms a continuum with them and helps me understand them”; he then continues: “literature expands our universe, prompts us to see other ways to conceive and organise it [...] opens to the infinite [...] possibility of interaction and thus enriches us infinitely”. He concludes by adding: “far from being a simple distraction, entertainment reserved for educated people, literature lets each one of us fulfil our human potential” (Todorov, 2007, p. 15).

Literature should not be considered as a mere systematic analysis of its components and style. On the contrary, it should be regarded as an invitation to reflection without which it would be deprived of its beauty, its fundamental value of universality, and the possibility of dialogue between different time periods. It is interesting, then, to see another example of the possibilities literature offers and the way it may deeply affect the human mind. The protagonist of this example is John Stuart Mill, that demonstrates the healing power of written words in his *Autobiography*. While in his twenties Mill underwent a period of severe depression which led him to become “insipid and indifferent” towards life. After having tried everything to cure his condition, he kept on living in a state of permanent melancholy for two years until it finally started to diminish little by little. The reason why this anecdote is interesting is related to a book Mill happened to read: a collection of poems by Wordsworth, which played a particular role in his recovering process. Mill found in Wordsworth’s words the expression of his own feelings. He writes: “in them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings [...] Wordsworth taught me [...] the common feelings and the common destiny of human beings” (Mill, 1989, pp. 81-89). Literature, in this case, is portrayed as a helping hand guiding the reader towards other human beings, capable of making him better understand the world and helping him to live.

A further consideration on literature is offered by the American philosopher Richard Rorty, who considers literature as something other than a simple remedy for ignorance but instead as a cure against our “egotism”. According to Rorty, the reader meets other people through the

reading process “making the acquaintance of new literary characters” (Rorty, 2001, p. 243-263). This happens, though, with one substantial difference: the reader knows everything about them. He knows what they are like outside and inside. He is familiar with their decisions and the reasoning process behind them. The conclusion of his analysis is: the more characters differ from us (the readers), the more they contribute to the widening of our mental boundaries. As a result, the reader’s frame of mind will add new reasoning mechanisms alongside those he already possesses. Therefore, making these new acquaintances does not modify the content of the reader’s mind, but rather its frame, directly, culminating in the evolution of the mental perception apparatus. As exposed in Rorty’s theory, the receiver is given the possibility of increasing his capacity of compassion with other beings different from him. Literature, as a wise old friend, invites the reader to see through the eyes of other people, to put himself in their positions and adopt their point of view so as to challenge his ideas and expand his knowledge.

What Todorov and Rorty share is also the key concept I tried to transmit to the students I worked with. In Todorov’s words: “Literature allows us to better understand the human condition and transforms each reader inwardly [...] literary studies would aim at helping us to reach meaning - postulating that meaning, in turn, guides us toward a knowledge of the human[...].” (Todorov, 2007 p. 17).

As a matter of fact, we should consider teaching literature in secondary school as a way to inspire students to take part in the journey of understanding the human being, encouraging them to participate in the dialogue amongst humans from different eras. The understanding process they undergo, while reading, is like playing with *Lego* (Palmisciano, 2001, p. 61). There are many pieces, units, with their own characteristics. Teaching literature means instructing the student so that he can disassemble every text in search of its components, and doing so he comes to comprehend the developing process the author underwent when producing the text. Developing reading competences is at the same time an objective of Literary Education. Thus, literature turns out to be a didactic experience that helps achieve textual competences but also an existential experience, a mirror, in which every student can see his own reflection. It is possible to find a piece of ourselves in every major text. Entering a literary text means starting a journey inside the text and ourselves.

In order to enter the text, the reader has to understand the code that codifies it. In the moment the student has to face a text in a Foreign Language (FL)², the mentioned journey is not

² It is interesting to delineate the difference between Foreign Language (FL) and Second Language (SL). A FL is a language which does not belong to the environment or country in which it is studied, while a SL belongs to the territory in which it is studied. As a consequence, in FL it is the teacher’s duty to select and to adapt the input: a linguistic model, composed both by the teacher’s knowledge and modern technologies, is offered to the students. On the other hand, in a context of SL, the student is fully immersed in the language. Consequently, the teacher cannot control both the input and the information acquired by the student.

so easy to begin with. In this case, Literary Education in English as Foreign Language (EFL) needs to be supported by Language Education. As a matter of fact, Literary Education in EFL could be regarded as the converging point between Literary and Language Educations, when it is considered a means to learning language.

1.3 Language Education and Literary Education: two opportunities of learning a language

Before analysing Literary Education in EFL, spending some time trying to understand the differences between Language and Literary Educations would be interesting. What do these differences consist in? How have they been studied in the past and how are they studied nowadays? And, moreover, which are the objectives of the two disciplines and the instruments used to reach them?

1.3.1 Language Education

Since the focus of this thesis is partially related to Language Education, giving a brief account of its main aspects seems important. We shall then examine Language Education's protagonists (student and teacher), its object (language), the motives justifying its existence, and the techniques and theories used in the teaching process.

What is a language, why do we learn it and how do we learn it? The human faculty we call "language" is a system of human communication that implies written or spoken words. By combining chains of words, according to the syntactical and grammatical rules that govern the language, a social group, a community or even a nation manage communication.

Language is the product of culture, the most astonishing product of the people who speak it. Since every community has its own system of communication, a foreign individual approaching a community different from his own will be exposed to a different code. As a matter of fact, in order to interact effectively with the new environment, the individual will have to learn how to use the language adopted in the world surrounding him. How does he learn it? By undergoing an education process that aims at learning the new code with the use of innate linguistic mechanisms of the human being. The "black box", the individual's mind, starts activating the processes it's aware of even though it does not quite understand the nature of. Educating, in this case, means activating, alimending, and motivating the above mentioned working mechanisms of every human being from zero to ninety years of age (Freddi, 1994, p. 2).

Language Education is intended as the action that aims to bring out a peculiar genetic faculty of man (*homo loquens*), the faculty of language, and his ability of acquiring not only the

native language and the languages of the environment surrounding him, but also other languages during his life (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 5).

The object of Language Education is language, or - as we will see later on - the creation of communicative competences. Among the different types of languages an individual may learn and use (Native Language L1, Second Language L2, Foreign Language FL, Ethnic Language EL or Classic Language CL), we are going to examine the case of English as Foreign Language. Before moving on to the reasons that motivate its teaching, it is of interest to understand what a Foreign Language is. A FL is a language different from the mother tongue studied and acquired through conscious commitment in school or in language courses. In these two situations, the student has to decode a linguistic input used by the teacher or that of recorded files. As far as communication is concerned, it would be confined to scholastic interactions.

The reasons linked to the presence of Language Education in school are divided into two macro-groups: educational and instrumental. As far as the educational is concerned, learning a language has educational and cultural motives. With the word “cultural” we do not intend, as in the past, an elitist cultivation of *otium*, but it has a new connotation. In fact, in the last century, the word opened up to include literature, music, art, psychological and scientific thoughts, and also behavioural schemes that address the way of living and thinking, social organisation, traditions, habits and the innovations made by the implied population. From this point of view, language has to be considered a cultural fact, mirror and vehicle of collective life. Language is a way to enter and decipher the vision of the world of a whole population. When the student acquires a language, he also takes on the cultural schemes of the foreign population with the great opportunity of observing them from the inside, without any prejudice. Learning a new language also means expanding the student’s possibilities of socialisation, by joining or integrating himself with groups that differ from his national one. The language student has the potential of enriching his process of cognitive, affective, and social self-affirmation, with the additional advantage of linguistic and cultural relativism. The result of cultural relativism is the recognition and the acceptance of different cultures.

If this is the educational reason behind the presence of Language Education in school, the instrumental one concerns the technical use of language as a concrete linguistic instrument that overcomes the use of translation and interpreters in favour of a purer and more effective communication.

After having considered nature and reasons, it is time to briefly analyse how Language Education is taught. The word “how” in this sentence implies the philosophy at the basis of the teaching process, the methodological techniques used in teaching a language, and the translation

of the philosophy into operative models. Provided that language is one of the most extraordinary enigmas the human intelligence has dealt with, it is not easy to understand its secrets. For this reason, many different sciences have been appealed so as to comprehend it in its entirety. Among these sciences we count: natural sciences, inquiring the sound and the biological aspects of the language; those sciences that deal with culture, so as to identify the interested vision of the world and consequent life schemes; philosophic sciences to better comprehend the essence of language and knowledge; those sciences that address communication, in order to analyse the modalities of the linguistic-communicative exchange in terms of statistics; and psychological sciences, in order to better understand the connection between language and behaviour. To these sciences we may add those educational ones that aim to detect and identify the educational potential of a language and to develop strategies to teach it. Literary Education is part of this last group.

Language Education presents itself as an interdisciplinary field involving education, psychology, communication research, computer sciences, anthropology and sociology. Its aim, as said before, is to find solutions to everyday life language related problems. It could be regarded as both a theoretical and a practical science that receives information from different fields. In order to reach its goal, every notion deriving from other sciences has to be systematised. In *Le Sfide di Babele*, Paolo Balboni, revising Anthony’s model, suggests synergetic work at the basis of Language Education.

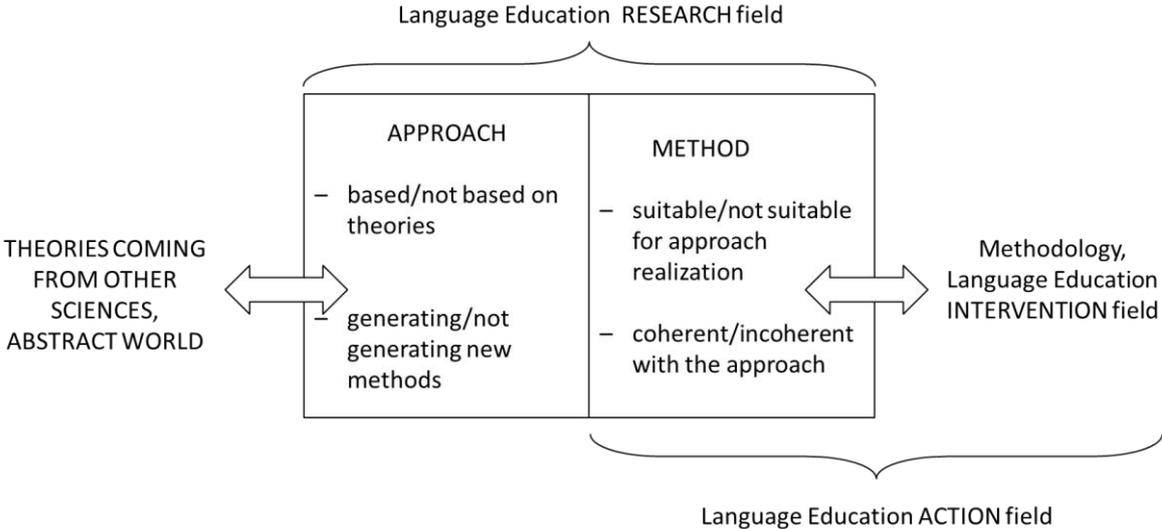


Image adapted from (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 6)

In the image above, adopted from *Le Sfide di Babele*, it is possible to distinguish between the left part - named “approach” and representing theoretical knowledge implied as referential theory - and the right part - called “method” and concerning the practical use of such knowledge in order

to operate in the world, projecting Language Education. The two bidirectional arrows stand for the mutual exchange between Language Education and the abstract world of theories.

The term “approach” refers to the basic idea of language, culture, communication, teacher, student and teaching process. There are different kinds of approaches, amongst which: structural approach, oral approach, notional-functional approach, natural approach and communicative approach. On the other hand, the term “method” concerns the conversion of the approach into an operative development, in order to organise and put the guidelines of the approach into effect. It is important to underline that the implied method is not interested in the techniques applied in class as much as in the instruments employed in the organisation of Language Education.

In order to better understand the differences between Approach and Method, we must briefly consider two opposite approaches: Formal and Communicative. A further reason for which the examination of this last approach is of particular interest stands in the fact that it is the precise approach used in the study we will later consider and discuss.

From the 17th Century to the 1960’s, Italian schools based their didactic programmes on the Formal Approach. As its same definition suggests, the fulcrum of this approach is the form of the language, its grammar, rather than its utilisation or its learner. According to this approach, the studied language is a system of stable and immutable rules. The student is a *tabula rasa*: studying is considered a duty and the student is not given the possibility of discussing the objects of the teaching process, its method and purposes. The origin of all knowledge is the teacher. He or she is a minister, possessing an incontestable knowledge based on the classics and on grammar manuals. Teacher and student interact through a mono-directional communication, *lectio*: the professor reads the text and briefly comments it while the students listen to him absorbing the words unconditionally. The methodological instruments taken into account are: text reading, to develop the oral dimension of language, and translation of foreign classics, to increase the written abilities.

Juxtaposing the Formal Approach with what can be seen as its opposite, the Communicative one, is also interesting. On the one hand, language is regarded as a system of rules, so the action’s focus will be on the form; on the other hand, according to the Communicative Approach, the concept of language and its use, most of all, undergo a change. In this case, the main idea overcomes the old simple question *how is language formed?*, rather focusing on the answer to two new questions: *what can we do with the use of language?* or, *what is language for?*. The answer is that language is necessary to do something: it is needed to communicate. The Communicative Approach in fact considers Language Education as an instrument for social

interaction. The student, no more considered a *tabula rasa*, is the centre of the teaching process; therefore, he has a central and active role as he is considered in his entirety: in both his interests and needs. The teacher abandons the role of “sacred” minister to become a guide, a facilitator, the coordinator of the teaching process. Student and teacher are both active parts in class, where the educational action implies different tools and techniques: text book with CDs, videos, Skype and so on.

But what does it mean to know a language? The Communicative approach is characterised by the notion of “communicative competence” and by the fact that the goal of teaching is to prepare the student to reach an *x* level in the foreign language. The legacy of this approach was initiated by Austin and Sarle, and later developed by other linguists (Trim, Wilkins, Widdowson), and finally Krashen, is the notion of “communicative competence”. To know a language means to achieve proficiency levels in every hue of the language and in every function it may be used for. And by “functions of the language” we mean the range of activities man can do by using language.

The notion of communicative competence refers to a mental reality that becomes practical when performed in the world, inside a frame of communicative events and in a social contest in which the person using the language is doing an action. The model of communicative competence can be summarised as below.

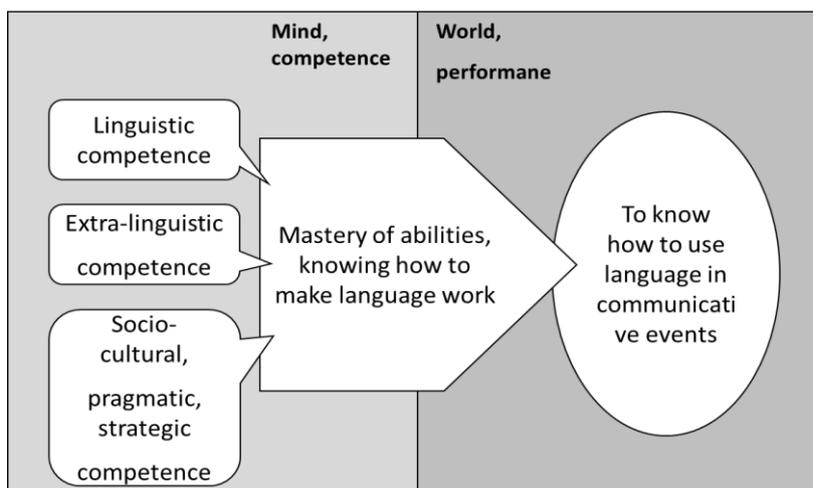


Image adapted from (Balboni P. E., 2014, p. 8)

Competence and performance are two key words that remind us of the Chomskyan dichotomy that compares the mental dimension of language (*competence*) to its realisation (*performance*). In order to freely use and understand a language, a person must achieve at least a basic level in three different areas of interest:

- a. *Linguistic competence*: the ability to understand and compose well-formed statements in a phonologic, morphologic, syntactic, lexical and textual sense;
- b. *Extra-linguistic competences*: the ability to understand and produce facial expressions and body gestures (*gestural*), the ability of evaluating the communicative impact that the distance between the interlocutors can have (*proxemic*), and the competence of understanding and recognising the communicative value of objects;
- c. *Socio-cultural, pragmatic, and strategic competences*: those competences related specifically to the language in use.

These mental competences are translated into communicative actions when used to comprehend, produce, and manipulate texts. The implied abilities are not confined to listening, reading, speaking and writing. They also have a role also in the so called “manipulative” abilities, as for instance summarising, translating, paraphrasing, taking notes and writing under dictation. This is defined as “mastery”, the mechanism of realisation of the given competence. Oral and written texts generated by the mechanism of “mastery” are used by the person, using the given language, to participate in communicative events ruled by social, pragmatic and cultural laws. In the moment a person successfully expresses himself, he proves to possess and control the competence to *know how to use language*. As a matter of fact, in order to build a certain competence a student will have to work simultaneously on the five components of linguistic competence, acquiring competences in each field to slowly improve his level. In order to reach a C2 level the student must obtain a complete preparation in every field of each former level.

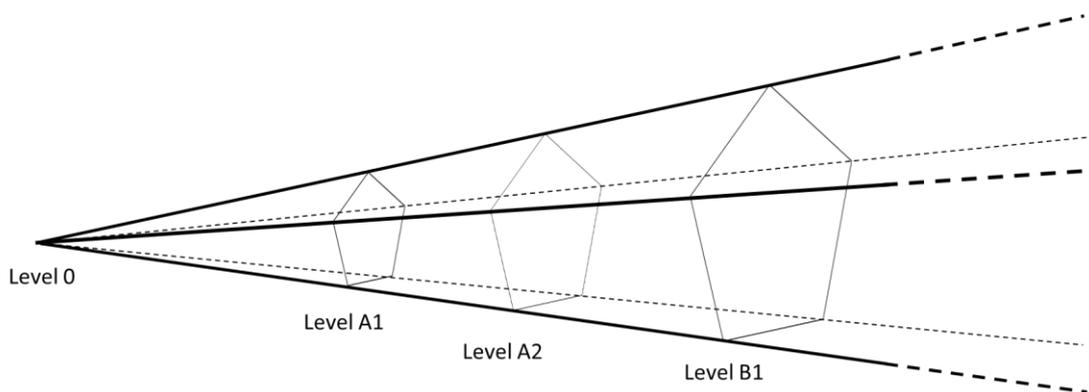


Image adapted from (Balboni P. E., 2014, p. 10)

In the graph are shown the five surfaces corresponding to the five competences discussed earlier. Two surfaces of the pyramid are visible in objective communication: the mastery of language and

pragmatism while the remaining three are not visible since they constitute a mental dimension, the competences. The areas of the figure (0 level, A1 level, A2 level, A3 level), situated perpendicularly to the major straight lines, regularly expand in dimension demonstrating both the product of Language Education and the importance of developing every aspect connected to language.

According to Freddi, Language Education is part of the wider General Education of a person addressing languages. During the process of education, the student undergoes a bidirectional process of *cultivation* and *socialisation*. Cultivation consists in interiorising the cultural schemes and the behaviours of a culture, while *socialisation* is the acceptance of the former schemes and behaviours and the integration of the subject in the group. When we move from General Education to Language Education, *cultivation* consists in learning a language and using it properly in every social context sharing the values, rules and behaviours of the foreign population speaking it. Once the student has experienced *cultivation* he is ready for the second part of the process, *socialisation*. *Socialisation* makes it possible for the student to become an integrated part of the foreign group and communicate freely.

Learning a foreign language implies an extension of the social relationships of the student, relating him with populations that think differently. This gives him the possibility of penetrating the meaning of culture and life, freeing himself from prejudices.

In conclusion, the development of communicative competence is considered the objective of Language Education. To know a language means to be able to understand and use not only words and grammatical structures, but also to correctly use a set of rules, typical of each culture. The linguistic competence is then joined by extra-linguistic competences and socio-cultural abilities. To know a language means mastering and successfully using these three sets of values so to achieve an objective. Dealing with different cultures is like dealing with different software: in order to communicate with them the speaker has to know them. The ability of reading this information is as important as the ability of reading a text. This ability will be discussed in the following section, in which Literary Education will be considered an extension of Language Education. Literary Education, in this case, concurs in the educational process of the student, to his awareness of himself and of the world surrounding him.

1.3.2. Literary Education

For a very long time, two different processes of learning, Literary Education and Language Education, were conceived as a sole discipline. The object of this extended field of studies was the simultaneous learning of rhetoric skills, composition of written essays and, finally, comment and interpretation of traditional texts, chosen for their dignity and ethic representativeness. In the last decades the situation has profoundly changed, embracing the new interpretation of Literary and Language Education as two different disciplines. Having already considered Language Education, we now move on to consider what Literary Education is, why it is still a school subject, which are its objectives, which part of Literary Education coincides with it and how it should be taught.

Regarding the concept of Literary Education, Balboni states in his *Educazione Letteraria e Nuove Tecnologie* that an effective definition of “Literary Education” (as found in many studies on this subject) would be “initiation into literature”. “Initiation” cardinal word in a perspective in which the student needs to be guided by a teacher-mentor in the discovery of the existence of literature. It is in this way that the student learns the values as general truth of literature, as well as its historic and cultural testimony without neglecting the way it can also become an aesthetic expression obtained through a peculiar use of the language itself. This last factor, the use of language, is in fact matter of Language Education, while the other components are to be taught by the same educator in a different guise. The language teacher dealing with literature, as testimony or as a universal truth, will assume the role of an “intellectual-educator”, whose aim is to encourage his students to approach, enjoy and evaluate literature’s virtues of beauty, culture and humanity (Balboni P. E., 2004, p. 6).

Literary Education has changed its purpose according to the historical period and the cultural movement it was involved in. From being source of an ethic model to becoming fertile ground for the creation of a new national identity, its purposes and uses are still being modelled. An example could be detected in the Platonist-based idea, by Gentile and Croce, according to which Literary Education is the discipline that allows the human innate faculty of lyric intuition and poetic imagination to bloom. With its focus on the poet’s expressiveness, and by poet we intend the creator of “ecstatic contemplator”, the main focus of Literary Education would be on the poet rather than on the socio-cultural background he lived in. What emerges from this is the necessity of separating poetry - aesthetically elevated, intangible, not-interpretable - from the rest of literature. One movement has Poetry intend Literary Education as the education to lyric intuition, to reach and comprehend the Sublime.

According to another movement also based on classical antiquity, Literary Education is regarded as rhetoric education, a discipline that aims at discovering the mechanisms regulating texts and learning how to use them properly in the creation of well-structured rhetorical texts. Etymologically defined as “the art of speaking”, the discipline of rhetoric taught how to structure a text and how to express it with the use of syllogisms and other instruments of both dialectic and analytic discourse. Commonly considered as a misleading persuasion device, rhetorical analysis here acquires a new positive role trying to describe the rules of text and teaching the students to grasp, interiorise and practice the rules implied in canonical texts.

After centuries, Literary Education continues to be studied as the ensemble of mechanisms that come to constitute a text, but with some interesting innovations generated in the period following the turbulent and innovative 1968. In the years of the birth of the first Italian semiotic treatise – and of the fresh ideas of linguists such as Todorov, Genette and the Italian Umberto Eco -, the didactic approach underwent a great shift: the communicative approach was in fact to be theorised. The ideas developed abroad were brought to Italy by those educators invited to join a special international Foreign Language Project, with the result of a vast dissemination of ideas and materials. It is in the 1980s that research in the literary field took a great step forward. The resulting developed principles are still today the general implant of the discipline, with just a few adjustments made due to the growing contamination of literature with other forms of art such as cinema, music and the impact of new technologies. Six years later, in 1986, the third academic year of Italian “liceo” was denominated as a hypothetical turning-point year, in which communicative competences need to be consolidated. According to this scheme, the first part of the third year is dedicated to the consolidation of textual competences, while the second focuses on the study of literary texts, their historical, social and cultural contextualisation and their actualisation. This is exactly the field of study that is going to be presented in Chapter IV. The results of this period of changes firstly concern the shift of focus from history of literature to literature itself (and a subsequent contextualisation of the texts). They secondly concern the forms of literature which are no longer confined to written language but instead consider its trans-codification into movies, music, video clips, and the text distribution system through the net, with new forms such as web novel, web poetry, blogs and virtual diaries. To all these forms, from an art form born 5 million years ago to the most recent use of the Internet, we add the immense quantity of information itself present online, in the net. It follows that Literary Education needs to update its purposes. It not only has to prepare analytic skills and emotional sensitivity for reading the texts, but it also has to bring additional skills such as selecting appropriate sources and creating

new types of virtual maps, that link information already owned by the student with new information acquired online.

After a brief account on the history of Literary Education purposes, it is interesting to consider the opinion of three Italian educators on the subject. When asked “what do we have to do with Literature?”, Remo Ceserani, Italian professor and literary critic, answers by articulating his own theory on the role of Literature. Differently from those professors asking to reduce Language and Literary Education to a mere achievement of good linguistic competence, Ceserani sustains the importance of a marked presence in school programmes of his interpretation of Literary Education: *Educazione all’immaginario*, Teaching Imagination. In a programme aimed at understanding the connections between society and culture, culture and literature, different means of communication, narrative, fiction and imagination, *Teaching Imagination* could help the student develop methodological initiative and flexibility, critical analysis skills and knowledge expansion, considered to be indispensable qualities for a person dealing with the complex society he lives in. The presence of Literature, and the product of the imaginary world it creates, is seen as necessary answer to the deepest and unmovable needs of man, and as a central element in the development of a non-superficial cultural experience. The text is not seen as an ensemble of rules or the product of a beautiful use of language; it is considered as a useful tool to experience emotions and situations through different genres in the safe world of fiction. The key word of the whole argumentation is “experience”. Beauty and ugliness, horror, terror and happiness are feelings created by the author through language. The artificial and controlled representation of life in the world of fiction is an instrument with great cognitive and educational potential. The reader experiences emotions (products of literary imagination) with the possibility of pondering over them without being directly involved. The final goal of Ceserani’s *Teaching Imagination* is to complete the student’s technical knowledge with a study in Humanities, in order to enrich his intellectual baggage with new abilities: creativity, sensitivity, and critical thinking (Ceserani, 2001, p. 15-19). A further consideration on the dialogue between text as a source of emotion, knowledge and the reader is suggested by Anna Baglione. She starts her reflection on the role of Literature describing two key-concepts: *complexity* and *change*. The word *complexity* refers to the complexity of the role of education in what she defines a “society of knowledge”. For this reason, it is fundamental to create new identities able to consciously and critically move in society and innovate it. *Change* deals with the mutation of learning modalities, cognitive styles and perceptions of reality for a generation accustomed to simultaneity rather than written texts and their intrinsic power. This said, Baglione proposes her own opinion on the relevance of literature. In her *scenario*, the teacher builds a programme responding to his students’ needs and attitudes in order to generate curiosity and a

shared imaginary background to instil an internal change in the student. Education becomes significant if the proposed content is part of the student's own project. It is considered indispensable to choose significant contents able to raise existential questions, connecting knowledges, self-images, and activating the mechanisms of interpretation typical of the act of reading. Through the reading process, the student enters the imaginary literary world facing linguistic problems, trying to predict the narration, experiencing new possible worlds, identifying and detaching himself from the way fundamental life themes are addressed and losing himself in the imaginary. Baglione agrees with Gardener when she shares his concept concerning the role of school and literature: school achieves its goal when it successfully conveys to its students that the world appears different to people "wearing different pairs of glasses". Literature can bring answers to its reader as much as the reader is capable of asking rich and complex questions: questions interrogating the values of the past in order to deal with the problems of the present. The class, during the lessons of Literature and Literacy Education, is to activate the process of interpretation based on the open dialogue and the direct confrontation with different opinions. The teacher is considered an intellectual whose role is to indicate, through chosen texts, a patrimony of values to know and to share. Literature is here considered a source of profound and inner interrogatives, and Literary Education is the discipline teaching how to formulate the right questions to answer to the students' needs (Baglione, 2001, pp. 53-59). Palmisciano, another Italian professor, reflects on literature highlighting what he considers Literature's great power: the enchantment of story-telling. Literature is here considered as an attention-grabber, something inducing men, children or adults to suspend their tasks in order to listen to the narration. In its plurality of forms, literature narrates the great gestures, adventures, tragedies and happy love stories, thus succeeding in conveying specific values from its pedagogic core. Palmisciano argues that the pedagogic idea of Literary Education is *Educazione democratica dei sentimenti* (democratic education of feelings). According to the Italian professor, reading means improving the instruments we use to understand and read the world and, consequently, the way we formulate our judgements. As supported by Cognitive Psychology, every text the student enters and analyses is confronted with his own encyclopaedia in the same way: every new piece of knowledge is the product of the comparison between the student's encyclopaedia and the new elements provided by external reality. In this perspective, Literary Education should be seen as a three dimensional experience involving author, text and the receiver, in which the receiver is the student with his age, his fears and his emotions. In relation to Palmisciano's idea, studying literature means to continuously work on our emotions and knowledge, constantly confronting them with the analysed texts. The goal of Literary Education is to create new competences through the confrontation of the student's personal

encyclopaedia with the new elements provided by reality and texts. These are competences such as those of a literary critic - since the student will learn how to understand the way the text was structured by each author and how to disassemble it down to its smallest components – and of a proper reader, intended as the competence to ably dialogue emotionally with the text. As a matter of fact, Literature becomes an existential experience, a mirror, in which the single student can see not the reflection of the immutable and silent texts but the reflection of himself and of others. Entering a text means starting a journey not only in the text but inside ourselves; a journey with a set destination or without a destination at all since it is not important to have one but to undergo the journey itself (Palmisciano, 2001, pp. 59-62).

In order to complete this panoramic on Literary Education, it is interesting to delineate the general objectives of teaching literature. From those orientated on the text to those focused on the receiver, the purposes of teaching literature respond to different educational needs: knowledge acquisition, skill acquisition and utilisation, and finally educational purposes. To begin with the first group, related to knowledge acquisition, the student is supposed to develop a certain familiarity with the texts, the authors, the literary currents, and the historical and social background of the texts in account. He should recognise the basic features of different literary genres and acquire the analytical skills (linguistic, structural and semiotic) necessary for textual analysis. Continuing with the acquired skills and their use, the student will learn how to use the above mentioned achieved competences while approaching new texts, being able to recognise the specifics of different literary texts and interpret them. Furthermore, the student will develop the ability to identify the relation between text and context, and texts and author, along with the ability to classify the typical characteristics of literary genres, including rhetoric, metric and text organisation structures. In conclusion, the educational purposes of Literary Education partially reflect the consideration on literature by Balboni, Ceserani, Palmisciano and Baglione. Literary Education aims at expanding aesthetic and ethic sensibility in the attempt to widen the student's emotional register; it also attempts to instil values of civil living, democratic citizenship, and acceptance and respect of both diversity and multiracialism.

The objectives of Literature do not change when we address literature in a foreign language, however it has a substantial difference concerning the first exposition of the discipline. On the one hand, students are exposed to their native language literature early in their lives, through fairy tales narrated by their parents, in kindergarten with the embryonic experience of teaching and then primary, secondary and finally high school. On the other hand, literature in FL is firstly experienced later, only assessed from the third year of high school. However, even if approached later, Literary Education in FL could have an advantage: it has the possibility of taking

advantage of all the literary competences the student has already acquired. Therefore, in spite of its linguistic disadvantage, Literary Education in FL can rely on a collected range of literary competences. For instance, the ability to qualify and classify a text, and consequently recognise a literary text among texts of different natures. This is a constitutive element of textual competence which is an essential part of the communicative competence the student develops first in his native language and subsequently transposes in the foreign one.

1.4. The meeting point: Literary Education in a foreign language

As we have seen so far, Language Education aims at creating and developing the linguistic competence of a proper speaker. On the other hand, the objectives of Literary Education are a variety of skills connected with the text, which is its main object. In the moment in which the student approaches a text in a foreign language the objectives and the skills acquired in Language and Literary Education combined with each other generate the field of the study presented in Chapter IV. Literary Education cannot be successful without language and linguistic competences. Among these competences, the most important in this case is certainly reading. Reading a text in FL can be hard for a student with a low linguistic level, however it offers infinite occasions of linguistic enrichment and achievement. Reading a text in the language it was written in constitutes an exposure to authentic material, very precious in the matter of learning a language. Every text unfolds thousands of worlds belonging to a semantic field the student did not formerly know. Literature in FL is useful first of all for its linguistic enriching power. In this situation, the role of the teacher, as an intellectual and facilitator, assumes a fundamental stance. He must pay attention to not mutilating the text with excessive technical requests, and simultaneously motivate his students to make the effort of reading a foreign text stimulating their need for comprehension.

Why teach literature in FL? There are various reasons, both interesting and fundamental. The first reason strictly concerns language learning. In order to fulfil its purpose, literature utilises language as an instrument in a special way, making the most of its expressive possibilities, renewing it and continuously enriching it. Reading a text means experiencing a language infinitely wider than common language, generating linguistic improvement and lexical expansion. A more practical reason justifying the teaching of literature in a foreign language has to do with motivation. After being studied as a mere language for years, the necessity for a fresh study subject becomes compelling. Consequentially, literature becomes an infinite source of texts that add a lot to the canonical linguistic side: interesting messages, exciting stories, and descriptions of human

experiences by creating alternative worlds different from ours. Literature presents various occasions to discuss, share and confront ourselves with interesting themes. Although the reading process could be hard, and everything but immediate, teaching literature encourages students to appreciate the text in its original form, motivating their curiosity to explore treasures of human knowledge. As a matter of fact, literature is permeated with contents. In this case, literature offers us a view of world that differs from our own. By experiencing diversity, the student investigates his own identity, consolidating his inner-self, and thus is guided in the identification and comprehension of others and, moreover, he perceives the fundamental equality of human experiences: love, suffering, fear, compassion and death. Language and culture are two inseparable entities. Therefore, one would hope that a student, a European citizen, would be able to read a different culture in its multiplicity of forms, from literature to architecture and from history to art. In the end, literature is a vehicle for ideas and values: civil, ethic and aesthetic. In a world that seems to forget the memory of its past, literature is a way to sustain the plurality and diversity of ideas and culture. It is an open invitation addressed to every student to reflect on life, for its generation is characterised by its impatient and immediate audio-visual communication.

1.4.1. History of the subject: how FL literary teaching has developed

As we briefly said earlier, in the 1970s the theorisation of the communicative approach marked a revolution in foreign language teaching. Teachers discovered the power of communication, linguistic functions, written and oral communications, a new way to read texts, from tourist descriptions to extracts of literary works. This new approach opposed the former formal and structural approaches based on the study of grammar. Nevertheless, the problems concerning Literary Education persisted. Language teachers could not find an approach that dealt with problems connected to teaching literature in a foreign language, a language partially known by the majority of his students. Literary Education in FL was merely based on the study of literature history - English, French, German or Spanish - and the analysis of brief passages of popular artists. The programme dealt with a fixed canon, with *Beowulf* (a rather difficult text to analyse in its Angle-Saxon original version) as a starting point and never coming to present authors belonging to the first or the second decades of the XX Century. As a matter of fact, Literary Education in FL took the form of Literary History study, addressing a small number of authors as representatives of a scanty number of texts, chosen not considering their linguistic difficulties or the interests of the students. Authors definable as modern or contemporary were not taken into account because of the lack of time and the abundance of other great names of the past. As a consequence, it became

impossible to consider present aspects of literature with themes surely more captivating and closer to the students' age and sensibility. This practice is well depicted in the chart below, in which the authors introduced in school are regrouped according to the period they lived in and compared to that of the generations immediately preceding the generation of students in class. As you can clearly see, the authors we usually define as canonical belong to a period of time preceding the students' by almost a century.

Students	Authors
Born 1986-1988
Parents (born in 1955-1960)	A. Carter, A. Byatt, P. Ackroyd, B. Chatwin, J. Barnes, I. McEvans, K. Ishiguro, M. Ondaatje, S. Rushdie, J. Fowles, M. Atwood, D. DeLillo
Grandparents (born in 1930s)	W. Golding, J. Osborne, D. Lessing, H. Pinter, N. Gordimer, T. Hughes
Great-grandparents (born in 1900)	S. Spender, G. Orwell, G. Greene, W.H. Auden, S. Beckett
Great-great- grandparents (born in 1875)	V. Woolf, J. Joyce, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, A. Huxley

Chart adapted from (Stagi Scarpa, 2005, p. 17)

A further consideration has to be made on this particular aspect. Studying contemporary authors has some advantages. On the one hand, it creates awareness of the cultural and social changes surrounding the students; on the other, it offers the possibility of acquiring important instruments of personal evaluation, not providing them with pre-determined hierarchies based on values or notoriety.

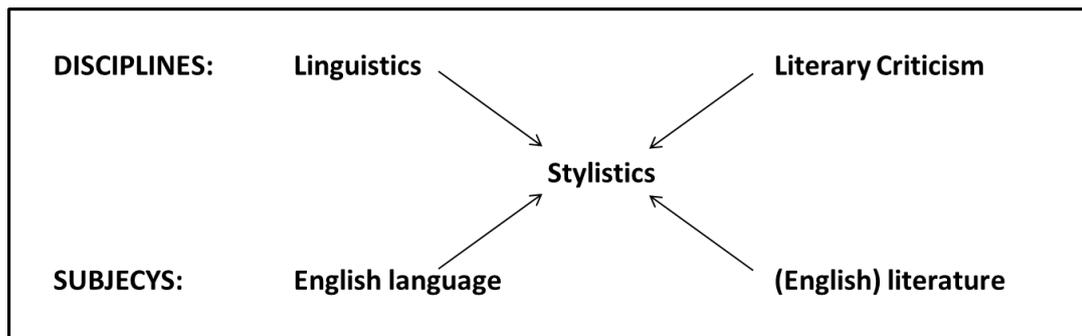
In the last decades of the XX Century, a further step was made with a contribution in the way the text was perceived. In 1975, H.G. Widdowson published one of the most fundamental texts for Literary Education in English as a foreign language: *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature*, edited by Longman. This text is seen as a landmark in the progress of educational conscience. First of all, Widdowson hypothesised a distinction between discipline and subject:

I want to define a discipline as a set of abilities, concepts, ways of thinking, associated with a particular area of human enquiry. [...] Subjects must be defined at different educational

levels in terms of pedagogical objectives whereas disciplines are defined in terms of theoretical requirements [...] The subject has to be defined in such a way to provide a basis for development, as a stage in process. Since some pupils will not be proceeding further in their education, it has to be defined as a complete process which will fulfil some more general educational purpose (Widdowson, 1975, p. 71-86).

The main concept Widdowson wanted to convey is bidirectional. From one point of view, Literary Education at a secondary school is not literary criticism and neither study of the history of literature. From the other, Literary Education has to be defined in relation to educational purposes and be considered as a temporary phase waiting for new developments. However, Widdowson specified, Literary Education must be conceived as part of a more general educational objective, in this way: the concern in the idea of teaching literature in its entirety, the pretension of turning the students into literary critics, the effort of working in isolation on the discipline and not considering a large-scale educational effort.

A further hypothesis by Widdowson is the existence of an approach to literature through what he calls *Stylistics*. With this term he describes what we have so far defined as the encounter between Language and Literary Educations, a mediation between two subjects: English Language and Literature. To continue its description, *Stylistics* concerns the way Language and Literature as school subjects are related to Linguistic and Literary Criticism disciplines. Linguistics focus their attention on the technical composition of the text, the product of linguistic system. As a consequence, the linguist will work on literature as a text, as a perfect execution of grammar rules and syntax. On the contrary, the literary critic focuses his attention on the contents of the written work, looking for deeper, more profound messages. The critic aim is to define the aesthetic vision at the base of the text, to find its message. *Stylistics* become here a connection between the two disciplines in the effort to comprehend how the text's linguistic elements combine, so as to create messages, and comprehend how literary texts are to be considered a means of communication. The stylistics approach deals with literature as a *discourse*, studying the ways linguistic elements contribute to effective communication and using linguistic analyses to understand the way the message is transmitted. The theory of *Stylistics* is schematised in the diagram here below (Stagi Scarpa, 2005, p. 19).



A supplementary improvement in Literary Education was generated by the debate on literary genres. Numerous French and English authors analysed the basic structures of each genre, highlighting the main components proper of each literary genre. In so doing, they contributed to overcome the idea that reading a text implies the same approach and that comprehension and evaluation of a literary text would be something spontaneous and instinctive. According to them, a better and deeper comprehension of a romance occurs when the student has experienced other literary forms earlier. In this situation, the student is conscious of the existence of different types of narrators, of the fact that they are characterised through their physical aspect, and that what they do or say is brought through what other characters say about them. Therefore, a romance could not be analysed as a dramatic or narrative text.

The third and last innovative critical event concerns the publication of the Reception Theory. Firstly theorised by Hans Robert Jauss and later developed by German literary scholar Wolfgang Iser, the theory moved the focus from the author/text relation to text/reader relation. The reader is here given a new role: the reading experience would imply the reader's active contribution to the text itself. In other words, it is the reader, the student, that partially determines the meaning of the text, grasping the aspects that connect it with the present and the aspects that reflect the reader's own personality. Consequently, in the moment the text is interpreted by the reader, according to his expectations and his cultural and ethical principles, the text abandons its immutability and objectivity and begins to speak to its reader. He brings his own range of values and preconceptions into the text co-determining its message and final meaning. Moreover, the reader possesses as much dignity as the text since he is the sole agent that gives it the possibility of living over and over again. From the educational point of view, this theory presents the advantage of having the student as the *fulcrum* of the reading process, conveying value to his interpretation.

One of the salient points of the Reception Theory has been the revision of the Eurocentric canon. Having considered the centrality of the text/reader relation, it was time to revise the canon and to study how other cultures perceive our canonical texts. An interesting experiment could be

made studying how a cardinal work of a certain author, as for instance Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, would be read and interpreted by postcolonial cultures or minorities (women, African-Americans, or Native Americans). An example of such an experiment could be detected in what is considered a feminist and postcolonial version of *The Tempest*, where a female author gives her personal reading of the Bard's story, giving voice to those characters that were previously silenced because of their savage nature: Sycorax and Caliban (Warner, 1993).

The last consideration we ought to make concerns Roman Jakobson's ontogenetic definition of linguistic communication which, employed in literary communication, has direct consequences on the educational approach. According to Jakobson's abstract model, communication is based on six constitutive and necessary elements. According to the interested purpose in each, the elements take on different functions. The elements necessary for communication to occur are: context, addresser or sender, addressee or receiver, contact, common code and language. Every component is a focal point in the relation between message and factor. These roles have the following corresponding communicative functions: *referential*, *emotive*, *phatic*, *meta-lingual* and *poetic*. These communicative functions are then presented in their differences: the *referential* function is referred to the context, so the message is related to external reality; the *emotive* function has the objective of giving the speaker the possibility to express himself; the *conative* function is attributed to the receiver, its goal being that of making the addressee do or think something; the *phatic* function deals with the contact between two individuals and is constituted by those words and sentences that make it happen. The function defined as *meta-lingual* concerns the code: the language is here clarified and elucidated. In conclusion, the *poetic* function takes the message itself into account, with the verbal, stylistic and phonetic aspects it presents. It is interesting to analyse this model because it can be applied to literary communication as well. Through some modifications and developments, the final result can be read in the chart below.



Image adapted from (Stagi Scarpa, 2005, p. 22)

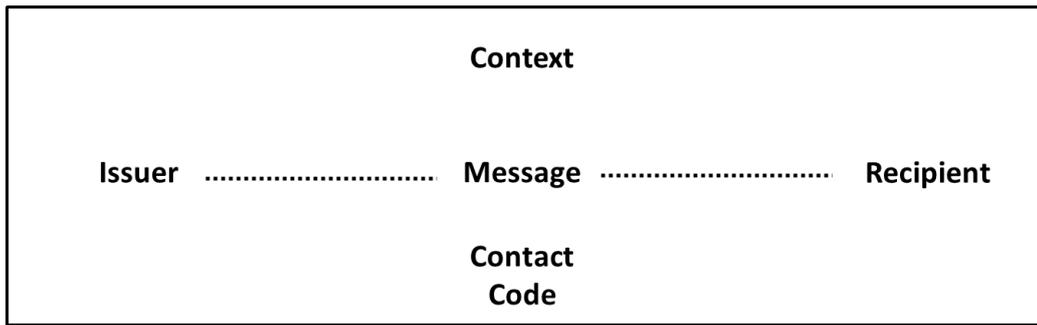


Image adapted from (Stagi Scarpa, 2005, p. 21)

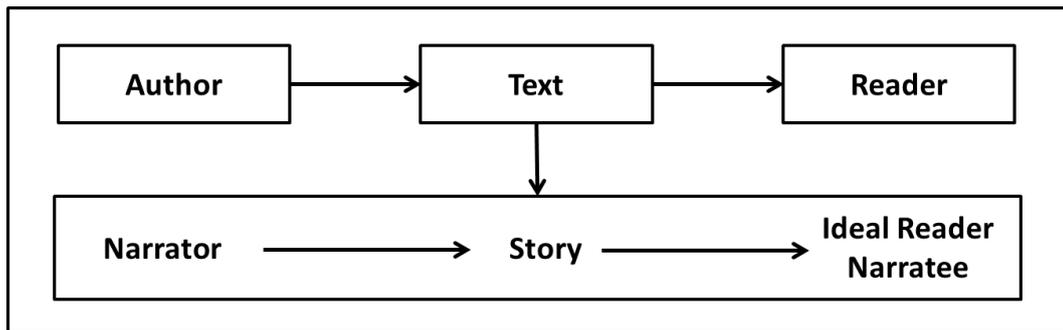


Image adapted from (Stagi Scarpa, 2005, p. 22)

In the years, literary criticism has focused alternately on each of the three elements at the base of literary communication: author, text and reader. Following Jakobson's model, it is possible to evaluate which communication aspect the different critical literary approaches emphasised. To begin with, Marxist literary criticism focused its attention on the context, on the *referential function* of the text. Differently, according to Romantic criticism, the author would be the fulcrum of textual examination, hence the underlined aspect is the sender's message and its *emotive function*. Moving to the Formal movement, the attention moves towards the text itself evidencing its *poetic function*; while according to the Structuralist approach to literary criticism, it is rather the code and its *meta-lingual function* that are investigated. Finally, the reader-response theory offers the role of protagonist to the reader, who, through the reading process, displays the *conative function* of the text.

In order to have a clear idea on how literary criticism and theories influence the educational purposes and the character roles of Literary Education, we would like to suggest the chart below as a brief summary of what we have said so far.

