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PRIMARY ENGLISH TEACHERS' PRACTICE ANALYSIS & LANGUAGE SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES (PET-PA & PET-LSE): eTWINNING STRATEGIES FOR SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL SELF-/HETERO-ASSESSMENT

CUESTIONARIOS DE ANÁLISIS Y AUTOEVALUACIÓN LINGÜÍSTICA PARA MAESTROS DE EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA (PET-PA & PET-LSE): ESTRATEGIAS eTWINNING PARA LA AUTOEVALUACIÓN/HETEROEVALUACIÓN PROFESIONAL DE DOCENTES DE SEGUNDA LENGUA/LENGUA EXTRANJERA

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Abstract:

The Initial Teacher Education (ITE) ongoing project, entitled *Teachers' self/peer evaluation: PET-PA and PET-LSE. Strategies meet self-analysis and expectations*, involving UniRoma3 and Enna Kore is seeking to promote the reflection of fifth-year Primary Education student-teachers in the two universities on their professional competencies as L2/FL/English language teachers, almost all of them Italian native speakers. After introducing the general outlines of the piloting, the two groups were administered two professional self- and hetero-assessment questionnaires regarding the linguistic and strategic competencies that an L2/FL teacher uses. Participants were then asked to evaluate the proposed instruments so as to arrive at a validation that would allow their usability to be extended as open access to pre- and in-service teachers. The use of English in the questionnaires' completion and in the following discussion on the outcomes is a further strength of the project, which includes a comparison with different teaching strategies and approaches such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), task-based learning or cooperative learning, which are replicable in teaching and useful for professional development, in the perspective of sustainability and lifelong learning.

Keywords: Initial Teacher Education (ITE); strategic competences; second/foreign language teaching.

Resumen:

El proyecto eTwinning para Formación Inicial Docente, Initial Teacher Education (ITE), titulado en el idioma original *Teachers' self/peer evaluation: PET-PA and PET-LSE. Strategies meet self-analysis and expectations*, actualmente en curso, promueve la reflexión sobre las competencias profesionales de futuros docentes de segunda lengua extranjera (inglés). Los participantes son estudiantes de quinto curso del grado en Educación Primaria de las universidades UniRoma3 y Enna Kore, casi todos hablantes nativos de italiano. Tras presentar las líneas generales del pilotaje, se administraron a los dos grupos dos cuestionarios de autoevaluación y heteroevaluación profesional sobre las competencias lingüísticas y estratégicas que utiliza un profesor de lengua segunda/lengua extranjera; a continuación, se les pidió que evaluaran los instrumentos propuestos para llegar a una validación que permitiera extender su uso como acceso abierto a docentes en formación y en ejercicio. El uso del inglés en la cumplimentación de los cuestionarios y en el debate posterior sobre los resultados es otro punto fuerte del proyecto, que incluye una comparación con diferentes estrategias y enfoques de enseñanza como el enfoque AICLE, el aprendizaje basado en tareas o el aprendizaje cooperativo, que son replicables en la enseñanza y útiles para el desarrollo profesional, desde la perspectiva de la sostenibilidad y el aprendizaje permanente.

Palabras clave: Formación inicial docente (ITE); competencias estratégicas; enseñanza de segunda lengua/lengua extranjera.

“Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 38)

1. Introduction

The domain of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) encompasses a diverse array of stakeholders and participants, constituting a critical nexus in the educational fabric. The primary actors within this framework are pre-service and in-service teachers, spanning the educational spectrum from pre-school to primary and secondary school levels (Tosi, 2023). The involvement of educators is pivotal, representing a continuum of expertise and experience crucial for shaping the pedagogical landscape. Moreover, internal resources, including teachers, support staff, and administration personnel, play a fundamental role in fostering an environment conducive to effective teacher education. The imperative for engaging in ITE is underscored by the recognition of education and training as not only a societal responsibility but also a scientific and strategic mission, with a primary objective in broadening and enriching both the professional and personal skills of educators, positioning them as dynamic contributors to the socio-educational milieu (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015). Central to this mission is the cultivation of transferable skills such as language proficiency, computer literacy, interpersonal adeptness, strategic planning, negotiation acumen, creativity, team-working efficacy, and heightened awareness (Council of Europe, 2006). The conceptualization of customised learning pathways within ITE further emphasizes the development of key competences in multicultural and inclusive contexts, recognizing the importance of preparing educators to navigate the complexities of diverse educational landscapes. This holistic approach to ITE envisions a multifaceted evolution, wherein teachers not only acquire pedagogical expertise but also emerge as adaptable, self-motivated, and self-efficacious professionals poised to meet the evolving demands of contemporary education.

This paper delves into the rationale and outcomes associated with the implementation of potential strategies designed to heighten the awareness of (trainee) teachers regarding their professional role as Foreign Language (FL)/Second Language (L2) instructors. It also emphasizes the competencies essential for effective performance, proposing a toolkit for lifelong learning within the framework of an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) eTwinning project: *Teachers' self/peer evaluation: PET-PA and PET-LSE. Strategies meet self-analysis and expectations*.¹ To achieve this, two questionnaires, namely PET-PA (Primary English Teachers-Practice Analysis) and PET-LSE (Primary English Teachers-Language Self-Evaluation), have been specifically crafted and administered to two distinct groups of non-native English-speaking trainee teachers—one at Roma Tre University and the other at Enna Kore University, Italy. University's guidelines for ethical approval have been consulted, and all ethical issues and implications concerning the use of the questionnaires have been considered; ethical approval need not be sought, all participants responded providing an informed consensus, their data being anonymised.

1.1 Goals of the project

eTwinning is the largest European community of practice, “made up of thousands of teachers and educators who share a vision of inclusive schools, using information and communication technology in a meaningful way, and making the most of 21st-century skills” (European School Education Platform, 2023a). Active since 2005 within the European eLearning program and part of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027, eTwinning is part of the European School Education Platform (ESEP); it engages teachers by getting them to get to know each other and collaborate in a simple, fast and secure way, using the potential of online technologies. The Mission of eTwinning is “to bring about an improvement in the educational offer of European school systems through internationalisation and innovation of teaching and learning models, to foster an openness to the community dimension of education and the creation of a shared feeling of European citizenship in the new generations” (INDIRE, 2023).

eTwinning involves initial teacher education (ITE) as a strategy to expand its reach and engage future teacher; its contribution in initial teacher education has the following benefits:

- discovering and implementing project teaching and multidisciplinary work,
- developing ICT and language skills,
- European, international, and intercultural experiences,
- developing professional skills (project management, setting goals, planning, teamwork),
- reflecting on professional practices; exchanges with teachers from other education systems (European School Education Platform, 2023b).

The implementation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and eTwinning into Academic education is driven by two primary dimensions: active practice and research-action. These dimensions are integral to assisting teachers in the strategic planning, creation, implementation, and management of active, participatory, and authentic intercultural learning experiences, aiming to cultivate and nurture aspects such as identity, autonomy, inter-relationship, professional and linguistic competence, and responsible citizenship among educators. A pivotal objective is the construction of properly organized settings, as delineated by Calvani (2002), capable of imparting a profound sense of extended community, belonging, and active participation. This comprehensive approach seeks to realize shared goals, fostering an educational environment that transcends traditional boundaries and promotes a holistic and interconnected vision of teaching and learning.

¹ <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/it/etwinning/projects/teachers-selfpeer-evaluation-pet-pa-and-petlse-strategies-meet-self-analysis-0>

The *Teachers' self/peer evaluation* project has been designed with several objectives in mind: to improve language competencies, encompassing both communication skills (production and understanding) and the use of language in the classroom; to equip trainee teachers with methodological skills and examples on effectively involving their own pupils in intercultural projects through eLearning and distance learning; and to establish an approach to intercultural communicative language learning/teaching (as outlined by Liddicoat et al., 2003, and Newton et al., 2010) aimed at teaching culture, fostering linguistic abilities, and promoting intercultural communication.

