

LE BOTTEGHE DELL'INSEGNARE

New paths to teach

English through language, literature and culture in the Reformed High School

*The alliance of literature and culture to teach English today for communication,
study and work*

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The Bottega dell'Insegnare *Language, Literature and Culture* will investigate a number of hot issues in the Reformed High School, still at stake after, and possibly despite, the implementation of the Reform in 2003 and later years.

Can the Reform really improve language teaching and learning in the Italian High School? What are language teachers expected to do? What pedagogic and methodological model should we adopt, adapt, or "make up", and upon which grounds? Can, or should we have, an active role in building our own syllabi? Should we foster the development of linguistic competence at all costs? What costs, and benefits, can we predict for our students? Is appreciation, and not mere competence, a feasible teaching objective? Is there still room for the appreciation of beauty for its own sake? Where is beauty to be found, in language, culture or literature, and how? Can students be taught critical thinking together with language competence? Last, but surely not least, what is the role of tradition?

After a brief presentation of the theme-centred approach (STEP 0), to be developed during the whole year, the Bottega will first analyse the Indicazioni Nazionali concerning Foreign Languages and then move on to consider the nature of *text* and *culture* so as to provide a definition of both on the basis of text linguistics, contributions from anthropology, and the participants' actual teaching experience (STEP 1). Secondly it will briefly consider most of the approaches to be traced

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in the theory and practice of language teaching, and focus on their pros and cons, with a particular emphasis about the importance of tradition for the development of a mature consciousness (STEP 2). Finally it will explore the theme-centred approach in depth by providing materials for the creation of one theme-centred unit, where language, culture and literature will be united (STEP 3). The literary work will be the heart of the theme-centred unit, enriched through the exploration of other “texts”, with an eye to the appreciation and not just “understanding” of texts and the development of key competences and language skills. In the theme-centred module a different procedure will be presented .

After the two-day session at the Convention, which will briefly cover all steps, the Bottega will continue through two (or more, depending on the participants’ needs) webinars and a final seminar, to be held in May with workshops where participants will be asked to study and create theme-centred units and/or modules. Enrollment to the Bottega will be required to all participants to the Convention so as to grant attendance to both webinars and the final seminar. DIESSE members can attend both webinars and seminar at no cost, while participants to the Convention who are not members of DIESSE will be asked to pay a small fee, or to become DIESSE members if they wish.