

Openness to Linguistic and Value Diversity as a Key Factor in the Development of a Learning Community

Authors : Caterina Calicchio, Talia Sbardella

Abstract : The ability to move through geographical and symbolic spaces is key for building new nodes and social relationships. Especially in the framework of language learning, accepting and valuing diversity can help to create a constructive atmosphere of cooperation, innovation, and creativity. Thus, it is important to outline the stages of forming a learning community, focusing on the characteristics that can favor its development. It is known that elements like curiosity and motivation are significant for individual language learning; hence, the study attempts to investigate how factors like openness to diversity and cultural immersion could improve Italian learning and teaching. This paper aims to indicate the factors that could be significant for the development of a Learning Community by presenting a case study on a course on Italian as a second language for beginners: first, the theoretical matrices underlying social learning will be outlined. Secondly, a quantitative study will be described based on an adaptation of the openness to diversity and some insights psychometric scale questionnaire developed at the Umbra Institute. The questionnaire was delivered to 52 American college students with open-ended and closed-ended questions. Students were asked to specify their level of agreement to a set of statements on a six-point Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly disagree to (6) Strongly agree. The data has been analyzed with a quantitative and qualitative method and has been represented in a pie chart and in a histogram. Moreover, mean and frequency have been calculated. The research findings demonstrate that openness to diversity and challenge enhances cross-cutting skills such as intercultural and communicative competence: through cultural immersion and the facility of speaking with locals, the participants have been able to develop their own Italian L2 language community. The goal is to share with the scientific community some insights to trace possible future lines of research.

Keywords : Italian as second language, language learning, learning community, openness to diversity

Conference Title : ICLLL 2023 : International Conference on Languages, Literature and Linguistics

Conference Location : Rome, Italy

Conference Dates : April 13-14, 2023