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# The L2 Students' Perception of Assessment in an Academic Context: a Case Study

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## Abstract

L'immigrazione è un fenomeno sempre più rilevante nella nostra società. Gli effetti del movimento di persone da un Paese all'altro, sono riscontrabili anche a livello didattico; ciò comporta la necessità di realizzare corsi di italiano per adulti stranieri che mirino non solo ad insegnare la lingua del Paese di arrivo, ma che soddisfino in modo efficace i diversi bisogni degli stranieri stessi. Con questa tesi si vuole esplorare il mondo dell'Italiano come Lingua Seconda per studenti adulti e soffermarsi in particolare sul problema della valutazione, attraverso l'analisi di questionari sottoposti sia ad alunni adulti frequentanti i corsi di Italiano L2 messi a disposizione dal CTP della Scuola *L. Einaudi* di Marghera, sia ai loro docenti.

Immigration is a phenomenon that has become all the more relevant in our society.

The effects of people moving from one country to another are even present in academic and didactic contexts; this has resulted the need to develop organized Italian language courses for foreign adults that not only teach the endemic language, but also adequately satisfy the different students' needs. This dissertation thus aims to explore the world of Italian as a Second Language (L2), and will take a look at the particular problem of evaluating these students through the analysis of questionnaires. These questionnaires were given to teachers and students attending CTP Italian L2 courses at the *L. Einaudi* middle school in Marghera.

*Part one*

**An Overview of the Adult L2 Student's World**

## *Chapter 1*

### The Adult Learner

This chapter introduces the concept both of the ‘adult’ and the ‘adult student’.

Furthermore on this dissertation, the main characteristics of adult learners and the factors that can favour or impede their learning will be outlined. Finally, there will be a brief examination of the role of the teacher.

#### 1.1 The Concept of the ‘Adult’

The concept of an ‘adult’ is incredibly difficult to define; it is attributed temporal and geographic instability, as its precise definition often changes to fit the needs of a particular community or institution within a given context. ‘Adulthood’ refers to personal and social factors; it encompasses a person’s psychobiological and psychosociological levels, physical and the intellectual levels, age, maturity, personality, level of autonomy and responsibility.

As a result of this plurality of factors, it has become quite problematic and complicated to attribute a precise and univocal definition to the term, ‘adult’(cf. Begotti, 2006).

Malcolm Knowles, one of the main proponents of adult learning, believes that a person reaches complete maturity when the four fundamental types of maturity - biological, legal, social, and psychological - have been achieved and can be verified.

Biological maturity refers to reproductive maturity, while legal maturity refers to when one has the right to vote. Social maturity is defined by society and psychological maturity is characterized by a sense of responsibility and autonomy. In spite of this, Knowles’ theory can be refuted if one were to compare eastern cultures to western cultures. For example, in Asian and African cultures, it is much more common to marry at a young age (even as minors), have children and occupy legal and societal roles. Contrarily in the western world, individuals typically marry and become parents at a much later point in life than they once did in the past; thus, such milestones as marriage or one’s first employment have lost their peculiarity. Such events may therefore no longer serve as indicators of defining adulthood (cf. Knowles, 1973).

## 1.2 Andragogy

Andragogy is the science that studies adult learning from a theoretical standpoint. The term itself - derived from the Greek, *άνήρ-uomo* - was first coined in 1833 by Alexander Kapp, a German editor. Later in 1921, E. Rosenstock reclaimed the term.

After certain controversy regarding the fact that the term evokes the male gender only, andragogy was abandoned in favour of more neutral terminology; the field was consequently renamed, *adult education*.

The term 'adult' is thought to better resolve the problem because it derives from the Latin *adolesco*, referring to growth and development. It is also thought to better convey the idea of the 'adult' as one that does not have the capacity to grow physically anymore, but rather psychologically (cf. Begotti, 2006).

## 1.3 The Adult Learner

The 'adult' represents a new type of student. In this paragraph, it will be demonstrated how adult learners have progressively become some of the major consumers of education. Later, the fundamental characteristics of adult learners will also be explained.

### 1.3.1 The Perspective Towards and the Conventions of Adult Learning in Italy

As a result of the social and economic development of the last ten years, adults in the workforce must be flexible and constantly willing to reinvent themselves in order to keep up with the current work market. Adults are always more interested in enriching their own scholastic education in order to both further develop their sense of self-realization and better the possibility for certain employment opportunities in the future. Such interest in adult education has led to the prospering psychological initiatives aimed to facilitate the learning process later in life. The most important concepts used to explain the adult learning process are elucidated below:

- *Life-span theory*, the study of learning and of the lived experiences of an individual throughout life;



- *Lifelong learning*, an expression coined by Kearns in 1999 to indicate the permanent education of adults; the term centres on the processes of acquisition, the numerous cognitive styles, and the diverse learning modalities. The learner, along with his or her particular needs and difficulties, is the central element of learning on the whole;
- *Lifewide learning*, a recently discovered type of education that considers every aspect of life as an occasion for learning (cf. Caon et al., 2008).

At the Council Assembly of March 23-24, 2000, in Lisbon, the European Commission undertook the objective of *Lifelong learning* as an individual right and a collective responsibility. In collaboration with the Members of the State, *Lifelong learning* was deemed as “*all purposeful learning activity, whether formal or informal, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence*”.

The process of rationalizing permanent educational systems has had increasingly more social objectives. These objectives include the fight against unemployment, the inclusion of youth in the workforce, the recuperation of grade school drop-outs, and the inclusion of minorities, disabled students, and immigrants in education.

The IALS-SIALS (International Adult Literacy Survey – Second International Adult Literacy Survey), presented in June, 2000, collected the results of a study analyzing literacy in countries culturally, economically, and socially diverse. This research defined literacy as the “*capacity to collect and utilize information available in written texts, graphs, tables [...] and to perform operations, calculations, and solve problems*”. An individual is defined as functionally literate when he or she has the knowledge of and the ability to read and write; with this ability, the learner is therefore able to conduct activities with writing and literature in which his or her own culture is presented and interpreted. The chart pertaining to this survey subdivides the countries taken into consideration into three profiles based on a scale from 1-5; one represents a very low level of literacy (nearing illiteracy), while five represents an excellent level of literacy:

- Germany 51,4%, Belgium 52,3%, USA 53,5%, New Zealand 54,2%, Denmark 54%, Australia 55,8%, Canada 57,8%, the Netherlands 59,4%, Finland 63,3%,

Norway 66,8% and Sweden 72,1% are the countries in which more than 50% of the population received a 3, 4, or 5 on the literacy scale;

- Czech Republic 46,2%, Ireland 47,6%, the United Kingdom 47,9% are countries in which more than 40% of the population received a 3, 4, or 5 on the literacy scale;
- Chile 14,9%, Poland 22,9%, Portugal 22,9%, Slovakia 23,3%, Hungary 23,4%, Italy 34,5% are countries in which less than 35% of the population received a 3, 4, or 5 (cf. Anichini, Vettori, 2004).

From this data, it is evident that Italy occupies a precarious position. A study conducted one year prior to this one in 1999 by CEDE (today the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Educational System), demonstrated that in Italy, there are approximately 2 million people (5,4% of the population) of the ages of 16-65 years that are functionally illiterate.

The situation is even more critical in older generations. While the rate of functional illiteracy from the ages of 16-45 years is in the average of Europe, the rate for those from 46-65 years old amounts to 1.400.000 people. The delay in elementary education increases drastically with age and as one descends from the North to the South of Italy:

- from the ages of 16-25 years, the rate of functional illiteracy is 3,8% distributed principally in Campania, Puglia, Sicily and Sardinia;
- from the ages of 26-35 years the rate of functional illiteracy increases to 9,1% in Piedmont, Tuscany, Umbria, Campania, Calabria, Puglia, Sicily and Sardinia;
- from the ages of 36-45 years, the rate of functional illiteracy is 20,9% in Marche, Tuscany, Campania, Abruzzi, Puglia, Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia;
- from the ages of 46-55 years, the rate of functional illiteracy reached 29,9%;
- from the ages of 56-65 the rate of functional illiteracy reaches 36,2% with the majority in Piedmont, Lombardy, Trento, Veneto, Marche, Tuscany, Umbria, Lazio, Campania, Abruzzi, Puglia, Calabria, Sicily, Sardinia (cf. Vettori, 2005).

The response in Italy to confront this situation is currently entrusted to the *Territorial Permanent Centres*, which I will expand upon in chapter 4. These centres, established in concordance with O.M. 455/97, are places of adult education and instruction that carry out activities involving helping, listening and orientation, primary functional literacy, return to schooling, language learning, development and the reinforcement of basic linguistic competences.

### 1.3.2 Characteristics of Adult Learning

According to Knowles (1984), adults present certain recurring characteristics that differ from children during the learning process. While children are always learning for both biological and psychological motives, adults choose educational opportunities selectively, and can prepare formative plans with the purpose of self-recognition.

Adults do not need to be motivated by others to learn, but are rather always actively searching, reworking and re-contextualizing their acquired knowledge. In addition, mature individuals have numerous and diverse lived experiences and a scholastic development markedly different from others.

The task of the teacher is therefore, to keep in mind that everyone has different experiences, cognitive styles and cultural influences. Knowles' theory can be subdivided into six fundamental points:

- *the learner's self concept*: as a person develops a fully-formed personality and perception of the self, he or she wants to be responsible for his or her own decisions and requests to be held accountable;
- *motivation*: as a person develops and matures, he or she aspires to better him or herself in the professional world, become cognizant of him or herself, and augment self-esteem;
- *the need to know*: as a person strives to learn, he or she carefully evaluates the advantages to be gained from learning something before undertaking the challenge of learning it;
- *readiness to learn*: a mature person develops the desire to learn what he or she needs to learn for certain professional and social contexts;
- *orientation to learning*: adults learn in order to use the knowledge acquired in real life; the interest to learn becomes manifested in the learning itself, rather

than directed towards the object or material to be learned as occurs with children;

- *the influence of the learner's previous experience*: a factor that can determine advantages and disadvantages; each mature adult accumulates a great quantity of diverse experiences that can affect the way in which he or she continues to learn (cf. Caon et al., 2008).

It is important to note that while children see that learning may serve a purpose later on, adults learn to see and utilize that purpose immediately, *hic et nunc*.

### 1.3.3 Factors that Influence Adult Learning

Beyond the cerebral plasticity that exists in children until 9 years of age (from age 20 and onward, individuals undergo the slow process of neuron loss), Knowles maintains that a group of adult learners differ from one another more markedly than a group of children differ from one another. The factors that differentiate adults from children can have positive or negative effects on adult learning; from a social point of view, these factors often concern the previous experiences and influences from the culture of origin. From the individualistic point of view, these factors include cognitive learning styles that have already been consolidated and the needs and motivations of the learner. Finally, from the biological point of view, such factors include attitude, age, and memory of the learner. All of these factors are outlined below (cf. Begotti, 2006):

- *the value of previous experiences*: adults have already experienced a learning model throughout their lives; therefore, they use the same cognitive processes they utilized before to acquire new knowledge (it is helpful for teachers to become familiar with the previous educational systems and their organization of the countries of origin of foreign students);
- *influence of the culture of origin*: adults clearly demonstrate the presence of cultural influences on their learning; for example, with Asian students, we can easily identify learning modules emphasizing memorization given the quantity of ideograms that are present in their languages and are necessary to learn. Such students are cognizant of social hierarchy, as it is often found in their cultures; they are not accustomed to sharing openly in class or confronting

other students and thus, opting for inductive learning methods may cause some difficulty. On the contrary, Hispanic students do not fear social confrontation in class and rather appreciate the opportunity to take part in class dynamics and work in groups;

- *cognitive styles, attitudes, and strategies utilized*: cognitive style refers to the way in which a person perceives and organizes environmental stimuli and then develops from those stimuli. A learner does not always use the same learning method, but there is nonetheless one method that prevails over the others during the learning process. There are numerous cognitive styles, as universally recognized in Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner identifies seven types of intelligence: linguistic intelligence, mathematical-logical intelligence, musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, inter- and intra-personal intelligence and naturalistic intelligence (cf. Caon, 2008). These types of intelligence are present in each individual in different proportions, thereby rendering each student unique. Consequently, the teacher must use appropriate activities that take into consideration the variety of intelligences and learning styles present; for example, a teacher can utilize problem-solving activities or activities involving dialogues or dramatization for students with significant interpersonal intelligence, vignettes with drawings to complete for those with spatial intelligence, or role-plays for those with marked kinaesthetic intelligence. Students also learn to develop personalized learning strategies that can guide them towards success in the educational process. The utilization of such strategies are influenced by the following elements:
  - *individual variability*, that is, factors of one's character and personality;
  - *task variability*, which determines the efficacy of a given strategy or its likelihood to fail;
  - *context variability*, that is, the learner's attitude, memory, age, or relationship with his or her teacher and the familiarity with the didactic material.

#### 1.3.4. Elements that Can Favour or Impede Adult Learning

There are numerous factors that can affect adult learning. They can be divided into social, psychological and professional elements. Those that may hinder adult learning are identified below:

- insufficient time dedicated to learning, due to professional and familial commitments;
- mental disposition, or rather, an adult student may 'feel old';
- emotional obstacles such as the fear of humiliating oneself in front of others, the fear of not knowing enough or the fear of reliving past painful experiences in an academic setting;
- difficulties understanding the teacher and his or her methodology;
- relevance of lesson content to confronting real-life problems; as discussed previously, it is extremely important for adults to use their acquired knowledge in real life.

Elements that can favour adult learning include a calm and constructive climate that promotes the interaction between peers and their participation in the teacher's activities and lesson plans. Such lesson plans can involve a diagnostic analysis that takes into account the students' individual characteristics, differing cognitive styles, and interests and motivations in order to create an environment most conducive to success in the education process (cf. Begotti 2007).

#### 1.4 The Affective-Humanistic Approach with Adult Learners

Up until recently, the formalistic-deductive approach was believed to be the most appropriate for adult learners. This approach was used predominantly to teach grammar: the teacher would explain course rules and guidelines, as well as grammar norms that the students would learn through memorization and fixation.

However, starting in the 1960's, a new communicative approach began to gain popularity, which focused its attention on communicative competences and the correct use of the language.

This kind of approach is still used today, although it may seem undervalued by adult students that may have developed a predisposition towards using deductive methods given past experience with those methods.

From the 1970's, another type of approach started to develop: the affective-humanistic approach. At the beginning, it only implemented into children's early language learning; but recent studies have retracted this statement.

The affective-humanistic glottodidactics are characterized by:

- strong interest in the affective and physical aspects of the students and emphasis on the different types of intelligence as propounded in Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences;
- focus on the moods and attitudes that may impede the learning process and emphasis on reducing the affective filter, a mechanism of psychological self-defence activated by the mind when one feels anxious due to the fear of making mistakes or of compromising one's self-esteem (cf. Begotti, 2007).

It is therefore important to take in consideration adult students' affective dynamics, their motivations and needs; by doing this, teachers can strive to reduce competitiveness amongst classmates and reduce their individual insecurities and anxieties that may obstruct the learning process; furthermore, by keeping these elements in mind, teachers can try to create diversified educational paths that take into consideration every peculiarity of the students and thereby support the educational development of all students.

From the affective-humanistic learning approach, different glottodidactic methods were generated, such as the *Total Physical Response* (TPR), the *Natural Approach* and the up-to-date *Ludic Glottodidactics*:

- the *Total Physical Response* is a method introduced by Asher, based on the coordination of language and physical movement; teachers are expected to give their students progressively complex orders and indications, in order to force them to use language automatically to accomplish those tasks;

- the *Natural Approach* is a method introduced by Terrell and Krashen, primarily based on Krashen's previous five hypotheses of the *Second Language Acquisition Theory* of Krashen:
  - language can be learnt through two processes; the first is *acquisition*, which is spontaneous, unconscious and long-term. The second is *learning*, which is rather conscious, rational and short-term;
  - learning functions as a *monitor* and a grammatical control mechanism;
  - in order for an input to be acquired, it must be *comprehensible*;
  - there is a natural acquisition order represented by  $i+1$ , where  $i$  represents the acquired input and  $+1$  represents the immediate higher step to be acquired;
  - the affective filter is a psychological factor that blocks the language acquisition. Thus according to the Natural Approach, students have to be exposed to a language in a spontaneous uncontrived and non-compulsory way. Instead of offering traditional grammatical explanations for activities, teachers should give students the freedom to develop their own inter-language amongst themselves and cultivate their oral fluency. Conversational skills thus, may hold precedence over written fluency (cf. Luise, 2006);
- the *Ludic Glottodidactics* is often wrongly considered as a method only to be used with children, given that the word 'ludic' signifies 'playfulness'. The common tendency is to associate a playful disposition with the teacher in activities with students. However, the Ludic Didactics serve to stimulate language learning by making the class atmosphere more relaxed through activities aimed to amuse and motivate students, rather than make them feel anxious and uncomfortable (cf. Begotti, 2006).

## 1.5 The Role of the Teacher

In light of the analysis provided on the different teaching and learning approaches, it has become evident that the role of the teacher has changed. The students and their needs now appear to be the centre of attention; the teacher no longer merely transmits knowledge to the student-tabula rasa.



In the affective-humanistic didactics, the teacher can assume various roles; these roles have some common features, such as the teacher's versatility and ability to listen to the students and prepare appropriate courses:

- the teacher as *facilitator*: the teacher tries to optimize the learning conditions; he/she also tries to consider the needs, the cognitive styles and the interests of every student in order to create a peaceful and relaxed educational atmosphere;
- the teacher as *coordinator and entertainer*: the teacher prepares personalized and diversified didactic activities and tries to encourage his/her students;
- the teacher as *linguistic counsellor*: the teacher has linguistic competences and makes them available to the students when they are required. The teacher lets the students take their time in order to resolve their doubts on their own; then, the teacher steps in and helps to guide the students towards a better solution;
- the teacher as *experimenter and artist*: the teacher is ready to experiment new techniques and methodologies that aim to improve the educational process of the students (cf. Serragiotto et al., 2004).

It is important to note that adult learners can be reluctant to accept the teacher as a 'knowledge holder' and as academically superior to them in a given area of study.

Adults are disinclined to view the teacher as one who can impart particular knowledge to them, as they consider themselves to be on an equal social level as the teacher.

Adult students consequently strive to be involved in the planning of the course and in the didactic choices. In order to alleviate the tension that is created by this between the teacher and the students, they must create a 'formative pact' together, where the modalities and the materials that will be used are negotiated. This pact can be modified during the course of study, in order to promote communication between the teacher and the students and to help the teacher to better understand the needs of the students.