	Literary Criticism	Literary Education
Central role of the author	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idealism or Marxist criticism • Historicism • Psychoanalytic criticism 	<p><i>Focalisation on the author and on the historical context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher is the minister and interpreter of both tradition and cultural values
Central role of the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalism • New Criticism • Structuralism • Stylist 	<p><i>Focalisation on the text and on language: textual analysis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher is considered a specialist and a technician
Central role of the reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception Theory • Reader's Response • Horizon of Expectation • Hermeneutics 	<p><i>Focalisation on the act of reading and on the reader's interpretation</i></p> <p>The reader is an intellectual mediator and facilitator. He helps the students identify the meaning and the text's values, also connecting past and present</p>

Chart adapted from (Stagi Scarpa, 2005, p. 23)

The third part of the chart is marked because it refers to the basic idea we developed in the modular programme I am going to discuss in Chapter IV. This programme aims were focused on the student's motivation and personality, adapting the activities to their interests and dialoguing with them so as to involve them in their own process of acquisition.

Once the teacher has chosen which of the three components will be the centre of the educational process, he will adopt a particular approach to transmit literature to his students. The teacher may opt for a singular approach, for example the *historical-chronological approach* or the *stylistic linguistic approach*, otherwise he can opt for a mingling of approaches utilising the modular approach.

1.4.2. *Literary Education's different approaches: advantages and disadvantages*

Now that we have considered the history of Literary Education, it is interesting to dedicate some time to the description of the characterisation of the different approaches used today to teach Literary Education in FL.

To begin with, the *historical-chronological approach* operates a description and a reconstruction of the cultural and historical world in which literature is produced and the relation each author had with his historical time. In this perspective, Literary Education is presented as in the following scheme:

- a. presentation of the historical, cultural and literary contexts;
- b. presentation of the author;
- c. partial text reading of extracts exemplifying the principles elucidated during the presentation.

This approach may present some advantages. It provides the student with a literary and historical background that he can complete by inserting authors and literary currents. Furthermore, it does not alter the student's already experienced studying criteria, since it basically follows the same approach used to teach history, philosophy and science. Finally, it responds to the need to avoid the fragmentary nature of texts and to create interconnections among authors.

On the other hand, taking the disadvantages in account, this approach suggests a mnemonic and uncritical learning, being based on the study of the history of literature. It privileges the presentation of the historical background rather than the texts themselves, first presenting the more ancient authors whose language is more difficult to understand, especially for students approaching literature in FL for the first time. It does not teach the students to be autonomous.

Considering now the *stylistic linguistic approach*, it instead concerns literature and the way in which linguistic elements contribute to the communicative effect. With this purpose, the focus of the analysis is the text in its rhetoric and linguistic features. Author and historical background are partially or hardly considered, while the student is provided with just a brief contextualisation of the text he must read in order to read it more effectively. This approach could be perceived as useful because it is starting point: the text and same act of reading the implied literary text. This approach is interesting for its use of those Linguistic Education instruments implied to identify the key elements of the peculiar language use in the composition of a specific piece of literature. Attention is given to: poetry in juxtaposition with ordinary language, the use of

lexicon, semantic differences between genres, orthography and to the *foregrounding*, that is to say repetitions, parallelisms or alliterations. The student experiencing this method will be more aware of the effects produced by the use of particular linguistic choices. Through linguistic analysis he would be then educated in the production of brief texts emulating those examined in class. In conclusion, the advantages that *stylistic linguistic approach* provides are also linguistic competences and instrumental knowledge leading the student to reach autonomy in reading and interpreting texts. While some other disadvantages regarding *stylistic linguistic approach* are that it might become an unproductive exercise. It may come to lack a clear and strong reasoning for which a certain text is worth reading, and it may risk bringing fragmentary knowledge from the moment the text is presented without proper contextualisation.

The third approach we would like to examine is *genre approach*. As one may deduce from the definition itself, this approach presents literature according to its genres: poetry, narrative, theatre and essay writing. It is a useful instrument to define the criteria of the analysis underlining the specifics of each text, providing the students with the instruments needed to investigate the text, discouraging too-personal interpretations and getting the students used to deal with genre structures and their mutation through the centuries. Considering its advantages, the approach presents the student with a range of instruments for non-approximate and intuitive reading: it adapts the reading method to the text – be it narrative, poetic, drama or an essay – and illustrates its main characteristics. By presenting a genre in its historical formation, it guarantees the contextualisation and the comprehension of those social, cultural and historical influences responsible for its modification. On the other hand, though, the *genre approach* has some drawbacks. In the moment in which the distinguishing features of the text are presented as a list of technical data, the approach could result poorly motivating. More so, if de-contextualised from its historical context, it may result fragmentary and with the possible consequence of flattening the text in an undefined background.

Thematic approach stands for an approach in which literature is studied according to macro-themes and its history is studied in relation to genre evolution, with a proper examination of all different and characteristic features. This approach is positive because the theme chosen by the students may come to fit their interests and it encourages a multidisciplinary learning, avoiding the scientific division of non-communicating disciplines, since the presentation of the historical evolution of a theme offers rational visions of anthropological phenomenon such as love and murder. This approach results particularly appropriate for those classes having chosen scientific disciplines as their main ones. In this case, and the case we are going to investigate later, motivation is easily stimulated by the choice of relevant themes for the students. The disadvantages

of this approach though are again related to the contextualisation of the texts. When a theme is developed by not considering any context, the teacher may incur in the risk of a random illustration of texts with the same theme. At the same time, this approach may bring to the flattening of a literary current or may even detach the contents from their initial stylistic choices.

From this brief analysis, dealing with the different approaches to Literary Education, it is possible to say that Literary Education may be taught through a mingling of the advantages typical of each approach. The resulting product is a new organisation of the curriculum of literature. This approach has been defined in a *modular approach*.

1.4.3. The modular approach and the construction of the curriculum of literature

In order to comprehend the purposes of this method we need to clarify what a module is. A “module” could be defined as an independent and autonomous teaching unit. It may address a theme, a problem or the development of a competence with clear objectives for each activity and no insistence on examining every existent text. It does not follow a linear chronological structure, presenting instead a ramified or reticular internal structure. Every module can be developed simultaneously with other modules or interact with the contents of former ones in order to create new hyper-textual knowledge. So, it might be said, the module constitutes a flexible methodology, adopting various strategies, methods and different material (text, power-point presentations, television, stereo, computer and so on). This approach, focused on the student, would involve the student’s active participation as centre of the teaching process.

In the moment a module has to be organised, it is important to precisely define: the objectives of both possessed knowledge and acquired competences; the themes, structures and topics taken into account; texts and materials chosen for the its development; and the schedule of time required to accomplish both singular activities and the module as a whole. In case of a multidisciplinary module, it would be necessary to delineate the cooperating disciplines and the formerly acquired range of knowledge and competences needed so as to comprehend and to actively participating to it. Once every aspect has been defined the modular curriculum can be constructed.

A modular curriculum could be seen as the *summa* of a series of modules regarding large areas of literature in FL. The purpose of this curriculum is to build and promote the formation of a system of knowledge and reading competences, so as to constitute a rigorous and wide platform for an independent continuation of Literary Education or, at least, to provide the students with the necessary reading and interpretation instruments to fully enjoy a text.

Far from exhaustive, the modular curriculum is more motivating when different disciplines are cooperating to build a solid and multifaceted culture. For this reason, its itinerary could intersect other languages' literatures evidencing the common features of human experience.

As far as education is concerned, a module-based curriculum addressing Literary Education might acquire different shapes according to its composition. For instance, a curriculum might be entirely based on modules, possibly aiming at different objectives. It may alternate a linear, chronological-based curriculum with specialised modules, or it may begin with preparatory modules used as introduction to more traditional activities.

Variety is the key factor of this approach. Making the most of its possibilities, and using all types of teaching units (historical-cultural, literary genres, thematic, biographical, on the literary work itself), the approach guarantees both a different development according to the objectives, and the possibility for students to express their own learning style.

We now consider the advantages and disadvantages of a unit-based curriculum. As far as positive aspects are concerned, the *modular approach* has precise objectives, and may better fit the students' interests thus generating motivation. It also presents a set number of exponents and texts, offering a possibility for deeper analysis and creating the first knowledge system connected to other units, ready for future development by the student. Moreover, having flexibility as one of its characterising aspects, this approach responds to different interests and different cognitive styles. It implies the students' conscious involvement in the complexity of literature. Another main aspect of this approach is the conciseness of each unit, which has the positive consequence of generating gratification and consequent pleasure: pleasure for both teacher and student, having both accomplished a task and appreciated the test results.

In conclusion to this list of pros, the thematic units may be analysed and re-analysed over and over again, so as to highlight new aspects of the same theme providing relevant multidisciplinary patrimony of knowledge. Whereas, taking the disadvantages into account, the *modular approach* does not provide the students with a complete chronological vision of events, making them appear possibly fragmented. Furthermore, from the student's point of view, a unit-based curriculum with a differentiated methodological approach could be difficult to deal with, especially for those students that haven't developed a study method of their own.

Basically, the *modular approach* presents a series of advantages exceeding every other approach we have taken into account. For this reason, we have elected this approach for the development of a programme based on the student's interests, a programme we will analyse in Chapter V.

1.4.4. What to include and what to exclude?

Among the countless possibilities offered to Literary Education by the flexibility and the multidisciplinary aspects of this approach, the teacher has to choose what to include and what to exclude from the final curriculum. This is due to the impossibility of working on the entire literature or to examine every literary theme, author or current. Since nobody knows everything, to know the whole literature of a FL is rather difficult for an academic. As a consequence, would result impossible for a secondary school student. The result of this selection is called *canon*.

Considering that FL Literary Education is still based on a canon dating back to times in which texts were analysed in a translated form following chronological order, 20th Century literature was not often dealt with and the selected authors belonged mostly to European literature, without taking many post-colonial works into account. As a matter of fact, the authors who came to compose the canon were consecrated ones, often not very close to the student's interests. For this reason, a teacher may operate a selection in order to follow and respect his students' interests and so stimulate their motivation. In addition, it would be unimaginable, and not even fair, to choose the same canon for every type of school, for every class and even for all the students. Consequently, it would be the educator's duty to cooperate with his class, with the purpose of creating a programme that most fits the time the students live in and the real circumstances the students' are experiencing. Hence, what is considered important in this perspective is giving the students the possibility of approaching different types of texts, carrying on gradually so as to avoid eventual problems due to the language level. Nevertheless, it needs to be underlined that there is no acquisition without a minimum intellectual challenge: when the text or the task is too easy it does not generate acquisition.

A further aspect we ought to consider is feasibility. From the practical point of view, what can be done in Italian schools? Literary and Language Educations face two main problems. Time first of all. With just two or three hours a week, developing a programme of literature history following a chronological order may result impossible. As a consequence, even those educators who aren't supporters of the *modular approach* are obliged to consider modules with well-definite and limited purposes. The second problem deals with the setting. In which kind of school is Literary Education to be taught? Having considered the educational potentials of literature, the necessity to bring it in schools where the study of humanities is not the main focus is important. How can Literary Education be adapted to basically scientific or technical schools? First of all, by trying to fill the gap between literature and the diffidence the students present towards the discipline, underlining the modernity of older pieces of writing by comparing them with modern

newspaper articles. Then, it is not necessary to choose a text that the literary world considers an irreplaceable classic, since a class mainly composed by male students would not much appreciate a governess romance such as *Jane Eyre*. In this case, a minor author could be more effective and thematically relevant. A historic text addressing particular issues may be more compelling than a narrative one. A theatre piece may offer the opportunity to involve the entire class in the reiteration of a play, offering an active role even to students that are not as linguistically gifted. What must be considered important in this case is the teacher's creativity and ability to transmit love for literature and inspiration to continue the reading process after school, even to those students who chose scientific or technical fields of study.

In order to have an idea of how Literary Education works in a school, we must consider its protagonists. For this reason, in Chapters II and III we discuss the main features of student, teacher, class, study book and educational techniques.

Chapter 2

The protagonists of the teaching action: students and teachers

In the first chapter we analysed what, on a stage, would be the setting of a play. In the second chapter, the actors, the protagonists of the play, are to be discussed and examined both personally and scholastically.

Among various aspects, we will begin with the student as the centre of the teaching process. He is a reading mind with a complex cerebral structure, a “body with a head”, a growing person with interests and fragilities, in addition to being member of a class.

The attention will then focus on the director of the learning process: the teacher. We will see how this role has changed over the years and how it is considered nowadays. Moreover, we will examine this important figure trying to understand its role as facilitator, source of inspiration, devoted intellectual, and most of all trusty guide students may rely on. The teacher, as we have said in Chapter I, has to create a programme that responds to the student’s needs and interests and constitutes their LASS for FL learning.

2.1. The fulcrum of Literary Education: the student.

“Language has no independent existence, living in some mystical space apart from the people who speak it. Language exists only in the brains and minds and ears and hand and eyes of its users”. For this reason, every person possessing a brain can be a potential language student, and eventually a Literary Education student (Crystal, 2012, p. 7).

Every person that will read this thesis has been a student, for a long period or a brief fragment of his life. Each of us has lived his school time differently. We experienced different situations, given by the historical period we went to school in, the teachers we had, the teaching method they employed, the people we met in class but, most of all, our student attitude and our own disposition as individual and unique people.

Being a student is a privilege. The majority of the individuals that belong in this category does not perceive this. This is especially true for those that are defined by the word “adolescent”: those who are experiencing a critical period of psychological and physical change, rich in active and passive rebellious and emotional crises. These individuals, adolescent students, are trying to understand who they are.

Being a student means learning the contents of lessons and knowing how to absorb them with the purpose of gratifying curiosity or understanding something that formerly could not be understood. We will see who the student of Literary Education is (brain and heart), his role as a reader and his presence as a member of a class.

2.1.1. *The student's brain: a bimodal machine*

When we talk about students, it is important to consider how they differ from one another, in what we can come to identify as “brain” and “heart”, two fundamental parts of the student. We may begin with the description of these two areas characterising the student. The brain is considered their “black box” (Freddi, *Glottodidattica. Fondamenti, metodi e tecniche*, 1994, p. 2), it is the place where every experience and feeling is stored. We may say that, fortunately, every person has a different way of perceiving reality, a different way of reacting to difficulties or to face problems, and different tastes. Each of us is unique. In the context of a class, this uniqueness must be considered and, most of all, stimulated.

The brain is what makes of us who we are. When someone loses his cerebral capacities, or his use of language, when his mental capacities fade away, the person loses his own personality, he loses his inner-self.

Furthermore, the cerebral structure is also where the inborn human faculty of language acquisition creates and produces language. In order to understand how to teach a language - and how to use it to read and understand a text written in a FL - it is useful to know how this incredible machine called “brain” works. With this purpose, three fundamental considerations will be taken into account.

First of all, the brain is divided in two symmetrical equal parts, the right and the left. In the cortex of the left part are located two areas, named after the scientists who discovered them, *Broca* and *Wernicke*. These parts are dedicated to language. The first one is involved in the production of language. It is connected to the second one, Wernicke’s area, responsible for the production of spoken and written language. Particular stress must be put on the word “left”, since the brain is composed by two main parts, defined as hemispheres: the right and the left hemisphere. The right hemisphere regulates global perception, the holistic and emotional perception, while the left is responsible for analytic and rational operations. The reason why this division is so important stands in the fact that language is located in the left analytic part of the brain. However, the right part results as indispensable for comprehension, which is an indispensable factor in linguistic acquisition. On this base, we will see how it is not possible to learn a language in the moment the basic input is not comprehensible and understood.

Inside our brain is also located the most ancient and primordial part of the cerebral system: the *cerebellum*. The *cerebellum* is where the mind’s automated processes are generated, without the intervention of the cortex, without any reasoning process. This instinctive area is where the child stores articles, prepositions and mechanisms of concordance up to three years of age. This way, the *cerebellum* accumulates linguistic information of the first language the child is exposed to, the language the child will bring in during his first three years of life. Once this phase is concluded, the new information is no longer stored in the instinctive and automated cerebellum but in the cortex, which is operatively slower, tires easily, and, most of all, that has difficulty when stressed. The cortex, and its division into left and right hemispheres, is the structure that welcomes and generates foreign languages (Balboni P. E., 2008, pp. 13-14).

After having considered the brain as a stone on which we have carved all information learned through direct experience, or in school, it is necessary to better understand how its components work synergistically so as to acquire a FL.

According to Balboni’s concepts of brain and mind, the first is considered as “hardware”, while the second as “software”. In order to fully understand cerebral actions participating in the acquisition of FL, it is necessary to consult two different sciences: Neurolinguistics and Psycholinguistics. On the one hand, Neurolinguistics is the science that aims at analysing the way

the brain works. On the other, Psycholinguistics studies the way the brain's software works in relation to language, in what one of the most eminent linguists, Noam Chomsky, theorised and defined as LAD, "*Learning Acquisition Device*".

Continuing with the analysis of the brain, other sciences are to be considered. Neurology first of all, which describes the process of brain called "*lateralisation*", a process of differentiation of tasks between the left and the right hemisphere of the brain. The two hemispheres work differently on specific tasks. The right hemisphere deals with the following types of perception:

- a. global/holistic: it perceives reality globally, as an ensemble;
- b. contextual/situational: it locates the event in the context in which it happens, especially through the use of sight;
- c. analogical/associative: it associates elements according to the principle of similarity, not only through the use of logic relations such as cause-effect, before-after and so on.

The left hemisphere leads analytic, logic and rational operations and, as we have explained earlier, hosts the two major structures that generate language.

The science of Psychology, on the other hand, gives its contribution by describing the nature of the above mentioned hemispheric differentiation. This discipline also studies the mechanisms of memorisation, the collocation of different notions in the cerebral structure and the way they can be accessed in case of necessity.

The third consulted science is Neurolinguistics. It studies the way in which the elaboration of language occurs in the left hemisphere and, together with Neuro-semiotics, explores how the different types of messages are elaborated by the synergic work of the two hemispheres. Marcel Danesi, professor of Semiotics and Linguistics, has worked on this particular theme and has analysed the brain's structure trying to understand the didactic implications it might have. In his 1998 work *Cervello in aula*, Danesi elaborates two useful notions in the matter of didactics: "bimodality" and "directionality".

With the term "bimodality" he suggests the fact that both cerebral modalities, the analytical of the left hemisphere and the global of the right, are involved in linguistic communication. As a consequence, they have to be integrated so as to engage the student's entire mind in the process of language and literary acquisitions. In the moment the student is required to study, to comprehend or produce texts or dialogue, he has to activate both modalities, the global and the analytical. On the contrary, when the exercise concerns the practice of grammatical processes, the student will work using only the analytic modalities of the left part of the brain. Moreover, the right hemisphere

runs the emotional dimension, having an essential role in motivation based on the pleasure of learning, of discovering new information, and of accomplishing a task. On the other hand, the left hemisphere is stimulated by a different-natured motivation, a motivation based on rational purposes such as the sense of duty or the student's needs. The integration of these two types of motivation, as we will analyse more in depth in the fourth chapter, is fundamental in order to deal with a long-term effort such as learning a language. This concept will be revised by Stephen Krashen, when he comes to define *acquisition* and *learning*. According to Krashen's theory, *acquisition* is the product of long-term memory, implying the profound integration of the two hemispheres. On the other side, the process of *learning* only involves the left hemisphere which generates short-term memory.

Finally, the concept of bimodality has been neglected by many approaches, such as for example the structural one, only to be later positively evaluated by Freddi in his unit-based teaching approach. According to this approach, the teaching moment is based on a harmonic cooperation between the two hemispheres: from the first cardinal moment of motivation, moment that involves the right-side's emotions and curiosity and the left-side's analyses of the student's needs. It goes from a global moment to the moment of analysis, followed by the final synthesis.

The second principle on which Neurolinguistics has been working on is the principle of "directionality". This principle establishes how, in a bimodal use of the brain, the information follows a precise direction: from the right hemisphere (holistic, global and emotional) to the left hemisphere (formal, analytic and rational). This principle has important didactic implications since it describes the student's natural order of acquisition.

As a matter of fact, didactic tradition teaches languages using the opposite order, by addressing the rule first and then practicing it through exercises. Translating these notions into teaching techniques that follow the natural order, it is possible to see that in the module's initial phase the teacher stimulates student motivation engaging both emotional and logic dimensions. Following this step is a second moment in which the teacher presents the material to the class, in a contextualised and sensorial way permeated with cultural connotations. The final section will investigate the techniques involving the analytical part of the brain. With this purpose, the teacher will submit exercises, linguistic reflections, grammar explanations and so on.

The acquisition of a language is generated through the accumulation and systematisation of single molecules of acquisition, with the smallest unit called "learning unit", not to be confused with the "teaching unit". The "learning unit" is a closed and unitary part of an activity perceived at first by the global part of the brain, the right side, then analytically thanks to the left part, and finally by using the entire cerebral system in the final moment of reflection.

These learning units are processed thanks to a mind device Noam Chomsky calls *Learning Acquisition Device* (LAD). With his new concept, Chomsky actually went against the mainstream that attributed the development of language to social pressure and considering human beings as *tabula rasa* on which only experience can write on (Locke). These notions were definitely overcome by the psycholinguistic concept of “innate nature of language”. In this case, “language” is considered as the product of the development of the faculty of language, typically transmitted genetically along the generations.

Linguists have found three main arguments supporting this thesis:

- a. the development of language faculties has similar schemes, regardless of the environment;
- b. the fact that linguistic acquisition follows a natural order, being it the first language or whatever language is learnt spontaneously;
- c. the existence of a “Universal Grammar” (UG). It constitutes common biologically based mechanisms, a linguistic faculty genetically possessed by every individual with the purpose of generating language.

It is interesting to consider the scholastic implications of this theory. Being the student a member of the enormous group called humanity, and thus possessing UG, he cannot be considered as “an empty pitcher to fill with facts”. The student is to be seen as an active being, linguistically predisposed to language acquisition, and possessing a system, a module of linguistic acquisition (LAD) which has to be supported, guided and made effective by Bruner’s *Learning Acquisition Support System* (LASS) (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 73).

Considering that we will develop the part concerning the LASS later on, as we are going to talk about the figure of teacher, we would like to spend some time on how the cerebral inborn structure called LAD works, such as how the student’s brain works on language.

The process of language acquisition is mainly structured by a succession of five stages in which the child, or the student, undergoes a process of language experimentation: *observation, creation of hypothesis, hypothesis validation, fixation and reflection*.

In the first phase of *observation*, the individual observes the linguistic input that surrounds him. Listening to sequences of words, the individual hears pragmatic and formal correlations and progressively understands the correlation between words and the world, or the subject/verb association (i.e. “she does” and not “she do”). As far as the foreign language is concerned, the student is given a foreign language input, mostly written, and is then asked to individuate the rules at the base of the above mentioned pragmatic and formal correlation between words (i.e.

“underline the right form of the verb”). These become the objectives (learning unit) of each part (teaching unit) that compose a module.

The next step in the experiment process is the *creation of hypothesis*. After the observation, around the 36th month of age, native speaking children start to advance linguistic hypothesis (i.e. the verb pattern *to go* is hypothesised in the past form as to be “goed”, instead of the right form “went”). LAD is a mechanism designated as “hypothesis-maker”, basing its assumptions on observation. This is different in the FL learning process. The hypothesis to be created is suggested by the teacher or exposed by a guiding scheme in the text book. The need to be discussed by the class with the purpose of cooperating in the construction of a class hypothesis is generated by an ensemble of different LADs.

To continue with the third step, after *observation* and *hypothesis*, the child or the student needs to understand whether the new linguistic information is correct or incorrect. Hence, the individual needs to *verify* its hypothesis. He does so by using feedbacks the parents or the teacher give him. In this part of acquisition, the teacher (LASS) has a fundamental function in guiding the student in the creation of hypothesis, in their validation and in the final elaboration of the new notions.

Once the information has been validated as correct, the brain proceeds with the step of *fixation*, reiterating and repeating it until it is fixed in the memory. As far as children are concerned, the child repeats newly learned words obsessively. On the other hand, the student is guided by the teacher in rather repetitive activities. In this phase, the teacher could present his students with playful didactic activities, pattern-drill based, in which the new information is to be used in different ways and repeated without bringing boredom to students.

The last section of the process of language learning is constituted by a moment of *reflection*. Guided by an adult (sometimes in the pre-scholastic period by parents and later by the teacher) this phase is necessary to deeply understand the use of language for a life-long learning. *Reflection* has to be considered a fundamental moment because it adds explicit acquisition to the implicit one, creating a rational instrument useful to control linguistic performance, and it allows the systematisation of the notion.

The process we have already described is the product that the cerebral structure called LAD’s generates by responding to a stimulus, an input. In Chapter IV we will discuss about the importance of the environment surrounding the student, and also about how this mechanism of reception and fixation of the input may work. Krashen worked on this subject: in his *Second Language Acquisition Theory* (SLAT) he postulated the importance of the student’s “psychological defensive wall”, a mechanism of self-defence called “affective filter”. According to SLAT, the student’s brain can produce acquisition only when his mind is free from fear and anxiety. In Krashen’s

words, when the affective filter is opened. With this assumption, it is the teacher's duty to create a relaxed atmosphere in class, so that students' minds can be free to welcome the information and insert it in their memory. The entire patrimony of knowledge is stored in the student's memory and can be assessed whenever the student needs information. Memory is *de facto* double-natured: the human mnemonic bank is composed by short-term memory, or "working memory", medium-term and long-term memory. The information related to the input arrives in the working memory, a short and quantitatively limited memory in which notions are accommodated before being forgotten or passed on to medium-term memory. Here, the notions are stored for a maximum of 90 days. For this reason, language structures and word significance need to be stored in a safer "place": the long-term memory. The long-term memory includes the subject's knowledge of the world, his own encyclopaedia, and the semantic memory, whose aim is to interpret and memorise languages. Four considerations should be made in the matter of memory:

- a. it is easy to memorise using the Aristotelian concept of "associationism", according to which the human being learns through associations based on similarity or contrast. Associations are useful only in the moment they are created actively by the student himself. Remembering implies an active role, it requires an effort the student has to make in order to reach an objective, a strategy and an elaboration process in his long-term memory. The subject needs a project, a life project to motivate him in remembering the language;
- b. there is a correlation between reflection and memorisation. The more a student reflects, the more he memorises. To reach a profound codification of language the student has to reflect on it. As a consequence, in order to learn a language, listening to the teacher is not enough, neither is reading the book. A reflection on the offered input can be considered as necessary;
- c. there is a correlation between "meaning" and "context". The process of memorisation, of deep codification of the language, is the product of a system of meanings. The lexicon is stored in the *semantic memory* only in the condition in which it is contextualised;
- d. memorisation has to deal with the problem of age. The creation of new synapses, new junctions among neurons responsible for the memorisation of new information, peaks at the age between the third and sixth year of life. With the passing of time it becomes

progressively difficult to store new information and to assess what is acquired. Nevertheless, effort and less spontaneity in the acquisition do not mean an adult cannot learn a language. He can but in a different amount of time. The functional memorisation of a language, what allows the recollection of words so as to communicate and use them automatically, involves other two factors that are important in effectively learning a foreign language: affective filter and motivation.

2.1.2. Every student thinks differently. The theory of multiple intelligence

In order to learn a language, and using it to study literature as a consequence, it is not sufficient to have a stimulating and relaxed atmosphere during the lesson. As a matter of fact, every person reacts to a linguistic stimulus or to a novel in his own way. A new humanistic perspective has underlined the importance of student differentiation, basing its teaching techniques on the following concepts:

- a. human beings differ from one another for their cognitive characteristics (different combination of intelligence and learning and cognitive styles), their personality, personal background and motivation;
- b. human beings process inputs arriving from the external world according to a specific neurologic directionality: global → analytical → synthesis;
- c. human beings are “two dimensional”. They are both emotional and rational, with the first quality often prevailing on the second. As a consequence, the humanistic approach will also deal with emotions, mostly pleasure and displeasure, interpreted as affective filter, and the role they play in the FL acquisition process.

Consequently, in a class composed by 26 elements, the teacher may expect 26 different ways of reasoning.

As far as language and language teaching are concerned, they follow the same principle of mind differentiation: some people learn language easily, while others need more time. How is this possible? The question can be answered by postulating the existence of an “aptitude towards language”, the existence of LADs working more effectively than others. According to Skehan, aptitude is a particular talent devoted to language acquisition, rather steady and totally independent from the abilities the given person might have developed in other fields. Skehan comes to the conclusion that this aptitude cannot be taught (Caon, 2008, p. 29).

Every student is different. Each student presents a different combination of personal characteristics which may or may not facilitate language acquisition. In this perspective, it is the LASS' duty to understand the reason why some LADs work less effectively than others, helping the students with and auto-analysis aiming at understanding the aptitude towards language and the factors influencing it.

Speaking of the factors that influence the capability of acquiring a language, it is interesting to address the concept of bimodality as a cardinal variable in determining, or not, an aptitude towards language. The cerebral hemispheric dominance is a proper characteristic of every person implying the use of lateralised aptitudes. Each hemisphere perceives and conceptualises reality differently. They perceive the inputs they receive from the senses differently: on the one hand, globally, contextually and emotionally (right hemisphere); on the other, analytically and rationally (left hemisphere). Every person privileges a different form of conceptualisation, every person has a different hemispheric dominance.

The cerebral differences among students are not limited to dominance, embracing a wider variety. On this theme, an American developmental psychologist, Howard Gardner, elaborated a theory postulating the existence of seven main types of intelligence. What Gardner did was confront the monolithic nature of intelligence with a new idea of composed nature, articulated in different intelligences. In his book, *Frames of mind: the Theory of Multiple Intelligence* (Gardner, 2011), Gardner exposes the idea of seven types of intelligence present in the cerebral system. In this perspective, every intelligence is seen as an ensemble of seven bio-psychological potentials coexisting in the person's mind. The inclination or aptitude towards one or the other is given by different combinations and dominances of the intelligences. The factors contributing to the dominance of one intelligence are: biological heritage, the environment in which the given person has grown up in, the experiences he has undergone, culture and the amount of motivation stimulating him.

As a consequence, the student's intelligence is the result of the mingling of the following types of intelligences: Visual-Spatial, Bodily-Kinaesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Logical-Mathematical, and finally Linguistic. A brief description of each category will be made, followed by the didactic implications a teacher might deal with so as not to facilitate or penalise part of the class.

Visual-Spatial intelligence means the capacity of mentally modifying the disposition of objects in a determined space. It is useful in matter of lexicon memorisation. *Bodily-Kinaesthetic* intelligence is connected to the ability of effective body use, generated by high corporal awareness. Translating this into didactic activities, the student possessing high levels of this intelligence will be good at

role-play activities and interpretations. *Musical* intelligence concerns sensitivity to rhythm and sounds of the environment. The students with a developed musical intelligence, present a propensity to learning lessons with music, and studying with music in the background. For this reason, the teacher could find the use of stereos, radio, CDS and computers quite stimulating. *Interpersonal* intelligence is the capacity of understanding other people and interacting with them. Students inclined to this intelligence will learn better through interaction in dialogues, seminars and activities using different tools, such as telephones, audio conferencing, writing tasks and computer conferencing tasks. *Intrapersonal* intelligence consists in a great capacity of self-analysis. These students tend to be shy and introverted. In spite of their apparently closed nature, these individuals are gifted with great intuition and strong will. They would be better stimulated with introspective activities, such as independent study and autonomous reading. In this case, the teacher deals with independent learners, so he will find instruments such as diaries, books, and creative material useful to give the student time and privacy. Students possessing the quality of *Logical-Mathematical* intelligence are capable of thinking abstractly and conceptually. They like to be challenged with problem solving activities, such as puzzles, enigmas and being asked cosmic questions. Before dealing with details, they need to conceptualise the new notion and understand it perfectly. In conclusion, *Linguistic* intelligence is the type of skill that gives the student the ability of using words effectively. These individuals have great auditory skills and think in words. Since they like to read and play with words, with words games and making up stories or poetry, they can be stimulated with the use of activities based on words and devices, such as computers, games, multimedia, books or tape recording.

The list of types of intelligences, technically, would be longer. Excluded intelligences from this main list are: *naturalistic* and *existentialistic*, which are not considered indispensable in the process of language acquisition. Moreover, it is interesting to specify that the *Linguistic* intelligence described in Gardner's theory is related to the social and relational use of language, while, as far as the grammatical part, the formal part is regulated by another intelligence: the *Logical-Mathematical* one.

2.1.3. Student ways of learning: cognitive styles and learning styles.

Having considered the composed nature of intelligence, and having underlined the diversification of activities required to stimulate every student equally, in order to have a full overview of the student's mind it is necessary to explore the way the student's brain processes and stores new information. For this reason, we are going to analyse what have been defined as the

student's cognitive and learning styles. Cognitive and learning styles are two different concepts. Cornoldi (Cornoldi & De Beni, 1993) defines the cognitive style as the prevalent modality responsible for the elaboration of new information.

So cognitive style means new information acquisition process, while learning style is described as the way the brain elaborates and stores information in the memory. It is important not to confuse cognitive styles (analytic or global) with the above-mentioned types of intelligence (logical-mathematical) or the student's personality (introverted or extroverted). The cognitive styles have been investigated by different linguists. A list of these different styles follows here below:

- a. *Analytic or Global style*: it is connected to cerebral bimodality and the way the student classifies information and formulates hypothesis. The students considered as analytic would prefer to disassemble the task into different parts, while the so-called global student would prefer to look at the general structure of the task;
- b. *Ideational or Executive style*: on the one hand, the ideational student works directly on the theory trying to understand the mental processes used to arrive to the rule or concept; on the other, the executive student needs to experience the rules and the concepts. He learns from his mistakes without any discouragement;
- c. *Accepting or Not-accepting ambiguity style*: the difference stands in the level of accuracy needed by the student to understand the notion. Some students manage to be satisfied with a global comprehension or production, accepting even ambiguous details. The opposite not-accepting style presents students that find it difficult to accept and learn ambiguous notions;
- d. *Dependent or independent from the background style*: this describes the skill of not being distracted by irrelevant inputs;
- e. *Capacity or difficulty to foresee the contents of a text relying on the context*: this style corresponds to the level of the Expectancy Grammar possessed by the student. To possess a strong expectancy grammar means to be able to intuitively understand the meaning of a text;
- f. *Learning or not from mistakes*: this particular trait concerns both personality and student scholastic experiences. As far as personality is concerned, an optimistic student will react positively to the correction of a mistake, while, on the contrary, a pessimistic student will be discouraged and possibly frustrated by the correction. Scholastic experience is connected to the scholastic experience the student has had and the way his teachers have

dealt with the correction of his mistakes. For this reason, the error can be seen as a vilifying failure or part of the learning process;

- g. *Self-aware and autonomous student or student dependent from the teacher*: the capacity to study alone is here addressed, underlining the existence of two types of students: autonomous and dependent from the teacher's guidance. In perspective of a life-long learning it would be essential for a student to learn how to study and autonomously maximise his potentials (Balboni P. E., 2013, pp. 80-83).

In order to complete the overview on learning styles, Cadamuro defines "learning style" as the inclination of a subject toward using a determined way of studying or learning. It concerns the student's modalities of perception and response to learning tasks on which the strategies implied by the student to complete the task are based (Cadamuro, 2004, p. 71). Compared to the already described "cognitive styles", "learning styles" are based on the elaboration of new information in scholastic learning situations where the affective and social spheres are also involved. Affective and the social dimensions are added to the cognitive one.

What is relevant about these styles is their systematic nature. As a matter of fact, the subject has his own tendency in using the same strategies in order to deal with a certain task and relate his self with the surrounding world or learn a foreign language.

The point we need to clarify now is how the subject elects his own style. So as to find a style, each person undergoes a process of reflection on the accomplished tasks through observation and transformation of the experience. Kolb defines this process as "Experiential Learning" (Caon, 2008, p. 25), dividing it into four moments in which the person undergoes an experience: he observes and reflects on the experience he underwent, he abstractly conceptualises what he has observed and elaborated, and finally he actively experiments what he has learnt. In Kolb's opinion, every subject tends to privilege one of the four phases. The objective student will privilege the first moment: he will need exemplification of theoretical contents and is more stimulated by activities in which he can actively experiment, like problem solving or trans-codification activities. The abstract student is a student that prefers the second moment: he needs order and linearity and is stimulated by logic activities, such as grammatical and lexicon analysis. The student orientated toward the third moment is the reflective student. He prefers activities aiming toward meditating on the action, individual study and activities of re-elaboration. In conclusion, the active student is connected to the last part of experimental learning. He likes to socially share what he has learned, privileging role-play or cooperative activities. The combination of the above mentioned characteristics, according to Kolb's model, generates four learning styles:

- a. abstract and active → converging style: these are students that prefer abstract conceptualisation and reflective observation. At the same time, they are interested in activities of active experimentations allowing them to inductively ponder and formulate hypotheses. They are potential excellent students;
- b. concrete and active → accommodating style: these are students preferring experimental experiences, objective experiences. They prefer to practice risking mistakes rather than not doing anything at all. They are capable of adapting themselves to various situations. This type of student is potentially an excellent student in FL and L2;
- c. abstract and reflective → assimilating style: these students are orientated toward abstract conceptualisation and reflective observation. They have a logical way of thinking, giving them the possibility of elaborating theoretical models through inductive reasoning. This student could achieve good results in activities of grammatical reflection in L1, however he might incur in severe difficulties in LC, FL and L2;
- d. concrete and reflective → diverging style: this type of student is inclined to either reflective observation or objective experience. He needs time to slowly reflect before acting. He may be a good LC student but he might have difficulties in FL, if the implied methodologies are mainly practical.

2.1.4. *The student's inner-self: personality*

The last student aspect a teacher should take into account is related to the personal characteristics of each stable general aptitude approaching the management of school tasks: personality. Even though personality is not a fundamental agent affecting the cerebral faculties of a student, it may influence the way the student perceives the class atmosphere and lives the scholastic experience. Some of the main traits regarding the heart of the student, his personality, are:

- *cooperative or competitive nature*: a cooperative student tends to work enthusiastically in group tasks, giving his active contribution to the activity proposed by the teacher. The competitive student, the “shark”, instead tries to emerge from the group, even coming to “damage” others. In a situation in which language is taught to a group, to a class, the first individual, the cooperative student, will find helping other students and letting others help him a fruitful way of learning. On the contrary, the competitive student may find difficulty in participating in group activities. Unless he learns how to use his competitive nature, this subject risks becoming isolated;

- *introverted or extroverted nature*: this characteristic could generate enormous difficulties or ease to the student. An introverted student would find it very difficult, sometimes even impossible, to participate in group activities in which he might be exposed to judgment. An introverted student, shy or fragile, will try to avoid oral exercises, compromising his own speaking level. As a consequence, the psychological difficulty is joined by the self-imposed educational lower level. An extroverted person, on the other hand, would be more inclined to experience new languages by meeting foreign people and participating in conversations in which he has the possibility to test his linguistic skills and challenge his own limits;
- *optimistic or pessimistic nature*: this characteristic has a direct impact on the foreign language learning process. The student approaching difficulty with a pessimistic attitude affects the quantity and the quality of information he acquires. An optimistic student would better live the scholastic experience by giving himself the possibility of learning more easily.

Student personalities may present other dichotomies, such as *arrogant/humble, empathetic/egocentric* etc., which may influence their didactic experience even though not from the linguistic point of view.

Aptitude towards language, different types of intelligences, cognitive and learning styles (characterising the “brain” of the student and the personality at his “heart”) have to be considered by the teacher in order to offer the class a programme addressing the diversities of his students and make a cardinal and positive point of their diversity. Through the differentiation of linguistic activity each student would have the chance of experiencing new hues of language and, possibly, of himself.

2.1.5 Different types of students: child, adolescent and adult.

Every individual in almost every moment of his life can be a student: he can learn a foreign language and also have the possibility to approach, study and appreciate literary education. A language can be taught to a child, an adolescent, an adult, and even to an elderly person. The difference lays in the effort the person has to make in order to systematise the language, the techniques the teacher uses in the learning process, the student/teacher relationship and the personal way the student memorises.

In this section, we will give a brief account on the various different types of students, paying particular attention to the way each type approaches language and the possibility each student deals with literature through Literary Education.

2.1.5.1 The child and cerebral plasticity

Children are naturally predisposed to learning, for this reason they are not taught a foreign language. They are guided in a process Candelier defines as «*éveil au langage*», a discovery process of a new language by direct contact with it (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 90). The child is guided in the approach to a foreign language with the purpose of making him understand the presence of a multiplicity of languages, the possibility of learning foreign languages and the idea that learning a foreign language can be a good game to play. The reason teaching a foreign language to children is so important has a political nature, and it is strictly connected to the type of society we live in. Teaching FL to children means giving them the chance of becoming citizens of the world, of feeling like bilingual and bicultural people. Moreover, the presence of two languages generates a cerebral enrichment with the following implications:

- a. language organisation in the cerebral structure of a bilingual student seems to be more bilateral than the cerebral organisation of a monolingual child;
- b. the right hemisphere displays a more decisive role in the cerebral representation of the two different codes;
- c. hemispheric dominance seems to be blurred and less rigid in the bilingual child.

The above mentioned considerations are related to the great plasticity of a young brain, in which the process of lateralisation still has to complete its realisation. The idea that children are more successful second language students than adolescents or adults was formulated for the first time by Penfield and Roberts in 1959, in a study that biologically and neurologically demonstrated children's advantages in learning a foreign language. After having underlined the presence in children's brain of a specialised language faculty, they formulated the idea of the existence of a "biological clock of the brain" (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2012, p. 539). They also suggested the presence of an age limit, corresponding approximately to 9 years of age, within which cerebral flexibility allows learning directly from the input source.

Another linguist, Lenneberg, worked on this very subject. In his 1967 study entitled *Biological Foundation of Language*, he suggests that the loss of cerebral plasticity and the biological

predisposition for language are ascribable to the completion of lateralisation coinciding with puberty. The interval of time going from age 2 to puberty assumes the name of “critical period” for language acquisition. According to Lenneberg, *Critical Period Hypothesis* (CPH), the mechanism of language acquisition, is at its maximum potential in the first years of life of the child and slowly deteriorates with puberty. Following studies on the CPH claimed that the deteriorating process would only affect the phonetic nature of language acquisition. What is certain is that a child student experiences a period of time like no other in his lifetime for learning rapidity and phonetic sensibility.

A more recent research shows the presence of another important acquisition period, to be added to the above mentioned “critical” one: the “sensitive” period. This period covers a wider age range, from 8 to 20-22, and in this period the person still has the neurologic potential to develop good linguistic competence, with the result however of a non-native speaking performance.

Another linguist, Cummins, studied the role of second language acquisition in children. He proposed the Cummins’ Interdependence Hypothesis. This principle states that studying a new language positively affects the entire linguistic repertoire of a person. In order to explain his hypothesis, Cummins uses a metaphor in which linguistic communication is represented by an iceberg. In this image, the emerging surface establishes only one of the seven parts of the submerged total surface. And it is this submerged mass that allows the emersion of the one small part. An iceberg can present two emerged extremities, separated even if part of a bigger submerged mass supporting them. The wider the submerged mass is, the more the peaks will emerge.

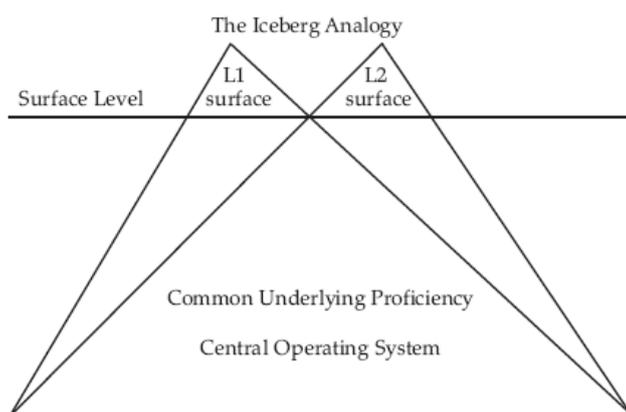


Image adapted from (Balboni P. E., 2014)

In the same way, what emerges in linguistic communication is only a fragment of the process of conceptualisation and verbalisation occurring in the student’s mind. The human capacity of elaborating a language, the submerged part of the iceberg, is expanded in the moment a new

language is learned. With the addition of new ice, that is to say linguistic reflection and new processes of linguistic acquisition, the resulting iceberg of communicative competence rises, peaking not only in the FL but also in the L1. In this perspective, introducing 36-48 month old children to a foreign language, in a moment in which the mechanism of linguistic acquisition has concluded its initial phase of L1 acquisition, would have a double function: on the one hand, it would maintain the LAD active; on the other, it adds new material and new *stimuli*, improving general semiotic competence and consequently the native language.

A child's mind is receptive and ready for constant learning. A child student is a learning machine. What is important in this phase is to guarantee adequate LASS to the child's LAD, avoiding actual teaching and preferring the creation of situations in which the student would naturally learn.

As far as Literary Education is concerned, in this first part of the formative process, the student learns the existence of literary text, mainly nursery rhymes, fables or short poems. To introduce literary text to a class of children means to present them structurally or phonetically strong examples.

In conclusion to this first segment, Education Literature for children is approached rather than didactically taught. In this particular phase, children are supposed to read short texts, occasionally learning them by heart, and maybe even writing some of their own. The work can be done together with a native language teacher, so as to underline both concepts of universality of literature and of the difference between everyday language and written language.

2.1.5.2 The adolescent learner

Once the student has grown out of childhood, he starts a new period of his life, rich of both physical and emotional changes: adolescence.

As far as school is concerned, in this particular phase of personal formation, the problems regarding foreign language teaching begin to emerge. They are related both to the student's age and the new scholastic structure the student is inserted in. Moreover, the students have to deal with the shift from primary school "subjects" to secondary school more challenging "disciplines".

A further change lays in the axis describing the teacher/student relation. Primary school students are related to their teacher according to a vertical axis: they have a privileged relationship with a teacher that represents a social version of his parents. When the child becomes an adolescent student, the vertical student/teacher relationship is substituted with a new horizontal one, with schoolmates. In so doing, the teenage learner enters a sort of protective group whose aim is to preserve his social image. In this situation, the quantity of members and the self-referred values of

the group compensate the fragilities the student presents in this period of adult rejection and need of emancipation.

The consequences of this axis mutation directly affect the psychological balance between student and teacher, student and class and student/mistake relation. A new relation corresponds to a new nature of the student's "protective armour", what was formerly defined as affective filter. In order to better understand this passage, a short digression on the affective filter theme is necessary and interesting.