In terms of innovation, the students' active involvement in the project was meant to develop identity, autonomy, interrelation, professional as well as linguistic competences, and responsible citizenship, through a specifically devised setting able to convey a sense of extended community, belonging and participation in achieving shared goals. The practice strategy relied on promoting reflection on experience through exploration, observation and comparison, to understand how teachers can work together, even at a distance, in planning, creating, implementing, and managing an active, participatory and *real* intercultural learning.

2. Key strategic competences and Smart Learning

The cultivation of key competences within the educational domain, as advocated by the Council of Europe's Recommendation dated 18th December 2006, underscores a comprehensive approach involving both educators and students (Council of Europe, 2006). This pedagogical paradigm places a significant emphasis on strategic competences, a domain wherein both teachers and pupils collectively contribute to the sharing, acquisition and assimilation of new skills. On the side of teachers/educators, didactic agency becomes a focal point, highlighting the pivotal role of strategic competences in guiding and shaping the learning trajectory. In this collaborative framework, the establishment of an environment conducive to the simultaneous acquisition of skills and knowledge emerges as paramount, aligning with the insights of Margottini and Rossi (2019) who advocate for a facilitative learning environment shaped by both teachers and students. The adoption of innovative pedagogical approaches, such as Foreign Language (FL) and Second Language (L2) education through learning by doing, project-based and task-based learning (in particular when gamification strategies are employed), becomes a shared endeavour, empowering both educators and learners with practical application and a holistic understanding of the subject matter. Additionally, the promotion of learning readiness, as expounded by Trinchero (2015, p. 54), becomes a collaborative effort, reflecting the need to cultivate a proactive mindset in both educators and learners, preparing them to engage with and assimilate knowledge effectively. This collaborative and symbiotic approach to key competences in education delineates a pedagogical landscape characterized by shared strategic competences, immersive learning environments co-created by both teachers and students, and a proactive stance towards learning readiness, collectively fostering a dynamic and enriched educational experience.

The paradigm of Smart Learning underscores the imperative for future teachers to systematically explore and engage with various domains essential for their professional development (Ley et al., 2023)². This multifaceted undertaking involves cultivating competences in learning to teach, embodying the ethos of lifelong learning. Methodology, strategy, and

² "Smart learning refers to learning in interactive, intelligent, and personalized environments with the support of cutting-edge digital technologies and services (e.g., virtual reality, learning analytics, multimodal technologies, and artificial intelligence)" (Lee et al. 2014). Smart learning can be realized through the adoption of diverse technologies, two typical examples of which are learning analytics and multimodal technologies." (Chen et al. 2021).

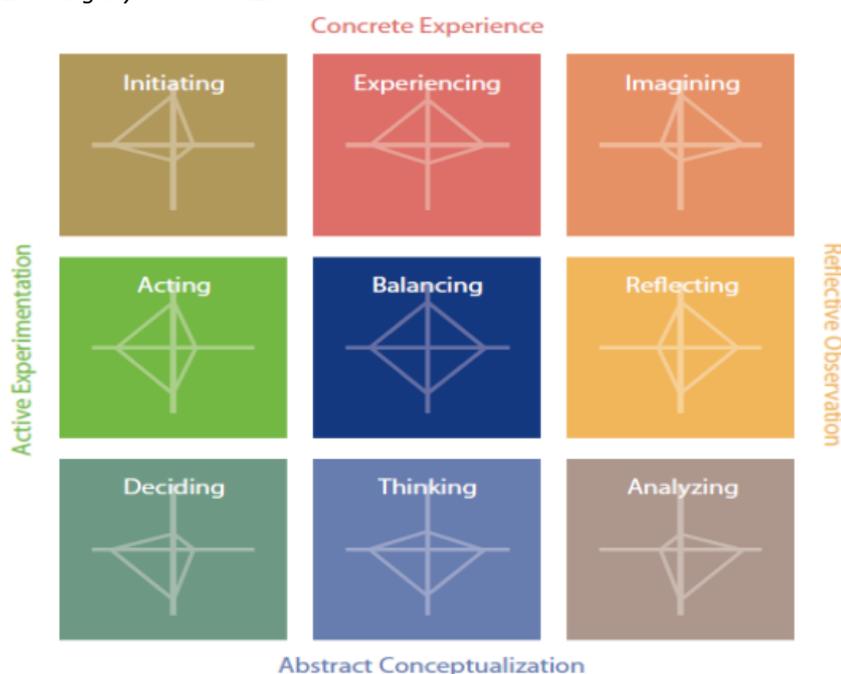
technology emerge as the three primary domains necessitating dedicated attention from educators. In this context, there is a pressing need to augment the linguistic and intercultural competences of aspiring teachers, aligning with the evolving global landscape of education (Gabbi et al., 2023). This involves providing methodological skills and concrete examples that equip educators with the tools to effectively engage and involve their students. International cooperation projects, both in-person and remote, become instrumental avenues for fostering these competences, offering real-world scenarios for application and collaboration (Tonner-Saunders & Shimi, 2022). As future teachers navigate the complexities of the educational landscape, the cultivation of expertise in these key areas not only enhances their professional prowess but also equips them to address the dynamic challenges inherent in contemporary educational contexts (Coker et al., 2023).

3. The reflective practitioner in the Italian context

Reflecting on practice stands as an indispensable dimension within the realm of any educational or training initiative in the field of learning professions. It involves elevating the significance of actions, assigning value to everyday behaviours, and ascribing precise meaning to each of these actions. The concept of the teacher as a "reflective practitioner", as introduced by Schon (1983), underscores the importance of thinking on the action while it is taking place. This reflective approach aims to cultivate a heightened awareness and effectiveness in operational models. By engaging in ongoing reflection, educators can refine their practices in real-time, leading to continuous improvement and enhanced pedagogical outcomes.

In this context, it is crucial to consider the learning process framework developed by Kolb (1984). Kolb's model emphasizes the cyclical nature of learning, involving four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This framework, often referred to as the experiential learning cycle, underscores the dynamic interplay between concrete experiences and reflective thinking, allowing practitioners to develop a comprehensive understanding of their actions (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
The Nine Learning Styles in the KLSI 4.0



Source: Kolb and Kolb (2011, p. 14)

Integrating Kolb's learning styles into the reflective process may enhance educators' ability to tailor their approaches to the diverse ways in which individuals engage with and internalize new information.

The role of the teacher as a reflective practitioner signifies a dynamic and self-aware approach to professional development and pedagogical engagement. Embracing this concept, educators engage in a continuous cycle of introspection, evaluation, and refinement of their teaching methodologies and practices. The reflective practitioner is attuned to the intricacies of the learning environment, seeking to understand the impact of instructional decisions on student outcomes. This approach involves a thoughtful consideration of experiences, both successful and challenging, with the aim of extracting meaningful insights that inform future actions. The reflective practitioner is not only receptive to feedback but actively seeks it, fostering a commitment to lifelong learning and professional growth. This introspective stance allows teachers to adapt to evolving educational contexts, refine instructional strategies, and contribute to the ongoing enhancement of the educational experience for both themselves and their students.

The concept of community underscores the importance of cultivating a sense of belonging and shared goals among educators and learners alike. Networks serve as vital conduits for communication and collaboration, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and best practices. Inclusion, integration, and interaction highlight the imperative of creating environments that embrace diversity and foster meaningful engagement.

The reference keywords encompass a comprehensive array of concepts intrinsic to the support, development, and synergy within educational frameworks. Institutional support and development are facilitated through both bottom-up and top-down approaches, involving various stakeholders such as teachers, schools, universities, INDIRE (Italian National Research Agency), USRs (Regional School Offices), and Ministries of Education in Europe. The synergy is fostered through peer-to-peer interactions, emphasizing collaborative learning and mutual support.