## Chapter 2

### The L2 Learner

In this chapter, I will describe the characteristics of adult learners and the differences between mother languages, foreign languages and second languages. I will also discuss the increasing presence of foreign residents in Italy and the issues encountered teaching Italian to these residents. Hereafter, I will explain the main characteristics of L2 adult learners and L2 teachers, and illustrate the models and glottodidactic approaches adapted to teach Italian to L2 learners.

#### 2.1 What is a Second Language?

*Mother Language (L1)*: the language learnt at the time of birth; it is the first language that one learns and utilizes for socialization and thought development.

*Foreign Language (FL)*: a language learnt at school or in an academic context and therefore not used in every-day life.

*Second Language (L2)*: a language learnt after the mother language, but acquired in its country of origin or a country where it is endemic. Thus, the L2 can be learnt in and outside of a formal academic setting.

When teaching an L2 language versus teaching an FL, it is important to note the following differences:

Figure 2.1 (Luise M.C., 2006: 68)

<i>SECOND LANGUAGE (L2)</i>	<i>FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FL)</i>
a. Communicate/study	a. Communicate
b. Real motivation	b. Developmental/Academic Motivation
c. Heterogeneous starting class level	c. Homogeneous starting class level
d. Mixed linguistic input	d. Controlled linguistic input
e. Authentic situations	e. Non authentic situations
f. Encounter-clash with cultural models	f. Mediated cultural references

Fig. 2.1 summarizes the most meaningful differences between L2 and FL:

- a) the L2 is not only used for communicating and interacting with others as the FL is, but it also contributes significantly to cognitive development; the L2 becomes a vehicle for learning other materials in formal and informal settings;
- b) students are stimulated to learn the L2 out of necessity; they must learn it as quickly and efficiently as possible in order to interact with others and assimilate into the endemic culture. There is no such immediate demand to learn the FL because it is not used in everyday life;
- c) in an L2 class, it is often difficult to find students of the same level of linguistic competence due to their varying past academic experiences. On the contrary, in an FL class, students usually share the same academic experiences. Thus it is important to individualize the glottodidactic techniques to suit the particular needs of each student;
- d) there are differences in the type of linguistic input between the L2 and the FL as well. With the FL, the teacher designs and controls the input, proposing the didactic materials to work on with the students. In an L2 context, the teacher cannot have complete control over the input, as students can learn from external linguistic inputs outside the scholastic environment as well;
- e) in the L2 context, every moment is useful to learning the language as it becomes necessary for every-day life. From watching soccer games with friends to listening to teachers explain certain grammatical rules, the L2 is acquired constantly and continuously from authentic, non-contrived situations. Contrarily, the FL is learned in controlled and manipulated situations; teachers provide prompts to practice dialogues between students and design fictional situations where the FL is required;
- f) L2 students come into contact with the cultural aspects of the L2 directly in everyday life, without the mediation of a teacher. On the other hand, FL students do not encounter the cultural qualities of the L2 directly, but experience a rather filtered or contrived interpretation of the language of study through the teacher and the didactic materials utilized in class (cf. Luise, 2006).

## 2.2 General Framework and Legislation

The data included in Mauro Albani's article (2013) and published by Istat reported that there were approximately 4.387.721 foreigners residing Italy at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 – 334.000 more than the previous year (+8,2%). This growth is due to both immigration and the increasing birth rate of foreign children in Italy.

The populations of foreign residents in Italy are found sporadically throughout the country: 35,2% resides in the Northwest, 26,6% in the Northeast, 24,2% in the centre and 14% in the so-called 'Mezzogiorno'.

According to a report on foreign immigration in the Veneto Region published in 2013 by the Regional Immigration Observatory, the Veneto has the second largest number of foreign residents in Italy (after Lombardy). It is also the fourth largest region, after Emilia Romagna, Umbria and Lombardy, in the incidence of foreigners in the total population. The number of women and young people between the ages of 30 and 45 years old has particularly increased during these last years.

In addition, the Regional Immigration Observatory report found the following percentages of immigrants that held the largest number of residency permits possible in the Veneto: Morocco (15%), Albania (10%), China (9%) and Moldova (9%). Serbia, Bangladesh, India and Ukraine followed closely behind them.

The Statistical Service of MIUR reported that in October, 2013, the number of foreign students in Italian schools had increased: during the academic year of 2012-2013, the total number of foreign students was 786.630, which is 30.691 more than the year before.

According to the Law Article n.38, paragraph 1 of the Legislative Decree 286/98:

*“I minori stranieri presenti sul territorio sono soggetti all'obbligo scolastico; ad essi si applicano tutte le disposizioni vigenti in materia di diritto all'istruzione, di accesso ai servizi educativi, di partecipazione alla vita della comunità scolastica”.*

*“Foreign minors in the country are subject to compulsory schooling; they are expected to follow all academic regulations and have the right to receive an education, have access to all educational resources and participate in the scholastic community life”.*

Adult foreign students are also reserved the right to study in Italy. It is explicitly decreed in paragraph 5:

*“Le istituzioni scolastiche, nel quadro di una programmazione territoriale degli interventi, anche sulla base di convenzioni con Regioni e enti locali promuovono:*

- a) *l'accoglienza degli stranieri adulti regolarmente soggiornanti mediante l'attivazione di corsi di alfabetizzazione nelle scuole elementari e medie;*
- b) *la realizzazione di un'offerta culturale valida per gli stranieri adulti regolarmente soggiornanti che intendano conseguire il titolo di studio della scuola dell'obbligo;*
- c) *la predisposizione di percorsi integrativi degli studi sostenuti nel Paese di provenienza al fine del conseguimento del titolo dell'obbligo o del diploma di scuola secondaria superiore;*
- d) *la realizzazione ed attuazione di corsi di lingua italiana;*
- e) *la realizzazione di corsi di formazione, anche nel quadro di accordi di collaborazione internazionale in vigore per l'Italia".*

*"Educational institutions, mediated by territorial planning and based on regional conventions and local authorities, promote:*

- a) *the positive reception of adult foreign students with regular residency permits in literacy courses at elementary and middle schools;*
- b) *the possibility for adult foreign students with regular residency permits to have valid cultural opportunities to earn educational qualifications at institutions of compulsory education;*
- c) *the preparation and organization of the integrated paths of study received in the country of origin in order to obtain a degree from the institution of compulsory education, or a high school diploma;*
- d) *the realization and the actualization of Italian language courses;*
- e) *the realization of continuing education courses in accordance with international collaboration agreements in Italy".*

These points ultimately help discern the needs of adult foreign students in Italy and validate their rights to continuing education.

In order to teach adult foreign students, it is first necessary to develop literacy courses of various levels and determine the linguistic competencies of each student.

Once this is done, the students will be able to move on in their education and obtain elementary and middle school certificates (a residency permit is required for the latter). These students can then continue their studies, consolidating the coursework completed in their native country with their recent coursework in Italy. Territorial Permanent Centres, located across the nation, typically undertake these permanent educational projects.

From 1989 to 1996, the European Council developed the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) to provide those involved in education with the proper tools to organize a course framework and achieve a set of pre-determined objectives, as well as with a means for categorizing and evaluating students.

The CEFR is divided into six levels; each level contains a detailed description of the expected capacities of oral-written comprehension and oral-written production.

The levels are designated as follows: A1- A2 is a basic user of the language, B1-B2 is an independent user and C1-C2 signifies a proficient user. These levels are universally accepted in order to evaluate levels of the language competence (cf. Council of Europe, 2001).

## 2.3 Who is the L2 Adult Learner?

The L2 adult learner is a person foreign to the environment and culture in which he finds himself immersed.

Italian legislation defines students as ‘foreign’ according to the Nationality Law n.91/1992; under this decree, all those born from non-Italian citizens are considered foreign. In an academic context, foreign students are characterized as having a language other than Italian as their mother tongue and a culture distinct from that of Italy (cf. Luise, 2006).

### 2.3.1 Needs and Motivations of an L2 Adult Student

In general, the presence of foreign immigrants in Italy has shed light on the common difficulties and needs faced by foreigners as they try to integrate into society.

These needs can be sequenced into six macro-areas; these macro-areas are not to be considered independent and do not follow a specific order.

On the contrary, all the needs are interdependent and linked one another:

- *reception and regulation macro-area*: this macro-area encompasses the need to make welcome information easily accessible to foreigners in order to help them obtain the proper legal documents for residency, find work opportunities and ultimately assimilate into society;
- *job macro-area*: immigrants need to find jobs and integrate into society; to accomplish this, they can learn essential skills for work through continuing education courses;

- *residence macro-area*: the need to find an accommodation for him/herself and for the family;
- *health care macro-area*: the need to locate available health services and understand how to navigate the health care system;
- *education macro-area*: the need to locate educational institutions where with L2 language courses compatible with work hours;
- *socialization macro-area*: the need to develop relationships with natives, become a part of the local social life and become familiar with the local communications media (such as TV, newspapers and magazines) (cf. Caon et al., 2008).

With L2 learners, it is possible to identify two main motivations: the first has an instrumental nature, the second one has a psychological nature (cf. Balboni, 2002).

Instrumental motivation is aimed towards achieving a basic level of mastery of the language in order to be able to communicate with others and assimilate into society.

This type of mastery is referred to as *Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill* (BICS) and credited to Jim Cummins. It indicates the fundamental communicative fluency and the basic language skills required to interact with others, or to search for a job or an accommodation. However, it can often be frustrating to encounter linguistic limitations for people who would like to develop more profound relationships with others or integrate themselves further into society. Language learners can feel linguistically and culturally ‘inferior’ as colloquial and idiomatic expressions and certain social customs may be hard to understand.

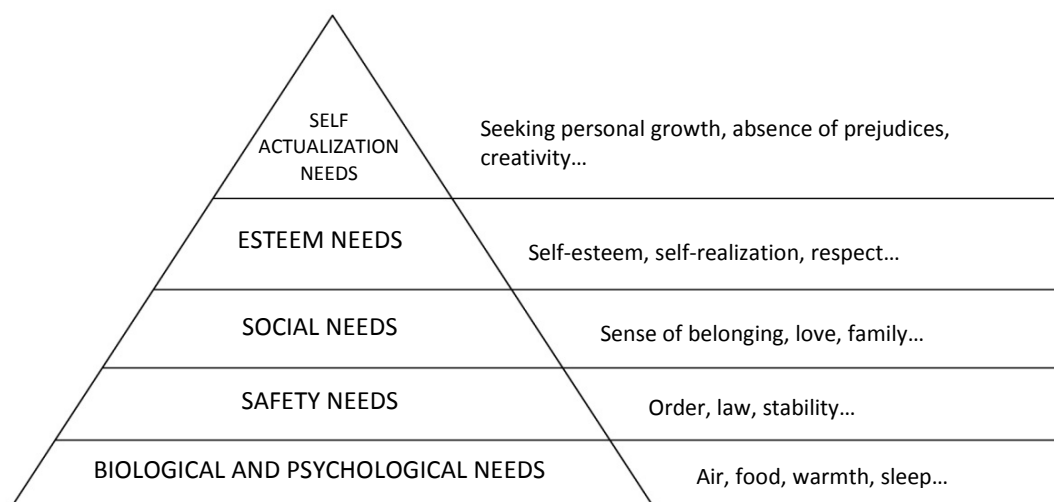
Therefore, it is important for students to attain *Cognitive and Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP) - the ability to think in the L2 and use it as a tool for learning.

CALP is essential for familiarizing oneself with the micro-languages and through it, students will be able to ask complex questions, describe objects or actions in detail, or to tell a story. Thus, it should be the aim of the language school, as it requires strong psychological motivation (cf. Coonan, 2002).

Adults who have attained a CALP competence are represented in the highest steps of the Maslow pyramid (fig. 2.2). Maslow, a leading figure of humanistic psychology, created this five-level pyramid of the hierarchy of the following needs: biological and physical, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. The level of needs increases from top to bottom, from the most basic to the more complex. A person has

to satisfy the needs in the basic needs of the lower level first before moving onto the next level.

Fig. 2.2 Maslow pyramid (1954)



## 2.4 Problems of an L2 Class

In L2 classes, difficulties may be present that can impede the language learning process and compromise the relationships between students and teachers. On the one hand, there may be problems related to the students' perceptions of themselves, as they may find particular difficulty with certain activities and methodologies utilized in class. They may thus become discouraged from further participation. On the other hand, there may be problems directly related to the teacher, such as an underestimating extra-linguistic factors and disregarding the previous education models used in the students' native countries.

### 2.4.1 Problems Concerning L2 Learning

According to Freddi (1974: 25), adults identify their own language within the world they live in; therefore, adult students may be unconsciously reluctant towards learning a new language for everyday life. Freddi states that adults' effort to learn a language is directly proportional to their age and inversely proportional to their educational level.



The older a person is, the more difficulty he or she encounters when learning a language, while the younger a person is, the less difficulty he or she may encounter.

The more educated is a person, the less difficulty he or she finds learning a language while the less educated a person is, the more difficulty that person experiences.

Charles Pierre Bouton recognized some reactions typical of adults towards languages that they are required to learn. First, adults often develop a sense of insecurity when learning a new language, which can lead them to feel uncomfortable.

This is especially common when in-class activities or didactic techniques appear compromising to their self-esteem, such as is the case with role-plays and staged dialogues. Contrarily, problem-solving activities that promote discussion and cooperation amongst students do not create the same sense of anxiety, but are rather enthusiastically received. Secondly, students can become frustrated due their limitations with the language they are learning. They may feel unable to express their thoughts as clearly and easily as they can in their mother language. It is also possible that their mother language could interfere with the learning process; given that learning a language requires certain mental reorganization, one of the two languages could potentially prevail over the other from a phonological, morphological, lexical and cultural point of view (cf. Begotti, 2006).

It is important not to undervalue students' educational experiences in their country of origin and the cultural and behavioural norms that may have been present in their previous academic settings. For example, given that South-American students are considered as markedly extroverted learners, they are likely to be more enthusiastic towards activities that require cooperation and challenge. On the other hand, Arab students may be rather afraid of exposing themselves in front of the class because of their fear of appearing ridiculous.

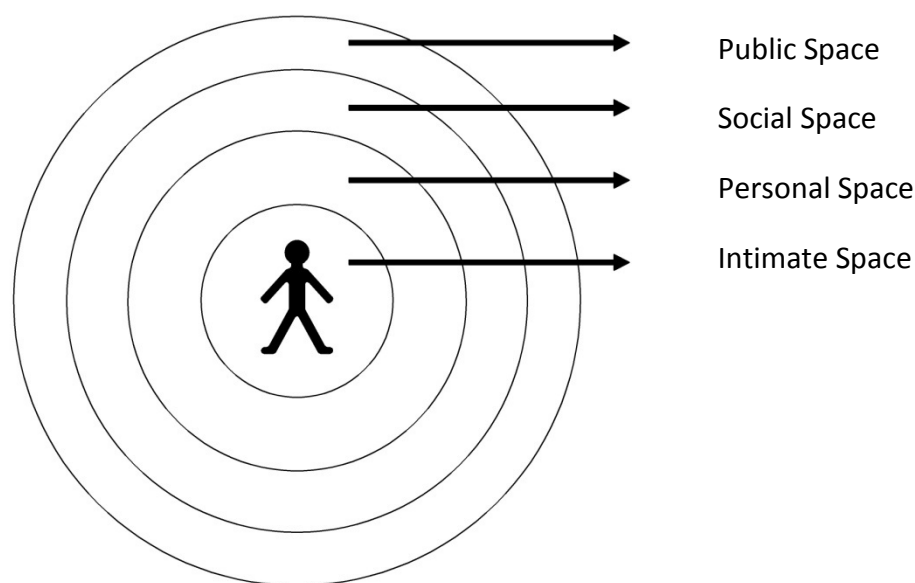
#### 2.4.2 Problems of Intercultural Communication

In the L2 teaching, it is essential not to underestimate the importance of extra-linguistic factors, such as those that comprise non-verbal communication - *kinesics*, *proxemics*, *vestemics* or *objectemics* - and such as cultural models including hierarchies and the concept of time.

Before analysing some of these extra-linguistic factors in detail, it is necessary to understand that people are generally more seen than heard; in other words, the majority of the information received from the environment is visual rather than auditory information. Thus, it is important to be aware that communication involves not only verbal messages, but also non-verbal, visual messages too. Our body receives a constant flow of information that it then utilizes to communicate with itself and with other people. For example, from the kinesic point of view a smile or crossing one's legs can have different meanings in different cultures. To westerners, smiling while someone is speaking means 'I agree with you', while in Japan, smiling while someone is speaking is an expression of embarrassment and may instead signify disagreement with the interlocutor. Crossing one's legs and swinging one leg over the other means 'go away' in Arab cultures, while it has no particular significance in the western world.

From the proxemic point of view, there is considerable variation in the extra-linguistic factors within Europe itself. According to Edward T. Hall (1969), every person lives inside a reaction bubble made up of four different circles (fig. 2.3). The closest circle is the intimate space, used for embracing or touching. The personal space is in middle and it is the immediate space surrounding a person and into which good friends or family members can enter. Next is the social space, in which a person interacts with acquaintances and lastly is the public space.

Fig. 2.3 Hall's reaction bubble (1966)



Hall says that people have slight variations in their personal space depending on their culture. Northern European communities tend to have a larger personal space circle, with larger distances between interlocutors. Southern European communities tend to have a narrower personal space circle instead and therefore have more physical contact with their interlocutors.

As for vestemics, clothing choice can result in problems as well. For example, wearing a short-sleeve shirt and a tie is considered informal attire in Italy, while in the USA it is formal.

The symbols displayed on clothing or status symbols can also be problematic if they have various meanings in different countries. This can lead to a misunderstanding depending on the culture. In Arab countries, wearing extravagant jewellery is a common way of displaying wealth while Europeans see such behaviour as showing-off.

From the cultural values point of view, hierarchy is an important element to consider as well. For example, Asian students often have more difficulty actively participating in class or asking questions than other students because they see the teacher as occupying a high hierarchical position in society. They consider it is a sign of respect not to interrupt or doubt the teacher, as such hierarchical social structures are characteristic of their cultures.

The importance of time is another factor; punctuality is fundamental for industrialized cultures, while in Arab or Brazilian cultures, appointments are seen as merely approximate indications.