In a challenging situation, a manageable challenge, the organism releases fundamental neurotransmitters able to fix mnemonic traces, introjections the organism makes in order to remind itself of the received and understood input. When the challenging situation acquires a negative connotation of stress and anxiety, of fear of failure, the organism begins to produce a steroid preparing it to face the danger. In this situation, there is a conflict between the section of the brain responsible for detecting fear and preparing it for emergencies (the amygdale) and the part of the brain responsible for long-term memorisation, new information organisation and reiteration of the stored information in long-term memory (the hippocampus). As a consequence, many didactic activities considered stressful are useless.

The new nature of adolescent learner's affective filter shifts its focus from adult approval to peer approval, generating the following didactic implications. The first one regards the role of mistake correction. An adolescent student perceives a correction as a direct and serious threat to his self-image and his role as a member of the class group. The correction is no longer seen as a natural step in the process of acquisition but as a threat. In order to contrast this new danger, the class members make an unspoken and ideal social agreement, a pact based on the principle of *aurea mediocritas* (Balboni P. E., 2013, pp. 95-96), whose final objective is not to reach excellence but mediocrity instead. The students "signing" this pact limit their scholastic effort to merely pass, even coming to discourage those who would like to work hard and reach excellent results. In the context of language acquisition or use of language, as in Literary Education, particular attention is given to the way interactive activities are structured in order to obtain best results from a student average and avoid relational marginalisation of the better or more resourceful students. Moreover, the adolescent learner identifies himself as an adult and for this reason he does not accept didactic activities he might perceive as puerile: from word puzzles to dramatization, from repetition to exercise copying. These are all activities that hold an important role in the process of foreign learning acquisition, so the teacher must find a solution in order to be able to use them. The implied solution is to be found in the open explanation of the psychological and cognitive nature of the activity itself, with the description of its utility and by presenting it as a challenge. The student's

awareness and involvement in the acquisition process will help him overcome the auto-imposed boundaries preventing him from doing these activities. He then will accept every teaching technique, even the ones based on games.

The teenage learner is in constant search of emancipation. He leaves, or strongly desires to leave, his parents' house trying to enter the world in an autonomous manner. In this setting, English could become a useful tool to widen the student's horizons or, quoting David Crystal, "as the primary means of achieving global presence" (Crystal, 2012, p. 24). This is how the motivation in language learning rises: the student is motivated to reach the competence to suit his needs, and is thus done overestimating his personal competences. The role of the teacher, the student's LASS, is that of making them understand that their English level is good enough to be understood or survive however not enough to stand in a complex society. Literary Education in FL assumes a different connotation since it is often perceived as a useless effort and a waste of time.

From a cognitive point of view, differently from the child learner, the process of bimodal lateralisation in the brain of the teenage learner is in *via* of stabilisation. He has acquired analytical abilities and developed meta-linguistic skills. The student development corresponds to a mutation of the didactic strategies the teacher may use in class. In teaching terms, the consequences of this evolution lay in the transition from a *communicative approach*, based on intuitions and associations, to a new and more mature approach that includes reflection, cataloguing and meta-linguistic definition. The competence in the use of language is joined by a new competence, the meta-linguistic one.

In this period of the student's life, the use of *communicative approach* would be considered rather offensive. It would offend the student's cognitive maturity and waste the entire range of potentials offered by a mind capable of linguistic reflection.

As far as Literary Education is concerned, adolescent learners have to learn how to read texts. Now that the main features of this student have been presented, it is time to see their implications in the perspective of the discipline. So as to obtain acquisition, the teacher should consider:

- a. the length of the text: the teacher should not present texts that are too complex or long;
- b. the *paratext*: it is considered important in providing the students with a system of information that allows them to understand the text. The objective is to pull the student closer to the text;
- c. the relevance of the text: the student works more gladly on a text that is psychologically close to him or that addresses themes he considers relevant;
- d. the order: even when the texts are addressed the natural neurologic order has to be respected;

- e. desire vs. imposition: the student is not to be considered a subject who *must* study literature. He should be considered an individual who *desires* to read literature. This is possible only in the moment that the student's qualities and sensibilities are respected.

2.1.5.3 *The young adult learner*

This is the case of a student that approaches FL in university or for work reasons. The young worker, for instance, may work for international companies or in the army corps in international contexts. He approaches foreign language as a response to a professional need and with the attitude of an independent and responsible person.

The young university student, on the other hand, doesn't have the same urgency of the worker. He perceives the acquisition of a second language as something related to work, and consequently as something distant and undefined.

The difference between these two sides of the case lays in the student's attitude towards the teacher. On the one hand, the working student, already belonging to a working circle, is in charge of his own time and money, and so prefers to be independent and considers himself responsible for the final results. The student's nature, in this case, is *andragogic* (adult student) and the prospective is *lifelong learning*. On the contrary, the university student has a different attitude towards the teacher. The student does not perceive himself as a peer learning from another peer with different abilities, but as a subordinate to the *magister*. The basic implant of this kind of relation is then not *andragogic* but *pedagogic* instead.

Literary Education would then only be partly or hardly considered at all in by the working student. Not having much time, this kind of student tends to focus his attention on sole language acquisition.

As far as the majority of university students are concerned, they are asked to sustain language exams as certification of a basic FL competence, without any consideration of Literary Education or literary texts in general. A totally different case is that of those students who have chosen a field of study in Humanities, as a *curriculum* in Foreign Language and Literature. In this case, the students would be considered experts in literary texts. Their motivation should be higher and based on their needs since they need to learn in order to complete their formation, both from a linguistic/critical and a historical point of view.

2.1.5.4 The adult learner

An adult student is a person who has already concluded his scholastic formation and decides to be an independent being, completely responsible for the choices he makes. This last quality directly influences the relation this type of student will have with his teacher, considered a peer both socially and economically, and a professional just as the learner is himself.

The direct consequence of the relational equality connecting student and teacher stands in the nature of their relation which no longer has an educative connotation but rather an instructive one. The teacher however is a highly formed technician of language and of teaching techniques.

The adult learner pays for the time he spends with the teacher, adopting the “value for money” principle. For this reason, he follows the course or takes private lessons with the purpose of enriching his CV, being transferred abroad and so on. Considering the economic nature of the relation, the two parts need to make an agreement on the linguistic objectives, their nature and the appropriate teaching techniques necessary to reach them. Finding a deal is considered fundamental in order to avoid a decrease of motivation.

Results should be reached in the shortest amount of time possible, following the principle of “time is money” and connected working necessities, such as an eventual transfer.

The generative machine responsible for acquisition, the adult learner’s brain, is considered still capable of learning, although less quickly and steadily than a child. The adult student can arrive at similar levels, however with different timings. This slower learning pace must be explained to the student in order to avoid a sense of defeat and consequent de-motivation.

A further difference between adult and child/adolescent students is related to the need for rules the adult student is characterised by: his need for meta-linguistic systematisation of the new information. The derivation of such necessity is connected to the high ability of abstraction and systematisation that the adult’s mind has acquired in years of experience. As well as his desire of having a stable system of rules he can refer to. The teacher dealing with adults will have to spend time reflecting on the rules and integrate the didactic material on the bases of meta-linguistic and grammatical necessities of the students.

As far as the teaching techniques are concerned, they will be based on the above mentioned andragogic approach and will be characterised by four main points:

- a. adult student motivation has a particular nature and role in the process of acquisition. In order to maintain the motivation level high, the teacher has to allow the student to measure

and appreciate the quantity of notions acquired and clearly individuate and understand the sequence of objectives;

- b. the adult learner is actively involved in a process of mental re-organisation of both his knowledge and his way of evaluating underwent experience. The teacher has to guide this process by using explicit grammatical systematisation, the preferred instrument of adult students;
- c. this learner has a high awareness of his own life experience. It is the teacher's duty to encourage the student's independence in the process of acquisition;
- d. the teacher is no longer considered a *magister*. Conversely, he is seen as a linguistic facilitator.

Suitable teaching techniques a teacher may use with an adult student are those implying the student's own awareness of his competence, such as self-corrected dictation activities, the "cloze" procedure, matching words with images, and reorganising words in a dialogue. On the contrary, counter-productive techniques are those based on student interaction, such as role-play simulations or public performances. Activities that are certainly to be excluded are those that imply direct confrontation between teacher and student, activities in which the teacher may take up the role of a judge. These activities in fact dissolve the psychological agreement at the base of the andragogic relation generating a situation of stress.

Considering the possibilities for an adult student of dealing with Literary Education, the adult student, who has decided to return to school after years of work, is a strongly motivated student. He perceives literature as a passion they could have not followed when he was younger. In this case, the teacher would not have to teach his student to love literature, already so beloved that it persuaded them to go back to school. The teacher must render the student's reading experience more coherent and systematised, and provide the student with basic critical tools to fully appreciate his readings and create his own system of hypertext.

2.1.5.5 *The group of students: the class*

Apart for rare individual courses, group learning is considered the custom. The ensemble of students, with their personal qualities and social factors influencing them, comes to form the class. According to constructivism, the learning process is to be considered a *social activity* since it is strictly connected to the quality and the quantity of the relations among the members of the class

and the family. Dialogue, interaction, collaboration and cooperation are considered integrated aspects of the learning process (Dolci, 2007, p. 85).

To begin, the class is the place in which the learning process takes place. It also is where each student's peculiarities encounter, or come in contrast with, other student's personal qualities. It is the place in which the students are forced to coexist and interact with each other in some way. Social dynamics of confrontation or contraposition will naturally develop in this group of students and may directly influence the student performance. As a consequence, group learning might constitute both an advantage and a disadvantage.

Advantages of group learning include the possibility of *cooperative learning*. In this perspective, the students substitute individual competitive behaviours, or indifference towards classmates, with a new logic based on the cooperative resolution of problems and execution of tasks. As a consequence, in the attempt of executing a task, every student is both colleague and teacher of his classmates. This approach has been ostracised by different teachers, claiming that students have not reached a high enough linguistic level to positively influence one another. The risk is then that a student could badly influence his classmates.

The second positive aspect of *cooperative learning* is the usefulness of the *summa* of student minds, since differently thinking minds may reach better results than a single one on its own. In this case, some notions that may result incomprehensible for a single student could be clear to one of his colleagues who might clarify the nature of the input without asking the teacher for further explanation.

This case underlines another feature that properly belongs to a student group: differentiation. Starting from the consideration that a class is a multitude of different brains working in different ways, it is a natural consequence to have differentiation in student results. The tendency demonstrates that almost every class presents three categories of students based on their scholastic results, a differentiation that is graphically clarified by a Gaussian function, with a bell shaped curve. In the moment the Gaussian graph is applied to student's scholastic performances, the result will be a curve divided in three moments: the first part of the curve corresponds to those students that reach basic satisfying results; the peak represents the average of students; while the other extremity of the curve represents students that achieve excellent results. The relation amongst each other and their relation with the teacher come to create two kinds of student groups: a "casual group", created randomly, and a "working group". The scholastic group as an entity the student belongs to, and through which he has a connection with his peers, might become an obstacle for the realisation of didactic objectives. This would be because of the

unpredictability and vivacity of student interactive dynamics, which often does not conform to a scholastic productive reality.

In primary schools, teachers encourage the formation of a group of peers that project and adapt their teaching techniques to the student differentiation. In secondary school and university, on the other hand, the most common approach to diversity is the more traditional “scholastic Darwinism”, according to which those managing to follow a certain rhythm may obtain positive results while the others would be left behind.

The direct consequence of this perspective is the implicit exclusion of some students from the working group. This didactic approach generates two class subsystems:

- a. a group formed by students that have difficulties and which tends not to accomplish the teacher’s tasks;
- b. a group of students that excel or that are potentially excellent. They tend to accomplish the given tasks in a rather short amount of time, perceiving any remaining time as boring and useless.

The teacher’s role is that of “gluing” these opposite poles of the class. As will be discussed in the following part dedicated to the LASS figure, the teacher will have to adapt the school programme to the capacities, the needs and the interests of the multifaceted group of students, and at the same time must supervise the relational modalities of student-student and student-teacher.

Class member relations are one of the fundamental objectives of didactic institutions. On the one hand, the objective is to create significant relations with each student; on the other, it is to incentivise a class evolution from a disorganised group to a new “working” group, a plurality of people with common functions and objectives that perceive themselves as a close group.

In order to reach this evolution, a socio-psychological evolution, a special condition has to be respected: the objectives of each class group must be discussed by the teacher and accepted by the students. The objectives must be clear so that each student can focus his attention on a particular aspect and maximise his own potential for best results. The learners and the teacher would have to make a pact, a *formative pact*, whose aim is to clarify class activities. Students will be provided with information about:

- a. what is going to be done in class so as to balance all working modalities, and come to know the nature of the relations and organising structures;

- b. how it is going to be done: which activities are going to be suggested so as to reach the goal and which role every student is going to play;
- c. why it is going to be done in a determined way. In this case the objective is to make the students understand the values connected to each plan of the class work. The students are to be involved so as to create positive interdependent relations;
- d. which objectives are going to be evaluated;
- e. which values are going to be rewarded: Language and Literary Education are educative subjects with values first of all.

In this joint-responsibility and transparency pact, the group of students that have difficulties will agree to different objectives so as to understand new notions and be able to reach the excellence group. As far as the excellent group is concerned, it will be organized in the same way. Indeed, they will have different tasks: their potentials will be stimulated with integrative objectives as, for instance, peer tutoring or complex tasks based on *problem solving* activities.

The reason this pact can be considered as so relevant is connected to the influence that class social relations may have on a student's way of learning, and, consequently on his results. For this reason, the teacher will have to pay attention to what Dreikurs, Grunwald and Popper defined as "social interest" (Caon, 2008, p. 44). The concept of "social interest" influences those teaching techniques that have the objective of turning students, both excellent or in difficulty, into a support system for the rest of the class rather than an obstacle. A further positive aspect of this principle is the general democratic educative climate it may come to create. A democratic attitude that must be displayed by the teacher himself and followed every day with coherence and commitment: democratic leadership, verbal behaviour, respect for the students, and the possibility for open discussion and cooperation.

The last aspect that is considered important in matter of class social dimension is the so-called "significant relation" between students and teacher, which may contribute to the conversion of all differences into a valuable asset. This relationship is based on transparency, negotiation, joint responsibility and a trust.

When the teacher is able to reach this respect-based relation, the students will come to accept even difficult and demanding tasks since he understands that every didactic action is made in his interest and oriented towards his promotion as a language learner and as a person.

Coming to consider the actual practical aspects of class teaching, a teacher dealing with a non-homogeneous class may adopt different techniques so as to stimulate every student equally. Amongst these techniques he may use:

- a. periodical division of the class into different groups working on different tasks. While the teacher spends time helping students in difficulty, those considered excellent may execute more stimulating tasks;
- b. creation of activities in which difficulties are sequenced, so that the student in difficulty may complete the easier first part, the average student the more-complex second part, and the excellent student the supplementary activities. In this way, every student will have the chance to answer exercise questions avoiding the feeling of failure. Moreover, this strategy represents a useful tool for the teacher. He in fact can easily come to understand the level or possible improvements of his students.

Having considered the importance of the class, it is now time to shift attention back to Literary Education. We will try to understand the relation between the student and the text, and the way the student builds a connection with texts, the way a student creates his own system of hypertext.

2.1.6 The student: a reader and creator of hypertexts

After having considered the student in his physical and psychological qualities, it is time to analyse the learner's relation with the object of Literary Education. It is time to spend some time examining the student as a reader of a text.

Literary Education has written texts as its main object, and that of stimulating the student to become a life-long instructed reader as its objective. The reason the student is defined as "instructed" is due to the importance given to the understanding of a text. Reading a text means to be able to comprehend it, to enter it, to appreciate it and to understand it. Moreover, reading a text means to respond to a communicative need of the author. The written text is the concrete instrument of literary communication.

Literary communication, as happens for oral and other forms of communication, is developed inside a communicative event which is characterised by the nine variables constituting the letters of the acronym S.S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G.

The first *S* of this acronym stands for *scene, cultural scene*. In order to comprehend a literary text, it is necessary to understand in which cultural scene it was written in: what directly influenced its author in the choice of topic, style, characters and so on. To fully appreciate a literary

event means being able to associate the text to its original social context and to understand what happens during the reading experience.

The second *S* is for *setting*, meaning the *physical space* the words are written in. Reading a text on the computer monitor or reading it on a book page generates two different communicative events. Reading Shakespeare in class, at home alone or going to a performance at the Globe theatre generates three different effects. For this reason, in order to keep stimulating motivation, the teacher will have to define what is to be done together in class and what can be done by the student on his own.

The letter *P* in the acronym stands for *participants*: author and reader. To these two we add a third participant, the teacher, who works as a mediator between author and student/reader.

Continuing with the letter *E*, it is the first letter of the word *ends*, such as the expectations of both author and reader. The authors' aims are multiple and differ greatly from one author to another: they might want to create a critical vision of an ideology (like Orwell in his *1984*), a poem against war (like Sassoon in *They*), the exaltation of youth and beauty (like Wilde in *The Picture of Dorian Grey*), or depict colonial versions of European imperial expansion (like Warner with *Indigo*). The *end* is to be considered the reader's objective, the reason for which the text was chosen to be read or would like to be read. A reader may read to escape from reality, to reflect on the meaning of life or for purely aesthetic reasons. The literary event takes place when the author's ends correspond to the reader's.

The fifth letter of the acronym, *A*, stands for *acts*, *communicative acts*. In this particular setting they can be redefined as *literary acts*. With "acts" we intend the proper acts of production, of creation of the text. In this case, the expert reader differs from an amateur one in his capacity of understanding the recurrence of some specific acts, complicit to the writer.

The letter *K* refers to the psychological *key* of the two participants. This is a crucial factor for the student's motivation towards the discipline. For this reason, the most important key is the teacher's psychological key. Considering that the teacher is a mediator between text and student, the way in which he addresses literature determines the student's reception of the reading experience and his consequent motivation. The final result of the literary event is strongly influenced by the "*k-factor*".

Following the letter *K* is the letter *I*, for *instruments*. These are the instruments the participants use in order to reach the event's expected results. The text book is the instrument *par excellence*. The instruments a teacher may use to create a contact between author and student are not limited to written text books. They also can be technological, if these seem to better suit student propensities.

The letter *N* stands for *norms*, stylistic and literary communicative norms that the students need to discover. And the final letter *G* indicates *genres*, intended in communicational terms: place description, character characterisation, and dialogue or a monologue choice constitute important factors from the communicational point of view.

In order to understand why reading is considered so important, it is useful to reflect on the reader's connection with the text. It is useful to analyse how these two entities are interrelated during and throughout the act of reading.

Since the student is the main protagonist of this thesis, the reader will be analysed as an adolescent student facing the text. Actually, it is the particular case of a student who hasn't chosen to be a reader of a particular text: the teacher has chosen and given him the text to read. Now that this particular role of the student has been clearly set up, it is time to see who the reader actually is and in which way he is interrelated with the text. It is time to see how the student actively interacts with the subject of Literary Education and the text, in the act of reading.

This particular text/reader relation has been analysed by numerous people who have been working on text interpretation and how it is generated. Among the many theorists we find names such as Jean Paul Sartre, Hans Robert Jauss, Wolfgang Iser and, much before them, Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Saint Thomas in fact claimed that *quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur*. That is to say that "everything is received according to the receiver's way of receiving". With his words, Saint Thomas reflected on how what is written by an author can be perceived differently according to the reader. In fact, the text can present a foreground and a background relationship resulting from the selection and composition of the repertoire of thoughts and social system of references that the reader possesses. The various interactions the text might have with the reader's repertoire – such as selections (triggering the foreground/background relationship allowing the reader to access the text) and combinations (that allow the comprehension of the work through the organisation of elements) of references – aim at creating an aesthetic object. The final result of this process is the combination of different perspectives: inner perspectives – like the narrator, the characters and the plot itself – in juxtaposition with outer perspective, connecting the inner text perspective with the opposite outer reader one. The reason it is worth considering the different perspectives of the text in the process of reading, is due to the function these perspectives may have in giving the reader the possibility of creating his own meaning of the text, creating his own interpretation.

As said above, the reading act can be defined as a dynamic interaction between reality and fiction, between the reader and the text. In this view, Sartre proposes his idea of "inexhaustibility" of the

text. In his opinion, the text would not exist without the reader, since without him the written words would be nothing more than traces of ink on paper. Moreover, the text can live on almost eternally, since the more a reader goes further in his reading the more he creates and discovers new interpretations of it.

Interpretation is a theme which has been studied by three main movements: Sociology of Literature, Aesthetic of Reception and Interpretative Semiotics. The third name listed above, along the side of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Sartre, is going to be addressed as a member of the group of studies that concern the Aesthetics of Reception. With his Reception theory based on Jauss' ideas, Iser put the focus of interpretation on the receiver of the text, rather than the text itself, investigating the way the reader processes and experiences the events through the act of reading. Partially considering Sartre's ideas, Iser's theory is based on the condition according to which *reading* would be "the essential precondition for all processes of literary interpretation" (Iser W. , 1974, p. 20).

In his book *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Iser explores the implications of basic human faculties, such as the faculty of reading in the reader. The dialectic relationship between the reader and the text will take the name of "aesthetic" response. This particular name is due to the particular role taken by the reader's faculties: imagination and perception respond to the text's input, and the term describes how the reader's mind reacts to the text. With the "reading reader" as the main protagonist of this vision, the literary work is no longer to be considered a product of a culture that has existed or exists. It must be considered as a reorganisation, a reformulation, of an already formulated reality: the reader's mental construction of it. Even though this new reality is considered as a product of the reader's mind, the real object of Iser's *Theory of Aesthetic Response* is to make the reader's response find its roots in the text rather than the reader himself. To briefly exemplify this, we can say that the version of *Hamlet* we read, or see on stage, is different from what Coleridge or T.S. Eliot read. It is even different from the original Shakespearean one (Stagi Scarpa, 2005, p. 20).

The starting point, the act that sets this mechanism in motion, is the reading process. This is the moment in which the reader enters the text and confronts the new information with the knowledge he already possessed. By processing the new information, the reading mind will generate individual realisations and interpretations of the textual reality in relation to the conditions that have previously governed the text.

Overcoming the 19th Century concept perceiving the interpretation of a text as a mere product of the reader's subjectivity, as a "buried secret" to be discovered (Iser W. , 1978), Iser substitutes this vision with a new idea. His new concept is based on the dynamic and virtual nature of the text,

seen as the encounter between the two poles of literary works: the artistic pole (the text) and the aesthetic pole (the reader's accomplished realisation of the given text). According to Iser, the study of literature and of literary works should not only concern the text or the reader but also, and equally, the actions involved in the mental process that gives the text a meaning.

Given the virtual position of the literary text's meaning, between text and reader, its actualisation lays in the interaction between written words and reading mind. As a consequence, neither the expression of the author's techniques nor the reader's psychology would be useful to understand the reading process and the meaning of a text. This meaning should not be a definite and definable entity but rather a dynamic happening.

Translating this in a didactic setting, the reading is not given an interpretation of the text. He is instead guided in this process of discovery by an "interpreter", the teacher, whose aim is that of presenting potential meanings of the text not restricting the student to a single one. The figure of the student, as of the reader, is essential in Iser's theory for the comprehension and realisation of the literary work according to the following three main aspects of the interaction:

- a. anticipation and retrospection of data;
- b. the transformation of the text conceived as a living event;
- c. the feeling of acting in a real situation.

The act of reading implies the discovery of new information and the comprehension of already present information in our brain, decoded only after the process of reading. In Iser's words: "there are ways in which reading literature gives us the chance to formulate the unformulated" (Iser W. , 1974, p. 294).

There is much evidence that underlines the fact that the text is written so as to be read, but the real question now is: who is the text expected to be read by? Is it a real reader or a hypothetical one? Iser even proposes an answer to this question, postulating the existence of an "implied reader", a reader in a role hypothesised by the same author of the text (Iser W. , 1974). And what of the case of a special reader? A reader who has not chosen what he is reading? Which is the differentiating factor between a student and a spontaneous reader? The answer may be found in the object of Chapter IV. The answer could be found in the reason that has induced the reader to read: his motivation. On the one hand, the mature person choosing to read the text; and on the other, an immature reader ignoring the role the text would attribute him so as to complete its meaning.

And here comes the problem of Literary Education: how is it possible to evolve an immature reader, a student, into a mature reader capable of continuing his reading process and create summative hypertext, even after he has accomplished his scholastic career? The answer is to be

found in a series of choices the next protagonist of the learning process will make: the choices made by the teacher.

2.2 The teacher, a multifaceted figure

The protagonists of the learning process are basically three, three “poles” interacting with each other: student, discipline and teacher. Having already considered the first two, in this second section the role of the foreign language and FL literature teacher is going to be further investigated. Starting from the assumption that he is a multifaceted figure, we are going to understand the plasticity of this professional figure as director of the didactic action, the importance of his life-long formation, his role as fundamental figure in student education, his function of facilitator and resource whose objective is the expansion of students’ knowledge. He is the main source of motivation and inspiring cultural model, supporter of equality amongst students and in his own relation with them.

2.2.1. *The director of the didactic action: the teacher*

In the *learning environment*, the teacher is the person responsible for the direction of the learning process. He is the guide and source of motivation, stimulating students in the development of their knowledge, step by step, in what Vygotsky defines as Zone of Potential Development (ZPD) and Bruner as Zone of Proximal Development. As a matter of fact, the teacher will be considered the expert responsible for the activation and coordination of the student’s LAD. He will proceed according to their ZPD and making sure they take in the new notions following the *scaffolding* principle ideated by Wood, Bruner and Ross. *Scaffolding* is the process that enables the students to solve a problem, to perform a task or reach a goal, which without the presence of a guide, the professor, would be beyond his capabilities. It is the practice in which an event or a task, more complex than the actual ZPD of the student and beyond his competences, is organised so as to assist him in reaching the goal and overcoming the difficulties.

The teacher is to be considered one of the members composing the *Language Acquisition Support System*, which are different according to the linguistic code taken into account. For this reason, in L1 the LASS will be the family and the adults surrounding the child, while the LASS will be the teacher, the classmates, and the social networks (in case of Foreign Language acquisition).

Considering the environment in which Language and Literary Education take place, the class, it is interesting to examine the relations and the connections among the poles of the learning process: teacher, students and discipline. Assuming that the said approach should be student-centred, the image

below depicts the synergic commitment of teacher and discipline, at the base of the triangle, whose aim is to create student knowledge through communication.

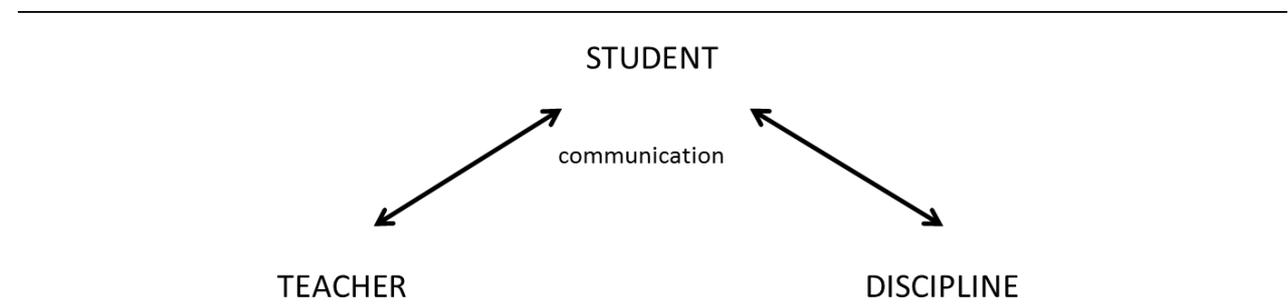


Image adapted from (Serragiotto, 2007, p. 3)

Traditionally, the scheme describing the teaching process has the shape of triangle, with the student as the vertex and the discipline and the teacher as the opposite poles at the base. According to Constructivism, the learner is at the heart of the teaching experience and is the main supporter of his own knowledge. The student is an individual who wants to learn. So the learning process becomes a voluntary act instead of an imposed one. In this perspective, the teacher abandons his role of sole statutory source of knowledge and becomes a supporting figure that helps and sustains the student's progress.

The former image was adjusted by Balboni who elaborated a new model. In the second image it is possible to detect a change in the position of the protagonists of this teaching action. The figure displays the student and the discipline as same level protagonists, while the teacher is put in the background, helping, supervising and directing the privileged connection between student and discipline. The teacher is a director who individuates the various objects of the teaching process and offers text examples, either taken from the text book or from authentic newspaper or book sources, and guides the student in the process of awareness in critical reading and appreciation of literary works.

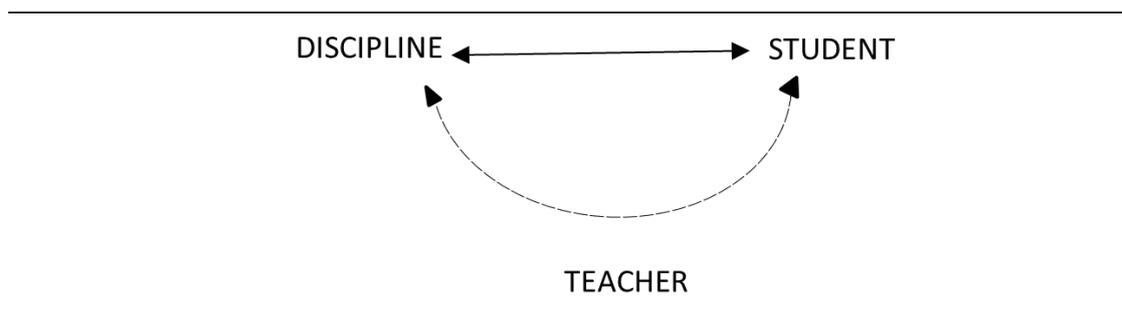


Image adapted from (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 108)

As a matter of fact, the teacher is both vehicle and coordinator of the information that flows from one side to the other, and because of his position he is in charge of maintaining the balance between the parts. In a balanced situation, the semicircle in the figure would not be inclined to one side - privileging the student, accepting his mistakes and facilitating him - or the other - obliging the student to face language levels he has outgrown or is not ready for, and acting as a judge without considering the acquisition process.

The teacher supports the whole system, keeping it balanced and adjusting the roles of student and discipline from behind the scenes. He is more like a director of a play rather than an actor, a protagonist. As director, the teacher is the person that has a generally clear idea of the project of the course: he is the person who manages to see beyond the acquisition process, guiding it and adjusting it according to the student's reactions, and correcting its trajectory in the moment it falls out of its natural productive order.

2.2.2 The teacher as a figure in evolution

Italian tradition sees the teacher as a sort of spiritual and moral guide, a cultural point of reference that detains all cultural patrimony and is used to teaching his students in one-directional classes, in which the sole protagonist is the professor.

With the beginning of the 20th Century, the role of the "sacred" professor underwent a process of change. The sole possessor of knowledge was converted into a new figure: he becomes an expert, a technician in matter of teaching techniques.

As far as language teaching is concerned, from the 1970s on, Italy has revolutionised the techniques used to teach FL and the way the teacher is perceived and self-perceives himself.

In the past, FL teachers suffered from an inferiority complex influencing their approach to the discipline. The reasons for such troubles were, and still are sometimes nowadays:

- a. awareness of their limits: this assumption was based on the fact that FL teachers are not native speakers. For this reason, they may feel uncertain and criticised even though they have studied really hard and passionately;
- b. they perceive the need to constantly update their knowledge, either linguistically or methodologically;
- c. they are often criticised for the teaching method they use, based on a traditional grammatical approach and in which communication often doesn't have a lot of room.

A turning point was constituted by the publication of text books based on a *communicative approach*, an improvement in the matter of teaching techniques which changed the way teacher saw his job. The new approach substituted the approach based on the study of grammar with a new one based on the spoken language, language functions, oral and written communication, and, most of all, a new method dealing with texts. Every text book in fact came to include literary text. As seen in Chapter I, the teaching techniques continued on an evolution process until they reached the modular approach. This approach was postulated as a way to build a *reticulum* of literary knowledge and competences so as to constitute a solid platform on which the student can independently build his own hyper-textual knowledge.

In this evolution process, the teaching figure is disguised as a facilitating figure, a counsellor, a silent guide, a tutor and a director. Whichever the new definition, the new teacher is now a figure that is quite different from the omniscient and omnipotent traditional professor: he is a new expert without a self-referential role. The focus then passes from the teacher to the student: he is the reason for the presence of the teacher and is no longer just a “sponge” whose only objective is to absorb the teacher’s words.

In order to transmit information to his students, the professor will use different ways of communication: from power-point presentations to graphs and images on the black board. The material he may use is various. The director of the learning acquisition may also invest the time of the class’ differently, in order to better transmit information, regardless of the teaching strategy. The amount of time that is properly of the teacher is called *Teacher’s Talking Time* (TTT). The acronym TTT indicates the percentage of time used by the teacher in relation to the total amount of time that constitutes the entire lesson time. This is a useful variable to consider when analysing the teacher’s teaching style.

The more the teacher talks the less the student has the possibility of talking, and as a consequence has less chances of acquiring. In case in which the TTT is elevated, the real protagonist of the learning process is the teacher and the result is that the new notion is often forgotten by the student. The student’s experience of the discipline is limited to hearing. When the notion is exemplified, and so only partially experienced by the student through exemplification, the student’s experience of the notion is bi-sensorial, involving ear and sight. However, it is in the moment the teacher gives the student the possibility of experiencing the notion that the student finally acquires it. Consequently, excessive TTT corresponds to a low rate of acquisition while making the student the protagonist of the lesson should invert the situation, assuring acquisition.

A further problem a FL literature teacher might incur in is related to the linguistic code used during the lesson. As Balboni suggests, the language has to be chosen on the basis of the communicative act that is offered. Considering that the native language is the language of emotional involvement, the teacher might use the student's L1 in the moments of emotional and relational connotations, or in the moment a correction has to be made. In this particular case, the correction explicated in FL could generate further difficulties for the student (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 112).

The concept of *lectio* was one in which the teacher used to be the centre of the learning process, the TTT almost covered the whole lesson, and reading the text book as a sacred book will eventually be outgrown. With the changes in the society that students live in - with ways of communication that enable them to communicate with the entire world, with the technologies that enable them to take audio, video and written documents everywhere – the *lectio* is no longer the time of the *Magister*. The teacher would be required of plasticity, flexibility and ductility in the use of his disciplinary and pedagogic competences, considering the new complexities of a society that requires new formation processes (Serragiotto, 2007, p. 4).

2.2.3 *The world changes and so does the teacher: the teacher as a professional*

The teacher is to be regarded as a professional figure in matter of education. As every professional, the teacher has to face a changing reality in which interpersonal relationships tend to become less formal and in which technological progress continues moving forward. Keeping this in mind, in order to achieve the objective of his work, a teacher will have to maintain a flexible profile enabling him to adapt to new generations, new requests and new instruments.

The concept that contributes to define the teaching action and comes to qualify the teacher's activity is the concept of *professionalization*. Juxtaposing it to the previous conception of the teacher as a person born to be a teacher, the professional figure of a FL teacher is characterised by the following aspects:

- a. his objective is the creation of communicative competence;
- b. in order to reach his objective he will use a scientific criterion;
- c. he detains a specialist degree in Foreign Languages.

The professionalization of the teaching figure has contributed to its delineation and clarification from the *professional* point of view (he teaches, educates, advises, evaluates and innovates), from the *scientific* point of view (he studies, informs himself, and keeps himself up to date) and from the *social* point of view. This professional figure is asked to be flexible with the use of his

disciplinary and pedagogic competences so as to deal with the multiplicity and the complexity of the European panorama and the institutions in charge of education.

As far as the professional identity of the FL teacher is concerned, it has been traditionally connected to knowledge, and only recently has assumed the further aspect that deals with a more practical nature of the profession. The new figure orients his action towards a more practical teaching process, aiming at the construction of linguistic competences involving both emotional and the learning realities of the student. As a matter of fact, teaching is a practical profession that also reflects on the teaching techniques. The didactic action leaves its *routine* and embraces a new perspective based on reflection on the teacher's work, on new learning experiences and on the possibility of experimenting in his class, in his didactic laboratory.

The evolution of the teacher's professional nature is other than easy and obvious. Reflecting on the mission of teaching is a complex task, since it means entering the personal emotional dimension of the teacher, something that could eventually generate a sense of inappropriateness. Processes of analysis and reflection of the teacher's linguistic, disciplinary and organisational competences are almost necessary passages for the improvement of the educator's teaching procedures.

The profile of the so-called professional teacher has been object of study and interest even at a European level. From the 1995 White Papers of the European Commission in matter of education, a fundamental role is given to the centrality of the teacher, with the objective of promoting independence and professional talent at the same time. Moreover, it underlined the importance that must be given to interactivity between educator and learners, keystone of the teaching/learning process. With the new stress on the commitment of the single individual in the creation of his own professional competence, the foreign language teacher will have to integrate his already possessed competences with others. In a perspective of life-long learning, the teacher will have to follow the paradigm according to which *learning foreign languages is a task the teacher will need his entire life to accomplish*. Therefore, initial education (specialist degree) and the continuous ongoing education are to be considered as integrated and inseparable.

The effort the educator makes in analysing and reflecting on his work, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of his didactic action, will transform him into a resource for the development of education.

The above mentioned effectiveness of the teaching techniques will bring to the realisation of successful learning in the student. The learning process is the outcome of the professional organisation of the teaching process and its *mise en place* through the interactions between the professional figure of the educator and the student.

Considering that the learning process does not mirror the teaching process, acquisition is generated in the moment the student voluntarily and actively participates. This is something that is unlikely to happen in the moment the educator-guide has not motivated the student.

The interaction between these two protagonists of education will take place in educational places, such as classrooms and virtual or complex contexts. It is in these particular places that the professional action of the teacher takes place. Among them, the *classroom* is the place in which teaching methods and procedures that the teacher has learned and collected during his own education are here put into practice. The classroom is to be considered a laboratory in which teacher and student work on the complex process of language and literary acquisition.

Considering the input, the teacher gradually provides the students with, language and literature will be seen as a system of symbols acquiring progressively more significance and importance. Significance and importance conveyed by the fact those signs once learnt offer the students the possibility of creating sense, talking about themselves and understand the others.

As we will develop later in Chapter IV, in order to make students discover the possibilities connected to language and literature, it will be necessary for the contents of the course to be captivating and stimulating. The proposed activities will need to be inclusive and guarantee interaction and participation. The teacher who manages to create both interaction and acquisition is an effective professional teacher, what Umberto Margiotta describes according to the following six qualities (Primon, 2007, p. 143):

- a. knowledge of both methodological and epistemological natures of the contents and of the object of the disciplinary programs;
- b. knowledge of the principles and methodologies at the basis of the construction of the formative *curriculum*, and the competences to organise it in relation to the development of student personalities and talents;
- c. to teach according to his mastery of a teaching strategies repertoire and the consequent ability in realising these strategies coherently, following the curriculum;
- d. ability of reflection and self-criticism, intended as an instrument for a cooperative way of working;
- e. empathy: the capacity to listen and comprehend others, recognising their dignity and talents;
- f. good management of all abilities, even those that go beyond mere teaching.

In order to conclude this account on the professional nature of the teacher, we should add that the educator is to conduct his teaching activity by planning it autonomously, based on his elevated level of competence and responsibility. A further quality a professional teacher should possess is credibility. This particular quality is rooted in the individual's disciplinary, didactic, relational and ethic competences, and is exemplified in the harmonic fusion between cultural mastery of the discipline and teaching competences.

2.2.4 Teacher of literature: an inspiring intellectual

In the case of a professional language teacher whose intent is to teach literature and make his students approach the study of literature, his image is no longer that of a language professor: he becomes a man of Letters, ready to guide his students towards literature.

As Freddi comes to define him, the teacher is an inspirational intellectual that stimulates his students to approach literature with his own passion for the written texts. He inspires them to enjoy it, to evaluate it as a source of beauty, culture and humanity. The educator is an expert, a qualified, sensitive and ductile figure whose objective is that of activating the student's psychological, cultural and operative mechanisms. This will allow the students to fully appreciate the names and voices of literature and their legacy (Freddi, 2003, p. 61).

The teacher of Literary Education is a specialist in matter of literature, performing what Umberto Eco defines as the three functions of the literary critic:

- a. reviewer: he talks about literary works and authors recommending them to his students, basing his choices on some critical parameter he must explain and share with the students;
- b. expert in history of culture: he is the person who is responsible for the historical contextualisation of the written work in its original social and cultural backgrounds. He tries to understand, and make his students understand, the reasons of the success or failure of a particular text, the reasons behind its censure or its oblivion;
- c. critic of the text: the teacher in this case is an intellectual who tries to make the students discover the mechanisms that make a text a literary work, with the objective of cultivating a critic view of the text (Eco, 2002, p. 61).

As a matter of fact, the teacher of Literary Education teaches his students to read literary texts through a kind of reading process that is neither free nor creative. The intellectual-educator will teach his students to face the interpretation exercises of literature appropriately. He trains them to respect freedom of interpretation, putting the student in front of the ambiguity of language and of

life. In this case, an expert and sensitive professional would instruct his students to profoundly respect the reasons the text was written for, for its original intention.

For a teacher, dealing with a text means to make his student understand the intrinsic meaning of it, the meaning it possessed in its original context and the new meaning it may assume in the reader's context, related to modern experience.

A further reflection on the role of the teacher dealing with literary education, especially with interpretation, is given by Balboni. According to his metaphor, the language teacher addressing literature may transform himself in a minister. A sort of prophet perceived as the sole authorised interpreter of those written texts that would result incomprehensible without him or his proper interpretation of them. The figure of the minister would then be subdivided into three different categories that delineate three different ways of working.

There is the Islamic minister. He is recognised by the community, the praying group, as the *mullah*, even if he has no theological formation. He is the only one that is legitimised in the critical interpretation of the *Koran*. Then there is the Catholic priest, responsible for choosing a particular text that believers are going to read aloud. In spite of this fact, the final interpretation of the text is given by the minister. He also extracts a moral from this text, a moral that the believers should apply to their lives. The last religious figure is the Protestant pastor, who guides the believers' interpretations after having read the text himself, and offering his own first interpretation as one of many possible.

All in all, teaching literature means for the teacher to guide his students in the discovery of the deepest meanings of the text, giving them the example and techniques necessary to reach such objective, and always trying to favour an abundance of points of view. The intellectual professor is no longer the omniscient teacher that enters the class, or even the year, with a pre-determined programme based on tradition. He is an inspirational figure that guides the students in the process of enjoyment of literature.

In order to make this happen, the educator should present his students with two fundamental "love generators" for literature:

- a. *the pleasure of reading literature*: pleasures given by the sense of evasion a novel can convey, by the exorcising of personal fears, by crying for unhappy love stories, and by seeing the evil figure of the story get caught. To these pleasures of "content", we may add those related to the form the text is written in. The reader may enjoy linguistic inventions, new words, interesting and acute metaphors, brilliant dialogues or perfectly chiselled sentences;

- b. *the need for literature*: the teacher must educate his students to the will to perceive needs that are not immediately identifiable. To emerge amongst these is the necessity of understanding life, love, sexuality, the sense of power and of justice. These are all great themes that sooner or later emerge in every life. They are also themes that literature has developed in the centuries.

In the first case, the teacher means to prove that literature is a pleasure, while in the second the teacher means to guide his students in the realisation that literature is a necessity, showing them that literature, in its past and present forms, has the answers to the great questions they need an answer to.

Pleasures or answers to necessities can be of different natures. A further objective of the teacher is that of installing the capacity of recognising these natures. Developing a critical sense is the main purpose and objective of Literary Education, through the guiding figure of the intellectual educator. For this reason, students will be taught to distinguish between bad and good literature, to find answers to their inner questions in it, and eventually to use it in order to transmit their own feelings, becoming authors themselves. Using a language that is different from the student's L1, the teacher will also teach them that English language goes beyond the grammar exercises or the dialogues written in the students' book. English language is a source of communication used to send oral and written messages. These messages are of various and profound nature and are expressed with the use of written words. These compose the wide world of English Literature, from the British authors to postcolonial ones.

The teacher's aim in class is to try and transmit the idea that Literature, with a capital "L", is to be considered the greatest source of pleasure a person can get through language, the English language in this particular case.

Now that we have analysed the object (Literary Education) and its protagonists (student and professor), we will proceed in the next chapter by analysing the instruments used by the teacher and the environment that surrounds Literary Education.

Chapter 3

The world surrounding the teaching action

This third chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the instruments used in support of the teaching action.

The first part of this chapter will bring a brief account of the abilities that Literary Education would aim to develop and train: receptive and productive skills.

In a second moment, the chapter will provide an analysis of the creators of the curriculum and of the organising system at the base of the teaching action, together with an exploration of the instruments the protagonists of Literary Education use in order to reach their objectives.

After having provided a general idea on the nature of these tools, we will examine what has been considered the primary source of the teaching process for a very long time: the text book. With the purpose of changing this traditional use, we are going to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of adopting and following the classic order of an English literature book for students. We will also make considerations on its presence as a linear source of linguistic and literary material and assess the necessity of integration with other material. By “integration” we mean the necessity of adding new materials so as to render the discipline more stimulating and captivating for the students: re-shaping the programme according to students’ interests and aptitudes, embracing their world. With this as a starting point, we will also discuss the use of technology in school as a precious resource the teacher can and should take advantage of.

3.1 Building receptive and productive skills

The objective of this brief section is that of analysing the field the instruments of Literary Education come to support. Assuming that the student must be at a linguistic level that enables him to understand the content of the text and the instructions of proposed exercises, the instruments necessary to the teaching actions would have to train two more competences: receptive and productive skills.

According to Widdowson, there is a distinction between *ability* and *skills*, a difference that lies between the actual cognitive process and its realisation in a specific situation. In this particular case, the difference is between the process of comprehension and to know how to comprehend a specific text written in a foreign language like English. In a perspective of Language and Literary Education, the development of *abilities* in the process of learning is to be considered more relevant than the mastery of the so called *skills* (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 95).

Focusing now the attention on comprehension, it could be regarded as the central ability in every form that learning may assume, gaining further importance when the discipline that must be learned is a language. As Krashen indicates, the student's LAD can only be activated when the language samples that compose the initial input are understood. It is the teacher's, and every member of the LASS', duty to select textual extracts that the students are able to understand and apply their analytical competences.

