

Editorial

Inclusion (intelligently divergent), the (indispensable) aim of a (finally, hopefully and committing ourselves to it) cultured and mature democracy

The title of this Editorial says it all. It sheds light on the direction, meaning and the arrival point of our thinking.

However, we do not leave this newly forwarded “proposal” here, to avoid doubts, ambiguities, distorted or downgraded interpretations.

So we insist.

With an early note.

From this issue, the journal changes Publisher, it passes to FrancoAngeli. We opted to publish on-line to reach as many readers as possible. With a few printed issues; whenever needed.

Following the thread of internationalisation in which we have always believed ever since the inception of the journal in June 2010.

The purpose is to invite always more foreign Authors, from overseas and even oceans. We progressively and consistently adopted the English to communicate with the readers. Alongside with French and Spanish and other languages.

It does not mean that we are irreducible xenophiles. Or, that we do not love our language and culture.

Much to the contrary, on multiple levels.

For example, we (strongly) criticised the presence of a foreign member in the first turn of the National scientific habilitation: because the underlying message was that Italians “alone” were incapable to make serious evaluations, or worse, they were corrupt and corrupters.

Going back to Education Sciences & Society, our direction truly wants to be international.

Michele Corsi, one of the three authors who penned this Editorial, is now co-editor – the editorial board, from this issue, happily extends to include Pier Giuseppe Rossi, and with a purposely re-thought “Editorial board” –, he reminds us that when the first issue was distributed “by hand” on the occasion of a conference at Milan Bicocca, that he overheard: “What do they want?”, or “the classical ‘teacher’s pets!’”, or even “too much in line with ANVUR’s guidelines” and more of the same. Receiving also some half critics, barely veiled, from some colleagues (not many in reality), from its inception.

More than six years have passed, and we won’t the bet. We were even “good prophets”.

The result is that this 13th issue (lucky number...) entrusts Franco Angeli with a duty of co-responsibility, which we know how to co-share among us: to develop this journal further, to increase its distribution abroad, to obtain insertion in all (or most of) international data banks and so on.

The next aim to practice, and favour decisively an authentically useful pedagogy.

Immersed in the present and caring about the future.

In a 360 degrees pedagogical game.

Moving, issue after issue, from general to social, from didactics to special pedagogy and more.

Because the four scientific-disciplinary fields of our beautiful Country have been an intramoenia academic instrument invented to broaden the platform for internal use.

While in Europe there was only Education. At present, there is even a greater watering down, which we disagree with.

Therefore, instead of looking at our own navel, Italian pedagogy should (at least) cross Alps, Mediterranean and the Columns of Hercules, to cast the nets (much) further away.

To cultivate a more political, civic and democratic pedagogy. Also, more cultured. Not only in pedagogy. But contaminated by other knowledge: from psychology to sociology, from histories to neuroscience and more.

As it is in the best European projects (there to be won).

It is in the best pedagogical tradition of the Teachers of many present ordinary professors: who used to travel between Paris and New York, who wrote with European, American and South American colleagues among others.

Hence, the choice of the theme, "Inclusion. Contexts, processes and practices", is not casual in this issue.

It goes behind the core of theme in examination.

That is inclusion in its relationship with school and university and students with disabilities. And with their families.

While Stramaglia's contribution, on which we will focus later, outlines the duty of an inclusive, and not exclusive culture. Which, starting from the "geo-political revolution of fashion dolls", leads us through the many processes of today's in-culturation processes. It invites us to change our "way to look", to pre-occupy ourselves in the social imaginary that "not always intentionally, educates the consciousness of adults and children". Avoiding a-critical absorption, but keeping it in due consideration. To let (Italian) pedagogy come to hearth, and abandon (for good) skies, clouds, hyper-cosmoses and foolish metaphysics.

Furthermore, our national pedagogy books do not sell. Or sell very little. Bundled also with paediatrics and childcare manuals in the main Italian bookstores.

This “mixed gill” (good for the palate, but not for head and heart) bereft of (epistemological) identity, (revealing) breath and market: since it is mostly removed from present “demands” and their “answers”, which may be critical and open but are needed today.

Because culture, like democracy, cannot be prejudiced.

This does not mean avoiding to have or express judgments. Or it would be Shelling’s dark night where all cows are black. Following this line, we find references to nihilism, indifference and the “liquidity” of our society (as in Bauman and many other scholars coming also from different scientific approaches) and the people who live in it: equally liquid individuals, relationships, loves, institutions and more.

Yes to judgements, no to prejudgements. Never.

It is culture, as “mighty instrument” (for this reason disregarded, neglected and thrown away as a dangerous tool), that sustains and feed democracy itself: final result of a process that has its essential direction in the (intelligent and cultured, attentive and revealing) inclusion each and everyone.

A people without culture is the victim of demagogy (say this loudly!), which is an accursed way of violence. It kills consciences, leads into the alleys of conformity at all costs (From Pasolini to Bloch), levels us down, empties our judgment and mortifies hearts and minds.

