

Dual Language Programs are Riding High in New York City

Giada Gramanzini (June 14, 2018)



The event at the Italian Cultural Institute of New York on June 13, dedicated to the presentation of DLP in NYC schools by In Italiano - Bilinguismo a New York, was an amazing success. It was made possible thanks to the hard work of the Italian institutions, NYC public schools and two incredibly strong women



On June 13, the Italian Cultural Institute of New York observed an extensive participation conducted by groups of people, especially moms, yearning to know more about the extraordinary initiative directed by [In Italiano - Bilinguismo a New York](#) [2]. The successful event was organized in order to promote the bilingual program in NYC public schools and to inform the audience of how the Italian community, as well as many others, are acting to achieve this goal.

Italian institutions: One great team

After the welcome speech by the Director of [Italian Cultural Institute](#) [3] Giorgio Van Straten, the project was introduced by the President of [IACE \(Italian American Committee on Education\)](#) [4] Berardo Paradiso and the [Consul General](#) [5] Francesco Geruardi, who reminded that the Italian institutions are working with all their energies: "We are a team. We are deeply committed to promoting and spreading Italian language in New York City and in the Tri-state area".

Tiger parents

But the real protagonists of the evening were undoubtedly the two so-called Tiger moms and promoters of the Dual Language Program in NYC schools: Benedetta Scardovi-Mounier and Stefania Puxeddu Clegg. "I really believe that bilingual programs together with parent involvement can make a difference, helping school flourish and communities get more integrated," said Benedetta. On the other hand, Stefania stated, "Italian should be one of the language options available to NY children," adding that the [Department of Education has an open policy to promote dual language learning](#) [6] but Italian has been excluded so far. These two incredibly strong women have been counting on Francesco Fadda, a "Tiger dad" who managed Public Relations and Communications for In Italiano - Bilinguismo a New York.

NYC schools to the rescue!

Then the panelists, moderated by the Director of IACE Ilaria Costa, alternately took the floor. Among them, Lucas Liu, member of the parent volunteer [Community Education Council 3 \(CEC3\)](#) [7] and Chair of the CEC3 Multilingual Committee, who reiterated his support to multilingual, bilingual and dual language students, families and schools. Denise Gomez Desjardin, who is Principal of [PS242](#) [8], home of the future Italian DLP in Manhattan, was pleased and honored to announce that Young Diplomats Magnet Academy has been chosen by Chancellor Richard A. Carranza to welcome the Italian Dual Language Program. Desjardin also called a teacher and his student to illustrate their new didactic activities. Cynthia J. Felix, Director of Bilingual Programs, expressed her enthusiasm too about the whole project.

Support from the French side

With more than 25 years of experience, [Fabrice Jaumont](#) [9], named Godfather of Language immersion programs by the New York Times, helped French, Italian, Japanese, German and Russian communities to develop their bilingual programs in their local public schools. He has been a very important source for DLP strengthening. "Monolingualism is the illiteracy of the 21st century but the good news is that monolingualism can be cured and I think Dual Language Programs help do that - said Jaumont - I am so thrilled that my children are able to talk to their grandparents every Sunday on Skype and send them letters in good French. This is so important for families like ours. It's a way to sustain our heritage and to understand other people's cultures. They are definitely better at comprehending differences, respecting others and these are the best ways to raise our children."

The rewards

[PS 112 Lefferts Park](#) [10]'s Principal Louise Verdemare is one of the first champions of Italian dual language education. Her aim is to raise awareness of Italian culture and encourage diversity, while simultaneously providing instruction in both English and Italian. As she said, "I think that all the indicators that were mentioned this evening, such as having the opportunity to watch children have the ability to communicate in more than one language, the ability to appreciate diversity from a different perspective, the ability to go deeper into culture and bilingualism, are the great rewards of



our campaign. The challenges exist in every school everyday for each and everyone of us. My program at this point is up to moving to 2nd grade next year. We thought about different ways to let language take roots and today we had a wonderful conversation with Annavaleria Guazzieri, Director Education Office of the Consulate General of Italy, about using Science and Social studies and Art to let students appreciate language in terms of presentation of curriculum and content.”

Source URL: <http://test.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/facts-stories/article/dlpnyc>

Links

- [1] <http://test.iitaly.org/files/stefaniapuxedduandbenedettascardovijpg>
- [2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1MvK3BRXdg>
- [3] https://iicnewyork.esteri.it/iic_newyork/en/
- [4] <http://iacelanguage.org>
- [5] https://consnewyork.esteri.it/consolato_newyork/en/
- [6] <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/GeneralCounsel/Investigative/OEO/KeyDocuments/DiversityandInclusionPolicy.htm>
- [7] <https://www.cec3.org>
- [8] <http://www.ps242.com>
- [9] <https://fabricejaumont.net>
- [10] <http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/20/K112/default.htm>