



‘Multicultural calendar and Recipe book’

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Section 1: Presentation

“If I listen I forget, if I see I remember, if I do I understand”

(Confucio)

Background

Food is culture, either when it is produced, when it is prepared and when it is consumed. It is a very strong identity factor and it is a vehicle for cultural exchanges. Every culture, every country is repository of its own “Diet” here understood as “*diaeta*” which means in latin “a way of living”.

Passed down from generation to generation, every food culture becomes a valuable piece of common cultural heritage, integrating a balanced combination of food based on fresh, local and seasonal products with the landscapes, techniques and social features that finally leads to a *dish*, different dishes across cultures, histories and lives. Food and meals so are not the same during time and they show to be an evolutionary, dynamic and vital tradition as culture is.

Because of this, many initiatives have been undertaken at different local, national and international level promoting food as a means of intercultural communication and understanding. The success of the intercultural laboratories, the cultural festivities of the school year, the various convivial occasions organized regularly in the school system have led to the awareness that the moment of the meal favours the commonality among the participants.

In the Northern Italy (province of Milan), following this trend, a network of schools developed a multicultural calendar in which typical dishes and the respective recipes are described in Italian and in other languages of the school community for each public holiday.

Learning multiculturalism by doing it is one of the most significant experiences that the practice of multicultural calendar and recipe book at school tends to achieve.

Description

Let's describe what the 'Multicultural calendar and recipe book' is about.

It is not only creating a book or papers where you can read when are main festivities in other countries or another national relevant event. It is not about reading on a recipe and maybe to know to prepare a 'Gambian' dish. The development of this good practice is based on active learning of the targets themselves (native and migrants' students, native and migrant parents, school staff) who are involved in several activities and take part of the creation and dissemination of each phase.

It is about learning by doing and doing by learning and it is a process that should be articulated in 4 main steps.

Step n°1: Mapping your multiculturality!

Community Mapping and Intercultural Dialogue: this first step is the occasion for the students of the school (either migrants and native students) to develop a collaborative practice through which beginning interacting, discovering their respective cultures. From one side, the tutor-teacher identify should in collaboration with the students all the nationalities that are present and represented in the school. To the other side, migrants' parents should be involved in the next activity with the aim to collect every relevant festivity or public event of their country of origin.

And this will contribute to the development of the Multicultural calendar. The other phase is to collect main representative dishes of the culture and country of origin of the migrant students in school, and in collaboration with their parents and to share also the main one from the native students.

Through exchange and discussion on the themes of culinary traditions and different cultural/national festivities, participants will be required to analyse their community knowledge through the local space and the various nationalities that inhabit it, looking at stereotypes and preconceived ideas and seeking to challenge them. Many schools where the % of migrant student is relevant, neither school leaders or other school staff have knowledge on the different nationalities present in their institute.

This is a first step to increase mutual cultural understanding through identification of the biographies and cultural specificities of each learner. This module is mainly focused on group-bonding through activities based on intercultural understanding. The participants had the chance to develop reciprocal knowledge about each other's habits and ways of living in the same city, develop awareness of different local realities.

Step n° 2: Learning on culinary traditions and cultural festivities

During this second phase, videos, workshops or other support explanatory activities are developed giving a 'practical' description and knowledge of what a national festivity consists of

(watching a video about that, describing its main components as typical music, dance and clothes) and how to prepare a typical dish and which are the main ingredients, the characteristic style of cooking and food preparation typically handed from generation to generation within, etc. Through this learning by doing activities also parents of both migrant and native students are warmly invited to participate taking part to the cooking workshop sharing their knowledge, their traditions and histories behind *food*.

Step n°3: Ideation of the 'Multicultural calendar and recipe book.

Now it is the moment to join the theoretical and practical experience gained in the first two steps and creating together the Multicultural calendar and recipe book!

A calendar will be created mapping during the school's years the festivities and main celebration of all cultures and nationalities of the school. It could be in an online format, including interactive audio-visual materials that gives more details on the origin of the festivity, typical music and habits occur on that occasion etc.