As a matter of fact, comprehension is based on three constitutive elements that join in the effort of understanding a written text:

- a. the student's knowledge of the world, his experiential encyclopaedia: this is the instrument the student uses so as to comprehend the new notion, comparing it with his own cultural heritage of knowledge;
- b. the cognitive process: this contributes to comprehension by linking the external stimulus to the mental dimension of the learner;
- c. linguistic competences of the language the text is written in. Every level on linguistic competence will have a corresponding typology of texts and activities.

Literary education in a foreign language can be quite difficult for those students who haven't developed a satisfying language comprehension level. It becomes even impossible in the moment the student finds himself having to comprehend it by summing the meaning of each singular word composing the sentences. So, considering it is not possible to learn a language perfectly in only

two years of study, there must be a mechanism in the student's cerebral structure that allows him to infer the general sense of the text, even though he doesn't understand all the words it is made of.

This mechanism is called *expectancy grammar*. It is built from childhood and is based on situational and pragmatic previsions rooted in socio-cultural constructs: semantic prevision and communicative prevision.

Comprehension is a long process to train. Beginners or students with a limited linguistic competence would not be able to immediately understand the meaning of written extracts. As a consequence, the teacher must gradually enter the written text, proceeding from a wider, more extensive comprehension. A comprehension that:

- a. finds and understands every hint offered by the *paratext* (titles, subtitles, photos and captions). In this initial phase, the teacher may stimulate the students' interest with a group brainstorming session. This activity aims at building knowledge together, in a group, through cooperation and fusion of different ideas. Since the task is mainly intuitive, nobody is at a particular linguistic disadvantage;
- b. intends to understand the general meaning through an operation called *skimming*, finding specific information by *scanning* the text. In this case, activities such as charts to complete are particularly useful: the student is asked to find some general component of the text and scanning activities can involve searching for a specific one in limited amounts of time. The task, therefore, is not proper linguistic comprehension as much as contextual and pragmatic ones. The linguistic will be addressed subsequently, with activities that gradually become more analytic;
- c. proceeds towards an analysis guided by the teacher, in which spontaneous acquisition through rational learning is sustained by the teaching techniques. It is in this moment that the teacher may ask specific questions in order to make the student reflect.

When the broader comprehension process is completed, the activity will move on to a more profound level: the purpose of this second intensive comprehension is to understand the socio-cultural and pragmatic elements that are proper of the text and that go beyond it. While his analysis deepens, the student will be asked to find unknown words and decipher passages that he formerly could not understand (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 177).

Among the abilities connected to Language and Literary Education there is the production of written texts. This can be considered an output moment, one in which the student himself

becomes the writer. It is fundamental to train this particular competence in order to achieve a more general one. The production of a written text can push learners from an initial semantic use of language, occurring during the comprehension phase, to a new syntactic use of it. Through the mechanism of production, the students are “forced” to impose a syntactic structure on their outputs. As a matter of fact, generating FL linguistic outputs may stimulate learners “to move from the semantic, open-ended, non-deterministic, and strategic processes that are prevalent in the comprehension stage, to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production” (Gass, 2003, p. 227).

Oral or written, the process of textual production is organised in three moments: *conceptualisation*, *planning*, and *realisation*. During the first moment, the student is asked to find ideas by his self or in group, using techniques such as diagrams, graphs and brainstorming. When *planning*, the students convert their ideas, associations and metaphors into a flowchart, a conceptual planned structure providing the text with its natural coherence and logical order. The student is then asked to write a text on a precise topic provided by the teacher. According to the textual genre he is presented with, the student will write a description, an account, a narration, a letter or a definition. Writing a composition is a complex activity that involves three elements:

- a. a cognitive component, logical reasoning;
- b. linguistic mastery;
- c. specific textual abilities, given by the student’s natural cultural heritage (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 183).

Now that the abilities connected to Literary Education have been briefly presented, the following section will talk about the instruments that the protagonists of the teaching action can use so as to train and increment the student’s mastery of language in reading, comprehension, analysis and writing.

3.2 The architects of the teaching action: from the European Union to the class

Language and Literary Education cannot be considered as something that merely exists in the classroom or at school. It represents the actual forms of political and organisational projects deeply rooted in the political and economic union of countries called European Union. This Education is organised by the country, the schools, and finally the class itself.

Literary Education must be seen as an integrative part of the FL linguistic competence of the students. Combining a foreign language to the cultural competence deriving from the study of

literature and history of the given country, the student would have the possibility of creating a heritage a wider knowledge, a European knowledge.

What follows is an analysis of the European policies in matter of language, which gradually tries to outline the role and the significance of language use and knowledge in the perspective of developing a sense of social identity as European citizens.

3.2.1. The European Union and its programs

The European Union started an action in matter of education, culture, and the diffusion of means of communication with the precise objective of enhancing and contributing to the conscience of a common European cultural heritage. Regarding the subject of languages, the European Union also played a significant role in raising awareness on the importance of foreign language teaching as a cardinal point for the perpetration of an effective “union” in which citizens could be free of travelling and working, thanks to their communicational abilities.

Considering the process behind the creation of such consciousness, the relevance of language developed in different phases, from a more political one to an executive one.

From the political point of view, between 1990 and 1994, a first step in a European experimentation programme was taken. Its objective was to increase the level of knowledge and linguistic competences of teachers and students. Moreover, in the same period, more than 800 partnerships were encouraged, giving start to the development of European Educational policies.

With the publication of the 1995 *White Papers*, entitled “White Paper on education and training - teaching and learning - towards the learning society” (White Papers, 2015), the importance of the acquisition of two European languages was thoroughly underlined. This proposal represented a new goal for the members of educational and formative systems, stating that “the society of the future will therefore be a learning society”.

A further step was taken with the publication of another type of proposal: The *Green Papers* of 1996, “Education-Training-Research-The obstacles to transnational mobility”. These underlined the importance of investing in the role of languages as a necessary condition to guarantee the European citizens the full benefit of possibilities offered by the EU, educational, formative or work related. The papers also mention the present underdevelopment of linguistic and cultural competences, constituting an obstacle for international mobility of European citizens. They specify that the linguistic and cultural deficit could be overcome with an investment on the acquisition of at least two communitarian languages, on linguistic training connected to every mobility action, on cultural knowledge and awareness of the life conditions related to the working

environment of the countries, and finally on making citizens aware of European citizenship and cultural differences.

From the practical point of view, these proposals originated exchange programmes, such as the *Leonardo Da Vinci* and the *Socrates Programme*, which from December 1999 became the *Life Long Learning Programme* (2007-2013) at first, and the *Erasmus Programme*, “European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility” afterwards (Education and Training, 2013). These two financial proposals contributed to the creation of cooperative programmes that aimed at linguistic training, creation of innovative teaching instruments and promotion of cultural exchanges. This also would come to promote professional experiences and the use of languages (Guido, 2004, p. 205).

Strictly concerning educational policy, the Amsterdam European Council of 1997 affirmed the necessity of supporting the development of professional and social competences in order to improve the adaptability of workers to the necessities of the job market. The direct consequence was a shift of focus towards education and the necessity of guaranteeing solid basic instruction. This was actualised by introducing the comprehension of cultures and the practice of languages among the basic competences that should be improved.

In 1997 the European commission also presented the “Towards a Europe of knowledge” document to the council of ministers. The aim of this document was “to set out the guidelines for future Community action in the areas of education, training and youth, for the period 2000-2006, for the purpose of building a Europe of knowledge” (EUR-lex. Access to European Union law, n.d.). The document highlighted the role of knowledge and mastery of different languages and cultures, a fundamental part of the basic competences required of every European citizen in search of employment.

From an operative point of view, among the practical realisations of the knowledge-based programmes and measures of the European Commission composing the *Life Long Learning Programme*, it is possible to find programmes for all levels of education:

- a. *Comenius*: a sub-programme focusing on all levels of school education, as well as the involved individuals - including pupils, teachers, and local authorities -, designed to increase staff and pupil mobility across the EU, and increase school partnerships, encourage language learning and the progress of teaching techniques. This can happen through the enhancement of teacher training and the improvement of approaches to both teaching and school managing;

- b. *Erasmus*: another sub-programme which has provided the opportunity of studying abroad between 1987-2013 to almost 3 million students;
- c. *Grundtvig*: a sub-programme focused on adult education and the development of the adult learners' sector in general. The programme aims at increasing the number of people in adult education and their mobility conditions, by improving the quality and the cooperation between adult education organisations. This by developing innovative educational and management practices and ensuring the social inclusion of adult learners;
- d. *Jean Monnet*: a sub-programme based on the theme of integration. It consists in stimulating teaching, research and reflection on the theme of integration. These activities include Jean Monnet Chairs, Centres of Excellence, and Modules integrated with conferences, thematic groups and policy support of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture;
- e. *Leonardo da Vinci*: a sub-programme based on practical projects in the field of vocational education and language training (Education and Training. Supporting Education and Training in Europe and beyond., 2015).

It is possible to detect at the core of each sub-project the effort made to establish common strategies that aim at enhancing the different experiences and promoting innovative experiences, recognised both nationally and by international entities.

Innovation and originality could be regarded as further elements of the above mentioned projects. Innovation does not consist in the mere use of technological instruments, but on the innovative character of new approaches in the use of already known methods and existing products.

Coherently with the objective of the White Papers - addressing the promotion of knowledge and use of foreign languages and the improvement of the quality of both teaching methods and procedures -, the European language label was launched in 1998. This project aspired to promote a European recognition of the most original and innovative language projects, reaching all educative and formative levels so as to stimulate the interest in language and culture learning.

To this first phase, focused on promoting the role of linguistic and cultural knowledge in the processes of social development, occupational strategies and innovation of the educational policies has been supported by other initiatives. Such as:

- a. CLIL experimentations;
- b. development of actions dedicated to the promotion of multi-linguistic comprehension;

- c. creation of a guide, providing the necessary input to elaborate pedagogic procedures and materials for the learning and teaching of languages.

Every initiative promoted by the European Commission in matter of language and cultural education presented the creation of a community based on knowledge as basic objective. Citizens are given the possibility of moving, communicating and understanding the reality that surrounds them.

In conclusion to this analysis ranging from political objectives to more practical realisations, we could say that the EU represents a guide for each member in matter of linguistic and cultural promotions. It would be each member's duty to decline and actualise the above mentioned guidelines, in schools and educational structures present in the national territory.

3.2.2 The creators of curricula and teaching materials

When European initiatives enter national boundaries, it is the Ministry of Education's and the schools' duty to organise the teaching action, translating the European guidelines into practice.

Considering the field of the current paper is FL Literary Education, the organisation of the curriculum and materials used in secondary schools will be discussed in this section.

Italian secondary school, differently from Universities and private linguistic structures, is still considered as depending from the study plan and programmes designed by the Ministry and then elaborated by the authors of teaching reading materials.

The person appointed to design the teaching action will have to:

- a. define the role of the language course according to the general interest area interest of the student's educational path;
- b. analyse and understand student necessities in order to define the general purposes of the course. Generally, as far as public schools are concerned, the indication of the students' needs is provided by specific national institutions;
- c. identify the resources needed in order to satisfy former needs and understand which of these might be realistically obtainable, establishing an order of importance;
- d. understand which type of teacher is actually more appropriate for the specific course and possibly indicate a series of formative processes that can better qualify the educators;
- e. define the foreign language curriculum according to the available models. With curriculum we mean the ensemble of educational path, its stages, its objectives and its contents;

- f. indicate the most adequate teaching instruments for reaching the general objectives of the course.

In the majority of cases, the fifth point is delegated to the author of the text book. The teacher would have to integrate eventual material shortage according to his personal competences and knowledge and those of his students.

The last point, regarding the specific teaching instruments, is interest of the course teacher. As far as Literary Education is concerned, the teacher will adopt the anthology he reposes most appropriate, with the possibility of integrating it with further material available online or in the scholastic archive.

Considering the teacher is attributed the duty of choosing the teaching instruments, it is interesting to understand what teaching instruments he can rely on during the teaching action.

Nowadays, the materials the language and literary teacher may adopt is no longer limited to the sole text book. These materials come to compose what Balboni defines as a constellation of materials, flexibly connected (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 115), a complex system of integrative materials that include:

- a. the text book: the personal tool that guides the student toward reaching didactic objectives;
- b. a series of parallel materials that reinforce and give more problematic students the possibility of reaching the objective. This material could be found online or in other text books;
- c. online expansions of the teaching unit guided by the teacher;
- d. audio-video materials, such as DVDs, clips, movies and documentaries that provide the students with cultural and historical contextualisation;
- e. a teaching guide, that illustrates the teaching path and the sense of each activity to the teacher;
- f. a sequence of test levels;
- g. a website providing further material.

The teacher that has to deal with the organisation of the programme will integrate the general material proposed by the ministry with supplementary material, not originally intended for the teaching action: these types of material are useful in offering authentic examples of language and literature, in stimulating student motivation and in promoting excellent results from some students.

This integrative material the teacher may use can come to include: songs, movies, video clips, power-point presentations and documentaries.

3.2.3 *The organization of the teaching material*

The student's unit of acquisition can be defined according to Gestalt psychology. According to the German study, perception is a sequence of three different moments. There is a first global step, a second analytical one and a final process of synthesis. This sequence (global→analysis→synthesis) transforms the perceived input into elements learned by the student's mind and, in the adapted condition, into acquisition.

The teaching material that supports the process of acquisition will have to be chosen and organised according to the gestalt model.

Even in matter of Literary Education, every text is explored according to the above mentioned model and the three phases of perception (globally at first, then in a more analytical way and finally with an independent realisation of a text synthesis), a reflection that allows the learned unit to evolve into acquired unit. In this way the new information is accommodated in the student's memory along with the existing knowledge and cultural heritage.

The *acquisition unit* may last a few minutes or whole hours and could be considered the measuring unit according to which the student perceives his own learning process. Differently, a language, or literary *teaching unit*, is a more complex system of notions resulting from the grouping of different events, acts, expressions and linguistic structures generally based on a cultural or literary theme (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 163).

A literary *teaching unit* on Shakespeare, for example, could last weeks and would be divided into different fragments, *acquisition units*, based on an initial phase of general discussion on the author. This phase would be followed by the reading of single texts by the author and finish with a synthesis and reflection on the analysed themes.

The *teaching unit* could become a useful instrument the teacher may adopt so as to organise the teaching action, a sort of container that includes an ensemble of *acquisition units* organised according to the three Gestalt moments. It is interesting to see how this concept can be graphically summarised in the image below, in which the four moments composing the didactic unit are described.

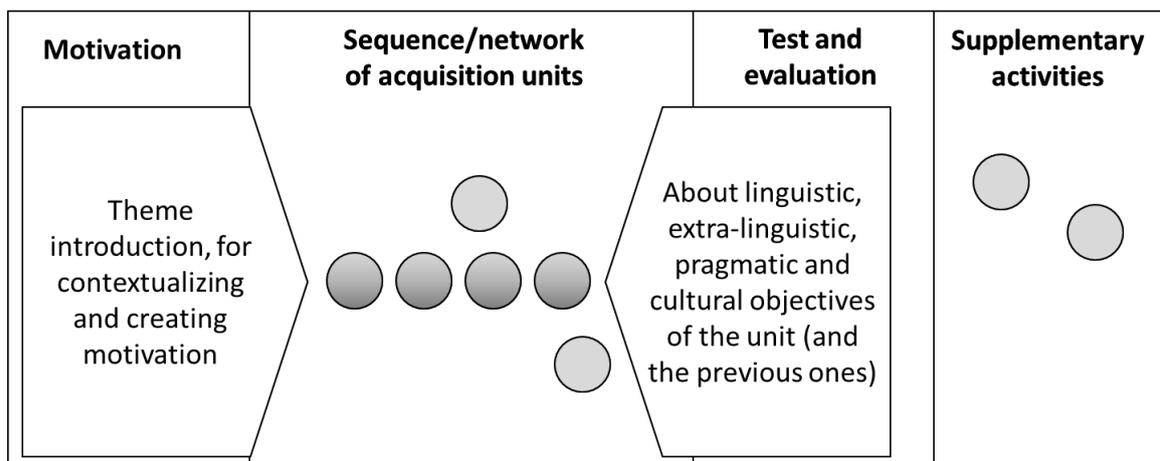


Image adapted from (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 165)

The first of the three moments in the teaching unit is *motivation*. In Chapter IV we will explain how without motivation there is no acquisition. As a matter of fact, a complex process such as the *teaching unit* needs a motivational phase that gives the student the strength to undergo the “effort of learning”. This motivational phase turns the notion into significant learning, generating the desire of walking through the entire unit in the student’s mind. In this preliminary phase, conducted in the student’s native language, the TTT is really reduced, taking the form of stimulating questions and could be organised by using:

- a. elicitation activities with the purpose of collecting what the students already know about the theme and their expectations, in order to gather up a knowledge and cultural heritage of what the student already possesses;
- b. rapid presentations of videos, songs, photos, images or the exploration of websites so as to understand the key words and the main points of the unit;
- c. a possible account, by the teacher, on his personal experiences with the theme, offering the students a human contextualisation of the theme.

Continuing in the path of the teaching unit, the teacher will address the various *acquisition units* generally following the order provided by the didactic materials, and adapting the proposals to student needs and interests. Moreover, in case the teacher might consider the available material as scarce or not stimulating, he can integrate the sequence with supplementary *acquisition units*, in a scheme that is new and that differs from the others.

The third moment focuses on the evaluation of the competences reached by the students. The test is the culminating point of the unit where the teacher evaluates the performance of every single student, basing his assessment on considerations such as student participation, commitment

and personal improvement. Considering the general order of the *acquisition unit*, the teacher will not consider mistaken information concerning elements not yet explored in class as an error. The text aims at mostly verifying the literary objectives, also coming to measure all those elements that are proper of language competences, which should have been acquired by the student at this point.

The fourth and last moment deals with supplementary activities the teacher might propose in order to actualise the cultural themes explored in the texts. Once the unit is completed, and before proceeding, it could be useful to spend some lessons trying to extract the theme from the natural “input→acquisition” order. This could happen by presenting new inputs, such as songs, film versions, and web material. This is an essential phase for the stimulation of motivation. As we have already mentioned in Chapter I, programmatic necessities influenced the selection of the modular approach as the best for teaching organisation. “Module” defines a self-sufficient, closed, and complete significant thematic bloc articulated into a series of *teaching units*, each one based on a sequence of acquisition units.

In the following part we explore the “classic” or innovative materials which, along with the presence of the educator, may facilitate the processes of learning and acquisition: the teaching materials.

3.3 The instruments of the teaching action

Literary Education has been described as a discipline that tries to instil in the students the sense of pleasure they may feel by reading a written text, and making them understand the need for literature as a precious source of answers to human questions. Moreover, literature is a form of communication the author uses to express himself, and once they have enough proficiency, the students may use it to express themselves. This communication, in our case, happens in a foreign language, the English language.

The class of Literary Education and the domestic study of a foreign literature will provide the students with authentic linguistic material and the possibility to exercise language in every declination it might be used. As a matter of fact, Literary Education means: to read it, to write it, to comprehend it, and to speak about it. It constitutes a fusion of the primary abilities to the integrated ones: receptive abilities and productive abilities.

Going through the texts, and discussing/dialoguing on the content of the texts and their significance, represents a double possibility for the student to improve both linguistically and culturally.

As specified in Chapter I, Literary Education in FL could result difficult or impossible in the case of a student whose language level is too low to guarantee him a general comprehension of the text, his participation to the lesson, and his appreciation for the content emerging from the texts of great authors.

As far as the literary input is concerned, it will be offered in its original form when it is presented by using what has been considered the cardinal source of Literary Education for a very long time: the text book, the anthology.

The paper source, often perceived as boring and scarcely stimulating, may no longer be entirely suitable for the new generations of students, submerged by kaleidoscopic and aggressive audio-visual inputs. As a consequence, the teacher can back the anthology with a variety of techniques of different nature. These techniques are not to be considered as mere integrations to the book, but rather as a precious resource for the complete appreciation of some literary genres. He could consider, for instance, theatre and its performance in a physical theatre, or the metamorphosis that a novel or a romance undergoes once transposed in a film according to a director's personal interpretative key.

It is a common fact that literature, and its great names, is a grand treasure chest for the cinematographic industry. As a consequence, the teacher could cautiously take advantage of the union of these arts, using the DVD player or the computer to show how the narration develops or how a piece of theatre comes to life.

There is a second form of art that literature may encounter and form a fecund and harmonic liaison with: music. Music is intensely popular amongst adolescents. However, they do not realise how similar the structure of many songs is to poetry. The teacher can then stimulate his students with the simple use of a recorder, a computer or a linguistic laboratory, through a medium they feel very close to themselves.

Once the teaching unit has come to an end, and it is time for the students to measure their knowledge, the teacher may use a further teaching instrument in order to evaluate them both linguistically and from the contents point of view. This instrument is the oral presentation, supported by power-point or graphic maps. The practical instrument that is most appropriate for this kind of evaluation is the computer. With oral presentation, the students may even come to develop transversal competences like speaking in public, exposing a text in a limited amount of time, and researching material so as to write the presentation.

In conclusion, there is infinite material for the presentation of literature. It is up to the teacher to select which best suits his students' characters and the programme. Overcoming the boundaries of the anthology could mean venturing in different words (photos, images, videos,

music and even works of art) in order to support and render the teaching action more pleasant and relevant. Even though they have different natures, the teaching instruments for Literary Education have a common objective: they intend to instil a passion for literature, and develop the ability of connecting different disciplines in order to develop a wide, multifaceted and multidirectional culture.

3.3.1 The text book: an advantage or a disadvantage?

For a long time, the textbook or anthology of literary texts has been considered the sole source and instrument of Literary Education from which the teacher gathered texts from. Texts were often presented chronologically and according to a fixed canon of authors that considered the literary voices of the past as mainly connected to their homeland.

Now that technologies, and students' attitudes and tastes most of all, underwent a significant mutation, the former fixed and "prophetic" textbook, however revised and graphically captivating, has seen its position change from "source of knowledge" to "tedious collection of texts".

In this section of the paper, the advantages and disadvantages of the text book are to be considered trying to understand how this instrument could still be used productively today.

Starting from the advantages the use of the anthology may offer to both the protagonists of the teaching process, it is interesting to note the opening invitation of the authors of the book *Discovering Literature* to the reading student, stimulating the interest of the student in literature and in considering the anthology as a useful key tool. They present an interesting case of reflection.

In the second page of *Discovering Literature*, by using a metaphor the authors compare the book to a key, giving students the direct possibility of opening different universes and create a productive connection between student and book. As a matter of fact, the anthology is regarded as an instrument that guarantees access to new worlds and enables students to access three different dimensions:

- a. *treasure chest* of texts. Diverging from commonly read texts, the anthology presents extracts with specific qualities and traits that are proper of the literary text. For this reason, the student may experience rhyme, rhythm, metrical figures and the differences among genres. The instruments that the author applied with the use of the English language in order to express his feelings as best he could. In this perspective, the text book is a great

chance for written training. This training requires exercise and practice, and for this reason the anthology presents extracts followed by different activities, such as exercises that aim to develop the student's literary competence;

- b. *valley in which English literatures flows*. This phrase contains the important concept of detaching the text from traditions limited to purely English literature. Literature written in the English language can be considered as the most extensive of existing literature, embracing authors from Europe to North America, from South Africa to Nigeria and from India to Oceania. It represents a valley into which different cultures speaking the same language flow in one river with a great capacity. The anthology will consequently abandon the Eurocentric canon and present literature from all around the world, offering the opportunity of entering and experiencing other cultures. In order to offer a clear idea, the extracts are supported by critical sections the student may use in order to comprehend the historical background of the excerpt, through historical, artistic, biographical details and comparison between European and postcolonial literatures;
- c. *possibility to understand life through the author's experiences*. With a selected range of texts, the anthology presents a brief account of life experiences provided by different authors. Texts that address love, worries, and friendships could be used on the one hand to understand the author, and on the other to understand the society the students live in, comparing their situation with the author's. The students will mainly work on already existing literary texts and will be provided the instruments to appreciate literature that has not been written yet. Moreover, the anthology could be seen as an instrument for understanding other cultures and becoming an important tool for intercultural comprehension (Balboni, Coonan, Antonelli, Bertin, & Fiornini, 2003, p. 3).

Amongst its advantages, the text book can be seen as an instrument to learn how to read literature in its entirety and variety of forms. It may address literature as:

- a. a particular form of communication: the writer is sending a message to a receiver. In this case the receiver is a student who is provided with the instruments needed to understand and appreciate the content of the given message. The book provides the student the instruments to become an experienced reader, teaching him to focus his attention on the main features of literary texts. The above mentioned instruments aim at making the student reflect and experience the text through different exercises. The student is asked to

complete exercises of comprehension and analysis re-elaboration, in the section located at the end of each module since, conceptually, a student learns better in the moment he practices with new notions;

- b. a special way of using language, with a “special ear”: the use of language in literature is different from its everyday use. Quoting Alexander Pope, literature speaks of life, of “*what oft was thought, but ne'er so well express't*”. When a student listens to a song or to an actor’s voice, he perceives language as sound. When he reads a text, on the other hand, he needs to be trained to appreciate the written words as if they were performed. The book is a tool to train reading abilities in order to comprehend metaphors, similes, oxymoron, synaesthesia, symbols or personifications. In other words, the students are trained to decode the figures of speech that authors often use to express their feelings, to describe people and so on;

- c. an occasion to better understand all literary forms surrounding students, like as music and cinema. Adolescents like songs and listen to them continuously because of the captivating way they are written. These songs, on the page, could be regarded as poems. Songs and poems actually share various features: the couplet (called refrain in music), the hyperbole, rhyming patterns, their components, stanzas etc. Moreover, literature is often the original and primary source for cinematographic successes. An opportunity for the student to develop a critic sense in understanding how the original piece is adapted for the screen. For these reasons, a text book offering an account on the connections among literature and the worlds of music and cinema could instil consciousness in the student and of the world surrounding him.

The book would represent an immediate and tangible instrument the student can keep even after having terminated his educational period, helping him judge literature and consequently how to choose “good” literature. The texts present together the author and his proper contextualisation, following a linear and chronologic order with modules proceeding according to historical succession and literary currents, such as “*The Elizabethan theatre*” or “*After the Empire*”. These are supported by thematic modules that mean to suggest connections between different eras, like “*Woman in society*” or “*War and power*”. These characteristics may facilitate the development of a wide cultural baggage, enriched and sustained by the reticular and hyper-textual system of knowledge built through these thematic modules.

Moreover, the text could be seen as a consultable guide apt at explaining the parts of the text resulting too difficult for average students. This is the reason why it is possible to find images, charts or boxes in the text. It provides a graphic version of the content, a *paratext* composed by titles, subtitles, images, captions, charts and photos that convey the text's general idea, helping the activation of the *expectancy grammar* and the consequent creation of hypothesis. It may be regarded as a key tool the student can use in order to comprehend complex and abstracted figures of speech or archaic forms of language.

All in all, the book is a tool that leads the student in the world of English literature, from Middle Age to Postcolonial texts. A concept perfectly summarised by the following "study contract":

"Your life is filled with literature: when you walk and listen to music you are immersed in literature; when you watch films or video clips you are watching literature; when you read a novel - be it a classic novel, a love story, science-fiction or a detective story - you are reading literature. We are surrounded by literature - a lot of bad literature, too! This book will help you become able to judge the quality of literature you listen to, you read, you watch and you write."

(Balboni, Coonan, Antonelli, Bertin, & Fiormini, 2003, p. 8)

The disadvantages of a textual anthology, on the other hand, are mainly two. The first is represented by the code, the language that not only the extracts are written in but also the socio-cultural contextualisation, the author's biography and finally the instructions preceding each exercise. In the moment a linguistically fragile student is asked not only to read but also to study a text written in a linguistic code he is not able to decipher, the process of acquisition is suddenly arrested. In this case, the student can come to perceive the book as the object of his defeat or as a collection of obscure chains of words that can possibly create a state of anxiety.

The second negative aspect of a student's literature book is connected to the variety of texts and authors it presents. Often the material presented in the text has a realisation schedule that exceeds the effective available time in class. Moreover, it may happen that the text book scarcely adapts to the necessities of those classes which follow a scholastic curriculum based on scientific subjects or are mainly composed by male or female students. In these two cases, the teacher has the possibility of integrating the material provided by the text with extra authors, copies of texts, activities and exercises created *ad hoc* for the class. For example: a class trip to a theatre performance, or the use of technologies supporting the teaching action, like DVD players, CD players, computers and the internet.

3.3.2. Technology at school: a productive source of interest

Before analysing how the different technological devices can facilitate the teaching process, it is interesting to see how their role has changed and developed in the years.

Assuming the literary text itself can represent a system of social, cultural, historical and literary connections, Literary Education can be considered as a hyper-textual system of texts to be discovered, appreciated and eventually created by the students.

In the last decades, the presence of hypertexts and multimedia has entered the scholastic system and influenced the way we teach. Every teacher using multimedia has to deal with new problems and new opportunities. Considering Literary Education, the presence of new technologies and their integration in the teaching action can help overcome the linear and mono-dimensional nature of literature. They can promote a new nature of knowledge as a multidimensional space, based on the concepts of the reticular system of knowledge with its exchanges and interactions. Consequently, the new technologies can be used as support for the creation of a complex system of knowledge that assumes different shapes: a fluid, reticular, open and plastic mentality able to create infinite associations between the text and the reality surrounding it.

When the hypertext system is based on conceptual connections among its various parts, the hypertext itself may become source of dialogue with the general structure of knowledge it expresses and with those mechanisms of the human mind responsible of acquiring it.

New communication and information technologies could also provide the educator with the possibility of adopting new didactic strategies that aim at stimulating the student's intellect with new modalities of comprehension, imagination and motivation. Moreover, they allow the creation of hypermedia elaborations that connect different expressive and communicative codes.

The teaching action has always considered technology as a precious resource, a support and sometimes substitute, and as a cardinal component of the learning environment. Their use, or their possible integration with existing and more classic instruments like the textbook, has depended equally on technological knowledge and its development, and on the nature of the theories related to the teaching action. Technologies as an instrument of the teaching action have even occasionally promoted the evolution of different ways of designing the entire didactic experience (Dolci, 2007, p. 85).

In the history of the teaching, it is possible to delineate two different moments in which the presence of technologies has dictated the organisation of activities and the perception of its

protagonists. On the one hand we have the objectivist paradigm (1950s behaviourists and cognitivists), and on the other we have the constructivist paradigm.

According to the objectivist paradigm, technological devices such as the computer can be regarded as a substitute for the teacher: it presents and organises the activities, it delineates the process of acquisition the students are supposed to undergo and it makes the final evaluations of the student's performances. In the behaviourist declination of this paradigm, the transmission of a programmed instruction is assigned to CAI (Computer Assisted Instruction) and CBT (Computer Based Training), in which established programmes are realised and in which the control of the teaching action is left to the machine, to the computer. In the subsequent objectivist paradigm, defined as cognitive or H.I.P (Human Information Processing), the machine is given the role of problem solver, helping the human being in decision making. The computer would replicate human behaviours, acting as an instructor and being the sole interacting element "dialoguing" with the student. Once again, the interaction would be confined to man and machine, to student and computer.

Considering the constructivist paradigm, technologies are here attributed particular importance and are considered as instruments of active, constructive, and social use of technology that generate situations of simulation, expression and exploration of communication. With the development of technologies, the role of the computer is no longer that of teacher substitute or technical expert. It becomes an important facilitator of social interactions among people.

In the studies conducted by Jonassen (Dolci, 2007, p. 86), the main guiding points for acquisition are:

- a. Active: students need to be actively involved in the teaching process, processing new information and being themselves responsible for the final results;
- b. Constructive: learners gradually build their knowledge, integrating new information with their own cultural heritage of knowledge;
- c. Cooperative: students work inside a community in which they are to help each other, taking advantage of each member's capacities and competences;
- d. intentional: learning environments are supposed to support the student, helping him reach his objectives and satisfy his needs;
- e. Complex: considering both world and reality are complex, students might be asked to solve complex problems;
- f. Conversational: teaching and learning are both social activities based on the process of dialogue and information sharing;

- g. Reflective: students may be asked to reflect on their actions, on the decision they make and the strategies they imply. Only by reflecting can they manage to use the abilities they have built during the learning process and transform them into acquisition.

In this perspective, technology might be used to significantly actuate these characteristics of learning and teaching, as tools that aim at facilitating moments of discussion, sharing and exchange of resources, as well as the cooperative realisation of final products like oral or written texts.

The positive involvement of technology in the teaching process leads to different and positive results. Beginning with the notions the student may learn, technology promotes gradual construction of knowledge instead of its momentary reproduction, the articulation of a notion rather than its mere repetition, the conversation among students, a climate of cooperation rather than competition, and student critical reflection.

Summarising, according to the constructivist approach students and teacher would teach and learn in a learning environment, real or virtual, supported by the presence of technology and in which collaboration, dialogue, idea sharing, and the contextualisation are not only possible but encouraged. The aim is the creation of a community in which the actors, students and teachers, work together in the realisation of projects and learn from each other. In this context, technology represents a fundamental resource that catalyses attention and simplifies communication. In contrast to the general idea provided by the objectivist paradigm, constructivism would situate a real person beyond the computer: the teacher or a group of people like the class (Dolci, 2007, p. 87). In order to face a global, intercultural and technological society, the development of new competences, new abilities and new knowledges would result fundamental to a learner of foreign languages. The socio-cultural constructivist paradigm based on dialogue, interaction, cooperation and social mediation - combined with the use of technologies that facilitate these dynamics -, appears to be a good key tool for the development of Language and Literary Education.

The presence of technological instruments for teaching has also had a deep influence in the development of different approaches and methods:

- a. Neo-behaviourism of the ASTP: record players (hour long repetitions of pattern-drill exercises) and films;
- b. Structuralism: use of cassette recorders and devices at language laboratories;
- c. Situational approach: cassette recorders, “diapofilm” (used for contextualisation), language laboratory;

- d. Communicative approach: audio recorders and televisions, instruments for authentic communication (from *Skype* to smart phones and the internet).

The society that students live in nowadays is characterised by a huge explosion of literature forms declined in every *medium*. Technological revolution of the literary distribution system guaranteed by new *media* has generated a spread of the genres in which different languages can possibly be integrated. Songs, film-clips, movies (often transpositions of literary works), recorded versions of dramas and lyric performances are demonstrations of the fact the literary text cannot just be considered limited to paper. The wide world of the internet supplies Literary Education with different versions of literature: from the classics to e-books, from song lyrics to romances. Literature cannot ignore the innovative power offered by these supports.

In this perspective, Literary Education would mean:

- a. exploring the millennial connection between music and poetry. In the form of song, poetry can return to its oral and performative origins, back to ancient troubadours;
- b. reflecting on the role music plays in its connection with words;
- c. stimulating the creation and the development of a critical way of thinking, enabling the student to choose “good” texts;
- d. clarifying the process of transposition that comes to generate movies from literary masterpieces, underlining the mechanisms of trans-codification that regulate them;
- e. transmitting the presence of literature in the world to the students.

(Balboni P. E., 2004, p. 32)

In addition to the general purposes technological instruments may have in Literary Education, a further aspect that completes this analysis concerns the general idea of the teacher that is supposed to deal with students whose receptive abilities are still at an embryonic stage. The ability connected to comprehension of the literary is still anarchic, disorganised and could result difficult for an educator that belongs to a different generation and is consequently excluded from students’ interests and aesthetic parameters. This situation might lead to two opposite reactions. From one point of view, the teacher could give up actual teaching, limiting his efforts to the mere introduction of texts, leaving the students with the responsibility of studying literature by themselves. From the other point of view, the director of the teaching process may attempt to organise a literary programme by making full use of all available instruments, stimulating the students’ interests by selecting the right texts and sustaining motivation by offering extracts that

are adequate to their abilities, introducing critical analysis and the consequent creation of hypertexts. In his personal reflection on the theme, Balboni (Balboni P. E., 2004, p. 42) states that the first case educator would believe in the possibility of teaching literature by respecting the students' competence level and their interests, adopting a perspective of cooperation between the tradition of Literary Education and the valuable contribution that technology provides.

In order to better understand which technologies may facilitate Literary Education, the following sections will present the various instruments that belong to the macro group of technological instruments. For this reason, we here provide a list of the most popular and available technologies in every Italian school.

3.3.2.1 The CD player

Among the various literary genres addressed at school, there is poetry. This genre is characterised by the importance of its phonological dimension. In this case, the presentation of auditory inputs requires a technological aid that the CD player can bring, becoming a useful instrument for the presentation of poetry.

The use of a recorded performance implicates different advantages. First of all, the possibility of overcoming all the negative implications the teacher's personal interpretation might generate (the authenticity of pronunciation, rhythm and prosody) while at the same time providing the advantage of a reiteration that only a machine's precision can produce. Secondly, this teaching instrument may have a central role in activities related to the analysis and interpretation of the text. In this particular case, the use of CD players allows:

- a. the teacher to record the student's reading performances, making him subsequently reflect on them;
- b. the students to seriously work on the meaning of the text so as to accentuate the right key words, insert pauses and handle voice intensity.
- c. group exchange on the analysis, on the vision of the text and the different ways of performing it.

Moreover, the CD player can be used to play music. A possible activity the teacher may propose is to find a song, or a short segment of a song, in which a feeling expressed in a studied text is conveyed. With this activity, every student, even the more sceptical, could be motivated by the possibility of expressing his own perception and analysis of the text and discussing it with his classmates.

Finally, in conclusion of this list of advantages, the audio recorder or CD player may be used to offer the students a musical version of classic texts, or to present texts born from a union of words and music like medieval ballads.

The disadvantage of this instrument resides in the fact that it would deprive the performance of its natural extra-linguistic and situational components. So, in order to bring remedy to this lack of qualifying components, the teacher may opt for another tool, the DVD player, for the vision of movie sequences.

3.3.2.2 *The DVD player*

As for poetry, there is a second literary genre which could be better appreciated and understood through the use of technologies. This genre is theatre. Reading a theatrical text without experiencing its performance on stage could be compared to a silent reading of a poem, in which the text partially loses its original strength. Theatre is made of light, costumes, music, and people – actors - whose role is to give life to an important component of this literary form: the text.

In case a school trip to the theatre was not possible, it is possible to offer the students a filmed version of the analysed plays, giving the students the opportunity to see how a theatrical text develops and the actual reason it was born for. Moreover, watching the play in class gives the protagonists of the play a face and a voice, making it easier for students to recall the plot and the information.

Continuing with other possible ways of employing the DVD, one of the most popular is the vision of the filmic transposition of great romances or novels. In order to transform 100-page novels into 90-minute movies, the plot must be cut, abridged, expanded and finally performed.

After the analysis of the text and the vision of its trans-codification, the teacher can ask the students to create their own version of the film, planning the script directly from the text explored in class. The activity would continue with the comparison of the various solutions by the different groups with original forms produced by famous directors. Moreover, the students can even be asked to personally perform their version of the text in front of a camera, conveying their interpretation of a classic text like Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The fact that the students can appropriate the text and transform it into their own vision of an emerging theme is an interesting aspect of this type of exercise, giving technology the role of a bridge between the text and the students.

3.3.2.3 *The computer and the use of the internet*

Almost every student nowadays possesses a computer or a smart-phone, connecting him to the internet and to where world literature is available at any time for free. By surfing the web, the student can easily obtain information on the biographies of the authors, critical essays and translated versions of the text in account. As a matter of fact, the web represents a big patrimony that students can use for researches, and most of all a world that can be explored with the students in order to teach them how to use it properly and choose reliable sources. In the current society, the problem is not finding information, but the adequate use that students makes of it in order to reach their own objectives. Acquiring a systematic method to find information generates the ability of creating new access points to the student's own cognitive hypertext.

As far as Literary Education is concerned, the web represents the possibility of creating hypertexts and participating in the creation of new written sources. Online literature is developed according to five forms the text may assume as:

- a. adaptation of the paper version of literary works;
- b. narrative: texts available online, *Netliterature*, romances in which the reader becomes co-author that directly participates in drafting the text;
- c. poetry: poems could be combined to visual inputs;
- d. open narrations, or in-progress narrations, based on cooperative writing;
- e. Web-blog: instrument of expression for students.

The computer represents an incredible "reservoir" for activities of text comprehension, both oral (TV series, movies, videos from *YouTube*, or theatrical performances) and written (texts belonging to classic or modern literature and their critics), where students might exercise their receptive abilities. Furthermore, comprehension could be trained using programmes to which the teacher has access to so as to create exercises based on *multiple choice*, crosswords, and questions they may distribute to the students.

Considering now the abilities connected to the production of a text, the computer could be a good instrument for the improvement of the process of textual production. From the operative point of view, the computer:

- a. underlines orthographic mistakes and suggests corrections;
- b. allows to transfer blocks of text and reorganise its contents;

- c. allows to start writing directly from the general sequences of the text and proceed by expanding them;
- d. does not need to copy or redraft the text, or pay attention to handwriting.

Other than just a database, the computer could be regarded as a mean of literary communication in the moment it is used to connect two classes that live in different countries and that are sharing a literary topic. Through the *Tandem* method or programmes, as for example *Skype*, two classes may dialogue on a literary theme that they are both studying. For example, two classes, the first British and the second Italian, analysing Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, could help one another in the general comprehension of the piece. The Italian class could help explain the setting in the Italian cities of Verona and Mantua, while the British class could help with the interpretation and actualisation of the plot. This exchange could also take place amongst students of the same class. The computer is a useful instrument for the cooperation between students and for sharing information, through the use of virtual archives such as "*Dropbox*" or e-mails. When three or four students work at the same computer, they can share, discuss, think aloud, organise information, and simply write sharing the final mark of the teacher who may move amongst the groups and give advice to his students. The evaluation of the text can be done through direct reading by the teacher or through an oral presentation, with the possible use of power-point. In this case, the production of a scripted presentation represents an instrument of evaluation and a good way for the student to express his talent and his ideas, implying graphic, colours and images.

Thanks to its archiving abilities, the computer can become a class database in which the students can store the texts they have analysed, the movies they have seen and the essays they have written. The computer is here transformed into a class archive of the hypertext born from the connections built from the texts and the materials found in matter of history of literature and culture: a treasure chest of knowledge developed in years.

The presence of technologies in school has been perceived so relevant as to induce the creation of a new field of studies that is totally dedicated to the analysis of the impact technologies have on the action of teaching.

These devices have been described as engines for revolution and innovation of the teaching action, thanks to the use of many separate instruments - like records, audio-cassettes, films, CDs and DVDs - at first, and then through the use of a summative one - the computer. A single device combined the functions of all previous instruments. Moreover, the presence of the web could further expand the boundaries of the possibilities that computer use may produce: internet, *Skype*, chat-rooms, blogs, v-logs, podcasting systems and social networks. The list is still not complete.

There are in fact two more additional and recent tools that must be considered: the smart phone and the Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) which are to be regarded as instruments of communication and source of video and audio-recordings.

As a matter of fact, the recent scholastic use of technology developed the role of language teaching and consequently of Literary Education. The role they play could not be defined as secondary, since technologies are to be seen as an important part of the teaching action and since the learners belonging to this “new” world can find them particularly familiar and, as will be discussed in the next chapter, could actually be motivated by them (Balboni P. E., 2013, pp. 51-52).

Chapter 4

Motivation: an essential factor in FL Literary Education acquisition

« Si tu veux construire un bateau, ne commence pas par rassembler du bois, couper des planches et distribuer du travail, mais réveille au sein des hommes le désir de la mer grande et large. » Antoine de Saint-Exupéry cited in (Lavoie, 2007, p. 51)

This quote from Saint-Exupéry introduces the general content of this fourth chapter. This chapter comes to close the first theoretical part of the paper and works as a “bridge” to the practical and final *mise en place* of the analysed content. A few key words of this quote that are interesting to analyse are the words *veille* and *désir*. According to Saint-Exupéry, instead of being forcedly pushed into the sea, the mariners should perceive desire and longing for the sea so as to have enough strength to face its waves again. Moving our attention back to Literary Education, these two words could be reduced to one relevant factor generating acquisition: motivation.

In matter of scholastic education, motivation could be regarded as the initial spark that activates the difficult task of acquisition and that supports it through the whole process of teaching and learning. It is the entity that allows the transition of information from the mind of the educator to that of the learner.

Having expressed the main theme, this chapter’s aim is that of exploring motivation as a key factor in the process of teaching Literary Education and stimulating the students to continue to appreciate literature, even after they have finished their educational course.

To begin with, we will provide a definition of motivation that underlines the reasons this factor has been given such a fundamental role. Afterward, we will give an account of the different theories addressing motivation, focusing on the scholastics implications they provide. In a third moment, we will discuss the factors generating, sustaining, and influencing motivation and those we can consider cause of the opposite *de-motivation*.

The following chapter can be read as a reiteration of the previous themes, following a *file rouge* represented by motivation.

4.1 What is motivation? Why is it considered so important?

In order to understand the specific meaning of this concept, we first need to have a look at its very origins. Considering the words “motivation” and “motive” it is possible to denote how they both derive from the Latin word *motus*, meaning “motion”. As a consequence, the term “motivation” sees its meaning directly connected to the idea of motion or transition. The concept of motion is key since, as will later be discussed, a motivated person is basically a person “set into motion”, an active subject that makes choices and completes tasks.

Considering the basic meaning of this word, we can find it useful to find the connections between the abovementioned “motion” term definition and the reasons, the motives generating it.

Dealing with the theme of motivation not only means dealing with the idea of an initial “incentive” driving the person to take action, but also with those reasons that ignite it. Therefore, the importance of motivation overcomes a mere matter of quantity, and rather focuses on the intensity level that characterises it - or its presence or absence – bringing us to analyse the general causes at its basis.

The factors that most influence motivation are its *origin*, its *orientation* and the *causes* which have brought it into action. Broadly speaking, motivation is the factor “responsible for *why* people decide to do something, *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity, and *how hard* they are going to pursue it” (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003, p. 614).

The term “motivation” can be detected in various contexts and not necessarily just in the field of Social Sciences or Pedagogy. In fact, this term is often used in everyday language to describe the dedication and the interest of a person towards something, as for instance when talking about courses aiming at “passing 9 exams in 10 months” or “giving up smoking through personal will”. Two possible slogans for these matters could be: “10 exams in 9 months. Our best students manage it. What about you? If you want to, you can do it” or “*Nicostop*. Together with your personal will it helps you control your desire of smoking”.

