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Promoting Multiculturalism, Multilingualism, and Global Citizenship through Italian Racialized Literature: A Case Study

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Abstract

After 30 years from the publication of the first migrant novel written in Italian by Moroccan author Tahar Ben Jelloun's, Dove lo stato non c'è (1991), the curriculum of Italian literature taught in upper secondary school is still almost devoid of non-white and non-male authors. This both affects minoritized students' sense of belonging, not offering them "mirrors" to their own culture, and deprives the dominant group of "windows" into other cultures (Sims Bishop 1990). Besides, it does not contribute to fostering global citizenship, which is, in turn, a cornerstone in the Council of Europe's (CoE) work in education (i.e., the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture or RFCDC), as well as the ultimate goal of the module of Civic Education in Italian schools as expressed by MIUR's (2020) Ministerial Decree n.35 of 22 June 2020.

Albeit theoretically sound, directives to foster global citizenship by the Italian Ministry of Education and Merit (MIUR) have until now remained vague and integration programs in upper secondary schools have received less funding and attention than those in elementary/middle schools. So foreign students, often entering the school system in their adolescence, are at a greater risk of failure, especially when faced with literary curriculum still monocultural and monolingual.

Building on RFCDC competences, this qualitative study designs an alternative curriculum of Italian literature to be implemented during a three-month long intervention in an Italian high-school in Bologna. This study seeks to enhance students' civic-mindedness and sense of belongingness to a glocal community and provides what Merriam and Tisdell (2016) call an "emic, or insider's perspective" (p. 16) into students' opinions prior and after the curriculum implementation, in order to offer relevant data for both discussion and evaluation of its effectiveness. The hope is that the outcome will make a case for the necessity of concretely and effectually applying existing inclusion policies at all educational stages at the national level.

Keywords: *curriculum implementation, pedagogy, students' identity, Italian racialized literature, global citizenship*

Introduction

"I am a citizen of the world" is how the ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes responded when asked about his origins. Rejecting local definitions and stereotypes, he introduced the concept of the kosmopolitēs, or world citizen. Nussbaum (1997) elaborates that "with respect to fundamental moral values such as justice, we should regard all human beings as our fellow citizens and local residents" (p. 52). She argues that the "goals of world citizenship are best promoted by literary education that adds new works to the canon of Western literature and engages with standard texts critically" (p. 89). Therefore, any school curriculum aimed at social justice and global citizenship should be rooted in multicultural education that promotes intercultural competences among both marginalized minorities and marginalizing majorities (Guilherme & Dietz, 2015, p. 6). Additionally, it should provide opportunities for practicing democratic citizenship, which the RFCDC (2013) defines as the ability to "exercise and defend democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life" (vol. 1, p. 14). This qualitative research project proposes an alternative curriculum for Italian literature aimed at enhancing civic awareness and global citizenship in a high school in Bologna, Italy. The objective is to enrich students' civic awareness, global citizenship and strengthen their sense of connection to a glocal community via multiculturalism and multilingualism.

This focus is particularly urgent given Italy's current political climate, where far-right policies threaten gender equality and the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals, women, and immigrants (Kirby, 2022). With a

significant number of foreign-born youth in Italy (Huddleston et al., 2013, p. 35), the lack of civic development practices in education discourages youth engagement. If on the one hand, youth cultural-political engagement keeps plummeting (Openpolis 2021, p. 12), with high percentages of high school students planning to move abroad in the future (specifically 42% among Italians and 59% among foreign students) (Fondazione Migrantes 2022, p. 3), on the other 83.4% of Italian young people expressed the desire to play an active role in the improvement of their community in 2016. This means that a large portion of young people in Italy would like to get informed, contribute to civic decisions, and operate as citizens, but cannot do so due to a lack of social involvement by the institutions. As Rosina observes, this may end up undermining their social belonging (ENGIM 2023). Only recently, in fact, did MIUR begin to urge Italian schools to educate citizens to address the growing complexity brought about by globalization. Specifically, the Ministerial Decree n.35 of 22 June 2020 (MIUR 2020) enforces the adoption of guidelines for Civic Education teaching. The document establishes that new curricula should tackle “le sfide del presente e dell’immediato futuro” (p. 1). It seems obvious that active democratic citizenship that both deals with present and future challenges to develop students’ understanding of the social, economic, legal, civic, and environmental structures of society cannot be achieved without concretely promoting students’ belongingness to a multicultural community.

