

## Keats’ “negative capability” for digital resilience education.

*Exploring boundaries among English language, social network, and resilience as resources for communication and inclusion*

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**Abstract** – Digital technologies and social networks introduced in today’s society and, consequently in families and schools, created a never-ending debate on their risks and their possibilities among experts and media. The investigation of the boundaries of social networks, resilience and the English language will design the scenario for discussing how to balance these polarities and develop educators’ competencies to cope successfully with digital challenges, their pedagogical implications for a digital resilient education and the way to trace hypothetical training on these themes. The way for developing digital resilient education should include reflective practices for becoming resilient educators and parents. Keats’ category of “negative capability” reminds us to catch the beauty of each change and to face uncertainty through “reflective inaction”.

**Riassunto** – Le tecnologie digitali e i social network entrati a far parte della nostra società, delle famiglie e della scuola hanno creato un infinito dibattito tra esperti e media sui loro rischi e possibilità. La ricerca di un legame tra social networks, resilienza e lingua Inglese disegnerà lo scenario per discutere come creare un equilibrio tra queste polarità e sviluppare competenze tra gli educatori per affrontare con successo le sfide del digitale, nonché le implicazioni pedagogiche per ipotizzare un’educazione alla resilienza digitale e percorsi di formazione su questi temi. La via per sviluppare un’educazione alla resilienza digitale dovrebbe includere pratiche riflessive per diventare educatori e genitori resilienti. La “negative capability” di Keats ci ricorda di cogliere la bellezza in ogni cambiamento e di affrontare l’incertezza attraverso una “inazione riflessiva”.

**Keywords** – resilience, English language, resources, social network, negative capability

**Parole chiave** – resilienza, lingua Inglese, risorse, social network, negative capability

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"Several things dovetailed in my mind, & at once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature & which Shakespeare possessed so enormously – I mean Negative Capability, that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason – Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetrarium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge".

(J. Keats)

## 1. "It's complicated": digital technologies from institutional norms to living narratives at school

Living narratives about social networks' digital abuse and misuse are part of our everyday life. Digital technologies and social networks introduced in today's society, and consequently, in families, schools and communities, created a never-ending debate on their risks and their possibilities among researchers, experts and media. When news from media reports bad events regarding the use of digital technologies and social networks, we emotionally tend to emphasize their risks. On the other hand, when current events show good practices or benefits, we are led to take into account their enormous possibilities. As an example of strengths we could mention the use of digital media for education: language learning can easily be enhanced through the use of social networks, apps, open educational resources<sup>2</sup>. In fact, students can learn anywhere and at anytime, interweaving formal, informal and non formal learning. Other strengths concern refugees and migrants: thanks to the use of media and social network they can stay in touch with families and friends from their original country, preserving in this way their personal and national identity. However, examples of weaknesses are the recent episodes of cyberbullying which occurred in the Italian schools: videos recorded by the students on a smartphone can easily be uploaded onto the internet and become viral, to the great embarrassment of the student shown in the video.

<sup>2</sup> See L. Cinganotto, D. Cuccurullo, *Open Educational Resources, ICT and virtual communities for Content and Language Integrated Learning*, in "Teaching English with Technology", 16, 4, 2016, pp. 3-11.

As stated by a researcher, the relationship with social media could not be reduced to an arena with people arguing against social media or with people supporting their advantages<sup>3</sup>. When we read news on social network uses at school, or within other settings, they are always presented with a question: do you agree? Yes or no? The call concerns an action, just a few minutes to decide if they are right or wrong and whether to support a debate or not. In this paper, we affirm that social networks and digital media should be approached by educators and families in a more critical way, as an opportunity to develop an educational zone where new learning can emerge and, above all, linking their role to a "human rights based approach"<sup>4</sup>. We also highlight the role of new and engaging competences such as negative capability, which may lead towards new learning experiences and at the same time, enhance the wide range of rights concerning digital education (safety, resilience, health, literacy etc.) from a holistic perspective. Negative capability may be supported by language competences, such as connecting and getting in touch does not necessarily entail mutual understanding.