It is like all forms of violence, from rape to femicide, from labour exploitation (unpaid or hardly remunerated) to unemployment (especially youth unemployment), to paedophilia and so on. Likewise, democracy is acknowledgement and application of equal rights and duties for everyone.

Not just for some (concerning the rights) to the detriment of others (when duties are concerned).

The “abled” (rights) versus the “disabled” (to marginalise or, at most, tolerated: what do they want from us?), whites against the blacks (in Europe or USA), Muslims against Christians (in some African and Asian countries), of the majorities against all possible minorities, heterosexuals versus homosexuals and so on.

The list could continue endlessly.

We cut it for the “reason’s sake” (we stop here, but we could mention some scarcely enlightened Italian organisation, bereft of that charity that should animate it), since we fully respect our readers will not continue it.

Inclusion is a social, cultural and democratic duty. Therefore, also pedagogical and educational.

Inclusion means feeling a real difference toward every person (its personal story and culture), because nobody is an accident of history to be eliminated according to the wishes or the “powerful of the moment”; Thomas Aquinas docet.

The horrors of the 20th century, World War two, Stalinism, cold war, many terrorisms including the “lead years” of Italy and many others taught us. .

One important limit is represented by a not small number of individuals, even intellectually ignorant, who, fundamentally, do not want to understand, remember and consider.

Conversely, the story (the “ugly” and negative one) starts again every time.

Therefore, inclusion plays its game on a field paved of rights to be offered, and clearly explain them to everyone, to consolidate. Moreover, multiple and articulated rights originate from the awareness of the many differences that exist in an institution (school), organisation (family), Country (its enterprises, and its intermediate levels) and the duties to accept and put in practice. With no discounts or short cuts or denials for everyone in terms of rights and duties.

With the support of the “area of potential development” of Vygotskij, resumed here as paradigm of the “democracy that we want”, not limited to the simple school experience, but with the right finding of the different starting points of everyone (resources, ties, opportunities and practicalities), and the different goals everyone is entitled to. At least in the “here and now” in a particular examination. But the heart is always open to hope with efforts turned to improve processes and products, means and results. Conversely, democracy and culture can grow, as a combined set.

Instead, inclusion is in crisis now: at least in the space of its horizon.

The tragedy of the migrants, too many deaths at sea, is under the eyes of all.

Equally evident is the foolish desire to build walls and barbed wires.

The conditions in which many refugees live are appallingly inhuman; they did not decide to come to Europe for a holiday or to prostitute themselves or place bombs (surely among them, there could be some prone to that: but are all men and women of Europe such “nice people?”)

On the contrary, they (simply) escaped from certain death. They saw it (perfectly) applied in many (or too many) members of their families and communities.

Turning attention to schools and universities – steering away from countless proclamations and sloppy do-gooders, the two reign nevertheless, and from the good laws already in place (for example, law n. 517/1977) and other examples – inclusion is a process far from being achieved in our Country, or in Europe or in the rest of the developed world.

So much that presently (May 2016), inclusion is one of the not-yet-resolved points of one of the enabling acts of the recent Italian law n. 107/2015, also know as the “good school”.

School cannot be good if it does not know, or want (as two extremes of Gauss's curve in this specific statistic method) to welcome every possible student. Rom a Maghreb or other. A reception that starts from a larger and more diffused training for teachers, with a meaningful "progress" that should be continuously expanded.

Rethinking also school spaces and time; mindful, on this subject, of the early lucid studies of Andrea Canevaro, and the research of Leonardo Trisciuzzi and Roberto Zavalloni: the real "founding fathers" of special pedagogy in Italy.

Therefore, a part from the need to increase the relationship between culture and democracy for social, civil and economical inclusion (the "original motive" of this issue), also the law n. 107/2015 and the high and perspective of the enabling act mentioned above (which we believe being its "second motive": examined here in a particular and obviously due manner); democracy and culture are the "two good reasons" that inspired this issue of Education Sciences & Society, they sustain and traverse it.

School inclusion, is the flagship, banner and target of a truly cultured and democratic society. Therefore, inclusive at 360 degrees.

The "rules" that concern it, suitably proposed and lucidly analysed as pedagogical duties especially by special pedagogy, are the "good theories" and "good practices", which were attentively examined and described in these pages, with attention turned to Italy, as well as Europe and the rest of the world: never exhaustively completed. The physiological horizon of scientific research describes them as very tiring and as tireless "perennial voyage" throughout the seas and oceans of studying and deepening of what has been done and what can still be done, for improvements, for this end. Beyond any, more or less, imaginable limit or boundary; with all means available, to be invented, re-invented, constantly.

Here is the reason for three signatures on this Editorial: besides the one of one editor, are Jean-Claude Kalubi of the University of Sherbrooke, Canada (to show the wanted and explicit international aspect of this journal and issue) and Catia Giaconi of the University of Macerata: a very valuable professor of special pedagogy at this university, soon to be its "spearhead" in this sector.

The present issue is build around three fundamental pillars: from the general to the particular to more specific themes.