There are additional intercultural communication factors outside the scope of this study that can create misunderstandings and reveal cultural incongruities. Nonetheless, the inclusion of this segment serves to make people aware that these problems exist and to highlight the need to take them in consideration. While it may not be possible to teach intercultural communicative competences, given that cultures are constantly evolving and influencing one another, it is in fact possible to teach to observe them (cf. Balboni, 2007).

## 2.5 Operating Models for L2

Operating models are instruments that aim to put into practise the theories formulated by Glottodidactis.

Identifying operating models for L2 languages requires careful consideration; these are some factors that must be taken into account:

- the class is culturally diverse, with students from all over the world that have different notions of grammar and varying logic and literacy capacities;
- every single student has a different previous academic experience; therefore, each student has a different level of language competence;
- motivations and needs can be an omnium-gatherum.

There are three current models used to teach languages: the *Teaching Unit*, the *Learning Unit* and the *Module* (cf. Balboni, 2002).

The Teaching Unit is a complex linguistic operating model that focuses on attaining a set of pre-determined goals outlined in the linguistic curriculum. The Teaching Unit is the simpler element of the organization of a course and it functions from within the framework of the course and presents the characteristics of the didactic process that will be implemented in class. The basic idea is that it is not sufficient to view the educational process as a continuum that can be halted at the most general level. It is rather more convenient to divide the educational process into discrete and autonomous units.

Since a class of L2 students is invariably characterized by different linguistic competences, motivations and cultural and relational models, it is necessary to adapt and integrate the linear and structured model of the Teaching Unit - seen as a complex linguistic-communicative portion - with the more flexible and modular Learning Unit model.

The Teaching Unit is composed of a network of Learning Units that follow three fundamental principles. The first principle is *gestaltism*, or rather, the “*acquisition occurs through a global perception at first, followed by a phase of analysis and it ends with a synthesis, where the mind fixes what it has observed and analysed*” (P.E. Balboni, 2010: 44).

The second is the principle of *directionality* in which the global comprehension of the right cerebral hemisphere precedes the analytic comprehension of the left cerebral hemisphere. Finally, the third principle is the principle of *bimodality* that states that both cerebral hemispheres - the right (holistic and global) and the left (analytic) - are involved in communication. The principle of bimodality also states that in order to involve both halves of the brain in the linguistic process, the two hemispheres must integrate themselves (cf. Balboni, 2002).

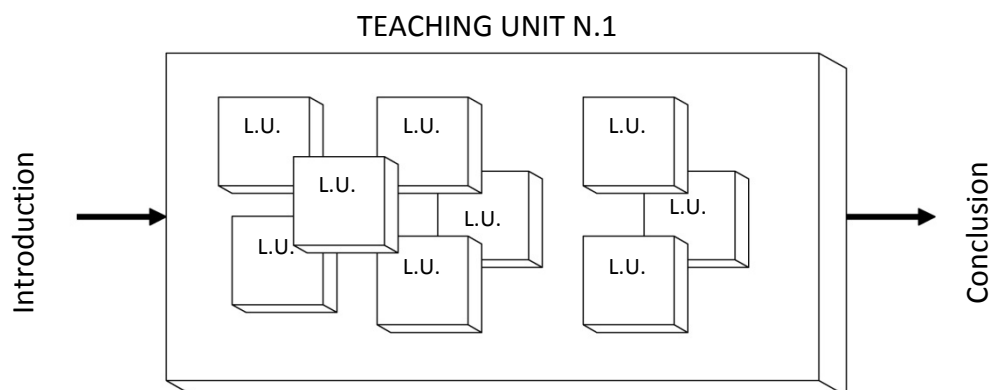
In light of gestaltism, Freddi and Balboni have perfected a model in which the Teaching Unit is divided into 4 phases:

- motivation;
- approach to the text (globality);
- work on the text (analysis and synthesis);
- control.

From within the Teaching Unit, teachers can activate a non-linear network of Learning Units. This network is short-lasting and thus the sequence of the units can be freely chosen to create diversified educational paths that stem from the students' needs and not from the subject matter itself (cf. Balboni, 2008).

Figure 2.4 (Luise, 2006: 117) can help to better understand the principles described above.

Fig. 2.4 The Teaching Unit meant as a set of Learning Units



Modules in language-learning contexts can be defined as a portion of the language curriculum contents. A module possesses the following characteristics:

- it must be autonomous and complete within itself;
- it must be based on complex communicative settings;
- it must be evaluated holistically to indicate the student's competences;
- it must be able to be linked with other modules - even if it functions autonomously (cf. Balboni, 2002).

## 2.6 Affective-Humanistic Glottodidactics and Ludic Didactics in L2

### Classes

In chapter 1, paragraph 1.4, the affective-humanistic approach to language teaching was described; the following outline explains the relevance and utility of this approach to teaching L2 languages:

- students, along with their individual cognitive characteristics and previous academic experiences, are the centre of the attention in language learning;
- great importance is given to the relationships between teachers and students and student and classmates in order to establish positive classroom dynamics conducive to successful learning. It is essential that students are welcomed into an academic setting by both their teacher and peers;
- self-realization in the L2 learner is central because it is one of the most prevalent needs found among adult students;
- the different types of intelligences and the difficulties that students face when approaching new educational methodologies are taken in consideration. Utilizing methods and techniques unfamiliar to students can hinder the learning process and consequently discourage students from continuing with their language development.

Each type of glottodidactic technique is unique and thus it may be too difficult to determine which type to adopt for a particular educational context. Nonetheless, it is

recommended that teachers use all the potential techniques available in order to determine which ones are better suited for each student and for the class as a whole (cf. Luise, 2006).

Upon re-consideration of the ludic didactic and ludic techniques discussed in chapter 1 within this framework, it has become all the more apparent how necessary it is to be mindful of the specific characteristics of the class. An extroverted class may approach ludic activities with more enthusiasm than a more introverted class, given that ludic activities are lively and playful in nature. There is always the risk that students will refuse certain types of activities, deeming them useless, and a waste of time. It is therefore essential that teachers clearly explain the reason behind the educational decisions made regarding class content, structure and modules integrated.

While the ludic techniques are useful to language learning, there are nonetheless numerous difficulties in their implementation. Thus, teachers often need to devise creative methods or make use of opportune moments to integrate them into the class structure. For example, teachers can propose diverse and dynamic activities to offer a change of pace and to rouse tired students. The teacher can propose ludic activities as a form of self-learning too, through which students can gain a sense of self-confidence rather than a sense of anxiety as it is often experienced when learning a language (cf. Begotti, 2006).

## 2.7 The Role of the L2 Teacher

As stated in Chapter 1, teachers are expert tutors for adult students; they make their own knowledge available to students and allow for the co-construction of learning.

Students can therefore become aware of their skills, increase self-esteem and discover their specific learning modalities and meta-cognitive styles.

L2 teachers must consider what characteristics to expect from their students in order to help them face difficulties encountered in the study of language. Teachers should reconcile their students' linguistic capacities with the language skills that they have yet to learn. In this way, teachers become mediators between students and the linguistic subject matter.

In other words, teachers serve as intermediaries in the educational process, positioning their students at the centre of attention and designing activities for them to

interact with languages. These activities favour the acquisition of language, as they focus on reviewing the specific ways in which language is used in class and is represented in didactic materials (cf. Luise, 2006).



## Chapter 3

### Evaluation

This chapter will focus on the discussion of evaluation in an academic setting.

Evaluating students is a complex issue and it requires a teacher's full-attention.

This process of evaluation will first be discussed in a legislative overview; then, the characteristics of evaluations and the role of error correction will be analysed.

#### 3.1 Evaluation and legislation

The evaluation of foreign students is fraught with problems such as difficulties related to certification modalities or issues that arise as a result of disparities in the learning processes of a group of students.

There are considerable regulations on how to include foreign students in education in Italy, but none of them gives specific instructions on how to evaluate these students.

However Law Article 45, paragraph 4, of the Presidential Decree n.394 of August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1999, states that institutions must take on more responsibility for the success of their students and that teachers should be more autonomous and capable of developing their own curricula:

*“Il Collegio dei Docenti definisce, in relazione al livello di competenza dei singoli alunni stranieri, il necessario adattamento dei programmi di insegnamento; allo scopo possono essere adottati specifici interventi individualizzati o per gruppi di alunni per facilitare l'apprendimento della lingua italiana, utilizzando, ove possibile, le risorse professionali della scuola.*

*Il consolidamento della conoscenza e della pratica della lingua italiana può essere realizzata altresì mediante l'attivazione di corsi intensivi di lingua italiana sulla base di specifici progetti, anche nell'ambito delle attività aggiuntive di insegnamento per l'arricchimento dell'offerta formativa”.*

*“The Teaching Body defines the necessary adaptation for teaching programs in connection with every foreign student's competence level; to reach this goal, specific, personalized or group-oriented interventions can be adopted in order to facilitate Italian language learning, utilizing when possible, professional resources from the school.*

*Strengthening the knowledge and practice of the Italian language can be realized through intensive Italian language courses based on specific projects, in range of supplementary teaching activities aimed to enrich the educational syllabus”.*

Although this Article does not explicitly mention evaluation, it is nonetheless related to it as the planning and creation of appropriate educational paths inherently concerns considering and evaluating a student's previous academic experiences.

Moreover, the Article promotes the selection of subjects and the identification of basic goals to reach. Thus, in order to adapt scholastic programmes it is necessary to adapt the evaluation modalities as well (cf. M.I.U.R., 2006).

The traditional summative evaluation, which aims to give an analysis of a student's performance and measures the level of learning through tests and exams, is gradually replaced by formative evaluations. This form of evaluation is instead based on recurring interactive evaluations of the student's improvements; its aim is to collect information that can help to enhance the student's performance.

### 3.2 What is 'Evaluation'?

Evaluation is a crucial component of didactics. Nonetheless, there are numerable difficulties that accompany it and are often related to constructing and interpreting students' exams.

Primarily, it is important to distinguish the notion of *evaluation* from that of the *test* and *certification*. A *test* is rather a collection of data that helps measure the achievement of certain didactic objectives. Conversely, an *evaluation* aims to consider and interpret the data provided by the test according to an objective measuring scale (cf. Balboni, 2002).

When teachers design tests, they must establish specific goals and their appropriateness to each student's educational level, academic inclinations and continuing educational path. Furthermore, it is fundamental to consider how much time a given exercise requires and to use a familiar format.

Upon consideration of the student-teacher relationship - in which there must be a mutual respect for and willingness to partake in the teacher's choices and the student's educational progress - it is important to explain the evaluation modalities that will be utilized and the weight of each exercise within the evaluative structure from the very beginning.

*Certification* provides a formal structure, in which the goals and the aims of every test are explained. However, certification does not take into consideration the special methodologies or learning paths present because it does not have a formative function.

A linguistic certification indicates how students have the capacity to use a language on their own, in a Country where that language is the every-day means of communication (cf. D'Annunzio, Serragiotto, 2007).

Linguistic certification also assigns an economic value to the language. The most significant example of certification is the Language Portfolio organized by the European Council.

With this certification, students are again positioned at the centre of attention: their educational process is the central point of evaluation. Their productivity, the relationship between their potentialities and the results are parameters used by teachers to evaluate them (cf. Porcelli, 1992).

Tessaro (2004) identifies six kind of activities characteristic of evaluation; these activities are inter-dependent and cannot be considered individually:

- *measurement and verification*: teachers must careful observe their students during lessons in order to find the most meaningful factors that help with learning;
- *supervision*: the oversight of the efficiency of the steps that compose the project or task at hand;
- *test*: the moment utilized for collecting data and consequently gauging student performance;
- *evaluation*: the interpretative analysis conducted on the data collected from the tests;
- *meta-evaluation*: a reflection phase that involves all the participants;
- *monitoring*: the project is monitored or guided in its realization.

### 3.2.1 Types of Evaluation

There are four discernible types of evaluation:

- *diagnostic evaluation*: is used at the beginning of the course and aims to both understand the students' academic competences in relation to the activities

planned and to observe different learning styles and cognitive skills. The diagnostic evaluation typologies can be distinguished through entrance exams;

- *summative evaluation*: observes the competences at the end of a learning unit. The summative evaluation typologies are traditional and include assignments and tests. This kind of evaluation has received adverse criticism because it is seen as incredibly selective, partial and capable of being influenced by external variables such as the teacher's mood. Subjectivity in evaluations can produce the following effects:
  - stereotype effect: the tendency that the first mark given to a student could influence the successive marks;
  - halo effect: the evaluation given in a certain subject can influence the evaluation of a separate, unrelated subject;
  - Pygmalion effect: the greater the expectation placed on individuals, the better those individuals will perform. Teachers can unconsciously release signals that may cause students to react in a certain way. Teachers can then learn to anticipate those reactions, depending on the stimulus provided. Teachers may also expect their students to encounter certain difficulties and, consequently, their students do in fact encounter those foreseen issues;
- *formative evaluation*: this type of evaluation started to spread in 1977, after the Law n.517 was passed on August 4th. As a result of this law, teaching and learning processes acquired a more relevant role. Formative evaluation is ongoing and it helps to alter and adapt didactic activities in order to fit students' needs. Thus, the learning process depends on both students and teachers;
- *suggestive evaluation*: aims to collect data that can guide students in making later academic choices (e.g. through questionnaires or interviews) (cf. Mion, 2009).

### 3.3 Authentic Assessment

As explored earlier, evaluation is ridden with numerous controversies. Research on evaluation is focused on identifying valid criteria in evaluating instruments due to the growing demand for more precise and objective measures.

In the 1990's, an opposite critical movement towards the behavioural assessment - based on standardized tests (including multiple choice exams) - arose in the U.S.. (It is important to note that in Italy, the same movement is found with different characteristics).

Then, in 1993, Grant Wiggins proposed an 'alternative' type of evaluation which replaced the more traditional previous version; it aimed to evaluate what students can actually do with their own knowledge, rather than evaluating just what they know. It highlighted how essential it is that students have the necessary skills to use their own knowledge in real-life situations and have the ability and resources to pursue their goals.

Wiggins affirms the following:

*"When we first started using it fifteen years ago, we merely meant to signify authentic work that big people actually do as opposed to fill-in-the-blanks, paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice, short-answer quiz, school-based assessment. So it's authentic in the sense [that] it's real. It's realistic. If you go into the work place, they don't give you a multiple-choice test to see if you're doing your job. They have some performance assessment, as they say in business"* (Wiggins, 2002).

Given that learning is often seen as the ability to transfer and apply acquired knowledge in real-life contexts, building tests in accordance with this type of assessment requires more effort. This kind of evaluation seems to be more 'democratic' because it provides everyone with the opportunity to improve.

Through authentic assessment, students can self-evaluate and teachers can simultaneously improve the learning process.

In adult learning, authentic assessment aims to integrate students into real life, where it is all the more fundamental to have aimed competences (cf. Comoglio, 2002).

In the essay *La valutazione autentica* (2002), M. Comoglio compiles a list of the characteristics of the authentic assessment made by Wiggins.

A summary of this list can be found below:

- assessment evaluation is realistic: the tasks proposed reproduce real-life situations;
- it requires innovation and judgement: students must solve non-structured problems using knowledge in an efficient and creative way;
- students have to 'build' subjects: they utilize their acquired knowledge of different subjects instead of repeating verbatim what they know;
- it simulates real contexts: students experiment real tasks in real contexts of adults' life;
- students can adequately use knowledge and skills in order to negotiate a complex task;
- assessment provides the opportunity to practice receiving real feedback and to improve a student's performance. This emphasis on student improvement gives assessment evaluation an educational function.

### 3.4 Evaluation of Adults

In student evaluations, it is crucial that teachers share the established linguistic goals to be expected with their students.

Adult students need to participate in the choices related to their own development in an academic setting and therefore must be aware of their improvements, the gaps in their knowledge and the ways to further their education. Thus, they should be able to self-evaluate.

In the self-evaluation of adult students, there are six types of evaluation activities to be considered, as previously illustrated in section 3.2: check and measuring, supervision, testing, evaluation, meta-evaluation and monitoring. Teacher will especially use check and measuring, supervision, testing, and evaluation in order to be as clear and objective as possible. Given that these evaluation activities are interdependent, they can be imagined as a spiral.

The adult learning process starts with an orientation phase, in which the students' needs and expectations are evaluated and courses are organized; subsequently, there is an evaluation used to observe the goals that have been reached and the linguistic skills

that have been acquired. A third phase of formative, ongoing evaluation ‘in itinere’, will survey the learning process. This phase can also be used as a form of student self-evaluation, where students can become aware of their improvement and limits (cf. Serragiotto, 2007).

### 3.5 Evaluation Instruments

The types of evaluation instruments are reported below:

- *self-evaluation*: useful especially with adults; it can be realized through multiple educational vectors such as through self-correcting dictations, cloze activities or matching activities. These are all exercises that allow students to become aware of their scholastic tendencies and their general educational development and direction without feeling anxious during the process. Self-evaluation allows adult students to become an active part of their own educational evaluation and development and it facilitates a transparent relationship with the teacher;
- the *Portfolio*: an appropriate instrument especially for L2 classes; it considers the students’ personal experiences and documents the students’ competences throughout the learning process. It is useful in adult evaluation because it makes adults more motivated and more responsible in their educational development; in this way, students actively participate in choosing course objectives, content and materials that will be signalled in the portfolio. The main types of portfolio are:
  - the Illustration Portfolio, used to show the students’ most significant and impressive work;
  - the Documentation Portfolio, which is a collection of work collected over time that represents the students’ improvements and results;
  - the Assessment Portfolio, which contains assessment grids and self-evaluation frameworks;
- the *Rubric*: an instrument that indicates how to reach a goal; it contains a list of parameters and a series of grids which outline the scores received (cf. Serragiotto, 2007).

### 3.6 The error analysis

The teacher should carefully consider how to treat student errors. In past behaviour theories, error was considered as something to be avoided and immediately corrected.

In language learning, error had a negative connotation and it was seen as the result of the interference of the mother language.

From the 1950's, error started to be seen in a new light as a component of educational and linguistic development. Chomsky contributed to the transition from a behavioural viewpoint to a more cognitive viewpoint in education, where error is regarded as a useful element in helping to understand the learning process and helping to especially understand students' strategies to learning a language. Students and their learning process become the focus once again.

While linguistics focuses on the types of errors (grammatical, lexical or phonological), the inter-linguistic analysis focuses on the diagnostic elements present at a specific point in the learning phase.