"A human rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyze inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress"<sup>5</sup>; in other words, the human rights-based approach demands a media education which enhances critical thinking and problem solving<sup>6</sup> from a holistic perspective to human development, considering all the rights and not only the right to be safe on the web, but also digital literacy rights, health rights, inclusive rights, privacy rights.

At European level, the European Commission adopted a Recommendation on media literacy on 20 August 2009<sup>7</sup> setting out a number of goals in this area for member states and the media industry. The same year the European Commission published a report titled *EuroMeduc, Media literacy in Europe Controversies, Challenges and perspectives*<sup>8</sup>, highlighting weaknesses and strengths of digital media and the need for media literacy to provide directions and guidelines to users from a wider perspective:

"Digital technologies have made media truly ubiquitous. Whether originated in established publishers or created by users, media content permeates and informs every aspect of our life. Yet, in order to make the most of the wealth of content available to them, people need to be able to make out what they wish from what they don't, what is suitable from what isn't. They

<sup>3</sup> See D. Boyd, *It's complicated. the social lives of networked teens*, London, Yale University Press, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> P. Garista, *Resilienza*, in W. Brandani, S. Tramma (a cura di), *Dizionario del lavoro educativo*, Roma, Carocci, 2014, pp. 287-290.

<sup>5</sup> In [https://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/index\\_62012.html](https://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/index_62012.html), UNICEF, Human Rights-based Approach to Programming.

<sup>6</sup> See S. Manca, M. Ranieri, *Facebook and the others. Potentials and obstacles of Social Media for teaching in higher education*, in "Computers & Education", 95, 2016, pp. 216-230.

<sup>7</sup> Commission Recommendation of 20 August 2009 on media literacy in the digital environment for a more competitive audiovisual and content industry and an inclusive knowledge society.

<sup>8</sup> In [http://www.euromeduc.eu/IMG/pdf/Euromeduc\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.euromeduc.eu/IMG/pdf/Euromeduc_ENG.pdf).

need a chart and a compass to reap the rewards and fight off the risks of navigating an ocean which looks alluring and forbidding at the same time. This is where media literacy comes into play”<sup>9</sup>.

The same report later on points out the importance of a wide and comprehensive definition of media literacy, including a wide range of dimensions, such as “creativity, citizenship, empowerment, inclusion, personalisation, innovation, critical thinking and the list goes on”. “It is about critical thinking, and about cultural dispositions or tastes [...] for young and old, for teachers and parents, for people who work in the media industries and for NGOs [...]. It is an initiative coming from the top down, but also from the bottom up”<sup>10</sup>. As a part of Europe 2020 strategy, the Digital Agenda for Europe provided six operational axes of interventions, which are: infrastructures and security; digital identities; public data and sharing; digital skills; digital administration; smart communities. Within this framework, the Italian Digital Agenda in 2012 transferred the strategies and the principles outlined by the Digital Agenda for Europe to the Italian context, through a coherent plan of concrete initiatives and measures and the effective coordination of public intervention both at central and local level. The aim is to cover all the aspects relating to digital spread, safety, divide all over Italy, from a holistic and comprehensive perspective, overcoming the debate on weaknesses and strengths.

This paper aims to go beyond these polarities to approach the complicated world of digital media and social networks, their virtual and uncertain space in which risks and opportunities coexist, starting from a resilient perspective, through which we could all develop capabilities and reflect on best practices as a way to mix together language learning, digital tools, rights to be healthy, safe and literate, bringing institutional goals to living narratives at school.

## 2. A digital resilience approach in education: balancing risks and opportunities of the use and abuse of digital technologies within schools and communities

Resilience is a construct, which describes the process of creating wellbeing and positive development in lifelong learning, starting from normal conditions for human development or by considering how to overcome adversities and stressful situations. During recent decades this concept has been contextualized in different settings and disciplines (psychological and emotional development, community action, environment, physics, health and medicine, learning and teaching), and only lately it has been introduced into the digital field. The term “digital resilience” is a less explored area of research related to lifelong learning. Resilience is becoming a very common term in literature on education in relation to several topics, as defined in a recent dictionary on education<sup>11</sup>: inclusion, disability, life skills, teachers’ training, leadership, mentoring, and guidance<sup>12</sup>. Within the Italian context of educational studies on resilience, for

<sup>9</sup> *Ivi*, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Ivi*, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> See P. Garista, *Resilienza*, in W. Brandani, S. Tramma (a cura di), *Dizionario del lavoro educativo*, cit.

