DEVELOPING WORLD CITIZENS: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND MULTIPLE IDENTITIES PERCEPTIONS IN 8th GRADE STUDENTS

The importance of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is related to political, economic, technological and cultural effects produced by globalisation. The impact of globalisation requires us to re-evaluate concepts of citizenship and citizenship education and raise questions about the values upon which such education might be based (Osler, 1994). The definition of GCE is debated, but its core component can be recognized in the understanding of the nature of global issues as well as the range of ways in which those with power and resources can be influenced to act in a globally responsible way (Ibrahim, 2005). GCE key elements get back to Global Education curricula (Richardson 1979; Hicks, 2003) and concern the development of the background knowledge of global problems (e.g. social justice and equity, peace and conflict, sustainable development, globalisation, diversity), skills to engage in action for change (e.g. critical thinking) and relevant values and attitudes (e.g. respect for diversity).

Among its many effects, globalisation has deeply changed the conception of identity and belonging, which now appear multiple, nested and contingent (Hall, 1996; Goffman, 1969, Brubaker, and Cooper, 2000).

We can thus observe in every person the existence of multiple civic identities, from local to national and global (Ross, 2007; Osler, 2008). For people belonging to a European Union country, the presence of a European identity may be also observed, although its meaning is a thorny and debated issue (Delanty, Rummford, 2005; Keating, 2009).

ICCS (2009) stressed the importance of the impacts due to globalisation in changing the meanings of citizenship and belonging and the approaches to civic and citizenship education. GCE related topics have been included in the achievement test while the student international and European module questionnaires have dealt with civic and multiple identities issues.

In Italy a curriculum related to global citizenship education does not exist but some of its topics can be included in different subjects such as History (human rights), Geography (globalisation and global interdependence) or Science (environmental sustainability).

REFERENCES