Final Report: Training Course "Go Ahead" on inclusive strategies for students with Special Educational Needs

Date: Location: Empoli, IC Empoli EST on line meetings **Target Audience: 8** Foreign Languages Lower Secondary School Teachers of Istituto Comprensivo Empoli Est **(Ilaria Mannina, De Cicco Simona, Burgassi Lucia, Allegri Elisabetta, Bartalucci Geraldine, Galliano Antonella, Poggetti Sabrina, Rocca Federica); Organizing body:** British School of Pisa; **Trainer: Anna Cuomo; time:** 10 hours, 5 meetings of 2 hours each.

1. Introduction

This report aims to provide a summary of the activities carried out, the content covered, and the results that emerged during the training course Go Ahead about Inclusive Strategies for Students with Special Educational Needs. The course was aimed at lower secondary school teachers with the objective of providing theoretical and practical tools to promote effective inclusion of students with SEN within the school context.

2. Course Objectives

The course aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- To provide an updated overview of current legislation regarding school inclusion and SEN.
- To deepen the understanding of the different categories of SEN (disability, specific learning disorders, socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural disadvantage).
- To present inclusive teaching strategies and active methodologies to meet the specific needs of students with SEN.
- To promote collaboration between teachers, support staff (e.g., special education teachers, educators), families, and the local community.
- To provide tools for the design of effective and individualized Personalized Education Plans (PEPs).
- To stimulate reflection on one's own teaching practices from an inclusive perspective.

2. Content

- **Unit 1: Understanding Special Educational Needs:** different kinds of disorders: dyspraxia, dysorthography, dysgraphia, memory difficulties, attention disorder, anxiety caused by low self-esteem, performance anxiety. Inclusive Teaching Strategies: text-to-speech (sintesi vocale); no italics, Dictaphone, pre-reading, step by step reading, hightlighted text, words matched with pictures, Dictaphone app, Lexical retrieval, Valency grammar, words booklet, audio tracks, earphones for all pupils in order not to differentiate, off line dictionary, well-organization of the text (focus on the different parts of the text in order to avoid visual pollution); focus on just ONE exercise to carry out; lexis categories;

- **Unit 2 Different types of Memories and Evaluation grid for children with special needs**
    - View the slides on Power Point Presentation

- **Unit 3 Concept Maps and different Learning styles**
    - Learning styles questionnaire

- **Unit 4 Processing Speed**
    - View the slides on Power Point Presentation

- **The last meeting** with the expert consisted of a recap of the entire course and deliver of Certificates of Attendance

- **On line meeting between Italian and Austrian teachers** to share ideas and material.

3. Teaching Methodologies

The course adopted an interactive and participatory methodology, alternating moments of theoretical presentation with group discussions, analysis of case studies, practical activities, and simulations. Diversified teaching materials were used (PowerPoint presentations, worksheets)

4. Results and Expected Impact

It is hoped that the training has provided participating teachers with stronger skills and tools to address the challenges of school inclusion. The expected short- and medium-term impacts include:

- Greater awareness of the different types of SEN and their educational implications.
- The adoption of more inclusive and personalized teaching strategies.
- Greater effectiveness in the design and implementation of PEPs.
- Improved collaboration among the various actors involved in the inclusion process.
- A more welcoming and respectful classroom climate towards individual differences.
- Greater academic success and well-being of students with SEN.

7. Conclusions

The training course GO AHEAD has represented an important opportunity for professional development for the participating teachers. The interest and active participation demonstrated the growing sensitivity of the school community towards inclusion issues. It is hoped that the knowledge and skills acquired can translate into increasingly effective and inclusive teaching practices, for the benefit of all students.