In these cases, the general term “motivation” is given two different connotations. On the one hand, the idea that is conveyed is an equation that bases scholastic success not only in student’s abilities, capacities or personal intelligence, but also in his personal will, strength and determination. In this first case the student’s will power represents the general component of motivation even if, sometimes, will power can be sustained by external factors, as happens in the second slogan about medicine. A further common belief attributes motivation with the quality of guaranteeing final success and of generating a vicious circle: the idea according to which success

would correspond to the reinforcement of motivation, something we will address while talking about the different theorised models of motivation.

Beginning with the idea of motivation that is based on the interaction between the individual and the environment surrounding him, it is possible to distinguish two different attitudes towards motivation. The first attitude identifies motivation as an inborn character of individuals' personality or a mere product of the socio-cultural environment. The second one identifies it with the possibility of manipulating students' motivation through isolated operations in matter of teaching materials or teaching techniques, without locating them in a long-term complex system of learning relations and strategies.

As we will further investigate in the following sections, motivation presents itself as a complex and multidimensional construct (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 21), according to three main reasons:

- a. it is the product of a profound personal *system of beliefs and attitudes* involving both cognitive and socio-affective aspects;
- b. it takes action in a series of different interactions among individuals and social situations, consequently being closely related to *socio-cultural* contexts;
- c. it evolves together with the transformation of external factors, also manifesting a *dynamic* feature. Thus, motivation cannot be perceived as an inalterable entity, but rather as a factor in constant evolution and liable to continuous interventions.

Motivation in school could also be considered as a competence that can be built through exercise. A competence that enables the transfer, the motion of discipline information (like Literary Education) between the protagonists of the teaching action (educator and learners) and the instruments and techniques that can be used to stimulate motivation.

4.2 Theories and models of motivation

The concept of "motivation", as the concepts of cognitive styles and learning strategies, is surrounded by controversies on the origin nature of the acquisition of such energy. Motivation research during the last years has shown a differentiated pattern of development, reaching a surprising climax in the 1990s with the publication of almost over 100 journal articles and a wide range of possible alternative theoretical constructs.

Every theory has tried “to address the basic question of why humans think and behave as they do” (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003, p. 614), studying the direction and magnitude of human behaviour, the fact that an individual makes a choice rather than another, and the way individuals support their initial decisions together with the effort they spend on it.

The range of potential influence on human behaviour, that is to say the range of possible reasons inducing a subject to take action, is very broad and so is the nature of the models that describe it. In theoretical constructs, the potential multitude of factors determining human behaviour is reduced to a smaller group of variables able to explain a part of the wide range of people’s actions. Thus, the key difference among theories lies in the selection of the principal factors on which the theory is anchored.

In order to clarify this passage, it is interesting to consider some instances on motivational constructs. In *Expectancy-value theories* by Bromphly and Wigfield, motivation is the sum of two factors: the individual expectancy of success in a determined task and the amount of value the subject relates to the success of the task. Another instance is provided by three sub-theories: Weiner’s *attribution theory*, that detects the engine of motivation in the individual’s experiences in success or failure; Bandura’s *self-efficacy theory*, that attributes motivation to the opinion individuals have of their own capabilities to deal with a specific task; and Covington’s *self-worth theory*, that identifies motivation with the need of self-acceptance and the importance of maintaining a positive attitude. Another type of theory is the so-called *goal theories* by Ames, Locke and Latham, according to which human action would be motivated by a “sense of purpose”. In this perspective, in order to take place, action has to be set and pursued by the individual’s choice. Moreover, the factor differentiating the various goal theories concerns the goal properties. These are called *self-determination theories*, the ensemble of constructs by Deci, Ryan, and Vallerand, followed by a paradigm dealing with the juxtaposition of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, grounded on the idea that “the essence of a motivated action is a sense of autonomy”. In conclusion, the main principle in Ajzen, Eagly and Chaiken’s *social psychological theory* is the individual’s predisposition to exerting a great influence on people’s behaviours (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003, p. 616).

Unfortunately, the existing theories are still far from a univocal answer. For this reason, this paper will consider three possible models of motivation theorised by the Venetian School, a fourth theory postulated by Shumann and Krashen’s SLAT.

Titone's ego-dynamic model

Titone elaborated a model based on the student's "I", the student's *ego*. The theory is founded on the assumption attributing every individual, every *ego*, with the construction of a project for himself. Therefore, it would directly attribute the *ego* with the initial activation and continuous motivation of the student, generating acquisition.

In Titone's vision, the *project* taken into account refers to the future vision the student has of himself, and - in the moment the fulfilment of such project comes to imply an effort – how he finds a *strategy* to reach his objectives, even in the case of objectives like learning a foreign language or building literary knowledge. In his construct, Titone noticed the fundamental role the individual's *ego* assumes in the process of strategy elaboration so as to fulfil initial projects and objectives.

The next step consists in the confirmation of the formulated strategies through practical *tactics*. The student's mental dimension enters reality in what may be called a tactic moment. The individual's connection with the learning environment, teaching materials, the class and the educator (in our particular case), the contact with literary texts at school and at home or Literary Education classes can sort out two different consequences. On the one hand we have tactics promoted by the student's *ego*: receiving a positive feedback and reaching the expected result can come to validate their strategy source. This process would maintain the *strategy* → *tactic* → *positive feedback* process active and activate a vicious circle that involves the student's entire personality and "profound motivational resources" (Caon, 2006, p. 14), giving him the energy and motivation to undergo the process of acquisition, even by tolerating unpleasant or arduous assignments. On the other hand, a negative feedback can come to discredit the *ego*'s initial strategies and have the project fail, activating the mechanism Krashen defines as *affective filter*.

Considering the practical implications of the holo-dynamic model, it is possible to detect what Caon defines as "a weak point" (Caon, 2006, p. 15).

This model is based on the student's personal projects and what he considers useful to fulfil them. As a consequence, the student's *ego* excludes every discipline he does not need. As a matter of fact, motivating an adolescent pupil to study a foreign language and its culture is an impossible task if the student has not included it in his *ego*'s projects. The student is motivated by a merely instrumental and utilitarian reason (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 87).

This case is often ascribable to the study of English language. The student perceives this subject as a mere instrument of communication, limited to its use as *Lingua Franca*, a window on an international view. On the contrary, following the same principle, there could be a decrease of

student interest in matter of subjects such as Literature, Philosophy or other languages that do not respond to future plans or that aren't socially indispensable.

This is a graphic representation of the implied model:

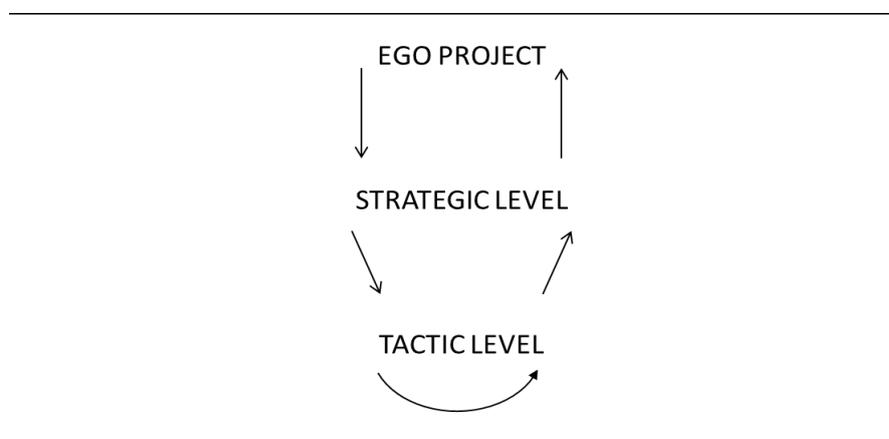


Image adapted from (Caon, 2006, p. 14)

Freddi's model on student's curiosity

Postulated 10 years after Titone's model, the construct offered by Freddi intends to provide a solution to the *ego-dynamic model's* "weak point", advancing a new theory based on the central role of pedagogic-didactic methodologies in motivation stimulation generated by what he defines main factors of curiosity. In Freddi's opinion, motivation is ascribable to the human innate faculty of curiosity towards diversity and others.

Partially following the thesis presented by Titone, Freddi states that "learning does not exist without an adequate motivation, and therefore without a dynamic interest of the subject that drives the student to learn." Motivation, in this case, includes part of the learner's affectivity, going from his personality to his feelings and from his emotions to "his attitudes towards the foreign language and the people who speak it" (Caon, 2006, p. 15).

From a more operational point of view, in his *Didactic Unit* model, Freddi realises that motivation can be seen as a product of personal *attitudes* and *prejudices*. This is to say that motivation in learning a foreign language can be influenced by the student's prejudices and former experiences. Moreover, considering the role attitudes and prejudices have in the learning process, Freddi points out the need for a constant nourishment of motivation along the entire DU.

Although supporting Titone's thesis, Freddi underlines a further aspect that concerns motivation. This aspect is innovation. He in fact states that the first source of motivation in matter of foreign language learning is its nature of "instrument of communication and contact with other

ways of living and thinking, with other beings that live their historical, cultural, and social events in a natural fashion” (Caon, 2006, p. 16).

School has to encourage attitudes of interest and curiosity in what can be regarded as culturally different (like languages, novels with unexpected ends and other cultures). These student attitudes may find methodological activities that focus on communicative and cultural dimensions of language stimulating, the same dimensions that previously were object of prejudice. In conclusion, the ensemble of expectations, predispositions and opinions towards a language and its culture represents the first material on which the teacher should work on, disassembling and reassembling it according to the key of cultural relativism.

Balboni's tri-polar model: duty, need and pleasure

The research team of the Ca'Foscari University of Venice, fronted by Professor Paolo Balboni, has elaborated its motivation model from previous pragmatic analyses of human needs. The so-called tri-polar model finds its origins in marketing strategies and is articulated into three different factors that are responsible for motivation activation: duty, need and pleasure. What follows is a brief account of each factor:

a) Duty and the activation of the affective filter

In Balboni's opinion, *duty* is the most popular motivation factor in today's schools. It can be considered as a factor that does not imply a general interest of the student in the content or a sincere appreciation of the methodologies implied to expose it.

According to its nature, *duty* may take two different forms: *hetero-directed* and *self-directed*. The *hetero-directed* form of duty is constituted by an external imposition of scholastic programmes including disciplines students are not interested in, or by authoritarian teachers that impose methods and contents without considering the students' opinions. The *self-directed* duty can be defined as a non-durable auto-imposition the student has to make in order to preserve his social image, or in order to avoid parental punishment.

Being it *hetero-directed* or *self-directed*, these forms of duty activate the affective filter mechanisms. As a consequence, the new information the students learn will be stored in medium-term memory, not long-term memory.

Anyway, the sterile *hetero-directed* duty can possibly evolve into a more productive and conscious “sense of duty” as reported by Caon (Caon, 2006, p. 23). In this case, extrinsic

motivation imposed by external imposition can be converted into a more *stable* intrinsic³ motivation, a passage that is possible uniquely in presence of a “meaningful relationship” between students and teacher.

The abovementioned stability does not intend a static nature of motivation, but is rather described as the “capacity to maintain as well as to regenerate itself, to change when the content changes [...] by adapting and renewing itself according to the different situation at hand” (Caon, 2006, p. 24). What we can extract from this account on duty is that in order to activate the vicious circle hypothesised by Titone, students’ direct involvement - rational, intuitive and emotional – is indispensable.

The two driving forces that consider the student’s personality and that move him toward conscious learning are *need* and *pleasure*.

a) *Need: an unreliable source of motivation*

As said by Balboni, student’s *needs* can represent a quite stable source of motivation. This is due to the fact that *needs* are almost entirely connected to the rational and conscious left part of the brain and can express the student’s expectations and personal objectives.

Although this type of motivation might work, it presents two fundamental limits: the fundamental perception of the *need* and its duration.

First of all, considering perception, the *need* works only in the case it is perceived as such by the student. This condition can easily take place when talking about language education, while the contrary happens in the case of Literary Education.

Secondly, duration can be considered as another flaw of this type of motivation, since once the *need* has been satisfied the students comes to lose interest and eventually abandons every perspective of investigating the discipline any further. This might be the case of an initial and momentary enthusiasm towards the language, given for instance by the idea of a trip abroad and the consequent need for basic and interpersonal communication.

Speaking of Literary Education, it is important to make students realise the role this discipline can have in answering their needs. Literature can be seen as a source of answers to existential questions that emerge during the period of adolescence. In this view, students would have to understand the need to learn how to read literary texts in order to understand the meaning

³ One of the major distinctions on motivation concerns its origins. Motivation can be *intrinsic* or *extrinsic*. It is considered *intrinsic* motivation when the individual’s disposition to work and his commitment in accomplishing a task are “rewarded” directly by the execution of the task itself. On the contrary, motivation is *extrinsic* when working is the individual’s answer to external pressures, like (i.e.) rewards or punishments (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 50).

of their reflections. They would also have to increase their critical abilities in order to be able to choose among authors, literary currents and texts; and finally they would have to understand the necessity of expanding their vision of literature from a simple scholastic discipline to a useful knowledge corpus.

b) *Pleasure: the stable and lasting source of motivation*

Responding to the “need-factor” deficiencies, *pleasure*, as Balboni states, is a determinant factor for the creation of meaningful, stable and lasting acquisition, even by means of reducing external conditioning factors.

Such quality has a neurobiological origin since pleasure is based in the right hemisphere of the brain and cooperates with the left hemisphere, coming to involve the entire cerebral structure.

Considering its intrinsic nature, *pleasure* allows the individual to activate and subsequently regenerate his motivation. Exploring this form of motivation, we must point out that it is not limited to a “pleasant feeling or emotion”, but also as:

- a. *pleasure of learning*: a gratification from a cognitive need and desire for participation. This fundamental kind of pleasure risks its own invalidation in the case a student was to be exposed to failure. As a consequence, activities proposed to the class need to be feasible (*i+1*) and, in case of mistake, need to be considered as natural steps that must be made in order to generate acquisition;
- b. *pleasure of variety*: a pleasure given by the alternation of materials, activities, methodologies and instruments used in the teaching action so as to avoid boredom, one of the major enemies of motivation;
- c. *pleasure of making new experiences and interest in the new*: it is directly connected to the previous form of pleasure conveyed by variety. This factor implies pleasure generated by novelty, by the unexpected and the unusual. It is also recalled in Shumann’s model, considered as an important factor in the mental evaluation of external inputs;
- d. *pleasure of challenge*: generated when the student challenges himself and his limits and auto-evaluates his results, seeking teacher’s help only in case of difficulty;
- e. *pleasure of systematising*: this pleasure emerges when the student manages to understand the mechanisms that regulate the world, the system of signals or languages, and manages to systematise his knowledge. The student is motivated by the acquired personal competence of creating connections between the concepts he already possesses and the

new ones he acquires in school. This pleasure is considered as an abstract, strong and formal type of pleasure since it involves the left side of the brain;

- f. *pleasure of responding to an inner sense of duty*: this concept was mentioned earlier when talking about the evolution of the *need* into personal sense of duty. This evolution is connected both to the professional relationship established with the teacher - who will be seen as a guide and a trusty expert - and to the emphatic relationship with the educator as a person.

The described tri-polar model is graphically represented with a triangular chart:

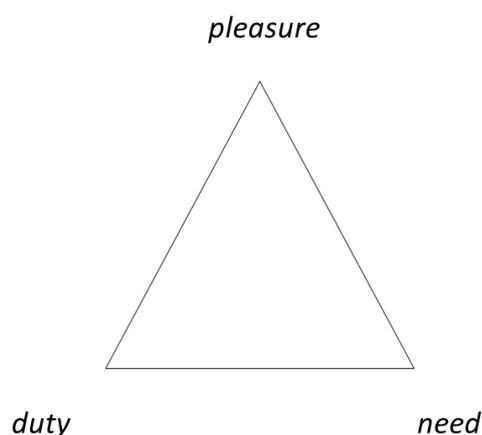


Image taken from (Caon, 2006, p. 18)

The role of pleasure in matter of Literary Education can be conveyed by the skill of choosing a text on the ground of conscious parameters, on the ability of contextualising a text in its original background - deducing eventual textual aspects beyond its mere context -, and by associating it even in the context of student's lives. In this case, the student experiences the pleasure provided by the sensation of handling and controlling, in some way, the copious flow of human work in centuries.

Moreover, Literature can offer a proper form of pleasure that Ronald Barthes defines as *le plaisir du text*. He says that pleasure is provided by the conscious realisation of the reason why a text is appreciated: it is an intellectual pleasure (Balboni P. E., 2004, p. 18).

The tri-polar model describes the process according to which a student decides whether the actions he makes confirm his strategy, reinforcing the idea that learning a foreign language is a useful instrument that responds to a need and that unpredictably stimulates (*sense of pleasure*) even in

the cases in which it is imposed by an external factor, like the scholastic system (*sense of duty*) (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 89).

Shumann's model and the input appraisal

The last model to be considered is grounded in the neurological and biochemical architectures of the student mind. In Shumann's opinion, acquisition is the final product of cerebral processes in which emotion plays a fundamental role.

According to Schumann, the student's brain understands the stimulus - what Krashen defines as "input" - and proceeds with its appreciation and evaluation, the so called *appraisal* of the stimulus. On the basis of the final judgment, the student's brain decides whether to approach or avoid the new *input*, accommodating the latest information in the previous cerebral architecture.

In fact, the student's brain selects the information provided by the input according to five criteria:

- a. novelty: stimulating the mechanisms of curiosity at the basis of the learning process;
- b. pleasantness: directly connected to the input's appeal to the student's mind;
- c. relevance: so as to be taken into account, the input must respond to a need the student perceives, the so called "*need significance*";
- d. feasibility: a possible, feasible task would be perceived as stimulating and as motivating. This would come to stimulate the cerebral and mental activities responsible for acquisition. On the contrary, a task considered too difficult could end up "closing" the student's mind. In short, the stimulus would be placed in PDZ following the *i+1* process in order to activate the student's LAD;
- e. socio-psychological safety: this factor deals with both the social and the personal image the student has of himself. In this perspective, the stimulus or the answer to the teachers' questions would not damage students' self-esteem and their social image. Hence, in the moment the student detects a possible risk for his image, his brain activates the *affective filter*, blocking the new information and, as a consequence, its possible acquisition.

The motivational factors offered by Shumann actually belong to other constructs addressing the same theme. The innovative factor provided by this study is the neuro-biological origin working as a "common denominator" among the implied factors.

4.3.5. Krashen's SLAT on motivation

Further considerations are offered by Stephen Krashen. In his SLAT he presents his own vision of motivation as one of the three variables that affect the process of acquisition.

The theoretical model advanced by the American linguist is based on five hypotheses: *the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis*, *the Monitor Hypothesis*, *the Input Hypothesis*, *the Natural Order Hypothesis*, and finally *the Affective Filter Hypothesis*.

In his *Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis* Krashen operates a distinction between *Acquisition* and *Learning*. The first is a subconscious and implicit process that involves both the global strategies of the right hemisphere and the analytical ones of the left part of the brain. As a consequence, acquired information is stored in the most stable part of the brain, the long-term memory.

Learning, however, is considered as a different procedure. While *Acquisition* is defined as a subconscious mechanism, as happens for L1, the *Learning* process requires instead the intervention of the left part of the brain, since it is an extremely rational and controlled process. In contrast with the *Learning* mechanism, this process does not generate any stable acquisition, but merely allows a slow and temporary recall of information. Practically, in real conversation, the student manages to use the new notions as a monitor of his performance (*the Monitor Hypothesis*). As a matter of fact, at the basis of the SLAT and the teaching action, there is the concept according to which the teaching action would aim at generating long-term *Acquisition* rather than temporary *Learning*.

While trying to understand how to generate acquisition, Krashen elaborated the next hypothesis, which could be seen as functional for the generation of acquisition. In the *Input Hypothesis* Krashen states that acquisition occurs when the learner focuses his attention on the meaning of the input rather than its form. This is possible only in the case the student is provided with a comprehensible input which directly activates his LAD. At this point, it is possible to add another theory by the American linguist: *The Rule of Forgetting*. According to this concept, when the student is faced with a comprehensible input he starts to use language so as to communicate, forgetting the fact that he is actually using a foreign language (adaptable in a situation in which Literary Education in FL is to be taught).

Taking the nature of the input into consideration again, Krashen hypothesised a natural order according to which information is stored in long-term memory. In this perspective, in order to be acquired, the new information would have to be located along a determined sequence permitting the student to internalise it. Recalling Vygotsky's *Zone of potential development*, and

Bruner's *Zone of proximal development*, Krashen elaborated the *i+1* concept, considering «*i*» as the student's already acquired knowledge, and «*+1*» as the new notion.

The existence of such natural order would generate two implications: on the one hand, the elements preceding the new information in the sequence would be considered a necessary precondition for its comprehension; on the other hand, in the moment the new input is judged as comprehensible it would be acquired only in case the *affective filter* is open.

Finally, in the *Affective Filter Hypothesis* Krashen claims the existence of affective factors influencing second language acquisition: motivation, anxiety and self-confidence. According to this hypothesis, in order to absorb and stably internalise new information, the student has to be serene and with an open affective filter. That is to say that in a relaxed atmosphere the student's brain transforms adrenaline into noradrenalin (a neurotransmitter that facilitates the memorisation of the input). In an opposite anxious or stressful situation, the student's brain blocks the production of noradrenalin in order to produce another substance: the cortisol. This steroid not only blocks noradrenalin, but also causes a conflict between the *amygdale* (a gland responsible for the mind's security) and the *hippocampus* (the part of the brain responsible for memorisation processes). In the first situation, the affective filter is open. The opposite happens in the second case, where the affective filter (the defence mechanism) is activated. The student's acquisition is consequently totally blocked. The factors which may cause such activation are: anxiety, activities in which the student's image could be in jeopardy, activities in which the student's self-esteem might be undermined and activities perceived as too complicated or even impossible.

The reason SLAT needs to be taken into account is due to the implication it might have on motivation and teaching techniques that can help to correctly stimulate it, even while teaching Literary Education in FL. So, in order to acquire, the student's affective filter must be lowered. When this occurs, the student can perceive a suitable image of himself and this would positively influence his aptitude and motivation towards the subject.

4.3 Motivation and Literary Education

The teaching action is based on the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student, and on the student's active notion internalisation through the mechanism Piaget defines as *accommodation* (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 86). In order to store the new information in his memory, and integrate it to its former cerebral structure, the brain undergoes a reshaping process of the synapses, the electrical-chemical connections among the brain's neurons.

This process, involving brain and mind - and that Balboni identifies as *hardware* and *software* of acquisition (Balboni P. E., 2013, p. 86) -, undoubtedly requires a certain effort. The energy needed in order to make such an attempt, and to sustain the implied difficulties possibly emerging during the process, is motivation. As will be analysed further on, the reasons that generate motivation may have different origins, *psychological* or *social*: they could be intrinsic (proper of the student), or extrinsic (such as generated by the environment in which the student interacts with other individuals).

What about the reasons stimulating secondary school students to undergo the complex study of Literary Education in a foreign language? If the reasoning behind language learning might be directly connected to its practical communicative use, the reasons that stimulate student enthusiasm in participation (and help not make it a miserable experience) are different.

Why, and most of all, how should a student with basic language knowledge face texts by Chaucer or Shakespeare? Which are the reasons legitimating the effort of reading a text in a language still partially unknown just to be asked to complete analytical tasks of textual re-elaboration in a foreign language?

In order to have a clear and exhaustive vision of the situation, it is interesting to briefly recall the main objectives of Literary Education so as to better understand the types of motivation needed so as to achieve them.

The acquisition of knowledge of texts, authors, social context and the general structures at the base of literary genres could be considered the biggest objectives of Literary Education in FL. The development and use of analytic skills, in order to explore the text in its entirety, and the acquisition of literary competence that enables the student to recognise the specifics of a text - interpret it, understand the connection among texts, context and author - are also important objectives. To the development of these “practical” skills, Literary Education also combines educative purposes, such as: education towards aesthetic and ethic sensitivity, democratic citizenship, and finally education towards diversity and multiculturalism (Stagi Scarpa, 2005, p. 12).

In matter of Literary Education, motivation could be seen as the factor underlining its value as an occasion for language and cultural improvement, combined with the construction of a mental text archive that transmits ideas, civil, ethic and aesthetic values. Furthermore, in the moment the student is asked to take an active role as an author of texts, Literary Education could represent a possibility self-expression, giving every student the chance of bringing out his personality.

In order to obtain competences and achieve the educational purpose, the student would have to first perceive a sense of urgency, a reason justifying the process of learning, an urgency that could be activated by three different factors: duty, need and pleasure.

Conforming to Balboni (Balboni P. E., 2004, pp. 14-21), the general purposes of Literary Education are also those of making the students realise the *pleasure* literature may give them: the possibility of evasion from their life to reach imaginary worlds, to understand their fears and possibly overcome them. They may also create an emphatic connection with the characters' frustrations or joys. Detaching from its contents and considering its form, literature may also generate *satisfaction* through its perfectly structured plots, incredible dialogues, amazing metaphors and perfect linguistic structures. Therefore, Literary Education offers the student the possibility to personally experience the *pleasure* of literature, disclose his inner questions and *needs* addressing life, love, power, justice and existence. *De facto*, with its plurality of themes and instruments of analysis, literature could both solve student interrogatives by offering narrated answers. The creation of awareness of this urgency for literature, and the pleasure it can provide, could be seen as one of Literary Education's objectives and the keystone of its action.

There are different possible methodologies to be used during the teaching action in order to stimulate the necessary motivation to reach the goals of literary competence and awareness. We will now discuss them briefly.

4.4 Motivation at school: a competence to be built

Assuming that motivation comes in various shapes, there is a wide range of possible interventions that could be made in order to stimulate it. In other words, the more fighting fronts there are, the higher are the possibilities of finding the right strategy among the various hypotheses.

As can be inferred from the various motivation models, the origin of such cerebral energy, fundamental in the process of acquisition, could derive from different sources. These sources might be *internal* (generated by the student's brain, as is demonstrated by the models of Titone, Freddi and Balboni), or *external* (as occurs the model by Shumann, where motivation is generated by an external input).

A further description of motivation is going to be provided in this section of the paper, paying particular attention to the connections between motivation and the scholastic context that surrounds the learner. The goal is to detect and to analyse the factors that positively influence motivation and those which might badly influence the student and de-motivate him. The complex

galaxy of motivation and the selection of teaching instruments that could help promote it are here to be analysed.

With these starting points, the areas that will be taken into consideration are: student personal perceptions, the general characteristics of the learning task, class interactions and the teacher's feedback, and finally the socio-cultural influences on the student's perceptions.

4.4.1 Three pre-concepts

Three characteristic of motivation were cited in the introduction to the current chapter. In order to offer a clear idea of the following sections, we find it interesting to further investigate the cognitive and affective nature of motivation (*a*), its connections with social interactions (*b*), and its dynamism (*c*).

Considering point *a*, among the primary constitutive factors of motivation there is the system of beliefs and attitudes every individual involved in the learning process presents as his personal experience archive. This is a sort of *hidden curriculum* that influences intentions, decisions, choices and behaviours related to the *explicit curriculum*, the didactic action. Furthermore, while personal beliefs constitute mental representations (a sort of cognitive web in which information is structured), attitudes and personal behaviours, connected to such beliefs, add a socio-affective sphere to the cognitive one and present an evaluation of the behavioural nature of the individual. For instance, a student scarcely motivated in the study of FL Literary Education might have connected this attitude to a personal belief evolved from the experience of other forms of Literary Education. Perceiving it as a "negative" discipline and convincing himself that he will never be talented in literature, the student creates a mental connection, connecting the discipline to his abilities. This initial perception will then convert into *evaluating behaviours* - self-directed as low self-esteem or in the perception of an ephemeral value of the learning tasks -, influencing the student's decisions and final behaviours (decision of undertaking the study of the discipline or, on the contrary, of avoiding any type of task). In conclusion to this first point *a*, cognitive and socio-affective aspects continuously interact inside the general construct of motivation, which could so be considered as a summative web that includes the student's knowledge, abilities, convictions, values and attitudes (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 22).

Continuing with point *b*, considering motivation as a fundamental construct for the realisation of the scholastic curriculum means to locate it in a teaching-learning social context. The context taken into account isn't limited to just the physical class, coming to include even scholastic institutions, students' families and the social community they belong to. These external

ambiences also influence the class dynamics. For these reasons they should be mediated by the figure of the teacher. Moreover, as analysed in Chapter II, teacher and students could be regarded as expressions of different and unique configurations of personal factors (age, sex, personality, attitudes, learning and cognitive styles and intelligences). In matter of motivation, such differences might have a direct influence on student motivational dispositions as inborn predispositions, and as product of learning and social experiences that each individual underwent separately and differently.

The process of leaning in school might be defined as a social activity in which different individuals participate. This activity is conditioned by the group's components and the dynamics occurring among them. As a consequence, every intervention on motivational factors apt to increase general motivation should consider the class in its complexity of different people, learning and teaching in a process that evolves throughout class dynamics.

In conclusion to this series of pre-concepts, the third interesting aspect of motivation is provided by its dynamism, point *c*. As can be evinced from the models describing it, the ensemble of variables influencing motivation suggest it should be considered as a combination of motivations rather than a single monolithic block, a combination that differs from one another and that is also changeable for the individual itself. In fact, motivation can vary because of different factors: the working context (different disciplines and different teachers), the experience's length (motivation towards the discipline or the entire educational path), and temporal dimensions (brief intervals of time, like the school day or the class, versus the duration of individual maturation or the passage from one school to the other). The dynamic nature of these variables implies the fact that motivation is a web of evolutionary factors not only influencing social interactions among the individuals and the working environments, but also conditioned according to a positive or negative cause-effect sequence.

4.4.2 The student's personal relation with leaning tasks: internal and external attributions

The process of acquisition could be considered as the active process activated by the student himself. This process involves the personal elaboration of information, the confrontation of these new contents with already possessed knowledge, and the reorganisation of the system of knowledge. Since the student is an active part, these new contents will be filtered by his feelings, thoughts, beliefs and expectations. In this perspective, the value the student will attribute to the learning assignment, together with the perception of competence he might develop, acquire a

relevant position in matter of motivation. We are now considering the factors that can activate the individual's motivation, such as *personal attributions* and *casual attributions*.

To begin with internal sources of motivation, *personal attributions*, in accord with some of the models we have analysed, the internal factors that promote motivation are:

- a. *Need*: motivation resides in the individual's personality, an individual that has both innate needs and needs mediated by the social context. According to Maslow (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 36), who articulated these needs in a hierarchal pyramid, the student's needs are physiological, psychological safety, sense of belonging, esteem, comprehension, knowledge, aesthetic needs and self-fulfilment. Considering the scholastic implication of such needs, it's clear that the fulfilment of lower needs - like psychological safety (avoiding dangers and anxieties), the sense of belonging, need for esteem and self-esteem - could be determining factors for class interactions and for student motivation. If we climb the pyramid it is possible to find more complex needs, like the need for comprehension, for knowledge and aesthetic needs. As sustained by Freddi, the human being is naturally curious, he is inclined to explore and understand, and is also ready to develop new competences in the moment he finds that the content and the activity he encounters are interesting and relevant. The highest need is the individual's self-fulfilment, a need associated with the awareness of having actively acquired new information. The higher the fulfilled need is located in this pyramid the more motivation its fulfilment brings;
- b. *Interest*: the concept of interest can be considered directly connected to motivation. The interests every student develops - as expression of individual personality, cultural distinctive traits and products of former knowledge - are factors the teacher must take into account while preparing the working material. Figuring out the class program using students' interests as an indicator can be a way of activating the strongest type of motivation in them: pleasure (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 39). However, a further consideration has to be made. Today the learning process is no longer confined to scholastic institutions and to what can be defined as "formal education" (Mariani A. M., 2006, p. 20). It is composed by a copious array of different direct or indirect experiences from virtual or real circumstances. As a matter of fact, it would be important to recognise and appraise notions and skills the student could have acquired in other contexts, the so called "informal education" (Mariani A. M., 2006, p. 30) and to integrate them in the scholastic education.
- c. *Personal purposes*: reiterating Titone's model, it is possible to affirm that the formulation of an objective is the first step in the realisation of the objective itself. From the

motivational point of view, personal purposes and the creation of an objective correspond to the moment in which motivation is generated. Unfortunately, in order to reach the goal, initial motivation is not enough. For this reason, the student will have to appeal to a series of learning strategies, mediated and modelled by the teacher, that constitute the key for the motivating factor of self-fulfilment and mastery of competences.

Now taking the *casual attributions* that influence motivation into consideration, it is possible to affirm that the personal accreditation of success is crucial for motivation. It would indeed condition the student's decisions and his behaviours towards a discipline.

In motivation perspective, subjective perception of the meaning of failure and success – and the causes that determine them in particular - results far more important than failure or success themselves. In other words, the consequences that affect students' decisions, evaluations and future attitudes are not conditioned by the actual causes (which are the obtained results), but rather by the personal attribution on the nature of such causes.

The causes of failure and success could be perceived as:

- a. internal: either a *stable*, with qualities such as intelligence or attitude, or *instable*, with other qualities like effort and commitment;
- b. external: also *stable*, like having a good teacher, or *instable*, like the fact of being lucky.

The general purpose of such attribution, it being personal or casual, is that of maintaining an adequate self-image. These could be seen as signs of need for self-esteem and of value attribution to the student's ego.

Acquisition would be supported by a system of success attribution and a combination of abilities and effort; while failure would be attributed to the inadequacy of the chosen strategy or the insufficiency of effort by the student. As Mariani claims, unfortunately in school it is possible to encounter cases of students who tend to use different and dangerous configurations of attributions, based on recurrent experiences of failure the student has been exposed to in the educational context. This could possibly generate de-motivation.

The *casual attribution* is also the product of student elaboration of the scholastic and class experiences, places where success and failure are actually evaluated. In this case, it is important to acknowledge and understand the vision that students might have of certain factors:

- a. intelligence: the student's idea on what it means to be intelligent and how to influence this state. As it has been said, the static vision of intelligence was overcome by Gardener with

his theory on multiple intelligences. Demolishing the monolithic concept of intelligence, Gardner postulated the existence of a constellation of intelligences that are present in different levels in every individual. Conceptions that are more elastic, like this one by Gardner, could possibly help the students rebuilt their personal system of *casual attributions*. As far as motivation is concerned, the possibility of disposing of different learning tasks results crucial. This variety could activate multiple intelligences, giving the students the possibility of expressing their individual potential and, in so being, be motivated;

- b. attitude: the concept of attitude is directly connected to that of intelligence. It could be seen as an inborn predisposition; a sort of natural way of learning the student might or might not have. Even in this case, students' personal beliefs on the role of attitude as a stable factor could influence motivation negatively. This could cause de-motivation in the case students were to use their presumed deficiencies in order to excuse their lack of commitment, or they might even come to perceive themselves as "incapable" of learning a determined discipline and consequently abandon it;
- c. self-fulfilment and self-esteem: the learning tasks presented to the class ask the students to be aware of their objectives and to be conscious of possessing the abilities necessary to be willing to invest effort in the accomplishment of the task.

In this perspective, it is important to promote positive expectations and perceptions with a meta-cognitive approach that privileges reflection on the student's experiences. This could be a useful instrument to rebuild the student's *casual attributions* and underline the importance of commitment and effective working strategies. From a socio-affective point of view, it is also result important to attribute the correct value even to the experiences of failure, in order to have the student develop tolerance for frustration and patience in matter of his deficiencies. From a cognitive perspective, it would be productive to analyse the causes of former difficulties and mistakes as occasions for reflection and development and no longer as cause for de-motivation. So far we have analysed the cognitive and socio-affective factors that condition the willing of an individual to invest his effort in the learning tasks. We have seen both *personal attribution* and *casual attribution* and considered their impact on the student's sense of self-fulfilment and on his perspectives of success or failure.

In the next section we will confront the factors here described and the characteristics of the learning tasks students might face daily might in order to stimulate motivation (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 97).

4.4.3 *The motivating character of the learning assignments, the value of the task*

A fundamental variable in matter of motivation is represented by the value that is attributed to the task. The student's disposition to make an effort depends on his perception of the competences and knowledge necessary to accomplish the task successfully, other than the value attributed to the task itself and the consequences positive results deriving from it can have on the students themselves. Briefly, the student will not make an effort for something that appears worthless to his eyes, even if he possesses the competences necessary to accomplish it.

As a consequence, the task has to be perceived as valid and worthy to be executed. Moreover, it should include a series of executive and control strategies that can help the students perform the task successfully.

The qualities that help bring a stimulating value to the learning task, for the students, could be regrouped into five macro-areas that interact with each other and from which the teaching methodologies used in the teaching action are inferred. These general characteristics are: relevance, attention/participation, variety/possibility of choice, challenge/support and teaching strategies. Each feature will be provided with a general definition and possible techniques for its use and stimulation.

a. Relevance

Relevance refers to what the student considers as instrument to satisfy his exigencies, desires and personal purposes. Hence, an assignment is relevant in the moment it represents a way to respond to a student's need and interest.

The more the proposed tasks recall real life experiences, the more they will be perceived as relevant. *De facto*, the abilities that scholastic institutions intend to develop may be perceived as detached from student reality. It would be useful for the student to make a real experience out of what they are studying.

The relevance of a certain task could often result difficult and rarely immediate. This is the case of activities like grammatical exercises, or mathematical calculation exercises that have no visible objective.

From the operative point of view, the teacher may adopt different strategies so as to make his student realise the relevance of the task, such as:

- a. incorporating elements that help the students recognise the personal use of the assignment;

- b. involving the students regardless of whether they perceive the actual relevance of the assignment.

In order to understand this characteristic connected to the scholastic experiences, the students should be invited to recognise the purpose of the task in the perspective of general objectives of the discipline, and in the wider perspective of such objective in the annual program.

It is interesting to explore some strategies the teacher may use in reaching this goal. To begin with, the teacher may clarify how the new topic could be linked to previous ones, making the students recall what has been done in previous lessons and underlining the logical connections between the lessons. Then, the teacher should regularly refer to a general plan of objectives, previously arranged with the students, so as to give them the possibility of understanding the steps they are taking. A further technique could be that of summarising the main ideas that are the object of class studies, with questions like “what have we done today?”.

b. Attention and participation

According to Mariani, attention consists in the cognitive tension created by the presence in the student’s mind of a contrast between informative elements that demand a resolution (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 108).

This consideration is supported by Shumann’s theory on input appraisal. This theory, in fact, postulates how the brain evaluates inputs provided by the environment and how this generates both emotional and behavioural responses.

The role of curiosity and interest is considered bi-directional. In fact, on the one hand, it addresses perceptive solicitation and stimulates different sensorial modalities (visual, auditory, tactile); while on the other hand it stimulates questionings that are considered as the cognitive participation a new problem or query can provoke, and to which the student needs to answer by working on the information he already possesses. It is in this moment that elements such as novelty, variety of the tasks, and challenge come to play an important role as stimuli for students’ curiosity and interest.

As far as the innovative and renewed nature of tasks is concerned, it is determined by the balance between two variables: change and routine. Even if tasks based on original and innovative changes are stimulating and used as antidotes against the boring routine, the sense of ease that comes from a recurrent scheme adopted during the lessons (or in a module) must be considered. Such recurrence would reiterate mental processes the student already has mastered, avoiding unproductive feelings like ambiguity and anxiety.

The level of originality and “surprise” of a task partially depends on its content, then also on the method used to introduce it to the students and what it requires from them. Breaking students’ expectations and creating suspense by introducing destabilising elements could be examples of a few methodological techniques the teacher could use in order to stimulate student interest. The educator would, however, have to clarify his role. As a matter of fact, teaching techniques based on surprising factors cannot be used just to generate emotional reactions in the students. They must stimulate student cognitive participation in the task and their active elaboration of the new information in order to find a solution.

Considering now the working modalities the teacher can take advantage of so as to generate and maintain student curiosity and interest from the beginning to the end of the process, the focus will shift to students’ fantasies, imaginations and emotions. Examples of this kind of teaching techniques are:

- a. activities in which the student is asked to research authors’ biographical information, and the reasons or the stimuli that can have motivated the realisation of his work;
- b. role-play activities in which the student is asked to play the part of an author, or to write a diary page that deals with an important date in the interpreted character’s life;
- c. activities in which the student is asked to identify himself with the protagonists of a novel, and describe in first person the thoughts and the feelings conveyed by the text;
- d. real experiences like didactic fieldtrips, laboratory experiences, and web researches from which the student might extract explicit meaningful values;
- e. group activities involving factors like authenticity, realism, variety, cooperation, creative expressiveness and self-regulation could also be very motivating (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 113).

Every effort by the teacher in making the reading activity more enjoyable is not to be considered as limited to the sole amuse and entertainment of the students. These efforts should focus on elaborating particular and determined information from the text.

A further aspect to be noted concerns a problem dealing with the preservation of the initial interest and participation. In order to make this happen, the teacher has to continuously stimulate both the cognitive and affective spheres of the student.

c. Variety and possibility of choice

Variety in matter of tasks implies a variety in different possible aspects: in the contents, in the objectives, in the supports and teaching materials that are used, in the organisation of time and place, in the working modalities, in the teaching and learning methods, and in the evaluating methods (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 116).

As it has already been hinted in Chapter II, every student is characterised by a personal learning style. That is to say that every student presents a unique combination of sensory modalities (visual, auditory), cognitive styles (analytic/global, reflexive/impulsive, systematic/intuitive), and personality traits (introverted/extroverted, preference to work alone or in a team, tolerance or intolerance of anxiety or ambiguity). Such combinations come to produce the definition of the personal profiles of the students and consequently of the presence of different degrees of reactivity towards the tasks.

The “problem” concerning the importance of the variety of tasks in fact consists in the answer of providing the class with modalities, both in presentation and execution, suitable for different learning styles.

With this starting point, the teacher can appeal to an array of tasks that aim at developing different sensorial modalities and cognitive styles.

The lesson presented to the students responds to the necessity of creating a rhythm of activity that considers both the informative and the motivational fluxes. While the first deals with the way the information is logically related, the motivational flux represents the variation in matter of student attention and participation in the activities. Breaking the natural “explanation/oral or written texts” order by inserting new modalities or teaching techniques can help stimulation of motivation.

A further aspect directly connected to the theme of variety is the possibility of choice the students may be provided with. Being allowed to choose the working modality implies a co-decision between teacher and students, a strategy that leads to student cognitive and socio-affective evolution and that brings to the development of independence. The students are asked to select the modality of work (either individual or in pairs), how to present their research project, the type of exercises to do, or to help schedule together the dates for the tests (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 121). Co-planning the lessons does not mean to totally adapt the lessons to the students, since one of the scholastic objectives is that of teaching the pupils to be mentally elastic and to be ready to face every kind of task.

d. Challenge and support

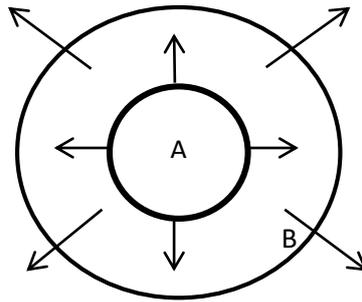
The task difficulty, or the level of challenge it presents, can be regarded as one of the most influencing factors on student's expectations, his behaviour during the execution of the task, and the evaluation's results. As we have previously explored, a perceived difficulty can activate the student's affective filter and consequently affect his own performance, acquisition and motivation.

Form the teacher's perspective, it is necessary to find and work on a balance between already possessed knowledge and abilities, on the one hand, and new information to be acquired and abilities to be trained, on the other. As a matter of fact, the teacher should delineate the task's "challenge degree" before he presents it to the students, along with the level of support he will necessarily provide them personally or through teaching materials.

Moreover, the combination of these two factors, if well balanced, may have positive and productive results; while they could cause unproductive results in the moment they were not to be levelled or appropriately balanced. For example, a high challenge level, greatly supported by LASS, is a situation in which the students perceive the challenge level but might not activate the affective filter because of the teacher's presence. In the opposite case, a high challenge level situation without an adequate support system would be perceived as a dangerous. The student could have feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, discomfort and hostility.

Considering the unstable nature of the learning process, even the support/challenge relation could not be constant. The evolutionary nature of the learning context involves the mutation of the teacher/student interactions and the difficulty level of tasks directly proportional to the student's increased competences. The more the level of education increases, the more the students are able to face high level challenge tasks independently and effectively.

The methodological choices the teacher has to make are then adapted to the status of the student's education. The gradual intensification of the challenge level and the contextual decrease of the support levels could even be analysed through the process Bruner defines as *scaffolding*. Along the educational path, the teacher's facilitating actions are continuously substituted by the student's self-regulation but always consider Vygotsky's *ZPD*.



Adapted from (Mariani L. , 2008, p. 127)

In the image above it is possible to see the ZPD, or rather what could be defined as “what the student is potentially able to learn”. “A” indicates the patrimony of knowledge already possessed by the student, while B stands for the actual zone of proximal development.

The potential learning corresponding to “B” is controlled by the balance between challenge and support, and by the social environment in which the teaching action takes place.

Speaking of teaching techniques, the teacher might use in order to support difficult tasks, he could fragment a complex task into smaller units and help the student focus his attention on finite steps. Furthermore, the facilitation of tasks is not confined to the teaching materials or teacher indications but rather on the product of social interactions and oral communication in class. It is through social interactions, teacher’s constructive feedback and a series of joined decisions that the challenge/support balance is maintained, leading to student independence and self-efficacy.

4.4.4 Teaching strategies towards independence and self-efficacy

Self-efficacy and self-esteem are to be considered as two important factors that influence the positive execution of learning assignments and, as a consequence, of motivation. The perception of being competent together with the perspective of success, and the actual success, in fact reinforce the student’s sense of self-determination, independence and self-efficacy.

In this perspective, the gradual process the student undergoes is to be supported by scholastic instruction. Hence, teaching the student how to cross the zone of proximal development in order to reach expected results is the teacher’s objective.

With this as an objective, it is crucial for the student to possess a range of strategies to help him translate the “potential abilities” of the B zone in “effective abilities” that aim at simplifying

assignment execution. Therefore, among the motivating features of an assignment we should include the possible training of proper executive procedures to help students reach their own objectives. With the LASS' help, the student can develop and train his learning strategies (intended as flexible procedures), enabling the student to plan and face the task, monitor its execution, evaluate the process and serenely accomplish the task.

The action of combining the strategic dimension to the actual learning of the tasks means to clarify how these tasks must be executed in the correct way, thus making the students aware of the fact that they can interiorise these strategies and use them as learning methods.

