



Cross-experiences of ethnic schools in Italy and the United States (Tri-state Area) during covid pandemic - challenges, strategies and problems.

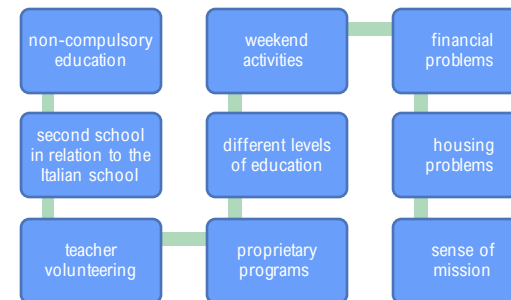
Author: Dr Natalia Maksymowicz Mroz, University of Szczecin, Poland

Co-author: Dr Kamila Kowalska, University of Warsaw, Poland



The benefits of remote learning

Negative effects



The main challenges

- keeping the school running despite difficulties;
- organization of remote classes (mastering technical issues, lack of equipment);
- developing a new teaching method;
- maintaining contacts with families (teaching parents how to help their children learn remotely);
- maintaining relationships with students and encouraging them to continue learning Polish remotely;
- controlling negative emotions (fear, uncertainty);
- the acquisition of new competences by teachers;
- the need to make the lessons more attractive, because teaching Polish diaspora is the second after completing compulsory education;
- during the lockdown, all family members worked / learned remotely - adjusting the lessons;
- the need to introduce innovative and interactive activities, because the long-term lack of contacts with peers discouraged from continuing education (Polish schools as meeting places).

Adopted strategies

- technical training for staff (new distance learning methods and techniques);
- various teaching methods:
- thematic online meetings for parents;
- role reversal - students trained teachers in multimedia;
- creating an alternative online community.



Conclusions...

- The period of the Covid-19 pandemic to the existing problems in running Polish diaspora schools in Italy was joined by new ones related to the transition from full-time to distance learning;
- Research has shown the involvement of schools in maintaining the functioning of a virtual school and an appropriate level of learning and student participation;
- The student's parent and family - a very important point of reference for the Polish diaspora school in Italy;
- The organization of education in the period of isolation confirmed that in the education of migrant children, the relationships that the teacher builds with students and their parents are important

Conclusions...

- Teaching during a pandemic was not always about following a specific program, but most of all about being and speaking Polish.
- Some of the institutions not only did not lose students during this time, but also gained new ones. This is important if we consider that teaching in Polish diaspora schools was, in fact, teaching in a second school, after completing compulsory education (also remotely) in American and Italian schools;
- The adaptation strategies chosen by teachers to the new teaching conditions have shown that the winning model in Polish education centers in Italy was to involve students and their families in school activities.
- As one of the respondents said: "The task of teachers is to teach that not everything is always perfect. The solution, however, is not to run away, but to look for the best way out of the situation". Polish schools in Italy chose this strategy from the first day of closure in the pandemic.