<sup>12</sup> See J. H. Brown, M. D’Emidio Caston, B. Benard, *Resilience education*, Thousand Oaks (CA), Corwin Press, 2001; M. M. Milstein, D. A. Henry, *Leadership for Resilient Schools and Communities*, Thousand Oaks

instance, Malaguti and Canevaro have widely researched this concept related to inclusion and the effect traumatic events have on development and education and migrants' integration; Pinto Minerva introduced this concept in the field of resilience education at school; Vaccarelli applied the concept to the emergent field of pedagogy of emergency and finally, Garista and Zannini introduced the debate on resilience applied to the fields of health and patient education and recently to the school setting<sup>13</sup>. The most important factor which characterizes resilience in the field of education, is its capacity to create new opportunities, new resources, new skills; in other words, new learning, emerging from a stressful, disadvantaged or traumatic situation<sup>14</sup>. Consequently, it is not surprising that the term resilience could be related to the digital challenges. For the English language, resilience is a common, diffused word. For this reason, blogs and documents about digital challenges, which refer to the resilient process emerging from them, are easily found. Our hypothesis is that both digital tools as well as language learning could build a bridge from risk, loss and uncertainty to opportunities, resources and learning.

Digital resilience presents itself in relation to the use of digital storytelling to evaluate or implement resilience promotion programs, to the use of mobile therapy, to information health access and resilience of the digital divide, finally, the resilience construct was discussed to cope with digital challenges in medical curricular changes in an Indian Campus. A digital resilience education could be considered an alternative approach to prevent and to overcome cyberbullism, focusing on positive and emotional relations even when violence and injures become a real experience within social networks.

There is a growing trend in the scientific publications on digital resilience related to the pedagogical field and to how technology is changing academic practice defining a 'digital scholarship resilience matrix'<sup>15</sup>. On the other hand, there is an emerging area of research about language learning, communication, inclusion<sup>16</sup> and resilience, which could lead to digital resilience education.

(CA), Corwin Press, 2008; E. Malaguti, *Educarsi alla resilienza. Come affrontare crisi e difficoltà e migliorarsi*, Trento, Erickson, 2005; F. Pinto Minerva, *Resilienza. Una risorsa per contrastare privazione e disagio*, in "Innovazione educativa", 7-8, 2004, pp. 24-29; F. Walsh, *La resilienza familiare*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> See E. Malaguti, *Educarsi alla resilienza. Come affrontare crisi e difficoltà e migliorarsi*, cit.; F. Pinto Minerva, *Resilienza. Una risorsa per contrastare privazione e disagio*, cit.; A. Canevaro, E. Malaguti, A. Miozzo, C. Venier (a cura di), *Bambini che sopravvivono alla guerra*, Trento, Erickson, 2001; A. Vaccarelli, *Le prove della vita. Promuovere la resilienza nella relazione educativa*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016..

<sup>14</sup> P. Garista, G. Pocetta, *Digital Resilience: meanings, epistemologies and methodologies for lifelong learning*, in F. Falcinelli, T. Minerva, P. C. Rivoltella (a cura di), *Apertura e flessibilità nell'istruzione superiore: oltre l'e-learning*, Reggio Emilia, Sie-L, 2014, pp. 194-196 ([http://www.sie-l.it/phocadownload/Atti\\_siel\\_2014.pdf](http://www.sie-l.it/phocadownload/Atti_siel_2014.pdf)).

<sup>15</sup> See P. Garista, G. Pocetta, *Digital Resilience: meanings, epistemologies and methodologies for lifelong learning*, cit.; M. Weller, *The Digital Scholar: How Technology Is Transforming Scholarly Practice*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2011 (Retrieved September 1, 2014, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781849666275>).

<sup>16</sup> See British Council, *Language for resilience: supporting Syrian refugees*, 2016 (Retrieved from: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/schools/support-for-languages/thought-leadership/research-report/language-resilience>).

