Teaching and Learning (English) in the Age of the Global Village

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A TEACHER'S JOURNEY INTO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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A world caught up in as dramatic a flux as today's certainly poses the need to address global issues, but also requires a focus on the local, hidden forces moving the whole. This book, which is the result of qualitative, ethnographic research carried out throughout 2002 and 2003, attempts a description and problematisation of both the global and local aspects of the contemporary educational world in order to produce a thinner description of the many components which characterise it. The author is aware that the choice of a qualitative approach might lend itself to criticism in a country such as Italy, which has a long tradition of positivist research, even in the field of education. Yet 'hard', reliable data lacks the depth of less structured materials which could well help to give an insight into the determinants of action, alongside developing 'situational understanding'. It is yet to be proved that experimental investigation is the preferable form of research in the educational field, where diverse individuals, each with his/her personal characteristics and motives, daily interact in unique situations. Based on this conviction, which was itself an achievement in the author's journey into qualitative research, this book does not aim to put forward a collection of generalisable findings or ready-made recipes to be re-used in different contexts. Far from that, it could rather be looked upon as an experience repertoire handed down to help other teachers and their students to identify and give a voice to their own priorities in their personal quests for understanding and empowerment.

L'AUTORE
Emilia Di Martino was awarded her MA in Education by the University of East Anglia and is currently a research bursar at the Istituto Universitario Suor Orsola Benincasa as well as studying for a PhD at the Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II". She taught French and English language and culture at Secondary-School level from 1988 to 2001. Over the same period of time, she was granted scholarships by the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, the Université de Poitiers, the British Council, Oxford University, Dartmouth College (USA), and the University of British Columbia (Canada), in addition to teaching as an adjunct-Professor at the Istituto Universitario Orientale and at the Università degli Studi di Salerno. She was also appointed teacher trainer for the Progetto Lingue 2000 by the Italian Ministry of Education. She has written on New Technologies, Intercultural Education, Action Research and Assessment of non-Linguistic Competences. She is presently carrying out research on e-learning.