Inter-language is a language studied with which a student may not be completely competent due to an existing strong influence of the mother language. In the 1970's, L. Selinker proposed the inter-language theory, in which real language follows mental grammar rules and mixes both L1 and L2 rules (cf. Chini, 2005). Nowadays inter-language has changed and it is seen as a:

*“continuum di varietà linguistiche che si pongono nello spazio tra interlingua materna dell'apprendente e lingua seconda d'arrivo, caratterizzate da: sistematicità (...), instabilità nel tempo (...), variabilità individuale”* (Luise, 2006: 92);

*“continuum of linguistic varieties that are located between the learner's native inter-language and the L2 language. These varieties are characterized by orderliness (...), time instability (...), individual variability”* (Luise, 2006: 92).

Thus, Inter-language is a set of rules that corresponds to both L2 and L1 rules simultaneously; however, it is nonetheless independent from the L2 and L1 (cf. Caon, 2008).

According to Pallotti (1998), the acquisition of a language is not a *“simple sum of language pieces”*, but it is rather a *“never-ending building and renovation of a system”*.



The L2 learning sequences can be divided into three phases:

- the *pre-basic phase*: the phase during which a person uses a pragmatic means of communication (the ‘pragmatic mode’);
- the *basic phase*: where the pragmatic mode is not abandoned, but instead gradually substituted by the syntactic mode in which the student starts to use verbs;
- the *post-basic phase*: where the syntax becomes more and more complex (cf. Lo Duca, 2003).

In light of this, the analysis of diagnostic elements becomes incredibly important because through the diagnostic elements, teachers can constantly monitor the learning process to see if there are problems with student development or evaluation.

Moreover, teachers can organize more focused educational paths in order to satisfy the students’ needs as they become active participants in their own education (cf. D’Annunzio, Serragiotto, 2007).

### 3.6.1 How to consider errors in L2 contexts

In order to evaluate errors in L2 learning, it is necessary to consider the various types of errors and how to respond to them. In general, errors are considered according to these four criteria:

- accuracy: errors are seen as a deviation from language rules;
- pertinence: one’s linguistic knowledge (considered a communicative competence) demonstrates how errors can begin to compose a particular linguistic form;
- comprehensibility: errors that are taken into consideration when they affect the ability of the interlocutor to understand what is being communicated;
- subjectivity: teachers consider and evaluate errors in different ways, in accordance with their tolerance towards them in a given academic setting (cf. D’Annunzio, Serragiotto, 2007).

A teacher in an L2 class evaluation should:

- consider that L2 students are forced to encounter multiple difficulties simultaneously such as learning a new language, which is also the vehicular language and understanding new rules and reference points in the society (understanding especially where these rules and indications precisely come into play);
- consider previous personal experiences;
- consider the different cognitive and didactic styles of the students;
- be coherent and consistent, such that expectations for the students coincide with the material that has already been taught in class; for example, if teachers review lesson content only verbally (i.e. in front of the class without supplementary written notes), they cannot demand their students to have well-developed written competences;
- use familiar formats: teachers should be wary of believing in the existence of universal testing modalities, when what is “universal” ultimately depends on the linguistic competences and academic tendencies of a group of students in a given setting.

There are various assessment techniques depending on the variables that the teacher wants to evaluate. For example, when evaluating conversational skills, it is important to note that there can be different types of students: there are students that are highly motivated and therefore may talk significantly in class, but may not pay attention to their mistakes; then, there are other students who may not talk as much because they focus on paying attention to accuracy rather than fluency. The teacher must determine the aims of the exercises (to practice and test accuracy or fluency with the language), and then be careful with the type of feedback offered and the way it is given, especially with the latter group of students that will be focusing more on their grammar skills and may be more sensitive to intrusive comments.

The following list provides some correction strategies utilized in evaluating oral or conversational linguistic competences:

- immediate correction: correction that occurs right after the error is made; this kind of strategy is usually considered negative because it can create anxiety

and activate the affective filter. However, it can be used for efficiency and when there is not enough time to dedicate to giving detailed, explanatory corrections. In this case, the teacher must be careful to explain the reasons why this correction strategy is being used and emphasize that the aim is not to humiliate the students;

- student self-correction: in this kind of strategy the teacher does not intervene, but lets the students talk and correct themselves if they notice a particular error. Sometimes teachers can give students some signals (such as a perplexed facial expression) to indicate that there is a mistake; in this way, students are encouraged to correct themselves. However, teachers must be careful not to over-exaggerate the signals and must decide which errors can be overlooked, such as those that are based upon material that has not yet been covered in class. Teachers must also determine which errors require a brief immediate correction, or require an extensive explanation in a lesson;
- group correction: this strategy involves all students and requires a calm, non-competitive and cooperative class. The teacher should emphasize student collaboration and discourage competition.

As for written production, the tradition of signalling and correcting errors with red ink could be risky and favour the raise of the affective filter as it highlights errors in a negative way, rather than constructively. Moreover, it does not promote self-correction or further reflection on the grammatical nuances of the language. Instead, using positive feedback to accompany these signalled errors could be used to solve this problem. In this case too, teachers should only mark errors on material that has already treated in class (cf. Mezzadri, 2002).

In an affective-humanistic approach, the emphasis on students' growth and autonomy renders it all the more important for teachers to encourage students to formulate hypotheses and reflect on their own errors. Teachers should give students the room to correct themselves and remain protagonists of their own education.

In addition, teachers should not aspire to perfect their students' language competences, but rather try to focus on specific goals that their students should achieve. They must let their students be autonomous and cognizant that errors are part of the learning process.

*Part Two*  
A Case Study

## Chapter 4

### A case study

I have conducted a study aimed to understand the perception of a group of Italian L2 students towards in-class evaluation. In order to collect the essential data, I went to a CTP, a Territorial Permanent Centre, which offers different courses to foreign students. In this chapter I am going to explain the methods I used and what I found out after the analysis of the questionnaires.

#### 4.1 What are CTPs?

In the 1970's, the *150 Hours Courses and Literacy* were created as a result of a metalworker's contractual deal; the workers were given the possibility to improve their education during 150 salaried working hours.

As a result of the foundation of CTPs, the different literacy course experiences were able to be collected, integrated and enhanced. CTPs are centres created in accordance with the Ministerial Decree 455/97 of the Board of Supervisors. They are usually set in state elementary or in state middle schools, offering courses to promote the improvement of the education of adults (both Italians and foreigners) of ages 15 years and older. Through such courses, students (both foreigners and Italians) can study languages and computer science. In addition, students that did not attend middle or high school can ultimately get their high school diplomas.

#### 4.2 Methodology

The CTP I went to is located in Marghera at the *L. Einaudi* middle school. In the late afternoon, the *L. Einaudi* offers Italian L2 courses for foreign students. The Italian L2 course started on October 1st, 2013, and is currently running until the end of February for a total of 60 hours. Lessons are on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursday evenings, for three hours total per week. Thus to collect data for my investigation, I decided to hand out questionnaires to four classes of different language levels. When I gave my

questionnaires to the classes at the end of November, the students were already quite familiar with one another. The questionnaires consisted of questions focusing on the students' feelings and attitudes towards in-class evaluation practiced in homework review and as demonstrated by the final test. The classes belong to four different levels: A1, A2, B1 and an upper level which is not exactly a B2 and thus, for convenience, will be referred to here as B1+.

The questionnaires are strictly anonymous and all include a brief introduction where I asked the students to write their gender, age and school ranking in order to best understand the class composition and to contextualize the data received. The succeeding questions were adapted to the different language competence levels of each class. Thus, I primarily used closed questions for the A1 and A2 students while for the B1 and B1+ students, I added some open-ended questions and I gave a longer and more structured questionnaire.

Concurrent with these students' questionnaires, I also gave a questionnaire to the teachers (identical for all levels), in order to compare their responses to the students' ones.

A total of 54 questionnaires were collected and separated into four groups for each of the four classes. Then, I counted and categorized them for the final analysis. During the analysis, I created some tables for the closed questions (as demonstrated below in figure 4.1). There are three columns: the first column contains the number of the question and corresponding answers (yes or no), the second one displays the number of students that responded yes or no and the third has the same results in percentages.

Fig. 4.1 Example:

<i>n.x</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	0	0%
No	0	0%

In addition, I created a pie chart for the open-ended questions to provide a visual representation of the results.

The analysis of the closed questions was simpler than the analysis of the open-ended ones. There were some difficulties faced in contextualizing certain responses that did not seem relevant or significant to the questions presented and the

investigation in general. Furthermore, there were some issues on a more explicit and grammatical level, with the expression of certain ideas and sentiments as evident in misspellings and convoluted syntax and sentence structure. The students' handwriting was, at times, difficult to decipher as well.

### 4.3 Analysing Students' and Teachers' Questionnaires

In this section, I will proceed with the analysis of the questionnaires. The investigation is divided into the four levels of competence: A1, A2, B1 and B1+.

#### 4.3.1 Questionnaire A1

The level A1 class is an interracial class made up of 18 students: 11 females between 15 and 36 years old and 7 males between 19 and 26 years old.

In the class there are:

- 6 students from Bangladesh;
- 4 students from China;
- 1 student from Egypt;
- 1 student from Jordan;
- 1 student from Kashmir;
- 1 student from Pakistan;
- 1 student from Romania;
- 1 student from Senegal;
- 1 student from Tunisia;
- 1 student from Ukraine.

Four students attended university, six students attended through high school, seven attended only through middle school and one attended only elementary school all in their native countries. I gave these students a very straightforward questionnaire that contained mostly closed questions (10 yes/no questions) given the present level of the language comprehension, and one open question.

*1. Does the teacher explain the lesson in class clearly?*

The first three questions were aimed to understand the class atmosphere and to determine if it is a pleasant environment in which the teacher serves both as a reference model and a guide to the students, helping them fulfil a set of pre-determined objectives.

17 students answered yes, while only one student said no. He then explains that it is because despite the teacher's attentiveness and helpfulness, he does not understand Italian very well.

<i>n.1</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	17	94,5%
No	1	5,5%

Almost the entire class, 94,5%, concluded that the teacher explains the lesson in class clearly, which is fundamental to student participation and knowledge acquisition in class.

*2. Do you ask the teacher to explain the class material again when you do not understand it?*

15 students out of 18 ask the teacher to go over again the material that was not made clear to them. On the other hand, 3 students do not ask for additional explanations. It is interesting to note that these 3 students come from China and Egypt, countries where students are known to be incredibly deferential, listening passively and perhaps refraining from asking for additional help out of fear of embarrassing themselves in front of the rest of the class.

<i>n.2</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	15	83,3%
No	3	16,7%

83,3% of the students ask for clarifications, while 16,7% did not.

This indicates that students perceive quite a relaxed environment in class, in which they feel free to express their doubts on class material.



### 3. Does the teacher explain the programme at the beginning of the course?

Almost the entire class – 17 out of 18 students – said that the programme was presented at the beginning of the course; the only student who answered ‘no’ could have likely been absent or merely did not understand the teacher’s explanation of the course material.

<i>n.3</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	17	94,5%
No	1	5,5%

It is important that the teacher explains from the beginning how he/she wants to organise his/her course and that he/she clarifies the course aims that the students will be able to achieve:

*“La conoscenza degli obiettivi permette a colui che studia di dirigere meglio la sua attività e il suo interesse, ed è provato che gli studenti imparano prima e meglio se conoscono (e capiscono) gli obiettivi del loro lavoro” (C. Pontecorvo, 1995).*

*“Knowing the objectives, allows the student to better direct his/her activity and interests [towards the completion of those objectives], it is demonstrated that students learn more efficiently and faster if they know (and understand) the objectives of their work” (C. Pontecorvo, 1995).*

It is also important to let students participate in the decisions made by the teacher regarding course structure, content and objectives, through the educational pact. This pact is a form of agreement that helps the teacher and the students to find a point of equilibrium between their needs and expectations. The teacher will have to clearly explain the lesson plans, as well as the importance of the students’ own involvement in those plans and their realization. Thus, here the key word becomes *negotiation*, as the teacher and the students have to negotiate class plans and organization, in order to create a more collaborative environment and avoid the risk of discouraging the class from actively participating in their own academic development (cf. Caon, 2008).

### 4. Do you have homework?

This question is in preparation for the succeeding ones which will focus on how students respond to in-class homework review and correction and their attitude towards it.

The entire class answered ‘yes’, that the teacher gives homework so the students can learn to work independently and develop a sense of self-awareness.

<i>n.4</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	18	100%
No	0	0%

5. *If yes, do you think that your homework assignments are easy or hard?*

The class is perfectly divided into two in response to this question. Nine students think that the assigned homework is easy, while the other nine think that it is hard.

<i>n.5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Easy	9	50%
Hard	9	50%

It is important that the teacher assigns tasks appropriate to the students’ language levels, so as not to discourage them from participating in class activities and from consequently slowing the development of their language skills. From the Chomskyan Hypothesis, where language acquisition is seen as an unconscious, more profound and resilient process, while language learning is rational and rather short-lived, Krashen developed the *Second Language Acquisition Theory*. According to this theory, in order to promote language acquisition, it is necessary that the student be exposed to an *input* rendered comprehensible by the teacher and set according to a natural order; the student has to be exposed to this new input immediately after the preceding input has already been acquired. Hence the formula  $i + 1$ , where  $i$  represents the already acquired input and  $+1$  represents the immediate higher step (cf. Balboni, 2002).

In order to promote language acquisition and to not discourage students from confronting difficult tasks, it is important to propose tasks with familiar formats, or to present tasks with new formats acquired through simple inferences and links (cf. Luise, 2006).

6. *Is your homework checked in class?*

Only one student said that homework is not checked in class; however, I do not consider this answer a valid response in agreement with the rest of the questionnaire because in the subsequent question, the entire class said that they felt relaxed while

reviewing their homework. Therefore, I think that this particular answer is the result of a misunderstanding of the question.

<i>n.6</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	17	94,5%
No	1	5,5%

Homework revision is very important to providing a form of feedback to the students' work. It is crucial that the teacher spends a considerable amount of time reviewing homework in class so that the students can become more aware of their skills and of the areas where they need to improve.

#### 7. *How do you feel during homework review?*

As noted before, the whole class feels relaxed during the in-class review of the homework.

<i>n.7</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Relaxed	18	100%
Nervous	0	0%

The in-class homework review can create anxiety and call into question one's self-confidence. Krashen calls this unconscious reaction that can disrupt the continuity of knowledge acquisition by creating a barrier between external input and acquisition, the *affective filter*. This filter behaves fundamentally like a switch: when the affective filter is activated or 'switched on', acquisition of the knowledge presented by the external input and to be acquired by the student's mind is impeded (cf. Balboni, 2002).

The data in the table above confirms that the class environment is relaxed, as deduced from the first questions.

The teacher can emphasize that the homework review activity does not aim to judge, punish or humiliate the students. On the contrary, it is an opportunity to help them improve and understand their mistakes.

8. *Do you prefer to work alone or in a group?*

This question aims to understand how the students usually work; according to the activities proposed by the teacher, the students feel comfortable in the class setting. A third of the class, approximately 33,3%, prefers to work alone. Students n.1 and n.11 - from Ukraine and Romania respectively - and students n.2, 3, 7 and 13 - all from China - prefer to work alone. This happens to coincide with the cultural conception that Chinese students are usually rather autonomous in a classroom setting, and thus prefer to work independently.

<i>n.8</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
In group	12	66,7%
Alone	6	33,3%

Considering the Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* and the different cognitive styles, it is evident that each student has his/her own learning strategy.

Gardner identifies seven different types of intelligence: the linguistic intelligence, the logical-mathematical intelligence, the musical intelligence, the spatial intelligence, the bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, the personal intelligence and the naturalistic intelligence (cf. Caon, 2008). These intelligences can be found in every person in different ratios.

As for the cognitive styles, we can find two types: the analytic cognitive style, which can be found in more introverted people and the global-holistic one, which can be found in more extroverted people (cf. Balboni, 2002). Every person is different, therefore the teacher must utilize diverse teaching models and activities to cater to the various types of learning styles present in a given classroom that do not ultimately favour only one type of student. The teacher should alternate between group and individual activities in order not to favour or disadvantage any of the students; in this way, every student will be able to express him/herself and work in a more congenial and productive way.

9. *Have you already talked about the final test in class?*

The last questions are focussed on the final test. This question helps us to understand if the teacher has already talked to the class about the final test, how it will be structured and the evaluation modality. It is just as important to establish the

structure of the course and its aims through the educational pact at the beginning of the course, as it is to talk about the final test. Presenting the final test structure and its specifics allows students to know what to expect and therefore makes them feel more comfortable and decrease their affective filter.

<i>n.9</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	13	72,2%
No	5	27,8%

The 72,2% of students that responded, 'yes', is a significantly high percentage and shows that the teacher is aware of the significance of explaining the final test beforehand. The 5 students who answered 'no' to the question may have been absent or inattentive.

*10. Are you worried about the final test?*

As shown on the table below, half of the class feels worried about the final test and half does not.

<i>n.10</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	9	50%
No	9	50%

The high percentage of worried students could be due to the fact that while the final test was discussed, the sheer quantity of information provided about it was not sufficient. There may still be serious doubts regarding the final exam that were not shared due to the students' shyness and therefore have not been acknowledged or alleviated. It is important to highlight that the students n.1 – 11 - 14 and 18 said that the teacher did not talk about the final test and that they therefore feel worried about it.

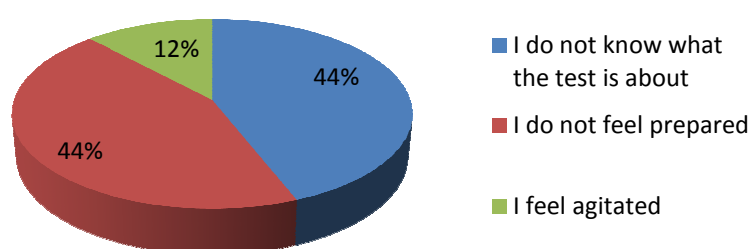
This demonstrates the importance of elucidating the details of final test (format, content, time restrictions etc.) and to include the students in the conversation of these elements.

## 11. Why?

The last question is the only open question. In order to analyze the answers, I divided them into two groups: the first is made up of the students who feel worried and the second is made up of the students who do not feel worried.

Instead of a table, I created a pie chart to give a better visualization of the percentages.