A Different Idea of *Italianness* through Global (Ethical) Citizenship

Encouraging a sense of belonging that does not rely on the idea of nation becomes particularly important in the case of Italy, where the majority of the immigrant students attend school with peers while not being citizens. As per Italian law 91 from 1992 in fact, Italian citizenship can be acquired either *jure sanguinis* – that is by descent; or *jure soli*, i.e., by birth on the Italian territory; if the parents are unknown or stateless.
The idea of the Italian nationality as strictly related to an Italian history and character, dates back to the need, emerged after the formation of the modern Italian state in 1861, to “create” a notion of *Italianness* that could resonate with peoples that did not share cultural or linguistic heritage. As Massimo d’Azeglio famously stated, “Fatta l'Italia, bisogna fare gli Italiani.”
In the early 20th century, Italy’s need for citizens facilitated claims to citizenship for those born abroad if their ancestors hailed from what is now Italy. However, after the 1970s, as Italy transitioned from an emigration to an immigration country, citizenship laws became more stringent, culminating in the current law that primarily recognizes citizenship through blood. This has led to a paradox where approximately 2.5 million individuals born, living, and working in Italy, including around 877,000 non-Italian students, are denied citizenship, while those with Italian ancestry can easily obtain it (Testore 2022). While this alone seems to be a slap in the face of students without citizenship populating Italian classrooms, the failure of several citizenship reform proposals over the past 10 years is even more so.
Over the years, the debate surrounding citizenship for children of foreign parents has sparked numerous initiatives, many of which faced government resistance. Black Italian-American sociologist Camilla Hawthorne (2022), describes her active role in the movement Rete G2, born as a result of the frustration of so called “second-generations” in Italy. In 2011, their campaign “L’Italia Sono Anch’io” (‘I, too, am Italy’) gathered fifty thousand signatures – the minimum required by Italian law – to propose a new citizenship bill. This proposal was approved as a reform bill in 2015 by the Italian Camera dei Deputati (Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Parliament) and was framed as *jus culturae*, or the right of culture, aiming to allow those who arrived in Italy before age 12 to gain citizenship after five years of schooling, while those who arrived between 12 and 18 could obtain citizenship after five years of residence and completing an educational qualification. Unfortunately, despite its promise, the bill never secured final approval from the Chamber, leaving an entire generation's hopes dashed (p. 40).
As highlighted in the 2012 documentary *18 Ius soli* by Italian-Ghanaian filmmaker Fred Kuwornu, one of the primary challenges faced by students without Italian citizenship is their inability to participate in school trips outside the EU. If they wish to travel beyond Italy, they must carry their visas at all times, facing the risk of deportation if they do not. These students are also denied access to sports and educational competitions, grants, scholarships, and opportunities like Erasmus and other exchange programs, which their Italian peers enjoy.
This culturalist understanding of Italian citizenship and the obstacles faced by these students were central to the intervention made by Italo-Moroccan Member of the Chamber of Deputies and Vice-Secretary of the Democratic Party of Emilia-Romagna, Ouidad Bakkali. In September 2024, she presented a petition to

Parliament advocating for a citizenship reform that would reduce the years of legal residence required to apply for Italian citizenship from ten to five years. Once citizenship is granted, parents could automatically pass it on to their minor children. Bakkali, who obtained her Italian citizenship in 2009 at the age of 24, recounts how, during her final year of high school, she was stopped during a school trip to Prague and had to spend the night at the airport, escorted by two professors, because her document was deemed "not correct" (namely, not European). Bakkali's reform aligns with the nationwide campaign *Dalla Parte giusta della Storia* ('On the right side of History') led by the NGO Rete Riforma Cittadinanza.

Supporting the campaign, racialized authors and activist Djarah Kan (2024) critically examined the concept of *Italianness*, particularly in light of the media portrayal of Black Italian Olympic volleyball players Paola Egonu and Myriam Sylla as "perfect examples of integration". Kan's main argument challenges the concessive nature of *Italianness* as a concession from a majority that perceives itself as superior and permits a minority to exist. This perspective reduces a young Black woman like Egonu—who is both Italian and Nigerian, as well as an Olympic-winning athlete—to a mere symbol of anti-racist struggle based on flawed assumptions. The focus should not simply be on identifying whether Paola Egonu is Black *and* Italian or Black *but* Italian. Instead, we should question whether it is truly possible to represent Italy and its diverse population through the narrow lens of *Italianness* defined by shared physical traits. In such a framework, individuals like Kan—"Black, from Campania, *terrona*, from the South, from Ghana, of Fanti origin, and Italian"—find themselves unable to fit without undermining the very premise of Italianness itself. Given that *Italianness* as a concept primarily serves to delineate the foreign from the belonging, it must be reexamined in light of the realities faced by millions. Italy and its people represent a tapestry of historical and cultural experiences in constant evolution and Egonu, Sylla, and others, with their diverse identities, are integral to this fabric.