The trajectory of the Italian school system is evolving towards a more and more proactive integration within the broader European context, a trajectory underpinned by the guiding principles outlined in the *Indicazioni Nazionali* (National Guidelines) of 2012 and their subsequent revision in 2018³. This strategic alignment seeks to establish an educational and

³ "As an educating community, the school generates a widespread relational conviviality, interwoven with affective and emotional languages, and is also able to promote the sharing of those values that make members of society feel part of a real community. Schools combine the task of 'teaching to learn' with that of 'teaching to be'. The aim is to enhance the uniqueness and singularity of each student's cultural identity. [...] It is not enough to live together in society, but this same society must be continuously created together. [...] The education system must form citizens capable of consciously participating in the construction of broader and more composite collectivities, be they national, European or global." Furthermore, "[t]he specific task of the first cycle is to promote basic literacy through the acquisition of the languages and codes that make up the structure of our culture, in a horizon extended to other cultures with which we coexist and to the conscious use of new media. [...] Multilingual and intercultural education contributes to cultural and social literacy as a priority. Indeed, the mother tongue, the language of schooling and the European languages, as languages of education, help to promote the rights of the individual to the full development of his/her identity in contact with linguistic and cultural otherness. Multilingual and intercultural education represents a functional resource for the valorisation of diversity and the scholastic success of everyone and everyone and is a prerequisite for social inclusion and democratic participation." (*Indicazioni Nazionali*, 2012, pp. 24-25).

cultural path dedicated to the cultivation of conscious, participative, and realized European citizens. At the heart of this transformative journey is the recognition of the English language as a pivotal key element in education and training across formal, non-formal, and informal learning contexts⁴.

Central to this paradigm shift is the imperative to elevate awareness regarding teachers' professional competences at every stage and grade. The Indicazioni Nazionali provide a crucial framework for delineating the skills and knowledge essential for educators, facilitating a comprehensive approach to teacher development. Within this framework, teaching experimentation is positioned as a defining aspect of pedagogical practice, as initially characterized by the Decreti Delegati in 1974⁵. This concept emphasizes teaching autonomy, an expression of the constitutionally granted freedom in teaching as articulated in Article 33.

The educational and cultural path envisioned within the Indicazioni Nazionali seeks to empower educators to incorporate innovative teaching methodologies, with the English language assuming a central role. This dynamic incorporation of elements from the broader European context into the Italian school system, while emphasizing a positive and progressive approach to integration, envisions English language education not merely as a linguistic pursuit but as a vehicle for fostering intercultural competence and European citizenship. By embedding these principles at every stage and grade, the Italian school system aspires to cultivate a generation of students who are not only proficient in the English language but also imbued with a profound understanding of European values, collaborative spirit, and a sense of active citizenship within the broader European community.

Interculturality, interdisciplinarity, and internationalization, encompassed by an intercultural communicative language learning/teaching (Liddicoat et al. 2003; Newton et al. 2010) in a lifelong learning perspective are therefore key components in the educational landscape, signifying a commitment to global outlook, diverse approaches, and cross-cultural understanding. Innovation is a driving force, emphasizing the continuous pursuit of creative and effective solutions in teaching and learning. Such initiatives, both small and large-scale, reflect proactive efforts to instigate positive change and progress within educational frameworks.

4. Research and practice: PET-PA and PET-LSE. Strategies meet self-analysis and expectations

The overarching goal of teaching languages, particularly within the context of fostering active citizenship, is to educate and train individuals who emerge as conscious, involved, and reflective speakers capable of engaging in meaningful interactions characterized by mutual respect. This

⁴ The Italian education system is a reference for the key-competences for Lifelong Learning defined by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, Recommendation, 18th December 2006): Literacy competence; Multilingual competence; Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering; Digital competence; Personal, social and learning to learn competence; Citizenship competence; Entrepreneurship competence.

⁵ The delegated measures on education, also referred to as delegated decrees on education (Decreti Delegati), comprise a collection of six legislative acts promulgated in Italy between July 1973 and May 1974, which constituted the initial comprehensive unified text endeavouring to provide a substantive, organized, and cohesive implementation of the principles outlined in the Constitution of the Italian Republic concerning the Italian state education system (excluding universities). Though much of the legislation they established has undergone modifications through subsequent reforms - notably the introduction of school autonomy, which has streamlined and directly managed the operations of each individual educational institution - these measures remain in force to this day, having been incorporated into the Unified Text on Education (Legislative Decree 297/1994).

pedagogical objective underscores the transformative role of language education in cultivating not only linguistic proficiency but also a deep awareness of cultural nuances and a commitment to active participation in societal discourse. To achieve this goal, teachers need to be not only educators but also well-educated, continuously trained, and deeply aware of the cultural and social dimensions embedded in language. Moreover, teachers should be actively involved in the learning process, creating inclusive and engaging environments that foster students' linguistic development alongside their awareness, involvement, and reflective thinking, thereby shaping them into empowered and responsible citizens.

Addressing the challenge of preparing Italian students to become proficient English teachers necessitates a strategic and comprehensive approach. As researchers, we felt we needed to conceive an appropriate intervention to enhance their awareness of the personal, professional, linguistic, and didactic skills essential for the teaching profession. Reflection focused on some cross-cutting questions: Do they (really) know what level of English they possess? Do they (really) know what level of English they need for the job? Are they able to conduct an entire lesson in English or devise different ways to assess the English level of their pupils? What matters more in their teaching (and in their pupils' learning): formal correctness, grammar, pronunciation, communication...? What tools can they rely on? The priorities of these prospective teachers lie in developing a sound understanding of effective language instruction and cultivating pedagogical expertise; to help them sustain the challenge and promote continuous reflection, a multifaceted toolkit should be employed.

Within the Department of Education at Roma Tre University, the development of trainee-teacher activities has been strategically guided by two primary focuses: research and practice, aiming to help trainee teachers develop and retain comprehensive professional growth and competence. In terms of research, it seems strategically important to compare the educational paths, needs, and self-perception of our students with counterparts from diverse backgrounds, both within Italy and across Europe. A particular emphasis is placed on non-native English-speaking students who are engaged in learning to teach English as a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) to primary school children. This comparative approach serves to enrich the understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by trainee teachers in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, contributing to a more nuanced and globally informed pedagogical perspective. On the practical front, trainee teachers are actively engaged in learning to align their language skills and acquired theoretical knowledge with the standards they encounter when addressing various facets of teaching, including curriculum development, lesson planning and delivery, assessment strategies, and self-assessment.

This hands-on approach ensures that trainee teachers are well-equipped to meet the practical demands of the educational environment and bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and effective classroom application. By intertwining research and practice, trainee teacher trainers are committed to cultivating a cadre of reflective and skilled educators who are adept at navigating the complexities of the teaching profession within a diverse and dynamic educational landscape.

Firstly, efforts have been concentrated on integrating professional competence and agency within courses and laboratory settings. In particular, two self and peer-assessment questionnaires have purposely been developed and administered to 5th-year trainee teachers specialising on Primary School Education, embedding the implementation within an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) eTwinning project involving the university of Enna Kore⁶ PET-PA, Primary

⁶ The project envisions building upon the foundation laid by the *Teacher's Self-Perception Project* initiated by the Roma Tre Science of Education Department in collaboration with Salzburg Paedagogische Hochschule

English Teachers-Practice Analysis, and PET-LSE, Primary English Teachers – Language Self-Evaluation. Specifically developed on linguistic aspects and teaching content/techniques, and drawing from peer-coaching and TEP-Q⁷ instruments for self/other-oriented evaluation, such questionnaires not only trigger trainee teachers to critically evaluate their own performance but also promote collaborative reflection, enriching both the learning and teaching experience.