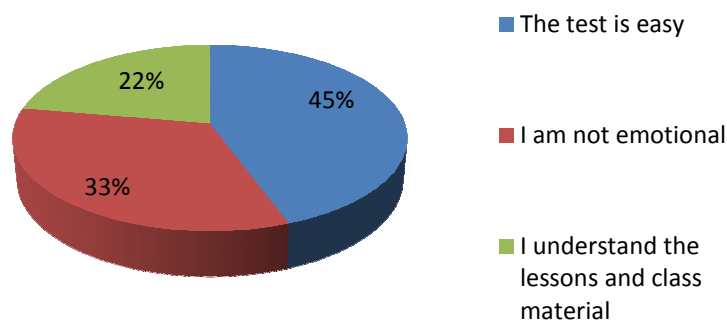
*Why are you worried about the final test?*



- I do not know what the test is about 44% (n.1 – 11 – 14 – 18);
- I do not feel prepared 44% (n.4 – 13 – 16 – 17);
- I feel agitated every time I have to take an exam 12% (n.15).

The students feel worried primarily because they do not know how the test will be structured (n.1 – 11 – 14 – 18) and because they feel that their level of language competence is not adequate (n.4 – 13 – 16 – 17). Student n.5 feels worried rather because she thinks she is an emotional person. The chart above displays the percentages that correspond with the data described above.

*Why do you not feel worried about the final test?*



- The test is easy 45% (n.2 – 3 – 5 – 7);
- I am not an emotional person 33% (n.6 – 8 – 12);
- I understand the lessons and class material 22% (n.9 – 10).

The majority of the students that said that they do not feel worried, think that the test will be easy; perhaps after discussing the final exam with the teacher, they feel more self-assured and ready to confront it. Three students think that they are not particularly emotional people and two students feel relaxed because they think that they can easily follow the lessons. The chart above shows the percentages corresponding to this analysis.

#### 4.3.2 Questionnaire A2

The level A2 class is made up of 9 students: 5 females between the ages of 19 and 55 years old and 4 males between the ages of 27 and 50 years old.

These students all come from different countries:

- 1 student from Albany;
- 2 students from Bangladesh;
- 1 student from Cuba;
- 1 student from Romania;
- 1 student from Turkey;
- 2 students from Ukraine;
- 1 student from Vietnam.

In Ukraine, only one student attended university, five students attended through high school, two attended through middle school, and one student did not answer.

This questionnaire is slightly longer than the previous one and it is divided into 3 sections: the first section concerns the teacher and includes 3 closed questions; the second section concerns the class lessons and includes 7 closed questions and 2 open questions; the last section regarding the final test, is made up of 2 closed questions and one open question, for a total of 15 questions.

### ***The teacher***

#### *1. Does the teacher explain the lesson in class clearly?*

<i>n.1</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	7	77,8%
No	2	22,2%

From the chart above, it appears evident that the teacher explains the lesson in class clearly. However, two students from Bangladesh stated having significant difficulties in the lessons conducted by the teacher.

#### *2. Do you ask the teacher to explain the class material again when you do not understand it?*

<i>n.2</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	7	77,8%
No	2	22,2%

In general, students have described asking for clarifications about the lesson content or plan; nonetheless, it is interesting to note that 2 students, (one from Turkey and one from Ukraine), mentioned refraining from asking for clarifications in class.

Perhaps this is due to their previous academic experiences where students may not have intervened as frequently in class. As it has been discussed in previous chapters, some students of certain ethnic backgrounds do not ask questions in class or actively participate because they are accustomed to respecting a certain form of hierarchy even in academic institutions or because they are afraid of compromising their self-esteem in front of others.



3. *Is the teacher willing to give clarifications about the lesson in class?*

The data in the chart below confirm that the teacher is willing to offer clarifications for class material, as the class unanimously answered 'yes'. Consequently, it can be suggested that the two students from Turkey and Ukraine that did not ask for further explanations and clarifications in class may have behaved like so due to the behavioural customs present in academic institutions of their native country.

<i>n.3</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	9	100%
No	0	0%

***The lesson***

4. *Does the teacher explain the programme at the beginning of the course?*

<i>n.4</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	8	88,9%
No	1	11,1%

The chart indicates that the teacher has presented the class programme at the beginning of the course. As already noted, this is important in order to encourage students to be involved in their education and the choices made regarding it. Only one student stated that the teacher did not explain the programme; given that the vast majority saw the contrary, possible assumptions for this response could be that the student was not paying attention or was absent from class the day that material was covered.

5. *Are you interested in the topics that the teacher presents in class?*

5 out of 9 students responded being interested in the topics proposed in class, while 4 students are not. This disparity is substantial because it is important to engage adult students in their education as much as possible; they need to be able to use their acquired knowledge in real life. Thus, discussing topics with which the students do not identify can hinder the learning process.

<i>n.5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	5	55,6%
No	4	44,4%

6. *Do you have homework?*

As in the previous questionnaire, this question is in preparation for the succeeding questions, which will focus on the students' attitude towards the in-class revision and correction. The student who answered 'I do not know' specified that she had started the course a few weeks late.

<i>n.6</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	8	88,9%
I do not know	1	11,1%

7. *If yes, do you think that your homework assignments are easy or hard?*

<i>n.7</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Easy	4	44,4%
Hard	4	44,4%
I do not know	1	11,2%

4 out of 9 students think that their homework assignments are appropriate to their linguistic levels. 4 students said that their homework assignments are hard.

Giving homework assignments that are too hard for them can cause students to feel dejected, or incompetent with the language and thus resentful towards it. The teacher should be wary of discouraging their students from continuing with their language education and should therefore try to assign homework assignments appropriate to their levels of linguistic competence. The same student, who arrived a few weeks late, was unable to determine if the homework assignments are easy or hard.

8. *Is your homework checked in class?*

The entire class - except for the late student - asserts that their homework is checked in class.

<i>n.8</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	8	88,9%
No	0	0%
I do not know	1	11,1%

9. *How do you feel during homework review?*

5 students feel relaxed during the in-class review of their homework, while 3 students feel nervous. It is interesting to note that the students that feel nervous include the two students from Bangladesh (who have stated before that the teacher does not explain the lessons clearly) and the student from Ukraine (who does not ask for clarifications). These students probably have a high affective filter that, in turn, blocks the learning process. They are also likely influenced by their previous academic experiences; the difficulties they encountered understanding the teacher's lessons and the lack of clarifications asked for, indicate that external, perhaps cultural factors, may be at play. The risk of the loss of motivation is therefore extremely high when considering these factors.

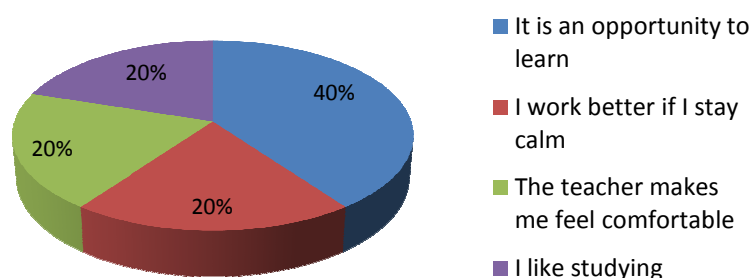
<i>n.9</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Relaxed	5	55,6%
Nervous	3	33,3%
I do not know	1	11,1%

10. *Why?*

This is the first of the three open questions of the questionnaire. As in the previous questionnaire, I have divided the answers into two groups: the relaxed students and the nervous students and I displayed the results in a pie chart in order to offer a visual representation with accompanying reasons for these feelings.

*Why do you feel relaxed during in-class homework review?*

The percentages for each response to the above question are presented below:



- it is an opportunity to learn 40% (n.3 - 5);
- I work better if I stay calm 20% (n.4);
- the teacher makes me feel comfortable 20% (n.8);
- I like studying 20% (n.9).

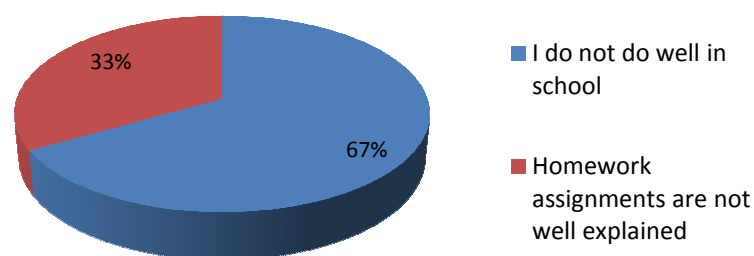
Students n.3 and 5 feel relaxed during the in-class homework review because they are aware that the in-class review is an opportunity for them to learn. Student n.4 is aware that if she keeps calm, she can work better and therefore learn more efficiently - in other words, her affective filter is low. Student n.8 feels relaxed because the teacher helps him remain calm during homework review. Student n.9, responded that she likes studying; this is probably a result of her own motivation to learn the language and the pleasure she sees in learning.

According to Balboni's re-examination of Titone's ego-dynamic model, there are three important factors that favour motivation: duty, need and pleasure. A motivation founded on duty does not necessarily result in knowledge acquisition because one rather feels obliged to learn a subject, so as not to embarrass oneself or appear ignorant; a high affective filter level therefore accompanies such acquisition.

Motivation based on need is linked anatomically to the left analytic cerebral hemisphere and sociologically to one's personal expectations and goals; it becomes evident when students feel they have satisfied their need to learn a subject and thus they consequently lose further interest in that subject. Motivation based on intrinsic pleasure is linked to both the right holistic cerebral hemisphere and left analytic hemisphere; therefore, it can be a very strong type of motivation that leads to knowledge acquisition (cf. Caon, 2008).

Teachers know that in-class correction is a useful activity for students to check their competence level; thus, teachers try to create a relaxed and peaceful academic environment so as not to cause a sense of anxiety.

*Why do you feel nervous during in-class homework review?*



- I do not do well in school 67% (n.1 - 9);
- homework assignments are not well explained by the teacher 33% (n.6).

Two students asserted that the main reason why they feel nervous is because they feel inadequate; this may be because they feel that their competence level is not sufficient enough to complete the tasks proposed by the teacher, or they may feel too old to return to school - especially student n.9 who is 55 years old.

Student n.6 attributes her nervousness to the fact that in her opinion, the teacher does not explain the assignments clearly enough. Once again, the importance of having a comprehensible input is demonstrated: in order to promote acquisition, the new input must be clear and understandable for the students.

#### *11. Do you prefer to work alone or in a group?*

Almost the entire class prefers to work in a group, except for student n.2 who prefers to work alone. As we have seen in the previous responses, student n.2 has some difficulties with understanding the teacher's in-class explanations and believes that the homework is hard. As a result, this student may feel inadequate and his affective filter may be high, resulting in the preference to work alone rather than work with others.

<i>n.11</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
In group	8	88,9%
Alone	1	11,1%

#### *12. Why?*

All eight students who prefer to work in a group stated unanimously that the reason is because they find that cooperative work allows for the exchange of competences and they can learn from one other.

Student n.2 prefers to work alone perhaps because he is afraid of humiliating himself in front of the others, or because he is afraid of not knowing enough.

#### ***The final test***

#### *13. Have you already talked about the final test in class?*

<i>n.13</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	5	55,6%
No	4	44,4%

5 out of 9 students said that they have already discussed the final exam in class, while the rest of the class said that the final exam has not been discussed. This presents some controversy as the class is divided in two; the teacher may have presented the test too transparently or superficially or some of the students may have been absent or not attentive.

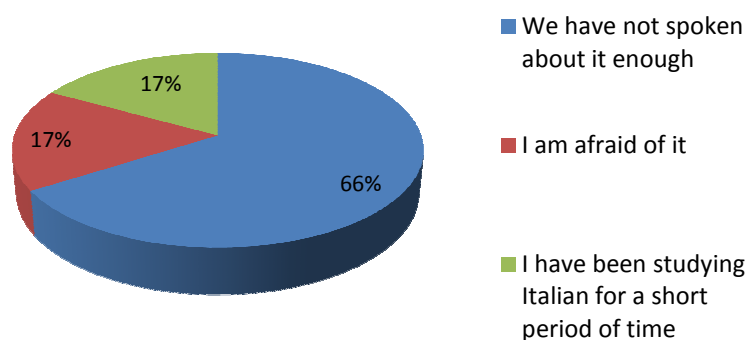
#### *14. Are you worried about the final test?*

<i>n.14</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	6	66,7%
No	3	33,3%

More than a half of the class responded that they are worried about the test, while only three students said that they are not afraid. The reasons for these responses will be presented in the following question.

### 15. Why?

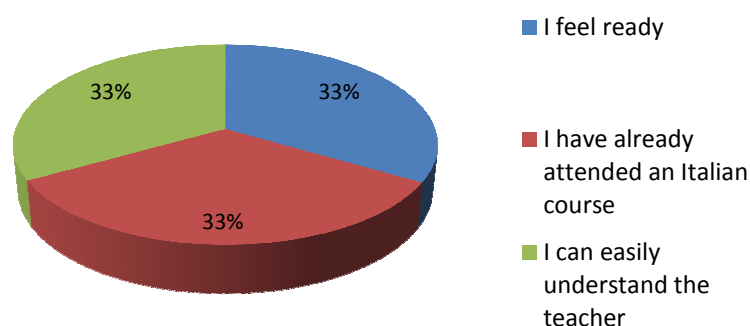
*Why are you worried about the final test?*



- We have not spoken about it enough 66% (n.3 - 9 - 5 - 6);
- I am afraid of it 17% (n.4);
- I have been studying Italian for a short period of time 17% (n.7).

The main reason why students feel worried about the test is because they think that they have not spoken about it enough in class. They need to know how the test will be structured and assessed. Student n.4 said vaguely, 'I am afraid I will not pass it' without explaining why. Student n.7 reasoned that she had been studying Italian for a short amount of time and therefore she feels linguistically inadequate.

*Why do you not feel worried about the final test?*



- I feel ready 33% (n.1);
- I have already attended an Italian course 33% (n.2);
- I can easily understand the teacher 33% (n.8).

The three students who said that they are not worried about the final test gave different reasons. Student n.1 said that he is not afraid because he feels ready and believes his level of language competence is high enough to pass it. Conversely, student n.2 - who previously had problems understanding the teacher's in-class explanation and found the homework too hard - surprisingly answered that he is not worried about the final test because he had already attended an Italian course. Lastly, student n.8 said that he feels relaxed about the test because he can easily understand the teacher.

#### 4.3.3 Questionnaire B1

The level B1 class is made up of 10 female students between the ages of 25 and 62 years old.

These students are from the following countries:

- 1 student from Brazil;
- 1 student from Colombia;
- 2 students from Russia;
- 5 students from Ukraine;
- 1 student from Vietnam.

Seven students attended university, while three students attended through high school.

The questionnaire that will be analyzed in this portion of the investigation is different from the other two questionnaires: it contains more questions overall (21 in total) and more open-ended questions. In addition, there are three sections: the first section contains closed questions about the teacher; the second section concerns the lesson content and contains nine closed questions and three open-ended questions; the last section is about the final test and contains both closed and open-ended questions.



### ***The teacher***

1. *Does the teacher explain the lesson in class clearly?*

<i>n.1</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%

The entire class thinks that the teacher explains the lesson clearly.

2. *Do you ask the teacher to explain the class material again when you do not understand it?*

<i>n.2</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%

In this case, the entire class answered that they would ask for clarifications if they do not understand something during in class.

3. *Is the teacher willing to give clarifications about the lesson in class?*

<i>n.3</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%

2 students out of 10 said that the teacher is not willing to give clarifications about the lesson in class.

### ***The lesson***

4. *Does the teacher explain the programme at the beginning of the course?*

<i>n.4</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	7	70%
No	3	30%

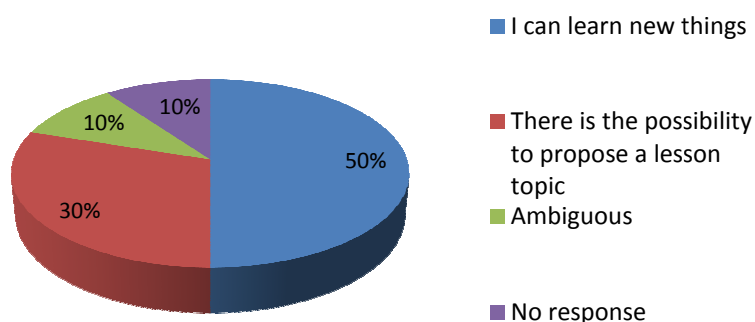
Students n.1, 3 and 9 answered that the programme was not explained at the beginning of the course, while the rest of the class answered that the programme was explained.

5. *Are you interested in the topics that the teacher presents in class?*

<i>n.5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%

The whole class shows interest in the topics presented by the teacher.

6. *Why are you interested in the topics proposed in class?*



- I can learn new things 50% (n.2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 9);
- there is the possibility to propose a lesson topic 30% (n.7 – 8 – 10);
- ambiguous 10% (n.1);
- no response 10% (n.6).

Half of the class said that they are interested in the topics proposed in class because they have the opportunity to learn new things. They could then perhaps give what they learn a practical purpose and translate it into real life. 30% of the class said that there is the possibility to propose a lesson topic in class.

Student n.1 gave an ambiguous answer and stated in question n.5 that she considers the topic proposed in class interesting, but then that her level of interest depends on the topic. Student n.6 instead did not answer the question.

7. *Is there the opportunity to suggest additional topics to the teacher?*

<i>n.7</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	9	90%
No	1	10%

The entire class except for student n.4 said that they are given the possibility to propose a lesson topic to the teacher.

8. *Does the teacher explain the goals of the course from the very beginning?*

<i>n.8</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	7	70%
No	3	30%

Students n.1 – 3 and 9 said that the goals that they are expected to reach in the course were not explained at the beginning. These same students in question n.4 said that the teacher did not explain the programme either at the beginning of the course. It could be assumed that these students were absent, since seven others agreed that both the programme and goals are exposed at the beginning of the course.

9. *Do you have homework?*

<i>n.9</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%

100% of the class confirmed that the teacher assigns homework to their students.

10. *If yes, do you think that your homework assignments are easy or hard?*

<i>n.10</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Easy	7	70%
Hard	2	20%
It depends	1	10%

7 students think that their homework assignments are easy, while students n.8 and 9 think they are hard. Student n.1 was ambivalent and said that the level of difficulty of the assignments may depend on additional factors.

*11. Is your homework checked in class?*

<i>n.11</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	9	90%
Sometimes	1	10%

Almost the entire class (except for one student) said that homework is checked in class; student n.1 answered that homework is only sometimes checked in class.