Addressing issues of identity discrimination, privilege, and the deprivation of minority rights by a majority, Kan's intervention highlights the urgent need for a redefined sense of citizenship and belonging that reflects contemporary realities. By the same token, the rise of globalization necessitates a reevaluation of citizenship, particularly in relation to the traditional framework of the nation-state.
In the past decade, scholarly work on education for global citizenship has expanded significantly, emphasizing the importance of integrating global citizenship education into social studies curricula (González-Valencia, Massip Sabater, and Santisteban Fernández 2022, p. 3). The central premise is that, within a global context, citizenship should transcend mere legal status and be rooted in values that promote coexistence within communities. As Cortina notes, true citizens are those who actively contribute to building functional communities and work toward the common good through their political engagement (Cortina in González-Valencia, G., Massip Sabater, M., and Santisteban Fernández, A. 2022).
The term "global citizenship" is often overused and difficult to grasp due to its inherent complexity. In relation to pedagogy, UNESCO defines global citizenship education (GCE) as having the goal for students to develop "the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development and global citizenship education, as well as human rights education" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 1).
However, educators and curriculum designers have often fallen into the "trap" identified by Biesta and Lawy which assumes that "citizenship can be understood as the outcome of an education trajectory" (Biesta and Lawy quoted in Oxley ad Morris 2013, p. 304). In their extensive review of existing literature on global citizenship, Oxley and Morris (2013) warn educators against what they call the "global citizen attributes" approach, emphasizing the qualities desirable in global citizens, such as responsibility, empathy, and cultural awareness and ignoring the educational goal. This model is often overly individualistic and fails to connect strongly with concepts such as rights, action, and social dynamics, essential for viewing citizenship not as a fixed identity but as a dynamic 'practice' (Biesta and Lawy quoted in Oxley and Morris 2013, p. 304).
While Oxley and Morris (2013) do not provide specific guidance on how to design an effective global citizenship education (GCE) curriculum, Bosio and Schattle (2021) offer a framework for ethical global citizenship education that emphasizes the notion of *glocal citizenship*. In particular, their five-dimensional framework encourages educators to design programs across the following domains: values creation, identity progression, collective involvement, glocal disposition, and an intergenerational mindset. These dimensions can be loosely categorized into three arenas: purpose (values creation), relationships

encompassing self, others, and communities (identity progression, collective involvement, glocal disposition), and historical context (intergenerational mindset). The dimension of glocal disposition engages global citizens to participate in multiple overlapping communities—at the local, regional, national, and multinational level—and highlights the responsibilities and sentiments that come with belonging to this multiplicity of diverse spaces (p. 5)

In this view, the RFCDC emerges as a valuable tool for competence-based curriculum design, offering a framework of 20 competences organized within a 'butterfly' diagram that encompasses four areas: values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding. In this approach, competences are considered to be interrelated and none of these approaches exists in isolation or "in a pure state" (RFCDC, Volume 3, p. 15). By emphasizing the dynamic mobilization, application, and flexible adjustment of clusters of competences across different contexts, an RFCDC-based curriculum offers a comprehensive global worldview that does not risk of incurring in Biesta and Lawy's idea (Biesta and Lawy quoted in Oxley and Morris 2013, p. 304) of watertight compartmentalized attributes that can be measured on a Likert scale.

The Need to "Decanonize": Issues of Representation in the Current Italian Literary Curriculum

By reflecting the "principle[s] and the traditions of European education processes" (RFCDC, vol. 1, p. 15), the Council of Europe's work in education runs the risk to perpetrate oppressive power structures and dynamics that, for centuries, allowed Western powers to invisibilize racialized subjects. To effectively challenge this dynamic, teaching for empathy in the curriculum in not enough.