To foster the cultivation of strategic competences, trainee teachers were also invited to utilize specific questionnaires developed by Roma Tre researchers, available open-access at <https://www.competenzestrategiche.it/>. These resources provide a structured framework for evaluating and improving strategic competences, aligning with the central aim of equipping prospective educators to navigate the diverse challenges inherent in the educational landscape.

Digital competences were also taken into consideration, as major area of development for (trainee) teachers, acknowledging the transformative role of technology in contemporary education. Trainee teachers are encouraged to engage with tools and content through the European School Education Platform (ESEP) and the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp 2.2), which encompasses a broad set of digital competencies applicable to citizens in general that teachers might find valuable for preparing students for a wide range of digital challenges they may encounter beyond the classroom; reference to the Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu) is also recommended, especially for the practical perspective on the teaching practices it offers. This initiative aims to equip educators with the skills needed to effectively integrate technology into pedagogical practices, ensuring that they are well-versed in leveraging digital tools for enhanced teaching and learning experiences.

4.1 The project in action

The primary aim of the eTwinning project *Teachers' self/peer evaluation: PET-PA and PET-LSE. Strategies meet self-analysis and expectations* is to elevate the professional self-awareness of aspiring teachers, encompassing both optimal teaching practices and linguistic competencies and performance. The instruments employed include two self-reflection tools derived from the initial project, adapted and expanded to align with the current ITE eTwinning context. These instruments aim to encourage reflective thinking, prompting individuals to critically assess their language proficiency and teaching techniques, which are made subject to self-and peer evaluation, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. By utilizing structured self-assessment questionnaires, collaborative evaluation sessions, and mentorship opportunities, students have engaged in a reflective dialogue on their progress. Workshops and training modules focused on best teaching practices and language enhancement have been integrated

in 2015, later involving Timisoara West University's Teacher Training Department. The scope of this initiative is now extended and refocused on the eTwinning pilot project developed with Enna Kore, started in March 2023, and concluded in the piloting phase in December 2023.

⁷ The *Teachers' Educational Practices Questionnaire* (TEP-Q) is a self-report questionnaire comprising 36 items, developed to evaluate educational styles in kindergarten and primary schools. Initially, the questionnaire consisted of 60 items, derived from a literature review on school climate and classroom management. It delineates three dimensions of educational practices: Relationship, Communication, and Organization. The Relationship dimension, consisting of 8 items, delineates both explicit and implicit strategies employed by teachers to enhance pupils' social and emotional skills. Communication, encompassing 16 items, pertains to the teacher's adept utilization of verbal, nonverbal, and para-verbal communication during explanations, questions, and discussions. The Organization dimension, comprising 12 items, assesses the structuring of the classroom to facilitate optimal learning and teaching conditions. Teachers can rate each item on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (never) to 5 (always) (see Catalano et al., 2014, p. 460).

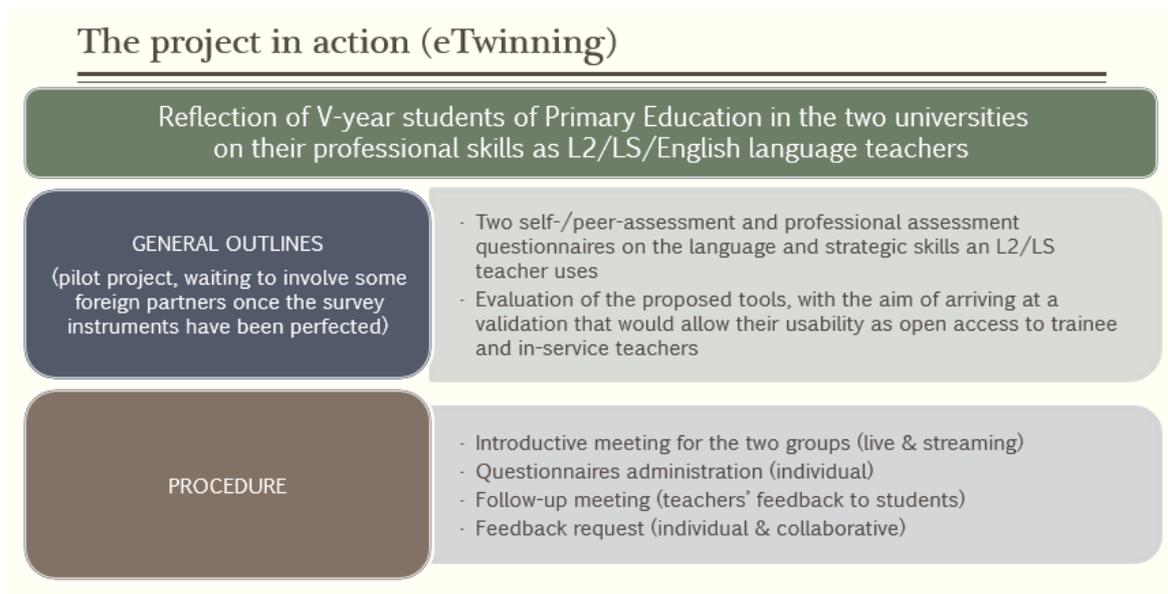
into the curriculum, allowing students to acquire practical skills and theoretical knowledge concurrently.

Student-teachers from the two partner universities have been requested to fill in the questionnaires at the given links, then to evaluate one of the questionnaires (the PET-PA) through an evaluation grid, provided after the questionnaires' completion. All responses have been anonymised, according to D. lgs. 196/2003 "Codice in materia di protezione dei dati personali"; the results have then been commented collaboratively, via online sessions involving the two groups, to share perceptions on both research and didactics.

The project's success is being measured not only by the enhancement of linguistic and pedagogical skills but also by the development of a reflective and self-aware teaching ethos among the participants, testified by their comments in the Padlet shared at the end of the activity. Through this comprehensive approach, the project endeavours to produce English teachers who are not only proficient in the language but also possess a deep understanding of effective teaching methodologies, thereby contributing positively to the landscape of English language education in Italy.

The structure of the project is summarised in Figure 2.

Figure 2
The project in action (eTwinning)



Fuente: Leproni et al. (2021)

The PET-LSE was administered to 579 5th year trainee teachers, 355 belonging to Roma Tre (61.3%), 224 to Enna Kore (38.7%); 554 of them (94%) were females and 33 (5.7%) males, 2 (0.3%) not wishing to specify. The majority of the respondents (55.3%) were aged between 18 and 24 (therefore in regular course), 179 (30.9%) ranging 25-35, only 10 (1.7%) over 46 years old. The 53.2% possessed only their High School degree, while the rest had already achieved an academic title, spanning from Bachelor (27.5%), to Master (16.1%), to PhD (3.3%). 76.9% of the respondents were pre-service teachers.

The PET-PA was administered to 597 5th year trainee teachers, 349 belonging to Roma Tre (58.5%), 248 to Enna Kore (41.5%); 558 respondents (93.5%) were females and 37 (6.2%) were males, 2 (0.3%) not wishing to specify. The 52.8% (315 respondents) possessed only their High School degree, 26.1% (156) had already achieved a Bachelor, 17.9% (107) had a Master, 3.2%

(19) had a PhD; 454 (76%) of the respondents were pre-service teachers, the rest were in-service teachers following the Primary Education courses to obtain a specialised degree. The 53.3% (318 respondents) used the questionnaire to observe their tutor's teaching practice, the 18.8% (112) observed some peer, while the 28% (167) applied the tool to self-observation. The observed teachers were mainly women (92.6%), equally divided into the four spans of age considered (18-24, 25-35, 36-45, 46-over), and among Kindergarten and all Primary school grades.