To sum up thus far, there is a two-fold link between resilience and digital tools: digital tools can promote resilience in education, wellbeing promotion and health education; resilience could be implemented as means to face digital challenges and cyberbullying. We can state the same for language learning and inclusion within the digital world, where language learning becomes the means to create real communication over simple connection. As a result, a holistic perspective considering human development (psycho-physical, social and academic dimensions) and human rights should be taken into account when schools and families have to face the uncertainties and risks of the digital world and the social networks.

### 3. Keats' negative capability to foster digital resilience and to cope uncertainty in the digital world

Coping with risk and uncertainty is a must of our education system, considering both the more traditional dimensions and the virtual ones. Our society and education call for performance<sup>17</sup>. Social networks call for performance too and they usually act as a mirror, amplifying habits of everyday life. In fact, in the use of social communication people's instinct is to share experiences and private information, to show how literate and skilled they are on a certain topic and how able they are to cope with different situations with the aim of presenting their attributes and skills to other people, without stopping and reflecting on what is going on. A lot of problems probably lie within this call to action, relevant to online interaction, to playing a role and to finding a solution, with a misuse of social networks. We are considering them as a means of communication and, as a consequence, a mirror of other relationships we build to be in contact, to create connectedness, to be accepted in different cultures and societies<sup>18</sup>. In this scenario, attention is given to top performance at school and at work "is alienating and dehumanizing students, teachers, and families who are looking for what would help to orient themselves toward a changing and unpredictable world"<sup>19</sup>. According to Todd and her interpretation of Anna Harendt thoughts on "time of present" we should refocus on education rather than on learning. The latter has a close relationship to outcome, outputs and performance. In doing so we can deeply understand the importance of transformation and uncertainty in transforming people's lives and their way of coping with "uncertainty meaningfulness"<sup>20</sup>. In brief, learning demands action and decision-making, education highlights inaction, reflective inaction, and the ability to use transformation and new challenges (such as the digital ones) to produce transformative learning.

The poet John Keats best described this life process through the expression of "negative

<sup>17</sup> See S. Todd, *Facing uncertainty in education: beyond the harmonies of Eurovision education*, in "European Educational Research Journal", 15, 6, 2016, pp. 194-196.

<sup>18</sup> See M. Ranieri (Ed.), *Populism, media and education: challenging discrimination in contemporary digital societies*, Oxon-New York, Routledge, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> S. Todd, *Facing uncertainty in education: beyond the harmonies of Eurovision education*, cit., p. 619.

<sup>20</sup> *Ivi*, p. 623.



capability"<sup>21</sup>. The word 'negative' does not refer to a pejorative sense, but to convey the idea that a person's potential can be defined by what he or she does not possess – in this case, a need to resist the 'false necessity' of deterministic solutions or to cope proactively with risks. Keats points out that essential to literary achievement, is certain passivity, a willingness to let what is mysterious or doubtful remain just that.

"I mean Negative Capability, that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason"<sup>22</sup>.

If a positive capability is related to problem solving and decisive action, negative capability describes a "reflective inaction"<sup>23</sup>. Inaction does not mean passivity or neglectfulness, it should be seen as a way to react to "a culture dominated by control and performativity"<sup>24</sup>. A negative capability is an ability not to do something, where the term negative is used to contain negative moods and attitudes as "not knowing what to do, not having adequate resources, and not trusting or being trusted. [...] This capability manifests itself in behaviours such as waiting, observing and listening, which are not negative per se but are, as it were, at the opposing pole to action as intervention. Positive and negative do not imply any moral judgment"<sup>25</sup>. A negative capability seems to be a positive factor in different fields. At first glance, negative capability refers to several useful behaviours in the teaching-learning process, as well as in leadership (as stated in an increasing number of studies) but also in psychoanalysis, in religion, in language and organizational studies. For instance, in the field of education Perla and Riva presented this capability in relation to the acquisition of relational, affective and clinical competences which should be developed by educators to face and cope with everyday practice<sup>26</sup>; Valentino, in addition, introduces negative capability in relation to creativity, offering a perspective to read and shift poetry into a didactic scenario. In this article, we introduce the idea of developing negative capability as a key skill also in the field of language learning, digital and social challenges, resilience education. Its possible contribution turns out to be the creation of an "educational zone", a sort of mental and emotional space, where new learning can emerge. This space for education could offer fresh insights for all stakeholders struggling in defense of the enormous possibilities of social network and digital challenges.