Then in each month, two or three proposals of traditional dishes are describing providing details on the country of origin, tips on its preparation and ingredients, 'operative' suggestion for its best preparation (gained also during the practical workshop, step n° 2).

*Step n° 4: How to create/celebrate a cultural event? **

Participants (either students, their parents and school support staff) are trained on how to create a cultural event. They used the competences acquired during the previous steps in order to plan, exchange ideas, distribute roles and responsibilities, and coordinate an event promoting culinary traditions and cultural events.

The modalities for organizing such event could be vary and according to the cultural calendar mapped and recipes described. It could be realized a festivity in a day that combine more than one festivity or celebrating the same festivity but in the modalities each country celebrates it; dishes related to the event could be prepared before or during it. Arts laboratories or classes, if existing, could contribute in creating the useful materials and resources for the realization of the cultural event.

This peculiar moment has the potentiality of promoting intercultural dialogue inside and outside school community and consolidating cultural identity based on cultural heritage preservation.

Finally, the role and responsibilities of the trainer is key to ensuring an effective delivery of all phases of the training and ensuring the course objectives and learning outcomes for participants are met.

*Note: the organization of a cultural event is optional than the realization of the Multicultural calendar and recipe book.

Section 2: Resources

To implement this good practice, you will need:

- A big room/space
- Computers/internet connection
- Audio-visual support materials (projector, speakers, printer)
- Coloured pencils and rolls of large paper
- Songs from the countries of origin
- Pictures from the countries of origin related to the festivity/dish
- Any typical ornaments or clothes related to an event
- Ingredients for the dish preparation
- Human resources (teachers, older migrant students as support staff, parents, other actors of the surrounding community as NGOs or cultural centres)

Section 3: Duration

This good practice could be implemented continuously for the entire school year. The first step could be developed once a week and could last a couple of months.

The 2° step “*Learning on culinary traditions and cultural festivities*” could be realized in afternoon laboratories once or twice a week, lasting for two or three months.

The elaboration of the multicultural calendar and recipe book could be a shorter activity, taking the advantage of what has been found out in the first step. The 4th step, is a single day event but for its preparation one month before could be necessary in order to prepare what is planned to be realized.

*Note: it is up to each school to decide how much time and space dedicate to each step’ development. Each activity (step) could last a minimum of one month until the half school year.

Section 4: Expected results

By implementing this good practice, you will:

- Transforming cultural and language barriers with creative processes and nonformal learning converting challenges and differences into new forms of expression
 - Creating a contact network to the inclusion of migrants with different nationalities
 - Develop the intercultural and intergenerational dialogue between the two target groups
 - Enhancing the transmission of non-tangible heritage and habits
 - Stimulate the learning of the host country language and culture as a process of social integration
 - Deepen the migrants’ sense of belonging
 - Interpersonal and Civic Competence and Cultural expression of all students
 - Enhancing (migrant and native) parents’ involvement at school and community level
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- Support the families in their process of social integration in the surrounding community

- Developing multicultural sensitivity among the whole school community members (students, teachers, parents/carers);
- Full participation in the co-creation of the multicultural and social inclusion activities;
- Promoting intercultural understanding and integration at local level
- Co-elaboration of the activities to be developed
- Cultural promotional activities
- Development of collaborative and inclusive methodologies

Section 5: Evaluation

How can we adapt this good practice to our context?

Here, trainees should reflect on the above question, having into consideration their real needs and technical and human resources available. This section aims to develop critical thinking and to adjust the good practice to each particular educative context. Whether this is proposed on the face-to-face sessions or virtually at home (after watching the MOOC videos, where all the previous information should be available), trainees should write a small reflection, considering what is doable and positive and what is not. Trainers can provide a set of orientations to help them do this (What competences should the professionals have? Do we have the space needed? How can we include this good practice in the school plan of activities? Etc...)