4.2 Structure of the questionnaires and rationale

The PET-LSE questionnaire comprises 15 questions, strategically sub-divided into multiple items, employing a diverse response format that combines Likert scales ("A lot", "Enough", "A little", "Not at all", "Do not know") complemented with an "Other – please specify" open option, binary choices (yes/no/other), and open-ended responses. The questions are designed to be clear, concise, and contextually relevant to elicit accurate and meaningful responses. Likert scales provide a continuum for participants to express the intensity of their agreement or disagreement. Binary choices (yes/no/other) offer a straightforward approach to specific queries, while open-ended responses permit participants to articulate more personal perspectives.

The PET-LSE questionnaire primarily focuses on two overarching dimensions: linguistic skills and extra-linguistic skills. Linguistic skills are analysed across the four abilities of language use (oral and written understanding and production), encompassing both teachers and pupils. Extra-linguistic skills are examined through the following lenses:

- **Cognitive and Meta-Cognitive Abilities:** This dimension explores the cognitive processes involved in language teaching and learning, along with the metacognitive strategies employed by both educators and learners.
- **Socio-Relational Abilities:** Understanding the social dynamics within the learning environment is essential. The questionnaire delves into how teachers and pupils navigate personal acquisition, social interactions and classroom learning experiences.
- **Affective/Emotional-Motivational Abilities:** Recognizing the role of emotions and motivation in language education, this dimension probes into the affective and motivational aspects influencing both teachers and pupils.

Drawing from established literature on language teaching assessment and self-evaluation, the questionnaire underwent iterative refinement to ensure its validity and reliability.

The PET-PA questionnaire, a comprehensive tool tailored for the evaluation of teaching practices. The questionnaire comprises 33 items, measured on a Likert scale ranging from 0 to 4 ("Never", "Occasionally", "Sometimes", "Often", "Always", allowing respondents to express the degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement), complemented by a single open-ended question to capture personal insights and perspectives not covered by the structured items; the structure is meant to offer a balanced approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The self- and other-oriented analysis centres on critical aspects of teaching practice, including the use of language, materials, didactic approaches, and the commitment to lifelong learning.

With a focus on self- and other-oriented analysis, the questionnaire probes into key dimensions such as teaching practices, language usage, materials utilization, didactic approaches, and the commitment to continuous professional development.

The following dimensions are central to the analytical framework:

- **Teaching Practice:** This dimension scrutinizes the methodologies and strategies employed by teachers in their instructional practices, aiming to uncover effective and innovative approaches.
- **Use of Language:** The questionnaire delves into how language is utilized in the teaching environment, including communication, instruction, and fostering language competency among students.
- **Materials:** The evaluation of materials involves an assessment of the resources and tools employed in teaching, with a focus on their relevance, appropriateness, and impact on learning outcomes.
- **Didactic Approaches:** This dimension explores the varied instructional methods and pedagogical techniques utilized by teachers, aiming to identify effective approaches that enhance the learning experience.
- **Life-long Learning:** The commitment to continuous professional development is a crucial aspect of effective teaching. The PET-PA questionnaire examines teachers' dedication to ongoing learning, including their engagement in professional development activities and their attitudes towards staying abreast of educational advancements.

4.3 Goals, aims and competences

The goals and aims of the project, as well as the competences the questionnaires mean to trigger, are meticulously aligned with fostering a reflective and proactive engagement with the teaching profession. The instruments are crafted to serve as catalysts for profound reflection on both profession and professionalism, prompting teachers to scrutinize their practices, values, and overarching goals. They function as tools to bridge thought into action, elucidating the conceptualization of the teaching profession and its core principles. Moreover, the questionnaires are instrumental in cultivating a sense of satisfaction in work performance by acknowledging accomplishments and strengths while concurrently highlighting areas for growth. Their overall aim is to instil a perpetual desire for professional development, emphasizing the need for continuous learning and improvement. The eTwinning involvement serves well the purpose of making (trainee) teachers feel their professional reflectiveness a meaningful, practical value, as well as an activity to be shared with peers, and repeated in time thus enhancing their lifelong learning perspective. It also makes manifest the importance of their professional awareness and development in fulfilling goals 4, 8, 10, 11 of the 2030 Agenda⁸, by fostering quality education, promoting economic growth, reducing inequalities, and contributing to sustainable and inclusive communities:

1. Goal 4: Quality Education

- *Expanding Access to Quality Education:* eTwinning allows trainee teachers to connect with educators and students from around the world. This global collaboration fosters diverse perspectives, enriching the learning experience and contributing to the overall quality of education.

⁸ Among the 17 Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Goal 4 aims to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, Goal 8 to “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”, Goal 10 to “Reduce inequality within and among countries”, Goal 11 to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>).

- *Enhancing Teaching Practices:* Through eTwinning, trainee teachers can share best practices, innovative teaching methods, and resources. This collaborative learning environment supports the professional development of teachers, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes.

2. Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

- *Promoting Innovation and Creativity:* eTwinning exposes trainee teachers to innovative teaching approaches and methodologies. This exposure not only enhances their teaching skills but also contributes to the development of a workforce that is adaptable and equipped with creative problem-solving abilities, aligning with the goal of fostering economic growth.
- *Building Global Competence:* Engaging in eTwinning projects helps trainee teachers develop global competence, an essential skill in an interconnected world. This competence can lead to increased employability as teachers equipped with international perspectives are better prepared to contribute to a globally competitive workforce.

3. Goal 10: Reduced Inequality

- *Cultural Exchange and Understanding:* eTwinning promotes cultural exchange and understanding among teachers and students from different backgrounds. By connecting trainee teachers with diverse educational environments, it contributes to breaking down stereotypes and reducing inequalities in education by fostering inclusivity and appreciation for cultural diversity.
- *Equal Access to Educational Resources:* Through collaborative projects, eTwinning facilitates the sharing of educational resources, narrowing the gap between different educational systems. This helps ensure that all trainee teachers, regardless of their geographical location, have access to a broader range of teaching materials and methodologies.

4. Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

- *Promoting Sustainable Education Practices:* eTwinning encourages the exchange of ideas and practices related to sustainable education. Trainee teachers engaged in eTwinning projects can incorporate sustainable development concepts into their teaching, contributing to the creation of environmentally conscious communities.
- *Community Engagement:* Through collaborative projects, trainee teachers can involve their local communities in global issues. This fosters a sense of responsibility for sustainable development at the community level, aligning with the broader objective of creating sustainable cities and communities.

It is important to underline that these questionnaires are not designed to assign a value to the teacher; instead, their purpose is to facilitate self-reflection and self-evaluation. By steering clear of judgment and evaluation, the focus remains on the individual's growth, encouraging an open and constructive examination of professional identity.

Teachers' professionalism is inherently intertwined with a profound sense of social responsibility, encapsulated by the concept of service; this service-oriented perspective underscores the ethical dimension of our profession, emphasizing the importance of fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment that goes beyond the transmission of knowledge. Within the complex realities of the educational landscapes they operate in, teachers draw upon

a rich tapestry of competences and skills which encompass not only subject-specific knowledge but also interpersonal, communication, adaptability, and cultural competency skills. They therefore need to be aware of their own potential and performance on three main axes of capabilities: technical-teaching competences, language competences, mediation skills and pro-social abilities. Practicing these abilities within a real project fosters their sense of efficacy and the importance they bestow on both their preparation and their performance.

Quality teachers make quality school. A Europe/world-oriented perspective in education underscores the significance of cultivating students' intercultural and language skills to prepare them for an increasingly interconnected global society. This viewpoint emphasizes the significance of nurturing an awareness of second/foreign language acquisition, recognizing its importance for both educators and students. Teachers, as facilitators and role models, play a pivotal role in this process, requiring comprehensive preparation at various levels: at the disciplinary level, teachers need to be well-versed in the subject matter, ensuring a deep understanding that goes beyond mere instruction to incorporate cultural nuances; methodological and didactic preparedness are also essential facets, requiring educators to employ effective teaching strategies that engage diverse learners and promote intercultural understanding. Additionally, language preparation is crucial, necessitating the ability to adapt and reformulate authentic materials in another language, as teachers must construct teaching units and classroom workshop activities that align with different objectives, texts, and methodologies, catering to the varied needs and backgrounds of their students.