<sup>21</sup> Keats' negative capability has been compared with Coleridge concept of "negative belief", and Wordsworth "wise passivity" (S. Greenblatt *et alii* (Eds.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2006, ix, p. 424-954). In psychoanalysis the negative capability is a construct related to the theory of Bion and his critic to the tendency to fill empty spaces of ignorance because it is just in this present moment that new thought could arise.

<sup>22</sup> *The Letters of John Keats*, Ed. by H. E. Rollins, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1958, pp. 193-194.

<sup>23</sup> P. Simpson, R. French, C. E. Harvey, *Leadership and negative capability*, in "Human Relations", 55, 810, 2002, pp. 1201-1226.

<sup>24</sup> *Ivi*, p. 1209

<sup>25</sup> *Ivi*, p. 1211.

<sup>26</sup> See L. Perla L., M. G. Riva, *L'agire educativo. Manuale per educatori e operatori socio-assistenziali*, Brescia, La Scuola, 2016; F. Valentino, *Poesia, fantasia, filosofia. La didattica della creatività nell'esperienza educativa*, Roma, Armando Editore, 2002.

Negative capability can be seen within the framework of the wide range of definitions adopted in education, such as the following:

“We refer to ‘competencies’ when we focus on the energy, skills, behaviors, motivations, influence and abilities of individuals. We use the term ‘capabilities’ to refer to a broad range of collective skills that can be both technical and logistical or ‘harder’ (e.g. policy analysis, marine resources assessment, financial management) and generative or ‘softer’ (e.g. the ability to earn legitimacy, to adapt, to create meaning and identity). All capabilities have aspects that are both hard and soft. Finally, we use the term ‘*capacity*’ to refer to the overall ability of a system to create value”<sup>27</sup>.

Through a negative capability, we can create a pause in the narrative, a time and a space to think in difficult situations, without the instinct to fill “with knowing the empty space created by ignorance”. Simpson et al. well describe a way to approach negative capability: a “shift from the familiar paradigm of technical control to a paradigm of the management of meaning”<sup>28</sup>.

The negative capability could then be perceived as a breath after running, as a reflection pause before acting, reasoning and reflection as opposed to instant reaction and instinct. Educating the New Millennium learners to balance the two dimensions, action and reflections, reasoning and instinct, could be an added value for their growth and for their capacity to meet the challenges of today’s society.

An emerging question for educators could now be posed: in which way could negative capability be enhanced in students, families, teachers, educators, schools and communities? Are there good practices which could become a trigger to think of a new digital resilience education to approach social networks in a global society?

#### 4. A case example of negative capability building: language for resilience

“Like the capacity for language, negative capability appears to be an in-born aspect of human potential”<sup>29</sup>. The language itself proves a pivotal factor in relation to negative capability, as it is the expression of thought and reflection.

A recent report published by the British Council titled “Language for resilience”<sup>30</sup> examines the role that language can play in enhancing the resilience of Syrian refugees and host communities. It collects interviews with refugees, host communities, teachers, ministry of education officials, children, parents, volunteers and non-governmental organization staff. They express their thoughts and feelings on the role of language in enhancing the resilience of indi-

<sup>27</sup> P. Morgan, *The Concept of Capacity*, in The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ec-dpm), *Study on Capacity, Change and Performance*, 2006, p. 7 (Retrieved from: [http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Biblio\\_Reinforcement/documents/Chapter-1/Chap1Doc5.pdf](http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Biblio_Reinforcement/documents/Chapter-1/Chap1Doc5.pdf)).

<sup>28</sup> P. Simpson, R. French, C. E. Harvey, *Leadership and negative capability*, in “Human Relations”, 55, 810, 2002, pp. 1215.

<sup>29</sup> *Ivi*, p. 1220.