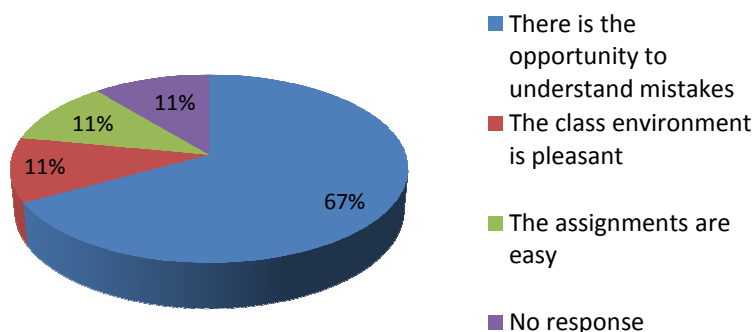
*12. How do you feel during homework review?*

<i>n.12</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Relaxed	9	90%
Nervous	1	10%

Only student n.7 feels nervous during the homework review. The rest of the class feels relaxed. The next questions will clarify the reasons why students may feel relaxed or nervous.

*13. Why?*

*Why do you feel relaxed during in-class homework review?*



- There is the opportunity to understand mistakes 67% (n.2 – 3 – 5 – 6 – 8 – 9);
- the class environment is pleasant 11% (n.1);

- the assignments are easy 11% (n.10);
- no response 11% (n.4).

6 students out of 9 said that the reason they feel relaxed during homework review is because through the in-class review, they can learn and reflect on the language from their mistakes. One student said that she feels calm because the class environment is pleasant; another student finds the homework assignments easy so she does not worry about in-class review. Student n.4 did not provide a reason for why she feels relaxed.

*Why do you feel nervous during in-class homework review?*

Only one student feels nervous during the homework review because she is afraid to make mistakes; thus, her affective filter is probably high because she is worried about embarrassing herself in front of her peers.

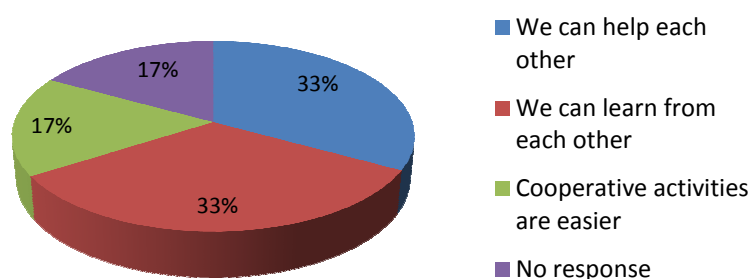
*14. Do you prefer to work alone or in a group?*

6 out of 10 students prefer to work in a group; students n.1 – 3 – 4 and 5, instead, prefer to work alone.

<i>n.14</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
In group	6	60%
Alone	4	40%

*15. Why?*

*Why do you prefer to work in a group?*

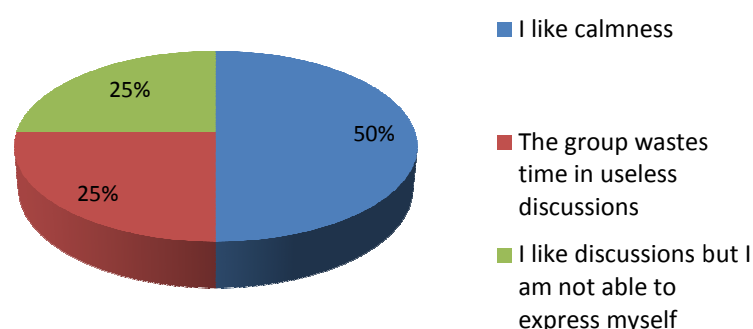


- We can help each other 33% (n.7 - 9);
- we can learn from each other 33% (n.8 - 10);

- cooperative activities are easier 17% (n.6);
- no response 17% (n.2).

In general, students prefer to work in groups because they can confront difficulties with one other and learn from one other.

*Why do you prefer working alone?*



- I like calmness 50% (n.3 - 5);
- the group wastes time in useless discussions 25% (n.1);
- I like discussions, but I am not able to express myself 25% (n.4).

Students n.3 and n.5, both from Ukraine, prefer to work alone because they consider in-group activities too loud and chaotic. Perhaps, in their previous academic experiences, they were used to working independently and in a fairly calm class environment. Student n.1, instead, does not feel comfortable during group activities because she feels like she is wasting her time. It appears that for adult students in particular, time is precious: if the time spent in class is not considered useful and does not satisfy the students' needs, they will lose interest in learning the language and their acquisition process will be halted.

Conversely, student n.4 prefers to work alone not because she does not like group activities, but because she feels inadequate; she feels unable to express herself fully, and thus she does not think that she has the appropriate level of linguistic competences required to hold a conversation.

### *The final test*

16. Have you already talked about the final test in class?

<i>n.16</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	3	30%
No	7	70%

70% of the class asserts that the final test has not been discussed in class.

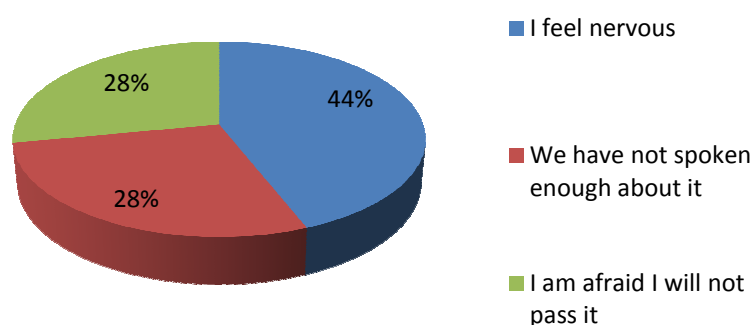
17. Do you often think about the final test?

<i>n.17</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	7	70%
No	3	30%

It is interesting to note that the same students who answered that they have not talked about the final test in class, also mentioned that they often think about the exam. Not knowing how the test will be structured clearly makes them feel worried.

18. Why?

*Why do you often think about the final test?*



- I feel nervous 44% (n.3 – 4 – 8);
- we have not spoken enough about it 28% (n.6 – 10);
- I am afraid I will not pass it 28% (n.7 – 9).

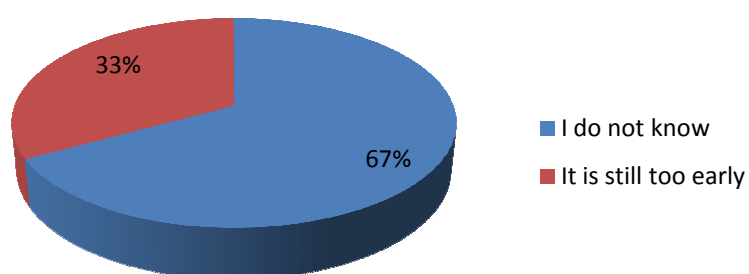
Three students answered that they often think about the final test because they feel nervous; two students confirmed that they often think about the test because they have

not spoken enough about it in class. Two other students attributed thinking often about the test to a fear of not passing it.

In my opinion, the reason why these students often think about the final test is because they have not spoken enough about it - this is supported by the fact that all of these students affirm in question n.16 that they have not spoken about the test in class.

Thus, the fact that three students feel nervous and that two are afraid not to pass the exam is likely attributable to a lack of discussion and explanation about the exam (as students n.6 and 10 answered).

*Why do you not think about the final test?*



- I do not know 67% (n.1 – 2);
- it is still too early 33% (n.5).

Students n.1 and 2 do not know why they do not think about the final test; perhaps, as student n.5 stated, students 1 and 2 believe that there is still enough time to prepare themselves for the test before they have to start worrying.

*19. Are you worried about the final test?*

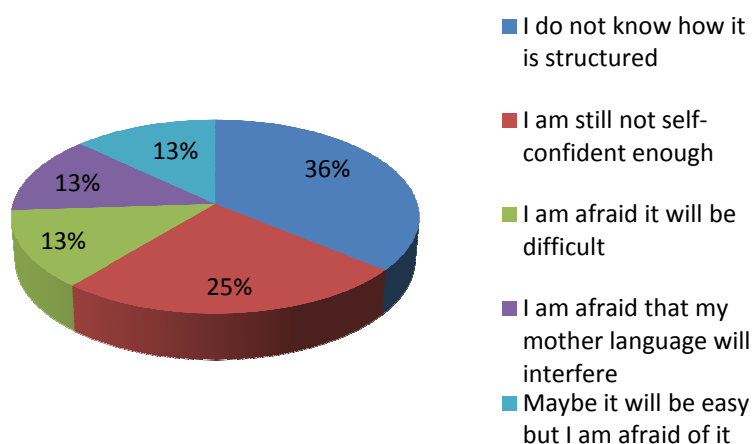
<i>n.19</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%

Almost the entire class is worried about the final test, especially those who affirmed that the final exam was not discussed in class.



## 20. Why?

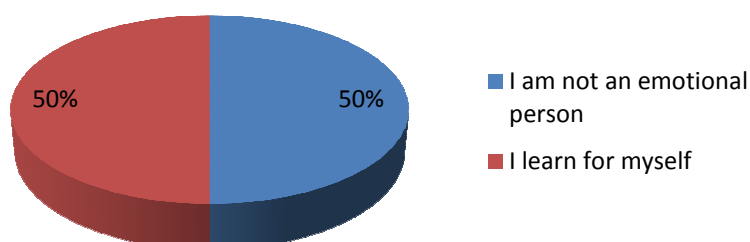
*Why are you worried about the final test?*



- I do not know how the test is structured 36% (n.7 – 8 – 9);
- I am still not self-confident enough 25% (n.4 – 6);
- I am afraid that the test will be difficult 13% (n.3);
- I am afraid that my mother language will interfere 13% (n.1);
- maybe the test will be easy, but I am afraid of it 13% (n.10).

As confirmed previously, almost the entire class is worried about the final test: those who said that they have not spoken enough about it in class are mostly afraid of the test because they do not know how it will be structured or because they do not feel adequately prepared. Student n.1, who previously said that she does not think about the test that much, said however, that she is worried that her native language (Spanish) will interfere with the cultivation of her Italian language skills.

*Why do you not feel worried about the final test?*

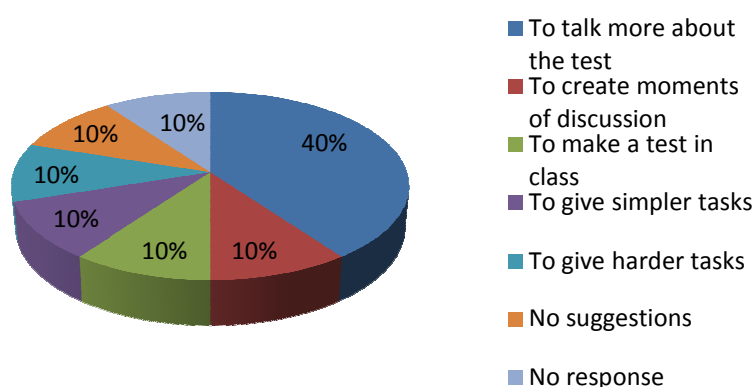


- I am not an emotional person 50% (n.2);

- I learn for myself and not in order to pass a test 50% (n.5).

Student n.2 is not worried about the test because she does not consider herself to be an emotional person, while student n.5 is aware that the most important thing is to learn, rather than to merely pass the test. She probably has a high motivation based not only on the need to learn the language, but on pleasure as well.

21. *If you could give some advice to the teacher, what would you suggest to him/her?*



- To talk more about the test 40% (n.2 – 6 – 7 – 8);
- to create more moments of discussion of topics chosen by students 10% (n.1);
- to make a test in class 10% (n.3);
- to give simpler tasks 10% (n.9);
- to give harder tasks 10% (n.10);
- no suggestions 10% (n.5);
- no response 10% (n.4).

This question was designed in order to help students see what the most urgent things are in their education. These results coincide with what was discovered from the questionnaire: the majority of the class (40%) feels the need to talk more about the test. The rest of the class needs to see how the test will be structured (n.3), or will wait to become well prepared through class discussions (n.1), and to adapt the course level to their own (n.9 and 10). Only one student said that she does not have any suggestions; another student instead, did not answer at all.

#### 4.3.4 Questionnaire B1+

The level B1+ class is made up of 13 students: nine female students between the ages of 18-60 years old, and four male students between the ages of 28-55 years old.

These students come from the following countries:

- 2 students from Bangladesh;
- 2 students from Brazil;
- 1 student from China;
- 1 student from Egypt;
- 3 students from Moldavia;
- 3 students from Russia;
- 1 student from Ukraine.

In this group of students, eight students went to university, three received a formal education through high school, one student attended through middle school, and one student attended university but did not finish.

This questionnaire is identical to the questionnaire given to the B1 level students. It contains 21 questions divided into three sections: one section is about the teacher, one concerns the lessons in class, and the last section is based on the final test. The questions are both closed and open-ended and students are asked to offer some suggestions that they would give to the teacher at the end.

##### *The teacher*

##### *1. Does the teacher explain the lessons in class clearly?*

<i>n.1</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	12	92,3%
No	1	7,7%

Almost the entire class, except for the student from Egypt, thinks that the teacher explains the lessons clearly in class. This may be due to the fact that this student only had a formal education up through middle school, and he is 55 years old. As noted in

chapter two, Freddi (1974) asserts that the older and the less educated a person is, the more difficulties he or she may encounter when learning.

2. *Do you ask the teacher to explain the class material again when you do not understand it?*

<i>n.2</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	7	53,8%
No	6	46,2%

The class is divided into two groups: one group of students confirmed that they ask the teacher to clarify material in class, while the other group of students do not ask for clarifications.

3. *Is the teacher willing to give clarifications about the lesson in class?*

<i>n.3</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	12	92,3%
No	1	7,7%

Only one student said that the teacher is not willing to give clarifications; however, it may not be considered convincing, since the student previously said that he does not ask the teacher to clarify class material when he encounters certain difficulty.

### ***The lesson***

4. *Does the teacher explain the programme at the beginning of the course?*

<i>n.4</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	10	77%
No	2	15,3%
I do not know	1	7,7%

77% of the class asserted that the teacher explains the programme at the beginning of the course. The two students from Bangladesh said that the programme was not

adequately explained in class and one student said that she does not know because she arrived late after the course had already started.

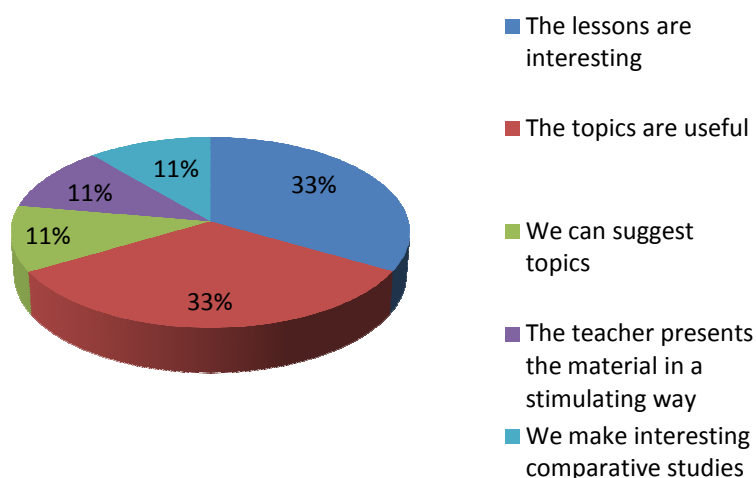
5. *Are you interested in the topics that the teacher presents in class?*

<i>n.5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	9	69,2%
No	4	30,8%

4 students out of 13 stated that they are not interested in the topics proposed by the teacher. The next question will explore the reasons as to why students may or may not be interested in class material.

6. *Why?*

*Why are you interested in the topics proposed in class?*



- The lessons are interesting 33% (n.1 – 2 – 5);
- the topics are useful 33% (n.7 – 10 – 13);
- we can suggest topics 11% (n.4);
- the teacher presents the material in a stimulating way 11% (n.6);
- we make interesting comparative studies 11% (n.3).

The first two answer options and the last option are interconnected, as the students are interested in the topics presented in class because they find them useful and

applicable to real life. It is interesting to note that students can suggest topics to discuss in class to the teacher, as confirmed by student n.4: giving the possibility to choose the topics, lets students feel more involved in their learning process and satisfy their needs. Student n.6 attributes his interest in the topics instead, to the teacher's ability to present the material in an intriguing and stimulating way.

*Why are you not interested in the topics proposed in class?*

Students n.8 - 9 - 11 and 12 are not interested on the topics presented in class because they consider them useless.

7. *Is there the opportunity to suggest additional topics to the teacher?*

<i>n.7</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	13	100%
No	0	0%

The whole class answered that they are allowed to suggest additional topics to the teacher to discuss in class.

8. *Does the teacher explain the goals of the course from the very beginning?*

<i>n.8</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	6	46,2%
No	7	53,8%

In response to this question, the class is divided in two groups: 46,2% of students said that the goals they are expected to reach were explained in class from the very beginning, while 53,8% denied this.

9. *Do you have homework?*

<i>n.9</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	10	77%
No	3	23%

10 students replied that they do have homework assignments while 3 students said that they do not. This could be explained by the fact that one of the students said that homework assignments are non-compulsory; perhaps, the three students interpreted as asking about compulsory assignments outside of class.

*10. If yes, do you think that your homework assignments are easy or hard?*

<i>n.10</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Easy	6	46,2%
Hard	7	53,8%

6 out of 13 students consider their homework assignments easy, while the rest of the class considers them hard; this relates back to the importance discussed earlier of giving assignments that are appropriate to the class language level, so not to hinder the learning process.

*11. Is your homework checked in class?*

<i>n.11</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	12	92,3%
No	1	7,7%

Only one student replied that homework is not checked in class; possible explanations for this outlying response may be that this student had been absent in class or had not been paying attention.

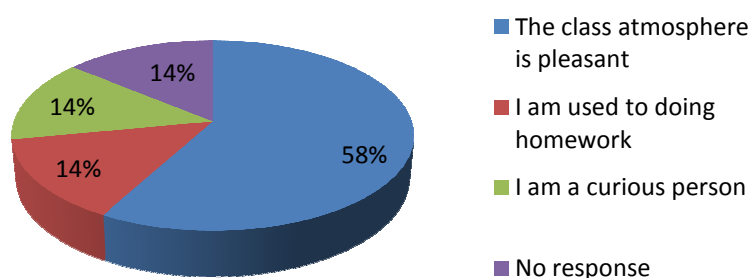
*12. How do you feel during homework review?*

<i>n.12</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Relaxed	7	53,8%
Nervous	6	46,2%

53,8% of the class feels relaxed during homework review, while 46,2% feels nervous.