4.4 How to respond, how to react

Pet-PA and Pet-LSE Questionnaires serve as awareness-triggering tools for foreign language teachers, facilitating the evaluation of one's own teaching methodologies and the identification of areas for improvement. The completion of these questionnaires demands intellectual honesty and an alignment of responses with one's true feelings. Any form of cheating in responses can be detrimental, impeding the acquisition of truthful feedback on the activities and strategies employed in classroom settings. Hence, it is crucial for teachers to approach the questionnaire with honesty, ensuring the reliability of the evaluation process.

Simultaneously, self-evaluation emerges as a metacognitive process, marked by a reflective detachment from instructional roles to scrutinize experiences as if observed from an external perspective. This introspective journey becomes particularly significant for recognizing the nuances of professional development, revealing individual strengths and weaknesses, and fostering a proactive approach to change. Self-evaluation, in this context, necessitates accepting judgments on actions rather than the intrinsic worth of the individual. The ability to contextualize one's performance, isolating it from personal teaching competence, becomes essential for embracing judgment as a dynamic and evolving concept. This discerning perspective serves as a catalyst for continuous improvement, guiding non-native language teachers toward pedagogical refinement and heightened effectiveness within the language learning environment.

4.5 Expectations, observation, and outcomes

Students/teachers have been encouraged to analyse their own teaching experience, justify their choices, rethink their teaching experience. At the same time, the questionnaires have been used for peer-observation, allowing to investigate a colleague's experience, and possibly helping to relate it to one's own activities. This kind of positive comparison triggers critical thinking, facilitates the implementation of cooperative learning and peer tutoring, and enhances both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

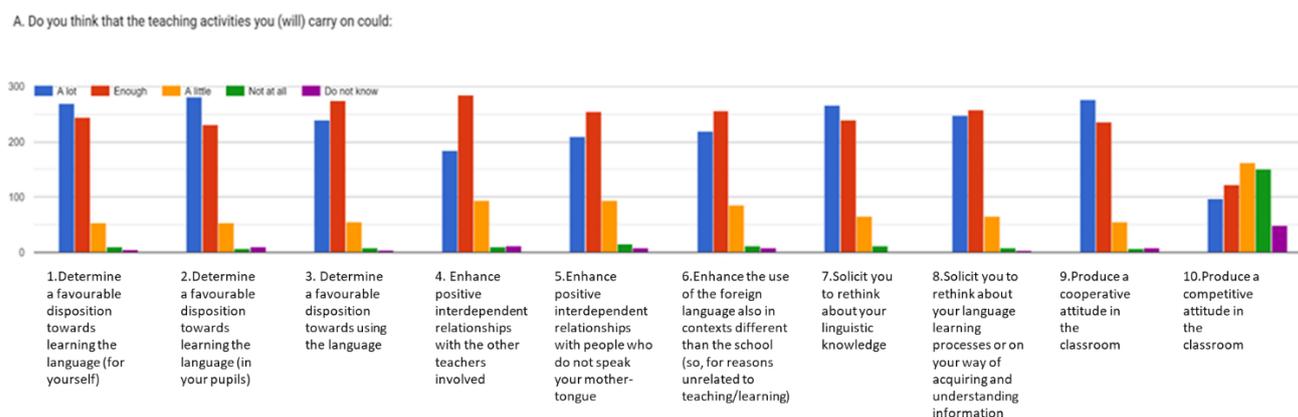
Engaging in the process of analysing one's teaching experience involves a reflective examination of one's instructional methods and decisions. Having to answer to a dataset of questions, (trainee) teachers are prompted to delve into the rationale behind their choices, fostering a deeper understanding of the pedagogical approaches employed. This introspective scrutiny, based on the principles of SWOT analysis, not only enhances their own teaching efficacy but also contributes to a culture of continuous improvement within the educational context.

Furthermore, the analysis extends beyond individual experiences to encompass those of colleagues. By comparing and contrasting these experiences with one's own instructional activities, educators initiate a process that stimulates a comparative reflection that provides valuable insights into diverse teaching methodologies and encourages the exploration of alternative approaches. Importantly, it serves as a catalyst for collaborative practices such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring, fostering the enrichment of the learning environment where teachers actively share insights and strategies, and boosting intrinsic motivation for both students and teachers. Additionally, the recognition and incorporation of effective teaching strategies from peers provide external motivation, creating a dynamic and synergistic atmosphere conducive to continuous growth and improvement in educational outcomes.

While the findings are currently undergoing analysis, initial data that has surfaced appear promising in relation to the perceived efficacy of the questionnaires.

As to the PET-LSE, in all the questions concerning the impact of one's teaching activities on the use of second/foreign language on the classroom as a whole, on the individual pupils, on the relationship with the other teachers, as well as on the same teacher's awareness of and ability to use the FL/L2 (Figure 3), the aggregate data of positive values in response ("A lot", "Enough") show results over the 75%.

Figure 3
Foreseen impact of one's teaching activities



The same occurs in all the questions concerning the possible impact of the teaching experience on the four main language-use abilities in both the same teacher and the pupils (reading, understanding, speaking, writing; questions C-L), where respondents also provided for a wide range of suggestions, included in the "Other" option (an average of 64 answer to each set of questions provided).

Concerning the abilities brought to the respondents' attention (questions M-N-O, Figures 4-5-6), all given alternatives were selected as "A lot" and "Enough" necessary to teach to a classroom, while the "Other" option showcases many declinations of "Awareness".