<sup>30</sup> See British Council, *Language for resilience: supporting Syrian refugees*, cit.



viduals and communities affected by crisis. The report shows how language learning can help resilience through different actions, such as giving a voice to young people and adults, building social cohesion in host communities or providing individuals with the skills they need to access work, services, education and information. The report shows that for children educators working in difficult communities of migrants and refugees, quality language learning improves attainment and attendance and builds safer and more inclusive classrooms. It also illustrates how creative approaches to language education can support the development of life skills and help meet psycho-social needs. A suggestion provided for strengthening the resilience of refugees through language instruction in mainstream schools is the provision of home language-based learning programmes, which could help the transition to national language acquisition and lead to better learning outcomes.

It is important to embed language programmes in the curricula and to provide training opportunities for teachers and educators to help them understand and manage the impact of the trauma of displacement on students and to work on their own wellbeing.

This study shows the role of the language dimension for resilience in difficult communities made up of refugees and migrants in a crisis period. However, the conclusions can be also interpreted from a wider perspective, considering language as a way to build bridges and destroy barriers separating groups from different socio-cultural backgrounds.

Among the possible strategies to adopt, some examples are described<sup>31</sup>, which show how social network can become an environment for language learning and inclusion, as a part of digital resilience education:

- “Developing community volunteer networks on how to teach their own language as an additional language”.

- The building of a community network can be enhanced through the use of social network and media<sup>32</sup> which could build long and effective bridges over cultures, languages, beliefs, provided that the community “shares a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly”<sup>33</sup>.

- “Integrating basic literacy and numeracy in language programmes for youth and adult learners”.

- The idea is pluriliteracies for teaching and learning language programmes<sup>34</sup> should provide a wide set of activities aimed at developing the learner’s pluriliteracies, such as basic literacy and numeracy, but also digital literacy, communicating literacy etc.

<sup>31</sup> *Ivi*, p. 29.

<sup>32</sup> See E. Wenger-Trayner, B. Wenger-Trayner, *Communities of practice – A brief introduction*, V April 15, 2015 (Retrieved from: <http://wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/07-Brief-introduction-to-communities-of-practice.pdf>).

<sup>33</sup> *Ivi*, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> See O. Meyer, D. Coyle, A. Halbach, K. Kevin Schuck, T. Ting, *A pluriliteracies approach to content and language integrated learning – mapping learner progressions in knowledge construction and meaning-making*, in “Language, Culture and Curriculum”, 28, 2015 (*Issue 1: Content-Based Instruction and CLIL: Moving Forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*).

– “Language programming which uses a ‘Content and Language Integrated Learning’ (CLIL) approach, where the content of the course is driven by the skills the community wants to develop and is studied through the medium of the language being learned”.

CLIL approach, which has become crucial in Italy, as a compulsory methodology in all upper secondary schools<sup>35</sup> can bridge language, content, culture, communication cognition, as provided by the 4Cs framework<sup>36</sup>. We can define it as a resilient approach within a difficult community of learners such as the communities discussed in the British Council’s report.

Digital media can contribute to language learning through devoted programmes, apps or webtools or they can simply provide the infrastructure needed to get people far from each other to get in touch with friends, relatives, acquaintances across the world, after becoming fully aware of the potential of digital media for educational purposes, avoiding all the possible relevant risks.

The project carried out by the British Council could be defined as an example of negative capability, as the research takes into account the situation of crisis refugees and migrants have to face in some parts of the world, considering all the different aspects meditating, reflecting, balancing all the different problems and trying to find some solutions through the set of approaches and strategies proposed.

The recent Eurydice report “Key Data on teaching languages at school in Europe<sup>37</sup>” highlights the different types of support provided by the member states when newly arrived migrant students enter the education system. In order to guide schools in planning and implementing the different learning pathways, trying to meet the migrant students’ needs, approximately one third of European countries provide central recommendations or regulations on testing students in the language of schooling, as one of the aspects of a broader psycho-pedagogical assessment: language plays a key role for migrants’ resilience.

In order to provide further support to the member states in language teaching provision and assessment with reference to adult migrants, the Council of Europe has promoted a wide range of projects in recent years, such as the LIAM<sup>38</sup> (Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants) project, which has developed a set of tools designed for learners and teachers to encourage good practice and a high standard in the provision of language courses and in assessment of language proficiency.

