

Editorial

Special Pedagogy is for people, society and democracy

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Thoughts and emotions equal to the total of each person. And the totality of people.

In publishing this important issue of the journal, we want to emphasize its rigorous scientificity, usefulness, preciousness, and foresight.

The emotion: This is the special pedagogy we want, like all other pedagogies: general, social, historical-educational, didactic, and experimental. It is *incarnated*, at the service of the present for the future and, using an ancient expression, for ‘the magnificent and progressive destiny of humanity’, from the Enlightenment to before, from Leopardi to after.

Along a route that has always characterized this ‘crystal’ of knowledge from its origin *because it is in its DNA*.

And that, as a model of individual growth, it has been able (by choices and decisions) to evolve over time. To arrive, metaphorically, at the adult fullness of a triumphant maturity.

So, in its history, as in this file.

With an eye to Italy (for the Special Pedagogy of ‘home’ and, of course, not only) but also to Europe and the world, especially the most civilly, culturally, and economically advanced. But without neglecting the countries and ‘lessons’ from other nations ‘on the border’ between the old continent and Asia (for example, Makarenko, Vygosky and Leontiev), to some even more circumscribed and, for this reason, perhaps even more prophetic – a name for all: by Paulo Freire.

“Domestic walls”, but also *internationalisation*.

Like the signatories of this editorial: Michele Corsi, one of the founders of this magazine; Catia Giaconi, the current national president of the Italian Society of Special Education; and Gabrielle Miller of the University of Arizona, U.S.A.

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Let us now proceed ‘towards’ the title of this rich and multifaceted issue: *‘Special Pedagogy, Third Mission and Social Impact: reflections and practices for an inclusive community’*.

Let us now stop at the first ‘text’ of this ‘context,’ just outlined in the previous paragraph, namely ‘special pedagogy,’ as a ‘fundamental’ or ‘polar star’ term to look at. And with the attention, particularly paid in the first instance, to our ‘beautiful country’ and to the century that has just ended: the twentieth century.

‘The century of the child’ but certainly also the century of inhuman errors, absurd wars, and unthinkable follies; the period of the greatest discovery of otherness as truly the ‘other by itself’; as the discovery, “finally” and consequently, of the initial openness to difference, diversity and to every “single” positioning and history.

Let's think of Maria Montessori, her Master, and their Schools. How, however, to the three great Italian academics of this discipline, especially of the last fifty years of the twentieth century; in alphabetical order: Andrea Canevaro, Leonardo Trisciuzzi and Roberto Zavalloni. Catholics, lay people and priests, as in the best history of pedagogy and education ever, from 1500 onwards and to the religious orders founded in that period. With a symbolic image overhanging and supporting that period: Filippo Neri and his extraordinary “work” on behalf of the poor and illiterate Romans (then over 90% of the population), the sick, the dispossessed, the last, and those who, for too long, have been called the handicapped, then the handicapped, then the disabled, finally people with disabilities. Every linguistic expression is a sign and symptom of an era, of a specific cultural climate, of a strategy in development.

A DNA that has grown, evolved and matured. With other bright pages yet to be written and other important goals to be achieved.

So that we can see them all on the horizon and, at the same time, know perfectly well how and how much we need them.

Let us now move on to another keyword, or expression ‘synthetic’, in the title of this issue: *‘reflections and practices’*.

Theory for practice and from practice.

Such as “practices” enlightened, supported and guided by theory and theories.

It is the constant fil rouge of the ultra-bi-millennial history of pedagogical-educational knowledge.

Implicitly, but not only, from Socrates onwards, to Seneca, to the Christian Middleevists and the dawn of the modern era: Comenius, Locke, Pestalozzi, Froebel etc.

To return to the 20th century and to that extraordinary global phenomenon of the highest strategic, cultural, and operational direction, which has been naturalistic and Christian activism, and to the greatest of this movement: John Dewey.

Dewey: the Master. We could say the ‘singer’ of ‘pedagogy as theoretical and practical knowledge.’

And how not to mention, in this fertile furrow of plow that has disseminated the pedagogical discipline and human history in general, a small volume of it, small in quantity of pages (around 60, in the various world editions), but enormous and great for the revolution it has brought: *‘The sources of a science of education’*, in which this methodology, or rather this epistemology, is rooted, explained and offered to the decades (at least) to come.

