

**Erasmus + Azione KA1 “Una scuola per tutti, una scuola europea: un percorso verso l'inclusione e interculturalità” (codice attività 2017-1-IT02-KA101-035782).**

## **“Designing Inclusive Educational Environments”**

**Barcelona, Spain**

**October 22<sup>nd</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

In June 2016, I had been selected to attend a Teacher Training Course on Inclusive Educational Environments under the Erasmus + KA1 program to be held on October 2018 in Barcelona, Spain.

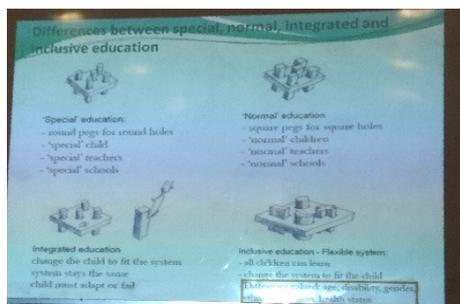
In order to respond to the request of dissemination after the course, I hereby will try to resume the main topics of the course, the character of the interaction among all the participants and the course trainer and last, but not least, some information about my staying in Barcelona, hopefully giving a taste of the mood of the whole experience I had.

I arrived in Barcelona on October 21<sup>st</sup>, in the early afternoon, as planned by the organizing agency. My hotel was just in front of the school where the course was held, in the barrio Sants, very close to the Sants Barcelona train station.

The day after, the course started, at Barcino School. We were 11 participants, coming from different countries: 4 from Serbia, 2 from Sweden then 1 from Germany, 1 from Bulgaria, 1 from Greece and 1 from Croatia and, obviously, me from Italy. We also came from schools of different grade of education. The trainer, coming from Greece, welcomed us very warmly and friendly, presenting the schedule of the following days.



*The school*



*Inclusive education in a slide.*

The scheduled topics ranged from defining inclusive education to addressing barriers to participation, learning and resources to support all students, from how respond to the increasing diversity in our classrooms to adaptation, accommodation and modification of the curricula, from effective teaching for all to designing differentiate lessons and activities, from authentic assessment to ICT tools to support all learners.

Actually, not all the topics have been addressed at the same degree of depth, since sometimes the useful discussion among the participants took precedence over the schedule. We shared experiences, opinions and even doubts and feelings about the specific proposed issue, in the spirit of the adopted methodology of the laboratory teaching. The trainer himself was thrilled in our way of working together.

Furthermore, we compared our school systems: laws, school facilities, teachers benefits and even salaries, in order to understand the strength of feeling that exists Europewide on the issue of inclusion and its related problems.

The main differences jumped immediately out between Sweden and all the other countries, especially in terms of the acknowledgement of the role of the teacher and in terms of the necessary school facilities to address the special needs of students. Among the other countries more similarities can be found, e.g. between Italy and Germany to some extent and also between Italy and Greece, even if some important differences could still be noticed. I was for example amazed by the fact that in Greece there is not the chance for teachers to choose from among several textbooks but there is just one choice, i.e. for each subject the textbook published by the State publisher, but it is given for free to students.

At the beginning I was astonished by the fact that, talking about inclusive classrooms, in Swedish public school system still exist differentiated classrooms even if for pupils with severe handicaps. The Swedish colleagues explained us that the government take care of the families of these students offering the chance to choose from among the option of differentiated classrooms in the framework of a public school system.

Concerning classrooms with special educational needs' students, co-teaching is the common practise in Sweden, while among other countries co-teaching experiences vary depending on the country.

Summarizing, it was very interesting and fruitful meeting colleagues from several countries and sharing with them opinions and ideas; we wished to keep in touch to develop some exchange programmes among our schools. Finally, it was also nice to have a sort of "certificate of attendance ceremony" at the end of the course!



*Certificate of attendance ceremony.*

Coming to spare time, in addition to the scheduled sightseeing tour of Barcelona, we spent one late afternoon in the old barrio Gracia, the most independent and bohemian barrio of the city, where you have the feeling of being in another town, in a small city inside the metropolis. You can breathe a different air due to its multicultural activities and vibrant squares, a place where people want to preserve traditions related to food and commerce in spite of the rampant globalization, promoting local production and local craftsmanship.

Led by an Italian guy who knows very well that area, we so had the chance to admire Casa Vicens, the first opera by Gaudì and to see other minor expressions of the Catalan Modernism movement.

The overall experience has been great and I warmly suggest to my colleagues to apply for future KA1 - Erasmus + programme and I hope I shall have further similar occasions also for myself.

**Stefania Miglio**