In her paper "Global citizenship: abstraction or framework for action?", Davies (2006) uses Richardson's definition of a 'global citizen' as someone who 'knows how the world works, is *outraged* by injustice and who is both willing and enabled to take action to meet this global challenge' (emphasis mine, Richardson quoted in Davies, p. 7). In this definition, the focus is on 'outrage', so students' motivations to drive change should be promoted. Such an approach has profound implications for teaching and learning, particularly in Italy, where students would be lectured on citizenship while not being citizens.

U.S.-based post-colonial scholars Tuitt and Stewart (2021) refer to the "happy talk of diversity" (p. 101) to describe a superficial commitment to increasing access and representation for historically underrepresented students—one that often fails to translate into meaningful practice. Notably, among the protests for racial equity that began in the United States, Tuitt and Stewart (2021) highlight #WhyIsMyCurriculumWhite movement as a foundational example (p. 101). By recognizing the lack of literature by BIPOC authors and LGBTQ+ individuals in most curricula, the movement echoes Rudine Sims Bishop's (1990) oft-cited metaphor of mirrors-windows-sliding doors. According to Sims Bishop, students should have access to mirror-books that reflect their realities, window-books that offer perspectives on different life worlds, and sliding door books that foster empathy and allow them to adopt the perspectives of others. This underscores the idea that absence of diversity harms every student, not just those from minoritized backgrounds. To quote Gloria Ladson-Billings (2017) "*all* students should be able to develop fluency in at least one other culture – even those who are members of the dominant culture" (p. 145).

Building on Sims Bishop's insights, literature is identified as a critical space for beginning the decolonization of the mind. However, Appleton's (2019) warn us against the risk of appropriating the meaning of 'decolonization' for actions that do not have to do with land reappropriation. By using terms such as *diversify*, *decentre* or *disinvest*, she urges teachers, scholars, students, and individual to contribute to the paradigm shift from the "Ancient Régime" of Eurocentrism to realizing the ideals of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* from the French Revolution, which are yet to be concretized. However, challenging the notion of breaking from the colonial order of knowledge as an "out-with-the-old, in-with-the-new" revolution, Appleton (2019) urges us to initiate the change while paying attention not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. A new "order" should not substitute the old one; rather, the change must be fully understood and not merely a fear-driven reaction to policies calling for equality. Applying Appleton's (2019) suggestions to the study of literature within the Italian literary curriculum reveals a dual truth: while the significance of reading the classics is undeniable, the notion of the Italian canon as a fair and comprehensive reflection of Italian reality of today and of the past must be questioned. If we do not want to use the word 'decolonization', this certainly calls for *decanonization*. Indeed, if we echo Italo Calvino's 1981 article urging Italians to engage with the classics, we might define a classic as any book "che si configura come equivalente dell'universo, al pari degli antichi talismani" ('which comes to represent the whole universe, on a par with ancient talismans') (p. 3). In this light, a canon that only

reflects a limited array of voices can offer only a partial view of that universe. Bloom (1994) himself, the architect of the infamous Western Canon, concedes that "as history lengthens, the older canon necessarily narrows" (p. 531). Yet, shortly thereafter, he invokes a gatekeeping perspective, suggesting that "expanding the canon, […] tends to drive out the better writers, sometimes even the best, because pragmatically none of us ever had time to read absolutely everything" (p. 540). Unfortunately, this second notion has overshadowed the essential truth that countless voices have historically been excluded not because of a lack of artistic merit, but rather due to systemic biases and racial oppression. Moreover, the number of voices seeking recognition and representation continues to expand as our understanding and societal needs evolve. This observation is particularly relevant in the context of the Italian literature canon, which still largely lacks representation from non-White and non-male authors. Despite the longstanding emphasis on integration and multiculturalism in Italy's education policies— though changes in the government might lead to changes in the education policies —the Ministry of Education's attempts to regulate practices addressing diversity have often been vague. These initiatives have placed the burden on schools to develop their own implementation strategies without adequate guidance or consideration of existing institutional and curricular demands, as well as disparities in funding at both regional and educational levels.

While elementary and middle schools receive economic support and clear guidance from the Italian Ministry of education with reference to the phenomenon of integration (ISTAT 2015, pp. 13-14), upper secondary schools – which do not fall under the category of "scuola dell'obbligo" (i.e., mandatory education) – struggle with very "vague procedures" (Berti, 2006, p. 527). Consequently, high school is seen as the level with the *highest chance and rates of failure for the immigrant students* (Berti 2006, pp. 539), especially those who arrive in Italy in their adolescent years 13-17 and for which integration becomes even harder.