Figure 4
Cognitive and Meta-cognitive abilities

M. Which COGNITIVE and META-COGNITIVE abilities do you think are necessary to teach to a classroom?

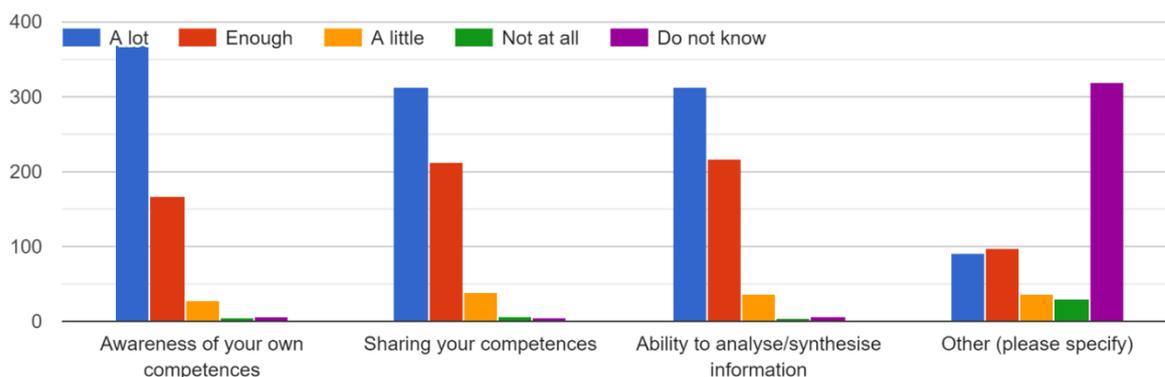


Figure 5
Socio-relational abilities

N. Which SOCIO-RELATIONAL abilities do you think are necessary to teach to a classroom?

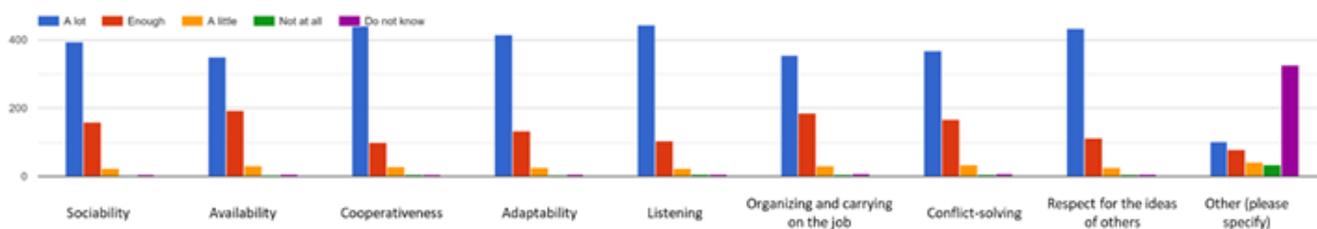
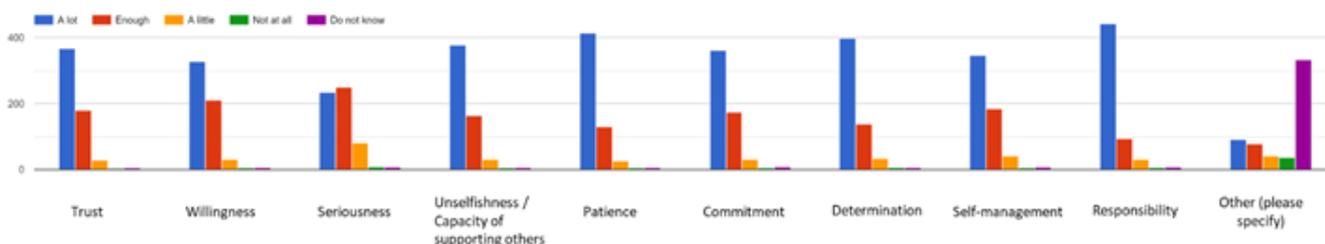


Figure 6
Affective/Emotional-Motivational abilities

O. Which AFFECTIVE/EMOTIONAL-MOTIVATIONAL abilities do you think are necessary to teach to a classroom?



Significant observations were offered at the end of the questionnaire, in response to the open-ended query seeking further comments (113 responses in total, 76 of which reporting “no further observations”, “-[no]”, “Nothing to add” and similar; 37 providing comments and advice). Notably, respondents provided diverse perspectives that added depth to their overall feedback. Some comments delved into technical aspects of the questionnaire itself, offering valuable insights for refining and perfecting the tool. For instance, some participants (5.41%)

shared observations about the clarity of specific questions, especially those related to "M-N-O," indicating an opportunity for improvement in questionnaire design.

In addition to technical feedback, a substantial number of responses expressed sincere appreciation for the questionnaire as an instrument (32.43% of the actual comments provided). Respondents found the questionnaire to be interesting and reflective, with one participant stating, "This test is very useful for reflecting on many aspects of teaching." Another respondent went further, emphasizing the impact of the questionnaire on their professional growth, stating, "This questionnaire has made me reflect on some points to which I had never given due attention. Very useful for my future career. It has been very clear and enlightening."

The feedback received not only highlights the effectiveness of the questionnaire in prompting self-reflection but also underlines the importance of continuous improvement in its structure to enhance user experience. Moreover, respondents emphasized the significance of addressing cultural diversity in teacher training, suggesting an avenue for incorporating this aspect into future teacher education programs.

The diverse range of comments showcases the richness of perspectives among trainee-teachers, offering valuable insights into their opinions, needs, and aspirations. It is evident that the questionnaire serves not only as an evaluative tool but also as a catalyst for thoughtful consideration of essential aspects of teaching. As we move forward, integrating the suggested improvements and aligning the questionnaire with the expressed needs of future educators can contribute significantly to its efficacy in shaping the development of proficient and culturally sensitive English teachers.

The questions proposed in the PET-PA, instead, aimed at investigating FL/L2 teaching/assessment strategies, approaches, behaviours and attitudes, as well as the use of English in the classroom, allowing answers on a 5-values Likert scale ("Never", "Occasionally", "Sometimes", "Often", "Always"). The data have not been fully processed yet; nevertheless, they provide a meaningful picture of both trainee-teachers perceptions and expectations, and the actual state of the FL/L2 teaching in the Primary school in the two Regions where the project was implemented in Italy.

Significantly, teachers seem to show interest in pupils' language requests/curiosities (Figure 7) as well as prone to stimulate the participation of all the pupils and their active use of the language (Figure 8).

Figure 7
The teacher shows interest in pupils' language requests/curiosities

The teacher shows interest in pupils' language requests/curiosities

592 risposte

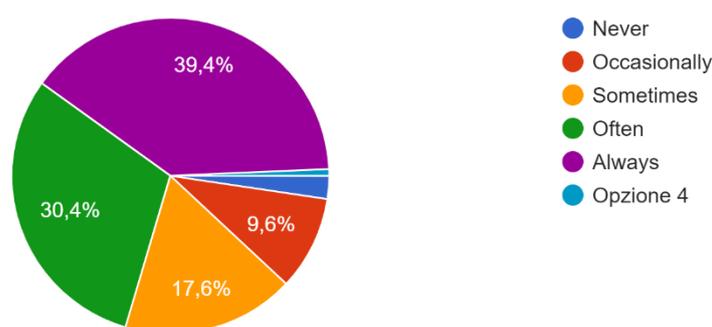
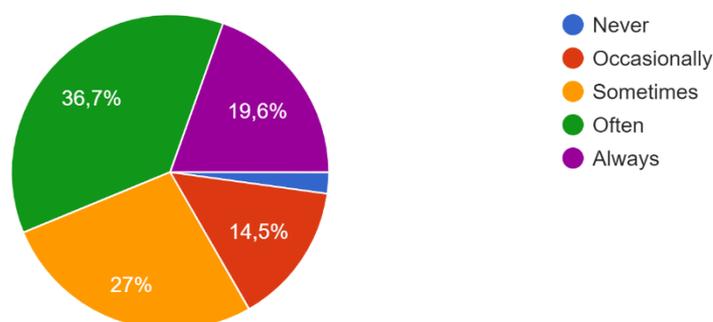


Figure 8

The teacher stimulates the participation of all the pupils and their active use of the language

The teacher stimulates the participation of all the pupils and their active use of the language
592 risposte



Some positive attitude of teachers, and commitment towards their job requirements, is reflected also in their participation to refresher courses, where the “Never” option scored 10.6%, while the aggregated data of “Always” and “Often” count 32.1%.

Notably, all respondents provided consistent comments to the open question (“Which strategies/features of the observed teacher would you adopt in your teaching? Why? (short answer, max. 500 characters) [in case of self-analysis, specify only about your reasons to adopt certain strategies]”); recurrent answers propose the use of technology, inter/multidisciplinary teaching, CLIL, Storytelling, task-based and project-based learning, engaging activities to trigger the pupils’ attention and boost their motivation - especially promoting real language-in-context and the use of authentic materials. Some respondents also stated they wouldn’t wish to use any of the strategies applied by their observed teacher, deeming them obsolete or non-coherent with the needs of the classroom.

The analysis of the data is still running. So far,

- Approximately 70% of respondents express a preference for interactive strategies such as circle time, cooperative learning, and group work.
- Around 30% of respondents express mixed views on the observed teacher's strategies, with some disapproving and others expressing a desire to adopt certain aspects.
- Approximately 40% of respondents express an interest in the CLIL methodology, seeing it as beneficial for both language learning and subject content.
- Roughly 25% of respondents emphasize the use of technology as a valuable component in language teaching.
- About 20% of respondents highlight the importance of focusing on pronunciation in language teaching.
- Around 65% of respondents express a preference for a student-centric approach, involving students directly in the learning process.
- Approximately 30% of respondents express a desire to use storytelling, role-playing, and activities that develop dialogue in children.
- About 45% of respondents stress the importance of promoting English through real-life tasks and experiences.
- Around 15% of respondents express concerns about the observed teacher's approach, stating that it does not stimulate interest in the class.