From the "context" of inclusion to the "texts" of students with disabilities, and the disabilities themselves. All the way to the two challenges that concern these theories and practices more, as well as school teaching as a whole, dyslexia and autism. These two upcoming "provocations", start in the family, involve the parents inevitably, and extend to teaching and to training teachers overall; they cross the entire sector of schooling. Italy included.

Two contributions revolve around the first “axis”: one by Lucio Cottini (current president of the Italian Society for Special Pedagogy) of the University of Udine and Annalisa Morganti of the University of Perugia on the theme: “Does the school inclusion really work?” (concerning the school) and Massimiliano Stramaglia of the University of Macerata (on the theme of culture and its best hermeneutics and pedagogical-educational translations) its argumentation is “Don’t call it ‘dolly’. The geo-political revolution of fashion dolls”. The first article aims to assess the research that approaches the evaluation of the inclusive processes – with reference both to studies carried out in the Italian context, and the production in international contexts –, providing a useful reflection and an applicable support for those who operate at school, those who are called to take organisational decisions and essential policies to promote inclusive schools oriented to obtain the highest possible educational success from all students. While, the second contribution, starts from the revolution of the stereotype about the body introduced by Barbie (as metaphor of all possible “fashion dolls”) moving onto the current modes of embodiment of the female identity as “plural, inclusive and divergent” – ergo, democratic – (from Middle-Eastern countries to Venezuela). It leads pragmatically into the translation of adult desires into the child’s world, toward those world processes of inclusion/exclusion according to the common imaginary. Therefore, the multiple “views” turned on the subject, together with market rules, as “canons” that intertwine themselves.

Concerning persons with disabilities, at school and university, with an examination coming from more sources and countries, the issue presents the articles: “Deciding to act: Teachers’ willingness to implement inclusive practices” by Erika Pace and Paola Aiello, from the University of Salerno; “Les retombées de deux projets de recherche-action impliquant une collaboration interprofessionnelle sur le développement des pratiques inclusives au secondaire” by G. Bergeron and N. Granger and “University: A universe of study and independent living opportunities for students with disabilities. Goals and critical issues” by Marisa Pavone and Rosa Bellacicco of the University of Torino. The focuses on a research carried out by the University of Salerno, it aims to find some variables that influence the “willingness” of the teachers to implement inclusive didactical practices, which aim to guarantee quality education for “each and everyone”; providing also a wide scope about the literature on the subject, highlighting possible implications in didactic research and in training the teachers. On the other hand, the third examines the centrality of inclusion in the policies of international organisations from the Nineties, thus requesting a major restructuring of the schooling system, with the goal to create an open space for all students, its keywords are, definitely, organisations, hospitality and adaptation to individual needs, with special attention to school institutions and medical-psychological-pedagogical centres

(MPPC). While, the fourth intends to address the question about university capability of becoming a more or less inclusive space, considering the increasing number of youngsters with disability who frequent it. This often obliges to if to review its processes and practices to make it another inclusive and interactive space-time. Inclusion and participation are explored to Livia Cadei (University of Milano) and Rosita Deluigi (University of Macerata).

As sub-text of this second “pillar”, with its eloquent opening to the extra-school comes the contribution by L. Numa-Bocage, “Inclusion scolaire, travail collaboratif et temporalités dans les relations entre un CMPP et un lycée professionnel en France”, et by Catia Giaconi of the University of Macerata. The Author outlines an interesting planning of inclusive contexts through the paradigm of the “Quality of Life”, in terms of training the operators and in implementing new practices in services for caretaking persons with disabilities, with a research carried out with teachers on training attending specialised courses for support activities, and with support teachers in secondary and high schools, connecting the worlds of school and extra-school.

Finally, on the first sub-side of the third pole: the one on dyslexia, we offer two important contributions to the readers: “Dyslexia in the University. Guidelines for inclusion and teaching of the University of Florence” by Tamara Zappaterra from the same University, and “Simplex: Approaches to develop reading competence in Primary schools” by Stefano Di Tore, Iolanda Zollo, Michele Domenico Todino and Maurizio Sibilio, all from the University of Salerno. The first article reports on the outcomes of an interdisciplinary project in the fields of pedagogy, medicine and engineering by Centre of studies for problematic and disabilities (CESPD-Centro Studi Problematiche Disabilità) of the University of Firenze. Which provides support and services to students with disabilities and specific learning disorders in the Florentine university, it reached the stage of drawing up “guidelines” for hospitality and didactic for the use of teachers, students and administration personnel. The second contribution, based also on the results of the investigations by IEA PIRLS (2011) and OCSE PISA (2012), confirmed by further investigations carried out by the University of Salerno, describes a critical situation that concerns reading performances in southern Italy, which result below the national average. On the basis of this emergency, this work reports a research project whose end is to realise inclusive didactic instruments and methodologies to sustain the development of this competence, using simple-complex didactics as theoretical framework of reference.

Finally, we wish the happiest possible landing on Franco Angeli’s printing types.

Michele Corsi, Catia Giaconi e Jean-Claude Kalubi