Moreover, official documents from the Ministry of Education lack clarity and guidance. Despite requiring teachers to "stop improvising" and start "introducing a specific curricular space for intercultural citizenship education," the MIUR essay *La via italiana per la scuola interculturale* (MIUR 2007, p. 17) does not give real directions on how to do so. In the document, MIUR delegates to each schools the task of creating and implementing their own integration strategies. While apparently expanding schools' authority, MIUR's choice overlooks the requirements of the national curriculum, established both by numerous decrees in the Official Gazette of the Italian Republic and by the content of the standardized final national exam.

Similarly, in September 2020, MIUR introduced the transversal discipline of Educazione Civica ('Civic Education') at all school levels with three main thematic cores aimed at learning about: (1) the Constitution (2) Sustainable development, and (3) Citizenship. The final goal of the subject is for educational institutions to concretely form students to "act as responsible citizens" and "participate fully and consciously to the civic, cultural, and social life of the community" (MIUR 2020, pp. 1-2). While apparently a step towards students' civic sensitization, Civic Education is not yet tested in the final national exam.

Part of the exam, the written *prima* and *seconda prova* ('first and second exam') verify the mastery of critical, expressive, as well as logical-linguistic abilities of candidates in Italian literature and in the core subject of the school. The final exam inevitably sets the tone for schools' curricula, especially during the fifth (last) year, when students should be studying modernity. In fact, Teucci (2009) denounces how teachers willing to see their students succeed in the final exam, must continue to focus on the topics more likely to be covered by the *tracce d'esame* ('exam prompts') (p. 12). While the content of the *seconda prova* may vary according to the school, the content of *prima prova* is the same for all schools, regardless of their specialization. Since 2019, the *prima prova* is dived in the following typologies:

TYPE A – Analysis and interpretation of a literary text

TYPE B – Analysis or production of an argumentative essay on chosen topics

TYPE C – Critical reflection on a current topic.

The analysis of the prompts for *prima prova* from academic years 2004/2005 to 2023/2024 – with 2019/2020 being the only missing year, probably due the Covid-19 pandemic – gives us a pretty good understanding of the literary canon students have faced since shortly after the emergence of the so-called migration literature, considered by scholars to coincide with 1991, year of publication of Ben Jelloun's first novel (Gnisci, 2003, pp. 85-86). From their analysis, it emerges that, even more than three decades later, the prompts dealing with literature display (1) the total absence of migrant or racialized authors who write in Italian – with the exception of De Caldas Brito – despite the increase, after 2011, of more modern literary texts (i.e., written after the 1990s). and (2) the quasi-absence of female authors (but Schelotto and De Caldas Brito in 2006, Morante in 2008, Deledda and Cossetta in 2014, and Merini and E. Dickinson in 2018. Both Segre and Gheno appear together with a male co-author in 2022. The 2024 exam prompt uniquely highlights three

White female authors are cited for their own individual work: namely Maria Agostina Cabiddu, Nicoletta Polla-Mattiot and Rita Levi Montalcini, similarly to Italian journalist and author Oriana Fallaci appearing alone in the 2023 literary prompt).

It becomes evident that migrant and racialized authors remain absent from literary discourse and that female authors consistently fail to appear in Type A prompts, which focus on the analysis of single-authored canonical literary texts, thus continuing their exclusion from the Italian literary tradition.

The content of the *tracce d'esame* – and consequently the literary curriculum – hinders the study of non-canonical authors, leading to a notable absence of 21st-century writers, particularly non-White and non-male authors writing in Italian. As a result, Italian students are confronted with a literature curriculum that neither represents the demographics of today's multiracial Italy and the experiences of minoritized students, nor allows "historically Italian" students to understand the complex reality of those who sit next to them in the classroom.