- Roughly 10% of respondents specifically mention TPR as a strategy they adopt or would like to adopt.
- Approximately 25% of respondents positively mention a multidisciplinary approach, combining different subjects and activities.
- About 15% of respondents appreciate the passion for teaching and creating a friendly atmosphere with students⁹.

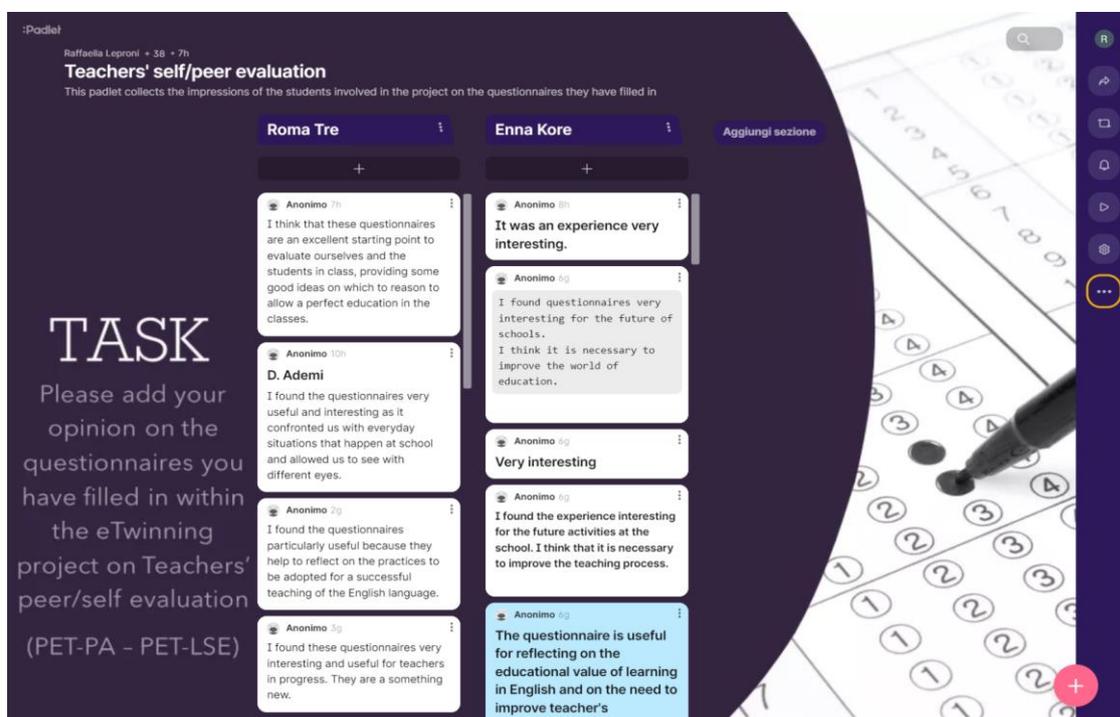
5. Data return and Feedback. (Provisional) conclusions

The data derived from the study were collaboratively deliberated upon by both groups during a collective meeting conducted through the Meet platform. This assembly was attended by not only the trainee teachers but also the curricular teachers engaged in the process, along with the supervisors overseeing the traineeship.

Two fundamental criteria, namely transparency and involvement, were emphasized throughout the discussion. The discourse aimed to ensure clarity and openness in the interpretation of the data while actively involving all relevant stakeholders in the analytical process.

In addition to the group discussion, feedback from students has been solicited through the Padlet platform (Figure 9). This initiative seeks to gather insights from the student-teachers themselves, fostering their active participation in the evaluation process. The criteria of accessibility have been given due consideration to ensure that the feedback collection mechanism is easily accessible to all stakeholders involved. This multifaceted approach aims to comprehensively capture diverse perspectives and enrich the overall evaluation process.

Figure 9
Participants' feedback on the eTwinning project (Padlet)



Fuente: Leproni, Padlet page <https://padlet.com/raffilep/teachers-self-peer-evaluation-fd7o6zgwqhteavad0>.

⁹ Please note that these percentages are approximate and based on a qualitative analysis of the first 240 responses. The actual percentages may vary, and the categorization is done for illustrative purposes.

The evaluation of the questionnaires provided at the end of the piloting of the eTwinning project reveals several notable strengths. Firstly, the adept use of English in both the completion of the questionnaires and the subsequent feedback discussions on outcomes facilitates the acquisition of professional jargon and the learning of technical content, particularly within the contexts of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Furthermore, the questionnaires demonstrate a commendable capacity to enable comparisons with diverse teaching strategies such as task-based learning, and cooperative learning. This feature not only broadens the scope of the evaluation but also supports the potential replicability of identified strategies in the teaching domain.

The utility of the questionnaires extends beyond the immediate evaluation process, proving beneficial for ongoing professional development. This is particularly evident when viewed from the perspective of sustainability and lifelong learning, emphasizing the enduring value of the insights gained.

In addition, the questionnaires contribute to the enhancement of participants' personal skills at both linguistic and professional levels. They serve as a source of constructive ideas for self-improvement, fostering a proactive approach to skill development. Simultaneously, they play a role in refining individuals' perceptions of their own work within the professional context.

However, the evaluation also underscores certain criticalities that warrant consideration. The intensive use of English, particularly from the teacher's perspective, is identified as a potential challenge, potentially influencing the comprehension and engagement with the questionnaire content. Participants also reported language difficulties, manifesting in challenges understanding specific items or words. Additionally, some participants expressed difficulty in maintaining objectivity during the analysis phase, indicating a potential need for support on this aspect of the evaluation process.

While still analysing the responses given, the project team is currently working on addressing these criticalities, to refine the questionnaire design foreseeing a new administration in the next phase of the project (possibly extended to foreign partners), fostering a more inclusive and effective evaluation process for all participants involved in view of the validation of the tools.

In conclusion, aligning with previous research, such as Başaran, et al. (2020) and Gülbay (2018), the findings of this study underscore the prominent role of eTwinning collaborative activities in fostering the development and consolidation of teaching professional capabilities and awareness among trainee teachers. The strengths identified in the evaluation of the project's activities, including the proficient use of English, comparison with diverse teaching strategies, and the provision of avenues for personal and professional growth, collectively contribute to the robustness of this collaborative approach.

The adept use of English in completing questionnaires and engaging in discussions not only facilitates the acquisition of professional jargon and technical content but also aligns with the contemporary demands of an increasingly globalized educational landscape. This linguistic competence is not a superficial proficiency; rather, it serves as a conduit for trainee teachers to find way through and contribute meaningfully to the discourse surrounding various teaching strategies, such as CLIL, task-based learning, cooperative learning, and debate, extending their pedagogical repertoire. The professional and language awareness triggered throughout the eTwinning activities also enhances their understanding of diverse instructional methodologies, fostering adaptability and critical thinking in their future teaching endeavours. As trainee teachers engage in eTwinning collaborative activities, they not only garner ideas for personal skills improvement but also refine their perception of their own work within the professional

context. This dual effect contributes to a holistic approach to teacher development, addressing not only the technical aspects of pedagogy but also the reflective and metacognitive dimensions essential for effective teaching.

Furthermore, the identified usefulness of eTwinning activities for professional development, with an emphasis on sustainability and lifelong learning, signifies their enduring impact. By providing a platform for self-reflection and constructive feedback, eTwinning contributes to ongoing skill enhancement, aligning with the evolving nature of educational practices.

In essence, the importance of eTwinning collaborative activities in supporting trainee teachers not only exposes them to diverse perspectives but also nurtures a sense of community and shared learning (Leproni et al., 2021). As educational landscapes continue to evolve, the integration of eTwinning activities emerges as a highly valuable strategy for preparing future educators who are not only technically proficient but also cognizant of the broader implications of their profession.

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