This project is an example of the great interest at European level in the migrants’ language issues: facilitating and supporting communication and mutual understanding in the language of the country where they live means promoting their wellness and their resilience.

Communication may often be mediated through a screen and through digital channels (all migrants have a smartphone to get in touch with their relatives living in their home country):

<sup>35</sup> See L. Cinganotto, *CLIL in Italy: a general overview*, in “Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning”, 9(2), 2016.

<sup>36</sup> See D. Coyle, D. Hood Marsh, *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

<sup>37</sup> See Eurydice, *Key Data on teaching languages at school in Europe, 2017* (Retrieved from: [http://eurydice.indire.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Key-Data-on-Teaching-Languages-2017-Full-report\\_EN.pdf](http://eurydice.indire.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Key-Data-on-Teaching-Languages-2017-Full-report_EN.pdf)).

<sup>38</sup> See <http://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/home>.

that is why language competences, digital competences and negative capability often become interwoven.

## 5. Teachers' training solutions for digital resilient schools and communities

Complicated situations like the ones concerning digital challenges in schools demand "hard and soft aspects" represented by capabilities instead of competencies and skills. According to us, the concept of negative capability well embodies risks and opportunities from a resilient perspective. Above all, because a negative capability could create a space of "inaction" where new thoughts can arise. These new thoughts and connections open a way for planning educational projects capable of rethinking natural behaviours (such as developing one's native language) or educational issues (such as acquiring a new language) and strategies being able to support different aspects of human development in traumatic or stressful situations.

We experienced our negative capability as researchers to hypothesize a space where teachers, families and pupils can cope with digital challenges considering both risks and possibilities of social networks and digital tools in a positive way. Within this space, we were able to connect different aspects of human development and all their rights: not only the right to be safe on the web, but also digital literacy rights, health rights, inclusive rights, privacy rights. In doing this, we imagined a scenario, confirmed in the review process, where institutional norms meet living narratives at schools. Creating a pause in these narratives, debates could be provoked by leaders of schools/communities in order to welcome different positions and educational proposals coming from other institutions. In this way, strategies for language for resilience could shift in digital resilience education programmes (like the British Council project) and strategies from digital resilience programmes could turn out to be methods to support capacity building in schools and communities (like the Swedish project where students teach teachers how to cope with digital risks).

Considering the aforementioned remarks, a new learning scenario should shape our classes, where reflection, self-reflection, meta-cognition and narratives play a key-role for both students and teachers or educators, in order to slow down the pace of action, reaction and instant messaging: a powerful tool could be the journal or learning diary for the students, collecting the most relevant steps of his/her learning experiences or the portfolio for the teachers, gathering his/her reflection on the most significant training initiatives attended or the most memorable teaching moments of his/her career<sup>39</sup>. In Italy, an important step has been taken with the National Teacher Training Plan issued by the Ministry of Education in October 2016, reshaping teacher training, making it compulsory and introducing a wide range of innovative dimensions, such as the teacher's digital portfolio, which is aimed at collecting evidence from all the training pathways attended in the last three years.

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<sup>39</sup> See L. Perretta, P. Garista, *L'animatore digitale resiliente*, in "BRICKS", 6, 4, 2016 ([http://bricks.maieutiche.economia.unitn.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/11\\_Perretta.pdf](http://bricks.maieutiche.economia.unitn.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/11_Perretta.pdf)).

In this perspective, a guide towards the use of asynchronous digital tools such as blog, forum, digital portfolio could help learners reflect on what they write and how they write it; this could also impact the use of synchronous tools such as instant messaging, chats, whatsapp chats etc. Teachers and educators should guide learners in slowing down the pace of action, leading them to reflection, observation, meditation, in order to get their attitude to remain open and reflective, rather than reaching a fixed premature judgment and reaction<sup>40</sup>.

These aspects could be transversal to the curriculum and could be developed through specific school projects for students and through some of the wide range of teacher training actions proposed within the framework of the National Teacher Training Plan: digital resilient education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

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<sup>40</sup> See P. Simpson, R. French, C. E. Harvey, *Leadership and negative capability*, cit.

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