### 13. Why?

*Why do you feel relaxed during in-class homework review?*

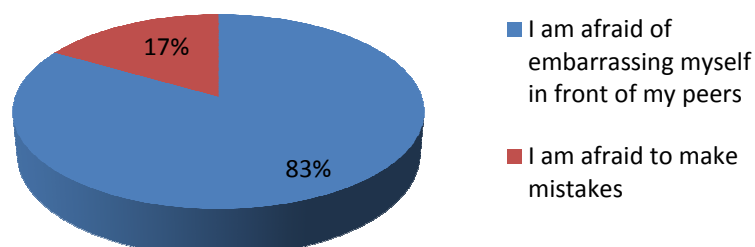


- The class atmosphere is pleasant 58% (n.3 – 4 – 5 – 6);
- I am used to doing homework 14% (n.2);
- I am a curious person 14% (n.1);
- no response 14% (n.7).

The majority of students responded that they feel relaxed during homework review because they feel comfortable and the class atmosphere is peaceful. Student n.2 answered that she feels relaxed because she has had homework assignments and in-class revisions in her previous academic experiences. Student n.1 answered that she feels relaxed because she is a curious person; this response could signify that the student's willingness to improve allows her to make mistakes and learn from them.

Student n.7 did not answer.

*Why do you feel nervous during in-class homework review?*



- I am afraid of embarrassing myself in front of my peers 83% (n.8 – 9 – 11 – 12 – 13);



- I am afraid to make mistakes 17% (n.10).

Students who feel nervous during homework review are afraid to embarrassing themselves in front of their peers and to make mistakes.

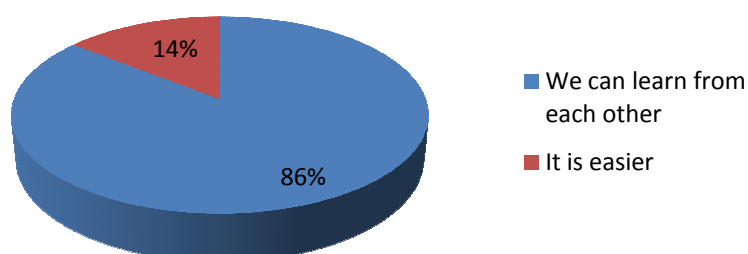
14. *Do you prefer to work alone or in a group?*

<i>n.14</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
In group	7	53,8%
Alone	6	46,2%

7 students responded that they prefer to work in groups, while 6 students prefer to work alone.

15. *Why?*

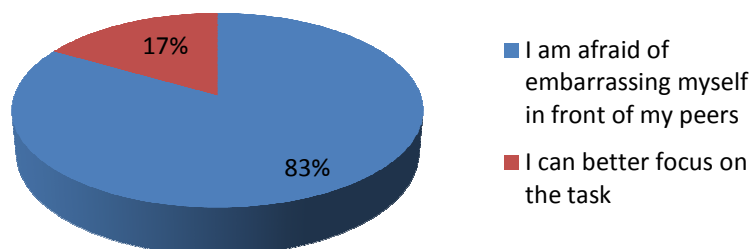
*Why do you prefer to work in a group?*



- We can learn from each other 86% (n.2 – 3 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 10);
- it is easier 14% (n.4%).

86% of students prefer to work in groups because cooperative work allows them to learn from each other; they can discuss their doubts and opinions. Student n.4 merely answered that it is easier to work in a group; this may be because the student finds group activities easier for the same reasons as his classmates.

### *Why do you prefer working alone?*



- I am afraid of embarrassing myself in front of my peers 83% (n.8 – 9 – 11 – 12 – 13);
- I can better focus on the task myself 17% (n.1).

The majority of students that prefer to work alone said that it is because they are afraid of embarrassing themselves in front of their peers. Thus, their affective filter is likely high, as they do not feel comfortable in front of one another and are afraid of compromising their self-esteem. Student n.1 answered that when she works alone, she can better focus on the task; for this student, cooperative work may conversely inhibit her ability to accomplish tasks in class or cause her to work less efficiently.

### *The final test*

16. *Have you already talked about the final test in class?*

<i>n.16</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	2	15,3%
No	11	84,7%

Almost the entire class said that they have not talked about the final test in class, while only two students responded yes. From these results, it is possible that the teacher may have briefly mentioned the final exam, but did not talk about it in depth.

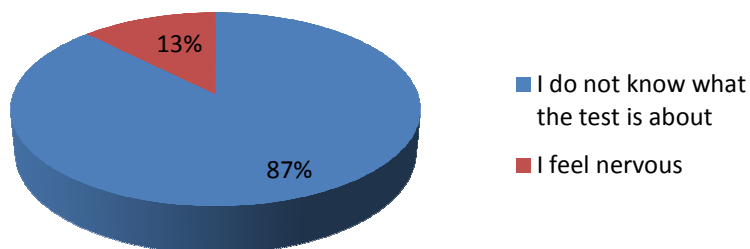
17. Do you often think about the final test?

<i>n.17</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	8	61,5%
No	5	38,5%

61,5% of students often think about the test, while 38,5% do not.

18. Why?

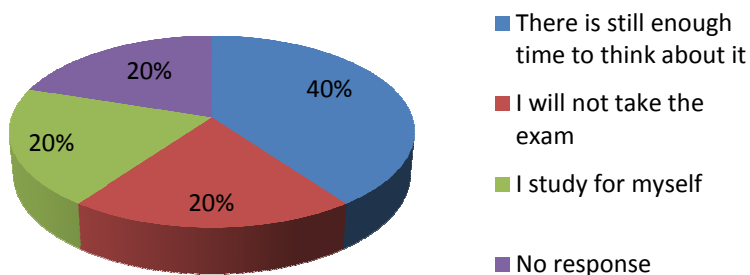
*Why do you often think about the final test?*



- I do not know what the test is about 87% (n.5 – 8 – 9 – 10 – 11 – 12 – 13);
- I feel nervous 13% (n.4).

The main reason why students often think about the final test is because they do not know how it will be structured. Student n.4, who previously said that the test had been discussed in class, responded that she nonetheless feels nervous. This maybe signals once again, to the possibility that the test was not talked about it in enough depth.

*Why do you not think about the final test?*



- There is still enough time to think about it 40% (n.1 – 2);
- I will not take the exam 20% (n.3);
- I study for myself 20% (n.6);
- no response 20% (n.7).

40% of students who do not often think about the test said that there is still enough time to think about it because the exam will be in March. Student n.3 does not think about the test because she will not take it. Student n.6 instead, said that she does not think about the test because she studies for herself; her education seems to be more founded upon her motivation to do well for herself and to make herself proud.

Student n.7 did not answer.

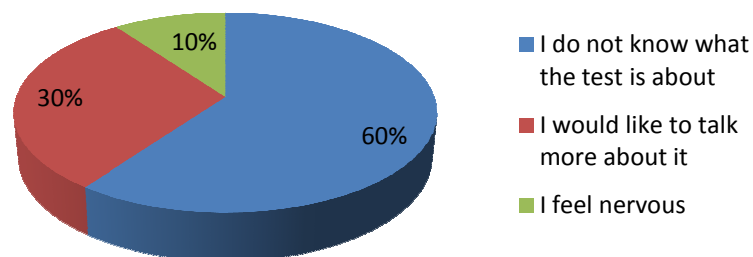
#### 19. Are you worried about the final test?

<i>n.19</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	10	77%
No	3	23%

77% of the class is worried about the final test, while 23% is not.

#### 20. Why?

*Why are you worried about the final test?*

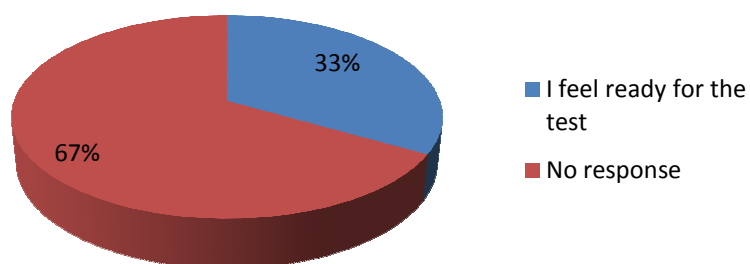


- I do not know what the test is about 60% (n.8 – 9 – 10 – 11 – 12 – 13);
- I would like to talk more about the test 30% (n.1 – 2 – 4);
- I feel nervous 10% (n.5).

Students feel worried primarily because they do not know how the test will be formatted. Although students n.1 and 4 said that they have already talked about the test in class, they feel worried because they would like to talk about it in more depth.

Student n.2, who previously said that she did not think about the test because it is too early, is still worried because she feels the need to talk more about as well. Student n.5 said that she feels nervous, perhaps for the same reason as her classmates.

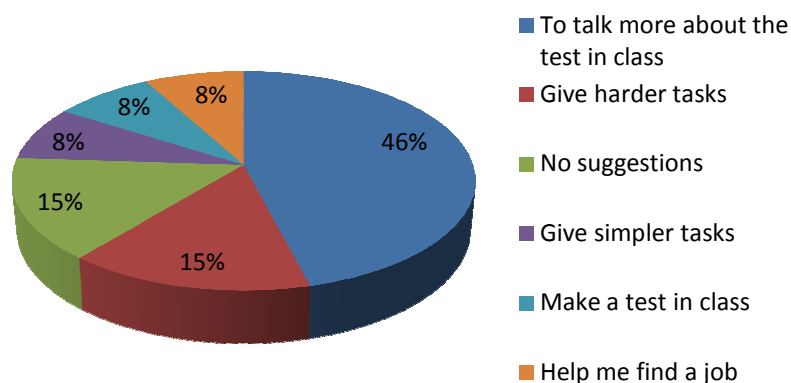
*Why are you not worried about the final test?*



- I feel ready for the test 33% (n.7);
- no response 67% (n.3 - 6).

Only one student answered that she feels ready for the test. Students n.3 and 6 did not answer, it can be assumed that those students are likely not worried because student n.3 previously said that she will not take the exam, student n.6 said that she studies for herself and is therefore not concerned with how she will be graded.

21. *If you could give some advice to the teacher, what would you suggest to him/her?*



- To talk more about the test in class 46% (n.8 – 9 – 10 – 11 – 12 – 13);
- give harder tasks 15% (n.3 – 4);
- no suggestions 15% (n.6 – 7);
- give simpler tasks 8% (n.1);
- make a test in class 8% (n.5);
- help me find a job 8% (n.2).

As in the previous questionnaire I asked the students to give some advice to their teacher in order to improve the course. The majority of the class would like the teacher to talk more about the final test in class. Three students would like the teacher to assign tasks that are more appropriate to their individual competence levels. One student would like to design a practice test in class. Two students said that they have no suggestions to give and one student responded with an unrelated suggestion that she would like the teacher to help her find a job.

#### 4.3.5 The Teachers' Questionnaire

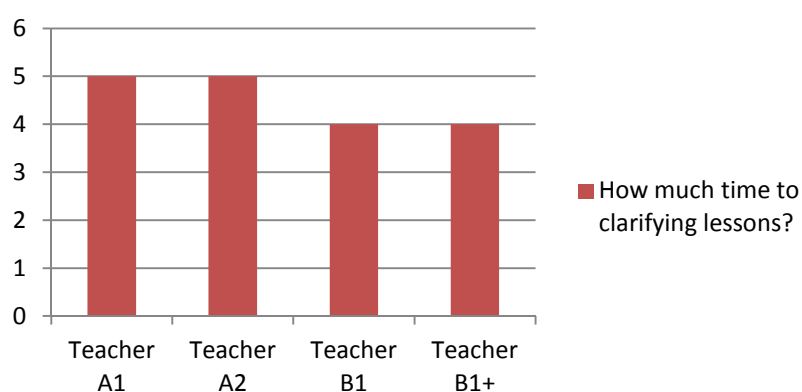
The questionnaire given to the teachers is the same for all class levels. The aim is to understand the teachers' perception of their classes, and to subsequently compare their answers to the students' responses. The questionnaire consists of 18 questions: 13 closed questions and 5 open-end questions. I used different types of graphics to illustrate the results.

1. *Do students ask you to explain the class material again when they do not understand it?*

<i>n.1</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	4	100%
No	0	0%

All four teachers answered that their students have no problems asking for additional explanations of class material if they do not understand it.

2. *From a range of 0 to 5, where 0 represents the minimum and 5 represents the maximum, how much time do you dedicate to clarifying lessons?*



Both A1 and A2 level teachers said that from a range of 0 to 5, they dedicate the maximum amount of time possible to clarifying lesson material, while B1 and B1+ teachers dedicate the time equivalent to a level 4.

3. *Is the programme explained at the beginning of the course?*

<i>n.3</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	4	100%
No	0	0%

All the teachers explained the programme to the students at the beginning of the course.

4. *Are students interested in the topics presented in class?*

<i>n.4</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	4	100%
No	0	0%

All the teachers think that their students are interested in the topics presented in class.

5. *Do you assign homework?*

<i>n.5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	3	75%
Sometimes	1	25%

The A1 teacher said that she sometimes assigns homework. A2, B1 and B1+ teachers assign homework regularly.

6. *Is homework checked in class?*

<i>n.6</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	4	100%
No	0	0%

All the teachers check the homework assigned in class.

7. *Can students suggest a topic to the class?*

<i>n.7</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	4	100%
No	0	0%

All the teachers give to their students the opportunity to propose a topic to the rest of the class.

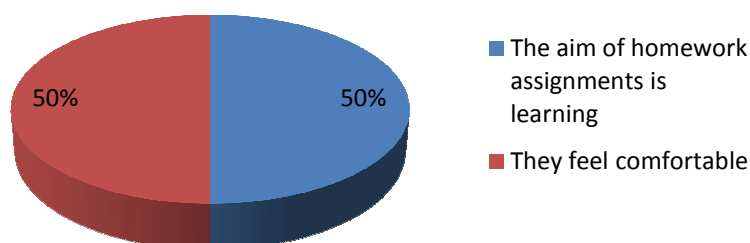


8. *How do your students appear emotionally during the in-class homework review?*

<i>n.8</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Relaxed	4	100%
Nervous	0	0%

All four teachers asserted that their students all appear relaxed during the in-class review.

9. *Why do you think your students feel that way?*



The A1 and B1 teachers think that their students feel relaxed during the in-class review because they are aware that through homework correction, they can learn from their mistakes. The A2 and B1+ teachers answered that they think their students feel relaxed during the in-class review because the classroom environment is peaceful, comfortable and cooperative rather than competitive.

10. *In your opinion, do your students prefer to work alone or in a group?*

<i>n.10</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
In group	2	50%
Alone	1	25%
Both	1	25%

The A2 and B1+ teachers maintained that their students prefer group activities; the B1 teacher stated that her students prefer to work alone but added that according to her experience, as the time goes by and students get to know each other better, they start to

prefer group activities and become more cooperative. The A1 teacher answered that her students like both group and individual activities.

#### 11. Why?

All of the teachers gave different reasons for why their students prefer to work in groups or individually:

- the A1 teacher said that her students like both modalities because on the one hand, they enjoy challenging themselves through individual activities and, on the other, they can exchange and share their knowledge to help one another;
- the A2 teacher answered that her students prefer to work in groups because they can help one another;
- the B1 teacher said that students prefer to work alone especially at the beginning of the course because they do not know each other. Furthermore, it is often easier to utilize individual activities in class lessons because, given that many students often come to class straight from work, they are not always on time;
- the B1+ teacher specified that students usually prefer to work in groups during the homework revision, while they prefer to work individually during other in-class exercises.

#### 12. Did you talk about the final test at the beginning of the course?

<i>n.12</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	4	100%
No	0	0%

All the teachers discussed the final test at the beginning of the course.

#### 13. Do you think that students are worried about the final test?

<i>n.13</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	2	50%
No	2	50%

The A2 and B1 teachers think that their students are worried about the final test while the A1 and B1+ think that their students are not worried about the final test.

#### *14. Why?*

The teachers are divided in two: 50% thinks that their students are worried about the final test while the other half does not think that they are worried:

- the A1 teacher said that she believes her students are not worried about the test because they are aware that the most important thing is the learning process and not the final test;
- the B1+ teacher answered that her students are not worried about the final test because all the topics that have been discussed in class are clear and therefore, they have no reason to worry;
- the A2 teacher said that her students are worried about their final test because they are afraid of failing it;
- the B1 teacher answered that their students are worried because they feel inadequate and do not have enough confidence in themselves or in their language abilities.

#### *15. Do students ask questions about the final test?*

<i>n.15</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	4	100%
No	0	0%

All four teachers answered that their students ask questions about the final test.

#### *16. Why?*

The A1, A2, and B1+ teachers said that their students ask for more information about the final test because they want to be well prepared for it. The B1 teacher said that her students ask for more information because they may feel inadequate and unsure of themselves and their language competences.

*17. In your opinion, is it necessary to make some improvements in class in order to make students feel more comfortable towards their evaluation?*

<i>n.17</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	3	75%
No	1	25%

The A1, A2 and B1 teachers all think that they could make some improvements in order to help their students feel more comfortable about their evaluation. The B1+ teacher answered that she thought no improvement is needed.

*18. What type of improvement would you suggest?*

The A1 teacher thinks that in order to make students feel more relaxed and comfortable, the school should provide more friendly and intimate classrooms; this is an intervention that does not necessarily require a change in the organization of the course, but is aimed to make the environment of the course more conducive to language learning. The A2 teacher said that she could try to create more individualized and personalized exercises in order to adapt the tasks to the different types of learners.

The B1 teacher said that she should try to foster a more cooperative and tranquil learning environment.

#### 4.4 The Results of the Investigation and Personal Reflections

The utilization of the questionnaires in this study served to reveal the students' feelings towards their final exam and to see if, and how precisely, their teachers take into consideration the humanistic and affective teaching approaches in evaluating adult foreign students.

Aside from questions specifically devoted to the final test, the questionnaires also requested comments on how the course was organized, if the students have homework assignments, if the homework is checked in class, and how the students felt during the in-class homework review. These comments are useful to understanding the students' attitudes towards the new academic context in which they found themselves in, learning Italian in Italy at a later point in their lives. These comments help to

determine if students prefer to learn and work in groups or alone and consequently if they are cooperative, independent, or emotional individuals in an academic setting.