In discussing how the Italian literary curriculum shapes the notion of *Italianness*, Mantovani (2009) criticizes various aspects that prevent students from receiving a comprehensive picture of contemporary Italy. One of her students, Cristina Borin, highlights the complete absence of interest in 21st-century Italian literature in the classroom, which "only magically reappears at the *esame di maturità* ('final national exam')" (p. 81). Secondly, teaching methodologies encountered in the Italian school are considered to be "very mnemonic, not very engaging", as well as lacking any link to civic education (p. 93). Additionally, the teaching methodologies employed in Italian schools are deemed "very mnemonic, not very engaging," and lacking any connection to civic education (p. 93). Lastly, a survey Mantovani conducted with over 200 students in her Anthropology and Pedagogy class at a university in Milan revealed a general "indifference to being Italian" and a "lack of pride in being Italian" stemming from exposure to the curriculum (p. 88). This is not surprising, given that a 2010 analysis by Demos & Pi regarding national pride in Northern Italy indicated that pride in being Italian is generally low among young people under 25 (38%) and peaks among those over 65 (68%) (p. 5).

To propose an expanded idea of "global" *Italianness* that all students can feel they belong to, therefore, it is essential to introduce a curriculum that authentically reflects the experiences of all students with a variety of stories that multiply, instead of simplifying, reality.

How Students Build Their Sense of Belonging

As seen from Mantovani's (2009) questionnaire, Italian schools' contribution to building sense of belonging is still insufficient. Understanding how students build their sense of belonging is key to designing school curricula and to selecting adequate material that respond to MIUR's Civic Education objectives.

Among the children who arrived in Italy after the age of 10, more than one in two feels 'foreigner,' (ISTAT 2015, p. 9), with specific communities (Chinese, Ecuadorian, Peruvian, and Filipinos) feeling 'foreigners,' even when born in Italy (ISTAT 2020 pp. 21-23). On the contrary, the share of young people who feel Italian is generally high among those originally from a European country, and especially high for Romania (45.8%). The non-European citizenship with the highest sense of belonging is the Moroccan one (36%); being the community that most frequently interacts with Italians (82%), even though only 73% of them claim to be proficient in the language (ISTAT 2020, pp. 21-23). This suggests that neither language proficiency nor being born in the country are the main incentive for belonging. In fact, minoritized students define multiculturalism and multi-religiousness as key traits of their belonging and compare their belonging with the concept of *cosmopolitanism*, not only for their experiences and the tangible consequences of globalization, but because, to them, this concept normalizes the diversity that distinguishes them and recognizes the dignity and positive value of multiculturalism, opposing the policies of exclusion from which they sometimes feel threatened (Sachy 2018, p. 24). Based on the studies and the understanding that validation is a fundamental psychological need, we can hypothesize that seeing oneself reflected in literature fosters a sense of belonging for minoritized students and encourages a broader sense of community for non-minoritized ones.

Research indicates that humans have a strong motivation to feel accepted by their social groups; indeed, a sense of belonging—which fulfills one of Maslow's basic human needs—is crucial for effective learning (Knekta et al., 2020, p. 1). Nonetheless, the notion of belonging is still "both vaguely-defined and ill-theorized" (Antonsich 2010, p. 1). Antonsich's (2010) proposes the idea of "individual feelings of place-

belongingness," and identifies factors contributing to it: auto-biographical (personal experiences, relations, and memories), relational (personal and social ties), and cultural (language, traditions, habits, and religion), alongside economic and legal factors (pp. 8-11). This study's alternative canon focuses on the first three factors.

How Literature Can Foster Belongingness

Feeling represented by what they study and seeing authentic representations of others is essential for both minoritized and "mainstream" students, as already claimed by Sims Bishop's (1990). Literature, in fact, serves as an effective tool to learn about real-life situations by applying narrative make-believes to the real world (Swirski 2007). Moreover, simulating alternative realities aligns with the RFCDC's (2013) recommendation for activities based on real or imagined experiences. This approach helps adolescent readers, who, according to Barzon (2008), seek characters that reflect both their similarities and the "other-than-self," fostering a dialectic of identification and confrontation essential for growth (pp. 50-51). This point is further demonstrated by Zannoni and Sirotti's (2019) collective reading of second-generation migrant authors in the High School "Cavazzi-Sorbelli" in Pavullo nel Frignano (Modena, Italy). When asked how diverse groups can coexist without assimilation or hostility, minoritized students emphasized integration and relationships with the dominant culture while expressing their sense of belonging through heritage aspects like food, fashion, and traditions, alongside identity elements such as family and language. These topics resonate with three of the five factors identified by Antonsich (2010) as crucial to feelings of belongingness, shared by both minoritized and non-minoritized students.