A pedagogy that Dewey compares to culinary art, which stems from an embodied and lived cooking tradition. The practices theorized to become ‘recipes’ and models of ‘essential ingredients,’ variables, and parameters relating to pedagogy and pedagogies. So, even for the special one. Each of them is characterized by a ‘quanto basta’ that is neither prescribed nor prescriptive but entrusted to the intelligence, creativity, and ‘historicism’ of present and future ‘cooks’: That is, to educators. In a continuous coming and going, play of shore, constant rebound, "red phone," between theoretical and practical.

Which is the liveliness of an ever more multifaceted and luminous disciplinary crystal.

Together, academics, scientists, operators, and service providers have given rise to regulatory frameworks and legislation that are increasingly respectful and welcoming of every diversity and difference. In Italy: of which to be proud, and Luigi d’Alonzo reminds us of this in every speech, written and oral.

As well as outside our national borders.

But reception would have been little, or only national, if it had not translated into inclusion and in favor of that ‘inclusive community’ which here represents the third beacon or the third linguistic trait, that characterizes this dossier.

And where, before going into a representation even if physiologically, and duly, summary of the articles housed therein: the ‘bridge’ or ‘bridges’ of this happy trait d’union between special pedagogy (the theory we cultivate) and the inclusive community (the practices we want) are represented, in this icastic scheme, precisely by the *‘third mission’* and, therefore, by the *‘social impact’*.

That is, the transformative, socio-transformative, cybernetic, ‘positive’ catastrophic power of Thom, of the third mission, in its specific and stringent nature.

The third is mission and social impact, which are the last two keywords in this issue’s title.

From here, in a further hermeneutic-applicative transfer, or moving from reflections to practices and vice versa, in a theoretical-practical frame of reference, the title we intended to give to this editorial: “Special pedagogy is for people, society and democracy.”

For persons: Special pedagogy, even before being ‘special,’ is pedagogy in all respects and, therefore for all people, without exception. This is so much so that, in its models and strategies, not least in schools, interaction and integration between all individuals, able-bodied and disabled, are required.

For the company, where the reference to the inclusive community is the turnaround of the society that has not yet been realized. In other words, a society that is still a ‘project’ and has yet to become a ‘human’ one.

For democracy: Therefore, third mission activities are the lever, tool, or “means” to produce a social impact that improves the existing status quo with the same social impact that becomes, in turn, the ‘further means’ for the ‘end to be achieved’ that is democracy, as a mode of government of the people, and of a people where there is no ‘waste’ of any kind or nature. Here, too, is the relational context of that ‘text’, which is the society we hope for.

And to conclude, but actually to open, or launch, the desire to read this issue: the items collected and declined in the total body of the articles that make up this dossier.

With the choice that we make, in this editorial, not to proceed analytically for individual contributions and their authors but to make them, instead, a single precious bundle of readings and meta-readings, which are based on a single “brilliant,” such as a “set” or “system” of semantics and “reasonings.”

In other words, they are sub-keywords of those identified so far and, ultimately, of that familiar and overall upstream “name” represented by special pedagogy.

In a list, or synthesis, global, such as to constitute a sort of imaginative brainstorming, or stunning of the heart and mind, to return to the beginning of these pages, and, that is, to the thoughts and emotions in totality between them.

In this issue, and front of the reader, there are evocative paths and landscapes offered to us by the following trajectories of analysis and planning, also confirming what has been written so far and the two “titles” of both the issue and this editorial: *Transformative practices* and emancipatory processes; *cultures to be built and inclusive practices to be put in place in the relations*

between universities and territories also in a multi-regional key; educational and therefore inclusive community and vice versa.

And again: reports of experiences, such as that of the TFA between intercultural schools, families, and inclusive communities – with a specific focus, in another contribution, also on the relationship between inclusive teaching and the intercultural dimension; case studies; research and training to promote both complex employability and the persistence of each person – for example, the mission Inclusion of the University of Foggia, and in kindergartens (the Group based Early Start Denver Model) and others relating to international contexts such as ‘the profiles of STEM students in Latin America and Europe’; training laboratories; robotics and educational methodologies for inclusion; educational poverty (how much, too much!); transition to adult life of young people with intellectual disabilities – and with attention nevertheless to their families and parents; as well as the Mounerian “look” at the “sunset of life,” with people with Alzheimer’s and the “Bridges in Amman” project.

Therefore, an almost infinite, rich, multifaceted, varied, multifaceted, and articulated ‘mine’.

It can also suggest and promote the activation of other theoretical and cultural processes and further ‘personalized, social and democratic’ practices.

Therefore, several *Education Sciences & Society* are to be read meticulously ascribed and carefully preserved among our libraries’ most helpful and valuable monographs.