These characteristics that show through the student evaluations, can often influence the students' approaches to the final test and to their teachers in general; with this in mind, it is recommended that teachers engage as much as possible with their students by offering advice or additional explanations and clarifications, and a variety of teaching modules in order to make students feel more comfortable in class and facilitate their overall learning experience.

The results of the research conducted in this study serve to profile the different language levels in L2 classes – A1, A2, B1 and B1+. These results in combination with the students' comments about their teachers and the course content presented, also illuminate the successful components of the L2 courses and highlight areas requiring improvement. With regard to the teachers' attitudes, students generally agree that their teachers explain the class material clearly. Only 4 out of 50 students – from Tunisia, Bangladesh and Egypt - said that their teachers are not clear when explaining class material.

Conversely, it is intriguing to note that the majority of students (39 out of 50) ask for clarifications; yet, upon closer examination of those results, it appears that the B1+ class is divided in two: 7 students stated that they ask for clarifications while 6 students said they do not, the majority of which come from Eastern Europe, China and Bangladesh. This relates back to the first part of this dissertation, where the effects of previous academic experiences and social customs on students' in class behaviour were explored. For example, the fact that a Chinese student may not actively participate in lessons or question the teacher directly may be attributed to the Chinese social customs of respecting figures of authority and passively complying with the wishes of those hierarchically superior. This may also be the case for Eastern Europe students, who culturally are accustomed to viewing the teacher as a stringent and authoritative figure.

The above results are statistically valid, as they were taken from a population of fifty individuals. Nonetheless, the scope of this study is on the individual student's needs in an L2 class setting. All students should be given the possibility to reach the goals of the course, cultural incongruities aside. Moreover, teachers should be all the more attentive to the diversity of their students, as they present material that may be reacted to in different ways culturally and psychologically. It is recommended that

teachers try to discern the competence level of the class and then provide appropriate activities catered to that competence level for effective language learning.

In addition, the teachers concur that their students ask for clarifications and have no reservations doing it, even though half of the B1+ students maintain that they do not ask for clarifications on class material. Evidently, there is a discrepancy between the teachers' and students' perceptions of clarification in class. It is vital for the teachers to understand the learning habits of their students, in order to know which strategies to use with them and to anticipate what type of behaviour to expect from them.

Furthermore, the teachers should stress the importance of asking questions or asking for additional explanations with their students and explain that resolving doubts is part of the learning process. Teachers could also create questionnaires in which they ask students to express their doubts and needs for the additional explanation of particular topics; in this way, the students' affective filter could be reduced. From the students' and teachers' answers, it has nonetheless become clear that the teachers are willing to explain the lessons over again and dedicate a lot of time to this; thus, the students that choose not to ask for clarifications may behave as so due to a high affective filter and may be influenced by previous academic experiences distinct from those at an Italian learning institution.

The investigation of the value of course organization in this study confirms the importance of expounding the course programme and objectives from the very beginning of an academic term. Students - particularly adult students who have already received some type of formal education - need to be active participants in their teacher's curricular choices and course design. It is essential to have an educational pact to ensure this, in which teachers discuss the course and its goals at the very beginning and also negotiate with students how to best organize it, so as to create a synergic and inclusive learning environment. In fact, 42 students out of 50 in this study say that the programme is explained at the beginning of the course. Furthermore, 13 out of 23 students in the B1 and B1+ classes - of a higher level of language competence - confirmed that their teachers specifically explain the course goals and objectives. The teachers also affirmed that they explain the course programme and goals at the beginning of class.

Given these positive results, it may be hard to understand why some students may still encounter some difficulty with course organization and objectives. This may be because some teachers may only briefly explain the program and its goals, but are

unable to dedicate enough time to discussing the specifics with their students. As a consequence, some students may feel as if nothing has been explained, when these feelings might really be due the fact that their teacher's abbreviated or superficial explanation didn't leave room for them to take part in discussion. The students' inability to contribute to class discussion seems to coincide with their inability to ultimately understand the course objectives.

In addition, by excluding students from assisting with course organization and from negotiating class terms and content, teachers can actually deter students from participating in lessons and thereby cause them to potentially lose interest in the subject matter. Upon examination of levels A2, B1, and B1+, it was revealed that 8 students out of 32 are not interested in the topics presented by the teacher mainly because they consider the class material useless. This connects back the notion that L2 students are learning a language primarily out of necessity in order to communicate with natives, integrate into society and further their social or work position. Thus, the lesson content and objectives is not only relevant to furthering language development, but also to facilitating the acquisition of knowledge outside of the classroom in a real-life setting. This proves once again that the educational pact between teachers-students is essential, as it could allow students to obtain the language skills they need that would be most advantageous to them. Such language skills may include common expressions or vocabulary that are often used in an environment where they might work. For instance, it would be more beneficial for a student whose job is to look after the elderly to learn common vocabulary used in healthcare, than it would be to focus on learning vocabulary used to describe sports or hobbies.

When students are actually given the possibility to propose a topic to the class, they may be able to catch their peers' attention by presenting more 'authentic' material that has not been pre-conceived to fit within an educational framework, and is therefore more applicable to everyday life. The teacher should determine if the topic proposed is valid and then should didactise the activities in order to demonstrate the purpose of the topic and adapt the material to the level of the class. Didactising authentic material requires considerable time and effort from the teacher; yet, it gives the chance to interchange exercises and allows for the utilization of group and individual activities with varying levels of complexity. The majority of the students that answered these questionnaires, prefer group activities because they believe they can exchange their knowledge with one another and help one another when working in groups. However,

17 out of 50 students prefer to work alone. These 17 students – the majority of Eastern European and Chinese descent - may prefer to work alone because they may not be used to being active participants in the classroom due to their previous academic experiences in their country of origin. They may therefore be afraid to embarrass themselves in front of their peers. Other students stated that they prefer a calm learning environment and find cooperative work too noisy.

Teachers affirm that students like both independent and group activities, because they can help one another in the latter and can reflect on their mistakes in the former.

One teacher in particular stated that students prefer individual activities at the beginning of the course, but as the time goes by and the students get to know one another, they start to be more optimistic towards group-work. Proposing didactic activities is more advantageous for students with different cognitive styles as the various types of exercises it includes can be used to ensure that each student is able to learn in the way most fitting for him or her.

Upon consideration of the language level of the class and the intended course objectives, teachers should try to vary the types of activities used, such as presenting some that require both cooperation and individual reflection. To develop interpersonal skills and promote cooperation in particular, teachers should use different strategies, such as role-playing in which students have to act out a scenario with their peers. To rather focus on language comprehension, individual activities using cloze techniques – texts in which some words or parts of texts are missing or rearranged – should be implemented (cf. Balboni, 1998).

After these introductory questions on the presentation of course material, the explanation of course objectives, the participation in class, and the different learning preferences, the rest of the questionnaire was more geared towards the in-class homework review. In certain respects, homework revision is its own type of in-class evaluation conducted by the teacher to see how students can cooperate with one another, approach their coursework, confront their insecurities about their language levels brought to light by their coursework and learn from their mistakes. The teachers of all language levels assign homework to their students; however, homework is not obligatory, as it is seen as counterproductive to impose homework activities on adults with fulltime jobs, families and concerns outside of the classroom. 22 students out of 50 (many from Eastern Europe and Bangladesh) said that their homework assignments are too hard, while the rest of the students consider them easy. This points once again



to the difficulty in designing activities and assignments that are universally appropriate for all students. Teachers should try to select activities that are as compatible as possible with the language competence level of the class; giving tasks that are too easy or too hard risks discouraging students from further participation, and could cause them to lose interest in the subject.

To confront this issue of assessing the appropriateness of certain didactic techniques, it could be useful for teachers to adopt a diagnostic evaluation method to be used at the beginning of the course in order to discern the students' different learning styles and cognitive skills. Once the language competence level of the class and the students' preferred types of learning activity has been determined through this evaluation, the teachers could then propose exercises most suitable for the various types of cognitive styles present. These exercises must not favour one cognitive or learning strategy over another, but should rather promote the improvement of every student regardless of their intellectual dispositions or idiosyncrasies.

With the A1, A2 and B1 level students, homework assignments are checked regularly in class and students generally feel quite comfortable because they are aware that the homework review exercise allows them to understand their mistakes and learn from them. However, in B1+ class, half of the class – again including those students from Eastern Europe and Bangladesh – stated that they instead feel nervous during homework review because they are afraid to make mistakes and embarrass themselves in front of their classmates. The teacher countered this assertion and stated that she thinks her students feel relaxed because the class atmosphere is calm and quiet. The teacher may not have realized how anxious some of her students actually feel and consequently how high their affective filter is. A possible solution could be to give different types of assignments and self-evaluation activities, and to propose a collective homework revision. For example, teachers could propose exercises to develop vocabulary through activities that involve matching words with images, or completing crossword puzzles; these exercises can be checked by the students on their own. Teachers could also give spider chart activities to improve vocabulary in which a central word is chosen, and all other words related to it extend like the fibres of a spider web. Students could then exchange their charts with one another and add additional words that they learn from their peers. These are only some of activities that can favour every type of cognitive style.

The last part of the questionnaires was focused on the final test and the students' feelings towards it. Both students and teachers were asked to give some advice in order to improve the course. The results of the answers show that the majority of students (27 out of 50) noted that after two months of lessons, they still had not talked about the test, while the teachers are convinced that the test had in fact been discussed.

As was found in the discrepancy between the teachers' and students' perspectives of the discussion of course programming and goals, it is possible that the teachers may have only briefly talked about the test. Such a succinct explanation may not have been sufficient for the students and therefore they strongly feel that it needs to be talked about it more in detail. In the succeeding questions, each class had a high percentage of students who said that they are worried about the final test chiefly because they are unsure of the content and format. While A1 and A2 level students need to pass the final exam primarily to get their residency permits, they may have other motivations as well just as B1 and B1+ level students do, such as furthering their professional or personal development. The A1 class is divided in two with respect to their feelings about the final test: 9 students are worried because they do not know what the test is about, while 9 others are not worried and think that the test will be easy. In class A2, 6 students are worried about the test because they do not think that they have talked about it enough in class. Contrarily, the 3 others in the A2 class said that they feel ready for the test. In class B1, more than half of the students feel nervous because they do not know how the test will be structured; 2 students stated that they learn for themselves and are therefore not concerned about passing the final exam. In class B1+, 10 students out of 13 are worried because they, too, do not know how the test will be formatted.

The teachers' opinions on their students' feelings towards the final test are slightly different: the A2 and B1 teachers think that their students are worried about the test because they are not confident in their language skills and are therefore afraid of failing it. Conversely, the A1 and B1+ teachers said that their students feel relaxed about the final test because they believe that the lesson topics have been clearly presented and because they are aware that the course's main objective is to increase their knowledge for themselves. When the teachers were questioned if their students often ask about the test, they replied that they do because they want to be well-prepared. However, none of the teachers (except for the B1 teacher) seemed to have realized that their students needed to talk more about the test in order to feel more

comfortable. It is clear that the students' and the teachers' perceptions of the final exam are considerably different.

In my opinion, teachers should constantly monitor their students throughout the learning process; in this way, teachers can help their students determine what level of language competence they are at, and can help them improve and gain more confidence in themselves and their language abilities. In order to monitor students and help them progress and acknowledge that progression as they become more autonomous in an academic setting, teachers should offer their students practice tests that require self-evaluation. For example, a strategy that encourages students' self-evaluation is dictation: students have to listen and write down what is being said. They must confront their limitations with the language both in oral comprehension and written speech. Through in-class tests, students can become familiar with test formats; this familiarity can subsequently reduce their anxiety of failing the test and give them an additional opportunity to learn about their own strategies and styles.

I asked students and teachers to suggest some advice to improve the course organization. The A1 teacher rather focused on improving the physical environment of the class and answered that a more comfortable classroom could help students to feel more relaxed. The A2 and B1 teachers focused instead on improving class structure and logistics; they responded that they probably should create more personalized activities and try to promote and encourage a more cooperative learning environment for their students. As for these last two answers, didactising the material and choosing appropriate activities resurfaces as a solution to promote in-class cooperation. The students - irrespective of their age, origin, and language competence level - indicated that they are worried about the final test and would therefore like to talk about it in more depth. They mentioned that they would like the opportunity to take some practice tests in class, so as to alleviate some of this anxiety. Thus, the inclusion of supportive work in the form of practice tests and in the form of homework review as discussed earlier, is crucial to ensuring that students maintain a certain level of self-confidence necessary to further their language studies. While some teachers realized that their students may feel anxious about the final exam, there are others that are oblivious to this concern. Regardless, none of the teachers acknowledged that they should talk about the final test more in detail, nor did they consider organizing practice tests for their students in order to better prepare them mentally and emotionally for the final exam.

This reveals that there is a clear disparity between the students' and the teachers' perceptions of the final evaluation. Thus, a constant dialogue between teachers and their students that includes the discussion of course objectives and the ongoing monitoring of each students' individual progress, could help teachers actualize a more efficient and rewarding course that satisfies the students' needs and desires. Such a relationship would prove mutually beneficial for both teachers and students; teachers could learn how to shape their courses and teaching styles to fit the needs of their students and students could further their linguistic, psychological, and mental development as they gain more confidence in themselves as students and autonomous individuals of society.

*Appendix:*  
The Questionnaires

## Livello A1

Maschio ☐ Femmina ☐

Età: ...

Paese di provenienza: ...

Carriera scolastica precedente: ...

### **Rispondi alle domande con una crocetta, dove previsto:**

1. L'insegnante spiega in modo chiaro?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

2. Chiedi all'insegnante di rispiegare gli argomenti, se non hai capito?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

3. Il programma viene presentato ad inizio corso?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

4. Devi fare dei compiti per casa?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

5. (Se sì) Pensi che i compiti siano facili o difficili?

- Facili ☐ Difficili ☐

6. I compiti vengono corretti in classe?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

7. Come ti senti durante la correzione dei compiti?

- Tranquillo ☐ Nervoso ☐

8. Ti piace di più lavorare in gruppo o da solo?

- In gruppo ☐ Da solo ☐

9. Avete già parlato in classe del test finale?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

10. Sei preoccupato per il test finale?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

11. Perché? .....

## Livello A2

Maschio ☐ Femmina ☐

Età: ...

Paese di provenienza: ...

Carriera scolastica precedente: ...

### Rispondi alle domande con una crocetta, dove previsto:

#### *L'insegnante*

1. L'insegnante spiega in modo chiaro?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

2. Chiedi all'insegnante di rispiegare gli argomenti, se non hai capito?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

3. L'insegnante è disponibile a ripetere?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

#### *Le lezioni*

4. Il programma viene presentato ad inizio corso?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

5. Sei interessato agli argomenti del programma?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

6. Devi fare dei compiti per casa?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

7. (Se sì) Pensi che i compiti siano facili o difficili?

- Facili ☐ Difficili ☐

8. I compiti vengono corretti in classe?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

9. Come ti senti durante la correzione dei compiti?

- Tranquillo ☐ Nervoso ☐

10. Perché? .....

11. Ti piace di più lavorare in gruppo o da solo?

- In gruppo ☐ Da solo ☐

12. Perché? .....

*Il test finale*

13. Avete già parlato in classe del test finale?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

14. Sei preoccupato per il test finale?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

15. Perché? .....



## Livello B1e B1+

Maschio ☐ Femmina ☐

Età: ...

Paese di provenienza: ...

Carriera scolastica precedente: ...

### Rispondi alle domande con una crocetta, dove previsto:

#### *L'insegnante*

1. L'insegnante spiega in modo chiaro?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

2. Chiedi all'insegnante di rispiegare gli argomenti, se non hai capito?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

3. L'insegnante è disponibile a ripetere?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

#### *Le lezioni*

4. Il programma viene presentato ad inizio corso?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

5. Sei interessato agli argomenti del programma?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

6. Perché? .....

7. Puoi proporre argomenti da trattare in classe all'insegnante?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

8. Gli obiettivi da raggiungere vengono esposti sin dall'inizio?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

9. Devi fare dei compiti per casa?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

10. (Se sì) Pensi che i compiti siano facili o difficili?

- Facili ☐ Difficili ☐

11. I compiti vengono corretti in classe?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

12. Come ti senti durante la correzione dei compiti?

- Tranquillo ☐ Nervoso ☐

13. Perché? .....

14. Ti piace di più lavorare in gruppo o da solo?

- In gruppo ☐ Da solo ☐

15. Perché? .....

*Il test finale*

16. Avete già parlato in classe del test finale?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

17. Pensi spesso al test che dovrai sostenere?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

18. Perché? .....

19. Sei preoccupato per il test finale?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

20. Perché? .....

21. Se potessi dare un consiglio all'insegnante per venire incontro ai tuoi bisogni, cosa gli diresti? .....

## Questionario per l'insegnante

Classe: ...

### Risponda alle domande con una crocetta, dove previsto:

1. Gli alunni le chiedono di ripetere gli argomenti, nel caso in cui non li abbiano capiti?
  - Sì ☐ No ☐
2. In una scala da 0 a 5, dove 0 rappresenta il minimo e 5 il massimo, quanto tempo dedica ad eventuali chiarimenti degli argomenti?
  - 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐
3. Il programma viene presentato ad inizio corso?
  - Sì ☐ No ☐
4. Gli studenti sono generalmente interessati agli argomenti proposti?
  - Sì ☐ No ☐
5. Vengono assegnati compiti per casa?
  - Sì ☐ No ☐
6. (Se sì) I compiti vengono controllati in classe?
  - Sì ☐ No ☐
7. Gli studenti possono proporre argomenti da trattare in classe?
  - Sì ☐ No ☐
8. Come le sembrano i suoi studenti durante le correzioni?
  - Tranquilli ☐ Nervosi ☐
9. Perché? .....
10. Secondo lei gli studenti prediligono le attività di gruppo o quelle individuali?
  - Di gruppo ☐ Individuali ☐
11. Perché? .....
12. Le modalità del test finale vengono espone ad inizio corso?
  - Sì ☐ No ☐
13. Gli studenti sembrano preoccupati a riguardo?
  - Sì ☐ No ☐

14. Perché? .....

15. Capita che gli studenti le facciano domande sul test finale?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

16. Secondo lei, perché? .....

17. A suo avviso, guardando alla classe in generale, potrebbero essere necessari ulteriori interventi per mettere a proprio agio gli studenti nei confronti della valutazione?

- Sì ☐ No ☐

18. Se sì, quali? .....

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