From the student's point of view, managing to attribute success to other than personal commitment, even to the effective use of strategies, positively influences his sense of self-efficacy, his previsions of success and his own motivation towards the discipline. In addition, mastering these strategies enables the student to:

- a. ace the procedures;
- b. easily and consciously plan, control and evaluate the performance;
- c. attribute the increased quality of the performances to the use of learning strategies rather than causal attributions, like luck.

This way, student learning motivation consisting in the self-perception of being able to deal with new notions and abilities is stimulated. At this point, the teacher should create lessons and assignments that include a strategic dimension. In order to do so, the assignment would have to present a problem to be solved, in order to stimulate the formulation of possible solutions, to provide working procedures and evaluating criteria, to encourage group discussion, and to include a moment of reflection on the notions that are learned and the strategies that were used.

4.4.5 Social factors influencing student's motivation

Every student taken into account - child, teenager or adult - is a social being that lives in a world based on social interactions. Continuing the exploration of the factors influencing motivation, the role that social environment plays in its stimulation, or collapse, must be taken into account. Among the many intricate and complex variables controlling student behaviour we find three factors that are directly connected to the scholastic social context:

- a) the teacher's way of interacting with the students;
- b) the class dimension;
- c) the influence of social environment, family, school and society.

a. *The teacher: feedback and evaluation*

The teacher's interactive strategies - and the way in which they are perceived - control and evaluate the student performances and can have a deep impact on student motivation. The constant interactive flow with the students and their motivation is conditioned not only by the content of the lesson, but also by the gestures, the facial mimicry or the voice tone of the teacher.

As we have seen, during the learning process, the teacher is a facilitating guide for the students, with whom to establish a "social pact". Considering the aspect that deals with the other roles of the teaching figure, giving *feedbacks* on the student's performances is also a duty of the teacher. The role of *feedback* is really important for the progression in the educational path, since it provides the students with information on the product of their strategies. On the other hand, though, feedback even includes emotional implications. It is considered important for this reason because it doesn't judge the student directly as a person or his performance. On the contrary, it assumes the shape of a specific and systematic correction based on detailed information centred entirely on the task, object of the correction, rather than on the person. This type of feedback comes to underline effort, commitment, the strategy used, and the consequent results; while it looks at the development of competence and the stimulation of intrinsic motivation.

The possibility of having formative feedbacks, and to use them effectively, influences student motivation in continuing the effort of acquisition. A constructive feedback stimulates the student to work in order to master his abilities.

Returning to the formative "pact" that should be established, this should include even the evaluative modalities summarised in the following principles:

- a. transparency and co-decision of objectives and evaluative criteria;
- b. focus on the process of acquisition rather than its products;

The teacher could be considered as a figure that has an impact on the students' education, a cultural impact. For this reason, it is important to develop a functional relationship with the students in order to avoid unpleasant consequences. As a matter of fact, the ways of the teacher in interacting with the students could even lead to dysfunctional relationships that activate the affective filter. According to the possible consequences of such situation, the student might block, distort, or even destroy the positive development of his self-esteem, trust, confidence and the development of both abilities and competences, and of his motivation towards the learning process most of all (Mariani A. M., 2006, p. 34).

b. Class dimension

The effectiveness of the teacher's motivational strategies is also influenced by a series of social dynamics occurring in class amongst students and between the students and the teacher. This is the so called "class atmosphere" or "class dimension".

In order to be motivating, the class dimension needs to involve a series of features, such as:

- a. co-responsibility and involvement: students and teachers are co-responsible for acquisition. In this perspective, the monolithic figure is replaced by a new "referential" figure. The teacher deals with the balance of the class, the student's involvement in the learning process, and will supervise social interactions. These interactions will be based on values (guaranteed by a shared system of rules) like solidarity and cooperation rather than competition and contrast. Moreover, students and teacher should share transparent evaluative criterion that both describes the acquired notions (that must be internalised) and reflects on the process leading to such acquisition.
- b. awareness and cooperation: aiming at developing his own independence and self-realisation, the student undergoes a long learning process composed by experiences that engage him in active and significant learning. With the objective of teaching him how to face didactic challenges, the student will find solutions through cooperation with the teacher, at first, and then gradually become independent and self-regulated;
- c. respect for the shared formative contract: the norms at the basis of class interactions are not superimposed from above, but are instead the product of a mediation between students and teacher and are to be respected by both parts. The class will also find balance by establishing relationships based on sincerity, trust, tolerance, respect, and esteem in order to enable students and teacher to freely express themselves. In this context, every student and his needs, interests, experiences and personal projects should be considered;
- d. communication: it is based on three other sub-factors. These are: quantity (the Teacher Talking Time is to be reduced to a minimum), quality, the teaching strategies used by the teacher (that should suit the class diversities and aim at authenticity), and finally the flexibility of the communication formats;

- e. collaboration and cooperation: as explored in Chapter II, the affective filter changes its orientation during adolescence. In this perspective, the class is the major source of productive motivation or possible unproductive de-motivation, exclusion and even bullying. Moreover, cooperation rather than competition reduces the possibilities of affective filter activation and, at the same time, can teach the students how to develop interpersonal abilities.

c. *The influence of social environment, family and school*

In order to complete the overview on the social factors that influence student's motivation, it could be interesting to recall a consideration Mariani makes on the forms of education and the roles of school, society and family. In Mariani's opinion, education is classified in two categories: formal and informal education.

The latter consists in the most diffused form of education, one that reaches every person even if in different qualitative levels. Informal education, as the adjective suggests, is in fact characterised by a total de-institutionalisation that places it in an external position compared to the rigid system of the scholastic institution. Characterised by its unpredictability, informal education operates even before the official start of the educational journey, and then continues along the entire process up to when the student has *de facto* accomplished his scholastic, formal education. Hence, informal education is generated by all those impulses that are offered by the environment surrounding the individual. So, considering the constant immersion in the environment, informal education prevails in matter of time, exposure and subtle influence on the individual (Mariani A. M., 2006, p. 17).

In contrast, formal education is provided by the school system and is therefore regulated by norms and schedules. The aim of formal education is that of offering the students the necessary awareness to absorb every piece of knowledge offered by the social environment he lives in.

Informal and formal education combine in order to create what has been defined as the student's permanent education. In this perspective, the knowledge archive built during formal education is fundamental for the student. It becomes a fundamental condition to consciously and critically understand the world. Formal education works as a key the individual can use to interpret and read the world.

Whichever form of education, formal or informal, the essential precondition for its existence and internalisation is its initial activation by the subject. Thus, substituting students' initiatives and motivation with that of the institutions would result unproductive.

As seen in Chapter II, the major formative agents are the school and the student's family. Having extensively dealt with the role of school, we would like to provide a brief consideration on the way the family can determine the student's personal beliefs or behaviours that can influence his own motivation.

Family and school can be considered as two entities bonded by an enduring link and having a fundamental role in individual formal and informal education. It must be pointed out that, even though the formative offer is rather homogeneous, the variety of student backgrounds is quite the opposite. Every student has a different story, extraction and personal resources. These factors are part of the student's original context, his family, and have a consequent deep impact on his motivational dispositions (Mariani A. M., 2006, p. 32).

The student's family constitutes a fundamental element in the pupil's socio-cultural background, and it works its way into the teaching processes, either implicitly or explicitly. The figures that compose the family context, according to the culture they belong to, are important mediators between the first learning context and school. As a matter of fact, they condition the student and his motivational dispositions towards school.

Family can influence on motivation in different ways:

- a.* by transmitting beliefs, attitudes and evaluative systems, in regard to scholastic education and the attribution of value to the scholastic objectives and processes;
- b.* by encouraging, or not, a responsible attitude from the student (for himself and others) or by transmitting him the logic of attributing success or failure to external factors;
- c.* by offering the student different cognitive experiences and possibilities that condition his abilities and his attitude towards learning.

What we gather is that the motivational dynamics investigated so far are not confined just to the scholastic context, but they work (with positive or negative effects) simultaneously even from inside the student's family, and more in general in the social environment that surrounds him.

Chapter 5

A study on a sample class approaching English Literature

In the previous chapters we have analysed in detail the factors which come to constitute the present study. To begin with, Chapter I describes the general field of interest of this paper, FL Literary Education. It explores the various occasions and possibilities FL Literary Education can provide students with: from the possibility of discovering new meanings to the development of linguistic competences, from a “democratic education of feelings” to interpretative keys allowing students to better comprehend reality. Chapter II analyses the protagonists of the teaching action: the students, intended as unique individuals that carry specific cognitive and learning styles, their personal mingling of intelligences, their different personalities and their actions inside a group of peers. Furthermore, the chapter provides an account on the director of the acquisition, the professor, a facilitating and guiding figure. Chapter III focuses on the description of the teaching materials and the organisation of the teaching action. Particular attention is relied on the role of the text book together with the contribution technological devices offer as integrative materials. Chapter IV describes the driving force determining acquisition. And finally, in this chapter, we will see how these factors actually work together in class, in the sample class this study was based on.

The current final chapter is totally dedicated to the description of a project developed during a two-month internship at Liceo Brocchi. The first part of the chapter will provide a general introduction to the study and will focus on its main purposes and the research questions we tried to find answers to. Afterwards, we will provide a description of the participants underlining the class’ main traits that influencing motivation. A third moment will be dedicated to the description of the activities and the subsequent feedback recorded in the questionnaire. And in conclusion, in the final part of the chapter, we will offer the main findings from the made experience and the final drawn conclusions.

5.1. Brief introduction to the case: main purposes and research questions.

The curricular internship at Liceo Brocchi gave me the possibility of entering a scholastic reality made of buildings, books, schedules, programmes, teachers, and students most of all. After having assisted different classes and different grades, we decided to select a unique sample class so as to map the most relevant factors in matter of motivation. For this reason, in co-operation with Maddalena Fantini (internship tutor) and Graziano Serragiotto (supervisor of this paper), we decided to start a questionnaire-based study on a specific class approaching English Literature for the first time.

This study attempts to understand how to effectively stimulate motivation through effective pedagogical techniques and to determine which operations result more useful in motivating students to read and enjoy literature. The research was carried out during the second term of the 2014/2015 Academic Year and focused on a high school with a focus on scientific subjects. The questionnaires were administered to the students as they were approaching FL Literary Education for the first time. This fact offered the possibility of mapping the evolution of their motivation from their very first exposure to the discipline. The students were asked to fill in the final questionnaires and answer specific questions on the concluded activities and on their motivation. At the end of the chapter we will provide the material used during the study. This will include: questionnaires, teacher interview and implied working sheets.

The study was interested in obtaining feedbacks on submitted activities, in listening to students' perceptions and in encouraging reflections on the discipline. Every activity administered to the students was previously discussed with them so as to underline their focus, objectives and utility. In so doing we tried to promote awareness in matter of acquisition processes. A further reason of such a formal pact is the intention of reducing affective filter dynamics and the rejection of some activities.

By directly entering the scholastic reality, one objectively understands what happens in class. We then tried to create a new perception of the role English Literary Education plays in the students' lives. Now, the reason why we chose a class with a scientific curriculum, rather than a class studying Humanities, is related to the fact that a class interested in Humanities appears more likely to enjoy Literary Education. The opposite seems to happen in a class composed by students having chosen Maths and Physics as their characteristic disciplines, and is therefore probably less interested in the study of Literature. As far as the collection of data is concerned, it was decided to administer a paper questionnaire written in Italian so as to give the students the possibility to express themselves freely and exhaustively. So, to begin with, a module on Shakespeare was

developed by paying particular attention to programme priorities and to the students' interests most of all. In order to understand their interests and to continue to stimulate them, we started the questionnaire-based study aiming at mapping the students' motivation towards FL Literary Education. We will describe the class at hand later on because we find it interesting to start off by presenting the study's main purposes and the main questions we tried to answer.

5.1.1. Main purposes

By putting into practice three themes exposed in the previous chapters, this study aims at:

- a. Understanding how to effectively stimulate the motivation of a class belonging to an upper secondary school;
- b. Delineating the effect of motivation on the process of acquisition;
- c. Understanding whether the class dynamics can influence motivation, and consequently even student acquisition;
- d. Recording how specific teaching methodologies can generate an increment of motivational rates;
- e. Understanding the vision students of a scientific curriculum have of Literature, and finding ways to possibly better it;
- f. Promoting a reflection on the nature of Literature that goes beyond the scholastic discipline;
- g. Promoting awareness, responsibility and the development critical and linguistic skills.

5.1.2. Basic research questions

In the final considerations we will try to give an answer to the following questions at the basis of this study:

- a. Is it possible to detect a relevant difference between motivated and de-motivated students?
- b. Is the learning environment, the climate established in class, a determining factor in matter of motivation?
- c. Is it possible to influence student motivation towards FL Literary Education with a selection of teaching activities and different methodologies?
- d. Is there any difference in the student's perception between curricular and non-curricular disciplines?

- e. Which are the factors that the teaching action has to work on in order to raise student motivation?

5.1.3 General principles to be applied

Since the study intends to be a practical translation of the notions and principles analysed so far, it could be interesting to briefly recall the main concepts:

- a. Literary Education could be regarded as a “democratic education of feelings”, as an instrument to expand student knowledge, as an occasion of better comprehending the world, and as a linguistic instrument to help improve language competences. A scarce linguistic level can generate difficulties both in the comprehension and the appreciation of the analysed texts. Consequently, the texts are chosen and adapted to student requirements;
- b. the teacher is to be considered as a facilitating guiding figure helping and inspiring his students. He is an expert whose aim is not that of indoctrinating his pupils but that of promoting the appreciation of the discipline, autonomy, self-efficacy and commitment. On the other hand, students have to be considered as individuals presenting a series of differences of different nature: learning and cognitive styles, attitude towards the discipline and the language, mingling of seven types of intelligences on different levels. A further consideration to be made concerns the particular age of these students: adolescence. As we have seen in Chapter II, it is in this period that the nature of the affective filter changes its orientation. From vertical (between teacher and students) it becomes horizontal (among students). The new horizontal orientation of the filter might cause the students to have difficulty in expressing themselves freely, in fear of classmates’ judgements;
the material used in class guarantees a fundamental support both to the teaching action and to the students’ learning. By maintaining the LAD’s acquisition order, the classes address new approaches following the general-analysis-synthesis order and proceeding by *i+1*. The nature of the materials may vary from the traditional text book to the innovative presence of technological devices. The latter can greatly expand the boundaries of the didactic action, also by putting it more in contact with the students’ reality;

- c. motivation is a cardinal factor in setting the student's mind into motion. Therefore, the teacher always has to pay attention to it and work for it. Motivation can be generated by different factors, even though it has been said that its most powerful source is pleasure. It is a multidimensional construct that is potentially influenced by different factors that cause de-motivation and block acquisition. Among these factors there are: student's pre-conceptions, affective filters, scarce self-esteem, teacher's wrong behaviour, boredom, monolithic programmes with repetitive activities, and wrong activity levels.

The activities we have proposed to the students tried to pay attention to all these factors with the purpose of creating motivation in the students.

5.1.4. How to stimulate motivation

Considering motivation as the fundamental energy at the base of the acquisition process, and the key-concept of the present study, we find it interesting to recall some notions on motivation. Motivation, as extensively exposed in Chapter IV, can be originated by three factors: duty, need and pleasure. The third of these energy sources is regarded as the only one that generates long-term acquisition. This is due to the fact that it is connected to the right hemisphere of the brain but also involves the left part of it, becoming the most powerful source of all. With this as a starting point, this study aims at stimulating motivation based on the pleasure of studying English Literature.

The class was composed by 26 adolescent students having chosen scientific disciplines as their main field of study. We started out by asking ourselves: how could these students find pleasure in studying English Literature? The answer is a didactic action that respects the students' interests and integrates them in a programme based on modules. As a matter of fact, pleasure could even be generated by teaching methodologies. Excluding the ego-dynamic pleasure of accomplishing a life project, or that of satisfying a rather temporary need (which are both long-term strategies), there is the possibility of producing pleasant emotions even during daily teaching tactics. Among these types of pleasure, the teacher can stimulate:

- a. *Pleasure of learning*: a primary pleasure, easily erased by the effect of failure. For this reason, the activities proposed by the teacher must be of a feasible level. Mistakes have to be considered a natural part of the process of acquisition. Failure provokes dis-pleasure and nullifies motivation, consequently blocking energy flow in the cognitive processes. On the other hand, the fact of making mistakes could be accepted by the students and even

become a useful instrument of self-development. Among other factors that negatively influence this type of pleasure, we need to consider “class climate” and the level of stress deriving from it;

- b. *Pleasure of variety*: the material that is used should be varied. Moreover, it would be useful to offer a certain variety even in the modalities used to develop activities, like text comprehension or linguistic re-elaboration. This assumption is based on the principle that doing the same exercises, or using the same modalities, over and over, deprives the students of pleasure and substitutes it with unproductive boredom;
- c. *Pleasure of novelty, of the unexpected and of the unusual*: Schumann considers these factors extremely important in the process of input evaluation and in the subsequent decision of making acquisitive effort;
- d. *Pleasure of being challenged*: assuming everybody likes to be challenged intellectually, testing student ability could be a good way of motivating them. This strategy is considered productive in the moment that effort and support are well-balanced, and the students are free of expressing themselves;
- e. *Pleasure of systematising*: this is a very strong pleasure. With its formal and abstract nature, it involves the left hemisphere. This is the pleasure of understanding how the world works and the mechanisms, the signals, at the basis of such knowledge;
- f. *Pleasure of responding to a sense of duty*: this leads to the disposition of the student in being committed even to the activities that do not, in themselves, provide pleasure.

5.2 Material used: questionnaires and teaching materials

As already mentioned, the study intends to map the level of students' motivation. The instrument we used in order to register this was the questionnaire. This instrument has a double nature and a double purpose: as far as its nature is concerned, it is constituted by two written interviews and three closed-type questionnaires. The interviews were administered as initial and conclusive moments in which the students were asked to extensively answer to open reflexive questions. The questionnaires were administered in the central phase of the study and are made of questions the students were asked to answer using a 0-3 scale. The reason for the use of the scale is due to the need of objective data.

The objectives of these tools, on the one hand, were used to record the increase or decrease of student motivation. On the other, they were used as student general feedback on the concluded activities and as indications on how to organise following ones. The data elaborated from the

questionnaires offered both an image of the student's ideas and their feedbacks on the proposed activities.

The language in which the questionnaires are written in is the student's native language, Italian. The reason why we made this choice is due to the learner's level of FL. Their level did not in fact allow them to effectively express their ideas and totally understand the questionnaire requests. Moreover, the present study aims at creating awareness and reflection on the role of Literature, something which needed to be exposed in Italian so as to be fully understood. Hence, English language was used only in the remaining activities.

Considering now the modality in which these evaluation tools were administered to the class, the questionnaires were printed and handed out after a brief introduction that aimed at clarifying the utility of the requests and the reasons they are made in the first place. The questionnaires were administered at the conclusion of each activity and asked questions on the activity itself, on motivation and on the material put to use.

On this subject, the materials used during the teaching action were almost entirely built according to the students' needs (certified by the questionnaires) and the students' interests. Among the materials implied, we should mention:

- a.* The use of videos found online, used in order to introduce the topic;
- b.* The use of power-point presentations so as to make frontal lessons, dealing with historical and cultural, easier to follow;
- c.* The use of work sheets the students can use in order to take notes and as a study instrument;
- d.* The adoption of selected extracts of the analysed texts, printed aside rather than directly from the text book;
- e.* The use of a "class-mail" which was applied so as to provide the students with the material needed in following classes.

5.3 The class: main characteristics, attitudes and curriculum

The analysis would be incomplete without a description of the present study's protagonists. Therefore, exploring the general characteristics of the sample class is interesting in understanding the reasons of the choices made in order to generate motivation.

To begin with, the class was attending the third year of the Italian upper secondary school "Liceo". Differently from the English school system, in Italy this level of instruction is attended by students with ages from 14 up to 19, when school ceases to be compulsory. The Italian upper

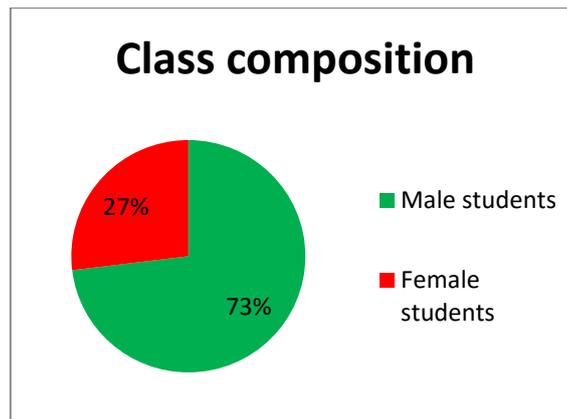
secondary school system is of three different school categories, divided according to each's characterising disciplines and their pragmatic level. Following a line that goes from "practical studies" to "theoretical ones", Italian schools are categorised as: "Istituto Professionale", which aims at developing professional competences; "Istituto Tecnico", which combines theoretical knowledge to its practical application; and finally the "Liceo", the most theoretical one. In Liceo, students are formed intellectually according to the field of interest they choose, among "Liceo Classico", "Liceo delle Scienze Umane", "Liceo Musicale e Coreutico", "Liceo Artistico", "Liceo Linguistico" and "Liceo Scientifico".

As far as foreign language is concerned, it is taught differently according to the study field of the student. Currently, almost every type of school has among its subjects the study of a foreign language, which is English in high majority. During the third of the five years, the study of foreign languages is declined into the particular field of study the student has chosen. Having to pay more attention on the sample class' field of interest, in the "Liceo Scientifico", during the third year, the amount of hours dedicated to foreign languages are reduced to three per week. The third year is also the time in which FL Literary Education is firstly introduced. Contrarily from the professional and technical schools, in which Literature is studied as a thematic integration to Language Education, in the "Liceo Scientifico" it assumes the role of discipline.

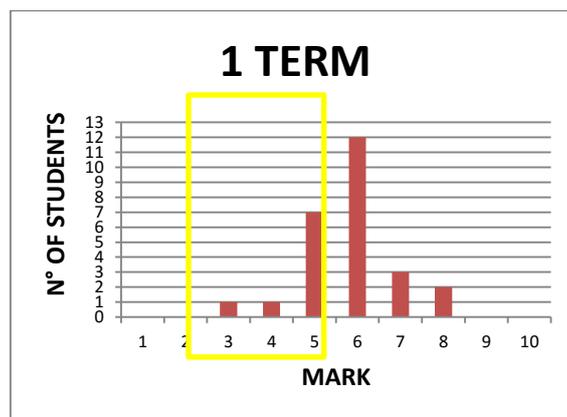
Now that the environment that surrounds the sample class has been described, we'll move our attention to the class composition and description. In order to be accurate, we will use selected passages from the material collected during an interview (full version in *Appendix A*) made to three of the class' professors.

To begin with, the class presented itself as a group of 26 elements with a majority of males (7 female students and 19 male students) as shown in the following chart.

CLASS COMPOSITION		
GENDER	TOT N°	%
Male students	19	73%
Female students	7	27%
TOT	26	100%



Considering their initial linguistic competences, we find it useful to consider the marks the students started the second semester with. As we can see from the graph, even though the end-of-term average was generally positive, the class presented 8 insufficient students, two of them with severe problems. So, as can be deduced from the image, the general linguistic level was rather low, a condition that could have had influence on students' motivation in English Literature. As a matter of fact, one of the factors of de-motivation is difficulty in comprehending the input.



As far as their attitude is concerned, they had been described as a “difficult class to work with” due to the additional difficulty of rejected students to an already problematic class. Talking about the general results, the class presented a basic sufficient tendency of level, with some peaks of excellence and few low rates (represented by particularly troublesome elements). The students, even the most promising and motivated ones, are often described as inattentive and with exuberant behaviours, which sometimes even required principal intervention. As a consequence, even if they presented good skills, they did not succeed in controlling and focusing their interests, enthusiasm and energy, with consequently difficulty in the class management. Moreover, the situation was partially worsened by scarce parent support that attributed the class' behaviour and performance

to the student's age and, even if not expressed explicitly, to the teacher's incompetence. This caused the general tendency of having students attribute failure to external causes, one of the ascribable causes of de-motivation. Furthermore, students presented interest in the characterising subjects, such as Maths and Physics. Such interest and "cultural vivacity" was nullified by the negative nature of the class' dynamics, which also had a negative repercussion on the teaching action's effectiveness. The class lacked in responsibility, since the students were often unprepared or forgetting materials. Italian Literary Education was perceived, by the majority of the class, as a discipline that was scarcely useful and consequently not worthy of interest, commitment and motivation.

As far as English Language and Literary Education, even though the class had a rather low linguistic level, 50% of class elements were interested in the discipline, especially in activities involving discussions. The class was partially interested in FL Literary Education because it provided them with the possibility of new "different" kinds of readings.

We started our study with this initial situation, administering the students the first interview with the objective of understanding their preliminary idea of Literature and consequently create the first activities aimed at motivating them. The proposed activities and the subsequent results will be analysed in the following section that generally presents descriptions of the activity, student feedbacks and our final conclusions.

5.4 Analysis of activities and data collected through questionnaires

The present study is articulated in five different phases, alternating the description of proposed activities and the collection of their feedbacks through questionnaire data. The abovementioned phases could be regrouped in three main moments: initial, central and conclusive. The initial and the conclusive parts are symmetrical and intend to map the mutation of the students' idea of Literature. The central moment considers the group of activities proposed in the time between the initial and the conclusive phases, aiming at increasing student motivation towards the discipline and promote reflection.

5.4.1. Definition of the initial context: phase 1

In order to define the initial context, the overview provided by the teachers' interview was integrated with a first written one. The first questionnaire (Appendix B) aimed at understanding

the starting view students had of Literature. As it is possible to denote from the image below, students were asked to name their paper for two different reasons: to create a contact with the students and to promote awareness and responsibility. Moreover, students were asked to describe themselves using three adjectives. This was useful so as to understand both their personalities and interests.

Before handing out the questionnaires, we explained their purpose so as to justify the students' effort in filling them in, in order to create participation in the reflection process and to share the importance of the study with them. Moreover, we informed them that there were no right or wrong answers, in order to avoid any fear, suspicion or concerns preventing a free compiling of the questionnaires. Here is the first part of the questionnaire:

Nome e Cognome:

Definisciti usando tre aggettivi:

QUESTIONARIO SUL RUOLO DELLA LETTERATURA

INDAGINE SULL'IDEA DELLO STUDENTE CHE SI INTERFACCIA PER LA PRIMA VOLTA CON LO STUDIO DELLA LETTERATURA INGLESE

Con questo breve questionario intendiamo analizzare la vostra opinione riguardo il ruolo della letteratura nel vostro percorso scolastico e nella vostra vita.

Quello che segue è un breve elenco di domande a cui vi chiedo di rispondere con onestà e tranquillità. Alla presente attività non seguirà alcun voto pertanto non esistono risposte giuste o sbagliate.

Sentitevi liberi di scrivere tutto ciò che vi passa per la mente. Grazie per la collaborazione.

Name and surname:

Define yourself with three adjectives:

SURVEY ON THE ROLE OF LITERATURE

SURVEY ON THE IDEA OF A STUDENT FACING THE STUDY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE FOR THE FIRST TIME

With this short survey we intend to analyse your opinion on the role of Literature in your scholastic career and in your life in general.

The following is a short list of questions that I ask you to reply in an honest and calm manner. To this activity will not follow any evaluation, hence there are no right or wrong answers.

Feel free to write whatever comes to mind. Thank you for your collaboration.

This brief introduction was followed by a series of questions the students were asked to answer extensively on the nature of Literature.

The seven questions composing the first inquiry were divided into three groups that analysed different information: the first group inquired on the students' general idea of Literature; the second tried to understand the role of Literature in students' lives; and the third provided a direction for the contents of the subsequent activities.

The first *tranche* of question was:

- a. What is Literature? Which is its purpose?
- b. What is Literature about?
- c. In your opinion, did Literature influence the development and the diffusion of ideas?

The second, more personal part was:

- d. In your opinion, is it possible to regard Literature as a useful discipline in your curriculum and your life project?
- e. Why is Literature taught? How can it influence the student?
- f. Do you usually read? If so, what do you like reading?

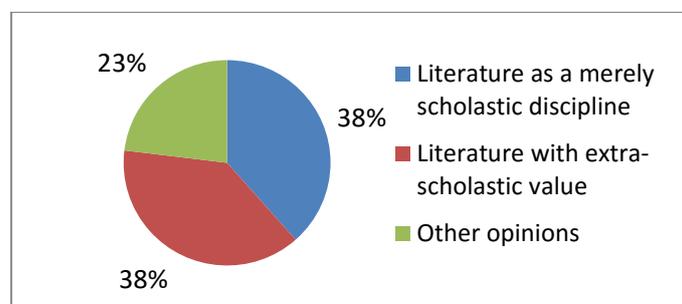
The last section included:

- g. Is there any particular theme you would like to deal with?

The questionnaire was filled in approximately 30 minutes, which denotes a certain difficulty in pondering on the theme of Literature. As a matter of fact, the collected data indicated a partition of the class in different factions highlighting different ideas and attitudes towards the discipline.

5.4.1.1. Data analysis

What follows is a brief account on the data collected in *phase 1*. The data was used to create the general frame for the subsequently developed module. To begin with, we find it useful to regroup the students' answers to the first question ("What is literature? Which is its purpose?") into macro-groups, in order to facilitate the analysis of their positions. The following charts represent these so-called macro-groups:



As we can understand in reading the chart, the class split itself in three in answering the question: two groups composed by 10 learners, and a third of 6. As far as the blue section is concerned, 38%

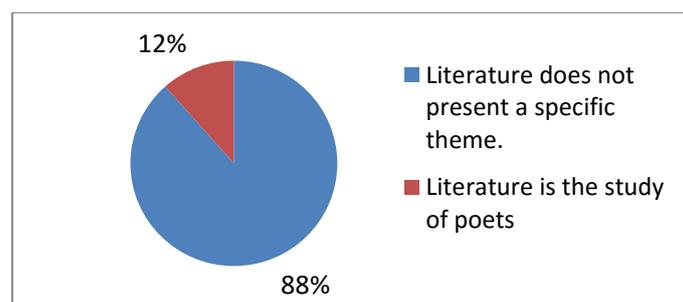
of students identified Literature as a scholastic subject directly connected with L1 Literature, Italian Literature. The other prepondering group, the red section, is constituted by students that consider Literature as a multifaceted entity. We find it interesting to report some of their answers. In the students' opinion, the functions of Literature exceed the mere discipline and are perceived as:

- a. A way to ponder on life;
- b. A way to express feelings, thoughts and opinions;
- c. A way to connect with the past;
- d. A way to pass down ideas through generations;
- e. A way to recollect memories;
- f. A way to express the artist's opinion, declaring approval or annoyance on a specific theme.

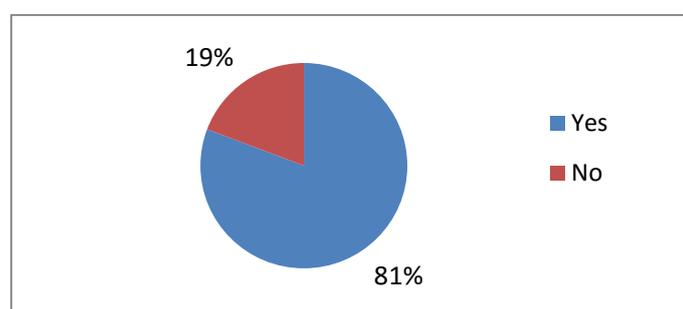
Finally, the third part of the class (the green section) regards Literature as an alternative way to study history, an instrument to relax or to show the author's literary skills.

Further information that emerges from the chart is the class' general perception of the discipline. Out of a total adherence to the questionnaire, 62% of the students convey Literature a practical role, an instrumental role: a position which could be seen as coherent with the typology of the examined students.

A totally different situation appeared when students were questioned on the contents of Literature. The class' answers presented general uniformity. 88,5% of the students claimed Literature does not have a particular theme. It rather presents a variety of themes which could not be regrouped under a sole label. A small group (11,5%) considered Literature as a monothematic discipline addressing the lives of poets that lived in the past. The reference to Italian canon of authors the students were experiencing when the questionnaire was administered appears clear, in this case. This aspect is important because it helps us understand how students perceive Literature as a part of history.

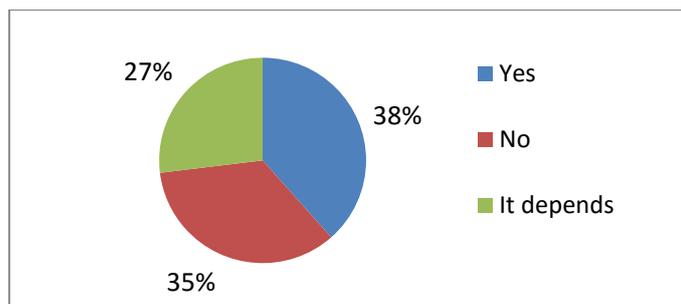


The third question asks them their opinion on the influence Literature might have on the development of ideas and their diffusion. Starting from the minority, 19% of students affirmed that Literature did not influence the spread of ideas, giving it a marginal role. On the contrary, the high majority (81%) sustained Literature actually had a certain role in the diffusion of ideas. Students belonging to this group sustained Literature is a way to widen man's knowledge, culture and mental boundaries. Furthermore, it spreads ideas reaching almost every social *stratum*, creating more awareness of past faults, and crystallised the thoughts and the ideas of ancient authors.

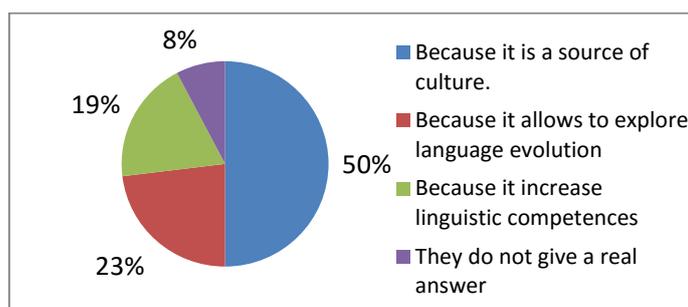


We then investigated on the students' vision of Literature. We asked them to ponder on the use of Literature. This question aimed at understanding the general role of Literature in the students' lives. As a matter of fact, as was explained in Chapter IV, to major use corresponds major interest in the subject, and eventually more motivation.

About the collected data: 35% of the class considers Literature as a useless subject. They justified their choice by saying that its humanistic nature contrasts with the students' scientific curriculum. 27% of the students regards Literature as an occasion to expand their knowledge, even if not considered as a useful subject in the students' study plan. They declared that the usefulness of Literature depends on the person reading it, the education typology the person has chosen, the proposed literary genre, and on the way it is presented in class. From the moment it should happen to be imposed it would result useless. On the other hand, the remaining 38% considers Literature as a useful discipline in both the students' education and in their lives. What we can note from the following chart is the prevailing quantity of students not perceiving the utility of the subject, 62%.

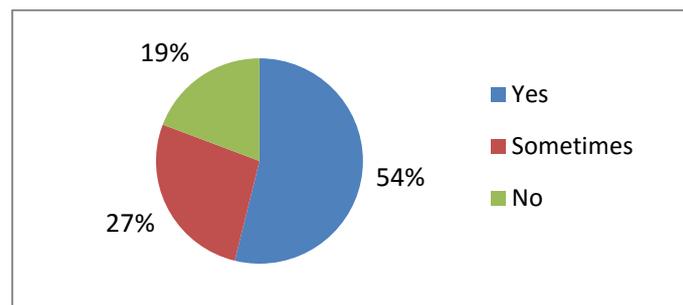


The next question intended to make the students reflect even on the nature of the discipline. Starting from the assumption that motivation could be the energy that allows students to make the effort of acquisition, we asked them to detect the reason why Literature is taught in school. The chart shows that 50% of the pupils think Literature is taught to increase student knowledge, opening his or her mind, so as to complete the students' culture and to know the thoughts of ancient populations. Continuing the analysis of the chart, 23% of the students consider Literature as a means to explore FL evolution. According to this group, through literature it is possible to understand both language and cultural evolution of the country the book was written in. Moreover, reading literary texts, the students have the possibility of comprehending how the language developed and where it has its origins. 19% of the students answered conveying the discipline a linguistic relevance. The students composing the green part of the chart stated that FL Literature is taught so as to increase the students' linguistic competences.

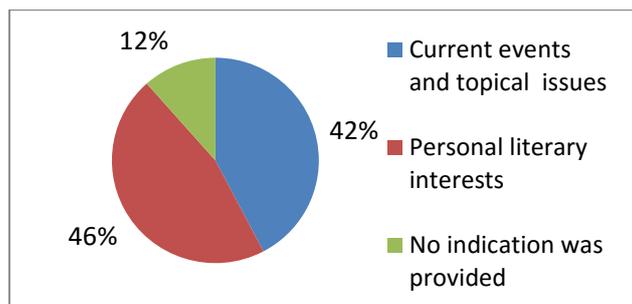


The sixth question aimed at understanding the “subconscious” role of Literature in the students' lives. We defined it “subconscious” because of the answers given to the very first question. The corresponding chart shows that 62% of the students perceived Literature as a scholastic discipline, an instrument to relax, or a way to study history. As a matter of fact, we found it interesting to see whether a discrepancy would emerge between the perception of Literature of the first question and the answer to this one. Students were in fact asked whether they used to read or not, and what they

did if they did. On the basis of 62% of students identifying Literature as a scholastic subject or as an instrument, in the chart below emerges what could be defined as an incoherence. 54% of the students claimed to be good readers, while 27% affirmed to read during summer holidays or during their free time, sporadically. Uniquely, 19% of the students answered they were not readers. What we understand from the comparison of the two groups of answers is the identification of Literature with a scholastic discipline, particularly Italian Literature. The collected data underlines certain confusion on the nature of Literature and a low perception of its usefulness. In addition, students do not consider the readings they do at home, pleasure reading, as part of Literature. They do not realise that the romances, thrillers, adventure novels or fantasy narrations are actually works of Literature. For instance, some of the students that said Literature is a mere scholastic subject later said to love Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Some others, after having claimed Literature is a useless discipline claimed they actually read. A possible consequence of such attitude involves scarce motivation in the scholastic appreciation of Literature. Consequently, in order to help create a counter-trend, we asked the last question.



With this last question we wanted to explore the students' interests so as to create the ground for a stimulating module. The data, regrouped in macro-groups, displays two strong general tendencies and a third weak tendency. To begin with, 46% of students declared they'd like to develop personal literary interests. Among their suggestion: contemporary literature, love romances, 19th Century romances, adventure novels and Tolkien. What we find interesting is the percentage of the second biggest group. As a matter of fact, 11 students, 46% of the class, claimed they'd be interested in developing themes involving modernity and topical issues. Some of the students expressed the will of dealing with themes such as racism, economy, politics and other cultures. Only 12% of the class did not provide any indication. These three students stated they were not interested in any theme, and underlined certain indifference in the possibility of studying something they might appreciate. They also affirmed to be sceptical about a possible change of their interest in the subject.



5.4.1.2. Preliminary considerations

The data collected through the first questionnaire suggested these initial considerations, and worked as a starting point for the module system creation and for initial stimulation of motivation.

Generally speaking, even though the class was described as rather troublesome, it must be pointed out that the students totally took part in the questionnaire compilation. This opened up reflections on the possibilities that could be offered to them.

As far as Literary Education is concerned, what emerged is a vision of Literature that is partially confined to as scholastic discipline. Moreover, it is perceived as strongly related to Italian Literature and the classic canon of literary authors. So, the majority of students were far from perceiving Literature as a pleasure and consequently be motivated in studying it. Further information that is interesting to report is the perception of the usefulness of Literature. When talking about motivation, we analysed the importance of considering the discipline, considering it as part of a project. In the moment FL Literary Education is perceived as useless, it does not take part in the project and the student consequently has no reason, energy, or motivation in studying it.

After having analysed the general content of the questionnaires, we decided to assert a reflection on the tendencies that emerged from them. Starting from some student comments, we began a discussion that aimed at creating a functional dialogue among students of the same age, presenting juxtaposed perceptions of the same subject. The presence of the teachers was necessary to introduce the discussion, asking students to read their answers, and worked as moderators in the discussion itself. The students were in fact the main protagonists, free of expressing themselves without any affective filters.

We find it interesting to report some students' contrasting statements that we used as starting point for the class discussion. In order to preserve the students' privacy, the comments will not be preceded by the student's name.

What follows are the said comments that we report in translation. Answering to the first question, these students said:

- a. S.M.: “In my opinion, Literary Education is a useless discipline because looking at the thoughts of ancient poets can hardly be useful for the thoughts of modern men, since they live in different eras”;
- b. G.P.: “Literature is a source of leisure, as are other forms of media. Its main objective is that of entertaining its readers but is not necessarily be confined to this”;
- c. B.S.: “Literature was and will always be the most important way to set imagination and expressivity free, to expose approval or disapproval in matter of topics other expressive forms cannot express with the same clarity and sincerity”;
- d. R.D.: "In my opinion, Literature is a possibility to rediscover history under a different light”.

Moving to the fourth question on the usefulness of Literature, they said:

- a. Z.N.: “In my opinion, Literature is important because it teaches history and most of all it teaches how to express ourselves appropriately. I don’t think it is fundamental for my education”;
- b. G.P.: “It is useful. Studying the evolution of Literature, it is possible to understand the analogies between Literature and other forms of media”;
- c. B.S.: “Literature is a useful instrument to increase linguistic competences”.

Particular attention was paid to the following comments on question 4 and 5:

- d. Z.S.: “No, Literature is something a person might nurture on his own for personal pleasure. From the moment it might be imposed, it is transformed into something unpleasant”;
- e. Z.S.: “I think Literature is taught so as to increase student lexicon quantity and variety. However, there is a recurrent problem: Literature is often transformed into a demand”;
- f. R.M.: “If it was for me, I would have already banned Literary Education from school, or at least from “Liceo Scientifico”. We need to be focus on making our own history rather than studying someone else’s”.

Students spoke frankly in a sort of debate on the nature of the discipline. Even though some of them started mitigating their total rejection for the discipline, the majority maintained a sceptical attitude. In conclusion to this first preliminary phase that aimed at promoting a reflection on the subject, we decided to proceed with a final activity.

5.4.1.3. Phase 1 conclusive activity: a suitcase filled with books

The final activity of this initial reflexive and motivating phase aimed at shocking the students, and showing them Literature in its most physical and usual form: the book. A suitcase filled with almost 100 books was presented to the students so as to demonstrate them how Literature can be more than a scholastic subject. After having opened the suitcase, we started off by briefly presenting each book and trying to stimulate curiosity and interest. We brought to school this suitcase full of narrative, poetry, theatre, female or male authors, Muslim, Jewish and Christian authors, modern and or belonging to distant times.

Among the variety of books there were themes that the students openly expressed the will of exploring. The activity's purpose was to promote a gradual approach to Literature, free-reading and to stimulate motivation in FL Literary Education through the discovery of texts the students could identify themselves with.

5.4.2. Phase 2: the creation of a module responding to student exigencies

After having pondered on the general idea of Literature, we will provide an account on the module we built in this following operative phase. Considering the results emerged in the preliminary phase, and respecting the programmatic exigencies of the teacher, we designed a module on Elizabethan Theatre and Shakespearean plays. The teaching units composing it were designed, step by step, in accord with the students' feedbacks and the teacher's necessities. As far as the order of the notions is concerned, the module was structured according to the general order of the teaching unit. According to the general partition of the students' LAD's, the module was divided into different teaching units, going from more general aspects to more specific ones.

The focus of the module was that of exploring English Renaissance. Starting from a general historical and cultural contextualisation, we proceeded by presenting Shakespeare as a universal author. Then we explored the power of his texts, analysing *Macbeth*, and highlighting its analogies with the present. In spite of its complexity, we elected *Macbeth* for this very first activity because

of the range of themes it offers and its affinity with the theme students wanted to develop. Students in fact asked for adventure, politics, fantasy, the role of women, and topical issues and themes that *Macbeth* provided the possibility to develop.

In conclusion, the presence of the questionnaires and the particular stress put on moments of reflection made the creation of awareness and the increment of motivation two further module objectives to be added to other literary competences. The module aimed at developing: reading competences, analytical competences, research competences, linguistic competences, social competences and meta-competences such as reflection, responsibility and awareness. To these contents, self-scrutiny and reflection of what studying Literature means were added with the purpose of motivating the students.

Considering now the very nature of the module as a teaching organisational unit and operational instrument, we find it interesting to recall its main characteristics:

- a. a module is an independent and autonomous teaching unit;
- b. it is centred on a specific theme: historical period, author, cultural movement, literary current, a critic issue, a procedure or a competence to be built;
- c. it has its objectives clearly defined and it does not insist on exhausting every theme, author or related readings;
- d. it does not follow a chronological order. Thus, it is not designed according to a linear order but as a reticular structure instead;
- e. the module is the instrument of a flexible methodology and requires the active involvement of the students.

5.4.2.1. Literary module characteristics and organisation

What follows is a schematic description of the modular structure in which the activities were inserted.

- a. Type of module: based on an historical period (English Renaissance) and an author (Shakespeare).
- b. Addressed to: students attending the third year of an Italian “Liceo Scientifico”.
- c. Prerequisites: a minimum B1 language level and good reading competences.

- d. Cognitive and educational objectives: to explore the Elizabethan age and understand the general characteristics that are typical of the English Renaissance; to examine Shakespeare as a mirror of his society, through extracts from *Macbeth*, and discover analogies with the present; to develop the ability of reading Elizabethan theatre in guided activities.
- e. Affective objectives: to understand the role of Literature in the culture of a person; to comprehend the importance of language and commitment; to develop parallel abilities, such as making a presentation and taking notes; to behave productively and being active during class; to work as a team and develop class cohesion; to increase student motivation and pleasure in reading literary texts.
- f. Time schedule: 19 classes regrouped in various teaching units that develop different aspects of the given theme, including tests and class reviews.
- g. Texts: extracts from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.
- h. Connections with other disciplines: History (Renaissance and Reformation), Art (John Henry Fuseli), Sociology (dictatorship), Cinema (adaptations), Philosophy.

5.4.2.2. *The teaching plan*

Here we briefly report the general schedule of the module that we will further analyse later on. Activities were alternated with the administration of “guiding” questionnaires that had the purpose of understanding which activities would be more suitable to keep students motivated.

Step 1

Activities of contextualisation concerning English Renaissance and Shakespeare: Renaissance and Reformation social organisation, values, technological innovations, role of women, new forms of theatre, and Shakespeare contemporaries; analysis of the consequences of the historical and cultural changes in individuals' lives; presentation of Theatre and Literature as: means of self-expression, idea dissemination and instrument in commenting political, religious, cultural changes and philosophical reflection upon what it is to be human.