Curriculum Design and Implementation

The curriculum developed in this study aims to enhance students' competencies as defined by the RFCDC while incorporating previously underrepresented female and racialized authors, following Möller's (2016) four-theme model inspired by Sims Bishop (1990). The model's key pillar are: (1) consciously interracial books that that depict a multicultural society where diverse backgrounds interact; (2) texts reflecting the principle that "people are people," showcasing the experiences of minoritized groups (pp. 68-69); (3) works that portray the unique experiences within specific cultural groups, emphasizing values, attitudes, and distinctive language patterns; and (4) literature addressing racism and discrimination, considering both historical and contemporary injustices. By selecting books across all four types, teachers can create a quality, diverse collection that is balanced "in terms of the types of mirrors offered to students from underrepresented groups and the types of windows offered White students" (pp. 68-70).
Examples of chosen texts include: Lakhous' *Scontro per un ascensore in Piazza Vittorio* (2006) as a *consciously interracial* book where people from all socio-cultural backgrounds come together in the same condominium and have to cope with each other's differences. Similarly, in Laila Wadia's short story "Curry di pollo" (2005), the protagonists' Indian family meet the Italian boyfriend and must negotiate cultural and generational differences. Moïse's short story "Abbiamo pianto un fiume di risate" (2019) follows the principle "people are people", both by defying the Italian idiomatic expression 'piangere un fiume di lacrime' ('to cry a river') and substituting it with its opposite 'risate' ('laughters') while explaining the experience of being black in Italy. Similarly, Ribka Sibhatu's *Aulò. Canto-poesia dell'Eritrea* (2004), written in both Italian and Tigrinya, novelizes the life of the author as she escaped the country to avoid getting married to an army officer. For category 3, Scego's short story "Salsicce" (2006) showcases the internal struggle of a protagonist as a Muslim eating a typical Italian cut of pork meat ('salsiccia'). Similarly, Chiamaka Sandra Madu's short story "Lame in libri" (2022) narrates the preparation of the protagonist's sister for her *gudniin* (genital mutilation) ceremony. Lastly, coping with racism and discrimination, Kan's short story "Cacciatrici di negre" (2020), narrates the story of a young girl negatively sexualized by a schoolmate because of her color. By the same author, the short story "Conosci la tua storia" (2020) exposes the "white savior complex" of a white volunteer working in a refugee association. Authors may be included/excluded depending on the country of origin of the students in the classroom, to provide them with authentic experiences as relatable as possible.
The selection of readings also engages with themes from Zannoni and Sirotti (2009) and Antonsich (2010) in relation to RFCDC competencies for democratic citizenship. It centers on five modules derived from Zannoni and Sirotti's (2019) research: (1) identity and belonging; (2) relations and integration; (3) culture of

origins; (4) the migration phenomenon; and (5) religiosity and hospitality (pp. 171-175). All literary excerpts are compiled in an anthology with corresponding activities to guide student reflection.
Participants in the curriculum will primarily be 5th-year students, as this year's focus is on the 21st century, making contemporary authors more relevant. The sampling aims to reflect Italy's complexity and diversity, balancing native and immigrant backgrounds to enhance the findings' generalizability.

How to "Measure" Global Citizenship

The RFCDC (2013) explicitly excludes assessment methods such as checklists, ranking tasks, Likert scales, multiple-choice questions, constructed-response questions, and situational judgment tests for evaluating competencies. Instead, it advocates for cumulative assessments like portfolio evaluations, project-based assessments, observational assessments, open-ended diaries, reflective journals, and structured autobiographical reflections (Volume 3, p. 66). Therefore, to capture students' perspectives before and after implementation, qualitative data will be gathered through various methods, including interviews, focus groups, audio-visual materials, and observations. Additionally, students' work samples, created during guiding and outreach activities, will be collected.
At the end, students will also complete individual self-reflections based on *what* has changed in their perception and *how*, to analyze the "storied landscape", or relationship, "between institutional storytelling and personal narratives" (O'Toole, p. 176).
The project's goal is to highlight how Italian racialized literature can enhance the representation of historically and currently underrepresented groups, such as women and immigrants, while also broadening the experiences of non-minoritized students. This approach aims to foster a more inclusive and global understanding of *Italianness*. Inspired by Sims Bishop's (1990) concept of "mirrors, windows, and sliding doors," the intent is to guide students through a sliding door toward a co-constructed glocal community to which they all belong.

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