Step 2

Activities of textual analysis: general presentation of the play *Macbeth* and summary of the content of each act so as to provide the students with the general structure of the play (Analysis of *Act 1 Scenes 1-3* and *Act 1 scene 7* from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*).

Step 3

Group activities: students were divided into groups. They were asked to choose a theme of *Macbeth* they liked and give a 15-minute presentation.

Step 4

Activity review: vision of the play on stage and comparison with the movie version. Students were given the possibility of reviewing the analysed themes so as to get prepared for the final test.

Step 5

Test: the test aimed at verifying competences and notions of the entire module, presentations included.

Step 1: introductory phase of motivation

In this first motivating phase we began with two visual instruments: the guided vision of introductory clips, retrieved from YouTube⁴, and a power point presentation. The technological devices were used in order to introduce the general English Renaissance background and motivate students through stimulating inputs close to their personal habits.

As far as the videos are concerned, they presented Shakespeare's theatre, the society it was surrounded by and a very brief summary of *Macbeth*. After the vision, students were guided in finding the main themes that emerged from the videos. The teacher asked questions and students answered while one student took notes on the black board. The power point presentation) aimed at giving a cultural and historical contextualisation of Shakespeare, presenting him as a mirror of his society. This activity was far from being a frontal lesson, as students were continuously asked

⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpblQu2Jd3U&list=PLreci3HSaXLE-ZRuWkt2haYBYFIdAy_X
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0LrdOa7uZQ>

to extract information or ponder on what they unconsciously know of Shakespeare and his times. These exercises tried to take advantage of one of the class' primary features: the need of discussion; a characteristic which turned out to be really productive during the vision of the clips. Therefore, the presentation was based on the alternation of new notions and questions such as "test your personal knowledge" or "what do you already know about Shakespeare?". Moreover, so as to help the systematisation of new notions, develop the skill of taking notes, and maintain mental focus, we provided the students with working sheets. Students were asked to fill them out during the presentation and use them as material review.

Subsequently, after Shakespeare was defined as a universal author, we proceeded by highlighting the themes which could possibly connected the Bard to our times (as initially asked by the students), like: politics and power, the role of women in society, Racism and the perception of others, homicide, murder, and finally magic and fantastic creatures, introduced in order to generate further interest. The presentation also intended to stimulate the students' area of interest in order to make them appreciate the variety of themes that Shakespeare offers.

Considering the students' specific scientific field of study, we decided to put particular stress on the role of technological innovations (printing press and purposely built commercial theatre), and on the role of Cultural Revolution influenced by Reformation and Renaissance. Trying to stimulate student interests, we included personalities they already knew so as to promote the construction of a reticular knowledge. We underlined the influence that cultural and innovative changes had on theatre, analysing the potentials of the new printing press and of the new commercial stage.

We concluded this initial general presentation anticipating some of the themes presented in *Macbeth*, and reiterating the explored themes using working sheets.

Speaking of the objectives of this initial phase, the activities aimed at:

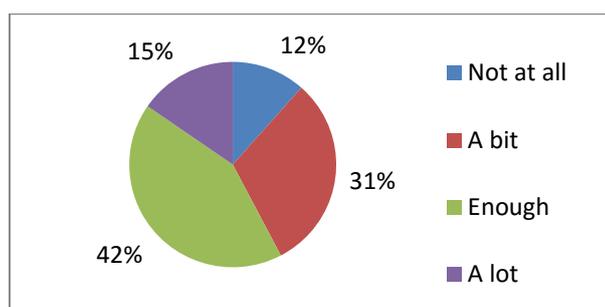
- a. creating the general background and structure on which students can later add new information;
- b. making the students visually and conceptually enter the Elizabethan period;
- c. providing the students with the pleasure of systematising and actively involve them in the lesson by asking deducible information and recalling their own personal knowledge.

Step 1 questionnaire: feedbacks for step 2

The first introductory phase was followed by a moment of reflection constituted by the questionnaire (Appendix C). Students were asked to answer questions on the basis of a scale going from 0 to 3, in which:

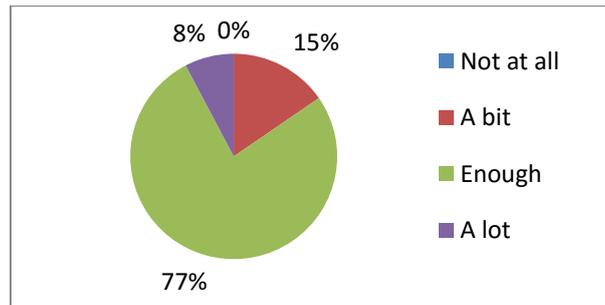
- a. 0 corresponds to “Not at all”;
- b. 1 corresponds to “A bit”;
- c. 2 corresponds to “Enough”;
- d. 3 corresponds to “A lot”.

The first question of this phase aimed at understanding whether the students’ opinion of the use of Literature in their life project had changed. As a matter of fact, comparing the answers to this question, it is possible to see that the class had partially changed its opinion on the use Literature. From an initial 35% of students that found Literature a useless subject, after the first activities the number dropped to 12%. Only 12% of the class at this point still found Literature a totally useless discipline. On the other side, 31% of the students claimed it was partially useful, 42% affirmed it was useful enough, and 15% stated Literature was to be considered a very important discipline in student education. In the following chart it is possible to read an initial mitigation of the initial hostility towards the discipline.

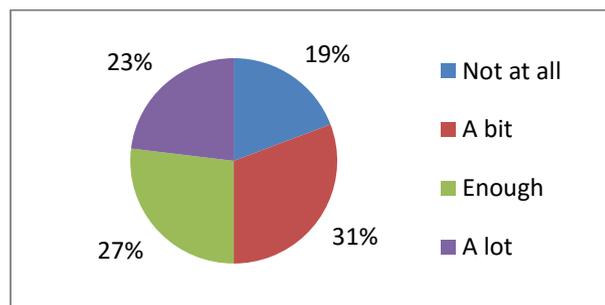


The second question of this phase aimed at understanding whether an increment of motivation due to interest towards the subject had taken place. We asked the students to define how interested they were in the discipline.

The chart below shows that none of the students answered with a totally negative score. 15% affirmed to be partially interested in Literary Education; the majority 77% of students claimed to be sufficiently interested in the subject; while 8% stated to be really interested in the discipline.



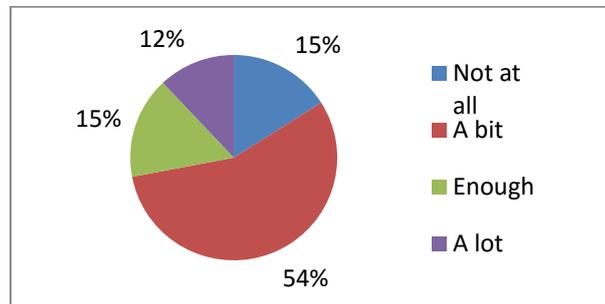
The following three questions aimed at obtaining a feedback on the developed activities. The first asked the students whether the previous lessons contributed to modify their opinion towards the subject. The scores show a division of the students in equal parts. This could be attributed to the proposed lesson typology and the presence of different learning styles. Fact is, 19% of the students affirmed that the activities did not affect their opinion; 31% claimed to have partially changed their opinion; while 27% stated the activities contributed enough in changing their opinion. Finally, 23% of the students stated that the activities strongly contributed to make them change their opinion.



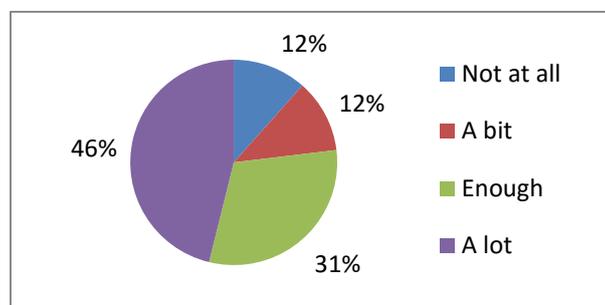
The second feedback-question wanted to understand whether the themes and activities we chose were considered interesting or not. We then used the data provided by this question to adjust the activities and their contents. The majority of the class gave a positive feedback: 35% of them said the activities were partially interesting; 50% affirmed the activities were interesting enough; and 12% claimed they were very interesting. On the contrary, 4% of the students sustained the previous classes were not interesting.

The final feedback question meant to understand whether the materials students were provided with (working sheets, power point presentation, guided extracts) were considered good or not. These materials were used in order to offer support to students and facilitate information acquisition. Regarding the scores, we can state that students found the supportive teaching materials generally useful: 27% regarded them as partially useful; 38% considered the materials as useful enough; and 35% of the students believed the materials to be really useful. What we can

extract from this data is that students find the need of support and guidance satisfying in the moment they are offered supportive materials.

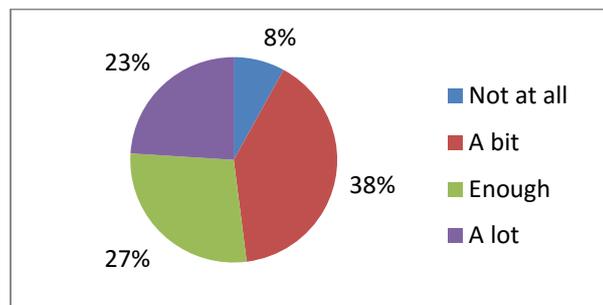


With the subsequent questions we intended to analyse one of the factors that is considered as a major de-motivation factor in the class: “class climate”. We started inquiring on this topic in order to make students reflect on the importance that interpersonal dynamics of the class can have on single personalities. Moreover, a further reason justifying this choice was that of reflecting on the counter-productive action of the affective filter activated by the presence of certain individuals. As a matter of fact, when asked to reflect on the the class dynamics, just 12% said to feel at ease in class. Conversely, 15% of the students claimed they were satisfied enough with the class dynamics. The majority of the students gave a rather negative answer: 54% of them stated they are not at ease in class, while 15% said they are not at all at ease in class. Among the students having a completely negative opinion, we found the entire group of female students that seemed to suffer from the situation. We then followed with a counter-question that aimed at spurring a reflection on class dynamics in order to promote cooperative relations and open dialogue. We even pushed the more discreet and quiet students to take part in the discussion and openly declare their position. The question prompted the students to say how much the class situation could be improved.



The second *tranche* of the question aimed at reflecting on motivation and its causes. To begin with, we find it interesting to report the opinion of the students on motivation. 88% of the class conveyed

motivation has a fundamental role, while 12% thought it was important enough. As we stated before, motivation is stronger when interest in the subject is present. So, with this basic assumption, we asked the students to say how important they thought what they were learning was. Even though 50% gave a positive opinion, the chart shows a great amount of students continued having a rather poor interest in the discipline, and were consequently scarcely motivated.



When asked to indicate the importance of pleasure in the process of education, the class responded with a 58% of students conveying pleasure a central role, 38% of them declaring it has an important role (important enough) and 4% stating it is not relevant. We continued the reflection process by asking students to think about how the mark influences their motivation towards the subject. The collected data show that 58% of the students thought the mark had a relevant role in motivation; 35% stated marks detain an important role, even if not central; 4% affirmed marks partially affected their motivation; while the remaining 4% thought motivation would not be influenced by this factor. We find it relevant to underline that the percentages conveying pleasure and marks as central roles are the same. What we understand is the confusion the students make between the role of motivation and the factors generating and sustaining it.

The last question we would like to report intended to further analyse motivation conveyed by interest. When asked on the importance of integrating students' interests in the scholastic program, the class showed a majority (69%) considering this connection really important; 27% of the students gave it enough importance; against a sole 4% affirming this connection to be only partially important. At the end of this questionnaire, we asked students to suggest a methodology or a support instrument that could facilitate their acquisition. The majority of students expressed the will of working with guided working sheets helping them following the lesson, suggested the vision of movies or brief clips, the use of power point, and finally preferred group discussion in which they could express themselves.

Step 2: supported textual analysis

In this phase, we introduced the Shakespearean play *Macbeth*. Considering the students' indications, and intending to increment their motivation even during a phase of textual analysis, we created specific work sheets. We then decided to use the class e-mail in order to provide the students with the work sheets that they were then asked to print out. In these sheets the students could find: the extracts to be analysed, some exercises of guided analysis, and paintings by John Henry Fuseli that represent scenes of the play. Even this activity aimed at being as captivating as possible, in order to get students directly involved into reading passages and participating in analysis activities. A further reason according to which we decided to use work sheets instead of the text book relies in the practicality of this instrument, since students can carry it without any problem. In addition, we also gave students the possibility of following the extracts with their smartphones. In doing so, we overcame the problem of possible lack of physical material and the confusion this might generate.

The contents of this instrument were organised from general to analytical. The first part offered the students a general introduction to the play, followed by an overall description of the five Acts. Students were then asked to read the summary of the play and to detect the salient episodes that construct the tragic plot. Then, in order to examine the nature and the characteristics of each character, we proposed an activity in which students were asked to fill a chart with the detail of each character.

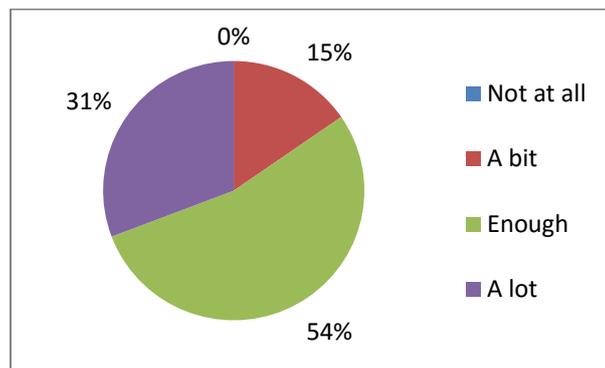
The subsequent lessons were all dedicated to the analysis of the first Act. Particular attention was paid to *Act 1 Scene 1* and *Act 1 Scene 3*, and *Act 1 scene 7*. Extracts were read out loud and commented by both the teacher and the students. Even in this occasion, students were provided with work sheets to help them follow the lesson, understand the main themes and make them reflect on the evolution of the character

Considering now the general reception of the activity by the “public”, the class presented almost 10 distracted and basically bored individuals. This indicates that the lesson typology was partially inappropriate for this class.

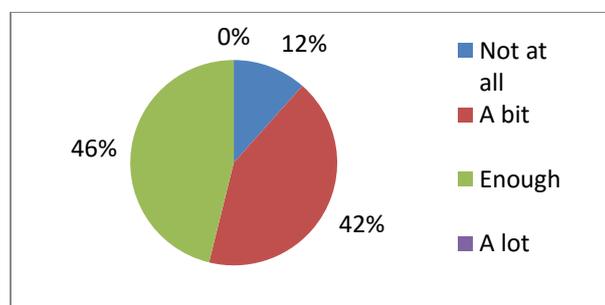
Step 2 questionnaires and feedback for Step 3

The third questionnaire (*Appendix D*) aimed at continuing a reflection on motivation and maintaining the focus on class dynamics. To start, in order to get feedback on the previous activities, we asked the students if they thought that the lesson typology could influence their

motivation. The entire class stated that they noted a connection between the two elements: 31% of the students claimed that methodology deeply influenced their motivation; 54% claimed their motivation was sufficiently influenced by the way lesson are constructed; while 15% confirmed that class typology partially influenced their opinion. None of the students found there to be no connection between lesson typology and level of motivation.



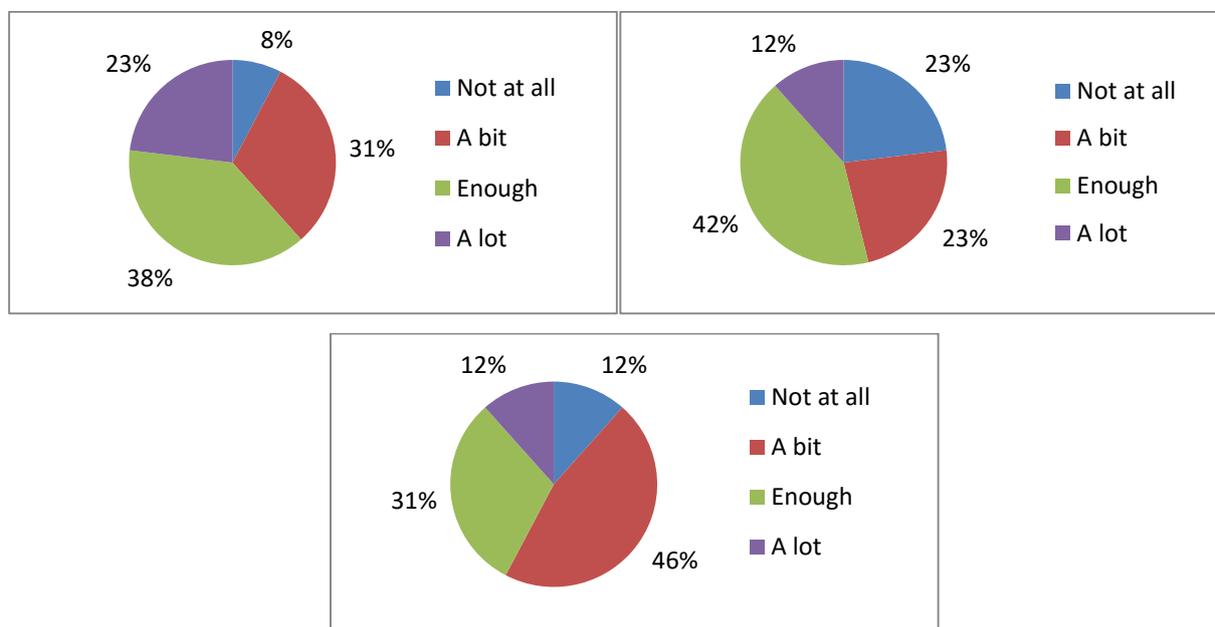
At this point we asked them further questions on the proposed activities. We asked them to express how motivated they were or felt. Predictably, having seen their reaction to the activity of analysis and the results reported in the previous chart, students said to not be motivated at all.



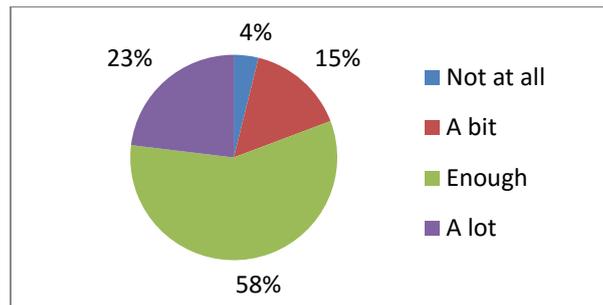
We now consider an important change in class dynamic, a key factor influencing the students. We denoted a change in the tendency and a better the vision of the class dynamics: 38% of students said to be totally at ease in class; 35% thought to be enough at ease in class; while 27% claimed they were only partially at ease in class. None of the students said to not be at ease in class.

This way we proceeded by asking them whether they felt free of expressing themselves. Differently from the message conveyed in the first question, the data collected highlighted only 23% of the students felt totally free of expressing themselves, while 38% and 31% felt respectively to be free enough and partially free of fully expressing their opinions. 8% of students then stated to not feel free to express themselves. The reason of such scores is to be found in the following

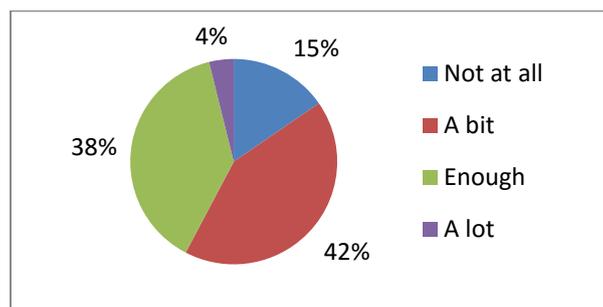
question that aims at understanding the origin of the affective filter blocking the students. Having individuated the main class de-motivating problem in the class dynamics, we asked the students to think about how their classmates' opinion influenced their behaviour. On this theme, it is often reported that in the study of Literature, during adolescence, the nature of the affective changes its direction: from a vertical relation, connection teacher and students, the affective filter turns horizontal. The classmates become new protagonists in the learning field, and their opinion in particular. In accord with what has been said, the class embodies such tendency. 77% of the class in fact said to be influenced by classmates' opinion, even if on different levels: 12% claimed to be strongly influenced; 42% said to be sufficiently influenced; while 23% found classmates' opinions to be only partially influencing on their behaviour. The remaining 23% of students, all male, stated that their behaviour or attitude was not influenced by their colleagues' opinion at all. Insisting on this point, we asked the students to think how much they participate in class in order to understand how big the obstacle constituted by the classmates was. The collected data demonstrated only 12% of the total students found to actively participate to classes. 31% of them claimed to be sufficiently involved, against 12% feeling only partially involved in the activities. The remaining 12% expressed to not participate to class activities.



Students were then invited to reflect on their commitment in Literary Education. They were asked whether they were doing their best to obtain positive results. In response: 23% of students claimed they were already doing their best; 58% said to be committed enough; 15% admitted not to have done their best; and finally, 4% of students claimed they were not committed at all.



Considering commitment as the product of student reasoning and their opinions, we found it interesting to ask them again whether they were changing their opinion on Literary Education. The class responded as follows: only the 4% claimed to be changing their opinion; 38% stated they had quite changed their opinion; 42% found they partially changed their initial idea; while 15% did not seem to alter their opinion at all.



Step 3 supported challenge: group presentation

On the basis of the feedback from the students, and their strong will of giving voice to their interests, we decided to propose them an activity that would make them presenters of the lesson. We proposed them a group activity based on presentations. Students were provided with a range of themes, connected to *Macbeth*, and were asked to expand a topic according to their interests. This activity wanted to act on different factors:

- a. Increase class cohesion and promote cooperative dynamics;
- b. Give the students the possibility of working on a theme connected to their interest;
- c. Give them responsibility and trust;
- d. Challenge students with a new task that required organisational competences;
- e. Give students the possibility of exploring a theme they liked and creatively expose it.

To begin with, students were provided with instructions. We then discussed their doubts on the presentation and its organisation. The groups were then formed by the teachers, in order to have equal division of competences and personalities. We paid attention to troublesome personalities and difficult subjects so as not to favour some groups to the detriment of others. Further motivation justifying our choice of group composition is due to the objective of creating class cohesion. We noted some students had not yet connected with some classmates so we decided to create a collaborative link between them.

We decided to propose the students a series of possible theme alternatives to be developed, such as:

- a. Recurrent images in *Macbeth*;
- b. Supernatural elements and prophecies;
- c. The role of Women;
- d. Connection between Manhood and Cruelty;
- e. History and setting → realism and representation;
- f. Loyalty and guilt;
- g. Power and ambition;
- h. Tyranny and kingship.

We gave the students the basic structure for their research, leaving them free of expressing themselves. The final mark then concerns the *c.* factor mentioned above (responsibility and trust), one the activity means to act on. After having perceived high levels of individuality and scepticism, we informed the students that the final mark of the presentation would be a mathematical average between the personal presentation and the group presentation. In so doing, we gave students with more difficulty the possibility of getting a higher mark. In addition, we managed to involve troublesome and solitary students in the process, since without their presence their classmates would be penalised. The final evaluation would then take account of:

- a. Individual mark based on: linguistic accuracy, pronunciation, involvement, re-elaboration of the contents and knowledge;
- b. Group mark based on: quality of the final product, contents, clarity and pertinence.

Even though the activity was rather challenging for the students, we thought it could help them:

- a. Work as a team and establish dialogues and idea confrontation;
- b. Organise time schedule and respect deadlines;
- c. Learn to give a presentation, research material and improve linguistic skills;
- d. Be responsible for their own personal choices and their group's;
- e. Connect Literary Education with their interests;

- f. Enjoy different facets of the same play by listening to other group presentations.

In order to maintain interest and attention, we informed the students with the fact that the contents of the presentation would be part of the final test.

In challenge terms, we wanted to stimulate students' intellects, raising the complexity level of the activity. We, however, guaranteed them constant support; on the one hand, offering them consultations and advice in class and during three organisational lessons; and on the other, at home: students were given the chance to ask for further information at any time, and were also given the possibility of having their presentation reviewed before the class presentation.

What follows are the instructions we handed to the students before dividing them into groups

ISTRUZIONI PRESENTAZIONI 3BSA
PROVA VALUTAZIONE ORALE

Ogni gruppo sarà composto da tre persone secondo istruzione dell'insegnante. Vi sarà richiesto di individuare un passaggio tratto da *Macbeth* e di analizzarlo seguendo le seguenti istruzioni:

- a. Tempo massimo 15 minuti (ogni componente del gruppo dovrà prendere la parola);
- b. La presentazione potrà prendere qualsiasi tipo di forma (rappresentazione, power point, mappa concettuale su cartellone o stampata per tutti) NB: la presentazione dovrà risultare chiara e facile da seguire per tutta la classe;
- c. Contestualizzazione del passaggio scelto (Atto/scena/personaggi/momento della narrazione);
- d. Motivazione legata alla scelta (ho scelto questo passaggio perché...);
- e. Proporre un parallelo o un legame della tematica con temi di attualità, con la propria esperienza personale o interessi personali;
- f. Dal punto di vista tecnico la presentazione dovrà essere composta da: un momento introduttivo (parleremo di **ELENCARE I PUNTI CARDINE DELLA PRESENTAZIONE**); una spiegazione dei vari argomenti procedendo con: breve introduzione → corpo della spiegazione → conclusione e legame con l'argomento successivo; le conclusioni;

Alla fine di ogni presentazione seguirà una serie di domande di approfondimento. L'insegnante terrà conto di coloro che interverranno nella discussione facendo domande pertinenti e significative. Per agevolarvi il lavoro vi do la possibilità di inviarmi i testi o lo script della presentazione per averne la correzione: perinlaura@hotmail.it

3BSA CLASS PRESENTATION INSTRUCTIONS
ORAL EVALUATION

Every group will be formed by three people, following teacher's instructions. You will be asked to choose an extract from *Macbeth* and to analyze it by following the instructions here below:

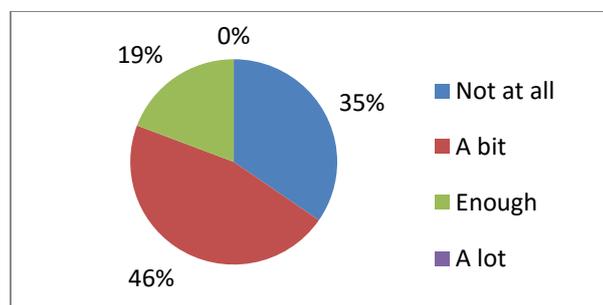
- a. 15-minute presentation limit (every component of the group must have the chance to speak);
- b. The presentation can take any kind of form (performance, power point presentation, conceptual maps, on the black board of printed and handed out to the rest of the class) NB: the presentation must be clear and easy for the whole class to follow;
- c. Contextualisation of the chosen extract (Act/Scene/Character/Episode of the narration);
- d. Reasons behind the choice of the extract (I chose this part of the play because...);
- e. Presentation of parallels or connections with modern day themes, and with personal experiences or personal interests;
- f. From a technical point of view, the presentation must have: an Introduction (we will speak of... **MAIN POINT OF THE PRESENTATION**); and a brief presentation of the various points that follows this order: brief Introduction → Main presentation and thesis explanation → Connection with following discussions → Final conclusion.

A series of further questions related to the research will follow each presentation. The teacher will take note of all those who will participate in the discussion with pertinent and significant questions. To help you with your research, I give you the possibility of sending me your presentations for corrections or reviews: perinlaura@hotmail.it.

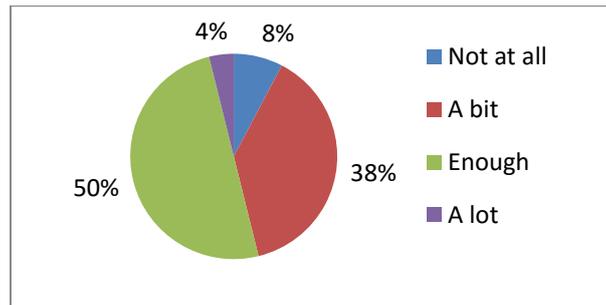
Considering now the general reception of this activity, it is possible to say students actively took part in presenting a certain interest and curiosity towards the subject and the new type of activity proposed. Only two out of 26 students did not present their work. And finally, as far as the marks are concerned, we registered a general level of sufficiency.

Step 3 questionnaires and feedback for phases 4 and 5

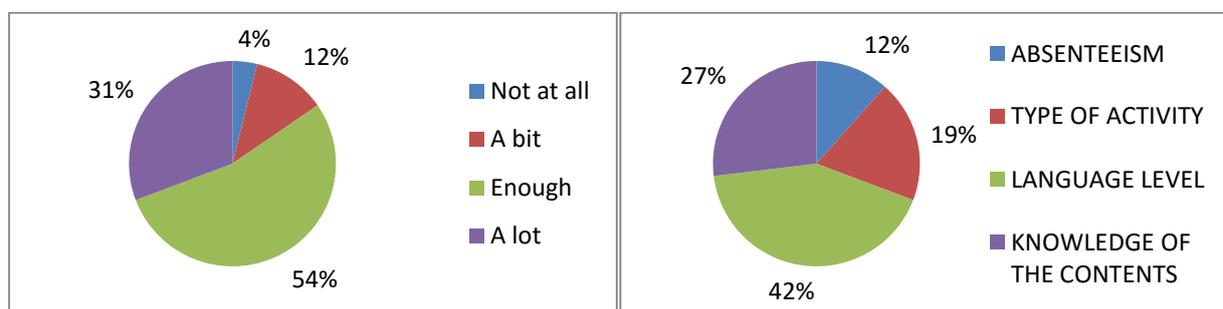
The next to last questionnaire (*Appendix E*) that was aimed at understanding whether the group activity influenced the students' idea of Literary Education and if it stimulated their motivation. We find it interesting to recall one of the main focuses of such activity: creating productive and serene class dynamics. Keeping this as the starting point, in the first asked the students to report their opinion on the influence the group activity could have had on the cohesion of the class. According to the data, 35% of the students thought the activity was not to be considered productive in the creation of class cohesion. On the contrary, 46% stated that the activity, even if only partially, contributed to better the class dynamic. Finally, 19% of the students claimed they found the activity sufficiently useful, while none of them considered the activity substantially productive.



Secondly, we asked for feedback on the stimulating nature of the activity. We asked the students whether they considered the activity stimulating. The class' answers were generally positive. Even if they did not consider the activity useful for the cohesion, the scores underlined a certain appreciation of the new task. A mere 8% considered the activity not stimulating but the rest of the class found the activity stimulating, even if in different levels: 38% of the students found it to be partially motivating, 50% stated it was motivating enough; while 8% had an entirely positive reception of the activity.



So we tried to understand the reasons connected to such a reception by asking two further questions. The first inquiring on the commitment of students in the activity, while the second asked them to list the major factors affecting the success of the activity.

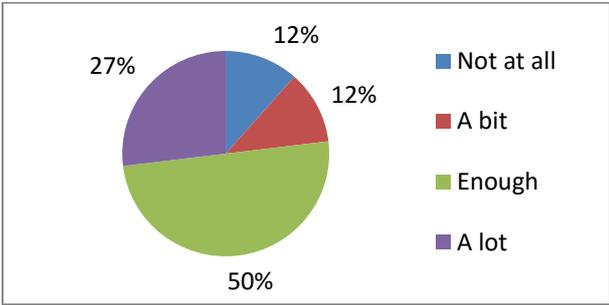


In the chart on the left is possible to analyse the collected data regarding the first question: 31% of the students declared to have been really committed in the group activity, while 54% and 12% stated they respectively put enough and little effort in the activity. The minority, 4% of the students, claimed not to have been committed at all.

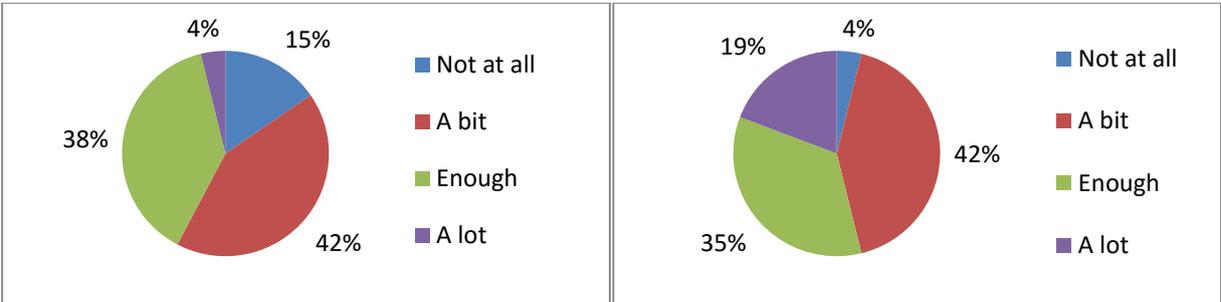
Through the chart on the right we tried to understand why the activity was not as stimulating as we expected it to be: 12% of the students found the problem to be absenteeism, 19% found it to be in the typology of activity, 42% claimed the activity was too difficult for their linguistic level, while the remaining 27% declared the main problem resided in the knowledge of the contents.

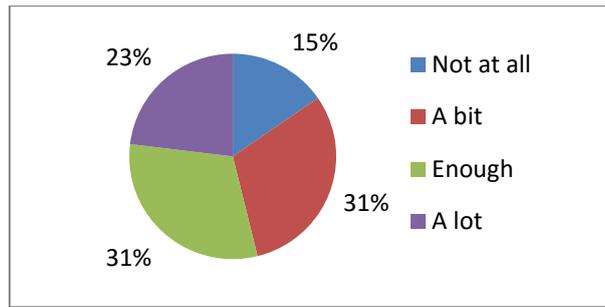
The remaining three questions meant to analyse the nature of students' motivation at this point of the study. Initially, it appeared that student motivation towards the subject was produced by a sense of duty or necessity. We firstly asked the students about their general idea of scholastic education in order to then examine in depth the origin of their motivation. A student that doesn't perceive scholastic education as important would hardly be motivated simply by pleasure. He would rather be expected to be motivated by necessity or duty. So we later asked them to reflect on the importance of education in their lives, as source for the development of their mind. According to the collected data, 12% of students regarded education as something useless. The other 12% conveyed education a small role in education, while 50% of the students claimed education had a certain influence in their formation. Only 27% found school to have a central role in education.

With this as a starting point, we continue our analysis shifting the attention to the factors of motivation.

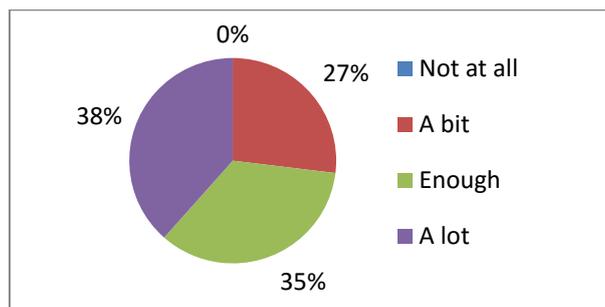


We asked the students the measure in which they are motivated, respectively by: pleasure, duty or need. We proceeded by explaining what we meant with these three sources, focusing the attention on “need” in particular. We clarified the students that with “need” we intended a temporary need, as studying to take a good mark for instance. When asked whether they studied for personal pleasure or to expand their personal knowledge, only 4% said they studied entirely for pleasure. 38% said to study instead mostly for pleasure, while 42% of students claimed pleasure had little to do with their motivating factor. The remaining 15% of students stated pleasure was not to be considered as source for their motivation. In the following charts, different scores were registered on duty as source of motivation. 19% of the students said duty is the main factor motivating them. For 35% duty has an important role, even if not fundamental; while for 42% of the students, duty is a partially relevant factor. Only 4% of students did not consider duty as a motivating factor. Regarding motivation generated by temporary need, 23% of students saw need as source of acquisition energy. 31% of the students claimed need had some relevance in motivating them, while the other 31% thought it had a small role in motivational processes. Finally, 15% found need a factor that influenced their motivation.

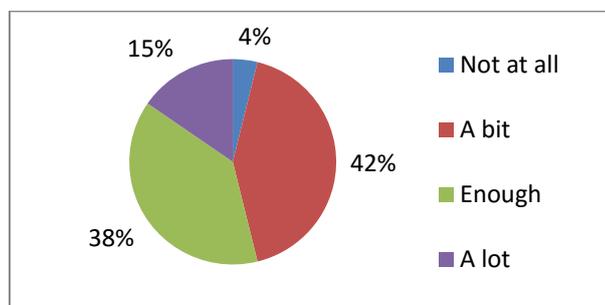




The last block of question aimed at promoting a reflection on the idea of FL Literary Education. Surprisingly, when asked on the importance of Literary Education, students expressed a general change in their perception of the discipline. As a matter of fact, 38% found FL Literary Education had fundamental importance; 35% thought it had enough importance; 27% gave it a partial importance and none of the students claimed it had no importance at all. This data proves a counter-tendency in respect to the initial opinions.



Even when asked to weigh their results and the progress made in the discipline, the class responded almost entirely in a positive way: 15% claimed they had made consistent progress in the discipline; 38% claimed to note enough progress; 42% stated to have registered a small progress; while only 4% of the students claimed not to have made any progresses.



What we understand from the data collected through this third questionnaire is:

- a. Group activity may help only in part the class dynamics;
- b. Low linguistic competences and complexity of the task were found to be two de-motivating factors affecting the success of the students in the activity;
- c. Students expressed general enthusiasm for the activity, letting them connect their interests to scholastic tasks.

As far as motivation is concerned, the class still shows a tendency to base their motivation on duty and need, even though motivation based on pleasure did not present completely irrelevant rates.

The data, however, shows a change in the students' perception of the discipline. Even if the activity was not totally useful to increase cohesion and cooperation, it was a useful instrument for reflection. Students entered the study of Literature by "finding pieces of themselves" in it, and experimenting with both Literature and Language. On the whole, the reception of the activity is to be considered positive and student motivation seemed to increase.

Step 4: review activities and Step 5: final test

These last two parts aimed at summarising the entire module. With the fourth step we intended to offer the students the possibility of reviewing the concepts explored in the previous classes so as to help them get ready for the final test. In order to offer support, we asked the students to bring the work sheets we used during the activities with them, and use them as a general track for the review. In so doing, students already possessed the necessary material to prepare themselves for the test. We also encouraged them to share the prepared power point presentations with each other. We then proceeded by analysing and discussing the passages students found to be particularly difficult.

In the final lessons, we decided to offer two further possibilities of review: in order to set the concepts, visualise the character and scenes, and fully memorise the plot, we brought the students to a theatre representation of *Macbeth* and showed them a movie version. A further reason justifying our choice is found in the will of making students reflect on the actual realisation of the play in its natural form, theatre, and to ponder on the differences between the text source and its movie adaptation.

Step 5 consisted in the final test, structured in 5 different activities to be carried out in 55 minutes. The test aimed at reducing the affective filter to a minimum. The contents of the test were taken directly from the material used during the lessons and the review phase. To begin with, students were asked general questions on the historical contextualisation and on Elizabethan theatre. The exercise was a multiple choice type so as to enter the test in a gradual. Differently, in *Exercise 2*, students were asked to summarise plot of the play in 10 lines. This exercise had a double function:

to check the knowledge and the linguistic competences. In the third exercise, students were asked to describe characters by delineating their main features. This exercise followed the form of an activity made during the initial phase, in order to reassure students with a form they had already experienced. The fourth part, the most demanding in terms of effort, asked the students to write a text, choosing among four possible themes explored during presentations.

4. IN THE FOLLOWING EXERCISE YOU ARE ASKED TO WRITE A TEXT ON ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS

(you are not allowed to choose the topic of your presentation):

- *Macbeth* and the role of power;
 - Female figures in *Macbeth*;
 - Hallucinations and psyche in the tragedy;
 - Violence and murders: how they are connected with society.
-

In the last part of the test, students were provided two passages from *Macbeth* (both in its original version and in translation): they were asked to find the main themes emerging from the passages and to write them in a bulleted list form. Only 7 students did not reach a sufficient grade level. The majority obtained sufficient marks, with some emerging higher peak marks.

5.4.3 Phase 3: final data, new context, main findings and reflections

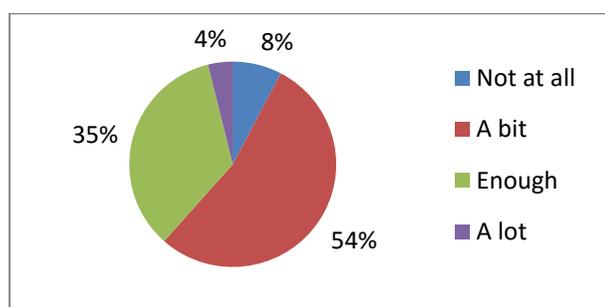
The purposes of this last part are various. To begin with, we are going to report the final data collected in the process, using the last questionnaire (that has a structure that is specular to the first). In so doing, we have the possibility of understanding if and how students' opinions towards the subject have changed or not. In addition, the collected data can also be regarded as a general feedback on the effectiveness of the activities in stimulating motivation. Secondly, we are going to answer the initial research questions and finally address the main findings of this study.

5.4.3.1 Final questionnaires and general feedback

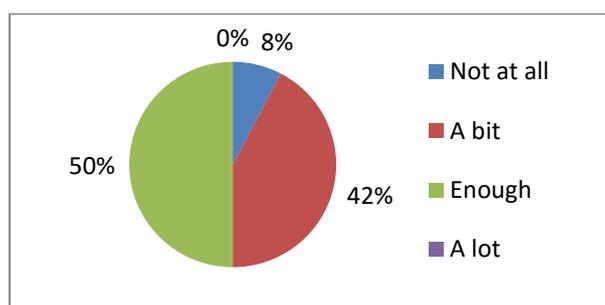
We now consider the data received from the last questionnaire (*Appendix F*) administered to the students at the end of the module. It is constituted of two parts:

- a. The first, composed by closed questions for feedback on the concluded activities;
- b. The second, specular to the first questionnaire, re-proposing the initial questions to the students. The purpose was to understand whether the opinion of the students in matter of Literary Education has changed thanks to activities of reflection and stimulation.

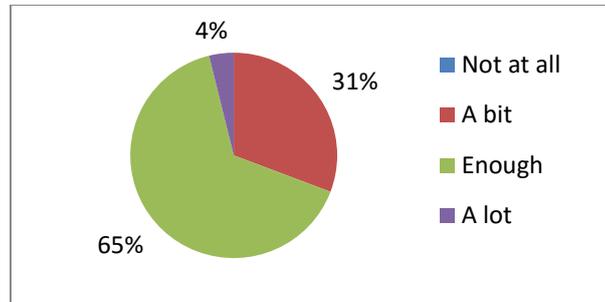
To begin with the first part concerning feedback, students were asked to say whether their idea or perception in matter of FL Language and Literary Education had changed. According to the collected data, the class gave a general positive feedback: 54% of the students said they had partially changed their opinion; 35% claimed they had substantially changed their initial ideas; while 4% said to have totally changed opinion. On the other hand, 8% of the students stated their ideas on FL Language and Literary Education had not changed.



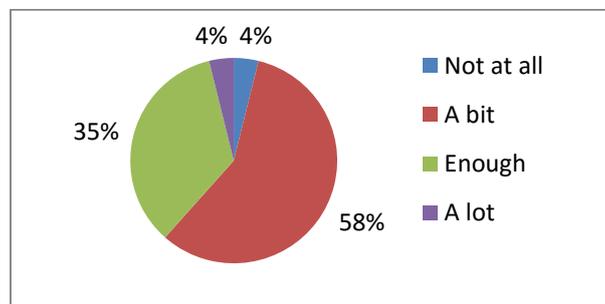
In the second question, we asked the students for direct feedback on the proposed activities in order to understand the effectiveness of these activities in student motivation: 92% of the students gave a positive feedback; 50% claimed the activities discretely affected their motivation; while 42% stated the activities partially influenced their motivation. Only 8% stated activities did not influence their motivation at all.



We completed the feedback collection by asking students to ponder on the usefulness of the activities. Partially in contrast with the previous results, none of the students claimed the activities were useless. On the other hand, 4% of the students said the activities were really useful, 65% stated they were considerably useful, while the remaining 31% of the individuals said the activities were partially productive.

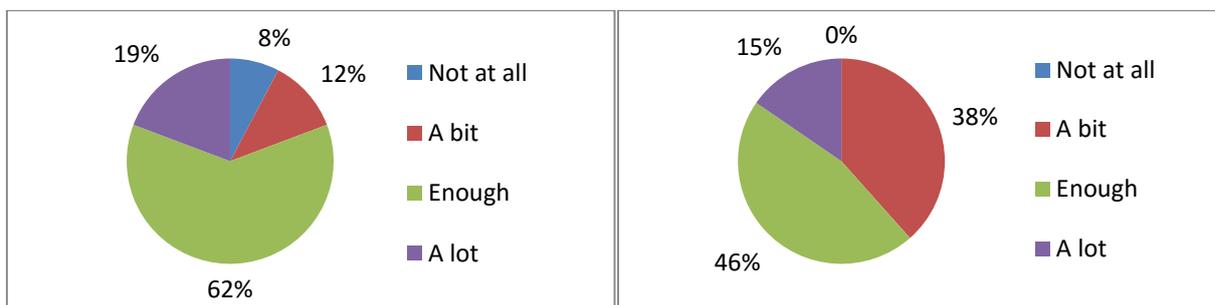


With the fourth question we meant to try and understand whether the module allowed the students to express their qualities and interests. Even in this occasion, the class responded positively: only 4% of the students answered negatively; 58% of them said the activities partially permitted them to express their interests; 35% claimed they managed to discretely express themselves; and the remaining 4% stated the activities considerably helped them express their interests and qualities.

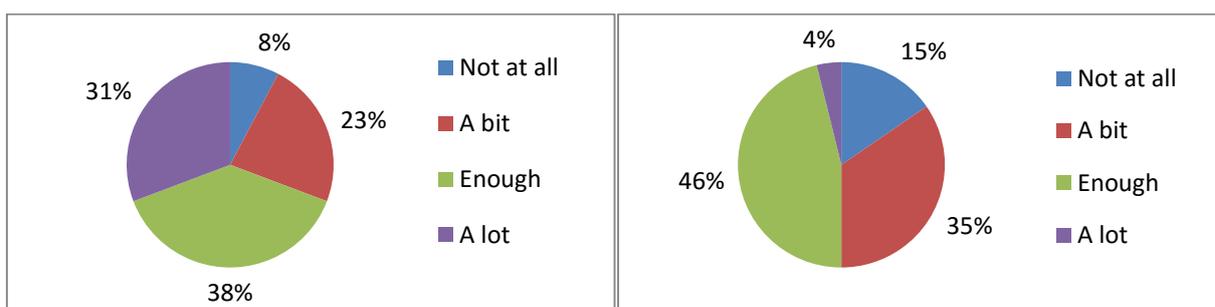


In the following questions, students were asked to ponder on their commitment and progress in the discipline. On the one hand, as we can see in the chart on the left, 19% of the students said they did their best, 62% said to have put sufficient commitment in the execution of the tasks, 12% claimed to have been only partially committed, while 8% stated they did not put any effort. On the other hand, in the right chart it is possible to see the students' perception of their progress. Even in this occasion, the data seems in contrast with the previous opinions. In fact, none of the students claimed they had not made any progress in the discipline, even those who claimed not to have put any effort in the execution of tasks. 15% of the students perceived to have made great progress,

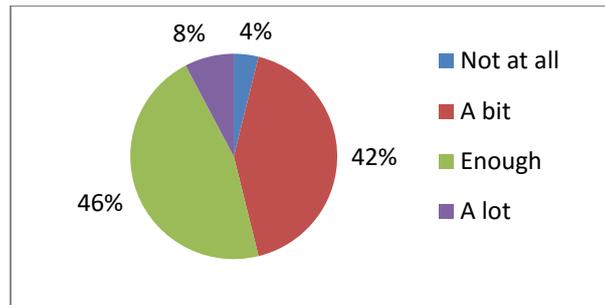
46% claimed they sufficiently got better, while the remaining 38% stated to have made little progress.



With the further two questions we intended to re-collect a feedback on class dynamics and student involvement. As seen in *phase 2*, the class climate was considered one of the factors of demotivation affecting the students' involvement in class activities. When asked whether they felt at ease in class, 31% of the students claimed to be totally at ease in class, 38% felt considerably at ease, while 23% of the students retained they were just partially at ease in class. Only 8% of the students said they were still totally uncomfortable in class. In an attempt to further explore this emotional factor, we asked the students the second question, the data of which is reported in the chart on the right. When asked whether they started being more involved or not, the students reported the following scores: 4% claimed to have considerably incremented their involvement; 46% said they had incremented their involvement enough; 15% felt they had just partially become more involved, while 15% of the class felt they were still not involved in the activity.

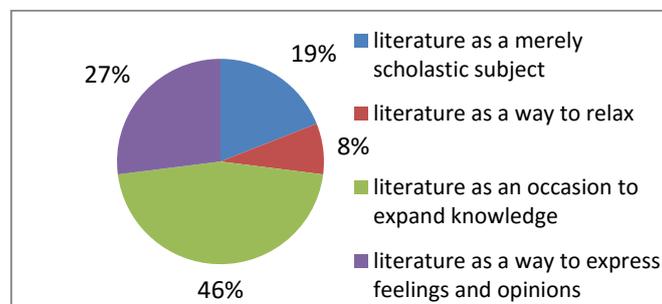


The last and most central question of this conclusive section directly concerns motivation. Students were indeed asked how motivated they thought they were. Surprisingly, 96% gave a positive answer and said they felt motivated in the study of FL Literary Education, even if in different levels. 8% said to be consistently motivated, 46% said to be discretely motivated, while 42% felt poorly motivated. Only 4% of the class didn't feel motivated at all.

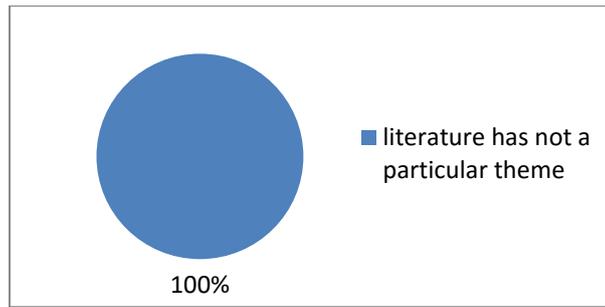


Considering now the second part of the last questionnaire, what follows are the answers the students gave to question we had already asked them in *phase 1*.

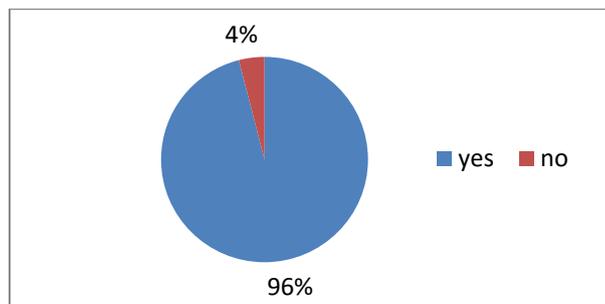
The data collected demonstrates a significant change in the general idea of Literature. After two months of reflections and dialogue, students abandoned their previous idea that identified Literary Education with Italian Literature. It appeared clear that students had changed their opinion. When asked about the nature of Literature and its purposes, students gave totally different answers: only 19% of the class continued regarding Literature as a merely scholastic subject (compared to the initial 69%); 8% saw Literature as a way to relax while learning new notions; 46% regarded Literature as an occasion to expand their knowledge; while the remaining 27% considered Literature as a means the author uses to express his ideas, opinions, judgements and feelings and a way for the reader to identify with the author's words.



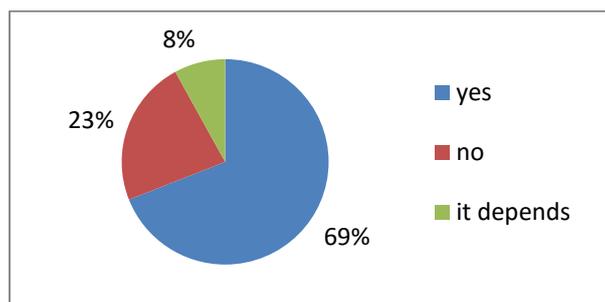
The second question, once again, asked the students to think what Literature is about. In this case the data shows that 100% of the students claimed Literature was not to be confined to a single theme. Literature could deal with almost every theme. Even in this occasion students changed their opinion: in the first questionnaire, 12% of the students said Literature was the study of the poets of the past.



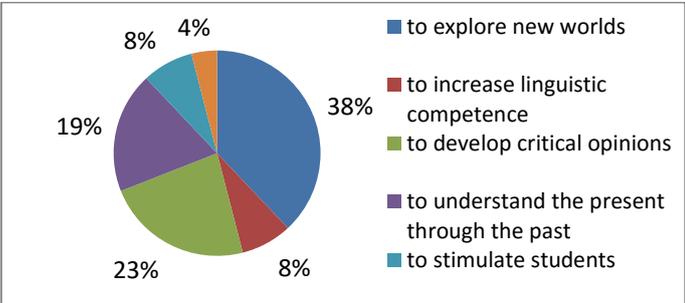
The third question intended to map the students' opinion on the role Literature might have on the development and diffusion of ideas. The activities we proposed had, among others, the aim of demonstrating Literature was not separated from the context in which it was written in. As a matter of fact, the data demonstrates 96% of the students claimed Literature had a role in the diffusion and development of ideas. The remaining 4% said they did not perceive such connection.



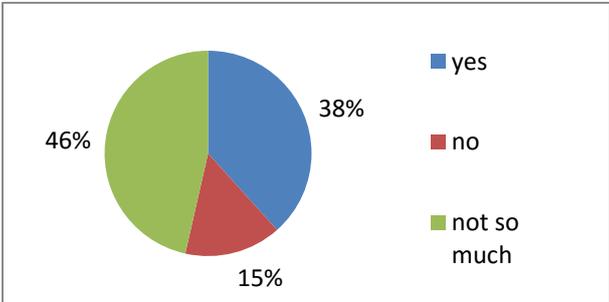
The fourth question aimed at understanding whether the students' opinion on the usefulness of Literary Education in their curriculum and their life project had changed. The collected data measured a big change: 69% (compared to the initial 38%) of the students claimed Literature could be regarded as a useful discipline that helps create awareness and enrich student knowledge. The percentage of students stating Literature is a useless discipline decreased from the 37% to 23%, while the percentage of those saying the use of Literature depends on the students' curriculum lowered to 8%, from the initial 27%.



A marked difference in the type of answers students gave is found through the question that explores the motivations justifying the presence of Literature in school. *De facto*, students maintain two reasons for this presence, also exposed in the first questionnaire: Literature is as an occasion to explore new words and enrich student culture (now 38% while initially 50%); and Literature is as an instrument that increases linguistic competence both oral and written (now 8% while initially 19%). 23% of the students then regarded Literary Education as an occasion to develop critical opinions; 19% of the students claimed Literary Education could be seen as a way to understand the present through the past; 8% found Literary Education to be the instrument a teacher might use so as to stimulate his students, getting them closer to Literature and stimulating their curiosity towards reading. The remaining 4% claimed to not have any idea.

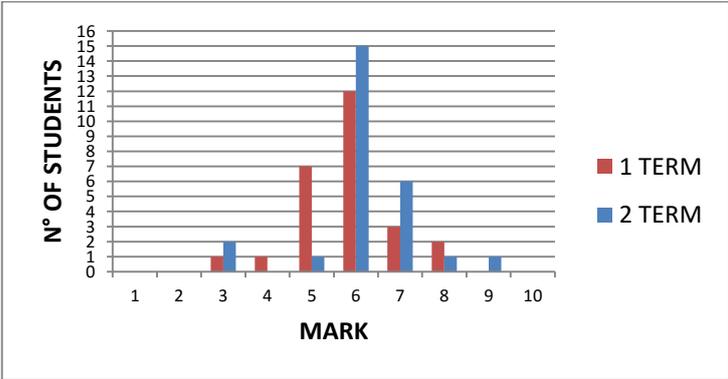
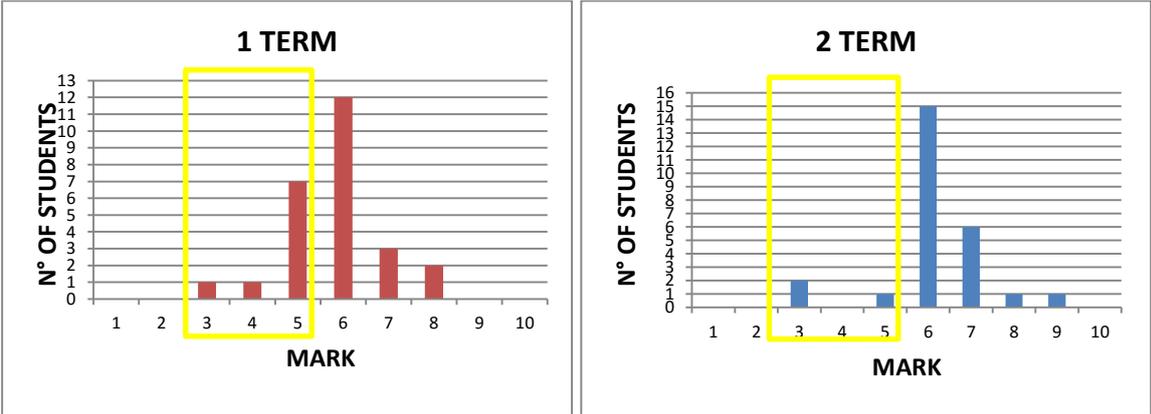


Considering now the last question, the one concerning students’ reading habits, what we registered is a decrement of the number of reading students. A possible reason is the new awareness of what reading actually means. Considering the data, from an initial percentage of 54% of reading students, the number was reduced to 38%. The number of students that stated they did not read a lot went from 27% to the current 46%. Finally, the number of students that said they did not read at all decreased from 19% to 15%.



As we can see in charts, the class demonstrated a general change in their attitude towards Literature. From a general scepticism we almost reached a level of modest interest. A change took

place even in what concerns the students' marks. As a matter of fact, we registered a general progress of students we can visually represented in the images below. On the left are reported the first term class marks, while on the right are reported the final marks. The reported information demonstrate the number of sufficient students increased, even though the class did not turn out totally sufficient. On the whole, 6 students got 7, a student got 8 while another got 9. What appears clear is a significant reduction of the students presenting a 5 in the first term, from 7 students they decreased to a single student.



5.4.3 Final situation and conclusions

At the end of the activities, and after having analysed the collected data, what appears to be clear is a general transformation of the students' perception of FL Literary Education. From initial scepticism, and through a series of guided stimulating activities, we managed to at least create, stimulate and interest in Literature. Students participated in the activities and were always open to dialogue with the teachers.

We will now report the questions that followed our considerations.

To begin, we intended to ponder on the differences between motivated and de-motivated students and the possibility of detecting any relevant difference between them. What we understand is that there is a clear difference between the first and the second. Motivated students tend to face new activities with positivity and enthusiasm. De-motivated students, on the other hand, are different to work with; they tend to create a wall the teacher can often find difficult to overcome. The factors responsible for de-motivation in this case are: general prejudices towards the subject (due to the students' idea of Literature based on Italian Literature) and class climate. The latter factor can also be used so as to answer the second question. We wanted to reflect on the learning environment and figure out if it is a productive factor or a source of de-motivation. The questionnaire and the initial interview given by teachers demonstrated this class actually suffered from problems related to class dynamics. The presence of troublesome elements, in addition to the class composition with a male predominance, generated a rather unproductive climate. Such situation implied disorder and impossibility of reaching daily goals. In order to tackle this problem, we promoted group activities aiming at creating cohesion and cooperative dynamics. We thought that working on the class dynamics could help reduce de-motivation activating the affective filter and limiting acquisition. The word "activities" directly links this topic to the next question. At the beginning of this study we intended to discover whether motivation towards FL Literary Education could have been stimulated through selected activities. The answer is certainly positive: students demonstrated enthusiasm and participation in the activities that were part of a module created *ad hoc* for them. The methodologies and the activities we proposed aimed at involving student interests, challenging them and supporting their acquisition both by guidance and teaching materials. Even though the activities were created for them, the students did not present a total change in their initial scepticism towards the discipline. The reason behind such attitude is to be found in the answer to the next question: when we tried to consider whether there was a difference in the perception of curricular and non-curricular subjects, the answer was yes. From the very beginning, part of the class justified a counter-productive behaviour during lessons, claiming

Literature was not a characterising discipline in their curriculum (a factor which generated demotivation). Working on the value of Literature, even in a scientific context, has helped the students become less uncompromising and has helped give this subject a chance. In conclusion, our work, our teaching action, made use of a really useful instrument: guided reflection. From the very beginning, we tried to establish a relationship based on respect and clearness: we stipulated a didactic agreement with the students. As a matter of fact, we explained them the reason of each activity and its practical use. We also listened to their opinions, creating a productive dialogue that had the objective of overcoming the problems and the prejudices towards the subject. We tried to sustain student acquisition, providing the students with copious teaching material and helping them even in the review phase. But most of all, we tried to stimulate reflection: reflection on Literature and its meanings; reflection on the variety of forms it might assume; reflection on the correlation between past and present; and finally reflection on the power of words. Among the instruments we used, trust and reflection were the most productive in the effort of motivating this class in the acquisition and appreciation of FL Literary Education.

ANNEX A

INTERVIEW TO THE SAMPLE CLASS' TEACHERS

What follows is the Italian transcription of the interview made to three teachers who have been working with the sample class during the period of internship at *Liceo Brocchi*. We decided to consider this micro-group of the entire teaching team as its representative and to better focus our attention on Literary Education.

As a matter of fact, the professors who kindly participated to the interview are:

- Professor Roberto Zorzi (PRZ), class coordinator and teacher of Math's and Physics;
- Professor Rachele Bombieri (PRB), Italian language and literary education;
- Professor Maddalena Fantini (PMF), English language and literary education.

The three professors have been questioned on the general situation of the class at first, and then on the specific discipline they have been teaching. Particular attention has then be put on the description of the class' characteristics, climate, disposition and attitude towards humanities so as to understand how to work on their motivation.

Io: “chiedo innanzitutto al coordinatore di classe, come si presenta la classe, quali sono le caratteristiche che la contraddistinguono?”

PRZ: “la terza BSA è una classe che ho preso quest'anno, per cui non la conoscevo. E' una classe che a dire il vero mi era già stata presentata come una classe un po' difficile, anche se per mio carattere tendo a non farmi influenzare da opinioni altrui. Comunque, ho fatto ben presto a capire che la classe era una classe difficile. Difficile da gestire dal punto di vista della didattica. Far lezione a scuola risulta difficile anche per la presenza in particolare di alcuni alunni, e poi, al di là di queste presenze un po' difficili per altri motivi o per situazioni personali eccetera, anche il resto della classe, le persone più motivate, più dotate o interessate alla materia presentano delle difficoltà di autocontrollo in quella che è la gestione della normale lezione. Queste sono state le difficoltà che ho trovato io. Ci sono anche delle belle individualità, delle belle presenze cioè delle persone dotate di capacità che però non riescono ad indirizzare correttamente i loro interessi, il loro entusiasmo, la loro energia, a scapito di una gestione della lezione. Dal punto di vista dei risultati, io li considero risultati nella media però sicuramente condizionati dalle difficoltà che

personalmente ho avuto. Poi diciamo anche che da parte dei genitori non abbiamo tutto il sostegno. Anche nei colloqui con i genitori si ha avuto l'impressione che ci sia questa doppia percezione: alcuni genitori che soffrono con i loro figli per questa situazione, altri che invece tendono a giustificare il comportamento dei figli legandolo all'età dei ragazzi e, sebbene non in maniera esplicita, all'incapacità dei docenti di saper gestire certi docenti. Abbiamo dovuto intervenire con richiami anche da parte del preside, cosa che, insomma non è molto frequente.”

Io: “mi chiedo se gli altri docenti vogliono aggiungere altre considerazioni sulla classe, a livello generale?”

PRB: “io devo dire che, come Roberto, ho cercato il più possibile di non farmi condizionare dalle indicazioni che ci avevano dato i colleghi che avevano precedentemente lavorato con questa classe, e per molto tempo, ho sperato insomma che quel che ci avevano riportato si sarebbe potuto migliorare, con il passare delle settimane o dei mesi. Ho dovuto però constatare che non è così.”

Io: “vorrei passare ora alla descrizione dell'andamento della classe nelle specifiche materie da voi insegnate, per capire come alunni che ha scelto un ambito scientifico, vedono materie di indirizzo (matematica/fisica), materie obbligatorie e comuni (italiano/storia) e discipline che, dal loro punto di vista, potrebbero non appartenere al loro cammino di studi (inglese e letteratura inglese). Inizierei quindi con matematica e fisica poiché, già dal primo questionario si nota che la classe tenda a dar poca considerazione alle discipline umanistiche poiché, a loro dire, non dovrebbero far parte del curriculum scientifico da loro scelto. Mi chiedo quindi, e chiedo a lei, se poi, effettivamente, nelle discipline caratterizzanti ci sia un livello d'attenzione e rendimento più alto ed una motivazione superiore.”

PRZ: “fermo restando la presenza di alcuni ragazzi, che hanno palesato la mancanza di alcuni prerequisiti, io posso dire che un certo interesse, una certa vivacità culturale verso la materia, è presente in un bel gruppo di ragazzi, che però non ha potuto esprimersi compiutamente a causa di un clima di classe che non dà sempre la possibilità di indirizzare questo loro interesse in maniera corretta e rendere anche proficuo il mio tipo di intervento. A volte, infatti, l'intervento di un alunno è di stimolo per l'insegnante per approfondire o

spaziare all'interno della lezione allargandola. Questo potrebbe avvenire molte volte in questa classe poiché spesso si presentano interventi degli allievi di questo tipo, che denotano un certo interesse per la disciplina, però sempre in parte **compromessi dal clima di classe**. In generale posso dire che questa è una classe tipica da scienza applicate e che gli alunni non hanno sbagliato indirizzo. Ora, non so come hanno percepito le discipline “non di indirizzo”, perché è chiaro che deve esserci la consapevolezza profonda che, comunque, la scuola che hanno scelto è un liceo.”

Io: “la prima impressione che ho avuto io durante la prima parte del tirocinio, è che gli alunni fossero svogliati, non sapessero stare in classe. Mi sono ritrovata davanti ad una classe disordinata, caotica e difficile da gestire.”

PRB: “si sono loro. Io ti assicuro che per riuscire a fare lezione devo continuamente muovermi per l'aula, **controllare banco per banco chi ha il libro e chi ha il quaderno, incitare a prendere appunti** (anche se poi non viene fatto assolutamente da tutti, anzi). Salvo poi sentirmi dire al momento della verifica che fare gli schemi alla lavagna e prendere appunti serve come anche serve leggere i testi e seguire le lezioni in classe.”

Io: “quel che ho notato è un distaccato riconoscimento dell'utilità delle attività o i suggerimenti proposti, ma non li usano, non li attualizzano. Questo ho notato.”

PRB: “per quanto riguarda la disciplina di lingua italiana, questa classe ha avuto una fortuna che altre classi non avranno, perché non c'è più la possibilità di fare il laboratorio di scrittura di italiano. Loro hanno potuto fare, in prima ed in seconda, un laboratorio di scrittura con il professor Malagutti. Quindi, dal punto di vista della scrittura, io gli ho trovati veramente con una marcia in più rispetto ad altre classi che non avevano potuto fare la stessa esperienza. Di fatto, però non hanno saputo potenziare queste abilità che avevano, si sono un po' adagiati. Questo per quanto riguarda la scrittura noto però un livello discreto per una classe delle scienze applicate e trovo che quell'esperienza sia stata davvero utile. **D'altro canto, per loro è stato molto difficile lo studio della letteratura, me lo hanno detto in modo chiaro che loro non la ritengono una disciplina utile o spendibile, anche se poi hanno riconosciuto che le lezioni, come abbiamo cercato di strutturarle funzionano, servono, hanno ammesso che a casa manca totalmente la rielaborazione.** Dunque, investono tutte le loro energie nella lezione a scuola e a casa non fanno più niente. Quindi io sono

stata chiara nel dire che se questi testi non li leggiamo, non li mastichiamo a scuola sono sicura che nessuno li leggerà. Gli alunni leggono le analisi del testo, non leggono i testi d'autore. Credo che il prossimo anno cercherò di coinvolgerli di più, nel senso di assegnare loro degli approfondimenti da fare, delle presentazioni da fare, ho visto che le poche volte che mi sono permessa di farlo, perché è anche rischioso, non è che sempre poi si possa esser sicuri del risultato. Ho visto però, che le poche volte in cui ho provato a fare questo, a dare un po' di fiducia, un ritorno l'ho avuto. Quindi penso che farò così, l'anno prossimo. Dell'esperienza di quest'anno faremo tesoro, cercando di usarla per muoverci in modi diversi.”

Io: “passiamo ora ad inglese.”

PMF: “premetto che io ho iniziato ad insegnare al tecnologico l'anno scorso, non ho mai avuto esperienze di tecnologico, bensì di scientifico, dunque non so in realtà quale possa essere il livello linguistico di un tecnologico. L'anno scorso la classe era molto problematica, poiché una classe già problematica in prima è stata aumentata da una serie di eredità da altre classi di natura problematica. Una classe, l'anno scorso, con un livello linguistico medio/basso. Solo due o tre persone se la cavavano, il resto avevano competenze da prima media. Quest'anno, rispetto all'anno scorso, gli ho visti maturati dal punto di vista umano, non tanto ma maturati, soprattutto le ragazze. Molto più consapevoli dei propri limiti, ma anche della possibilità e della voglia di studiare. Dal punto di vista linguistico, questa rimane una classe fragile, però fragile, tenendo presente che c'è un 50% che ha voglia di fare, di provare e di mettersi in gioco. Quest'anno c'è stata un'eredità di altri tre personaggi, che hanno aumentato il peso della classe creando altre dinamiche. Devo dire che però, durante l'anno si sono dimostrati personaggi positivi, rispetto alle eredità dell'anno precedente. L'interesse, avendo praticamente due discipline - la parte linguistica e la parte di letteratura- l'approccio che hanno è diverso. Devo dire che sulla lingua, quindi i testi del libro, secondo me si annoiano. Si annoiano perché ripetono cose che loro credono di sapere. Se si fa un argomento di attualità o di interesse generale, la parte che piace di più è la parte di discussione, leggere e la parte di comprensione è una parte opzionale. La parte di discussione invece gli interessa, perlomeno ad un 50-60% delle persone che poi intervengono. Sulla letteratura c'è stata questa sorpresa di un impatto così di perplessità all'inizio, però poi, nei lavori di gruppo hanno lavorato e devo dire che alcuni sono veramente anche cresciuti, come interesse, come piacere del leggere e del sentir parlare di

letteratura e del contesto storico. Ieri un alunno, per rispondere alla domanda su cosa gli fosse piaciuto del programma svolto ha risposto che Shakespeare gli è piaciuto ma che gli piacerebbe leggerlo in inglese moderno. Allora oggi gli ho mostrato da *You-tube* alcuni video in cui Shakespeare viene messo in scena. Hanno visto la comicità dei pezzi, il fatto che possa capitare che alcuni attori possano interpretare un personaggio femminile, e la cosa gli ha incuriositi. Devo dire che alcuni gli ho visti cresciuti scolasticamente come rendimento e come interesse. Forse, l'aspetto della letteratura gli ha motivati di più perché hanno visto che quel pezzo di letteratura si colloca in un periodo storico in cui effettivamente esiste qualcosa, un modo di vivere, un modo di pensare, e quello forse è stato interessante. L'anno prossimo proseguiremo sulla falsariga di quest'anno pertanto la parte di lingua sarà un po' ridotta e sarà dato più spazio alla letteratura. Come verrà sviluppato il programma si vedrà l'anno prossimo, in base alla classe."

Io: "l'ultima domanda che vi faccio riguarda l'attività che ho proposto. Vorrei sapere se il modulo proposto ha influenzato la disposizione degli alunni nei confronti della materia e quindi la loro motivazione. Partendo da inglese e chiedendo agli altri docenti se le attività di riflessione proposte abbiano portato a conseguenze positive anche nelle loro discipline."

PMF: "a mio avviso sì. Gli ho fatto proprio la domanda ieri. Hanno apprezzato molto i lavori di gruppo e si sono sentiti molto coinvolti, perlomeno coloro che hanno preso il lavoro di gruppo come un'attività seria."

Io: "devo dire che è stata anche una buona percentuale."

PMF: "si abbiamo avuto solo due o tre persone che si sono rifiutate di svolgere il lavoro. Devo dire che nei lavori di gruppo li ho trovati molto coinvolti. Alcuni mi hanno detto di aver apprezzato questa parte di programma, speriamo non sia un amore passeggero ma si presenti anche l'anno prossimo."

PRB: "io credo che il lavoro che avete affrontato quest'anno, di riflessione, meta-valutazione e di auto-valutazione e riflessione su quanto studiato, sia utile per loro. Anche in termine di ricerca della motivazione. Io ho visto che loro si chiedevano: "a perché devo fare questa cosa? "e risponderci che se qualcuno gliela insegna ci deve essere una ragione. Io credo anche che matureranno questi ragazzi diventeranno un po' più grandi l'anno prossimo. A

volte li vediamo gradi ma in realtà sono tanto ingenui e fragili. Credo anche che il lavoro svolto sia servito anche in una prospettiva a lungo termine, per farli riflettere su quello che devono fare. Come diceva Roberto, io gliel'ho ripetuto tante volte, siete studenti di liceo, e in quanto tali la vostra maturità si misura anche nella capacità di affrontare con attenzione e serietà tutte le discipline, altrimenti avreste dovuto scegliere un altro percorso. Fanno un po' fatica i ragazzi delle scienze applicate a capire questo, ma credo anche che ci siano molte persone in gamba.”

Io: “ultima domanda. Vorrei chiedervi quali fattori, secondo voi, possono essere considerati causa di demotivazione all'interno di questo gruppo classe e cosa li rende più demotivati rispetto a precedenti generazioni di allievi.”

PRZ: “perché i ragazzi di oggi sono demotivati? Secondo me, perché si è rotta quella che era la continuità tra le varie componenti che costituivano l'educazione del ragazzo. Prima c'erano un progetto e degli obiettivi in comune, adesso loro si confrontano con tante altre situazioni. Si vedono a dover soddisfare quel che chiedono i genitori, gli amici, il gruppo, magari hanno stimoli differenti. Una volta era più facile perché questa pluralità di richieste avevano tutte un denominatore comune. Adesso c'è questa pluralità, anche di modelli culturali proposti loro con anche valori e validità diverse. Diventa quindi più difficile orientarsi all'interno di tale molteplicità anche se è da considerarsi sicuramente più maturante. Io sono anche convinto che i ragazzi d'oggi siano anche più in gamba rispetto a quello che eravamo noi. Presentano delle fragilità dovute a ciò che li circonda e che a volte può portarli a smarrirsi o a non saper far fronte alle loro fragilità. Parlando dei fattori di demotivazione, probabilmente, vedono noi un po' poi vecchi di te, quindi magari percepiscono anche questa frattura. Vedono un po' noi, per esempio nel campo dell'informatica, come un passo indietro. Non credo centri la loro prospettiva futura bensì la frattura tra noi e loro.”

PMF: “io a volte credo che loro non riescano a percepire la spendibilità di ciò che stanno facendo. Parlavo coi ragazzi di quinta, due anni di differenza, loro sono state in grado di collocare ciò che hanno fatto a scuola in un'ottica di praticità. Loro [la terza BSA] vedono ancora tutto come informazioni senza una precisa utilità. Possono capire l'utilità della matematica, e forse quella dell'inglese per ascoltare canzoni o “parlocchiare” ecc.; quando però gli parlo

di letteratura questi pensano che non gli serva a niente. Bisogna trasmettergli il messaggio che dietro alla letteratura si celi un modo di pensare, un'esperienza di vita.”

PRB: “io concordo con quanto detto. Una delle motivazioni, pensando alla demotivazione nella mia disciplina, mi trovo a convenire con il collega quando dice che questa possa essere generata dall'ambiente che circonda l'alunno, agli input che lo possono sovrastare, le diverse agenzie educative che chiedono cose diverse. Dal mio punto di vista, un fattore demotivante è la scarsa spendibilità pratica di quello che io insegno. Però, quando i ragazzi, e col tempo ci arrivano, si accorgono che anche una materia che in apparenza non è spendibile dal punto di vista pratico, da qualcosa, questi capiscono che per la formazione della loro persona si rivelano utili. Loro hanno proprio la tendenza a voler metter in pratica, preferiscono la discussione perché rimane pratica, non si devono concentrare per andare in profondità ed interiorizzare. Questo, secondo me, è dovuto anche al mondo esterno, sovra-stimolante li porta ad adottare un approccio superficiale. E noi contro questo approccio dobbiamo lottare.”

Io: “è una cosa che ho notato anche io. Presentano una motivazione legata prettamente al bisogno, al bisogno di prendere un bel voto in un compito o di alzar la media per evitare il debito. Quello che ho cercato di spiegargli io e dimostrargli, con l'attività della valigia, estraendo libro per libro e raccontandogli le trame di questi è che la letteratura, ciò che si apprende a scuola, non è il voto bensì un insieme di conoscenze e competenze che se coltivate possono permettergli di vivere consapevolmente e far le scelte più adatte a loro soprattutto al di fuori della scuola. Creare una certa solidità e consapevolezza della persona.”

PRZ: “me sembra che sia proprio al giorno d'oggi che i ragazzi si trovino davanti ad un'offerta formativa universitaria vasta e di esperienze da fare. Spesso capita che i ragazzi trovino lavoro al di fuori dell'ambito di studio. Quindi, da questo punto di vista, il fatto di creare una solidità della persona dovrebbe essere qualcosa su cui dovremmo puntare. I ragazzi dovrebbero percepirla. Bisogna trovare la maniera di far loro percepire che non sono tanto le conoscenze che noi forniamo ad essere importanti, tanto la complessità della persona. Per questo sarebbe utile portare loro esempi di persone che si sono realizzate in un ambito diverso rispetto al percorso di studi, ma su cui le influenze scolastiche hanno avuto esito

positivo. Sarà che la matematica ha una spendibilità immediata, ma non insisto mai su questo aspetto.”

Io: “secondo me invece ne hanno proprio bisogno. Quello che ho notato è che, come per la letteratura hanno bisogno di collocare un testo in un contesto storico, a livello di meta competenze, gli alunni hanno bisogno di collocare quell’insegnamento, quella nozione, all’interno del loro progetto. Sarebbe dunque utile ragionare sul perché si facciano determinate attività e determinati argomenti e che direzione si sta seguendo. Quando gli alunni sanno dove stanno andando, che obiettivi dovrebbero raggiungere e che tutto fa parte di un unico cammino, riescono a spendere meglio le loro energie, capire meglio e quindi ad essere più motivati. Questo è ciò che ho notato nelle attività proposte, nel mio piccolo.”

QUESTIONARIO SUL RUOLO DELLA LETTERATURA
INDAGINE SULL'IDEA DELLO STUDENTE CHE SI INTERFACCIA PER LA PRIMA
VOLTA CON LO STUDIO DELLA LETTERATURA INGLESE

Con questo breve questionario intendo analizzare la vostra opinione riguardo al ruolo della letteratura nel vostro percorso scolastico e nella vostra vita. Quello che segue è un breve elenco di domande a cui vi chiedo di rispondere con onestà e tranquillità. Alla presente attività non seguirà un voto, non esistono risposte giuste o sbagliate. Sentitevi liberi di scrivere tutto ciò che vi passa per la mente. Grazie.

1. Cos'è la letteratura per te?

2. Di che parla la letteratura?

3. Secondo te, come ha influito la letteratura nello sviluppo della società e nella diffusione delle idee?

4. Secondo te la letteratura è considerabile una materia utile nel tuo percorso di studi e nel progetto di vita?

5. Perché viene insegnata la letteratura?

6. Leggi? Quanto leggi? se lo fai, ti piace leggere?

7. C'è una tematica che ti piacerebbe sviluppare a scuola?

ISTRUZIONI:

Nel questionario che segue troverete delle domande a cui vi chiediamo gentilmente di rispondere seguendo la legenda. Ti chiediamo di esser sincero e di non aver nessun tipo di remora in quanto tal questionario è finalizzato a stimolare la tua motivazione.

Legenda:

0 = No o Per niente

1 = Un po'

2 = Abbastanza

3 = Molto

1. Quanto è utile lo studio della letteratura nel mio progetto di vita? 0 1 2 3
2. Quanto ti senti interessato alla materia di studio? 0 1 2 3
3. Le scorse lezioni hanno influito sulla mia idea di letteratura? 0 1 2 3
4. Quanto sono stati utili ed interessanti gli argomenti trattati? 0 1 2 3
5. Quanto mi sono stati utili i materiali didattici forniti dai docenti? 0 1 2 3
6. Quanto credi sia importante la motivazione nello studio? 0 1 2 3
7. Quanto pensi sia coinvolgente il clima in classe? 0 1 2 3
8. Quanto pensi sia migliorabile tale clima? 0 1 2 3
9. Quanto è importante l'impegno nello studio? 0 1 2 3
10. Quanto reputo importante ciò che sto studiando? 0 1 2 3
11. Quanto mi serve lo studio per capire come funziona il mondo e la realtà? 0 1 2 3
12. Quanto credi sia importante il piacere di apprendere nel tuo cammino di studi? 0 1 2 3
13. Quanti influisce il voto nella mia motivazione allo studio? 0 1 2 3
14. Quanto credi sia importante che il programma di studi rifletta gli interessi dello studente?
0 1 2 3

15. Segnala qui come ti piacerebbe siano affrontati gli argomenti (power-point, film, schede riassuntive ecc.)

ANNEX D

ISTRUZIONI:

Nel questionario che segue troverete delle domande a cui vi chiediamo gentilmente di rispondere seguendo la legenda. Ti chiediamo di esser sincero e di non aver nessun tipo di remora in quanto tal questionario è finalizzato a stimolare la tua motivazione.

<p>Legenda: 0 = No o Per niente 1 = Un po' 2 = Abbastanza 3 = Molto</p>
--

1. La tua idea e percezione della materia "Lingua e letteratura inglese è cambiata? 0 1 2 3
2. Quanto credi che le attività proposte abbiano influito sulla motivazione? 0 1 2 3
3. Hai trovato che le attività proposte fossero utili? 0 1 2 3
4. Sei riuscito a far emergere una tua qualità/interesse? 0 1 2 3
5. Quanto ti sei impegnato per eseguire le consegne date dai docenti? 0 1 2 3
6. Hai fatto progressi nello studio della disciplina "Inglese"? 0 1 2 3
7. Quanto ti senti a tuo agio in classe? 0 1 2 3
8. Sei diventato più partecipe? 0 1 2 3
9. Quanto ti sei sentito motivato? 0 1 2 3
10. C'è un argomento che ti piacerebbe sviluppare l'anno prossimo?

.....
.....

ISTRUZIONI:

Nel questionario che segue troverete delle domande a cui vi chiediamo gentilmente di rispondere seguendo la legenda. Ti chiediamo di esser sincero e di non aver nessun tipo di remora in quanto tal questionario è finalizzato a stimolare la tua motivazione.

<p>Legenda: 0 = No o Per niente 1 = Un po' 2 = Abbastanza 3 = Molto</p>
--

1. Nell'ultimo questionario somministrato sono emersi dei problemi in materia di coesione di classe. Quanto credi che il lavoro di gruppo abbia contribuito a migliorare la poca coesione di classe? 0 1 2 3

2. Hai trovato l'attività stimolante? 0 1 2 3

3. Quanto ti sei impegnato per la buona riuscita del lavoro? 0 1 2 3

4. Che cosa ha impedito l'ottimale svolgimento dell'attività?

ASSENTEISMO / TIPOLOGIA DELL' ATTIVITA' / LIVELLO DI LINGUA /
CONOSCENZA CONTENUTI

5. Quanta importanza dai alla scuola nel tuo sviluppo come persona, nello sviluppo della tua mente e delle tue idee? 0 1 2 3

6. Quando studi, lo fai per piacere? 0 1 2 3

7. Quando studi, lo fai per dovere? 0 1 2 3

8. Quando studi lo fai per bisogno momentaneo (es. prendere un bel voto)? 0 1 2 3

9. Hai già progetti che riguardano il tuo progetto dopo la scuola superiore?

.....

10. Quanto credi sia importante lo studio della lingua e letteratura inglese (la letteratura oltre ad arricchire la tua cultura personale ti dà modo di usare la lingua migliorandola)? 0 1 2 3

11. Dall'inizio dell'anno hai fatto progressi in lingua e letteratura inglese? 0 1 2 3

Se nessuno o pochi, perché?

ANNEX F

QUESTIONARIO FINALE SUL RUOLO DELLA LETTERATURA

(INDAGINE SULL'IDEA DELLO STUDENTE CHE SI INTERFACCIA PER LA PRIMA VOLTA CON LO STUDIO DELLA LETTERATURA INGLESE)

Il seguente è l'ultimo questionario che vi somministriamo. Come potrete notare è speculare al primo. Il suo scopo è quello di vedere se e come le attività proposte in questo breve periodo siano riuscite a stimolare la tua motivazione, in parte, a modificare il tuo parere riguardo questa materia. Ti ringraziamo per la collaborazione.

1. Cos'è la letteratura per te?

2. Di che parla la letteratura?

3. Secondo te, come ha influito la letteratura nello sviluppo della società e nella diffusione delle idee?

4. Secondo te la letteratura è considerabile una materia utile nel tuo percorso di studi e nel progetto di vita?

5. Perché viene insegnata la letteratura?

6. Leggi? Quanto leggi? se lo fai, ti piace leggere?

7. C'è una tematica che ti piacerebbe sviluppare a scuola?

8. La tua idea e percezione della materia Lingua e Letteratura Inglese è cambiata? 0 1 2 3

9. Quanto credi che le attività proposte abbiano influito sulla tua motivazione? 0 1 2 3

10. Hai trovato che le attività proposte fossero utili? 0 1 2 3

11. Sei riuscito a far emergere una tua qualità/interesse (nei lavori di gruppo vi veniva chiesto di scegliere un argomento ed espanderlo secondo le vostre personali inclinazioni)? 0 1 2 3

12. Quanto ti sei impegnato per eseguire le consegne date dai docenti (lavori di gruppo, verifiche, partecipazione alle lezioni di ripasso con interventi)? 0 1 2 3

13. Hai fatto progressi nello studio della materia Inglese? 0 1 2 3

14. Quanto ti senti a tuo agio in classe? 0 1 2 3

15. La tua partecipazione alle lezioni è cambiata (sei diventato più partecipe)? 0 1 2 3

16. Quanto ti sei sentito motivato? 0 1 2 3

17. C'è un argomento che ti piacerebbe sviluppare l'anno prossimo? Per favore rispondano anche coloro che hanno intenzione di cambiare scuola.

References

- Baglione, A. (2001). Letteratura e Processi Formativi. In D. Medici, *Che Cosa fare della Letteratura?* (pp. 53-58). Milan: FrancoAngeli.
- Balboni, P. E. (2004). *Educazione Letteraria e Nuove Tecnologie*. Turin: UTET Università.
- Balboni, P. E. (2008). *Imparare le Lingue Straniere*. Venice: Marsilio.
- Balboni, P. E. (2013). *Le Sfide di Babele*. Turin: UTET Università.
- Balboni, P. E. (2014). *Fare Educazione Linguistica*. Turin: UTET Università.
- Balboni, P. E., Coonan, C., Antonelli, A., Bertin, B., & Fiornini, A. (2003). *Discovering Literature. History and themes in English Literature*. Florence: Valmartina.
- Boncinelli, E. (2015). *Noi siamo Cultura. Perché sapere ci rende liberi*. Milan: Rizzoli.
- Cadamuro, A. (2004). *Stili Cognitivi e Stili di Apprendimento*. Rome: Carrocci.
- Caon, F. (2006). *Pleasure in Language Learning. A Methodological Challenge*. Perugia: Guerra Edizioni.
- Caon, F. (2008). *Educazione Linguistica e Differenziazione*. Turin: UTET.
- Caon, F. (2008). *Educazione Linguistica e Differenziazione. Gestire Eccellenza e Difficoltà*. Novara: UTET Università.
- Ceserani, R. (2001). Che cosa fare della letteratura nell'epoca della globalizzazione. In D. Medici, *Che cosa fare della letteratura* (p. 13-19). Milan: FrancoAngeli.
- Cornoldi, C., & De Beni, R. (1993). *Imparare a studiare*. Trento: Erikson.
- Crystal, D. (2012). *English as a Global Language*. Croydon: Cambridge University Press.
- Dolci, R. (2007). Glottodidattica, costruttivismo e tecnologie. In G. Serragiotto, *Le lingue straniere nella scuola: nuovi percorsi, nuovi ambienti, nuovi docenti* (p. 83-104). Novara: Utet Università.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Skehan, P. (2003). Individual Differences in Second Language Learning. In C. J. Doughty, & L. M. H., *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 589-630). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Eagleton, T. (1996). *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. . Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Eco, U. (2002). *Sulla Letteratura*. Milan: Bompiani.
- Freddi, G. (1994). *Glottodidattica. Fondamenti, metodi e tecniche*. Turin: UTET Libreria.
- Freddi, G. (2003). *La letteratura. Natura e Insegnamento*. Milan: Ghisetti e Corvi.
- Gardner, H. (2011). *Frames of Mind: The Theory of the Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gass, S. M. (2003). Input and Integration. In C. J. Doughty, & M. H. Long, *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 224-255). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

- Guido, N. (2004). La Politica Europea per le lingue e lo sviluppo di progetti formativi. In G. Serragiotto, & G. Serragiotto (Ed.), *Le lingue straniere nella scuola. Nuovi percorsi, nuovi ambienti, nuovi docenti.* (pp. 203-231). Turin: Utet Università.
- Hyltenstam, K., & Abrahamsson, N. (2012). Maturational Constraints in SLS. In C. Doughty, & M. H. Long, *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (p. 539-589). Singapore: Blackwell Publishing.
- Iser, W. (1974). *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett.* Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press.
- Iser, W. (1978). *The Act of Reading: A theory of Aesthetic Response.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lavoie, R. (2007). *The Motivation Breakthrough: 6 Secrets to Turning On the Tuned-Out Child.* London: Simon & Schuster.
- Mariani, A. M. (2006). *La scuola può fare molto ma non può fare tutto.* Turin: SEI FRONTIERE.
- Mariani, L. (2008). *La Motivazione a Scuola. Prospettive teoriche e interventi strategici.* Rome: Carocci Faber.
- Mill, J. S. (1989). *Autobiography.* London: Penguin Books.
- Palmisciano, R. (2001). La Didattica della Letteratura come Educazione Democratica dei Sentimenti. In D. Medici, *Che cosa fare della letteratura? La trasmissione del sapere letterario nella scuola* (Prima edizione ed., pp. 59-63). Milan: FrancoAngeli.
- Primon, M. (2007). Il Profilo Professionale dell'Insegnante di Lingua Straniera. In G. Serragiotto, *Le Lingue Straniere nella Scuola. Nuovi percorsi, nuovi ambienti, nuovi docenti* (pp. 139-145). Turin: Utet Università.
- Rorty, R. (2001). Redemption from Egotism: James and Proust as Spiritual Exercises. *Telos* 3, no. 3, 243-63.
- Rorty, R. (2010). Redemption from egotism: James and Proust as spiritual exercises. In R. Rorty, *The Rorty Reader* (p. 389-391). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Serragiotto, G. (2007). Nuovi Ambienti di Apprendimento. In G. Serragiotto, *Le Lingue Straniere nella Scuola. Nuovi percorsi, nuovi ambienti, nuovi docenti* (p. 3-7). Turin: Utet Università.
- Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (Fifth Edition ed.). (2002). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stagi Scarpa, M. (2005). *Insegnare Letteratura in Lingua Straniera.* Rome: Carocci Faber.
- Todorov, T. (2007). *La Littérature en péril.* Barcelone: Novoprint.
- Warner, M. (1993). *Indigo or, Mapping the Waters.* London: Vintage.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1975). *Stylistic and the Teaching of Literature.* London: Longman.

Sitography

Education and Training. Supporting Education and Training in Europe and beyond.. [Online]
Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/llp_en.htm
[Accessed 6th December 2015].

White Papers. [Online]
Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/white-papers/index_en.htm
[Accessed 6 December 2015].

EUR-lex. Access to European Union law. [Online]
Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/?uri=uriserv:c11040>
[Accessed 6 December 2015].